

Among Young People in Togo, Social Media Provide Social Remediation

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Abstract: The notion of re-mediation sheds light on a shift that takes place gradually from action to reaction, from adjustment to readjustment, from formatting to reformatting, from mediatisation to re-mediatisation, from information to re-information. This shift is not trivial. It underlines the need for a rebalancing, a reorientation of policies and even information, communication and digital strategies. Following this logic, this paper presents social media as a tool of social remediation, in other words, resolving certain issues related to people's place in society and their relationships with others. By favouring speech and social mediation in various virtual discussion forums, social media helps citizens reconnect with the "palaver tree" and "grin" in traditional African societies. The palaver tree is well known, the grin a little less. The term "grin" signifies a place of meeting, entertainment and discussion. It is used in the Bambara cultural sphere (Mali, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast), suggesting that it is a French transliteration of the word "gere", which has the same meaning and pronunciation in Bambara. Traditional media outlets have tended to replace these meetings dedicated to speech and discussions, without necessarily fulfilling the same functions. By reconstituting them, social media places citizens at the centre of the mediated public space, from which they had been excluded. We are thus witnessing remediation, insofar as social media introduces citizens to an agora that was previously inaccessible.

Keywords: Social Media, Mediation, Social Remediation, Lomé's Young People, Usage

1. Introduction

In Sub-Saharan Africa, social media use represents an essential need. The use of social media apps relies on the assumed mediation capability of these communication methods. There is no doubt about this function in traditional media outlets, identified by functionalist theory as one of the most important. Adhering to the principle that all media outlets perform this mediation function, we felt it should extend to digital social media and sought to demonstrate how it worked on their level. Of course, social media has the advantage not only of facilitating exchanges between people and groups, but also of providing a production site for social discourse, as well as meeting and interacting with other citizens. This is why the concept of social mediation has attracted growing interest among researchers specialising in Information and Communication Sciences, who analyse interactive communication tools.

The theoretical approach is generally based on different

information, communication, and cultural territories. While, according to Josiane Jouët [9], mediation is technical "since the tool used shapes practice", it is, above all social "since motives, usage and the meaning attached to this practice are nourished by the social fabric". Jean Davallon [5] follows the same line of thought, when he sees this concept as a means to fully apprehend the media, which is, on the one hand, a production site for social discourse, meeting, and interacting with an audience, recipients, and publications, and on the other hand, the intersection of a multitude of political, economic and societal issues.

The function fulfilled by the media in democratic and postmodern societies becomes social remediation, in the sense of restitution, in the context of the relative democratisation of public discourse. Remediation, the process of improving or correcting a situation, is, according to the educational psychologist Vygostki, a form of "re-mediation". With access to traditional media outlets reserved for government officials and a few privileged

members of society, the appropriation of social media paves the way for social mediation, actually a form of social remediation. Those previously denied the right to express themselves are now able to do so. They can give their views on current affairs, as well as the latest social, political, and cultural issues impacting society. Remediation may also be perceived as a form of re-interpretation, or even resilience as defined by Boris Cyrulnik [6]. Social media are used to reappropriate events that have left an excessively violent impression, transform its content, reshape it, and monitor the persistence of the image.

The shift from mediation to re-mediation highlights a sudden displacement from formatting to reformatting, mediatization to remediatization, and information to reinformation. This is by no means insignificant, since it highlights the need for rebalancing, a shift in policies, or even information and communication strategies. Addressing mediation by putting it into perspective with remediation reflects the need to explore new ways of addressing convergence, reinvent consensus, build memory peacefully, and capitalise on collective intelligence.

To highlight these issues in a context of weak social democratisation, we studied the social media practices of young people in Togo. The fundamental question that guided our analysis was: in what ways are young people's social media practices a form of social remediation? We postulated that these media outlets, such as Facebook, which they use the most to communicate publicly, constitute a site for social mediation-remediation. By using social media to build relationships, foster social interactions, and establish equal relations in the public sphere, young people turn Facebook into a social dialogue space for catalysing community dynamics, moderating intra- and intergenerational debates, and social mediation. This remediation is determined by the motivations for social media use. This article draws on data from a 2020-2021 field survey. The aim of this study was to document social media representations and usage by young people in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

New social media outlets are characterised by their constitutive interactivity. For Josiane Jouët [9], "These technologies thus mark a breakthrough in mass media usage patterns" (p. 107). They indicate uses and appropriations that perform the functions of "social cohesion" and "identity constructions" and multiply them tenfold. Beyond the "strictly functional" purpose of these technological devices lies the "social purpose". Serge Proulx [15] highlights the role played by this technological tool: "In interpersonal communication, the media is presented as a mediation device that conditions (constrains, facilitates) interactions between interlocutors [see Technological Determinism]." (p. 146). It is, therefore, important to examine the role of social media as a social mediator. Traditional media outlets do not offer the public a platform to express themselves or the opportunity for genuine social interaction. New media outlets thus serve as remediation

tools for overcoming this obstacle. Furthermore, while palavers are held up as a model of popular participation in traditional African societies, young people do not always have the opportunity to speak in public, as this is mainly reserved for older people. The advent of social media has thus also enabled young people to remedy this situation and finally speak out in the public sphere. Young people turn to Facebook, WhatsApp, and, to a lesser extent, Messenger, to discuss and publicise their views and take part in public debates. This is how they participate in the public sphere, as theorised by Hannah Arendt [1] and how they activate and capitalise on the socialisation function of these media, as presented by Loicq [12]:

"In Web 2.0 social media, young people are reinventing ways of spending time together. Despite the numerous criticisms against them, these new forms of socialisation are worth analysing. They are very revealing of the way interactions and individual communication re-appropriate the media, as well as relations between young people and the rest of society. These forms of mediated communication thus provide a means of self-expression." (p. 43-44).

In the fifteen years since its invention, Facebook has earned an important place in the lives of its ever-growing community of users. Creating a profile and having a list of contacts to interact and share messages (texts, photos, videos) with is the main attraction of this network. In addition, Facebook acts as a mediator by enabling users to view profiles and form friendship groups based on their individual preferences. The technological platform thus generates socially significant mediations. According to Josiane Jouët [9], although technological mediation plays a role in developing communication practices, they are also nourished by the social fabric" (p. 106). As a result, "the emergence of new practices is grafted onto the past, onto routines and cultural vestiges that endure and continue to be transmitted long after their emergence [...]" according to Mallein and Toussaint [13] (p. 317), but to transcend them and establish new ways of forming social relations.

Based on the premise that social media serves as a remediation tool for young people, this analysis investigated how Facebook, the most widely-used social network, overcomes the limitations of traditional media and rectifies the social relations established by the young and mainstream society.

3. Methodological Approach

To test this theory, we chose a qualitative study based on the standard interview method. The aim of these qualitative interviews was to enable young people in education to explain their social media practices and underlying motivations. In total, 79 young people were interviewed between April 2021 and June 2021, in Lomé, the capital city of Togo. Due to the digital divide, Togo's young people do not all have equal access to social media. It is highly likely that in cities with a low wired and mobile internet penetration rate and few smartphones, the remediation function of social media is likely to be even greater. We tried to find diversity by choosing places where we were likely to meet young

people from different economic backgrounds. We hypothesized that, despite the fact that Lomé has a lot of potential in terms of information and communication technology, Internet connectivity is better here than in any other city in the country, it constitutes a leading hub for IT usage, and boasts a wide range of social media, the economic factor can nevertheless generate disparities in terms of access to these technologies. In order to test this theory, we selected different locations based on their potential to provide us with suitable subjects for this study. Firstly, the university, where we were likely to find informed social media users. A secondary school, where we were likely to find the most compulsive digital media users. The financial district, to observe whether young professionals used social media for any specific purposes, and finally, near the city's main market, to reach a more working-class population.

We handed out interview guides to the young people we met in various locations, to encourage them to express their personal views as fully as possible. We constituted the sample of our observation on the professional profile of the young person. This seemed decisive to us for understanding his position in society, his representations of social networks and the uses he makes of them in the public space. We retained the profile of the pupil, the student, the young employee and the young unemployed person. The choice of observation sites is also decisive. The aim was to meet young people in the places they frequent the most for professional or social reasons. We have chosen the college, the university, the service district and the market as emblematic places. Finally, differentiation by gender seemed important to us in order to observe the specific logics and the different trajectories within young people.

Table 1. Sample.

Professional profile	Gender profile		Number	Percentage
	Boys	Girls		
Pupil	11	13	24	30,37
Students	16	15	32	40,5
Employees	8	2	10	12,65
Unemployed people	12	1	13	16,45
Total	41	38	79	100

The interviewees comprised: 32 students at the University of Lomé; 24 at Lycée Tokoin (modern high school); 10 young professionals (including a lawyer and a whistleblower) at GTA (the business district), and 13 unemployed people in Asigamé market. Our interviewees were of both sexes: 41 male and 38 female. They were chosen randomly on a voluntary basis, depending on their availability and, in particular, for their motivation to conduct an interview on this topic.

This survey was conducted in accordance with instructions by Luc Van Campenhout, Jacques Marquet and Raymond Qivy [4]. They wrote: "Representativeness is less frequently required than is sometimes thought: scientific legitimacy must not be confused with representativeness" (p. 148). The study was thus conducted with Facebook users with a view to obtaining relevant, although not necessarily quantifiable, data. This method provided direct contact with the respondents, who were chosen on a voluntary basis. These interviews focused on social media use and representations of Facebook among young people in Lomé. The average age of the interviewees was 27.

4. Results and Discussions of Survey Data

We begin by presenting the general data, before focusing on the motivations and practices relating to mediation.

4.1. General Data

According to the people interviewed, the Internet is expensive in Togo. They mostly used mobile phone plans that ran out quickly. They spent at least 4,000 F CFA (over 7 USD) to obtain 1 Gb of data. Given the cost, most young people settled for 100 to 500 Mb plans, valid for 30 days. However, when circumstances required it (the need to communicate, festive celebrations, occasional group events, participation in debates on topical issues), they were willing to pay slightly more. As one student explained: "Connecting to social media is priceless for young people in Togo, who crave information and want to improve their social well-being."

Young people use most social networks. However, when asked to choose the most preferred social network, three of them stand out.

Table 2. Favorite social network.

Social media	Facebook	WhatsApp	Messenger	Reference number
Number	47	29	3	79
Pupil	4	19	1	24
Students	25	5	2	32
Employees	8	2	0	10
Unemployed people	10	3	0	13
Boys	30	9	2	41
Girls	17	20	1	38

In order of preference, they used Facebook, WhatsApp, and Messenger to communicate publicly. Over half of internet users, i.e. 60.86% used Facebook for public communication. 34.78% used WhatsApp and only 4.34% of respondents used Messenger to reach a wide audience. As the table shows, it is mainly university students, and among them boys, who prefer Facebook. Secondary students, and among them girls, prefer WhatsApp. Therefore, Facebook was the most popular social network among young people we interviewed, who remained permanently logged in to their account, whenever they had an opportunity to connect to the internet. The only reason for being offline was a lack of resources to purchase Internet plans. Other social networks, such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc., were less well-known among the people we interviewed. The present study therefore focused on Facebook, since it is a "popular", well-known site among young people in Togo.

In Lomé, Facebook, affectionately known as "Face" by young people, provided an outlet for curiosity and self-affirmation. There are good reasons for its popularity: keeping people informed and expressing themselves. Posts were also used to mobilise people and participate in community life via comments. WhatsApp ranked second in terms of preference, but was, in fact, the most widely-used social media app. This type of social media is better suited to poor connectivity. The current 3G speed in Togo is 1.9 Mbit/s,

far from satisfying internet users. WhatsApp was most often used for sending text messages or pre-recorded voice clips, which do not consume a large amount of downloadable data, thus extending the connection time. WhatsApp is the most popular app for sending private messages: "I use Facebook when I want to communicate with a wider audience, including people I don't know. Anyone who has Facebook can access this information, even if I am not their friend. Facebook is a popular site. WhatsApp is a lot more selective, so it enables me to keep in touch with my friends and family", one student stated.

40% used Facebook to inform and mobilise others via posts and 50% wrote comments to take part in community life. However, a minority of respondents (20%); used Facebook to stay informed and follow trending issues. 50% of WhatsApp users sent private messages to find bargains. Messenger came last on the list of preferences, not that it was used less, but because it was used exclusively to stay in touch with friends and family.

4.2. Young People's Motivations

Social media use stems from young people's motivations, which are, in turn, influenced by their representations of the communication tools available.

Table 3. Motivations related to the use of social network.

Motivation	Information	Sociability	Business	Public debate	Reference number
Number	75	68	14	23	79
Pupil	20	24	4	0	24
Students	32	28	1	18	32
Employees	10	8	2	2	10
Unemployed people	13	8	7	3	13
Boys	40	32	12	35	41
Girls	25	36	2	11	38

The response of one of the interviewees sums up their expectations: "If you really want to stay informed, you need to go on Facebook. That's where you'll find not only information, but also comments to inform your views on current affairs [...]. It's also a great way to expand your friendship circle. That's why I prefer it to WhatsApp." This demonstrates that "technology means nothing without the ability to inspire people's imaginations" as Achille Mbembe [14] says (p. 99). The search for information and social connections encourages young people to use Facebook. At any rate, even if each motivation is important, the two most important in the eyes of young people are the search for information and the need for sociability.

4.2.1. The Search for Information

The study demonstrated that Facebook use depended on the function this network provided to users. Several reasons motivate young people to use this social network. For some, it is a place to find out all kinds of information, including job offers, internships, bursaries, etc. Many young people also look for money-making opportunities by selling goods and services online. This type of marketing concerns all types of

products, although second-hand electronic goods remain the most popular.

Facebook is also the place to find national and international news. One history student said he preferred the Facebook pages of high-quality news sites, such as TVT (Togolese television), RFI [Radio France International], Nana FM, etc. He justified his choices by saying that these pages circulated reliable information posted by journalists. "The major news sites are a reliable way to stay informed. I sign up to their pages to receive accurate information." However, as a counterargument to this, one unemployed young person we interviewed claimed that: "radio Kankan is also good, since it broadcasts rumours of real issues in society. If you want to hear the heartbeat of society, you need to listen to the rumours on Facebook." However, at school and university, Facebook serves another purpose: enabling users to search for documents to help them understand their classes. All they need to do is sign up to various groups and pages according to their needs. "Groups like "Apprendre le Français [Learn French]" really help me improve my knowledge", reported one teenager.

Facebook also enables users to share information instantaneously. One student claimed to share information from Lomé University history club regularly via this channel. "When there is something happening at the club, like a meeting, the information is directly uploaded to the Facebook group and everyone is able to access it quickly", one of the club members explained. Class representatives also use social media to contact their classmates. "Schedules may change last minute and if you're online, you don't miss out on hearing about it." In addition to finding information, many young people simply want to stay in constant contact with others, demonstrating their sociability.

4.2.2. The Need of Sociability

According to Danielle Chini [5], "in order for two human beings to communicate with one other, they need to be able to find a link, an intermediary, a middle ground. This may be described as mediation, irrespective of its nature (things, people, signs/tokens)." (paragr. 5). Regarding Facebook, it is precisely this ability to put people in contact with one another that makes it so appealing. Social media enables users to experience new relationships and emotions, meet new people, and even feel less lonely. "[...] one of the recognised benefits of social media is the capacity to build links, in other words, to respond to human isolation." Like tam-tam, newspapers, radio, television, etc., social networks also have a 'social linking' function as Alain Kiyindou [10] points out (117).

The young people we interviewed were very attached to this social network, as it enables them to meet new people, build friendships, and create groups in which they can share messages. "Facebook has changed my outlook on life. I am more open because I am constantly in contact with my friends", exclaimed one student, who had recently moved to Lomé. Facebook constitutes a "grin": a place for meeting and sharing. It even facilitates physical meetings. Several young interviewees highlighted the fact that they could continue their online discussions in real life. The ability to shift from the virtual to the real clearly demonstrates this network's role as a social facilitator. "[...] Consequently, underlines Marlène Loicq [12], Facebook is an extended communication tool that

is both online and offline, private yet public, and raises numerous questions on the virtual existence it has created." (p. 45). In fact, social media users live a double life in the virtual and real worlds. Philippe Breton and Serge Proulx [3] consider that "[...] members of virtual communities are able to do everything they do in real life [...]" (p. 299). This sense of being in the real world on their phone, tablets, and PC screens impacts young people's social lives. They plan what they want to do virtually before meeting up in person to put their plans into action. In addition, several young people stated that before the October 2014 popular uprising in Togo, several Facebook groups called for people to take part in the protests.

In addition, this network is perceived as being easy-to-use, which makes it a very useful tool for communicating ideas and mobilising people around a common cause. Like most social media sites, Facebook is an open network, which is difficult to regulate and censor, as David M. Faris [8] reported in his article on the Arab Spring. "Facebook and Twitter made it possible for Tunisians to bypass state-imposed censorship laws, by enabling them to contact one another and transmit information internationally on the events in their country" (p. 106-107). The same is happening in Togo. There is no lack of censorship. However, such attempts to silence the critics only magnified the impact of social media. This serves as proof that social media provide an antidote to governmental censorship and social control.

4.3. Young People' Practices

From the above, we concluded that young people's representations of social media and its functions were geared towards social remediation. They believed that social media conferred social status by giving them access to information and a public voice, not available via traditional media and structures. Young people also expect social media to enable them to bypass the rules governing social relations and establish communities that they can control. We shall now demonstrate how young people's usage and practice follows this logic. This involves seeing how their mediation/mediatisation practices serve to remediate various misfortunes.

Table 4. Practices aimed at social remediation.

Motivation	Quest for Information	Public expression	Participation	Bypassing censorship	Sharing	Reference number
Number	56	62	39	51	22	79
Pupil	9	24	11	16	7	24
Students	32	28	23	30	11	32
Employees	8	2	1	0	3	10
Unemployed people	7	8	4	5	1	13
Boys	38	31	18	39	9	41
Girls	18	37	17	12	13	38

When asked what practices they develop to remedy a personally felt social problem, the young people mentioned speaking out, obtaining information, overcoming the limitations imposed on young people, participation, the sharing. But, as this table shows, three of these are particularly pointed: the quest for information, public speaking, and bypassing censorship.

4.3.1. The Quest for Information

Firstly, analysing the statements of the young interviewees confirmed that social media compensated for inadequate news: "Traditional media outlets only broadcast events that interest them. The opposite is true of Facebook, where you can find everything – a lot more than the latest news and trends", noted one student. This shortfall was interpreted by the young

whistleblower we interviewed as a policy of retaining information. "Our job is to expose what they are hiding. The public has the right to know everything." Social media even ensures that the facts and news are correctly interpreted: "They [classic media outlets] say what the government wants them to say. They always present things in a certain way, so as to hide reality or present it to their advantage." Social media help to combat these attempts at manipulation: "We deal with the facts. We broadcast the facts as they happened and as the protagonists described them to us."

Social media also make it possible to obtain information in real-time, as one teenager remarked: "Nowadays, Facebook is an essential means to stay informed. Events are broadcast in real-time, whereas you'd need to wait a long time to hear about the same events on traditional networks." However, at the same time, some of them are aware of the limitations of this race for the widespread, instantaneous transmission of information. They regret that some internet users do not take the time to check the facts before sharing them or commenting on them. "The problem with Facebook is that it is a shortcut. Not only a shortcut in terms of communication, but also in terms of reflection. People no longer take the time to dig deeper and anyone can take a stance without having a real grasp of the situation to be able to respond accordingly", regretted one student.

In a country that receives uneven media coverage, particularly television, new arrivals to Lomé recall the difficulty of accessing information. They thus experience the lack of geographical boundaries on social media. According to one student, "Facebook is an appropriate forum for posting information. Other media outlets, like radio, which is supposed to provide nationwide coverage, are unavailable in certain parts of the country. In contrast, Facebook enables users to stay connected to the reality of events in their country."

Social media is sometimes the only way to obtain information: In exceptional circumstances, such as the uprising, when we were unable to access the media, Facebook was our only means to stay informed", explained one young professional. "This network helped young people stay connected to the reality of events in their country when the 2020 election dispute was at its height. Nowadays, nothing can stop them from accessing information." When one door closes in the real world, another one opens in the virtual world. Their experiences during this important moment in their country were the subject of many discussions. "During the demonstration in March 2020, Facebook was the last resort of the resistance fighters, since they didn't have access to radio, television, or newspapers. Their messages calling for resistance were mainly shared on Facebook", explained one young professional. Social media thus provided a "remedy" under conditions considered to be "extreme". To illustrate this, one of the young people we met on the outskirts of the city's main market told us that when they felt that their rights had been violated and there was no further recourse, they could still "reach out to others on Facebook". Another young person considered that "using Facebook is priceless". They presented

it as a powerful tool for social justice, accessible to ordinary people. This is just one of the reasons that motivate users to constantly log in to stay informed, inform others, and bring about reforms, in other words, to take matters into their own hands.

4.3.2. Public Expression

One reason why young people use social media is to be able to speak out and express themselves, i.e. take centre stage. "In our society, people no longer have a place where they can attract attention and share their experiences. Facebook gives them that opportunity. You can share your activities and illustrate them with photos and videos. You can make yourself known and attract the attention of those who can offer you opportunities." Social media are appreciated for their accessibility, immediacy, plurality, and originality, and perceived as helping users to communicate differently, outside social codes. "On Facebook, you say anything to everyone. You can address the canton chief or the President of the Republic. In real life, you wouldn't dare!", one student told us. One difference between the real social context and the virtual world is that young people are aware of the benefits of simply being able to express themselves in public: "Unlike traditional "palaver tree" discussions and media outlets, which deny us the freedom to speak out in public and take an independent stance, Facebook lets you express yourself as you wish, post your views without fear of retribution, and share comments", noted one student. "Nowadays, young people can speak out in the public sphere and the authorities are obliged to take their opinions into account", confirmed one interviewee at Asigamé market. "This public communication channel provides an opportunity to listen and be heard." Facebook thus plays the role of mediator between young people, who were previously excluded from public affairs, and the authorities, who are now obliged to take them into account. Women felt these effects even more strongly: "I start by finding information, I then communicate by sharing my own posts or those of other people or organisations, and talk to my friends, either on Facebook or Messenger", explained one teenager. Why does she choose Facebook to communicate? "Because Facebook is accessible and allows me to reach a wide audience. Because it is the most popular communication channel outside traditional media outlets, such as TV and radio." Loicq [12] concluded that "Facebook is both a communication/ collaboration/ application tool and has become a social platform at the intersection of these various Web functions." (p. 44).

4.3.3. Bypassing Censorship

In a context of social and sometimes political censorship, any available means were being used to escape controls and go beyond imposed limits. Young people used social media to live a double life, see without being seen, and express themselves without worrying about the consequences. The interviews indicated that social media was a useful means for counteracting the withholding of information due to censorship or self-censorship in traditional media outlets. From this perspective, Facebook clearly seemed to be a remediation tool. Following Following the popular

mobilization observed after the 2020 presidential elections, several analysts agreed that the young people were taking their destiny into their own hands. This meant that young people had managed to free themselves from the control of their elders and the one-way communication that established an order-obedience relationship. This communication medium, where young people can express themselves more freely, may also help to improve governance. "Thanks to Facebook, the government are aware that they are being closely monitored. We can call them out on any subject and they are obliged to respond", insisted the whistleblower. The number of activists continues to grow, indicating the willingness of young people to become involved in managing public affairs. This clearly demonstrates that users are not afraid of being censored.

However, since the arrival of terrorists in Togo and the wave of terrorist attacks that only ended with the Covid-19 crisis, the concept of censorship has changed. People understand that the authorities want to monitor what is being said on social media. As Biagini et al. [2] emphasised: "The possibility of being able to see everything gives the illusion of having control over the world, while fuelling the demand for security and mistrust of others" (p. 40).

5. Conclusion

Young people use social media a lot to the point that several studies measure the impact of this investment on school performance. But few studies question their motivations and the functions that these young people make these means of communication and socialization fulfill. Why do young people use social media so much? How do they use it and for what purpose? These were the main questions guiding this study. It results from this survey that young people use social media to access information, socialize and above all to express themselves publicly by circumventing the limitations imposed by traditional media, ancestral traditions and the State. In doing so, social media is ordered to social remediation in all these areas.

The few aspects discussed here confirmed the coherence of our analytical hypothesis and demonstrated that social media were used as a remediation tool. Social media were presented as a remedy providing people with a means of recourse, or even a fallback when other solutions had failed. Discussing, learning, staying informed, and communicating are responses to needs that have been unmet or insufficiently satisfied in society. However, public speaking remains the greatest benefit of social media. The fact that young people's voices (men and, especially, women) can be heard and that young people can participate in managing of Togo is nothing short of a miracle. As Balima put it: "This means that social media has ushered in a new era of governance by the revolution it has caused in people's minds." However, as young people themselves acknowledge, this raises the issue of how open networks, such as Facebook, are regulated. Young people have access to information that they can modify, share and comment on freely, often with hints of defamation, insults, and slander that may constitute offences, which just goes to show that this remedy to several ills may

have rather unfortunate side-effects. Hence the need for media education, as defended by Alain Kiyindou, Francis Barbey and Laurence Corroie-Labardens [11]. It is not a question of media education that would only aim to form the critical spirit of individuals to protect them from the supposedly harmful effects of the media. It would be an initiation to communication and the media that would open real spaces of knowledge and socialisation by mastering the communication logic of our time. It would be a question of initiating young people into a world which, admittedly, is defined as the world of information and communication, and which for that needs to be known and understood by learning specific codes, but whose the complexity goes beyond what one can imagine.

Any institution has not yet taken up this challenge. Parents, schools and public institutions being concerned about how to prevent the use of social media instead of creating the conditions for their proper use. Yet citizenship, participatory democracy and peaceful social life depend on it. It may then be interesting to question the factors underlying this resistance to change. Should we look for them in tradition, in the social and moral order or in politics? Is it the circumvention of the rules imposed by the elders that is in question? We also know that the appropriation of these tools by young people leads to a form of reversal of the hierarchy of values. We know, for example, that in Senegal and Burkina Faso, young people have used them to demand more transparency in the management of public institutions and to demand stronger citizenship when the powers in place would have preferred to keep the old way to work. Is this what makes the Togolese parental, traditional, school and governmental authorities fear? This deserves to be analysed in another study.

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