Changes in the Public Space of Côte d'Ivoire: the Example of the Transposition of the Palaver Tree on Facebook

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Abstract: *The palaver tree is presented as a space where the cultural and philosophical principle of traditional African debate on the affairs of the city unfolds. This study analyses the transposition of these palaver trees onto the digital network Facebook. For theoretical reflection, it calls culturalism, the theory of uses and the theory of public space. At the methodological level, it is based on a corpus of 4 texts (the "about" sections of the different groups) and 8 images (the 4 profile images of the 4 groups and 4 captures of publications). The analysis reveals that the discussion tree groups on the Facebook digital network, while they trigger optimism and make people dream (especially because of the freedom of expression), disillusion and make many Internet users distrust them (because of, among other things, the intolerance, aggressiveness and irreverence that prevail there). Hence the need for digital network education based on the principles of the African palaver tree.*

Keywords: Palaver trees, digital social networks, public space deliberative space, Facebook, Côte d'Ivoire

1. Introduction

In traditional Africa, the palaver tree is the place where people gather to discuss the affairs of the city. It provides the framework and opportunity for everyone to express themselves freely on the state of society, namely on the political, economic and the socio-cultural of the village. The symbolism of the impressive and majestic tree, erected at a strategic location in the village (often in the center), with its roots deeply buried in the ancestral earth, and offering its shade in all seasons to the members of the community, refers to the ideal of maintaining social ties and cohesion, a guarantee of living together (N'Da, 2017). Diangitukwa (2014, 9) explains that "The metaphor 'palaver tree' is the emanation of the spirit of dialogue, tolerance and respect for others, because in order to discuss with others important issues relating to the administration of the community, it is important to respect their interests and ideas. " The tree is the designated setting for palaver, and therefore for speech. Indeed, as a "place of social involvement and plural expression, where everyone has the right to speak", it engages "the blossoming and the power of the word" (Toa and Lassarade, 2008, p.203). In fact, the word that prescribes "to speak truthfully, to speak justly, to speak usefully, to say what must be said, can be said, without contradicting oneself or contradicting oneself" (Benoît Kouakou, 2018: 75), is a framework conducive to the healing of hearts and therefore to liberationThus, "knowing how to speak opportunely and knowing how to speak wisely" (idem) characterizes the debates and deliberations of the palaver tree. As Amoa (2003, p.47-49) writes, "Linguistic smartness [is] a prelude to the quest for collective truth through the proper use of civilized speech. In its principle and in its manifestation, "the palaver institutes a public space for discussion that presupposes the detour through a procedure" (Bidima, 1997, p.13).

Today, with the technological revolution, the explosion of means of communication, as well as *La démocratie internet* (Internet democracy) (Cardon, 2010) and *Les mutations de l'espace public* (Mutations of the Public Space) (Mouchon, 2005), which have favored the emergence of electronic forums, palaver trees have been deployed in the arena of digital social networks and are developing there. In Côte d'Ivoire, there are several groups on the networks devoted to these deliberative practices on social problems. On Facebook in particular, there are a number of groups and thousands of subscribers. These include: "Observatoire démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire" (14, 795 members) [1], "L'arbre à palabres" (5, 349 members), "Le tassoiyage sacré" (2009 members), "L'arbre à palabres (Mea-culpa) " (18 members), and others. These groups exist with the clear objective of maintaining democracy (by freeing up speech) which is one of the essential principles of the living together.

This study focuses on the development of palaver trees on Facebook. It is important to analyze the relevance of the debates on these palaver tree groups in light of the problem of social cohesion and the living together in Côte d'Ivoire. The study thus answers the following central question: in what way can the transposition of the palaver trees on Facebook, through the debates around the topics convened and the inclusive involvement of citizens in the debates and deliberation of the issues of the city, constitute a dynamic in the construction of the living together? It is based on the hypothesis that the palaver trees transposed on Facebook, by calling on different problems of the city and plural expression, represent an adequate framework for the debate and construction of the social cohesion necessary to live together in the country.

2. Methods

In a qualitative approach, the study resorts to the documentary study. It is based on a corpus of texts and

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[1] These are the numbers of subscribers of these groups on October 28th at 14:11

images collected on 4 groups of palaver trees on the Facebook network and analyzed as such. These groups are: 1-"Observatoire démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire" (14795 members), 2-"L'arbre à palabres" (5337 members), 3-"L'arbre à palabres" (174 subscribers), and, 4-"L'arbre à palabres (Mea-culpa) " (18 members). The corpus consists of 4 texts (the "about" sections of the different groups under study) and 8 images, namely: 4 profile images (of the 4 groups) and 4 captures of publications. The data were subjected to a semiological (for the images) and lexico-thematic (for the texts) analysis. On the one hand, the aim was to describe the different data in order to identify the connotations and denotations, and on the other hand to proceed to a deconstruction-reconstruction in order to grasp the real scope and the global meaning.

On the theoretical level, the study is part of a socio-anthropological perspective of communication, and calls upon the theory of public space, the theory of the uses of digital social networks and culturalism.

The theory of public space is also indicated in this study to analyze how the virtual public space that is Facebook offers itself as an arena of deliberation. Indeed, according to Jürgen Habermas (1962), the public space is the place accessible to all citizens, a place where the discursive exchange of reasonable positions on problems of interest allows for the development of public opinion. The public space is thus a "place", a forum, where all citizens, regardless of their social status, can freely take part in contradictory debates on problems of common interest. For Habermas, the principle of the social universe is perceived in the exchanges between the social actors, through the communicative act (*L'agir communicationnel*, 1981). This work, in fact, considers the palaver trees on Facebook as arenas of plural expression.

Culturalism aims to explain social phenomena through culture, based on the principle that the individual, in a society, can only be understood if he or she is integrated into the social tissue to which he or she belongs. Culture, in this perspective, represents the whole of the institutions which ensure the coherence between the individuals in a society. Culturalism is thus interested in the diversity of human organizations in time and space, and accounts for the particular phenomenon of social integration. Culturalist approaches in communication studies describe and compare "the cultures and cultural dimensions that are revealed in communication", postulating that culture has "an explanatory value for the way in which the meeting between people is structured and functions" (Stoiciu, 2008, p.37). This study considers the palaver trees as an interesting perspective to analyze, given that the socio-cultural environment is likely to shape the personality of the individual, who becomes the product of a basic culture, and consequently the product of norms, social roles, behavioral skills and know-how.

The theory of uses, in particular in the perspective of Proulx (2005, p.11), apprehends the uses and appropriations of social networks, and therefore what the individuals make of and with this technical tool, by defining "social uses" as "patterns of uses of individuals and groups of individuals". The "communities of users" thus act around social practices or shared meanings. In Proulx's understanding, the appropriation of digital social networks and the Internet is both social and individual in nature, especially since the consequences of the appropriation of individuals reflect on society. This study focuses on the particular use and social anchoring of digital social networks in Côte d'Ivoire, in particular the way in which Internet users, through the palaver on Facebook, take part in debates on the problems of the city, in a plural expression.

3. Results

1) Palaver trees on the Facebook digital network: a desire to provide Ivorian Internet users with a space for expression and inclusive exchanges

The analysis of the "about" sections of the four (4) groups studied, their profile pictures and the exchange with administrators as well as members of these platforms provides information on the project behind the creation of these groups on Facebook.

Thus, in the first group, the "Observatoire démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire" (a group with 14, 795 members), the assumption is that "everything is known today [. . .] thanks to digital social networks. On this basis, speech is freed up so that everything can be discussed democratically. The second group, "L'arbre à palabres" (a group of 5, 337 members), presents itself as "a group to talk about our problems that affect our daily lives directly, to sketch out, with the group's knowledgeable members, possible solutions, paths to follow to help solve these problems. The group thus presents itself as a kind of "newspaper" in which each person is a journalist and writes his or her own articles. The postulate is that "development in Africa or [. . .] the emergence of Africa and particularly the emergence of Côte d'Ivoire will never come if a strong civil society does not emerge and does not pose its problems clearly, firmly, and pertinently. The third group, also entitled "L'arbre à palabres" (group of 174 subscribers), is in the same perspective of offering a space for participation in debates and societal issues. The group is presented as an arena "open to all", with the precision that it is "a platform for political debate in fraternity and courtesy". As for the fourth group, "L'arbre à palabres (Mea-culpa)" (a group of 18 subscribers), it is described as a "forum" for "doing one's mea-culpa", and "making peace with one another for a more peaceful society". This project, stated and explained in the founding texts of the groups, is supported by very expressive profile images, revealing the desire that drives their creators and initiators.

Image 1: Profile picture of the group « OBSERVATOIRE DEMOCRATIQUE DE COTE D'IVOIRE »
Source: https: //www.facebook. com/groups/1926654974047749

In this image of the group "Observatoire démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire" (Democratic Observatory of Côte d'Ivoire), we see representations of individuals (men and women) with the black color. Some, alone, are engaged in various tasks: on the left, at the top of the image, we can see a female person in communication; going to the right, a man is in the position of an opera singer; below him, going to the right, we have a painter, etc. Others are in groups of two: one notices particularly on the extreme left a man and a woman warmly clapping their hands, and on the extreme right two individuals very close together. Others are in groups of four, each in a different posture. Most of the individuals are represented with bubbles of different sizes (large, medium and small) and of different colors: the 3 primary colors that are blue, yellow and red as well as 2 secondary colors, namely green and purple. These colors appear with varieties or shades: varieties of blue (azure and electric blue), varieties of yellow (yellow ochre, amber and Venetian), varieties of red (cardinal red, burgundy red and crayfish red), varieties of green (khaki green, avocado green, grass green and bladder green), and varieties of purple (pure purple and indigo). All the set is placed on a white background.

What to understand? The image suggests diversity: a diversity of genres and professions, even of status, which must allow the diversity of thoughts, opinions and expressions to blossom. This diversity of thoughts, opinions and expressions is represented by the bubbles of different sizes and different colors. There is a clear will to present this public space as a place where differences are a source of wealth. The gathering of divergent opinions is perceived as positive for society. It is known that the primary colors, obtained without the mixture of other colors, are used as a basis for the secondary colors. We might as well conclude that in the vision of the actors of this page, a society where friendship (symbolized by yellow), wisdom (symbolized by blue) and love (symbolized by red) reign is a society where social balance (symbolized by purple) favors sustainable development (symbolized by green). The black color (symbol of rigor and sophistication) harmoniously placed on the white background (symbol of peace, purity, clarity) indicates that it takes union to build the community.
The profile image of the group "L'arbre à palabres" is also full of symbols and meaning.

Image 2: Profile picture of the group « L'arbre à palabres »
Source: https: //www.facebook.
com/groups/340109852859876

A tree can be seen with green foliage sheltering a group of individuals: men, women, children, adults. At the top, in the right corner of the image, There is (with the sky in the background) the creator and administrator of the group, André Silver Konan.

This image highlights the symbolism of the imposing tree offering its shade to the members of the community for palaver and deliberation that should lead to the maintenance of social cohesion. The heterogeneous crowd indicates that the village palaver tree is a common place, the place of all, and therefore the place from which the public's opinion germinates. But speech, even if it is free, remains sacred in the African tradition: it must be said with wisdom and circumspection. Hence the need for the presence of a moderator who casts a panoramic gaze to reframe things and guarantee the right thing to say to all. This is what the picture of the moderator suggests, called to make respect the rules, so that the group is not a freedom-destroying jungle.

The profile image of the third group selected for the study, also entitled "Palaver Tree", is in the same tone.

Image 3: Profile picture of the group « L'ARBRE A PALABRES!!! »
Source: https: //www.facebook. com/arbreapalabre225

This figurative drawing also presents the imposing tree which shelters the individuals with their differences. The writing "L'ARBRE A PALABRES!!!" is highlighted by the large font, the capital letters and the white color on a blue background: which refers to the peace and purity necessary to support life in society. A useful statement is put below to give precision: "Civilized political and social debate; with respect for the ideas and opinions of others." The white chosen as the font color of this gloss is not fortuitous: It aims at clearly stating beforehand the intention and the conditions of the palaver in the group in order to reach later on the success of the debates and the ideal of the fraternity wanted by the group.

Although quite simple, the profile image of the group "The palaver tree (Mea-culpa) " is nonetheless telling.

Image 4: Profile picture of the group « L'arbre à palabres (Mea-culpa) »
Source: https: //www.facebook. com/groups/1366846363713515

It is actually a predefined image, a pictogram, a kind of emoji. A handshake is highlighted, with the sentence "On est

ensemble" ("We're together!") on a white background. The image thus calls for people to get together, to give each other their hand to make peace, an imperative condition for living together. The presence of the Latin expression mea culpa (my fault) in the name of the group already translates the need to live in transparency with others through the humble recognition of one's faults and errors, in sincere remorse.

We can see that these groups, through their presentation in the "about" section and the profile pictures, show the unambiguous will to provide Internet users with a space for free expression and fruitful exchanges on subjects concerning the life of citizens. Through Facebook, they want to bring the social actors to participate in the construction of a social ideal based on democracy, which obliges itself to free the word and to consider all the opinions as well as all the positions of the individuals who form the society. This ambition is based on the discovery of digital social networks as an ideal arena for citizen participation and joint action in the emergence of a new social order. Indeed, generally free from the diktat of politicians and the control of rulers-unlike traditional media-these networks have a great capacity to depolarize deliberative processes and spaces.

In short, the palaver trees on Facebook aspire to offer Internet users the opportunity to express themselves freely. This is the reason for their existence, as the various documents attest. The spirit of freedom that is displayed and maintained motivates the adhesion of Facebookers. Today, social networks are imposed as the space of and for all. Its meteoric rise in the media device and the communication sphere in Côte d'Ivoire allows to put in visibility various opinions. There is here a real appropriation of these digital networks, in general, and of Facebook, in particular, as a mode and channel of expression, in a kind of citizen action and a deliberative form of the questions which concern the community.

2) The manifestation of the palaver on the Facebook network in Côte d'Ivoire

The publications on the various groups and the interviews provide information on the way the palaver is manifested in practice. The analysis shows that all topics related to the life of citizens and current events in all their forms are discussed on one or another page. Some publications are presented with a conciliatory tone and appear as useful constructions for living together. The one below, collected in the "Mea culpa" group, is an example.

Image 5: The reconciliation process
Source: group « L'arbre à palabres (Mea-culpa) » https: //www.facebook. com/groups/1366846363713515

The publication is presented as a reconciliation process of its author. The author assumes that as an imperfect human being, he may have caused harm to someone and asks that he not be held responsible, that he be forgiven: "If I have caused you harm at some point, I ask for your forgiveness. In truth, this request (for forgiveness) is addressed to anyone, to others. The sentence can be understood as follows: "To whomever I have wronged, I apologize. Mea culpa". We are well in the spirit of living together, and the humility and simplicity of this man's approach is likely to have positive effects.

The post records among other reactions this one: "Let's love each other despite our differences. Let's solve our problems here." The respondent's comment thus goes in the direction of the message's sender: good tone and conciliation.

In another register, the following publication calls under the palaver tree, for public and popular debate, the question of the type of political leader needed in Africa.

Image 6: Question about the type of political leader in Africa
Source: group « L'arbre à palabre » https: //www.facebook. com/arbreapalabre225

"Some people think that in Africa we do not need democrats but rather enlightened dictators. What do you think? The topic poses one of the great problems in Africa, one of the crucial questions (if not the crucial question) of the continent. The answer, apparently obvious, is not so obvious in reality. Indeed, if "some think" that Africa needs "enlightened dictators" more than "democrats", is it not based on the failure, in the African tropics, of those who have been touted as great democrats, while elsewhere, under other skies, leaders labelled as dictators, but who have a clear vision for their people, manage to guarantee the well-being and good living of their citizens?

The participants in the debate rather support the thesis and argue their position. The following excerpts of views show that democracy does not appear to be a panacea for everyone. Thus, for Haris, "the regimes most exposed to popular contestation and civil wars are democratic". Hamed, speaking of the supporters of democracy, says: "What they do not know is that democracy is a mirage because it does not exist. Touré, more prolix, explains, "When we look at the results of democracy all over Africa, we have the impression that we have only reaped war and more misery. On the other hand, the few examples of strong, rigorous management, bordering on dictatorship, of enlightened dictators who have been able to boost development in their countries, are success stories [. . .] I think we need discipline and work more than long, empty speeches!"

The proponents of the thesis of the need for enlightened dictators in Africa thus emphasize the quality of the leader's vision. For them, it is necessary above all to have a leadership that initiates and drives the development movement. In other words, the leader must have strong and assertive convictions, in order to courageously set him or her in motion for the benefit of the people. Beyond the question of the political leader and his leadership, the question of political ideology in Africa is posed in the background. Democracy or enlightened dictatorship? Everything seems to depend on those who animate political regimes and set ideologies in motion.

Sensitive political news is also carried into the public arena of Facebook, under the "palaver trees". Such is the case with this post on the "Observatoire Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire".

Image 7: 3rd term or 1st term of the 3rd republic
Source: group « Observatoire Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire»: https: //www.facebook. com/groups/1926654974047749

The debate arose in Côte d'Ivoire with the decision of President Ouattara to seek another term, after the death of Amadou Gon Coulibaly, the designated candidate of his party the RHDP, thus reversing his declaration not to run. The publication concerns the intervention (Thursday, August 6, 2020 in "Le Journal de l'Afrique" of France 24) of Patrick Achi (current Prime Minister), then Secretary General of the Presidency. For him, it is not a "third term in the second republic, we are in the third republic and it is the first term. This is the argument held by members of the RHDP to justify the candidacy, for the third time, of Mr. Ouattara.
Patrick Achi's remarks garnered 10 reactions through emoticons (some of which were mocking) and 19 comments. Most of the speakers express their disapproval.
The reactions, iconoclastic at will, are part of a daring transgression, one might say. Everyone expresses what he or she thinks as he or she feels or wants, without embellishment, sometimes with rage or humor. Here, no one is shy about boldly displaying his or her guts and point of view.

In these arenas, where the tendency is to freely express one's thoughts in a naked way, one also encounters bellicose, provocative and problematic publications.

Image 8: Show of force
Source: group « Observatoire Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire»: https: //www.facebook. com/groups/1926654974047749

The text of the publication, with a photo, is meant to be a deterrent. "Here is a very small part of the special forces in Côte d'Ivoire ready to defend President Ouattara. Opposition activists, stop dreaming, " it reads.

Then comes a passionate and lively debate. The harshness of the terms used, such as "arrogance", "others don't like you", "minority opposition jokers", "oddballs", etc., and the irreverent photo of the Guinean president overthrown by a military coup, show that the Facebook groups of palaver tree sometimes pose a problem and can rather harm the way people live together.

Thus, the results provide information on the motivations behind the creation of groups of palaver tree on Facebook digital network (to allow Internet users to have a space for expression and exchange in order to take part in the citizen debate) and on the reasons behind the adherence of Facebookers to these groups (freedom of expression). They also provide information on the actual manifestation of discussions on the Facebook digital network in Côte d'Ivoire, and the discourse that takes place there.

4. Discussion

1) "Internet democracy" and living together on Ivorian digital networks: between optimism and disillusionment

The results of the analysis of publications on the palaver tree pages and the results of the interviews conducted reveal the dynamism of these groups and their power to mobilize Internet users around various topics. Moreover, the summoning of subjects to the palaver tree arena is often at the initiative of the group members themselves (and not necessarily of the leaders). There is no doubt about it: today, thanks to the Net and digital social networks, there is a vitality of communication, and a lot of diverse information is transmitted to everyone. One understands then the optimism of the proponents of these communication means who considers it as the new democracy as well as the dithyrambic speeches celebrating this gift. For sure, the Internet democracy of which Cardon spoke (2010) is a reality. As he writes, "The Internet directs all experiments aiming at overcoming the gap between representatives and represented. " (p.7). It is a democratic experiment, an alternative to representative democracy. According to N'Da

(2017, p.230), "The right to speak in public is expanding to the whole society [. . .] On the Internet and thanks to the Internet, the public that is no longer under control willingly takes the floor without waiting to be asked or allowed. " The author, referring to Cardon, adds: "Internet appears as an instrument of fight against the infantilization of the citizens in a regime which is supposed to entrust them the power [. . .] One cannot restore any more the border on which the gatekeepers and the right-thinking people watched protectively in the traditional public space". It is the essence of democracy, one of the pillars of the living-together, to submit to the wisdom of all citizens the questions that concern the city. Dominique Wolton (2009: 28), on this subject, writes: "What is democracy, in fact, if not the negotiation and peaceful cohabitation of often antagonistic points of view?

However, one can also ask the question with N'Da (op. cit.): "Is it enough that thanks to the Internet, thanks to the electronic tool, reactivity is immediately possible, that the citizen can intervene and consume the information without even giving himself the time and the trouble of reflection so that one applauds an "electronic democracy"? The question deserves to be asked by noting the behavior of some subscribers of the groups of palaver trees on digital networks. Their actions are likely to disillusion more than one and lead to doubt the capacity of these spaces in the dynamic construction of a living together in Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, as Denis Huisman (1985, p.85) indicates, "When social communication becomes plethoric, abusive and perverted, it tends to turn into its opposite, that is to say, into uncommunication. The question of what can be said on the Internet and social networks remains topical: "What can we say? What should we say? Should we communicate everything for the sake of transparency [. . .]? And what does this term transparency concretely contain in the age of the information society?" (Kouakou, 2018, p.73). Obviously, tons of liberated and bold words on these pages can have a downside and be counterproductive. The downside is all the more to be feared as there is a risk of exacerbating sensitivities through the temptation, bordering on voyeurism, to expose everything in the public square. We sometimes witness, in fact, a kind of verbal incontinence, in the name of a certain requirement of democratic transparency and the right to communicate on everything. So we end up with this conclusion of Du Roy (2007, p.235): "We are submerged by a tsunami of information. But information is dying".

In order for these pages of palaver trees to be truly productive and part of the dynamism of the living together by managing to (in) form without distorting, it is necessary to go through an education in digital social networks that is based on the teaching of the fundamentals of these arenas in their original sense.

2) The need to return to the constructive palaver tree of traditional Africa through education in the use of digital social networks

The important role of the palaver tree is no longer in question in traditional Africa. The palaver, in fact, is always manifested in the African tradition in the form of a continuous dialogue, a public exchange, in a contradictory debate in order to allow everyone to participate and deliberate. It is therefore a framework for dialogue with its actors on the affairs of the city to reach a consensus, a point of agreement adopted by all. Diangitukwa (2014) writes in the summary of his article entitled "The distant origin of governance in Africa: the palaver tree" this:

"In Africa, the palaver is the equivalent of the 'public space' in the West (see Habermas) or even the 'participatory space. ' In this place, truth does not come from authority, but results from the palaver that stages power and gives meaning to language. Without arrogance or contempt, one goes to meet the other to (re) establish the truth in order to consolidate social links and unity.

The transposition of palaver trees to digital social networks in general and Facebook in particular is a boon to the perpetuation of values such as the re-creation of links, "active tolerance" and "learned ignorance" (Bidima, 1997, p.41). These values must be carried over the digital networks so that these groups of palaver trees can become spaces of compromise, understanding, mutual respect-based on the specificities of otherness-, peaceful coexistence and healing. The communicative ideal of traditional Africa constitutes a value to be exported to the arenas of digital palaver trees. This ideal integrates the idea that communication calls for an effort of the self upon the self and requires a control of thought in order to communicate without provoking what Wolton (2005) translates as "uncommunication". In this understanding, communication extends beyond the fact of saying everything, showing everything, transmitting everything without restraint, that is to say to establish a world without rules in the name of a misunderstood democracy.

To reach such an ideal and to make the palaver trees on digital networks, in particular on Facebook, a real space to practice the living together, there is an imperative need for education. This education in the efficient and favorable use of digital social networks must be based on the principles of the original palaver tree, according to African tradition. In the transition from traditional to digital, it is important to ensure that the palaver tree is not emptied of its substance, which constitutes its wealth and value. Media education, in general, allows for the "development of skills and competencies aimed at identifying, describing, understanding and evaluating the daily messages of our media universe that seeks to inform us, entertain us, move us or sell us something, " writes Dagnogo (2018). The author explains the contours of a specific education to digital social networks that would take into account transposed cultural values. He writes:

In the case of social networks, an education in this sense would privilege the preservation of values culturally and traditionally accepted by the groups transposed into the digital. Above all, it is necessary to bear in mind that the information disseminated on the Internet is irreversible and likely to produce indelible effects. That is why members must be careful not to give out certain information or deal with certain subjects on the digital platform.

The administrators or moderators of these groups must, if necessary, become instructors to teach the basics and

fundamentals of the cultures they transpose to the pages, in addition to rigorously enforcing the rules published in the "about" sections. These spaces must educate themselves in these principles that N'Da (op. cit., p.233) indicates:

Obviously, informationalization (or mediatization) serves the cause of democracy only where mediation thrives, where, in a public space, debates based on contradictory arguments that take into account the reasons and worlds of others can be confronted, where between different and equal human beings, there is a will to coexist peacefully with each other, tolerating each other, proceeding to the negotiations necessary to resolve issues that are necessarily common and to take up the challenges of the society.

5. Conclusion

The transposition of the palaver tree to digital social networks, particularly Facebook, is of the greatest interest. In fact, traditional African society, by instituting the palaver tree, provided itself with a means of seeking peaceful consensus stemming from uninterrupted dialogue around the problems of the community. This study analyzed the relevance of discussions on palaver tree groups on the digital network Facebook in the dynamics of the living together in Côte d'Ivoire. It is based on the hypothesis that the palaver trees, through this convocation of different problems of the city and plural expression, represent an ideal for debates and the construction of social cohesion necessary for living together in the country.

Through the analysis of the motive of creation (described in the heading "about") of the selected groups, of their profile pictures, of publications and reactions to publications, the study discovers that we are really dealing with spaces of free expression likely to seduce and obtain the adhesion of more than one Internet user. It also discovers that most of the subjects that punctuate life in Côte d'Ivoire are convened and are the subject of often violent exchanges. The current events concerning economy, culture, politics easily find their framework of treatment on these pages. The actions of politicians, in particular, are exposed and submitted to the deliberative capacity of Internet users of all sides, of all sexes and of all ages. Depending on the subject, the current events and the actors involved, the tone is either serious or ironic, or even daringly transgressive through jibes.

In short, the palaver tree groups on the digital network Facebook have both the positive element (which triggers optimism and makes one dream) and the negative element (which disillusions and makes one distrustful). The positive element is the freedom of expression, the possibility for all to get involved in debates and deliberations on matters that concern the community, the impression of forming through the virtual network a real community sharing the common ideal of freedom. The negative element is intolerance, aggressiveness, irreverence and, above all, the risk of moving away from the ideal of the original "arbre à palabres" (Palaver tree), which is then emptied of its substance and becomes nothing more than a dull ornament on Facebook or a space for trivialities and banalities, abusing the expression "arbre à palabres" (Palaver tree). An

education in digital social networks that takes these concerns into account is essential.

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