VIEWS OF THE WORLD AND LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE OF NEWS: RESEARCHING YOUTH, NEWS, AND CITIZENSHIP IN PORTUGAL

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The study of young people and news has been dominated by a Westernized research-centred view of the youth's relation with the news and about their life contexts. This paper aims to contribute to the academic debate on children, youth, news, and digital citizenship relying on invisible audiences from the non-western geographies. A crucial subject that demands more research is the context of migrant youth (Clark & Marchi, 2017; Leurs, 2015; Leurs et al., 2018).

Within the project Youth, News and Digital Citizenship - YouNDigital (PTDC/COM-OUT/0243/2021), we followed the PRISMA systematic literature review guidelines, within the period 2010 to September 2022, on the scientific databases WoS Core Collection and SciELO. Building on the literature review, we argue that some voices and thematics are missing, which are fundamental to better perceive the field and have a holistic and complete vision of the future of news and young people in the context of digital citizenship. Emerged two gaps that claim more research on news avoidance and also on crossing diverse dimensions such as gender diversity, low-income populations, and migrant lives. This text pleads for deepening the focus on diversity. This more diverse perspective can bring some food for thought to the field. This initial review of the literature evidenced a need for a decolonisation of the Western universalistic view of media and news contexts (Brites & Figueiras, 2022; Treré et al., 2020) as it pointed to a distorted map of the world that places the academic literature mostly in the global north

context. Remembering the seminal *Deciding What's News* (Gans, 2004/1979) and its warning on how news selection may distort the world topography this is an aspect that needs further attention.

A central objective of YouNDigital is to grab news definitions and their connection with youths' (aged 15-24) democratic needs and participation. The project relies on complementary methods. Nevertheless, for this article, we will focus on the national and representative survey (n=1300) that was applied between January and March 2023.

In this text, we will rely on a cohort (n=102) that covers the non-western respondents from Angola, Cape Vert, Mozambique, Brazil, Guinea, São Tomé, Bangladesh, Japan, India, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and their answers to these two open questions: Q1. How do you construct the image you have of the world around you? Q2. How do you imagine the news in the future?

A brief characterization of the sample (two age groups: 15-19 and 20-24) indicates that respondents from 15-19 (n=29; gender = M=12; F=16; Neutral=1) have educational contexts as follows: Middle School (n=5); technical-vocational Course (n=4); higher Technical-Vocational Courses - TeSP (n=1); High-school (n=18); Other (n=1). Regarding the professional situation: Studying (n=15); Neither studying nor working (n=2); Working (n=3); Working and studying (n=9). For the 20-24 group (n=73; gender: M=32; F=39; Neutral=1; Non-Binary=1), their educational context indicates: primary School (n=2); elementary School (n=3); Middle School (n=1); Technical-Vocational Course (n=13); Higher Technical-Vocational Courses - TeSP (n=3); High-school (n=24); Degree (n=25); Master's Degree (n=1); Other (n=1). If we consider the professional situation, they responded as follows: Studying (n=14); Neither studying nor working (n=11); Working (n=25); Working and studying (n=20); Does not want to answer (n=3).

Early results analysis denote that technology will continue to have a paramount presence in youths' lives and an evolving sophistication and intervention in the production of news in the coming future (the responses point to futuristic technological scenarios like intraocular devices for searching news), but they also reveal negative feelings towards the speed at which information is produced and circulates, opening way for the increasing of manipulative, and untrusty information production as a result they claim for more trustworthy news while at the same time, they see a pathway for the news that in their own words has no salvation.

Particularly concerning the question *How do you build the image you have of the world around you?* even if this is the 20th question of the survey on youth and news, with initial questions on media contexts, their top answers are not media-centric. Their answers are mostly distrustful, pointing to current social problems, namely the cost of living, and they envision that times will be more complicated leading to increasingly worse consequences related to corruption, chaos, and pollution to name a few. The answers also reveal contexts of politics and environmental issues: "The world is being affected by the global crisis and it is already starting to be seen in the Sea Level Rise and the poles being affected every day" (Venezuela, Male, 24, works and has a degree); "The world today is like in the past, with a lot of inequality, a lot of pollution, a

lot of carelessness and a lot of corruption" (Brazil, Female, 24, works and has a degree). At last, and if we try to catch what answers are exposed specifically on news outlets, we see a prevalence in online news but at the same time a context of legacy media: "The world is becoming more and more technologically advanced, and people need it for many occasions. Having a mobile phone with you today is always very important because you can store information, have reminders or just use it for leisure" (Cape Verde, F, 19, technical-professional course, student); "I've also always found it easy to communicate with people outside the digital world" (Mozambique, M, 20, High school, student); "Parents' opinion and what I read in the newspapers and research I do on the subject" (Brazil, F, 20, technical-professional course, working student).

The question *How do you imagine news in the future?* brings a similar pessimistic context, however, with the prevalence of a technological-driven format of news flux, with easy, quick and "fake" scenarios. "I imagine the news going completely digital, taking newspapers out of the picture - not that this is a good thing, but I can see it" (Cape Verde, Neutral, 19, High school, student); "In the future, perhaps there will be more evolved news, i.e. news that can not only be projected on a television or mobile phone" (Peru, M, 23, works and has a degree); "In the future I imagine that the news will disappear for several reasons, one of which is fake news, another is that there's almost no reason for there to be news and if there is, it will all be with intelligent computers" (Venezuela, M, 23, technical-professional course, works). Respondents also claim more trustworthy news while, at the same time, they see a pathway for the news that has *no salvation:* "Better and more reliable" (Angola, F, 24, Higher Technical-Vocational Courses, works); "unfortunately, I can imagine the news becoming more and more false and sensationalist" (Brazil, F, 23, High school, neither works nor studies).

Trying to grasp paths for the coming analysis, we can highlight the predominance of non-media-centric answers, the expression of negative sentiments, and a reinforcement of the technologically driven facets of the news. This also implies a need for a deeper understanding of diversities, considering that the initial characterization besides the non-Western views shows low-medium levels of education.

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