

Beyond news consumption: television's role on younger audiences in Portugal

Além do consumo noticioso: o papel da televisão nas audiências jovens em Portugal

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between television and young audiences (aged 15-24) in Portugal, in a context of rising digital media. Through the analysis of data from an online survey of 1362 participants and 42 semi-structured interviews, youths are categorized into seven profiles based on their television consumption habits and critical perspectives. A nuanced media landscape is revealed, in which television's relevance is maintained in transformed roles—from a traditional source of news to a platform for streaming content. The engagement of young viewers with television is shown to be shaped by family dynamics, educational backgrounds, and an increasing preference for digital platforms, indicating a shift towards more personalized and interactive media consumption.

Keywords

television, young audiences, news consumption, Portugal

Resumo

Este estudo explora a relação entre a televisão e os públicos jovens (dos 15 aos 24 anos) em Portugal, num contexto de crescente ascensão dos meios digitais. Através da análise de dados provenientes de um inquérito online a 1362 participantes e de 42 entrevistas semiestruturadas, os jovens são categorizados em sete perfis baseados nos seus hábitos de consumo televisivo e perspetivas críticas. Revela-se uma paisagem mediática com nuances, na qual a relevância da televisão se mantém em papéis transformados — de uma fonte tradicional de notícias para uma plataforma de conteúdo em *streaming*. Demonstrou-se que o envolvimento dos jovens espectadores com a televisão é moldado por dinâmicas familiares, percursos educativos e uma crescente preferência por plataformas

digitais, indicando uma mudança para um consumo de media mais personalizado e interativo.

Palavras-chave

televisão, audiências jovens, consumo de notícias, Portugal

Introduction

Television is a significant media outlet for news and information consumption in Portugal, having grown in paid subscribers in recent years (Newman et al., 2023; Obercom, 2023). Data from the Digital News Report 2023, however, indicates a shift in this scenario, driven by younger groups (Newman et al., 2023); yet there is a gap in recent studies on the relationship between youths and television in Portugal.

Qualitative studies carried out in the 2010s showed that there was news consumption through television among a younger audience with different media habits, despite the visible growth in the role of other media, especially digital (Brites, 2012, 2015; Marôpo, 2014; Silveira & Amaral, 2018). At the same time, the reach of the Internet itself has widened. In the Digital News Report of 2016, Internet penetration in Portugal was 68%, while in the 2023 report, it increased to 88% (Newman et al., 2016, 2023).

In a global context, there has been a recent growth in the use of TikTok and other video-centric networks, driven by younger generations (Newman et al., 2023). According to Statista (Ceci, 2023), TikTok reported a 45% growth in monthly active users worldwide between July 2020 (689 million) and September 2021 (1 billion). Influencers and celebrities are gaining ground, even when the focus is on news (Newman et al., 2023). At the same time, Galan et al. (2019) consider that young people are not looking for what they “should know” in the news, but what is useful, interesting, and fun to know.

In the long term, Newman et al. (2023) notice significant changes in audience behavior, driven by younger groups, including a preference for more accessible, informal, and entertainment-linked news formats. Most often produced by influencers rather than journalists, and consumed on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. Over time, video and audio formats tend to become even more relevant.

This article analyzes young people's (aged 15-24) relationship with television in Portugal. Based on fieldwork conducted in 2023, this article presents a critical analysis of the quantitative data obtained from an online survey applied to 1362 young people and a qualitative analysis of 42 semi-structured interviews. The 42 interviewed youths were divided into seven distinct profiles based on their relationship with television, usage patterns, and critical perspectives.

1. Television in the daily lives of people in Portugal: an overview

Television in Portugal has been studied in terms of public broadcasts (Cádima, 2017; Lopes et al., 2023), analysis of news coverage (Baptista, 2018; Lopes, 2005), political commentary (Figueiras, 2018), and specific media product analysis, such as soap operas (Cunha, 2011; Damásio et al., 2020). The role of television in the daily lives of those

living in Portugal also appears in research focused on audiences (Silva, Figueiras, et al., 2017; Silva, Brites, et al., 2017) and young audiences (Brites, 2015; Marôpo, 2014).

In the first Digital News Report that contains data on Portugal, the first with data on the country, Cardoso & Martinho (2016, p.44) indicated that “the news media environment in Portugal is characterized by a high reliance on television news sources, a weakening print media sector, and a radio sector that struggles to remain relevant”. When asked about sources for accessing news weekly, 88% of people referred to online sources and 82% to television. In the context of growing digitalization, television remained a relevant media outlet as opposed to a low percentage of people paying for online news (9%) (Newman et al., 2016).

A study carried out by the Portuguese Regulatory Authority for the Media in 2015 also revealed that television remained the most consumed medium in Portugal. 99% of respondents reported regularly watching television programs, and no relevant fluctuations were found in terms of gender and age (ERC, 2016).

The data from these reports aligns with findings from research focused on behaviors and personal perceptions about the place of information and media in the daily lives of those living in Portugal. At that time, television was considered a relevant media source for news dissemination, despite the possibility of using it on different platforms and the growing presence of social networks in daily life. Television distinguishes itself in three of the seven media repertoires identified by the study (Silva, Figueiras et al., 2017). With distinctions between uses, television consumption was present in different age groups, genders, and educational levels. The authors highlight that the findings concerning television elucidate its centrality within the business strategies of the major Portuguese media conglomerates.

The most recent edition of the Digital News Report shows that television has lost ground to online media, especially among young people in Portugal (Newman et al., 2023). However, the medium remains central, as 68% (of all people) indicated it as a source for accessing news every week. This percentage is significant in the European context, second only to Italy (69%) and alongside Czechia. The percentage who reported paying for online news remained low at 11%.

On the other hand, the number of subscribers to subscription television services – such as cable or satellite television – has been growing. In 2012, there were 3.1 million subscribers, and the most recent data indicate that in 2022 there were 4.4 million (Obercom, 2023).

Although the broad influence of television is recognized, the effects it has on young viewers call for an in-depth analysis.

2. The role of television for young audiences: insights from quantitative and qualitative studies

Studies conducted at various times have consistently highlighted the central role of television among young audiences in Portugal. Cardoso et al. (2009) revealed that 33.5% of young people reported watching television between one and two hours per day. At the same time, 33.1% watched television for at least two hours daily. The authors note that teenagers aged 13 to 15 tended to spend the most time watching television.

In a study focused on political news by young people, television was the most frequently mentioned medium for daily consumption in the two age groups analyzed. Television was the primary media used to follow political news for young people aged 15 to 17 (34%) and for those aged 18 to 29 (44.1%) (Magalhães & Moral, 2008).

A qualitative exploratory study, also focused on political news, concluded that television remained an important medium for young people (Brites, 2012). At the same time, the question of television contributing to family ties varied among the identified groups. The variations consider factors such as age and the increasing prevalence of the Internet (Brites, 2012).

A study conducted in 2015 also identified the prominence of television as a medium in Portugal across different age groups, with no significant variations in terms of age (ERC, 2016). Despite the idea that young people are swapping television content for other online entertainment, the findings indicate that 98.5% of respondents aged between 15 and 24 were regular viewers (ERC, 2016).

Among younger viewers, it was possible to observe consumption outside the times when the TV programs were aired, adapting consumption to their routines (ERC, 2016). The study also highlights that young people diversify their sources to access audiovisual content (ERC, 2016).

Qualitative studies contribute to mapping how young people in Portugal relate to television, a medium considered central to understanding information and news consumption in the country. In a study conducted with children and young people in a resettlement neighborhood, Marôpo (2014) found that contact with news, especially television news, occurred during family gatherings. Children and young people associated watching television with leisure time.

Analyzing young people, journalism, and participation, Brites (2015) identifies, among young people from different contexts, the association of television with democracy. These discourses are related to the fact that they consider television the most accessible medium for distinct ages and regions, and because it is one of the media they access the most. The centrality of television is present in some of the identified profiles and in the consumption of political information (Brites, 2015). In this context, the family was identified as a space where news resonates, although this does not always mean extensive dialogue.

In a study focusing on news access and consumption practices in digital media, television was the only media mentioned by all analyzed groups, besides online platforms (Silveira & Amaral, 2018). Younger audiences also associated television with greater credibility than the news they see online.

In other European and Portuguese-speaking contexts, studies detailed young people's television and audiovisual watching habits. Miranda and Geerts (2018) revealed that a laptop (52.1%) was the most cited screen for watching practices in 2017, although regular and daily watching TV set was observed. In an analysis conducted in countryside Brazil, Chocron Miranda (2019) identified seven interaction flows of viewing practices, highlighting the relevance of individuals' specificities and micro-social contexts.

Additionally, there is evidence that young audiences perceive news not only as essential information they "should know," but also as what is useful, interesting, and enjoyable to know (Galan et al., 2019). The Digital News Report 2023 highlights an

increase in the use of TikTok and other video platforms, driven by younger generations. They tend to pay more attention to influencers, even when focused on news (Newman et al., 2023). Analyzing tactics used by young people to validate the information they consume, Swart (2021) emphasizes the role of family and friends in assessing the reliability of news.

A report (Obercom, 2023) indicates that the 15-24 age group represented 6.4% of the total television audience in Portugal in 2022. This number has fluctuated over the last decade: 6.9% in 2014, 11.1% in 2016, and declining to 6.4% in 2022.

The insights into the television consumption behaviors and perspectives of young audiences stem from a research design described in the next section.

3. Research design and context

This article is part of project YouNDigital – Youth, News and Digital Citizenship (DOI 10.54499/PTDC/COM-OUT/0243/2021), focused on young people's perceptions, experiences, and understandings of news and digital citizenship. This paper aims to understand how young people (aged 15-24, following UNESCO's definition of 'youth') living in Portugal relate to television. Quantitative and qualitative data from two phases of fieldwork focusing on young people's relationship with television were utilized.

In the first phase of fieldwork, an online survey was conducted with 1362 young residents of Portugal, emphasizing practices, worldviews, consumption habits, and attitudes. The survey was developed on QuestionPro and disseminated by a company hired for this task. The survey sample (N=1362) is representative of the population in this age group in the country, with a margin of error of 2.7% for a confidence level of 95%. Gender and Portuguese regions (NUTS II) were balanced.

In the second phase, 42 semi-structured interviews were conducted with young people from the same age group. The interviewees were recruited through contact with 94 institutions, including political parties, and NGOs. A non-probabilistic snow-ball sampling technique was employed, with participants referred by other participants or close contacts of the research team. Young people living in all regions of the country were interviewed: 36 Portuguese, four Brazilians, and two Bissau-Guineans.

This project was approved by the university's ethics committee. Consent forms were signed by participants aged 18-24 as well as guardians of participants up to 18. Before the interview began, consent forms were discussed. Identifying information of the interviewees kept confidential (hence the use of pseudonyms), no personal pictures or video recordings were collected.

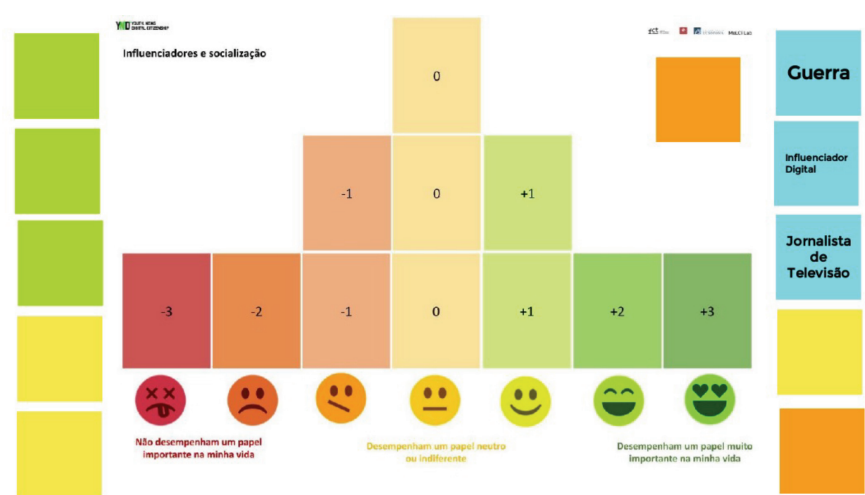
The interviews were conducted via Zoom and Jamboard during 60 to 120 minutes. The general aim of the interviews was to understand how the digital generation relates to news in a multi-platform and algorithmized context.

The interview started with an icebreaker question (Couldry et al., 2007). Interviewees were asked to present a news item that had caught their attention the week before and justify their choice, considering that discussing media relations and media consumption is complex and often an unconscious process (Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012)

Interviewees had placed cards in a pyramid considering what influences their news consumption (people, events, etc.). The cards had to be positioned considering the

following references: “play a very important role in my life,” “do not play an important role in my life,” and “play a neutral or indifferent role”. In a participatory/bottom-up research logic, 8 blank cards were presented to be filled in and 3 suggestions (War, Digital Influencer, and Television Journalist), which could be accepted or not. Image 1 below shows the pyramid presented to the interviewees.

Figure 1
Card pyramid presented to interviewees on Jamboard



Source: YouNDigital

By assembling the pyramid, the interviewees were encouraged to share their reasoning aloud, following a protocol inspired by the QSort methodology (Peters et al., 2022; Schröder, 2012). The cards could be edited and moved, and participants were invited to justify their choices. The interview script included follow-up questions focused on media consumption and socialization. For example, participants had to reflect on the axis where close individuals (family and friends) were positioned or on topics mentioned during the interview but not included in the pyramid.

In the last part of the interview, participants responded to questions and exercises centered on algorithmization and datafication.

For the analysis in this article, all mentions of television, channels, television programs, or people working in television were considered. Most of these mentions were made in the initial icebreaker question or during the QSort-inspired exercise.

A set of procedures inspired by different authors (Brites, 2015; Stokes, 2003) were followed to identify the profiles. The process was centered on the testimonies of the young people and not on predetermined variables such as gender, age, or education level.

The analysis (run on MAXQDA) looked for patterns in the relationship of young people with television, whether through daily practices or similar discourses. Considering the research questions, a micro-level analysis of the interviews was conducted, seeking what each person expressed in their discourses. In the second stage, individual ele-

ments were combined into the collective, allowing to draw up profiles. Given the relevance of individual contexts, the analysis also considered sociodemographic data, school, and cultural background (Brites, 2015).

In the subsequent sections of this article, we reflect on the following research questions:

- Q1: How do young people (15-24) living in Portugal relate to television?
- Q2: What roles does television play in young people’s media habits?
- Q3: What are the uses and discourses that young people relate to television?

4. Television as the media source to accessing news: quantitative data

The survey with 1362 young people living in Portugal generated indicators about the youths-television nexus. Television plays a prominent role in the amount of time young people dedicate to different media. When asked about time spent, 27.4% (*n*=373) reported 1 to 3 hours per day watching television. Only social networks had a higher percentage than television, as 31.1% (*n*= 423) spend between 1 to 3 hours every day on social media. The third most mentioned was television/streaming at 24% (*n*=327). In this question, it was possible to tick as many options as necessary. Table 1 presents detailed data:

Table 1
Daily average time spent on media outlets

Media	Between 1 and 3 hours per day	
	<i>n</i>	%
Newspapers (print)	38	2.8
Digital newspapers	65	4.8
Podcasts	136	10
Radio	106	7.8
Streaming radio	98	7.2
Social networks	423	31.1
Magazines	38	2.8
Television	373	27.4
Streaming television	327	24
Tablet	123	9
Smartphone	263	19.3
Desktop computer	145	10.6
Laptop computer	307	22.5

Source: author

Television is the main source for following the news for 63.7% ($n=868$) of the young people surveyed. Participants were able to select as many options as applicable for the question “I usually follow the news through...”. In an analysis of the two age groups (15 to 19 years, and 20 to 24 years), television is the most mentioned media source by both groups, as detailed on Table 2.

Table 2
Reported news-following media

Media	15-19 years old (n=396)		20-24 years old (n=966)		Total sample (N=1362)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Newspapers (print)	33	8.3	92	9.5	125	9.2
Digital newspapers	88	22.2	272	28.2	360	26.4
Podcasts	43	10.9	128	13.3	171	12.6
Radio	68	17.2	194	20.1	262	19.2
Streaming radio	24	6.1	61	6.3	85	6.2
Social networks	177	44.7	469	48.6	646	47.4
Television	230	58.1	638	66	868	63.7
Streaming television	54	13.6	138	14.3	192	14.1
Smartphone	206	52	550	56.9	756	55.5
Tablet	41	10.4	81	8.4	122	9
Desktop computer	52	13.1	116	12	168	12.3
Laptop computer	96	24.2	327	33.9	423	31.1
Not applicable	4	1	12	1.2	16	1.2
I do not want to answer	7	1.8	12	1.2	19	1.4

Source: author

People aged 20 to 24 marked the television option more frequently (66%; $n=638$) than those aged 15 to 19 (58.1%; $n=230$). Additionally, smartphones and social networks appear among the most mentioned source for getting the news, ranking second and third respectively. The three main media (television, smartphones, and social networks) do not differ between the age groups analyzed.

5. Youth and television in Portugal: seven profiles

The qualitative analysis of the 42 semi-structured interviews, focusing on young people’s relationship with television, resulted in the identification of seven profiles. These profiles can be divided into two main groups. The first group comprises four

profiles centered on television consumption habits in daily life (P1, P2, P3, and P4). The second group consists of young people who present their relationship with television centered on a critical view of the content they consume (P5, P6, and P7). Table 3 summarizes the profiles and their participants.

Table 3

Identified profiles, participants, and main characteristics

Profile	Participants	Description
Television as a screen (P1)	6 (5 female, 1 male; 5 Portuguese, 1 Brazilian)	Refer to television as another screen they use. Most mention using television to access streaming platforms.
No television at home (P2)	4 (3 female, 1 male; 3 Portuguese, 1 Brazilian)	Moved to a new city or country to study and do not have a television in their new home. They have adapted and do not indicate missing having the device.
Television as a family connection (P3)	13 (8 female, 5 male; 12 Portuguese, 1 Brazilian)	Habit of watching television in a family context. The group brings together young people with different consumption habits, but always connected to family.
Occasional or unplanned television consumption (P4)	5 (1 female, 4 male; 2 Portuguese, 1 Brazilian, 2 Bissau-Guinean)	Consumption of television content by these young people is unplanned and low-intensity. Television is not central to their media habits.
Negatively affected by television (P5)	4 (2 female, 2 male; 4 Portuguese)	The main reference for young people in this group is how television negatively affects them. They highlight that the content aired affects their well-being and mental health. Therefore, they report avoiding consuming information through television.
Television considered biased (P6)	8 (2 female, 6 male; 8 Portuguese)	They consider the content broadcast on television to be biased and unreliable. They indicate online search of information that television does not show. In general, they make generic references and do not directly mention television channels.
Critic of television coverage (P7)	8 (2 male; 2 Portuguese)	This group consists of young people who criticize the television content of certain channels. They distinguish themselves from the previous group by the fundamental nature of their criticisms. They have had access to information about media literacy in a family and school context.

Source: author

Below, we present a detailed description of each of the profiles.

5.1 Television as a screen (P1)

The main association that young people in this group (5F, 1 M; 5 Portuguese, 1 Brazilian) make with television is as a screen that allows access to streaming platfor-

ms. They primarily use it to consume online content, often referring to entertainment content. Alexandre, 22 years old, a master's student, defines his usage as follows: "I watch very little television. I use the television as a second screen for the computer. So basically, what I really watch is YouTube and related content."

The fact that they mention streaming platforms refers to the quantitative data presented in the previous section. 24% of the young people surveyed indicated using television associated with streaming for 1 to 3 hours per day. This profile also aligns with the global results of the Digital News Report 2023 (Newman et al., 2023), which indicate a growth in the role of video content consumption among younger age groups.

Half of this group are undergraduate students (Alice, Alexandre, and Laura), two are in high school (Madalena and Filipa), and Lara is pursuing a master's degree. The use of television as an additional screen is this group's definition of the role of television in their routines. In general, the use is more associated with streaming platforms than with news. Filipa, 17 years old, a high school student, also mentions that she considers her use of television to be distinct from the traditional: "Most of the time the television I watch is not news. It's also not regular television. It's a TV show. Either Netflix or Disney+ and so on."

Laura, 22 years old, indicates that this understanding of television is related to the present moment and more associated with leisure than with news consumption:

Television, nowadays, I use more to log into my streaming platform and watch something that distracts me. So, it's not so much for receiving news or informing myself about things. It has become more like a large computer where I can watch my series. (Laura, 22 years old, undergraduate student, interview, July 4, 2023)

5.2 No television at home (P2)

This profile comprises four young individuals (3F, 1 M; 3 Portuguese, 1 Brazilian) who do not have a television at home. They differ from the young people in the previous profile as they live without a television set, focusing their informational consumption on other devices.

Two are undergraduate students, one is pursuing a master's degree, and the other is a journalist. In their speeches, there is a commonality in consuming news and information through social media, especially via smartphones, and the experience of moving homes. Luísa (24 years old, journalist), Pilar (19 years old, undergraduate student), and Martim (19 years old, undergraduate student) moved to a different city in Portugal to study and, in their new homes, do not have a television. Bruna, 23 years old, moved from Brazil to Portugal to pursue a master's degree, shares a house with a friend, and does not have a television.

So, all the media I've been using lately are social networks, so I follow some news through social media. I don't have the habit of watching the news or looking for it since I came to Portugal, actually. I think it's because here we also don't have television at home, so I end up not using these means. But normally, I see it through Instagram or Twitter. Sometimes through people. (Bruna, 23 years old, master's student, interview, August 9, 2023)

None of the young people in this group express regret about not having a television at home or wanting to have one again. Their information consumption has been adapted, and they are content with this arrangement. Bruna (23) and Martim (19) associate television consumption with other times in their lives, particularly when they lived with their parents. In this association, they do not express missing the old habit. They replaced television with other forms of consumption, particularly through smartphones and social media. Martim and Bruna also mention conversations with friends, either in person or through messaging applications like WhatsApp. These habits are in line with the significant role of smartphones (55.5%) and social media (47.4%) in following the news, as found in the survey presented earlier.

Despite not having a television at home, Luísa works as a journalist for a television news channel. Thus, her information consumption is tied to her professional life and closely aligned with television news. When she is not working, she tries not to be attentive to the news. When discussing the matter, she clarifies that she follows them on the computer when she is at home.

I don't watch much television, especially now that I moved to a house where I don't have a television. But if we're talking about news, I can watch it on the computer, for example, but I don't always do. I don't often tune in outside of work. I also try to disconnect a bit when I'm away, try to have time for other things, and not always be glued to the news. (Luísa, 24 years old, journalist, interview, June 21, 2023)

5.3 Television as a family connection (P3)

Predominant among the identified profiles, this group (8F, 5M, 12 Portuguese, 1 Brazilian) comprises interviewees who directly associate television with their family context. In other words, the habit was created within the family and continues in this way. These are young people of different ages and educational profiles who claim to have significant family moments around the television. This profile is directly related to the results found in previous research conducted with young people in Portugal (Brites, 2012; Marôpo, 2014; Brites, 2015).

It is a heterogeneous group in terms of the activities they engage in. Four are high school students (Henrique, Rita, Carolina, and Gabriel), two are undergraduate students (Catarina and Sofia), one is a master's student (Joana), and two are working in their professions (Duarte, Manuel, and Tânia). Raquel and Matilde are in different transitional phases; the former has completed high school and has not decided on her next step, while the latter has completed her undergraduate degree and is awaiting responses from job applications. Mário has finished high school and is not currently employed. Most consume news through other means but maintain television consumption due to its association with family moments. Some mention dinner time, breakfast, or visits to grandparents' houses. Duarte, 21 years old, a mechanic, indicates that, in his house, the television has a space that is free from smartphones: "Sometimes, during dinner, we are watching TV and talking, because there are no phones on the table at home."

In other cases, television news consumption occurs at specific moments that have become a family habit, as Gabriel explains regarding elections and the pandemic:

I think these topics that end up being more urgent and are things that we follow are almost a family matter. Both during elections and the pandemic, for example, it was almost a ritual to sit in front of the TV and follow the live updates (Gabriel, 17 years old, high school student, interview, June 29, 2023)

Different interviewees in this group affirm their trust in the information accessed through television, like Rita (15, high school student): "... if it's on TV, it probably has some studied background, it will be something more serious, so I think yes [I trust television]." Henrique (15 years old, high school student) follows news on television but criticizes the way the content is presented. According to him, the focus should be on the images of what is happening rather than on the journalist, as he explains:

For example, a fire in Portugal. There was a fire in Nelas [town] recently near us. [...] I wouldn't want, for example, to see the journalist speaking to the microphone. I would want to see the fire. (Henrique, 15 years old, high school student, interview, September 1, 2023)

Sofia (18 years old, undergraduate student) enjoys following the news on television during dinner time, as she can learn about something important that she wouldn't know otherwise. She consumes content on social networks and explains the way she understands the difference between them.

Well, if the news is on television, I think they do a good job explaining everything, with images, and it's easy to digest. With TikTok, it comes with that layer of humor, it's always like I'm not watching it to get information, I'm watching it for the joke, so that's why it's easy to digest. Not that the others are hard, it's just that those are easier and they're all like fifteen seconds, not like thirty seconds. It's not news. (Sofia, 18 years old, undergraduate student, interview, June 16, 2023)

The distinction Sofia makes between the information she follows on TikTok and on television news refers to the conclusions of Galan et al. (2019): more than what one "should know", young people are interested in what is "interesting and fun to know."

5.4 Occasional or unplanned television consumption (P4)

Television appears in the daily lives of these young people (1 F; 4M; 1 Brazilian, 2 Bissau-Guineans, 2 Portuguese) occasionally or incidentally. They mention it as something that crosses their paths, but they do not habitually seek it out directly. This happens in person, as some mention public spaces like cafes and a butcher shop, and in the digital environment. For example, the only reference from Tamiris (21, working in a digital nomads' accommodation, Brazilian) is television news she accessed on YouTube. She couldn't say which TV channel the content was broadcast on, but she watched it based on a friend's recommendation.

Bernardo consumes more information on news websites but watches television during moments of socialization. For instance, when he goes to a coffee shop with

friends: "This [news] actually was on TV, which is not usual. But there it was, it was a coincidence to be in the cafe and watching."

This group is heterogeneous in terms of the activities they engage in. They are also diverse in terms of nationality, with two Portuguese, two Bissau-Guineans, and one Brazilian. António (15) is a high school student, Bernardo is a master's student, and Tamiris works in a digital nomads' accommodation. Amadu (15) and Omar (16) are in middle school.

Some young people in this group indicate difficulties accessing television, such as António (15), who mentions that the television in his room is broken.

Some relate television content to special occasions, like Omar (16, middle school student), who indicates watching specific events on television. "I only watch football or when there's a big activity or war". Amadu (15, middle school student), for example, resorts to television when he can't find what he's looking for on his phone.

Their relationship with television is minimal, not reinforced or grounded in family relationships, though in some cases it may be driven by friends.

5.5 Negatively affected by television (P5)

Television negatively affects the young people in this group (2 F, 2 M; 4 Portuguese), especially regarding their mood and mental health. They associate the images and content with a negative, heavy tone, which ultimately leads them to avoid consuming information through it. In general, the first reference they made to television relates to how the news on television affects them in a negative way.

In more than one case, they mentioned the news coverage of the pandemic as an emblematic moment. Some realized during this period that the news was negatively affecting them, as Diogo, 18 years old, stated: "...at the time [of the pandemic], I didn't know that excessive news on certain topics could affect us. So, I consumed it 24/7." Diogo mentioned changing his behavior because of this, starting to avoid watching television. In their speeches, they highlight what affects them in television images, as André (21) mentioned:

For about two months, during the pandemic, they turned on the news channel, and I either went to another room in the house or went for a walk in the garden and played with the dog. Because I just couldn't. It was affecting me, yes. I had to make a cut there because I was no longer able to deal with the constant bombardment of that news. (André, 21 years old, technician in tourism, unemployed, interview, July 19, 2023)

The group consists of Ana and Adriana (undergraduate students), André (a technician in tourism searching for employment), and Diogo (taking a mechatronics course and interning in the field). Some of them mention that they end up having to watch television in some context, but knowing about this negative impact makes them pay less attention:

I'm not going to leave the TV room because that's on. But generally, I try not to pay attention because of the mood issue. It affects me a little to see that kind of news. (Adriana, 19 years old, undergraduate student, interview, July 5, 2023)

Ana also mentioned that the fact that the news is mostly negative makes her not want to watch television at the end of the day when she's tired.

...the news is mostly destructive... at the end of a day of exhaustion and a day full of things, that's not really the type of content I want to absorb. So it's something that makes me somewhat disinterested, somewhat discouraged when I turn on the television and hence reduce that consumption. (Ana, 20 years old, undergraduate student, interview, May 29, 2023)

5.6 Television considered biased (P6)

The way television presents news is considered biased and incomplete by the young people in this group (2F, 6M; 8 Portuguese). They believe this is due to political issues, mentioning State and the influence of political parties on television content. They also claim to avoid consuming or not trusting the content because of this. Filipe (20 years old, undergraduate student) exemplifies this perspective: "I watch television, but not so much related to journalism. Because, you know, journalists sometimes end up conveying things wrongly."

Some refer to examples from other countries, notably Brazil and the United States, and argue that this does not only occur in Portugal. Rafael (20, working in a clothes shop) states that he follows influencers to access news that television does not cover.

I'm one of those who follow influencers to know some news that doesn't appear on television. For example, some news is not about war or politics, but about some subjects that television doesn't cover. Since television belongs to politics, to the State, they don't show some things to hide a lot. (Rafael, 20 years old, works in a clothes shop, interview, August 3, 2023)

The group is heterogeneous in terms of education and activity. There are undergraduate students (Gonçalo, Filipe, and Luís), master's students (João and José), and high school students (Sara). Lúcia attends a professional hairdressing course, and Rafael has a secondary degree and works in a clothes shop.

In addition to associating television with partiality and bias, the young people in this group often mention it in opposition to the Internet and social networks. There are cases of young people, like Gonçalo (19, undergraduate student), who reinforce their understanding by believing that television criticizes the Internet, social networks, and video games.

I don't watch television. I'm from the Internet generation, so to speak. And television has tried, more than once, to make a very strong attack on the Internet, on video games, on social networks. Because I think it's, just like when television came out, physical newspapers lost some relevance and tried to do the same attack. And television is biased. Television often belongs to certain parties or has affiliations with certain parties. Or it belongs to a wealthy owner, usually right-wing, so the news becomes influenced by the right. (Gonçalo, 19 years old, undergraduate student, interview, June 23, 2023)

It is worth noting that participants in this group consume news through other media, as highlighted in their speeches, such as social networks and influencers. They also make more generic references when criticizing television, hardly mentioning specific television channels.

5.7 Critic of television coverage (P7)

This profile is made up of two young individuals (2M; Portuguese) with a critical stance regarding Portuguese television coverage. When referring to television, they do so through an analysis of different television channels, pointing out which ones they trust, distrust, and why. Pedro (18) and Samuel (17) were about to start university. They also share another striking characteristic: both have siblings who have graduated in Communication Sciences. They mention discussing news, media, and news coverage with their siblings.

They make various mentions of television coverage that they consider to be low quality. Pedro (18) even mentions an impact on his mood: "It makes me partially, not irritated, but ashamed of how we have a television channel, which is quite famous in Portugal, and that broadcasts this content in such a low, quote unquote, manner." However, he does not mention ceasing to consume because of it.

Similarly, Samuel (17) identifies "poorly planned journalism". For him, this term is associated with a lack of confirmed information about a fact and with last-minute news. He states that he doubts the news he sees when that is the case. When asked about the origin of his reasoning, he indicates that he learned it in school: "I remember also having a class, which was media education, which was... Sometimes, in journalism, it was necessary to wait to be exactly sure before going to the scene. So I associated it with that" (Samuel, 17, about to start an undergraduate course).

Another common characteristic among individuals in this profile is their exposure to courses focused on subjects related to media and digital literacy. In addition to media education classes, Samuel joined his school's radio team. Pedro (18) had classes on cyberbullying and online safety, where topics such as disinformation and fake news were addressed.

They differ from other interviewees in the way they structure their criticism and in the fact that they do not associate this criticism with conspiracy theories or political influence on the media. They have had access, through either the school or family context, to some level of media literacy. This is reflected generally in their news consumption, whether on television or through other media. On television, they look for channels that present more reliable information. On digital platforms, they tend to seek out different sources to assess whether the information is true.

Discussion and future perspectives

The seven identified profiles shed light on the various ways in which young people (15-24) relate to television in Portugal. It becomes clear that television still plays a role in the lives of many young individuals, although in very different ways, with plenty of nuance.

Some young people do not directly associate television with news consumption as P1 and P2 demonstrate. For a specific group, the role of the family remains relevant and important in shaping or maintaining the habit of watching television (P3). However, when they leave home for study purposes and find themselves without a television (P2) they find new ways of being informed and can associate television with past moments of their lives. For some individuals, access to television is unplanned and deemed unimportant (P4). Some mention avoiding television content because they believe it negatively impacts their mental health and well-being. Among the critics, a group (P5) associates television with bias and prefers to seek information online that they believe television does not convey. Finally, there is a small group (P7) of young people who have contact with media literacy in both family and educational contexts, and they criticize the journalistic coverage of specific channels.

Consistent with international research (Chocron Miranda, 2019; Galan et al., 2019; Newman et al., 2023), young people from different profiles mentioned dedicating time to audiovisual content on social networks. Notably, TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube have a central position. Young individuals across profiles expressed interest in entertaining content (P1, P2), sometimes juxtaposing it with news. Some showed indications that television content is distant from their interests, either because it is lengthy, formal, or affects their perception of reality (P3, P4, P5, P6).

The fact that not all young people discern journalism from other content, especially that found on social media, is a rich theme for future in-depth studies. Among the identified uses and discourses that could also be explored in other research, is a group of young individuals who seek influencers “to learn what journalism does not show”.

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