

# NEWS REPERTOIRES IN DESTABILISED EVERYDAY LIVES: A STUDY AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SLOVENIA

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**ABSTRACT** *Traditional media consumption in the form of reading, watching or listening is being replaced by ephemeral practices such as clicking, searching and scanning, where the 'checking circle' has become a daily routine of constant browsing, checking and posting. In particular, these interrelated practices are constantly present among adolescents, who skilfully switch between multiple media, contexts and situations. The interdependence of such cross-media uses suggests that empirical research should focus beyond a single medium. The aim of this research was to examine news repertoires from the perspective of adolescents and highlight how biographical disruption during the Covid-19 pandemic had affected news consumption among young audiences. This article presents the results of a research project, within which focus groups on a sample of 67 adolescents aged 12–19 years were conducted. It also provides an analysis of a slightly smaller sample of 59 media sketches. The aim of the latter analysis was to identify the media preferences and potential interactions of young people. Six distinct news repertoires have been identified, which confirms the ambivalence of teenagers in terms of their media preferences. At the same time, teenagers generate their own personal 'news media assemblies' within their disrupted everyday lives.*

## KEYWORDS

NEWS REPERTOIRES, PLATFORM SOCIABILITY, YOUTH, MEDIA SKETCHES, BIOGRAPHICAL DISRUPTION

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid adoption of social and connective media and the influence of algorithmic platforms have radically changed the media configurations among family members, especially among the youth. Practical applications of various types of media are increasingly becoming isolated social experiences in spatially limited and time-defined moments. However, media adoption is fluid, instant and ubiquitous. At the same time, media are spatially dispersed and cross-related. For instance, watching TV is accompanied by reading emails on a laptop, phone or tablet; commuting, walking and running with podcasts; socialising with friends by responding on a popular social network over the phone; cooking; working and learning by reading; watching videos on YouTube; or taking photos on Instagram. Despite this shift in practice, most recent studies still focus on the impact or reception of one specific medium (e.g., platform, video-on-demand or app), neglecting the cross-sections of media presence and their multiple usage (Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017). By contrast, the present study follows the recent media repertoire approach (Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012; Hasebrink & Popp, 2006; van Eijck & van Rees, 2003), which views the impact of media as a conglomeration of several integrated media configurations and empirically analyses the collective and individual media repertoires among in-school youth. The combination of constant attention, participatory design and massification of personal media devices requires not only conceptual reflections but also innovation in methods and new empirical approaches to young media users.

In identifying the intersectionality of media practices, this article draws on the concept of media repertoires, which emphasises the importance of interconnected communicative configurations and social contexts (Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012; Hasebrink & Popp, 2006; van Eijck & van Rees, 2003). In a narrower sense, the article focuses on identifying the news repertoires of young people within their specific everyday context, which is largely influenced by social isolation, distance learning experiences and physically static personal and social lives. From 2020 to 2021, the Covid-19 crisis caused a major global change, which made the previously mobile and digitalised way of life of youth all over the globe collapse. The everyday lives of 'digital natives' were largely disrupted by radically new circumstances: school entered their private spaces and homes, and their online digital culture was occupied by previously unknown distance learning tools (Oblak & Brečko, 2022). Their home, usually a private and primarily leisure-oriented space, was upgraded by a set of radically new social roles that young people were forced to assume, thus blurring the previous boundaries between formally separated social spheres. Consequently, a large new set of social practices intensified and occupied personal digital devices, which the young generation needed to adopt.

This article examines how the context of the pandemic formed the main media choices and news practices of in-school youth by focusing on their news consumption. Analysing the news repertoires of adolescents amid their destabilised everyday lives requires recognising the main social influences that structure their media practices and the relationships between them. In addition to family socialisation, peer culture and school environments play critical roles in the media choices and digital preference

formation of young people (Buckingham, 2000, 2008; Fabbro & Ranieri, 2016; Jenkins et al., 2016; Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016). This starting point highlights the importance of a life course rather than a specific age, which in adolescence is characterised by the constellation of different ties (Quan-Haase, 2023) and where parents and peers amount to an important support system. Focusing on the early stage of life, represented by the age range specific to the youth, also allows this study to focus on the potential variations of media practices and news habits within the generation.

On the empirical level, this article presents the results of a qualitative research project conducted during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic closure in 2021 in Slovenia. The study sample comprised 67 elementary and secondary school children aged 12–19 years using a mixed-method approach. Through a combination of online focus groups with personal media sketches, this study provides the preliminary media preferences and potential interactions of adolescents. Focusing on the network approach, it aims to show the categories of cross-media assemblages among teenagers, who quickly and permanently switch from one media format to another, from one communicative figuration to the other. Accordingly, they are able to bridge the realities of social settings, which are usually fixed and have strict boundaries. In a narrower sense, the analysis is focused on identifying the primary news repertoires among teenagers, following the data from 59 media sketches that capture their information and news preferences. The identified categorisation of main news repertoires, ranging from dispersed news seekers to distant learners, is further elaborated in relation to the disrupted everyday lives of adolescents due to Covid-19 closures. According to the findings, the long-term changes of social isolation and distant online schooling not only drastically transformed the everyday routines of teenagers but also their modes of social and public connections (see also FrieSEM et al, 2023).

The formation of six news repertoires is thus interpreted in the context of specific transformations in everyday routines, habits and social roles of young people. They illustrate the main changes and innovative ways in which young people responded to their disrupted everyday lives. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine news repertoires from the perspective of adolescents and identify the conceptual and empirical challenges of this type of research. In addition, this study intends to critically reflect its relevance for future research on news repertoires among the youth. Since young people start to develop their news habits in early adolescence (Buckingham, 2000; Marchi, 2012; Russo & Stattin, 2017), gaining a better understanding of their news consumption can help predict their future news and media habits (LaRose, 2010; Peil & Spaviero, 2017).

## **MEDIA REPERTOIRES AND NEWS CONSUMPTION WITHIN DISRUPTED EVERYDAY LIVES: A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

According to Hasebrink and Domeyer (2012), media repertoires introduce three key components: user-centredness, diversity and relationality. This concept not only shifts the focus from the medium to the user and to the question of what users do with the media,

but it also emphasises the importance of the entire spectrum of media that users interact with, highlighting the interconnectedness of the components that form the so-called internal coherence of cross-media groupings. Therefore, media repertoires are not simply a collection of the different media used, but rather a meaningfully structured configuration of media. Each communicative figuration includes dominant frames of meaning that guide constitutive practices intertwined with other social practices and linked to a set of different media. Figurations are thus based on integrated communicative and social practices and encompass a comprehensive 'media ensemble' in their composition (Hasebrink & Hepp, 2017, p. 366).

Several studies on the media repertoires of young people show some overarching trends. The rise of the attention economy (Davenport & Beck, 2001) has established a culture of so-called attachment to social networks (Syvertsen, 2020, p. 31). At the same time, research confirms that young people do not assign media to specific functions, but use platforms multifunctionally, especially as they get older (Wimmer & Wurm, 2021). Smartphones have been profiled as 'hard-to-ignore devices' (Goodin, 2017), thus becoming an integral part of coordinating everyday life: they embody live events, generate a social shield (Lomborg, 2015) and facilitate transitions between various communication flows (Thorhauge, 2016). According to Costera Meijer and Groot Kormelink (2015), traditional media consumption in the form of reading, watching and listening are being replaced by more ephemeral practices, such as browsing, clicking, searching, scanning and checking. These practices comprise the so-called checking circle, which describes the daily routine of constantly switching between popular pages and checking the status on social networks, news and emails in a single session. In this context, Boczkowski et al. (2018) show how particular user practices are shaped by the constellations of meanings attributed to each platform. For example, while WhatsApp is a multifaceted communication domain, Instagram is an environment for stylised self-presentation. Nevertheless, such constellations are socially shaped and relatively autonomous from technical affordances: 'what people do with a particular social media platform is shaped in part by their understandings of what is acceptable and desirable communication on that platform and the others they use regularly' (2018, p. 255). Some studies also show that the development of information media resembles a patchwork process in which both peer groups and family and school environments are important contextual factors (Wimmer & Wurm, 2021). Studies of the general population continue to confirm that media repertoires differ considerably between social groups, especially in relation to age, educational level and cultural capital (Verboord, 2023; Prandner & Glatz, 2021; Vozab, 2019).

According to Ytre-Arne (2019), life-changing situations, such as getting or losing a job, retiring or becoming a parent, affect media use. These life changes can be conceptualised as biographical disruptions, which destabilise media repertoires and public connections: 'Typical biographical events in line with societal expectations could nevertheless be experienced as transformative or even disruptive for a range of everyday practices, as everyday life is the space where social relations are enacted' (2019, p. 489). Indeed, Ytre-Arne argues that understanding biographical change in everyday life is central to understanding changing media use, where the media repertoire model, with

its attention to everyday media use and social figurations, is valuable for understanding how biographical events might affect media use (2019, p. 497). In this sense, pandemic-related closures caused a severe destabilisation of everyday routines. Isolation and limited physical movement forced families and children into radically new experiences compared to their typically stable and routine everyday lives. These prior routines were usually structured, habitual practices, such as waking up, eating, commuting to school or work, cooking, entertaining, socializing with friends and relatives, watching movies, listening to music, shopping and so forth. The pandemic significantly transformed most of such routines, with many activities being intensively translated to online contexts, especially for children (Oblak & Brečko, 2022).

Disruptions, however, extended beyond the Covid-19 crisis and are linked to the characteristics of social media in general. To understand young audiences, the technological specificity and uses of a medium are not as important as the conceptualisation of digital media as an integrated communicative environment. The sociability of adolescents is based on permanent activity and affective engagement, enabled and framed by the algorithmically produced regime of visibility and the promise of activity on platforms. The regime of visibility refers to the technological affordances of platform software and the business model of social media, which encourages constant effort to retain visibility and avoid marginality in the world of online sociality. Maintaining visibility and avoiding digital death require one's constant presence on platforms and permanent performance and self-presentation with the highly standardised phatic communication tools offered by the platform, such as likes, dislikes, comments and sharing (Bucher, 2021; Krajina & Čuvalo, 2023). As users are encouraged to be constantly active in this form of programmed sociality, they are therefore always in a state of distracted attention. One fundamental aspect of the regime of visibility of social media and media acceleration is a state characterised by the continuous, automated stream of updates, constant connectedness, restlessness and anticipation of something new integrated into one's habitual navigation of digital media. Constant activity is necessary for visibility due to the nature of the algorithm. These are also factors significantly influencing news consumption of the youth (see also Jontes et al., 2023).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY: STUDYING NEWS REPERTOIRES AMONG IN-SCHOOL YOUTH**

The Covid-19 crisis, with its public disconnection, inevitably affected previous understandings of media practices and the meaning and value of news. Individuals became intensely dependent on digital platforms and the logic of social media. The question remains as to how such biographical disruption has affected news consumption, particularly among young audiences. With the abovementioned theoretical considerations and context, this paper focuses on the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What are the main characteristics of the news repertoires of young audiences in the context of their destabilised everyday lives?

RQ2: What were the main social and media factors that contributed to the destabilisation of everyday life during the last phase of the Covid-19 pandemic?

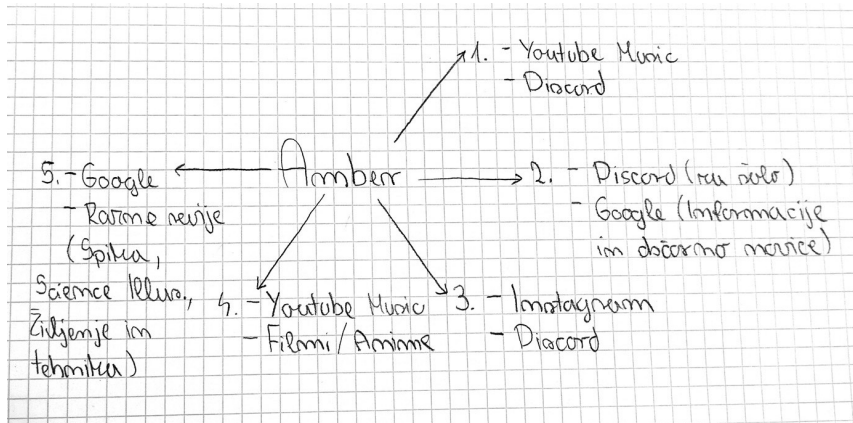
## Research design and methods

The qualitative research approach in this study includes a combination of methods (Oblak et al., 2022): focus groups separated into systematically selected subgroups of elementary school, secondary vocational or technical school, and gymnasium students; and personal media sketches together with online surveys on demographic backgrounds and family situations. Focus groups were conducted to determine individual media preferences and the combination of selected components. Personal media sketches were utilised to identify the subjective media repertoire, and an online questionnaire was used to capture the socio-demographic specificities of individual domains. Each method was first tested on a small pilot sample of elementary and secondary school children to correct any errors (repetition of questions, unclear instructions, length of the questionnaire, etc.).

1. *Focus groups*: A comprehensive semi-structured questionnaire intended for focus groups was used to obtain information on which networks and apps adolescents use; when, where and what content they consume; how they access media technologies; who selects these technologies; what they do there, and how parents, relatives, teachers, schools and peers respond to digital technologies. Individual media practices and technological preferences were accompanied with queries about the access to digital technologies and micro-regulatory strategies of families as well as the role of peer communication and adoption of technologies in schools. Based on a review of previous research, and due to epidemiological conditions, focus groups were conducted in the form of *online group interviews* either in pairs or with three respondents. Trio interviews served as the main model of group interviews, while duo interviews were used for adolescents with lower or specific socio-demographic status. The interviews usually lasted two hours in trios or one and a half hours in pairs. Both types of interviews were led by a moderator who provided technical support for the implementation, recorded the conversation and prepared the participants (interviewees were anonymised by being assigned nicknames). The moderator also implemented two other methods: media sketches and an online survey.

2. *Media sketches*: The media mapping method complements the data in group interviews with information on a more subjective level. Mapping is a replacement for media diaries, which are ineffective or less reliable among children and teenagers (Kirsh, 2010). Inspiration for this method comes from previous discussions (e.g., Hasebrink & Domeyer, 2012) that examine methodological approaches for exploring media repertoires and communication configurations in deeply mediated everyday life (Hepp, 2019). Hasebrink and Domeyer (2012) distributed the cards, on which the media mentioned in the interview were written, among participants and asked them to rank these cards in order of importance. In our case, and due to pandemic restrictions, the method taken from the ethnographic study *The Class* (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2017) was remodelled and conducted online. Each participant drew their own personal media network and categorised media choices as a response to five questions: Which media 1) are the most

important; 2) are used for information gathering; 3) are preferable for keeping in contact and socialising; 4) are for fun, relaxation and free time; and 5) are for creating, making or expressing themselves. Drawing such personal maps (Figure 1) was conducted directly after each focus group, and it took 5–8 minutes per session. Photos of the sketches were forwarded via Zoom or email.



▲ Figure 1.  
Example of a media sketch

### Recruitment of respondents and sample

In designing the sample, the objective was to include young people from various family and school backgrounds and from regionally diverse parts of Slovenia. The diversity of the education system (elementary schools, secondary vocational and technical schools, and gymnasiums), covering the age range from 12 to 19 years, was also included. Thus, the recruitment took place in two stages: firstly, selected schools or their representatives (head teachers or individual teachers) were contacted, and once their consent was obtained, the schools identified the participants. Such recruitment granted the school management discretion in gaining access to the respondents with lower socio-economic status. Once informed consent from parents was obtained, we contacted the students and arranged the dates for the focus groups. The institutional research ethics guidelines were carefully followed during recruitment, data gathering, management, storage and data analysis, and the data of all participants were treated with a high level of confidentiality.

In line with the principles of qualitative research, focus groups were conducted until saturation, when patterns started to repeat themselves. Between 3 March and 23 June 2021, we conducted 27 group interviews, including a total of 67 young people; 14 students were gathered in the first pilot sample. The sample consisted of 55% girls and 45% boys. In relation to the type of school, the sample comprised 40% elementary and



60% secondary school students (24% from secondary vocational or technical school and 36% from gymnasium). In the sample of elementary school students, the majority were 14 years old from 8th grade; secondary school students were on average 17 years old. Sketches were submitted by 24 elementary school students, 15 secondary vocational or technical school students and 20 gymnasium students. Altogether, 59 personal sketches were gathered. In relation to social and economic resources, the sample was relatively homogeneous, as it mostly included students from the middle or upper middle class. In this sense, the analysis of any potential social or economic differences among teenagers was highly limited and, therefore, not included in our study.

### **Data analysis: quantitative analysis of media sketches and thematic analysis of focus groups**

To analyse media sketches, Hasebrink and Domeyer (2012) recommend quantifying the data so that any indications/mentions and ranks within each category are converted into a numerical value. Accordingly, concrete indications in the form of qualitative records in sketches are numbered, ranked and translated into quantitative data. In our case, all answers obtained from sketches in the form of words (e.g., telephone, Snapchat, Google, etc.) were converted into numerical values, and a database was constructed to identify (a) the number of citations of each media/device in each category and (b) the ranking of each media/device. The database allowed us to conduct univariate and bivariate analyses according to individual categories and compare data according to the socio-demographic profile of the students. Demographic data were manually transferred from the online survey to the sketch database.

We likewise analysed the selected preferences via hierarchical classification to ascertain how certain devices and apps are grouped together. Network analysis tools are useful in the analysis of webs of relationships (Giuffre, 1999). We applied the block modelling method, which is particularly useful as an explorative step towards understanding the main news choices of the participants. 'Block models are constructed by looking at a matrix of ties between actors' (Arabie, Boorman & Levitt, 1978; Giuffre, 1999). In particular, block model algorithms produce groups of actors or 'blocks' that are structurally equivalent, reshuffling the rows and columns of the matrix and grouping together actors who share similar patterns of ties – either the presence of ties to the same actors or their absence (Giuffre, 1999). If blocks ideally link students with the same news media preferences, it will result in a structural equivalence, where within an 'ideal block' the same media would be selected by the same students (Sailer, 1978; Giuffre, 1999). However, in the complex social reality, such conceptual accuracy is highly unlikely to be achieved. Therefore, instead of structural equivalence, we searched for regular equivalence (Batagelj et al., 1992), which permits many types of blocks (Batagelj, 1997), also called *generalised block modelling* (Doreian et al., 2004). The block modelling method was accompanied by an assortment of socio-demographic characteristics to determine whether gender, age or type of school somehow differentiate, if at all, the generalised set of distinctive news repertoires. This two-step analysis of media sketches enabled us to address a part of RQ1: *What are the main characteristics of the news repertoires of young audiences?*



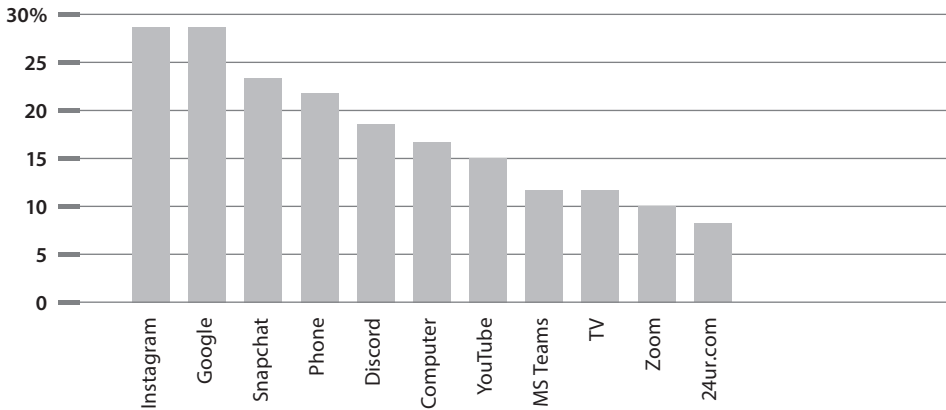
Some other key findings allow us to elaborate on the impact of the pandemic, as a severe disruption of everyday life, on the personal biographies of adolescents. Here, the qualitative interpretation of the data gathered through online focus groups is introduced. However, the analysis is limited to a small subset of questions specifically focused on the perception of isolation due to Covid-19. The analysis first refers to the following question: *Distance learning has probably changed the way you work in class and the way you interact with your teachers and your peers. It has also changed a lot of your everyday life in general. Can you describe what a normal school day was like for you during the pandemic when distance learning was implemented? Include details such as when classes start, where your learning space is, how you are dressed, if you have breakfast, if you have snack breaks, how the class is conducted, etc.?* In addition, the analysis is focused on the youth's experiences of distance learning by employing the responses to another question: *Did you like the distance learning experience? What do you think the advantages of face-to-face and distance learning are, and how would you compare them?* Distance learning is contextualised as a main disruption, either as a new burden or fear or as a more positive aspect of the new online school life. It is a radically new biographical situation for an entire generation of schoolchildren in Slovenia.

Following the logic of Ytre-Arne (2019), the present study carries out a thematic analysis of both sets of responses. It shifts to a more person-centred approach and attempts to evaluate the biographic experience of the adolescents and their personal descriptions of the main changes – in the form of potential new routines, new hobbies and new feelings – in order to contextualise their media preferences and news choices. The aim of such thematic analysis is to answer the second RQ2, *What were the main social and media factors that contributed to the destabilisation of everyday life during the last phase of the Covid-19 pandemic?* The final discussion joins together key findings and suggests further conceptual issues and potential empirical challenges.

## RESULTS: NEWS REPERTOIRES IN DISRUPTED EVERYDAY LIVES

### Media preferences and cross-media use

At this point, we firstly present findings on the entire sample of 59 sketches through answers to the question of which media or devices are considered by adolescents as 1) *the most important*, 2) *important for socialising* and 3) *important for getting information*. Preliminary analysis shows that adolescents included 39 very different citations regarding the most important medium or device. If we select the criterion that a medium or device appears at least five times (most other citations are mentioned less often), then the most important devices are phone (39%), computer (25%), TV and books, while the most important apps are Snapchat (44%), Instagram (34%), the multimedia channel YouTube (27%), TikTok and Discord. In the category of media preferences for socialising, the dominant media are Snapchat (64%) and Instagram (58%), followed by Viber (29%), phone messages (25%), Discord (20%), Facebook Messenger (14%). In the category of preferences for informing, the leading media/devices are Instagram (29%) and Google (29%), followed by Snapchat (24%), the phone (22%), Discord (19%), the computer (17%), YouTube (15%), MS Teams (12%), TV and TV reports (12%), Zoom (10%) and commercial news and TV portal 24ur.com (8%).



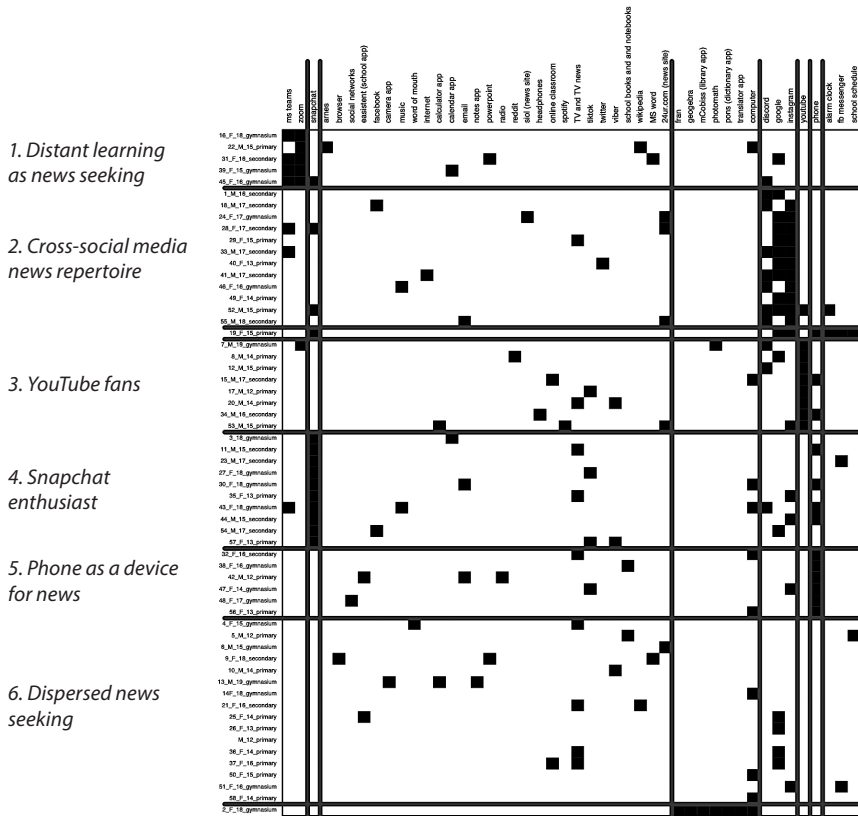
▲ Figure 2.

Media and device preferences for information (n=59)

### News repertoires: From dispersed news seekers to social platform minimalists

The above findings reveal a framework for a common cross-sectional regime of media repertoires through individual media relations. However, by using the block modelling approach, we can group together students who share similar news media and form a specific number of blocks with special news repertoires. The generalised block modelling method produced six distinctive types of blocks based on the similarity of media used for information. Each block can be interpreted as a single news repertoire of students (Figure 2). However, such groupings are not rank-order lists, but should be rather understood as 'subjective, relational clusters' (Peters et al., 2021). Members of a single repertoire share a 'certain constellation of information sources' or devices or platforms, but, at the same time, they 'may use those resources in very different ways' (2021, p. 11).

1. *Distance learning as news seeking*: The first block or group consists of those respondents who primarily accessed news through two online learning platforms, namely MS Teams or Zoom. For them, being informed mainly relates to their school obligations and tasks. 'News' for this group is not so much related to a concrete public media event but more to their own primary 'concerns', which is school. The importance of school and the changing perception of what being informed means were intensified due to the transformation of the physical notion of being 'in school' and the social element of learning together, which was completely mediated through online tools. This change was relevant for a small group of girls attending elementary or secondary school, which, contrary to the others, informed themselves through distance learning tools. In this sense, it is a very homogeneous (i.e., girlish) and niche news repertoire. Respondents from this group never mentioned the phone, YouTube or FB messenger as important news devices in their sketches.



▲ Figure 3.

News media repertoires among the adolescents (n=59)

2. *Cross-social media news repertoire*: The second repertoire belongs to a larger group of mostly secondary school students, who are different from the first group as they highly prefer three extremely specific and very diverse online tools: *Discord*, *Google* and *Instagram*. However, similar to the first group, they never mentioned using their phones as a primary device for news seeking. One girl, seems to form a special subgroup: she prefers Google and Instagram like everyone else, but opts for Snapchat instead of Discord. Nevertheless, this group is clearly mostly attached to Google for online searches and Discord for messaging, aligning with the dominance of Instagram, the most famous platform of visual culture. These three communicative figurations, namely searching for information, sharing the information and showing or revealing the information, seem to be the most popular news combination among secondary school students. These new patterns of intersections of media practices through a selected set of platforms confirm the logic of interrelated media repertoires, which are clearly present among a specific group of adolescents.

3. *YouTube fans*: The third news repertoire is considerably more narrowly structured as it belongs to those students who prefer a single, very concrete media platform or channel: YouTube. This very special news repertoire belongs primarily to boys from elementary schools, who are not fans of Snapchat or FB messenger. Their personal news consumption relies on only one channel; that is the reason we proposed naming them YouTube fans. In comparison to the previous groups, younger boys in elementary school form a narrow and single repertoire, which comes from their selected preference for one specific media channel.

4. *Snapchat enthusiasts*: The fourth group is similar to the third group in terms of having one specific media channel. However, it primarily consists of secondary school students who highly prefer Snapchat as their primary news resource. Although the group includes two members from elementary school and is mixed in terms of gender, they differ from the previous group by never mentioning YouTube as a news source. Thus, the news repertoires of YouTube fans, who are primarily boys, directly contrast with the news repertoire of Snapchat enthusiasts.

5. *Phone as a device for news*: The fifth group pertains to a very specific type of news repertoire that seems to belong to secondary-level girls. Their main difference to all the previous ones is that instead of a certain platform, specific portal or online tool, they are internally similar in choosing a concrete device as the most wanted news channel. Specifically, they all mentioned their phone as the most important news device. In addition, they seem to be very contrary to the first and fourth news repertoires in that they never mentioned the tools of distance learning, such as MS Teams, Zoom or Snapchat, in their media sketches.

6. *Dispersed news seekers*: The last and largest group seem to consist of younger girls, who mostly come from elementary school. In their media preferences and online tools, they seem to be 'dispersed all around'. Unlike previous groups, their news consumption is diverse as they are not consistently attached to a single medium or a concrete combination of devices and tools. However, this news repertoire is also not attached to distance learning tools such as MS Teams or Zoom, nor does it involve Snapchat, YouTube or even the phone.

### **Experiencing changes in a destabilised everyday life**

Such diverse logics of news consumption within a relatively homogeneous sample should be contextualised within the disruptive changes in everyday routines. Therefore, in this section, we present the role of pandemic closures in the adolescents' new experience of everyday life. What was everyday life like during the pandemic closures, and what were the main biographical changes experienced by young people? Four distinct types of transformations can be introduced through the thematic analysis of focus group interviews, ranging from structural aspects of disrupted everyday life to more individual or micro views of potential novelties and disruptions.

*1. Reorganisation of family techno-cultures:* The first structural change relates to spatial and technological upgrading of homes. Specifically, the hybridisation of work and home led to the purchase of new computer equipment for both parents and children. The intrusion of school commitments or routines also changed the appearance and furnishing of children's rooms; for instance, young people experienced internal moves from one room to the other, renovations to transform shared spaces to individual rooms were common, and so forth. In addition, the introduction of technology, especially computers, screens, cameras and headphones, as a necessary accessory was something families and youth faced for the first time. Let us see a few examples, mostly from elementary school children:

*Before, when there was no distance learning, I kept my computer in a drawer; I didn't use it because I didn't need it. Before the distance learning, I had only my phone in the room. I didn't even have this monitor yet. (boy, 12 years, elementary school)*

*When we had distance learning, my mother borrowed a computer from work so that I could have it in my room. We had to return it, so I only have the phone now. (girl, 14 years, elementary school)*

*Before that, I really used the computer much less, I barely used it... My use of the computer has increased. Before I used it only on weekends, but now during the week, I also watch some series or some movies in the evening. (girl, 13 years, elementary school).*

However, important distinctions between families were made according to previous arrangements, possibilities and type of living (house vs. block, smaller vs. larger flats, type of family - separated vs. not separated, number of children, parents working at home – yes or no, etc.).

*2. Rearrangement of personal time and sense of well-being:* On a more personal level, a large majority of students agreed that the pandemic closure gave them a significant amount of 'new time'. Access to school – through distance learning tools – was immediate, and the click of a mouse was a generous substitute for the long commute to school. As a result, pupils felt they had a great deal more personal time, time to sleep, time for themselves, time to walk. Consequently, they felt less pressure and sensed a qualitative change in their personal well-being. Some of them expressed the isolation caused by Covid to be a very positive experience. Here are some examples:

*I like it because I can really sleep longer, because I don't have to commute to school, and because it's actually much easier. (boy, 12 years, elementary school)*

*It was nice because you didn't have to go to school by bus and back... that's the only good thing. (boy, 16 years, gymnasium)*

*When we were at home, I could sleep longer... I sometimes even went out in the morning, even before class, and I had more time for myself... (girl, 14 years, elementary school)*

*I've started working more, so, well, I've been training more. I've had more time to myself. (boy, 18 years, secondary vocational or technical school)*

3. *Transformation of everyday routines – new values of personal appearance, eating habits and relocation of housework:* Significant changes have occurred in terms of physical appearance and attention to eating habits. According to some, personal image has become less important. Meanwhile, in terms of eating habits, previously scheduled breakfasts or school meals have been replaced by more unstructured eating times. However, eating during school hours was still practiced. Below are a few explanations coming especially from elementary-level girls, who are used to structured eating rules within the school schedule and who obviously value the importance of a proper image and personal style:

*I woke up about a minute before the first Zoom started... I put on a sweater over my pyjamas. I was completely sleepy and then the teachers wanted me to turn on the camera and I looked like some potato. (girl, 13 years, elementary school)*

*I spoiled myself a bit, [and woke up] about 20 minutes before class. It was the same with clothes: tracksuit and sweater, nothing special. I didn't take time for breakfast... (girl, 18 years, gymnasium)*

*Usually, I woke up about 5 to 10 minutes before class and then came downstairs to eat at half past 10... My mother was not happy with me eating [breakfast] so late. (girl, 14 years, elementary school)*

*In our class, they just ate during class, and they didn't even want to turn on the cameras. (girl, 13 years, elementary school)*

*I think I had more to eat. Because when I was at home, every time we stopped [with the class], I was hungry, because I was already downstairs by the kitchen. And you don't have that at school. Well, sometimes I would eat something during the class, a snack or something, when we didn't need to use the camera. (girl, 13 years, elementary school)*

The important distinction between those schoolchildren whose parents were at home during Covid-19 and those whose parents were not home must be mentioned here. Those who stayed alone at home had many new family obligations; some cooked for their siblings or also for their parents. Some were much more involved in housework than before.

4. *Mediatization of social interactions and learning:* Most of the students mentioned important changes in the way they experienced a new 'school day' and the school obligations within it, as well as the forms of communication and practices for getting together with friends and schoolmates. This was especially prominent for girls from the gymnasium, who are usually high achievers, but who also try to help others with lower grades and problems with school. Here are some examples:

*Fortunately, we had social media so we could keep in touch. A few times with a friend we organised one or two or three Zooms and chatted to keep in touch. (girl, 16 years, gymnasium)*

*During distance learning, I created a Zoom, and I went there with one of my classmates, and when I had to attend another Zoom, we both went to Instagram while also having that other Zoom open on the computer. I mean, we basically talked the whole time. (girl, 16 years, gymnasium)*

In this context, young people were also very innovative in finding new tricks either to escape from school obligations or to help each other in preparing homework or even during exams.

*I think distance learning is better, because if you know that you won't need some classes for graduation, you can easily skip a few, well, you don't pay attention to those... Or you'd make something that the teams would stop working. (girl, 16 years, gymnasium)*

*I've also spent quite a few classes, for example, history classes, where I really didn't want to listen and I actually ... I think that the subject's not so important for me since I'm studying electro[nics]. I played a lot of games, I admit, together with one or two classmates. (boy, 17 years, secondary vocational or technical school)*

*I worked remotely more. I was more familiar with where we are in terms of content, because I'm always present in the online lectures... Also, no one bothered me, but at school you have a lot of distractions and other factors. (girl, 13 years, elementary school)*

## DISCUSSION

Our analysis of the youth's sample of 59 personal media sketches provides us with insights at many levels: which media or devices are the most important to teenage youth in general, and which are the most important for their information seeking. Regardless of the specificity of each category, two of the most popular networks, Instagram and Snapchat, appear in the individual sketches, while among the devices, there are the phone and the computer, though they are inter-connected in different ways. Even a preliminary cross-section analysis of the media sketches suggests that media preferences mask complex relationships within the rather homogenised sample of one generation.

Our findings also confirm, at least in part, the results of previous research on news repertoires and information behaviour. For example, Prandner and Glatz's (2021) quantitative study of the Austrian population showed that it is only younger people who are online-only users (2022, p. 61), representing a small minority within the general population whose news consumption depends only on online platforms. A recent Danish study (Peters et al., 2022) identified five news repertoires among young adults: the online traditionalist, the in-depth audiophile, the digital news seeker, the interpersonal networker



and the non-news information seeker. All of these repertoires rely heavily on several new media platforms, which, on the one hand, undermines the importance of traditional news media players and, on the other hand, also shows that, apart from Facebook, other social media platforms, such as YouTube, Instagram and Twitter/X, are not important sources of information. For young people, the centrality of social media platforms as a mediating force is crucial: social media are key to the experience of interpersonal relationships and a gateway to civil society (Clark & Marchi, 2017).

The result of a simple preliminary cross-sectional data analysis of media sketches implies that complex relationships are hidden in the background of the selected preferences. Preliminary results from the focus interviews also confirm the importance of everyday contexts within which media and news preferences take place. The destabilisation of family techno-cultures, social practices and physical mobility are relevant elements that impact the collective choices of teens. In the current study, the educational context already hints at the specifics of media choice, but a cross-sectional analysis is needed along with data within family domains, even if these are relatively homogeneous in our sample. The sample mainly covers adolescents from middle-class families; and, according to research on class and the cultural conditionality of taste and literacy (Bernstein, 2015; Bourdieu, 2003; Ranieri & Fabbro, 2016; OECD, 2016, 2019), a lower diversity of media repertoires could be assumed.

## CONCLUSION

We conclude this study with considerations for further analyses since, in socio-economic terms, media preferences among in-school youth are relatively similar. For many aspects of media and news repertoires, we contend that they develop in close connection with the cultural and material circumstances of families (Bourdieu, 2003), which determine their access to media as well as their media choices, genres and tastes. Identifying the cross-sectional area of news repertoires will require a more comprehensive integration of data to (a) thematise the personal sketches along with survey data and focus groups and (b) carry out in-depth observations of a particular profile (of the participant or group of young people) through a carefully designed and systematic combination of methods. The model of media repertoires encourages such interpretative openness and flexibility according to the interest of the researcher, which is also very common in recent empirical research on news repertoires (Swart et al., 2016; Peters et al., 2021; Prandner & Glatz, 2021).

According to our study, the pandemic brought about many new changes to everyday lives of young people. Moreover, new biographies seem to be strongly related to structural social factors that allow for different resources, opportunities and priorities. At the same time, asking young people about their personal experiences of the pandemic revealed many hidden differences among them. Thus, the question remains: what does such a biographical disruption of young people's everyday lives mean in the long term? What might be the wider implications of a destabilised everyday life for young people, for their attitudes towards school, home and learning? As the findings of this study show, for some

pupils, getting to school on time entails a severe lack of sleep. Accordingly, the question remains as to how the physical mobility of pupils to school and back to their homes can be reorganised. Another problem seems to be related to the rationalisation of personal time, in addition to structural differences in access to technologies and personal space in their homes.

However, such media constellations are not fixed and unchangeable formations. Patterns of news consumption, as Vozab argues (2019), are formed through socialisation at a young age (Lee et al., 2013; York & Scholl, 2015). Additionally, as Wimmer and Wurm point out, 'when researching the media repertoires of young people regarding the choice of applications and end devices, it is possible to capture only snapshot at best' (2021, p. 118). One of the common findings of this recent research is a general shift in social values at many levels: Covid-19 changed perspectives on physical mobility and socialisation, as well as on learning and being together. It is reasonable to expect that the new disruptions have also brought changes in relation to news and to the perception of what news is. Our findings support the insight that we are not just witnessing radical changes in the structures of repertoires, but perhaps even more radical changes related to the perception of the news as well. Consequently, the results of our study also have important implications for the question of political participation, with studies showing a clear correlation between news repertoires and political participation (Geers & Vliegenthart, 2021). As Peters et al. (2022) argued, questions around news, youth and their affective dispositions towards news consumption are linked to questions regarding life stage, social stratification, cultural orientation and perceptions of citizenship (2022, p. 8).

Generational and educational studies are facing significant changes in perspective, as the complex boundaries between institutional domains have collapsed not only because of the new rules of digital platforms but also because of the social closure during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, what is generally needed in youth or generational studies is not just a revival of the 'radical contextualisation' that already made waves in media studies in the late 1980s, but a more thorough understanding of the social and cultural layers that connect (and disconnect) the already eroded context of everyday life.

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# REPERTOARI VIJESTI U DESTABILIZIRANIM ŽIVOTIMA: ISTRAŽIVANJE MEĐU ADOLESCENTIMA U SLOVENIJI

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**SAŽETAK** Tradicionalna konzumacija medija u obliku čitanja, gledanja ili slušanja sve se više zamjenjuje prolaznim praksama, kao što su klikanje, pretraživanje i skeniranje, pri čemu je „krug provjeravanja“ postao svakodnevna rutina stalnog pregledavanja, provjeravanja i objavljivanja. Te međusobno povezane prakse stalno su prisutne osobito među adolescentima, koji vješto mijenjaju medije, kontekste i situacije. Ovisnost o takvoj upotrebi više medija sugerira da empirijska istraživanja ne bi trebala biti usmjerena samo na jedan medij. Cilj ovog istraživanja bio je ispitati repertoare vijesti iz perspektive adolescenata i razumjeti kako je poremećaj života tijekom pandemije bolesti COVID-19 utjecao na konzumaciju vijesti među mladim publikama. Ovaj članak predstavlja rezultate istraživačkog projekta u okviru kojeg su provedene fokus-grupe na uzorku od 67 adolescenata u dobi od 12 do 19 godina. Također rad pruža analizu nešto manjeg uzorka od 59 obrazaca korištenja medija. Cilj analize bio je identificirati medijske preferencije i potencijalne interakcije mladih ljudi. Identificirano je šest različitih repertoara vijesti, što potvrđuje ambivalentnost tinejdžera u pogledu njihovih medijskih preferencija. Istovremeno, tinejdžeri generiraju vlastite osobne „kolače vijesti“ unutar svojih destabiliziranih života.

## KLJUČNE RIJEČI

REPERTOARI VIJESTI, DRUŠTVENOST NA PLATFORMAMA, MLADI, OBRASCI KORIŠTENJA MEDIJA, POREMEĆAJ ŽIVOTA

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