BUT WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?
NEWS LITERACY AMONG TEENAGERS

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YOUNG PEOPLE’S NEWS CONSUMPTION

— Continuing concern about youngsters’ (lack of) interest in following the news, intensified by arrival of new platforms

— Problematic, as young people are vanguard of future news practices
YOUNG PEOPLE’S NEWS CONSUMPTION

— However: media-saturated environment does lead to news exposure
— Youth’s news use as spider web:
  — “Today’s youths are sitting like spiders in the middle of a web, often content with consuming what flies by” (Moeller, 2012, p. 191)
— Result: both intentional and incidental news use
YOUNG PEOPLE’S NEWS CONSUMPTION

— Youngster’s news repertoires combine traditional and new outlets
(Reuters Institute, 2018; Mihailidis & Viotty, 2017)

→ News producers (i.e. legacy and born-online news media; journalists and non-journalists)
→ Platforms (e.g. offline and online news, including news shared via Facebook or (instant) messages)
→ Formats (e.g. political entertainment, satire and news memes)
YOUNG PEOPLE’S NEWS CONSUMPTION

— News has become ubiquitous
  → The sources of news are much more varied (cf. journalists and not-journalists)
  → The border between information/facts and entertainment/fiction is fading
— Complex news landscape makes critical consumption of news increasingly difficult, but also increasingly important (Tully & Vraga, 2018)

— Result: news media literacy is gaining scholarly attention (cf. fake news and disinformation)
NEWS MEDIA LITERACY

— News media literacy = knowledge and motivations needed to identify and engage with journalism (Maksl, Ashely & Craft, 2015)
— In order to become adept consumers, they are required to utilize news media knowledge, active senses, personal learning and critical thinking (Dale, 2014)

Pitfall: treat young people as “unfinished beings”
Pitfall: underestimate personal motivation and self-efficacy
Pitfall: increase scepticism instead of critical thinking
AIM: TEEN-CENTERED UNDERSTANDING OF NEWS MEDIA LITERACY
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1. map diversity of news use among teenagers (≠ 1 solid group)
2. understand how this relates to news use motivations, news scepticism, self-perceived news literacy and news checking practices
RESEARCH DESIGN
Mixed-method approach in order to measure and understand

Survey (N=2000) → Cluster analysis → Interviews (N=24)

Sample: 12-18 year-olds from Flanders
SURVEY STUDY (N=2000)

- Part of larger project on media ownership and use of teens
- 12 schools participated, survey filled in during class hours
- After data cleaning → 2681 valid cases
- Sample 2000 teens, weighted by gender, age and education
SURVEY STUDY (N=2000)

- Measures
  - (1) Self-percieved news literacy (Vraga et al., 2016)
  - (2) News scepticism (Maksl, Ashley & Carft, 2015)
  - (3) Media locus of control (Maksl, Ashley & Carft, 2015)
  - (4) Checking practices
  - (5) Perceptions of the value of media literacy (Vraga et al., 2016)
  - (6) News use motivation
INTERVIEW STUDY (N=24)

— equal distribution for sex, grade, level of education and cluster membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Interview sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (age 12-14)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (age 14-16)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (age 16-18)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News use cluster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social + broadcast</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online + broadcast</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASO</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSO</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSO</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(KSO)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

— interviewed in domestic environment

— topics: news use and interest, parental interest in news, trust and credibility and news (literacy) at school
(PRELIMINARY) RESULTS
# Typology of Young News Audiences

How often do you get news through the following news channels?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Channel</th>
<th>Social + broadcast (41%)</th>
<th>Online + broadcast (30%)</th>
<th>Disengaged (29%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mean square clusters</th>
<th>F-values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>285.478</td>
<td>203.311***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Group) messages</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>600.55</td>
<td>398.886***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>661.742</td>
<td>438.503***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>388.176</td>
<td>368.395***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>440.257</td>
<td>377.939***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News websites</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1269.025</td>
<td>1080.053***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile news apps</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>601.69</td>
<td>333.134***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>205.182</td>
<td>153.646***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email/newsletters)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>559.153</td>
<td>370.977***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

never (1), rarely (2), monthly (3), weekly (4) and daily (5)
TYPOLOGY OF YOUNG NEWS AUDIENCES

SOCIAL AND BROADCAST NEWS USERS (41%)

— Repertoire:
  → Daily news updates on social media and message services
  → Weekly news via television and radio news
  → Weekly conversations

— Distinguishing characteristic: talk about news (online and offline)
  → offline talks with friends (85%), parents (81%), siblings (48%) and teachers (33%)

— No significant sociodemographics
TYPOL OGY OF YOUNG NEWS AUDIENCES

ONLINE AND BROADCAST NEWS USERS (30%)

— Repertoire:
   → Weekly news on social media and news websites
   → Weekly news via television and radio news

— Sociodemographics
   → Slightly more girls in this cluster (55%)
   → Tend to be older than third cluster
   → Level of education: more ASO, less “A or B stroom”
TYPOLOGY OF YOUNG NEWS AUDIENCES

NEWS DISENGAGED (or News avoiders?) (30%)

— Repertoire:
  → Weekly news on social media and news websites
  → Weekly news via television and radio news

— Sociodemographics
  → Slightly more male (45%)
  → Tend to be younger than second
  → Lower level of education: more “B stroom” and BSO
## Correlation Matrix

### Correlation matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(1) Self-perceived news literacy</th>
<th>(2) News skepticism</th>
<th>(3) Media locus of control</th>
<th>(4) Checking practices</th>
<th>(5) Perceptions of the value of media literacy</th>
<th>(6) News use motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Self-perceived news literacy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) News skepticism</td>
<td>-0.208</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Media locus of control</td>
<td>0.442</td>
<td>-0.309</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Checking practices</td>
<td>0.329</td>
<td>-0.102</td>
<td>0.331</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Perceptions of the value of media literacy</td>
<td>0.373</td>
<td>-0.249</td>
<td>0.498</td>
<td>0.527</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) News use motivation</td>
<td>0.429</td>
<td>-0.213</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td>0.349</td>
<td>0.352</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
INTERVIEW DATA

— Less interested or engaged with news than survey would suggest
  — Main motivation to consume news: stay up-to-date
  — Parents and higher educated assumed to be more interested
— Little knowledge about journalism production (or fake news)
— High trust in journalists “it’s their job, they cannot lie!”
  — Even more so in images (photo manipulation is assumed to be non-existent)
CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION
CONCLUSION

— Young audiences are diverse: 3 types based on news use
— Literacy programmes should go beyond increasing scepticism
— Audiences label themselves as (rather) literate, yet have limited to no idea how news is being made
  → Idea for future research: measure knowledge + relation between measures
— High trust in journalism (they are accountable, limited checking practices)
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