

Tarja Rautiainen-Keskustalo, Sofia Theodosiadou

*Listening as Labour: About Podcast Listening Habits
of Young Adults in Finland and Greece*

ABSTRACT: Due to significant changes in media environments, listening has become an important way of consuming media content, particularly among younger generations (under 30). Since the pandemic, these individuals have increasingly turned to curated audio media content. While the practice of listening as a means of engaging with media has been well examined by media research institutions, we contend that the study of listening still requires ethnographic perspectives to address the complex nature of digital environments.

This chapter draws on data collected from Finland and Greece to highlight how listening is intertwined with intricate media landscapes. It explores how young people justify the podcast content they choose and the significance of news content in their decisions. The analysis is based on the concept developed by media scholar Kate Lacey, who argues that listening is an active practice and a form of labor. Lacey posits that listening is an engaged process of exercising citizenship through audio media, encompassing both cognitive and emotional dimensions.

The information is derived from community research by the Finnish Broadcasting Company, along with interviews conducted in Greece during the spring and summer of 2024.

KEYWORDS: podcast; listening; young adults; media infrastructures; trust; audiencing

Podcasts listeners and the future of journalism

As a multifaceted media format, podcasts foster a lively discussion about their definition (e.g. Rime *et al.*, 2022) and their significance in today's media landscape. Although the consensus to these questions is difficult to find, it can be said that in addition to being considered as «entertainment» – i.e., podcast listening is seen to belong to the sphere of leisure – podcasts have become a more and more important way of consuming news and journalistic content in general (Lindgren, 2016).

In the current media infrastructure, where journalism struggles to maintain its vital role in democratic public life, podcasts provide a way to address the various challenges in the post-truth era. This includes addressing the problem

of fragmented audiences in an era when media content is tailored for smaller sub-audiences instead of the general public. Additionally, the intimate nature and on-demand characteristics of podcasts serve as significant competitive advantages in the online media landscape (Newman & Gallo, 2019).

One of the key questions is how journalistic podcasts can provide an engaging and meaningful experience especially for young audiences. Many research reports highlight how the younger generations, particularly those under thirty years old, have increasingly turned to curated audio media content after pandemic. For instance, a survey conducted by the Reuters Institute (2023), which included participants from 20 countries, found that the percentage of people listening to podcasts monthly rose from 29% in 2018 to 34% in 2023. Notably, more than half of individuals aged 18 to 34 reported listening to podcasts.

Although there is a wealth of important research on podcast listeners and their listening habits (e.g., Soto-Vásquez, Vilceanu & Johnson, 2022; Chan-Olmsted & Wang, 2022; Garcia-Marin, 2020) understanding of how audio content fits into daily media consumption is a broad subject that needs to be examined from various perspectives. Particularly, the reasons why young people prefer audio media over other types of content, the criteria they use to select what to listen to, and how listening fits into their daily media practices highlight important contextual and infrastructural factors, which are critical from the point of view of journalism. Thus, the contextual approach focuses not only on the popularity of different podcast genres but also emphasizes the understanding of how individuals organize their daily use of media. In this article, we approach this question by comparing the listening habits and preferences of young adults between Finland and Greece. We are interested in a) on what grounds they select podcasts they listen to, and what significance news content may have in these choices and b) how they describe their listening practices as part of their everyday life.

The analytical approach we utilize emphasizes examining podcast listening as a practice. Here we particularly draw upon Kate Lacey's (2023) discussions on listening as labour, as a particular kind of multisensory practice. The perspective challenges the understanding of the public sphere as a place of «rational argument» (Habermas, 1974), which is defined solely by the written text. It suggests how audiencing, audience experience and engagement, is a complex process including a spoken word. Thus, voice and sound are not seen to belong only to the realm of emotions and the private sphere but are part of individuals' political agency. Therefore, we argue that the study of listening as labour contributes to discussions concerning the future of journalism by illustrating the complexity of the terrain (young) people encounter when engaging with media. Understanding of the complexity, in turn, affords to understand aspects of trust in journalism: how it is developed and negotiated among young audiences.

Landscapes of podcast listening – Finland and Greece

European countries vary in how podcasts have integrated into their national media landscapes. Therefore, we will first highlight some key features of the media environments both in Finland and Greece in an effort to sketch a short media profile of each country.

According to Iosifidis & Papathanassopoulos (2019) Public Service Broadcasting never really existed in Greece. The Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) has been unable to function according to the public service obligations observed in public broadcasters in Britain, Scandinavia or other northern European countries. Greece, like some other southern European countries, entered rather late into “modernity” and has neither a strong civil society nor a strong market. The Greek media have been used as vehicles for negotiating with and pressuring the government of the day, rather than reflecting public discourse (Iosifidis & Papathanassopoulos, 2019; Papatheodorou & Machin, 2003). In the period following the 2008 economic crisis, research has shown that a loose interpretation of the Code of Ethics is a common practice among Greek journalists (Papathanassopoulos *et al.*, 2021). The European Parliament passed a damning resolution in February 2024 regarding the rule of law and freedom of the media in the country that highlights concerns about serious threats to democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in Greece (Oikonomikos Taxidromos, 2024).

Karathanasopoulou (2020) argues that podcasting is a late bloomer in Greece as it appears to be sparse and disjointed. However podcasting can offer a valuable opportunity for diverse voices to be heard in Greece, allowing them to authentically reflect and preserve the lives, struggles, and hopes of the current generation. Podcasts in Greece include music, news and current affairs, history, lifestyle, sports and technology and there is a growing future for the medium in Greece (*Ibidem*). Journalistic podcasts in Greece represent a growing minority that mainly focuses on commentary journalism and very selectively on investigative journalism, and research into journalistic podcasts in Greece is scarce (Theodosiadou & Ristani, 2024; Theodosiadou, 2024).

Finland, in turn, is often called a «media welfare state», meaning that media access is rather extensive and largely unaffected by social class (Syvertsen *et al.*, 2014). Generally speaking, Finland belongs to the so-called Nordic new media system (including Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden). This means that newspapers’ online editions have been for long the primary sources of news instead of using social media. In addition, people use brand sites online instead of search engines and social media. However, the situation has presumably changed in the early 2020s, but there is not yet very comprehensive research available on the subject. Thirdly, in Finland, trust in news is at a high level. (Schröder *et al.*, 2020)

The popularity of podcasts in Finland rose in 2018, a few years later than in

leading podcasting countries such as the United States, Great Britain, and Sweden (Manninen *et al.*, 2022). A comprehensive study of the early stages of podcasts in Finland has not yet been done. However, Finnish Broadcasting Company has had a significant role in fostering podcast culture in Finland, and currently, all audio content produced by the company is categorized as podcasts.

Regarding print media, podcasts have gradually been incorporated into daily news flow; for some newspapers, they are already an important content production method. In terms of listening Finland is one of the top countries in Europe along with other Nordic countries (Reuters Institute, 2023). According to *Statistics Finland*, the percentage of respondents who listened to a podcast in the past three months has increased from 26% to 39% from 2019 to 2023 (Saarenmaa & Kohvakka, 2022).

Although the media landscapes in Greece and Finland have notable structural, cultural, and historical differences, these aspects constitute important background factors to consider when interpreting the results. We are especially interested in how networked and platform-based media (re)shape these historical conditions of media consumption beyond national boundaries.

Data

The material from Finland used in this article was collected by YLE News Lab, a sub-organization of Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE). The Lab develops services for the company and investigates how Finnish people engage with various forms of media through different types of audience research. The method utilized in this research was so called community research, which is often used in market surveys, because it gives access to customers' thoughts, insights, and feelings. The design of the community research was done in co-operation with the researchers from University of Tampere: the first author of this article participated in the meetings, where the structure of the data including the questions were planned and agreed. Some of the questions served the needs of the company, but most of them were designed to correspond to interviews conducted in Greece.

An online community was established for a four-day study, functioning as a discussion forum hosted by the authors. Participants initially answered questions related to their podcast listening habits and favourite programs. Afterward, they were able to see each other's responses and engage in discussions. Additionally, votes were conducted within the community on topics like favourite podcast hosts.

A total of twenty participants, all of whom actively listen to podcasts, were selected as respondents, with nineteen completing the survey. Among this group, eleven individuals were young adults (under 30), and on them this article is focused. The selected data highlight listening practices and the motivations behind participants' listening choices. In the implementation of data collection

the research team followed the ethical guidelines: participation was voluntary, and participants had the right to withdraw from the study. In reporting the results, this article protects the identities of the participants by anonymising any detail that would result in the recognition of individual participants.

The data collection in Greece was conducted by utilizing semi-structured interviews with young adults. The data collection lasted from March to June 2024, and 10 participants from Greece between the ages of 20 and 40 took part. Most of the participants belonged to the age group 20-30 years old. The primary criterion for the recruitment of the sample was to listen to podcasts on a regular basis. The data were fully transcribed and analyzed by the two writers of this chapter, who have conducted similar research and have relevant experience. Discourse analysis was used to analyze the interview material and the Atlas.ti program was used to analyze the coded data. Four codes emerged that include the profile of the listener, the reasons for listening to podcasts, trust in podcasts and what makes a good podcast.

Listening, trust, and young audiences: theoretical perspectives

Building trust and engagement with audiences is essential for journalism today, especially as news spreads widely through social media platforms. In this complicated landscape of datafication and platformization, citizens must navigate between clickbait and filter bubbles, which unfortunately often lead to power struggles and conflict. To meet the challenges of the current media scene, several trends in journalism have emerged, including liveness, experimental events, and face-to-face performances. In these new forms of journalism, the audience's direct interaction and proximity with a journalist is considered to increase trust in journalism (Adams, 2020; Vodianovic, 2020; Hänninen & Rautiainen-Keskustalo, 2023).

The rise of podcasting is part of this development although its benefits are different. As a form of narrative storytelling (McHugh, 2022) it highlights seriality, an accessible format and publication schedule and the listener's control over the choice of content (Spinelli & Dann, 2019; Lindgren, 2016). Because of this, podcasts have become a central part of the content production of private and public media operators. This is exemplified by the Finnish Broadcasting Company, which has categorized much of its downloadable online content as podcasts. While the shift to podcasts has been relatively easy to audio media companies, it has caused more challenges for newspaper-based media. The incentive for this transition has been the pressure to stay on top of technological developments and maintain credibility in the eyes of the audience and advertisers in the current media environment, where media companies' revenues increasingly rely on payments from the audience rather than advertising revenue.

The critical question surrounding podcasts is their potential as a medium,

particularly concerning the way they are received: through listening. Rather than seeing it as an unproblematic way of transmitting knowledge, the rise of podcast culture has urged to problematize listening as an everyday experience. From this perspective, it is possible to see podcast listening as a democratic force. For instance, Andrew Dobson (2014: 8) argues that listening can play a crucial role in fulfilling democratic objectives such as legitimacy, trust, disagreement, understanding, and deliberation. He also emphasizes that listening offers an opportunity to amplify marginalized voices, highlighting citizens' responsibility to hear them. According to Dobson, the power of listening lies especially in its ability to extend beyond the typical discourse on empowerment, which often remains shallow.

However, as Maria Rae's (2023) analysis of the popularity of Joe Rogan shows, Dobson's argument is probably overly optimistic because podcasts as a cultural product are too unregulated and can disseminate hate speech and misinformation. Rogan's rise to prominence exemplifies this issue: starting as a home podcaster, he is probably the most influential podcast host nowadays. He has developed podcasts as the medium of soft power (Loyd, 2008: 479) beyond the regulated media scene. As a result, he has become «a dominant competitor in the public sphere for economic, cultural and social power» (Rae, 2023: 191) The question about podcasts' potentialities is, then, an extremely complex issue.

From the point of view of this article, we argue that Kate Lacey's (2023) idea of podcast listening as labour is fruitful because it frames listening as a practice. According to Lacey (*Ivi*: 5-7), labour of listening is the active process of exercising citizenship through audio media, incorporating cognitive and emotional aspects. The perspective moves beyond Habermas' idealized concept of the public sphere, acknowledging, for example, the labour involved in preparing space, time, setting, and technologies for listening. In a saturated media environment, listening is, for Lacey, «the disembodied dispersed, and domesticated encounters with others in the public sphere through ordinary, everyday media technologies» (*Ivi*: 1).

Therefore, listening is a particular way of exercising citizenship, which is not «just about having a voice, but about having the capacity and the responsibility to listen to others' voices» (*Ivi*: 11). Thus, listening is more than merely consuming content; it reflects how individuals engage in citizenship through the act of listening. This concept also recognizes the ongoing debates and struggles within society, while broadening the discussion to include the technologies and physical spaces where listening occurs.

We propose that Lacey's perspective is fruitful when examining the listening practices of younger generations, as using media through listening is more habitual for them than it was for earlier generations. According to Andersen *et al.* (2021), millennials and Generation Z attend to news on social media more often than the three older generations. Political expertise is not a prerequisite for consuming news on social media platforms, although some generations

(such as Baby Boomers and Generation Z) seek out more political material on social media due to higher levels of political interest and efficacy. To put it another way, political exposure is somewhat facilitated by political engagement and participation, but through various media. However, it is worth keeping in mind that although younger generations enter the political sphere through different doors, they may travel the same path, i.e., young people may not be all that different from older generations (*Ibidem*). Various studies in the last two decades (Stahl & Literat, 2023; Craig *et al.*, 2021; Ezzat, 2020) have shown that social media provide young people with personal empowerment, expanded access and connectivity, community and identity formation, a means for organizing their social life, and multiple possibilities for interaction that adult-mediated and physical spaces may limit. At the same time, however, these platforms can also breed toxicity and harmful experiences (e.g. cyberbullying, friendship fallouts, peer pressure), which can contribute to diminished self-worth, increased stress and anxiety, envy, loneliness, or apathy. Privacy, user activity surveillance, and data-mining are other common concerns pertaining to young people's social media usage that coexist with the platforms' social benefits (Stahl & Literat, 2023; Gangneux, 2019).

In the following analysis, we examine research data collected from Finland and Greece. We scrutinize how young adults (under 30) talk about how they choose the content they listen to, how they evaluate podcasts' content and their everyday listening habits.

Analysis: topic and atmosphere defining the listening choices

In both countries, most participants said they consumed podcasts regularly, listening at least once a week, with most listening daily. The most important criteria for selecting a podcast was personal interest to the topic. Participants did not clearly differentiate between various types of content, such as news, hobbies, and entertainment.

No other factor makes a podcast the best option if it is not interesting. (Participant 1, Finland)

This criterion, personal interest, might seem self-evident. However, we argue it illuminates the nature of on-demand consumerism. Young people have both control and flexibility over the content, which is available for use according to diverse needs wherever and whenever they want (Laor, 2022). Notable was that respondents in their twenties emphasized personal needs and interests, while those over twenty expressed curiosity about various issues, even ones that initially seemed foreign to them. Still, the time was limited, so fairly often they were «running through» podcast content based on their personal interest.

If the topic is too foreign to you, there is not enough time to focus on listening. In addition, if you have a family, time is not on your side, so I preferably use the time I have by listening to a podcast that is personally interesting. (Participant 2, Finland)

While it could be argued that this trend leads to superficial media consumption, it is important to note that a substantial number of respondents in both countries reported listening to podcasts to enhance their knowledge on various subjects. These topics often included news topics as well as broader themes related to lifestyle and hobbies.

What I liked is that you have the time to process the information as you want, i.e. it's not like the news bulletin that says some specific things and you have to listen to them at that time, a podcasts you can listen to it anytime, wherever you are and it goes very deep into information, that is, it gives you information about what happened a year ago, ten years ago, many people are involved, and usually they are made quite neatly. The interviews are in-depth, not so-called superficial. (Participant 2, Greece)

However, young adults' choices were the sum of many factors highlighting the unique nature of podcasts as an audio medium. The concept of atmosphere illustrates this well. Originally introduced by social psychologist Erving Goffman (1981: 166), it refers real-life social interactions where individuals negotiate social roles, leading to collective affects. In the context of podcasts, these interactions are, of course, parasocial in nature (Lindgren, 2016). Regarding the data we used, the atmosphere referred to how the hosts and guests discussed the subject, for example, if there was a balance of the perspectives on controversial issues or how they showed diligence to the subject:

I think the way podcasters deal with things is most important because it determines whether the podcast creates an atmosphere suitable for the topic and whether the subject is covered in a versatile manner or/and from an interesting point of view. (Participant 3, Finland.)

Another thing that impressed me in the pods in relation to the news bulletins is that not everyone participates, that is, we don't take a microphone to ask randomly people what they think, but qualified experts participate that are involved with the event [...]. And I think pods are a great way to learn modern history or to research an event, a person that you're deeply interested in and it's a very different way to discover. (Participant 2, Greece)

On the other hand, atmosphere referred to sound-related issues, especially to the host's speaking style and voice qualities. The host's voice was seen to have the power to make the listener travel to a different time and space. As the young listener from Greece narrates:

[...] Certainly, the meaning first, that is to convey some feelings to me or pass on some meanings to me about life, about people, about social, human relations, that is, more that he wants to pass on [...] And on the other hand, the "feeling self" that the podcast transmits, beyond the information, I like the feeling very much and music can immerse you into that easier. (Participant 1, Greece)

Furthermore, Greek respondents described an engaging voice as the host's ability to maintain the listeners' interest through spontaneity, «the directness in relation to the listener and the ability to keep you on your toes» (Participant 3, Greece and Participant 4, Greece). A young listener illustrates this notion with a metaphor: «I think that (a podcast) should have exactly those features that a (good) theatre play has» (Participant 5, Greece). A Finnish respondent echoed this sentiment by discussing the importance of an «energetic» and «unique» atmosphere (Participant 4, Finland). In addition, some Finnish participants noted that a good podcast makes both the story and the storyteller relatable, effectively connecting with the listener's world. A Finnish respondent, who debated about the reasons why some podcasts gain popularity formulated the idea as follows:

In this case, the podcast, which has touched people closely, has with its empathy and interest originally spoken about real people. (Participant 3, Finland)

Respondents' characterizations, ranging from interesting topics to sonic qualities, including affects and impressions they feel, illustrate well how podcasts provide a complex interpretive framework for a listener. From a journalistic standpoint, the central challenge lies in how to reach beyond personal interests, i.e. overcome the phenomenon indicated in Finnish data: that while respondents wanted to consume news through podcasts, they preferred forms of expressions which were not «too serious» or «news-like».

Multisensory media environments and podcast listening

In addition to podcast content as such, also the overall media environment was defining podcast listening practices. A frequently emerging theme in this regard is the focus on the content versus using podcasts as a background

activity. In this regard, the answers varied a lot. Some of the respondents highlighted how they wanted solely to focus on listening, especially if they were listening to their favorite podcast. A Finnish respondent illustrated her listening habits as follows:

If the topic doesn't interest me, the thought goes off. If you're interested, then you can concentrate. I usually want to be alone when listening to podcasts because otherwise, it might be interrupted if someone starts talking next to me. I sometimes do something else like playing or cleaning while I'm listening, but if other activities take too much time to think or concentrate, listening to a podcast at the same time is impossible for you. In that case, I just put it away and listened later. (Participant 3, Finland)

Similar kind of descriptions was found among Greek respondents.

[...] Usually I'm doing something else (while I listen to podcasts), but for example it's related to the episode when I was listening to this one about the European elections, I was on the phone all the time, playing and looking things up, but when I'm listening to something lighter, (I don't act that way) [...] (Participant 1, Greece)

Both Finnish and Greek respondents stated that podcasts play a significant role in their daily practices, accompanying activities such as housework, travelling, spending time in public places, and engaging in hobbies. While this usage can generally be seen as using audio as a background, it may not be an example of shallowness in reception. Rather, it highlights how young people have been absorbed into social media: content can be consumed using various media technologies wherever people want.

Kate Lacey's (2023) considerations about listening as labour are, then, especially relevant here. Listening is not just a simple way to receive messages; it involves navigating in a complex media infrastructure marked by platformization, algorithms, and limitless number of choices. Especially Finnish respondents highlighted how they used several platforms on daily basis: Spotify, YouTube, Supla, YLE Areena. In addition, some of them also watched TV and read printed newspapers. Jumping from one platform to another was a key part of media use.

Notable is that some of the respondents brought up how the visual aspects of podcasts framed the overall experience of podcasts. The issue may be considered part of the labour the listener has to do when using digital platforms. For example, one of the respondents analyzed how titles and images contradict the contents.

The image [of Yle's news contents] is factual, male-oriented (because several images represent masculinity), aimed at adults, and has seen time (i.e. it is old-fashioned). Images are formed by coloring, people's ages, genders, and forms. (Participant 5, Finland)

The same respondent also said that they preferred watching podcasts, because it helped them to immerse to the discussions:

Video allows you to see people's reactions better, which can be very interesting, for example when dealing with emotional topics. Some video podcasts also give you a greater sense of being "in the company" of the podcasters or participating in the conversation. (Participant 5, Finland)

Trust

Our analysis above has highlighted the complexity of the listening process. However, from a journalism perspective, it is crucial to understand how young people perceive and discuss trust in content, particularly in how they differentiate between news and other types of content. For many young listeners trust was an important criterion for selecting the podcast they want to hear and especially for keeping on listening to it. In the narration from Greek data that follows they explain this vividly:

In other words, it has happened to me to double-check facts (that I listen to on a podcast) many times and discover that they are correct or check them from other sources. And that's how I understood that indeed this podcast was credible, it's worth engaging with *again*. He [the podcaster] may not be telling the truth, 100% in all points, but you know I'll keep working on it and yes... trust is an important factor. (Participant 3, Greece)

However, often trust was the issue, which concerned the host and the nature of the discussion. For example, young listeners in Greece claim that for them a podcaster/journalist who admits their mistake on air is someone they can certainly trust. Also, the podcaster's integrity was something they highly value and take as a sign of trust. For young listeners, trust in a podcaster is essential. It means believing in the authenticity of their words and relying on them to keep the story captivating. This connection fosters engagement, allowing the audience to immerse themselves fully in the narrative being presented.

Again, the atmosphere of podcasts was mentioned as a conveyor of trust; both in Greece and Finland young listeners highlighted the hosts' ability to keep balance between different perspectives; according to a Greek respondent, trust to the podcaster indicated that the podcaster is «confident about what

he says, he has done thorough research on the topic, and he hasn't put on his personal opinion or bias». It was also important that the podcaster's values aligned with their own and that it was possible to recognize the «honesty» of the podcaster from the very beginning. Also, maintaining listening to a podcaster over a long period of time was also an indicator of trust: thereby, they came to know the podcaster/s and familiarized themselves with their research culture and work.

The importance of trust varied depending on the genre of the podcasts that listeners chose. For those who listened to podcasts for fun and entertainment, concerns about trust were minimal. However, when it came to information and news podcasts, listeners naturally sought out trustworthy sources. This distinction was particularly emphasized in the Greek data, while Finnish respondents did not highlight this difference as much. This discrepancy may be attributed to the research context; the community research focused on news media, even though the questions addressed overall media consumption.

Conclusions

In this article, we have compared the listening habits of young adults listening to podcasts in Finland and Greece. We have been analyzing how podcast listening can be understood by utilizing Kate Lacey's (2023) concept of labour: as an active process of exercising citizenship consisting of «encounters with others in the public sphere through ordinary, everyday media technologies» (*Ibidem*). Our research sample has been relatively small, making it difficult to draw broad generalizations. However, our findings provide a perspective on understanding the nature of the current media environment, which is essential when considering the role of podcasts in journalism.

The analysis reveals very well the complexity of the media environment young people are living in. Using media content involves an ongoing process of decision-making between genres and platforms. As the analysis revealed, young people consider the interest in the content to be a key criterion. However, their responses indicated an aspiration to enhance their understanding of the surrounding society. Thus, based on the data, they cannot be regarded as passive regarding societal issues.

Literary critic and theorist N. Katherine Hayles (2012: 12) has argued that in Western information-saturated societies, the primary limitation is attention. There is an overwhelming amount of information and too little time to attend to it. She introduces the concept of hyper-reading, which refers to the way people skim, scan, and juxtapose digital texts to find relevant content. Hayles sees these practices as a strategic response to an information-intensive media environment. Similarly, the way young people discuss their listening habits in our data can be seen as a form of strategic engagement with audio content.

The strategy Hayles discusses can be seen as the basis of the labour the

young podcast listeners do when entering the audio world. The next aspect concerning labour is the atmosphere, which, as we argued, is fruitful for understanding the complex nature of podcasts as a medium. It includes both the material aspects of sound and voice (tone of voice) used, societal relationships, habits, aspirations and policies to talk about them. This highly delicate field highlights what Lacey (2023: 1) portrays as «the disembodied, dispersed, and domesticated encounters with others in the public sphere through ordinary, everyday media technologies». The young people's comments about the need to find the balance between different (conflicting) views speak about these encounters. Highlighting balance is imperative in a democratic society, but unfortunately, the media often favour conflicts and discord.

We argue that trust in (journalistic) podcast content lies, then, in its capacity to debate and navigate topics within conflicts and strive for balance – which is, naturally, a challenging and non-neutral concept. From that point of view, our data indicated that young people recognize the importance of fact-checking, which demonstrates a proactive approach to their media consumption. The occasional criticisms regarding the «seriousness» of the podcast atmosphere are important to consider, especially when discussing trust. While this perspective may be typical of the younger generation, it would be beneficial to explore the theme in greater detail. Finally, we emphasize that these encounters are multidimensional and occur within everyday life, rather than in an abstract space, as often suggested by the Habermasian perspective. These interactions take place amidst various media content, devices, and technologies. Thus, it is crucial to recognize podcasts as multimodal media. This aspect has often been overlooked in Western culture, where printed text has traditionally been viewed as the primary means of conveying information. The multimodality of podcast listening came up in the comments, where visual elements of podcast were mentioned. The interplay between visual and auditory aspects significantly influenced young people's attitudes, particularly when they encountered contradictions. Their engagement and willingness to follow the podcast were affected by this dynamic.

Based on the analysis, knowing listening audiences, especially from the perspective of how listening is labour, is particularly important. This requires much research focused on the audience and theoretical reflection on how to structure a complex media environment.

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