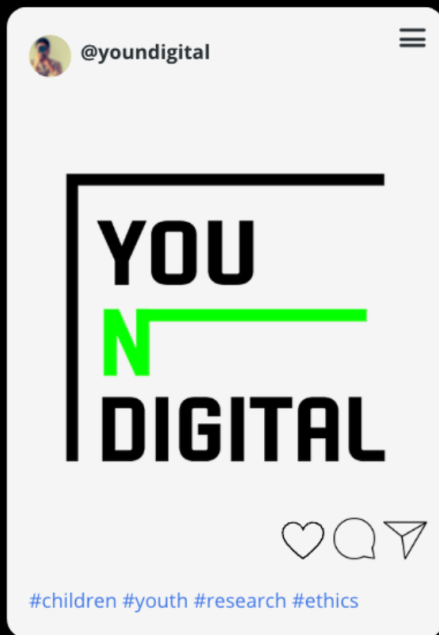


Vamos falar sobre ética na investigação com crianças e jovens?

Aquilo que ninguém partilhou online... até agora

Let's talk about ethics in research with children and young people?

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*LET'S TALK ABOUT ETHICS IN RESEARCH WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE?
What nobody shared online... until now*

Teresa Sofia Castro, Maria João Leote de Carvalho e Maria José Brites

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Thank you so much!

We express our gratitude to each other for the solidarity, patience, and commitment we have all shown throughout every stage of this project.

Teresa Sofia, Maria João e Maria José

INTRODUÇÃO

Teresa Sofia Castro*

Maria João Leote de Carvalho**

Maria José Brites***

Ao longo das últimas décadas, as mais diversas áreas científicas têm expandido significativamente o interesse no estudo da juventude, pela sua irrequietude fora da norma social, e da infância, quando os seus direitos de cidadania e de proteção começaram a ser acautelados. Atualmente, crianças e jovens são estudados enquanto atores sociais, sujeitos ativos no seu próprio desenvolvimento e na participação na vida em sociedade nesta era digital. A adoção desta orientação implica ir mais além do estudo sobre como são influenciados por estruturas e sistemas sociais, mas identificar e analisar como também resistem, negociam e reinterpretam essas estruturas e sistemas nas suas ações quotidianas. Para esta perspetiva, muito contribuiu a aprovação, no final do século XX, da Convenção das Nações Unidas sobre os Direitos da Criança (1989), que deu corpo a profundas mudanças no estatuto social das gerações mais novas e que se refletiram nos mais diversos campos de pesquisa.

A par das transformações sociais intensas e aceleradas que marcam os contextos de vida em qualquer parte do mundo, o enfoque atual no campo da investigação suscita um debate ético e epistemológico sobre o(s) lugar(es) da infância e da juventude nas sociedades contemporâneas, o que remete para o paradigma da competência (Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 1998; Jenks, 2009). Não mais crianças e jovens podem continuar a ser encarados como objetos

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passivos nas pesquisas de que são alvo; pelo contrário, por muitos investigadores são vistos como peritos nos assuntos que os afetam diretamente, reconhecida como imprescindível a sua colaboração e a sua competência para ajudar a compreender fenômenos através das suas próprias experiências de vida.

Nestes últimos anos, crianças e jovens adquiriram crescente relevância na qualidade de grupos centrais na configuração das dinâmicas comunicativas contemporâneas, marcadas pela omnipresença de media digitais e de múltiplas plataformas de interação. Novas realidades sociodigitais, que acarretam desafios éticos cada vez mais complexos e desafiantes aos investigadores, são amplificados pela possibilidade da participação dos mais novos nas diferentes etapas das pesquisas. Esta é uma reflexão oportuna sobre a necessidade de um equilíbrio cuidadoso entre inovação metodológica e responsabilidade ética, de respeito pelas vozes daqueles que muitas vezes são marginalizados ou silenciados nas discussões académicas e sociais.

O ebook *Vamos falar sobre Ética na Investigação com Crianças e Jovens - Aquilo que ninguém partilhou online... até agora* foi pensado e realizado por investigadoras cujas áreas científicas dialogam e cujos posicionamentos epistemológicos se abraçam na importância de uma investigação ética com e para as crianças e os jovens. Acima de tudo, é um convite ao diálogo contínuo e a uma nova forma de pensar e fazer investigação.

Os textos contidos nesta publicação tiveram a sua origem no Ciclo de Podcasts, realizado, no âmbito do projeto **YouNDigital - Jovens, Notícias e Cidadania Digital**. Foi intenção das autoras destas duas produções que os capítulos apresentados neste ebook não correspondessem à mera transcrição integral de cada conversa-entrevista, mas antes que se constituam como textos sistematizadores das principais questões debatidas com cada investigadora/a convidado/a.

Esta é uma publicação que se co-constrói-se a partir do que é vivido no terreno: É uma contribuição original e, acima de tudo, essencial para a reflexão ética, e para a formação de investigadores e estudantes, num tempo marcado pelo inesperado, o incerto, o volátil, a exclusão, a diversidade e a desigualdade, que atravessa as biografias

de todas as pessoas, e em particular, a dos participantes jovens com quem investigamos.

É uma compilação de visões teórico-empíricas, perspectivas metodológicas e éticas partilhadas com a generosidade de doze investigadores: Annamária Neag, Carla Sousa, Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam, Daniela Jaramillo-Dent, Denise Mensonides, Eckart Müller-Bachmann, Elisabeth Staksrud, Ellen Middaugh, John Magnus Dahl, Ricardo Campos, Vera Duarte e Vítor Sérgio Ferreira. Nesta publicação cruzam-se várias áreas científicas, desde as ciências da comunicação à sociologia, antropologia e psicologia, oito países e três continentes. O foco nos direitos das crianças e dos jovens e a importância da investigação ética percorre todo o livro; uma ética situada, (re)adaptável e atenta às dinâmicas inerentes à relação investigador-participante.

Ao longo dos capítulos, transborda também a complexidade e a dificuldade de aceder a populações muito específicas. Contextos marcados pela vulnerabilidade, pela marginalidade, pela deficiência intelectual, pelos (ar)ativistas, pelos mais radicais, pela multiculturalidade, pelo o Norte e o Sul, pelos migrantes e refugiados.

Assente numa lógica colaborativa de partilha entre as autoras deste ebook (e também através dos seus projetos) e investigadores/as convidados/as, a escrita de cada capítulo contou com a revisão entre pares.

De estrutura pouco ‘clássica’, o leitor pode encontrar em cada capítulo os temas abordados e a informação sobre cada investigador/a convidado/a, nomeadamente nota biográfica, interesses de investigação, propostas de recursos e de bibliografia.

Desperta-se o investigador “bricoleur” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), aquele que tem a sensibilidade de ler e escutar estes terrenos, aquilo que não é verbalizado, aquele (se) adapta metodologias para responder às realidades que encontra, aquele que se preocupa em (re)criar um ambiente seguro, inclusivo e gratificante às crianças e aos jovens que lhes doam o seu tempo e a sua voz.

Em suma, aqui pode encontrar uma série de reflexões e de práticas que destacam a importância da co-criação, da adaptabilidade metodológica, e da reflexividade ética. Em todos os capítulos, fica clara a necessidade de ir além das abordagens tradicionais de investigação,

adotando métodos que respeitem a autonomia e a agência das crianças e dos jovens, ao mesmo tempo que garantem a sua proteção e segurança. Um importante contributo para os/as investigadores/as que trabalham com populações jovens, oferecendo não só orientações práticas, mas também uma plataforma para repensar as éticas da investigação, as que estão no papel e as que acontecem na prática.

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INTRODUCTION

Teresa Sofia Castro*

Maria João Leote de Carvalho**

Maria José Brites***

Over the last few decades, various scientific fields have significantly expanded their interest in studying youth, due to their restlessness outside social norms, and childhood, as their citizenship and protection rights began to be safeguarded. Nowadays, both generations are studied as social actors, active subjects in their own development and participation in societal life in this digital era. This orientation goes beyond studying how they are influenced by social structures and systems; it seeks to identify and analyze how they also resist, negotiate, and reinterpret these structures and systems through their everyday actions. This perspective was strongly shaped by the approval, at the end of the 20th century, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which led to profound changes in the social status of younger generations, reflected across various fields of research.

Alongside the intense and accelerated social transformations that characterize life contexts worldwide, current research focuses on an ethical and epistemological debate about the place(s) of childhood and youth in contemporary societies, relating to the competency paradigm (Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 1998; Jenks, 2009). Children and youth can no longer be seen as passive objects of research; instead, many researchers now regard them as experts on matters that directly affect them. Their collaboration and competence to understand

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phenomena through their lived experiences are increasingly seen as essential.

In recent years, children and youth have gained growing relevance as central groups in shaping contemporary communicative dynamics, characterized by the omnipresence of digital media and multiple interaction platforms. These new socio-digital realities bring increasingly complex ethical challenges for researchers, amplified by the possibility of younger participants engaging in various stages of research. This reflects the need for a careful balance between methodological innovation and ethical responsibility, respecting the voices of those who are often marginalized or silenced in academic and social discussions.

The ebook *Let's Talk About Ethics in Research with Children and Youth - What No One Shared Online... Until Now* was conceived and created by researchers whose scientific areas interact and whose epistemological positions align in emphasizing ethical research with and for children and youth. Above all, it is an invitation to ongoing dialogue and a new way of thinking and conducting research.

The texts contained in this publication originated from the Podcast Series held, as part of the **YouNDigital Project - Young People, News and Digital Citizenship**. The authors of these two productions intended that the chapters presented in this ebook would not be mere full transcriptions of each conversation-interview but rather systematic texts of the main issues discussed with each invited researcher.

This is a publication co-constructed from lived fieldwork experiences. It is an original and, above all, essential contribution to ethical reflection and to training researchers and students in a time marked by the unexpected, the uncertain, the volatile, exclusion, diversity, and inequality, all of which traverse the biographies of everyone, particularly the young participants with whom we conduct research.

This is a compilation of theoretical-empirical views, methodological perspectives, and ethical reflections shared with the generosity of twelve researchers: Annamária Neag, Carla Sousa, Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam, Daniela Jaramillo-Dent, Denise Mensonides, Eckart Müller-Bachmann, Elisabeth Staksrud, Ellen Middaugh, John Magnus

Dahl, Ricardo Campos, Vera Duarte, and Vítor Sérgio Ferreira. This publication crosses several scientific fields, including communication sciences, sociology, anthropology, and psychology, spanning eight countries and three continents. The focus on the rights of children and youth and the importance of ethical research permeates the entire book, presenting an ethics that is situated, adaptable, and attentive to the dynamics inherent in the researcher-participant relationship.

Throughout the chapters, the complexity and difficulty of accessing very specific populations is evident. These contexts are marked by vulnerability, marginality, intellectual disability, activists, radicals, multiculturalism, the Global North and South, migrants, and refugees.

Following a collaborative logic of sharing between the authors of this ebook and invited researchers, each chapter was peer-reviewed.

With a less 'classical' structure, readers can find in each chapter the themes addressed and information about each invited researcher, including a biographical note, research interests, and suggestions for resources and bibliography.

The 'bricoleur' researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) is awakened – one who is sensitive to reading and listening to the field, to what is not verbalized, one who adapts methodologies to respond to the realities encountered, one who cares about (re)creating a safe, inclusive, and rewarding environment for the children and youth who donate their time and voice.

In summary, this ebook offers a series of reflections and practices highlighting the importance of co-creation, methodological adaptability, and ethical reflexivity. Across all chapters, it is clear that there is a need to go beyond traditional research approaches, adopting methods that respect the autonomy and agency of children and youth while ensuring their protection and safety. It is an important contribution for researchers working with young populations, offering not only practical guidance but also a platform to rethink research ethics—both those written on paper and those enacted in practice.

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“IT TAKES TIME TO BUILD TRUST”

Perspectives on Ethics in Research with Young Unaccompanied Refugees, with Annamária Neag




Keywords:

- Media literacy education
- Creative research methods
- Youth Digital Civic Activism
- Unaccompanied refugee youth
- Semi-structured interviews
- Participant observation
- Ethics of care
- Protection and participation in research
- Creative methods

ANNAMÁRIA NEAG

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WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THIS CHAPTER?

Annamária Neag shared her research on media literacy, which touches on different vulnerable groups, such as the unaccompanied refugee children and young activists. She provides insights into creative methods to make fieldwork inclusive, involving digital literate and non-literate in research crossing different cultures. The board game used in the research facilitated ice-breaking and language barriers. During the conversation, Annamária disclosed with an open heart the intricacies of “ethics of care”. Building trust, consent, protection and participation are unavoidable topics. At the end of this chapter, it is possible to find some reading suggestions shared by Annamária. You can listen to this conversation in full on  Spotify

WHO IS ANNAMÁRIA NEAG?

Annamária Neag is an assistant professor at the Research Centre of Media and Journalism Studies, University of Groningen, and a member of the Digital Inclusion Lab at the same institution.

She just finished leading an international research project focusing on youth digital civic activism at Charles University, in Prague, *Czechia*. Annamária also received a prestigious EU-funded Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship, through which she researched the lived media experiences of unaccompanied refugee youth across four European countries. In her latest project, she worked with young climate activists in Eastern Europe.

CONTEXTUALIZING ANNAMARIA'S RESEARCH

Annamária Neag's field of expertise is media literacy education, with a keen interest in understanding how young people and children use digital technologies and whether these technologies help them become more civically active. Her interest in inclusive media literacy education practices began during her work with a very vulnerable population: unaccompanied refugee children, coming from different countries, mostly boys.

“Many young people were coming from Syria, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and many different countries at the end of 2016, 2017... Most of them were under 18. (...) Why there are more boys may be linked to the dangerous journey they needed to take from any African country or Middle Eastern country across the Mediterranean Sea. They were coming on boats on their own without their families. So, I would assume more boys would be sent by their families. This might be one of the reasons that there were less girls.” (Annamária Neag)

BEING CREATIVE IN PROVIDING A HEALTHY FIELDWORK ENVIRONMENT

Annamária Neag values creative methods in her research, particularly when working with vulnerable groups, like asylum seekers. As many arrive from a very difficult journey, creative approaches provide unique experiences and a more ethical and beneficial research process. According to her, this approach also has the potential for diverse and impactful research outcomes. Additionally, she emphasizes

the importance of incorporating playfulness into human interactions in research, highlighting the significance of being able to go beyond overly traditional methods.

“The asylum seekers, for instance, are in sort of a limbo state. They are still not in the country, in a way, because they are not in full legality, they're waiting to get refugee status. They're not back in their home country, either. So most of them have very serious mental health problems because of the journey they have taken. Using creative methods, rather than let's say semi-structured interviews, is better for them in terms of ethics and well-being. It also can give very different results in terms of research data. This can easily be adapted to be used with other groups as well. We [human beings] like to play. We forget how important it is to make situations a bit more playful, not to be always so serious.” (Annamária Neag)

But Annamária explains how she got this insight. The fieldwork initially included semi-structured interviews and participant observation, alongside a web-based media diary for unaccompanied refugee youth. However, she soon realized the group's heterogeneity during the pilot project.

“(...) we realized the group of young people was very heterogeneous. Some of them were YouTubers but others were not very literate, they were struggling with writing and reading in their own language. We realized quite early the media diary would not work.” (Annamária Neag)

Recognizing these limitations, the researcher sought a more inclusive approach.

“When contacting an artist and talking about these issues we switched to a more inclusive approach, ‘Why don't we make a board game?’. We created a board game, and it was an excellent choice.” (Annamária Neag)

The board game entailed selecting app logos, enabling even non-literate participants to engage by recognizing familiar icons

on their phones. This approach facilitated a safer and more playful atmosphere for the refugee youth, mitigating their frequent exposure to formal questioning by authorities. It was also important to rebalance power dynamics within the research setting. While acknowledging that complete power shifts are unattainable, Annamária Neag found that this creative approach allowed a more equitable distribution of power between her and the youths, during the fieldwork.

“Even those young people who couldn't read were able to recognise, for instance, WhatsApp or Facebook because it was on their phone as well.” (Annamária Neag)

Annamária Neag found it enlightening to witness the diversity within the group of young people which encouraged her to broaden her perspectives, and "helped thinking outside the box." This realization challenged the common assumptions researchers make based on the youth in their own countries, “most 15-year-olds can do this or that”.

Despite being low literate or illiterate, “they are capable of coming from a different continent” and adapting to digital technologies upon arriving in Europe. Thus, for the researcher,

"It was very interesting to see the different uses of digital technology and how the affordances mean different things to these young people coming from different cultures (...) some of them, for instance, got the phone on their way to Europe. So it was very interesting to see the different uses of digital technology” (Annamária Neag)

Another project involving the Fridays for Future initiative further emphasized the significance of individual backgrounds and experiences. Annamária noted the contrast between activist youth from Hungary and Czechia. The two countries share geographical proximity and histories, nevertheless, the two groups of activists made different use of digital tools. This recognition of diversity and the cultural influences on technology usage underscored the need to approach research and scholarly work with a keen awareness of individual contexts and varied interpretations.

"So something that we should always have in mind when writing a grant application or article, is to try not to forget about these differences." (Annamária Neag)

THE ETHICAL SENSIBLE DOMAINS OF PROTECTION AND PARTICIPATION

"One may struggle to fill in the forms for the Ethics Committee, but how one does research, why one does research and how to protect participants are really important in my view (...) you need to think about risk management and ethical issues (...) And then we get to the field, and the field is so much messier and more difficult." (Annamária Neag)

Annamária encountered several ethical challenges, particularly in the sensitive domains of trust-building, cultural integration, consent acquisition, and participant protection.

BUILDING TRUST

Navigating the complexities of building trust proved challenging, as initial scepticism prevailed within the community of young refugees and asylum-seekers. An outsider's arrival often elicited wariness, necessitating considerable time and effort to establish rapport. "It takes some time to build trust."

This process varied across different countries, but collaboration with NGOs and dedicated social workers was pivotal for Annamária in bridging connections. Through their facilitation, she got invaluable insights from observations and informal interactions with the youth. Reflecting on this immersive engagement, the importance of extended presence emerged, highlighting the perpetual struggle between resource constraints and the depth of engagement desired.

"That enabled me to spend time in the accommodation centres observing what was happening and chatting with them. It was a very interesting experience. If it was possible to redo it, I would try to

spend even more time there. It's always a question of funding and how much time we have". (Annamária Neag)

CULTURAL INTEGRATION

Navigating the intricacies of cross-cultural research poses notable challenges. In preparation for fieldwork, meticulous groundwork involved data verification, collaboration with NGOs, and language considerations tailored to participant demographics.

"For instance, when preparing the information in flyers, the consent and the assent forms were translated into the languages they came from most: Arabic for youth from Middle-Eastern countries or Tigrinya for young people from Eritrea, and in English for some English speakers." (Annamária Neag)

The importance of having interpreters in transcending language barriers became apparent. However, some complexities were introduced regarding question fidelity and interpretive influence.

"What was the question?" and what kind of answers did you get? Because there's one more person there, interpreting what is being said. That needs to be, of course, taken into consideration." (Annamária Neag)

Doing research in Italy was easier for Annamária, "Speaking a bit of Italian when in Italy, helped."

ASKING FOR CONSENT

The distinct regulatory landscape concerning ethics across different countries added another layer of complexity. "[In] the UK we had very strict and very clear regulations on what we had to do", get a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check or work with minors and the research documents (e.g. consent forms) to submit to the Ethics Committee.

The risk management plan and consent procedures encompassing diverse consent methodologies and risk mitigation strategies exemplified a dedication to upholding ethical standards and participant welfare within Annamária's research framework.

"(...) for those over 14 years old to 18, consent is very important, for those between 14 and 16, we had an assent form, and for those over 16, we had the consent form. In this case, asking for parents' consent was really difficult because they were coming without their parents. We tried to get consent from the social workers who were in charge of these young people. And that was really important. Another issue was with those who were illiterate. When doing the pilot, we realized that some young people were not able to read and sign the forms. We needed to go back to the Ethics Committee, to get their approval to get an audio consent to take part in the research. Another application was submitted to the ethics board to get audio consent from the young people." (Annamária Neag)

PARTICIPANT PROTECTION

The commitment to the "ethics of care" (Sakr & Steemers, 2022) helped the researcher balance professional detachment and emotional impact, the emotional resonance, ethical boundaries, and empathic communication with participants while upholding research integrity, emphasising the profound impact of these meaningful exchanges on both parties involved. She remembers the reply of a Syrian girl when asked "What does the phone mean to you?", "All my life is on my phone. All my family is there. My friends are there, my pets, my home is there." This is not easy to hear...

To Annamária finding the balance between participant protection and agency preservation posed intricate dilemmas, exemplified by decisions on data anonymization and participant visibility noting the nuanced negotiation of participant preferences for data disclosure. Transparent communication is very important, "Respecting participants' agency and informed consent remains paramount, with participants actively involved in decisions that affect their representation and visibility."

Annamária Neag shares two situations that occurred when working with the activist youth regarding the anonymization of their data: “Sometimes they specifically say, ‘Yeah, it’s not needed. I want my name there. I want to show that I’m doing this’”. Another situation was very challenging. A young person who had set up a Facebook page to share his journey and his difficulties with the legal system in Sweden. The young activist shared his name on the Facebook page, and he was very proud of that because he was providing information to other young people. “So how not to deny their agency, and how to deal with these issues and still try to protect them?”

When participants state they want to be quoted, the researcher discusses with them what that visibility entails, so they clearly understand it. But when their final decision is ‘Yes’, then “I think we shouldn’t deny them the right to do so.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

To young researchers, Annamária Neag suggests going to the field “with an open heart and an open mind”, despite sometimes being challenging, because the best approach is to be open to “What would work for them? What I try now to incorporate more is starting from just asking young participants what would work for them.”

■ IN-TEXT REFERENCE

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■ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF ANNAMÁRIA NEAG:

<https://www.rug.nl/staff/a.neag/?lang=en>
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DESCONSTRUIR “ESTA VISÃO DO ‘NOSSO’ E DO ‘DELES’”

Perspetivas sobre ética, participação e auto-determinação na investigação com jovens com deficiência, com Carla Sousa




Keywords:

- Media Studies
- Jogos
- Inclusão social
- Educação para os media
- Deficiência
- Jovens
- Metodologias participativas
- Metodologias qualitativas
- Tokenismo
- Capacitismo


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O QUE PODEMOS ESPERAR DESTE CAPÍTULO?

A necessidade de adoção de um paradigma mais ético e empoderador na investigação com jovens com deficiência, onde a sua participação contribui não apenas para o avanço do conhecimento, mas também para a promoção da sua autodeterminação e reconhecimento como agentes capazes e participativos, é o tema central da conversa com Carla Sousa. No final deste capítulo, pode encontrar as sugestões de leitura partilhadas pela investigadora.

Pode ouvir a entrevista na íntegra no  Spotify

QUEM É CARLA SOUSA?

Carla Sousa é doutorada em Ciências da Comunicação, mestre em Psicologia Clínica e da Saúde e licenciada em Psicologia. Os seus principais objetivos de investigação estão direcionados para os estudos dos media, com um foco particular em jogos, inclusão, comportamento, aprendizagem e diversidade humana.

Na Universidade Lusófona (Portugal), faz parte do Centro de Investigação em Comunicação Aplicada, Cultura e Novas Tecnologias (CICANT) e é professora auxiliar nas licenciaturas em Psicologia e em Videojogos. Tem participado em vários projetos e redes científicas financiados nacional e internacionalmente. Desde 2022, é embaixatriz individual da *Women in Games* e, desde 2023, membro do *advisory board* da ECREA.

CONTEXTUALIZANDO O PERCURSO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO DE CARLA SOUSA

A experiência inicial da Carla Sousa é na área da Psicologia, em Psicologia Clínica e da Saúde. Começou a trabalhar na área dos jogos, da comunicação, ainda antes das questões da deficiência se cruzarem no seu percurso. No doutoramento, ainda que a sua visão já fosse na área da comunicação, era mais relacionada com teorias dos efeitos. Isto é, procurava saber como é que os jogos podem ter um efeito A ou um efeito B nas populações. Por conveniência, na altura trabalhava nessa área enquanto psicóloga e acabou por escolher as pessoas com deficiência intelectual para participantes desta sua investigação. À medida que começou a desenvolver a pesquisa, foi confrontando-se com uma realidade que marca o campo da deficiência intelectual, e o da deficiência em geral, e que se prende com os modelos de ver essa condição.

Por um lado, os modelos médicos e clínicos de olhar a deficiência e em que, resumidamente, as pessoas com deficiência são vistas como sendo ou como tendo elas uma condição que deve ser alterada. No fundo, como se devessem ser as pessoas com deficiência que, de alguma forma, se devem adaptar à sociedade. Por outro lado, uma outra forma de ver a mesma situação, mais associada ao chamado modelo social. Neste último, é a sociedade que, de alguma forma, deve adaptar-se às pessoas com deficiência. O que implica ver que a incapacidade é gerada por essa impossibilidade ou falta de vontade da sociedade, muitas vezes, de adaptar-se às pessoas com deficiência. Assim, o que se coloca também em causa são as questões dos direitos

humanos, como a aplicação da Convenção sobre os Direitos das Pessoas com Deficiência.

Depois do confronto com estes modelos, Carla Sousa fez um caminho em que procurou saber mais sobre o efeito dos jogos nesta área. Qquis saber como é que as pessoas com deficiência podem participar nos processos criativos de forma a tornar os jogos, e eventualmente outras formas de media, verdadeiramente acessíveis para si. Como é que estes jogos podem representar estas pessoas e as suas necessidades de acessibilidade sendo o jogo, e qualquer outro media, aspetos em que a sociedade deve acomodar as suas necessidades, de acordo com o modelo social já mencionado. Por exemplo, no caso de necessidades mais cognitivas e intelectuais, num jogo pode explicar-se um pouco melhor o seu funcionamento, ou reduzir-se a sobrecarga na memória.

Para quem não conhece a teoria dos efeitos, esta investigadora refere que importa destacar que assenta numa ideia mais interacional entre os media e as pessoas. Os jogos têm sempre um tipo de relação com audiências menos passivas porque enquanto se vê um filme ou se lê um jornal, tipicamente, não se participa numa interação tão direta como num jogo. O jogo só existe porque se interage com aquele media, porque se dá inputs, recebe-se feedbacks e por aí fora. Esta mudança de abordagem com a teoria dos efeitos foi importante para perceber que se as pessoas com deficiência intelectual não participassem de alguma forma no processo criativo, provavelmente estar-se-ia a perpetuar o impacto dessa interação naquilo que se chama o capacitismo, isto é, o preconceito social relativamente às pessoas com deficiência. Um preconceito que acaba por ser, de alguma forma extensível, ainda a algumas áreas de investigação.

PRINCIPAIS DESAFIOS NA INVESTIGAÇÃO COM JOVENS COM DEFICIÊNCIA

Existe um grande desafio em qualquer pesquisa quando uma pessoa que faz investigação pretende realmente trabalhar junto, ou trabalhar mais do que junto, com as comunidades para as quais e com as quais quer investigar, e que é ter de contornar a barreira para

chegar à comunidade, às instituições. Esse é o primeiro grande desafio que a investigadora aponta. Na área da deficiência observam-se duas problemáticas. Por um lado, há uma determinada sobreproteção das pessoas com deficiência pelas instituições onde estão e que lhes dão apoio. Por isso, pode-se perceber que pode haver uma visão mais capacitista e, ao mesmo tempo, estas pessoas serem bastante vulneráveis por existir esta proteção, por vezes excessiva, outras vezes não excessiva.

Há também um fenómeno que vem do lado da academia. Um fenómeno muito relacionado com o extrativismo. Carla Sousa realça como enquanto investigadores vamos ter com estas audiências e “utilizamos” as pessoas para aquilo que são as pesquisas. No fundo, o que está em causa é saber como é que a academia e estas instituições da sociedade civil crescem juntas ou não, ou como é que os investigadores simplesmente as “utilizam” para retirar os dados, fazer as teses e escrever os artigos e não se dá de volta.

Outro grande desafio, é chegar até às pessoas. Atualmente, Carla Sousa consegue chegar melhor às pessoas porque tem vindo a fazer um trabalho recíproco tentando evitar esse extrativismo. Por um lado, estabelecendo uma relação de confiança com as instituições e com as pessoas com deficiência, o que lhe permite ter parcerias. Entre essas parcerias destaca as que a Universidade Lusófona fez com a Federação Portuguesa para a Deficiência Mental - Humanitas ou com a Associação Portuguesa de Pais e Amigos do Cidadão Deficiente Mental (APPCDM) de Lisboa, entre outras instituições. Mais recentemente com o Centro de Educação para o Cidadão com Deficiência, CRL (CECD) de Sintra. Assim, tem algumas instituições-chave já referenciadas e isso ajuda-a muito na investigação.

No terreno, emergem outros desafios relacionados com este protecionismo e o *gatekeeping* que, por vezes, tendem a subjugar, de alguma forma, a voz das pessoas com deficiência, a voz das famílias ou de técnicos e profissionais. E, por mais que a sua experiência seja extremamente valiosa, essa não é ainda a experiência em primeira pessoa que Carla Sousa fez no seu trabalho, a experiência que valoriza por excelência.

Outros desafios mais práticos também surgem, nomeadamente na área da comunicação.

“Ao trabalharmos nos nossos projetos com pessoas neurodiversas, pessoas que podem ser neurodivergentes, pessoas cujo funcionamento intelectual e cognitivo é diferente do ‘nosso’, que têm características específicas e, mesmo se repararmos no meu discurso sobre este ‘nosso’, ainda há esta visão do ‘nosso’ e do ‘deles’. Por mais que tentemos desconstruir, está sempre a emergir e é um trabalho que fazemos também com as instituições. Muitas vezes, quando trabalhamos no campo com jogos, os cuidadores querem muito que as pessoas façam as coisas de uma determinada forma, influenciam um bocadinho. Depois há questões comunicacionais porque estas pessoas comunicam de formas distintas, comunicam através de tecnologias assistivas, comunicam verbalmente, mas ainda que de uma forma um pouco diferente que varia para cada pessoa. Quase que temos de ter um dicionário para cada participante da investigação para perceber que aquilo que queremos dizer é aquilo que está a ser entendido e garantir isso o mais possível.” (Carla Sousa)

Deste modo, há muitos desafios que surgem e contornar esses desafios será tão mais fácil, consequentemente, se os investigadores derem a palavra a estas pessoas porque são elas que dizem como é que compreendem o jogo, como é que se torna mais fácil, como é que se torna mais acessível. E como Carla Sousa salienta: “São também desses principais desafios que emergem as principais soluções.”

E como se pode ultrapassar os maiores desafios. Para esta investigadora o segredo é tentar empatizar o máximo com as diferentes pessoas. Mais uma vez, esses gatekeepers institucionais, estas famílias ou técnicos, muitas das vezes ou na maioria das vezes, senão todas as vezes, pelo menos naquilo com que ela se vem/tem confronta(n)do, têm esta sobreproteção e não é por uma intenção maquiavélica de excluir socialmente aquelas pessoas.

É importante perceber que se vive numa sociedade feita para pessoas sem deficiência e que o capacitismo está ainda institucionalizado. Essas pessoas, ao perceberem que as pessoas com que trabalham, os seus filhos e filhas ou as pessoas de quem gostam são

mais vulneráveis e excluídas dessa normatividade, tendem a protegê-las. O papel do investigador deve ser integrar essas ansiedades, integrar essas dificuldades e tentar também trabalhar com estas pessoas. Ainda que trabalhe com as pessoas com deficiência tentando que a sua voz seja a voz principal da investigação, há também que adotar sempre uma abordagem com todos os stakeholders, exatamente para coordenar isto, para que quando se chega ao campo toda a gente esteja relativamente confortável com aquilo que são as abordagens que estão a ser implementadas.

Carla Sousa tem trabalhado estas questões ao nível institucional, mas também com as famílias e com os técnicos. Da sua experiência, tem constatado que com as pessoas com deficiência acaba por ser mais fácil, às vezes até do que com outras populações em geral. Talvez porque as populações com deficiência, enquanto efeito também da sua exclusão, serem poucas vezes incluídas, a investigação lhes permita dizer o que pensam, dizer como querem que determinado processo criativo seja levado dali para a frente; têm muita vontade de participar.

Estas relações de confiança são relativamente demoradas a construir, sobretudo relações de qualidade. Na sua investigação, Carla Sousa adota normalmente abordagens metodológicas situadas num paradigma científico que fica algures entre o construtivismo e a teoria crítica. Este lado construtivista, que é construir aquilo que é a investigação com estas pessoas, implica uma relação de confiança e uma relação que se quer seja equitativa. Isto é, requer um desmontar das relações de poder que existem entre investigadores e participantes e que estão inerentes quando se entra no campo e se diz “nós somos os especialistas e somos professores de ensino superior”, ou algo parecido

Desmontar isto é complicado e exige essa relação de confiança. Obviamente que a experiência ajuda a melhorar este procedimento. Um dos exemplos que Carla Sousa dá refere-se ao facto de constatar que no seu doutoramento não tinha este procedimento, não sabia o suficiente, pelo menos até esse ponto. No projeto que integra, financiado pela Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, FCT [à data da entrevista] – GameIN (<https://doi.org/10.54499/2022.07939.PTDC>) os formulários de consentimento informado para as pessoas com

deficiência intelectual utilizam as fotografias de toda a equipa tendo em conta que muitas destas pessoas não têm capacidade de leitura, pelo menos não nos moldes que se espera na nossa sociedade. E isso ajuda a perceber quem é que as pessoas são e o que é podem esperar do investigador ou investigadora responsável sendo que tudo isso tentam tornar mais pictográfico, o mais visual possível, quando antes o que faziam era apresentar um consentimento informado normativo e alguém da equipa tentava traduzir ou interpretar para as pessoas. Havia, assim, o tal viés que revela a relação de poder na investigação. Não era a pessoa que detinha a informação e que a interpretava. Carla Sousa tem tentado desmontar esta questão, mesmo sabendo que não há a abordagem perfeita. Mas à medida que tem feito mais pesquisa, tem-se tornado mais apta.

Com alguns colegas nacionais e internacionais, tem também integrado a equipa de desenvolvimento num jogo que possa funcionar como umas cartas de suporte à compreensão da ética na investigação para pessoas que tenham dificuldades intelectuais ou que tenham algum tipo de alteração cognitiva. Podem ser pessoas com deficiência intelectual, mas que também pode simplificar, por exemplo, a compreensão para pessoas com muito baixa literacia.

O que se tenta trazer com este jogo é questões como, “a minha voz é muito importante na investigação”, “eu posso sair desta investigação quando eu quiser”, “quando eu não quiser participar mais digo”, entre outras. São materiais que podem ajudar não apenas este projeto, em particular, como eventualmente outros projetos de forma a tornar a ética menos filosófica e mais objetiva para todas as pessoas em geral.

Conforme nos conta, essas cartas resultam de um processo bastante intensivo da análise de materiais e publicações que abordaram a ética e as pessoas com deficiência intelectual. No site deste projeto, já está disponível o livro que resulta deste processo, em português (<https://doi.org/10.24140/gamein.01>) e em inglês (<https://doi.org/10.24140/gamein.02>). As cartas são uma segunda fase e a equipa está atualmente a terminar a validação, para já em português de Portugal e português do Brasil, por conveniência. As duas variações das cartas vão estar disponíveis em acesso aberto para as pessoas,

seguindo o que chamam muitas das vezes nos jogos ‘print and play’, isto é, as pessoas podem imprimir, cortar, etc. (em breve no site <https://gamein.ulusofona.pt/>).

Esta é outra coisa que Carla Sousa salienta nas investigações que faz na Universidade Lusófona com pessoas com deficiência intelectual. Tentam que todos os jogos, todos os recursos estejam disponíveis em acesso aberto porque também há um certo controlo de grandes companhias, de empresas de reabilitação, que vendem todos estes recursos muito caros e que os tornam inacessíveis à maioria da população. Enquanto agentes académicos e não comerciais, têm tentado fazer este esforço como uma das formas de dar um contributo de volta às pessoas, à sociedade daquilo que recebem enquanto financiamento público pelo seu trabalho.

INQUIETAÇÕES ÉTICAS NA PESQUISA COM JOVENS COM DEFICIÊNCIA

As principais inquietações éticas que surgem na investigação sobre e com pessoas neurodivergentes, isto é, pessoas com deficiência intelectual, algumas pessoas no espectro do autismo, e tantas outras, prendem-se com sabermos até que ponto aquilo que entendemos sobre o comportamento da pessoa, e daquilo que aquela pessoa nos está a dizer, é efetivamente o que está a querer dizer.

“No fundo, construímos formas partilhadas de comunicar mais ou menos normativas e quando alguém não partilha das mesmas formas de comunicação surge aqui para mim um dilema ético muito grande que é saber como é que nós estamos a interpretar. Acho que é um desafio mais ou menos transversal a toda a investigação, muito em particular na investigação qualitativa, mas aqui ele ganha outros contornos.” (Carla Sousa)

A questão que se levanta muitas vezes, no entender de Carla Sousa, é o facto das pessoas terem alguma dificuldade em dar a sua opinião porque são pessoas que, em geral, apesar de serem até maiores de idade ou muito perto disso, não estão muito habituadas a tomar

decisões exatamente pela forma como crescem numa sociedade muito capacitista, que as lê como extremamente vulneráveis. Assim, quando são chamadas a participar em entrevistas nos projetos que Carla Sousa tem desenvolvido, muitas vezes dão respostas muito breves e curtas. Muitas vezes porque pensam “como é que estas pessoas estão a perder tempo comigo” ou “quem sou eu agora para dizer que este jogo não está assim tão bem!”.

O dilema que surge por vezes ao tentar contornar isto é perceber até onde é que não está a enviesar as respostas. O dilema clássico do investigador sobre os seus limites, sobre as possíveis leituras excessivas que possa vir a fazer. Por isso, é essencial que se perceba que não se investiga sozinho nem sozinha e deve-se tentar ao máximo discutir, perceber se esta compreensão é partilhada pela equipa, se é partilhada pela própria pessoa, tentar desmistificar, desmontar aquela frase, tentar perceber novamente.

Outra inquietação que Carla Sousa identifica dada a sua experiência na área é que falta muito para perceber as pessoas com deficiência intelectual em Portugal à luz de outras lentes que são importantes. Há vários estudos na área, mas só agora começam a emergir alguns estudos que abordam, por exemplo, como é que a problemática do género se cruza com as problemáticas da deficiência intelectual. Talvez em breve se possa perceber como é que esta condição se cruza com a acessibilidade dos media. Falta conhecimento sobre uma série de questões culturais e de características pessoais e socioeconómicas na investigação neste campo. Existem pessoas com deficiência que não estão em instituições, que estão sozinhas em casa, que estão escondidas ou ainda mais excluídas, e nas pesquisas tendesse a trabalhar com algumas que já têm resposta social, com as que já têm isso e que são mais facilmente acessíveis.

Outro dilema que tem levantado no seu trabalho é perceber como é que se pode chegar a pessoas que não estão em instituições, como é que se pode compreender estas pessoas considerando também a sua origem cultural, étnica, o seu género, e menos universalizando apenas o fato de terem uma deficiência.

SUGESTÕES PARA JOVENS INVESTIGADORES

Para qualquer população que tem características que a sociedade lê como não normativas, ou muito diferentes, como no caso das pessoas com deficiência, Carla Sousa sugere que deve-se tentar compreender e empatizar ao máximo com essa condição, mas perceber também onde é que não se consegue empatizar e perceber o lugar dessas pessoas em que nunca se vai estar. Tem de se dar voz às pessoas com essa condição.

O conselho que Carla Sousa destaca, quando se quer investigar com uma determinada população, é que o investigador deve envolver-se com essa população. Imagine-se que se quer investigar com jovens e crianças com deficiência intelectual ou, por exemplo, cegas. Nestes casos, sugere envolver-se na investigação uma pessoa adulta com essas características nem que seja numa espécie de consultoria ou no nível que for possível. Ter a certeza que se coloca a ciência ao serviço de uma sociedade que, já de si, é capacitista, implica desconstruir os preconceitos que existem sobre estas pessoas. Na área dos medias e dos jornalistas, criar evidência científica sobre as narrativas que a sociedade já tem sobre determinadas populações, é muito importante para isso envolver, a diferentes níveis, as pessoas que vivenciam os fenómenos.

■ PARA CONHECER MELHOR O TRABALHO DE CARLA SOUSA:

www.gamein.ulusofona.pt

www.operat.ulusofona.pt

■ LEITURAS SUGERIDAS POR CARLA SOUSA:

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“IT EMPOWERS THE YOUNG PARTICIPANTS TO HAVE CONTROL OVER HOW THEY REPRESENT THEIR LIVES AND COMMUNITIES”


Perspectives on the ethical conundrums of decolonial research, with Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam



Keywords:

- Africa
- Epistemologies of the South
- Majority world
- Mobile diary
- Mobile diary interview
- Decolonial methods
- Photovoice
- Youth centred approach
- Voice
- Digital divides
- Collaboration
- Research Assistants/Apprentices
- Informed consent


CHIKEZIE E. UZUEGBUNAM

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WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THIS CHAPTER?

The conversation with Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam helped us navigate the potential of decolonial methods (Santos 2014; Nyamnjoh & Brudvig 2017) to bridge the knowledge gap on children and young people’s engagement with digital technology in low-income communities, in Africa. The researcher’s epistemic positionality calls attention to the diversity of African youth’s digital everyday lives and how collaboration with other researchers and participants can help interpret their contexts. Also, it is important to keep in mind the digital North-South divides, and how these are expressed in the different and unconventional ways young Africans adopt, adapt, and assimilate digital media.

Besides the innovative youth-centred approaches, the researcher shared with us the inevitable conundrums that require ethical contemplation through the research process, in particular, layers of informed consent and power dynamics in the research field.

At the end of this chapter, it is possible to find Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam's key suggestions for young or less experienced researchers and reading suggestions. You can listen to this conversation in full on  Spotify

WHO IS CHIKEZIE E. UZUEGBUNAM?

Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam is a Rated Researcher by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa, a system for benchmarking the quality of South African researchers who count among the leaders in their fields of expertise and gives recognition to those who constantly produce high-quality research outputs (Source: NRF South Africa website). He teaches Media Studies and is the MA Programme Coordinator in the School of Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University, South Africa. He also serves as the Deputy Head of School for 2024 in the same department. He holds a PhD in Media Studies from the University of Cape Town, South Africa. He has published over 30 peer-reviewed academic outputs in the areas of digital technology and young people, popular culture, political and health communication, and misinformation. His latest book is *“Children and Young People’s Digital Lifeworlds: Domestication, Mediation, and Agency,”* published by Palgrave Macmillan.

CONTEXTUALIZING CHIKEZIE E. UZUEGBUNAM’S RESEARCH

The conversation with Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam begins with the context of African digitalities. Research evidence has shown that teenagers and young adults in Minority worlds, such as the U.S.A., North America and Western Europe, among others, have a lot of access to digital media, such as smartphones, computers, games, high speed, internet and social media. The researcher unpacks the use of the terms Majority world and Minority world.

“So these terms are used to refer to what has been previously known as the third world or the first world, or, more recently, as the global South and global North. So my use of the term Majority world here acknowledges that the majority of the population, poverty, landmass, and lifestyles are in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.” (Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam)

Children and young people in the Majority world countries, such as African countries, do not have the same access to digital technologies. There’s not much knowledge on how digital technology affects the lives of important social groups such as children and adolescents in Africa, or about digital access and opportunity, and the digital footprint of children in such a context. Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam clarifies that digital tools, like mobile phones, social media and the Internet are becoming quite popular and increasingly used on the African continent. Therefore, the researcher claims that it is crucial that researchers “like you and me, academics, policymakers and families” pay close attention to issues concerning children’s physical, psychological, and social development. It’s imperative to “prioritize the study of children and young people’s socialization through the media and the extent and nature of technology adoption, adaptation, and assimilation.”

Contemporary youth are raised in a digital world heavily influenced by digital media, social media, and other kinds of media. But, although young people constitute the majority of Africa’s population, adults and official institutions in Africa rarely listen to or take their voices and perspectives seriously. This patriarchal and socio-political framework continues to view young people as fragile, disruptive and incapable of self-regulation and reflection.

The researcher’s recent book *“Children and Young People’s Digital Life worlds: Domestication, Mediation, and Agency”* tries to fill knowledge gaps about children’s engagement with digital media in the African context. The book tries to foreground children’s agency and autonomy as full human beings with opinions about their own digital lives, prioritizing child and youth-centred approaches.

Despite the ongoing digital divides and disconnections faced by young people in low-income contexts, when their creativity is allowed to flourish, new possibilities emerge. In Africa, school curricula around computer digital literacy and how to leverage digital opportunities are very limited. Most digital literacy is done informally through self-learning and learning through their small social circle.

“Despite the never-ending issue of digital divides and digital disconnections, young people from low-income contexts are redefining what it means to be digitally active, what networked autonomies and socialities are possible with restricted resources, spaces, and what new imaginaries are activated when their youthful creativities are unleashed.” (Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam)

Overall, Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam’s current work with colleagues in South Africa aims to examine in depth the meanings that young people (age groups 18 - 30) give to the digital resources and infrastructures available in their locality. For the researcher, “these meanings tell us about their digital and social lives in unequal contexts”, and how young people are shaping knowledge production, social belonging and other aspects in ways that challenge Western-dominated narratives.

DECOLONIAL METHODS

Chikezie’s research team foreground marginalized children and young people’s lived experiences. Young people who live in the Majority world or the global South, and who do not have the same opportunities face “this sort of abysmal line that separates the North from the South.” For the researcher, young people should be seen as autonomous and resourced in the use of digital technology in everyday life.

Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam advocates for a decolonial exploratory framework that acknowledges “Africa’s epistemic diversity and which counters the enduring impacts of colonialism on contemporary identities, and by that, we embrace the notion of epistemologies of the South.” Young Africans, in the researcher’s words, are the ones “who are not following Western norms, who are involved in a process

of hybridizing local and global digital cultures and mixing cultures, to produce something new or something alternative for themselves.”

From this epistemic positionality about young Africans’ digital realities, he resorts to decolonial methods: mobile diaries, mobile diary interviews, decolonial listening, photovoice, and spatial mapping.

Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam details the decolonial methods for us in sequential order.

1. The objective of the mobile diary method is to construct a comprehensive depiction of the routine actions and activities that comprise the days before the mobile interview, mobile actions and other digital actions that are intricate, and integrated into ordinary everyday tasks. The approach is rooted in the media practice framework developed by Couldry (2004).
2. The mobile diary interview is the next step. It “involves sitting down with young participants to unpack the diary, to review nuances and details that may not have been captured in the diary.”
3. Decolonial listening is a “way to engage with young people on their terms, value their insights and contributions as equal partners in the research process”. It implies listening to how they navigate their digital life worlds, and how they create new imaginaries, despite social, political and economic constraints and challenges. To Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam, this method is relevant when there is a need to challenge the dominance of Western or hegemonic perspectives and value the experiences of African local communities with low income.
4. Photovoice combines photography with social action, offering a rich visual narrative that challenges preconceived notions or assumptions about African young people. Participants are provided with cameras, or use their mobile cameras, to photograph what depicts their digital lives or

their everyday lives. The photographs are then used as a basis for a conversation starter or group discussion.

“To communicate insights to researchers, policymakers and stakeholders (...) can then be impactful as it empowers the young participants to have control over how they represent their lives and communities rather than the way that researchers or other stakeholders represent them.” (Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam)

5. Spatial mapping is a method that involves enlisting young people and identifying the digital landmarks of the communities, such as the Wi-fi spots, electricity substations, or mobile phone towers. Secondly, it allows young people to:

“identify local spaces of popular digital life where it could be in street corners where youth gather (...) to exchange digital artefacts and digital resources in unconventional ways, where they gather to exchange music or produce digital media (...) spatial mapping can be done through a combination of hand-drawn maps that they draw or through using mobile geotagged photographs.” (Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam)

ETHICAL CONTEMPLATION

Doing research with young people in Africa touches on several ethical conundrums which Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam told us about.

Obtaining access to young participants in Nigeria, for example, the researcher went through a hard and time-consuming process. Nevertheless, “it’s doable, you can do that.” The process consisted of a three-step bureaucracy of seeking permissions and getting approvals to work with schoolchildren. He did the research in schools, so he had to get permission from the Ministry of Education. Then get permission from the school heads to get access to the school. And finally, getting consent from the parents of those who are below 18 years old.

“So it’s like a three-step kind of process that you have to go through and sometimes waiting for those approvals, especially from the Ministries of Education, can take time.” (Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam)

Other ethical constraints and complexities may arise, and they are sometimes inevitable while using decolonial or innovative methods, particularly in spaces where there are already existing digital divides and a lack of digital literacy. However, the researcher thinks these can be overcome, if there is a constant reflection and continuous contemplation of ethics.

“Contemplation of ethics and ethical considerations as you go along in the research and as you fine-tune the research process is necessary.” For example, when using the mobile diary method, several ethical issues include privacy concerns when participants are sharing personal, sensitive information about their daily lives. Researchers must treat this information as confidential. Of course, this is something that researchers already know. But there’s also the issue of consent. If participants are minors, for example, obtaining informed consent, as we talked about before, can be complex and time-consuming.

There’s also this interesting idea that data accuracy related to the reliability of self-reported data can be questionable, when young people are asked, for example, to report what they have done with mobile devices, over the past couple of days.

Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam is not sure that participants might remember every detail accurately. And there is the possibility that they may alter their behaviour and what they report, knowing that they are being observed, or that they have been expected to produce something.

Another one is decolonial listening; there is the danger of misinterpretation. Thus, “researchers must be vigilant against guarding against their own cultural biases”. Ensure that they have a deep understanding of the local context to accurately interpret the information shared by the local communities. Power dynamics can exist between the researchers and the community members, so “it’s crucial to navigate the power dynamics carefully to avoid reinforcing colonial power structures or hegemonic power structures.” To avoid

this it is important to approach the process as a collaborative process that empowers local voices.

And then there is also the issue of sustainability, where engagement should be designed for long-term relationships rather than a sort of short-term research goals, where researchers go to a location, and “just do what is sometimes called the rape model, where you just go into the community or into the space and you just take the data you want, and you leave without forming any long-term relationship with the community, with the context itself. So by not doing this [rape model], it ensures that the benefits of research are sustained within the community”, explains Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam.

The photovoice method can also bring up ethical issues around consent, privacy, and the potential for harm, because there is also the risk of harm or stigma which may portray individuals or communities being photographed in a negative light, which can then perpetuate certain stereotypes that are already out there about such spaces. Researchers must ensure that participants are fully aware of these risks and take steps to help them mitigate these risks by anonymizing photographs or obtaining consent from all identifiable subjects that are involved in the photographs they are taking.

“So it is important, first of all, that participants give informed consent. Understanding how their images and stories will be used, especially if the young people are photographing people as part of their stories that they want to tell about the environment. If they are photographing other people it is important they explain this to the subjects. Also, privacy is crucial, as some photographs may inadvertently reveal sensitive information or identifiable features of individuals who may not want some parts of themselves to be shown in the study.”
(Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam)

It is also important to consider the power dynamics between the researchers and participants, ensuring that the research project does not exploit or misrepresent the voices it aims to amplify.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

“It’s a complex question to answer, but I may have some wisdom to share,” states the researcher.

When talking about ethics in research, Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam first mentions the importance of collaboration and being aware of differences but also the overlaps. Young researchers must be open to collaborating, with not just their peers, but also other senior people in the field. And there should, also, be a collaboration with young research participants.

“We need to have more South-South collaborations, but also North-South collaborations where global South and global North collaborate to get a more holistic picture of children and young people’s digital lives, and the ethical issues that can come up.” (Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam)

For example, in the project Uzuegbunam and colleagues are doing in South Africa, they are trying to not just reach out to these young people as research participants; they want to bring young participants in as research assistants and research apprentices, where they can also learn as much as they can about the research process. This helps the researchers get more insight into the environment that they are researching. The young research assistants and apprentices also help reach “other young people like themselves, and do some interviews, or do some observation and stuff like that. And it’s really going well with that experiment.”

Another thing the researcher recommends is that it is important for researchers, whether they are young or experienced, to continue to treat research participants as full human beings and not with a deficit mindset. With a mindset that acknowledges their autonomy and rights. Oftentimes researchers go into the field, and they think that the participants need to be saved. “No, your research does not have to save them.” So treat them as full human beings and not as research problems, but as “people in their context, who understand their context more than you.” In other words, research with empathy and not sympathy (see Gair, 2011).

There's a big difference when you research with empathy and not sympathy or pity.

The last thing Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam wants to say is that conducting research with children and young people is a delicate and vital field. Therefore, researchers should practice ethical mindfulness and sensitivity by constantly reflecting on, discussing and revising the ethical and methodological procedures in their work. Because the research process is really a continuous journey of contemplation. Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam believes that researchers should not only discuss their research methods, ethics, guidelines, and processes at the beginning of their work, but they should also critically engage with the ethical challenges that they face during their research and constantly change, adapt, and revise them as much as possible.

■ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF CHIKEZIE E. UZUEGBUNAM:

<https://www.ru.ac.za/jms/staff/drchikezieeeuzuegbunam/>

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“ALONG WITH ACQUIRING RESEARCH EXPERIENCE, I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT ETHICS”

Perspectives on ethics in digital research with Daniela Jaramillo-Dent



Keywords:

- Migration
- TikTok
- Digital media
- Identity
- Culture and social justice
- Algorithmic (in)visibility
- Minority representation
- Digital inequality
- Research methods
- Media literacy

DANIELA JARAMILLO-DENT

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WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THIS CHAPTER?

In a captivating conversation with the researcher Daniela Jaramillo-Dent, she talked about the intricate realm of young immigrant content creators on TikTok and their engagement with online narratives surrounding immigration. Daniela Jaramillo-Dent research journey unveils the voices and perspectives of Latin American immigrants in the United States and Spain, and she provides insights into the methodological decisions and ethical challenges in studying vulnerable populations on social media as a context for media and migration research. This chapter draws on the interview with the researcher and summarises the main ideas.

At the end, of this chapter, it is possible to find some reading suggestions shared by Daniela Jaramillo-Dent.

You can listen to this conversation in on  Spotify

WHO IS DANIELA JARAMILLO-DENT?

Daniela Jaramillo-Dent is a Senior Research and Teaching Associate at the Media Change and Innovation Division at the University of Zurich. She is an internet scholar with research and teaching expertise in the fields of digital media, migration, identity, culture and social justice. Her research has explored algorithmic (in)visibility, minority representation and inequality in digital platforms. She has contributed and held leadership roles in research projects at the local, national and European levels. Daniela Jaramillo-Dent has international teaching experience in fields related to digital inequality, research methods and media literacy and has led teaching innovation projects and training workshops for innovative teaching in Higher Education. She has received awards at the local and European levels for her research on minority creators and content creation practices on Instagram and TikTok. She is a Key Regional Leader of the TikTok Cultures Research Network and she is part of FemLab (Feminist Approaches to Labour Collectives).

CONTEXTUALIZING DANIELA'S RESEARCH

Daniela Jaramillo-Dent's research delves into a gap in existing research concerning online narratives and discourses about immigration. In 2020, during the pandemic, various immigrant communities were identified on the increasingly popular platform TikTok, with some members attaining an influencer status within both the platform and their respective communities. The investigation aimed to explore the accounts of their migration experiences and their responses to prevalent discourses on immigration propagated by politicians and other societal figures.

The study specifically concentrated on Latin American migrant youth residing in the United States and Spain, seeking to comprehend how TikTok both enables and constrains certain types of interactions among these content creators and how these creators become highly visible in a context that in many cases moderates and censors certain types of discourse on migration.

WALKING THROUGH DANIELA'S METHODOLOGICAL STEPS

Daniela Jaramillo-Dent begins her research with immigrant digital content creators, by doing a non-participant ethnographic observation of these communities, over an extended period, to identify prominent figures within these creator communities on TikTok.

Her focus is to understand the dynamics of visibility, within the community, observing how some figures gain prominence while others fade into the background or have their content marginalized. By examining prevalent discourses and narratives, Daniela Jaramillo-Dent finds trends that emerge from the data regarding the visibility and obscurity of different actors.

The researcher relies on the walkthrough method proposed by Light et al. (2018, p.882) as “a way of engaging directly with an app’s interface to examine its technological mechanisms and embedded cultural references, to understand how it guides users and shapes their experiences”. When applied to visual, memetic, and interactive platforms, it enables researchers to consider the contexts where specific discourses develop, and it adds dimensions to understand the specific languages, logics and grammars of social media platforms and communities, known as platform vernaculars (Gibbs et al., 2015).

Utilizing the walkthrough method in conjunction with observing the platform, she was able to map the actors and content on TikTok and analyze their interactions with existing material. TikTok, known for its mimetic nature, inherently encourages imitation, adding a layer of complexity for immigrants trying to navigate and engage with the platform. Observation of the context enabled Daniela Jaramillo-Dent to comprehend the tensions that arise, and the walkthrough method to understand how these creators navigated and perceived TikTok.

“I could see how they navigated the platform, and how they understood the platform from their perspective as creators, and in this sense, I was also able to explore their experiences of invisibility, or this negotiation to become highly visible, and be able to make their discourse salient, and put it out there for society in general...”
(Daniela Jaramillo-Dent)

After identifying key figures, the researcher conducts interviews to complement the participatory walkthrough method. The participatory walkthrough includes the participants (in this case immigrant TikTokers) in the walkthrough process and allows them to explain how they navigate and understand the platform. This approach provides insights into their experiences of visibility and invisibility, exploring the delicate balance between achieving visibility and making their voices heard within the broader society and creator communities, contrasted with the challenges of invisibility stemming from discrimination and hostility, and their strategies for negotiating this dual dynamic.

MAIN ETHICAL DILEMMAS ENCOUNTERED IN DIGITAL RESEARCH WITH LATIN AMERICAN CONTENT CREATORS ON TIKTOK

According to Daniela Jaramillo-Dent, during the process of acquiring research experience, she “learned a lot about ethics”. The intricacies of ethics in digital research present a significant challenge due to the ongoing evolution of technologies.

“... ethics in digital research are very complex and they are in constant evolution because they need to adapt to the evolution of technologies. This is a big challenge because a lot of the established paradigms of ethics are not designed for digital research.” (Daniela Jaramillo-Dent)

Aware that traditional ethical paradigms often do not directly align with the nuances of digital research and to address these challenges, Daniela Jaramillo-Dent as a digital researcher finds support in the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) ethical guidelines as a guiding framework.

The AoIR ethical guidelines serve as dynamic and publicly accessible documents that undergo periodic updates to stay updated. These guidelines offer a structured approach for researchers to reflect on their research practices, considering different ethical paradigms that vary between regions like the US and Europe. Furthermore, given

the multidisciplinary nature of Internet research, and the specific focus on immigrant TikTok content creators, for Daniela Jaramillo-Dent, it is essential to incorporate considerations from immigration research.

“But basically what they provide are guidelines for reflection about our ethics to make decisions about the risks and harms and the importance of the work we do... But because I was looking at immigrants, I also had to consider the specificities of migration research. And here we see that the standard of ethical care needs to be higher.” (Daniela Jaramillo-Dent)

Navigating through these diverse ethical landscapes, Daniela Jaramillo-Dent’s focus is on amplifying the voices of migrant communities online while respecting their privacy and anonymity. The researcher supports on concepts, like fabrication as an ethical practice used by Annette Markham, as Daniela’s research aims to provide insights without compromising participants’ confidentiality. The amalgamation of Internet and digital research practices with migration studies aims to mitigate risks to these communities, although ongoing refinement is necessary.

Another challenge pointed out by Daniela is the ongoing process of striking a balance between accessing diverse voices and ensuring ethical considerations are upheld. Ethical challenges, such as informed consent in a dynamically interactive platform like TikTok, pose complexities that necessitate continual adaptation of research methodologies. The concept of consent in digital spaces, especially with preexisting and interactive content, calls for a reevaluation to align with the evolving nature of digital platforms and technologies.

Technological advances, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and generative AI, pose further complex ethical challenges, namely understanding the consent and the ownership of digital content. Thus, in Daniela Jaramillo-Dent’s perspective, continual learning and adaptation are crucial to address these ethical dilemmas and ensure research practices evolve in tandem with technological advancements.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Daniela Jaramillo-Dent draws attention to the fact that when researching immigrant creators and content, the researcher must acknowledge the multidisciplinary nature of the research field. Once the term “immigrant” is integrated into any study, it aligns with specific disciplines that uphold distinct ethical principles, particularly in the realm of migration research. Conversely, delving into online research entails navigating a multidisciplinary space that presents both opportunities and challenges, researchers often position themselves within this multidisciplinary landscape to effectively address and engage with these complexities. In the researcher’s case, she embraced the challenge of responding to various disciplines within her research focus.

Researchers may choose to anchor themselves in just one specific discipline to streamline their approach and avoid potential challenges that may arise. Thus, the decision to engage with different disciplines depends on the researcher’s preference for exploration and for an intellectual challenge.

To Daniela Jaramillo-Dent the primary principle remains to ensure the well-being and protection of individuals involved in the research process, safeguarding them from any potential risks. Moreover, maintaining a transparent process of reflexivity and acknowledging one’s positionality is essential. From the researcher’s perspective, embracing reflexivity and considering one’s (researcher) positionality enriches the research, making it more pertinent and intimately connected to the communities being studied.

“And you know, it is important to ensure that people are not endangered through our research. And I think this is the key, to be able to avoid risk for participants. And of course, it is always important to have a very clear process of reflexivity, foregrounding your positionality. In my case, I am a Latin American immigrant. So my positionality was always questioned, but I noticed that a lot of people who are external to migrant communities who are studying migration, which is a very important voice to also have often, don’t always express their positionality explicitly, and I think reflexivity

and positionality are important in order to make our research more relevant and more located in the actual communities that you are exploring.” (Daniela Jaramillo-Dent)

■ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF DANIELA JARAMILLO-DENT:

<https://www.danielajaramillodent.com/>

■ READING SUGGESTIONS FROM DANIELA JARAMILLO-DENT:

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“SO THOSE WERE ETHICAL ASPECTS THAT I CONSTANTLY NEEDED TO REFLECT ON”


Perspectives on doing research with children, with Denise Mensonides



Keywords:

- Digital literacy
- Media and children
- Literacy practices
- Civic education
- Media education
- Qualitative methods
- Longitudinal participant observations

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WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THIS CHAPTER?

Denise Mensonides develops qualitative and longitudinal research with children between the ages of 8 and 12. She aims to understand children’s digital cultures and children’s processes of developing digital literacies grounded in the social contexts and interactions of their everyday lives. During our conversation, she emphasized the importance of reflecting on, and planning varying aspects related to the fieldwork. In particular, building rapport with the children and their gatekeepers, and the importance of communication clarity. Her positioning as a researcher is walled by reflexivity and examples from her grounded experience. At the end of this chapter, it is possible to find Denise’s key suggestions for young or less experienced researchers and reading suggestions.

You can listen to this conversation in full on  Spotify

WHO IS DENISE MENSONIDES?

Denise Mensonides is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies at the University of Groningen, Netherlands. She holds a Bachelor degree in IT law and a Master of Science in pedagogical sciences. The PhD project she is currently working on considers how children in middle childhood develop digital literacies in ways that are personally meaningful and how these processes are shaped by the social contexts of children's everyday lives.

The PhD project asks under what circumstances the development of digital media literacies is supported within households, and what possible differences in how children engage with digital media mean for children's media practices in- and outside the home. The project focuses on three domains of digital literacy: informed citizenship and news literacy, digital resilience and the development of social capital. Denise's study is part of the broader research project "Informed Citizenship for All. Digital Literacy as a Prerequisite for an Inclusive Society", funded by the Dutch Research Council, SKSG, the National Library of The Netherlands and the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

CONTEXTUALIZING DENISE'S RESEARCH

In her research, Denise Mensonides starts from the everyday life experiences of children, aged 8 to 12, to capture how they use media in the different social contexts of their daily lives and how this might lead to the development of digital literacies "they need to participate in this increasingly digitized society."

Her research is grounded in qualitative research methods. This includes longitudinal participant observations at afterschool care locations and primary schools, and semi-structured interviews with children, parents, and teachers. The study involved four different afterschool care located in four different neighbourhoods with contrasting social and economic backgrounds.

Denise Mensonides wants to understand what children do with media, how they use it in their free time, how those digital practices may contribute to the development of their digital literacies, and the role media plays in developing these skills.

“I carried out these research methods over the course of three years, which I think presents so many wonderful opportunities. One is that I could really involve the children in my research and make them the experts of their own lives, letting them inform me about their hobbies and their interests, what they learned, what they liked about it, and which friends they did it with.” (Denise Mensonides)

THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF FIELDWORK

Children allowed Denise Mensonides the opportunity to enter their digital cultures, enabling her access to “their peer groups and their interactions with each other.” But she also faced some challenges as she could not avoid being seen “as an adult entering this children’s space, which is their free time after school and suddenly being like ‘can I join in on your activities?’”

Denise Mensonides highlights other challenges and opportunities that come with doing research with children, namely building rapport with the children so that despite being an adult, they understood that she was not an authority figure in this space.

Another aspect concerns doing research with large groups of children, and understanding the interactions within and between different peer groups. Denise Mensonides had time to get integrated in children’s dynamics, so she started by “just being there and then gradually focusing. And I have the luxury to do that because I have three years” for the work in the field.

The third is to plan ahead the preparation of fieldwork and the entrance into the field, which has to go through a process of approval by different gatekeepers, the parents, the childcare workers, and the children themselves. It requires time and patience. With the childcare workers and the after-school care location, in the case of Denise, this aspect was smoother, the contact was already initiated previously by other projects.

“So that was very nice. And they knew about our research. We worked with them before. So when I asked them if I could visit their locations again, they were quite happy to agree to that.” (Denise Mensonides)

Collecting parental consent was not easy; she had to be patient and build trust with the parents. However, the researcher saw this as an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of her role in the research process and discuss the project in-depth with the parents. Denise’s ethical position in research is “I have to make it a safe environment for all participants.” To build a position as a researcher is the fourth challenge and opportunity underlined. Denise shows how rapport is crucial not only regarding participants but also with those who can give or inhibit access to young persons.

“But then, of course, you have to get the informed consent from parents, and that’s a longer process. But it was very worthwhile, because I was already at the location discussing with parents what I was doing, and what my research was about, and giving them the chance to ask me all the different questions they had. And in addition, while building rapport was crucial, it was equally important to ensure that the children understood that I was there as a researcher.” (Denise Mensonides)

REFLECTING ON THE ETHICAL DILEMMAS

Carrying out her PhD project allowed Denise Mensonides to reflect and go through emerging ethical dilemmas in the field. She sees them as a twofold reflexive path. Balancing observation with intervention is the first one, and balancing building rapport with maintaining professional distance is the second. Denise Mensonides shared with us her reflexivity process around these very important aspects with vivid examples of her own experience. The episode she illustrates shows the practicality of ethical decisions *in situ*. What is your frontier of action as a researcher? How to establish a personal relationship while at the same time maintaining an appropriate distance?

“As an adult in the children’s environment, there are times when they look to you during disputes with their peers, expecting you to intervene. They’re like ‘Are you going to do something?’ (...) But as long as it is a minor argument, I do not step in, because I am not an employee in the afterschool care location. This presented an ongoing ethical dilemma that I had to constantly reflect on: ‘How should I handle this? What is my role as a researcher in this situation?’ This ties into a second theme that comes to mind when you ask this question, building rapport. It’s important to establish a personal relationship with the participants. But so keeping an appropriate distance, especially as you’re leaving this space again after being there for an extended period of time. For instance, there were children who were very enthusiastic about participating in the research and were very curious about my personal life. And I think answering these personal questions is fine, for example sharing the hobbies you have. But they also wanted to follow me on social media and asked me to look up their profiles and and follow them. And while I can completely understand that, because that was so interesting for them, it also raised an important ethical dilemma. What do you share? And what do your participants share with you? I talked with them about those issues. So, it’s about finding that balance, keeping an appropriate distance and clear communication about the research while also building rapport through engaging with children’s questions and interests.” (Denise Mensonides)

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Almost closing this conversation, we asked Denise to point some directions to young or less experienced researchers, suggestions that support wise research.

In her suggestions, Denise underlines four important aspects, based on her three years of research with children from 8 to 12 years old: observation, planning ahead, continued informed consent, and closing and leaving the field.

She begins by explaining the importance of observation in research, noting that it offers valuable insights into “how children explore the world around them (...)”. Regularly, children’s own experiences are dismissed as merely childlike activities.

Another suggestion young researchers should always have in mind is informed consent and continued informed consent. It's paramount in research, particularly with children and when the stay in the field will be long.

“So when I started the research, I discussed with the children why I was there and what I was able to do, and I discussed it with the parents”. (Denise Mensonides)

Despite obtaining parental consent, during the three years of stay in the field with the children, from time to time, she periodically revisits the ongoing informed consent with children and parents.

(...) It's quite easy for children to forget that you are there as a researcher. And you just become one of the people in that context, which is nice. But I would really advocate for the need to continuously talk to children about their participation in the project, that you are still doing research, and that they can decide to stop and not participate at any time.” (Denise Mensonides)

Denise believes it is crucial to reflect on how researchers are leaving the context in which they conducted longitudinal participant observations. She emphasizes the importance of transparent communication, about her departure from the context and what will occur afterwards, to ensure the children are informed and up to date on the research process.

To engage and involve children in the research process, she returned a few months after finishing her participant observations. This way, children got a final chance to ask questions about the project, their involvement in it, and the results. In this follow-up visit, she also included a fun activity as a token of gratitude for their participation in the research project.

“I've designed a workshop to do with them. But yes, I think it is very important to make it very clear that you're also leaving that context. And when you are doing that and what you are doing afterwards so that they know what is going to happen.” (Denise Mensonides)

To conclude the conversation, we asked Denise Mensonides if she had any funny stories to share. She leaves us with this episode,

“Oh, I have so much. I have so many funny stories. For instance, when I told the children I was a researcher, they responded with, ‘What is research?’. I explained that it’s science and that I’m a scientist, but they didn’t believe me at all. They were really skeptical because their idea of a scientist was someone in a white lab coat with glasses, and I didn’t fit that image. They asked, ‘So how are you a scientist?’ This led to a fascinating conversation about what research and science really are. It was such a funny and enlightening experience for me, and I’ve learned so much from the children”. (Denise Mensonides)

■ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF DENISE MENSONIDES:

<https://digital-inclusion.nl/en/>
<https://www.rug.nl/staff/d.mensonides/>

■ READING SUGGESTIONS FROM DENISE MENSONIDES:

boyd, d. (2015). Making Sense of Teen Life: Strategies for Capturing Ethnographic Data in a Networked Era. In E. Hargittai & C. Sandvig (Eds.), *Digital Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online* (pp. 79–102). The MIT Press.

Mason, A.J., & Danby, S. (2011). Children as Experts in Their Lives: Child Inclusive Research. *Child Indicators Research*, 4, 185-189. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-011-9108-4>

Mensonides, D., Van Cauwenberge, A., & Broersma, M. (Forthcoming). *Developing Digital Literacies in Everyday Life: A Cross-Contextual Framework to Study Children’s Media Competencies*

Mensonides, D., Van Cauwenberge, A., & Broersma, M. (2023). Playfully building resilience: Dutch children’s risk-managing tactics in digital risky play. *Journal of Children and Media*, 18(1), 80–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2023.2271100>

NOT “MAKING SIMPLE WHAT IS TOO COMPLEX!”


Perspectives on ethics in research with migrants, young refugees, and young political activists with Eckart Müller-Bachmann



Keywords:

- Youth sociology
- Migrants
- Refugees
- Social engagement of young people
- Youth cultures
- Political protests
- Micropolitical activism of young people
- Social change
- Ethics
- Research methods
- Participatory research

ECKART MÜLLER-BACHMANN

Senior Researcher at the CJD Nord, Germany.  0009-0008-4927-8034

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THIS CHAPTER?

Research on the complexity of the everyday life of specific social groups, such as young refugees, migrants and young political activists in Germany, has been the focus of our conversation with Eckart Müller-Bachmann. Drawing on his experience as an independent researcher and project manager, he provides valuable insights into the methodological decisions and ethical challenges in studying these vulnerable populations and leaves some advice for anyone who wants to investigate with these populations. At the end of this chapter, it is possible to find some reading suggestions shared by Eckart Müller-Bachmann.

You can listen to this conversation in full on  Spotify

WHO IS ECKART MÜLLER-BACHMANN?

Eckart Müller-Bachmann is a youth sociologist; as he says “by heart and by education”. He holds a M.A. in sociology, from the Universities of Kiel, Dortmund and Chemnitz, Germany. He has been a

senior researcher and project manager at CJD Nord, since 2006, mainly focused on youth sociology and migration issues. At the CJD Nord, he has coordinated about 15 national and European research projects and worked on research projects (e.g. on the social capital of migrant communities, on the migration paths of families, on naturalisation procedures in Europe, processes of intercultural opening in institutions of host societies and anti-discrimination strategies of municipalities). He accomplished a project on diversity strategies for small cities and supported these in their launch of a local development process that views diversity in society as a mainstream task of local authority planning. This project has won the German Diversity Award. He was a principal investigator at the Horizon 2020 project “PROMISE – Promoting Social Engagement and Involvement of Conflicted Young People in Europe”. Currently, he is leading an AMIF-funded project (SHIFT) on social cohesion bridging refugee and third-country children with north German children in their local neighbourhoods.

CONTEXTUALIZING ECKART'S RESEARCH

Eckart Müller-Bachmann has been strongly interested in youth cultures and in different forms of use of protests by young people. He was strongly engaged in a project about male migrants, the refugee influx of 2015, which was relatively strong in Germany. The project resulted from the political situation that arose with the political activism and the political protests and movements after this refugee influx. There was a lot of media attention about it, and a very bad portrait of the male migrants. This supported his decision to design a project to show the needs and wishes of male migrants.

“Not women, not families, just the males, the ones who were portrayed very badly by the media. This project was relatively prominent and we had a follow-up from our Federal Ministry who asked us to do a project on the situation of unaccompanied minors and refugees in Germany, who are relatively hard to access as research groups.”
(Eckart Müller-Bachmann)

This and other projects led him to research social change and the use of protest by young people. He researched different groups who were not really in the norm of political activism and protest in Europe, some kind of subcultural groups, aiming to understand how their protests influence societal changes.

“This group I was researching was the extra-parliamentary left, which is a very heterogeneous cluster in Germany. It was very, very, very, very hard to reach the group. That’s not really being done research on that. And I was relatively successful.” (Eckart Müller-Bachmann)

Following the refugee influx, there was significant activism around racism. On one side, lots of established right-wing movements protesting against migrants. On the other, the extra-parliamentary left used protest on a bigger scale to face it. As he recognizes “all were connected and interdependent, protests rooted in each other”.

In the study with these young activists of the left scene, there was a gender balance.

PREPARING THE FIELDWORK

As an independent researcher working outside the university, to reach the social groups in each study, Eckart Müller-Bachmann used the institutional setting where he is working: the CDJ Nord, which is one of the bigger NGOs in North Germany, with a research section. Concerning the migrant population, the institution provides migration counselling services. This puts him in a situation where he can have direct contact not only with the migrants, but also in the networks with ministries, and other institutions that simply deal with migrant or integration issues. “So, we are at the very heart of problems that might occur, which has a positive impact on our work”, he says.

At the same time, this NGO also has a program that targets the right-wing radicals who want to move out of that scene helping them to get into normal life. This helped him to reach the young activists from the radical left because they knew about the program. This was probably the first small door opened to the left scene.

There was no social work in North Germany with members of these left movements, and they probably noticed that this institution was doing something which should be supported in terms of fighting right-wing extremism.

“It was very, very, very hard to reach groups like the left-wing radicals. It took nearly a year of work to reach them. It was a very, very unstable process and lots of contacts being made. Lots of online contacts, at first hand, have been made which were all unsuccessful. And I will give you just one example. I built up a Facebook page for the project [PROMISE project] and I reached out to a far left-wing group. (...) And what did they do? They asked the professor in Manchester, who was coordinating this project if this person [me] was really working with her. ‘Is he correct?’ ‘Is he, let’s say, can we trust him?’ They were very, very conscious and very, very suspicious.” (Eckart Müller-Bachmann)

This suspicion may rely on the fact that the militant behaviour of the radical left during protests against capitalism, climate change, right-wing groups, against the refugee situation is being mainly criminalised whenever it comes to media or research on these groups.

“What always comes out in the media, and goes through the research, is that most of these groups are criminals because they use violent behaviour during the protests. This is why none of them wants to talk with researchers, it isn’t an easy situation. (...) Police try to spy on the groups, so there’s a lot of suspicion among them.” (Eckart Müller-Bachmann)

What helped Eckart Müller-Bachmann to reach out to these groups was continuous talk and personal contacts. Once he had established contact with two groups there was the snowball principle: these groups said to other groups that he did not want to talk about militant behaviour, but just wanted to research the labels attributed to them.

With the young male refugees, there were some language barriers and mistrust because they were only unaccompanied minors until they turned 18. Not many of them have passports and they may

simply say they are under 18 when reaching the borders, but some might be older. As minors, they have a privileged situation in terms of their refugee settlement situation in Germany. So, they may have fear of being spied on, but once Eckart Müller-Bachmann talked about the research goals at the refugee house - asking them about their situation in the refugee's homes and what are their wishes and their needs -, it was not that complicated anymore.

To overcome the language barriers, a person who was able to speak directly with the young refugees in their language was employed in the project. Some of the young people were capable of speaking in English - and some learned German very fast - since many have education and most of them do not come from disadvantaged backgrounds, but from relatively privileged families in Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

CHALLENGES OF ETHNOGRAPHIC AND PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

First, qualitative research with these vulnerable groups always has challenges. For Eckart Müller-Bachmann, some of the biggest challenges are the language and when the study participants do not want to talk. So, he advises that it could be more useful to have a mix of methodological instruments to get more perceptions, and more perspectives on the diversity of views on the research issues. For instance, in his research, it was the combination of qualitative interviews and field diaries.

“For sure the young activists were not acting in their homes, they were acting on the street, in centres away, during protests, overacting during political demonstrations of other groups. (...) We had to see what they were doing, and you cannot rely on such a complex situation only by talking to them and letting them describe what they want, and what they experience, because this was making simple what is too complex. We need to get a broader perspective on different occasions, which means that it's not enough to have just one or two interviews.” (Eckart Müller-Bachmann)

As Eckart Müller-Bachmann stands out, it is important to notice the young activists have squatted areas, squatted houses, and their own use of culture centres. Drawing on his experience, he reveals they have different demonstrations in which all the media they are using was installed by themselves on their home pages. So, as a researcher, this means you need to do more than simple qualitative interviews with them. This project included desk research and research on their political activism online, and social media activism. It also included one thing that he recognises that might not be very common. When they were engaged in these groups, researchers asked them to use cameras to report the main activities they were engaged in and to send them back to the research team. The young activists sent the photos and another interview was held to talk about these photos. On the other hand, the participation in the young people's activities in different locations provided the opportunity to collect more information. As a result, the researchers came more inside into their actions as activists.

The complete anonymization of the information is a key issue so nobody knows which city a person is located in, and nobody knows which person the researcher is talking to. The project was only about activism and not about personal things. He reinforces that it is important to make clear the differences.

Besides, the use of devices may be needed. When Eckart Müller-Bachmann once said to the young activists, "I want to record this because simply I do not want to write everything", this was the one argument they all understood. They needed to be sure that he did not want to talk about criminal offences during demonstrations, you did not want to know anything about their relationship to violence during protests, but just wanted to know about the background of the protests, of the future wishes for the society, and so on. Once he got the first entrance, which was hard, there was a kind of snowball circumstance. Some of the groups told other groups in South Germany and without being expected, interviews succeeded.

DEALING WITH RESEARCH ETHICAL DILEMMAS

A set of ethical challenges emerge in research with young refugees, particularly unaccompanied refugees. First, it was not easy for Eckart Müller-Bachmann to communicate beforehand with them, and it was nearly impossible to let them sign anything such as informed consent or data protection papers. Even when assuring them that he did not want to control them, and that it was an independent research project with the goal of producing knowledge to help improve their situation, it was relatively hard. He explains the reason for that: “Migrants simply do not trust German authority.”

Second, there are no simple answers on how to build trust during and before research interviews. In the case of the young activists, the main issue was to give them the feeling that they were not being observed, they were not being controlled at all. Just bringing them the papers about the research, that was funded by the European Commission, was a very academic approach. Eckart Müller-Bachmann explained to them that the goal was not to work on violent behaviours and that nothing that they would say would be brought to the public authorities. He made it clear that the research was trying to promote forms of protest that somehow, in an academic approach, help to develop societies. However, the researchers were never able to get them to sign informed consent papers since they never wanted to do it.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

By the end of the conversation, Eckart Müller-Bachmann leaves some notes for young researchers who want to study these social groups. He always tries to put himself in their position and he never, never labels these groups in any terms of direction. He tries always to have a positive picture before going into these groups and to communicate this positive picture, which he recognises is not really neutral research, as might be learned at universities. But also:

“Trust in these people you talk to. Show empathy. Show your understanding for their situation. (...) Try to show empathy. Speak their language, which is very important. When you talk to young people, you can’t really talk in an academic voice and with an academic attitude. You need to be able to use the young people’s codes and their media. I mean, as you know, lots of young people are simply using codes you might not know anymore. So, try to prepare yourself a bit. See what they are looking for in the media so that you may talk a bit about this as well.”(Eckart Müller-Bachmann)

■ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF ECKART MÜLLER-BACHMANN:

Abgeschlossene Projekte | CJD

■ READING SUGGESTIONS FROM ECKART MÜLLER-BACHMANN:

Bundesforum Männer (2018): Geflüchtete Männer in Deutschland. Eine qualitative Erhebung der Bedarfe, Herausforderungen und Ressourcen junger geflüchteter Männer, mit Fachbeiträgen und inhaltlichen Einordnungen von Experten der Jungen- und Männerarbeit. Berlin: gefluechtete-maenner-deutschland.pdf (bundesforum-maenner.de)

Chorvat, Ivan, Mefalopoulos, Alessia (2022): Heading for a better world: micropolitical activism of young people seeking social change. In: *Journal of Youth Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2022.2053669>

Müller-Bachmann, Eckart (2013): Identitäten Jugendlicher, Interkulturalität und Kommunalen Raum. In: *Evangelische Jugendhilfe* 2/2013, S. 78-85.

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“THE LEARNING OF ETHICS IS A LOT ABOUT MAKING MISTAKES.”


Perspectives on research ethics, with Elisabeth Staksrud



Keywords:

- Research ethics
- Academic freedom
- Methods
- Informed consent
- Trust
- Media Studies
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Protection and participation in research
- GDPR - General Data Protection Regulation


ELISABETH STAKSRUD

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WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THIS CHAPTER?

This conversation with Elisabeth Staksrud takes us back to the very foundation of her commitment to research ethics and trust-building. The complexities, significance, and frequent neglect of ethics are key topics addressed here as well. Ethics encompasses far more than just obtaining approval from Ethics Committees; it involves being responsible and respectful towards informants throughout every stage, from planning to the exploration of data and dissemination of results.

Whether good or bad practices are involved, they must be shared, because research ethics is fundamentally about sharing and learning from both our own and others' experiences. The invitation is extended to the research community to engage in an international debate about the potential and pitfalls of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

At the end of this chapter, it is possible to find Elisabeth's key suggestions for young or less experienced researchers and reading and material suggestions. You can listen to this conversation in full on  Spotify

WHO IS ELISABETH STAKSRUD?

Elisabeth Staksrud is a Professor at the Department of Media and Communication at the University of Oslo, Norway. Her research encompasses freedom of expression and online censorship, children's rights, risks, academic freedom and research ethics. Her work challenges common assumptions about how to research and understand what is in children's best interest and the relationship between rights to participation and protection in public discourse, policy and practice. Staksrud focuses on researching children and media-related risks such as digital bullying, grooming, sexual harassment, and privacy violations. She has authored several books and articles on children's use of digital tools and the disparities between families, cultures, and countries. She has provided guidance to national governments and international organizations on children's risks and rights in the online environment, including the UN, European Commission, and the Council of Europe.

She is the coordinator of the 35-country EU Kids Online network and leads their large comparative international study of children's risk, opportunities and well-being online.

She has chaired the Norwegian National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) and has been instrumental in establishing ethical guidelines for research on the Internet in Norway and revising national ethical guidelines. From 2017 to 2021, she chaired the European Communication Research and Education Association's Children, Youth, and Media Section. Prior to her return to academia, she worked for seven years at the Norwegian Board of Film Classification as a senior policy advisor and film censor.

CONTEXTUALIZING ELISABETH'S INTEREST IN RESEARCH ETHICS

Elisabeth's interest in ethics is rooted in her own young-age experience in school as a prospective informant, and less as a result of her academic journey.

“When I was in about fifth grade our teacher said that we would not have a regular class, but we were specially invited by a group of researchers to participate in a study on bullying... and we were told that this would be completely confidential and anonymous, and we were to fill out, you know, questionnaires. And we were really excited about this. We felt important. We felt that somebody wanted to listen to us, and that this matters, our voices mattered, and then, two days later our teacher came back and started confronting us with what we had answered in our questionnaires. And I realized that this wasn’t confidential.” (Elisabeth Staksrud)

This experience and the lack of trust in adults’ ability to listen to young people instilled in her the motivation to take ethics with extra care, extra vigilance, respect and responsibility.

“And now, being in this position myself, I thought that, making sure that we do this in a way that really listen and have respect for the informants and for the people that we are performing research on and about and with is so important because you can really ruin a lot if we don’t.” (Elisabeth Staksrud)

Today, she is also fascinated by issues regarding human rights, censorship, and freedom of expression. Previous non-academic work as an advisor in the Norwegian Board of Film Classification is the link to pursue an academic career in media studies, and research on children and young people and media.

RESEARCH ETHICS COMPLEXITIES

In the field of media studies, Elisabeth Staksrud asserts that research ethics is taken very seriously. But to develop as an ethical responsible researcher, education and the ability to learn are key factors. As the chair of the National Research Ethics Committee for social sciences and humanities, in Norway, she got in touch with several complex and complicated cases, but she tells us that “these might not [always] be about the ethics, it’s about the methods and vice versa.”

From Elisabeth's perspective, methods and ethics are interconnected. It's not possible to separate them in the research process, which means that to have a good research design, researchers need to ensure the appropriate methods and ethics.

Nowadays, and based on her own experience, one of the biggest concerns for Elisabeth Staksrud is her experience with students and young researchers who are interested in the children and media field, but when they realize that the research ethical demands might be more complicated, they avoid doing research with children and young people.

"If it's so complicated, or if I have to do this to make sure that, for instance, children and youth are safe. I'd rather not just include them in the research. I'd rather just research adults or older young people because then I have not to deal with the ethics so much." (Elisabeth Staksrud)

However, Elisabeth Staksrud emphasises how she sees ethics as a helping tool rather than a problem, ethics is not a chore, it is a contract researchers have with society to make life better. If society can trust in research in return researchers get academic freedom.

"So think of it [ethics] more as a helping tool rather than a problem, I think will help a lot of researchers that feel overwhelmed with all these demands about what to do and what not to do." (Elisabeth Staksrud)

According to the researcher, ethics is very important for the success of research. However, researchers need to be open to how "the learning of ethics is a lot about making mistakes" and learning from them, as ethics is very complex. Ethical dilemmas and research ethics are never a black-and-white situation, most of the time they have different shades of grey. Researchers need to be aware that sometimes there is no right answer, but just an answer, and sometimes research ethics conflicts with other types of ethics.

Every method choice has implications and downsides, so Elisabeth Staksrud recommends that the prudent researcher needs

to balance the different concerns about participation and protection rights of the research informants. The act of balancing and deciding requires both vigilance and competence, but a lot comes from learning from the practice.

In relation to informants, the “Holy Grail of Research” as Elisabeth Staksrud calls it, is consent and assent. A consent that is informed to informants and understood by them, and then freely given. Also in this respect, putting ethics into practice goes beyond getting ethical approval. The work is not done, it is just beginning. As she clarifies consent and assent are more than a legal term, it is about respecting the informants, making sure they understand what their participation in research entails, and making sure the participation is informed and voluntary.

“Why are you asking them to do something? Why them? What are you asking them to do? How will you use it? What is it for? And making sure that when you include participants in your research is voluntary, it’s informed, it’s unambiguous, it’s preferably documentable, and there’s no social pressure or otherwise that it is really voluntary”
(Elisabeth Staksrud)

Independently of parents’ giving consent “you should always, always, always ask children for their consent or assent”. Parents may say yes, but here researchers also need to pay attention to children’s reactions, body language, and when they say ‘no’ researchers need to respect their decision. There are also some situations in which parents don’t give legal consent, and where “children should still have the right to be included in research if they want to.”

From Elisabeth’s experience if participants understand what the research is about, this trust-building will positively impact the quality of data, methods and even the data interpretation, “if we are also good in informing back what we found, it can have value beyond our papers”. Along the process, it is the researcher’s responsibility to consider and respect those participating in the research, but also those who were not chosen, or did not give their consent to participate, “the larger group of students or children that are affected by our research.”

The researcher believes that in terms of the future, research ethics might be further complicated by emerging AI tools. Thus, researchers need to make sure that they are not using “the potential of AI in ways to collect data that might harm children”, need to be sure that the person they are doing research with is really who they think they are. Before online researchers would ask “how do we know online if somebody is a child or an adult? But now we have to ask, how do we know if the informant online is a child or a machine.”

Such aspects also challenge the quality of data, and research ethics “because the potential is large, but also the pitfalls.”

According to the researcher, to tackle these AI pitfalls researchers face, the scientific community needs to have an international discussion with their counterparts. How to benefit from AI potential? How to safeguard our research participants?

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Before concluding the conversation, Elisabeth Staksrud highlighted four key recommendations to young or less experienced researchers.

“If we don’t share it, young scholars when they experience it, they think that this has happened to no one else. ‘This is unique for me. I must have done something wrong, or I wasn’t prepared for it.’”
(Elisabeth Staksrud)

1. Do your homework. It is important to read a lot and understand what research ethics is. Understand how it is linked to academic freedom. Not only our ability as researchers to freely choose our questions, methods and report on what we find. But also a way for society at large to be able to trust that researchers do no harm, and that the findings can be trusted. Realize that research ethics is not the same as privacy legislation.

“So, for instance, rules in GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in Europe about collecting data for children or from children or others,

is not research ethics, I mean, sometimes they're overlapping. But research ethics is much more." (Elisabeth Staksrud)

2. Do not avoid ethics. Everybody makes mistakes, that's how researchers learn. Elisabeth's advice is "do as best as you can, just tackle it head-on. It's going to be fine. People have done this before."

3. Discuss with others. Be honest about the challenges encountered and discuss them with others.

"There's no point in being alone, and you can learn a lot from other people's experiences, and sometimes there is a solution, even though you cannot see it right away. I always advocated for sharing not only good practices but also bad practices. There's no point in people making the same mistakes over and over" (Elisabeth Staksrud)

4. See ethics as a process. After getting ethical approval the researcher's work is just starting. Research ethics is the whole research process.

"So if you get an ethics approval, it is important to understand that your job is not over. It's just starting. So research ethics is the whole process from planning through collecting data, to documenting, to publication and dissemination." (Elisabeth Staksrud)

RESEARCH ETHICS IS ABOUT LEARNING AND SHARING

Closing the conversation, Elisabeth Staksrud kindly shared with us a bit of the dynamics she does in the research ethical training she delivers to established researchers coming from different scientific areas.

"I'm a PhD student with a problem, or I'm the scholar with a problem, and they have to help me. And then, after they have tried to solve this, I will add complications, because we all know that complications happen. And that's the real life for researchers. So it's a role play on making this practice and having your hands dirty in terms of

understanding the complexities of research ethics. And sometimes there's not even a right answer." (Elisabeth Staksrud)

Elisabeth Staksrud also shared a resource made in collaboration with her colleagues and the Norwegian Research Ethical Committee as part of the project Core, Children Online: Research and Evidence. A short animation movie to help explain to children and young people what research is, and their rights if asked to participate in research.

This resource is open-access and translated into different languages.

■ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF ELISABETH STAKSRUD:

<https://www.hf.uio.no/imk/personer/vit/estaksru/>

■ READING SUGGESTIONS AND MATERIALS FROM ELISABETH STAKSRUD:

CORE Evidence. (n.d.). *Children Online: Research and Evidence (CORE)*. <https://core-evidence.eu/>

CORE Evidence. (n.d.). Open source movie: Children's rights as research participants. <https://core-evidence.eu/posts/open-source-movie-childrens-rights-as-research-participants>

London School of Economics and Political Science. (n.d.). EU Kids Online. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/research/research-projects/eu-kids-online>

Staksrud, E. (2016). *Children in the online world: Risk, regulation, rights*. Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Children-in-the-Online-World-Risk-Regulation-Rights/Staksrud/p/book/9781138250628>

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“ARE YOU ACTUALLY INCLUDING YOUTH PERSPECTIVES?”

Ethical perspectives on researching youths’ uses of social media, with Ellen Middaugh




Keywords:

- Civic engagement
- Youth activists
- Social media platforms
- Content analysis
- Creative thinking
- interdisciplinary research
- Topic centered approach
- Innovative methodologies
- Inclusivity
- Peer review
- Mentorship

ELLEN MIDDAUGH

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WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THIS CHAPTER?

The conversation with Ellen Middaugh enables us to delve into methodological and ethical decisions, but also personal aspects of the process of being a researcher.

Ellen is interested in how youth use social media to engage with social issues. She targets inclusivity in the field, sampling participants with diverse life backgrounds, and in the analysis partnering with doctoral students who bring new approaches and insights as they are themselves representative voices of diversity. During the conversation, Ellen shares examples of practical ethical dilemmas and how she reacted to such challenges, namely the public-private characteristics of social media, what strategies she uses to avoid stimulating youths’ social media use, and what information to disclose, or not.

At the end of this chapter, it is possible to find Ellen’s key suggestions for young or less experienced researchers and reading suggestions.

You can listen to this conversation in full on  Spotify

WHO IS ELLEN MIDDAUGH?

Ellen Middaugh is an Associate Professor of Child and Adolescent Development at San José State University, United States of America. Her research focuses on factors that support youth civic empowerment with an emphasis on how emerging technologies are changing the capabilities needed for informed, effective, and ethical civic action. She has developed innovative methodologies for assessing social media practices for civic engagement (PI-Spencer Foundation, Civic Media Literacy in a Networked Society), co-designed a district initiative to integrate civic education and digital media literacy practices into high school humanities courses and evaluated the impact on student civic competencies (co-PI, S.D. Bechdel Jr. Educating for Democracy in the Digital Age), and designed experiments to assess the impact of emergent social media phenomena (user-generated YouTube information, internet outrage language) on youths' interest in and efficacy for civic engagement (Senior Researcher, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Youth and Participatory Politics Research Network).

Her expertise in the area of digital media and youth civic engagement has led to invitations to serve as co-Chair of the Participatory Politics Working Group for Children and Screens: The Institute for Digital Media and Child Development, to serve as an expert consultant for UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education Division, as well as for multiple regional programs to support youth civic engagement.

CONTEXTUALIZING ELLEN'S RESEARCH

Ellen's research originates "in young people having more voice in how their communities' schools are structured." A significant transformation has been observed in how young individuals learn about, discuss, and share their perspectives on relevant issues, particularly influenced by the surge of social media and emerging technology.

Over the span of the past 15 years, Ellen's research has been predominantly centered on exploring the impact of emerging

technologies in shaping how young people access information and opportunities for self-expression, alongside the inherent challenges. The current landscape presents a blend of advantages and complexities, notably in how young people consume news. Unlike the linear news consumption patterns of the past, the vast majority of young individuals now turn to social media platforms and apps to access news, resulting in a non-linear feed format that integrates various content types. This shift poses challenges and opportunities in information dissemination. Young people now encounter news that may have been inaccessible previously, including local news and firsthand narratives of events relevant to their lives. This evolution has significantly influenced her research focus over the past 15 years.

“It’s a mixed bag. So we know the vast majority of young people use social media. They tend to get news through social media and apps in a way that is very different than how I consumed news growing up. And so it’s not linear, you know, it’s coming in through a feed mixed with other things, and so that can present some challenges and getting information also opportunities.” (Ellen Middaugh)

Living in Silicon Valley, she positioned herself as an early adopter of various technologies. From immersing herself in podcasts during the nascent stages when only a handful existed to being an early member of platforms like Friendster, one of the pioneering social media sites, she has always harbored a keen interest in exploring new digital platforms. Her research endeavours have consistently been steered by tracking the behaviours and preferences of young people, aligning her focus with their activities and whereabouts. Witnessing the monumental shift of young individuals gravitating towards platforms like Facebook, only to later transition away from it, has underscored the importance of staying attuned to youth trends and adapting her research direction accordingly. Meeting young people at the forefront of their digital engagement has remained a key priority, shaping her research trajectory to mirror the evolving landscape of their digital interactions.

“I think for me, it’s just always been really important to meet young people where they are and pay attention to what they’re doing. And so, if they all leave social media, I will change my focus. But since it’s a big part of their lives, that’s really been important to me to understand.” (Ellen Middaugh)

CREATIVELY THINKING FIELD APPROACHES

In the college of education, she initiates her research predominantly within the realm of social science, frequently involving interviews or surveys conducted with youth within the age bracket of 15 to 24, occasionally extending to younger demographics. Her data collection methods encompass a diverse array, ranging from interviews, focus groups, and surveys to directly sampling social media content for analysis. Subsequently, she extrapolates insights from these data collection endeavours and collaborates with educators to craft curriculum and educational interventions that are informed by the research findings gleaned from interactions with young individuals. The selection of methodologies employed in her research endeavours varies based on the specific objectives and requirements of the task at hand.

“And I typically focus between ages 15 to 24, sometimes a little younger and so I will collect data through interviews, focus groups, surveys, or through sampling social media posts directly and kind of looking at the content. From there I tend to take the lessons learned and partner with educators to develop curriculum and educational interventions that learn lessons from research with young people. So I employ a wide range of methodologies depending on the task.” (Ellen Middaugh)

Ellen Middaugh considers one of her strengths as a researcher to be her creative thinking abilities. “I am willing to think creatively.” The appeal of this project lies in its innovative and creative approach, aligning with her inclination towards unconventional methodologies. Her research methodology involves sampling and qualitatively coding social media posts, as well as engaging in quantitative coding.

In collaboration with a colleague, they adopted a topic-centered approach, sampling tweets addressing issues relevant to youth, such as the DACA program for immigrant youth in the US, and then quantitatively coding them.

“We sampled tweets about issues that weren’t youth-produced. But they were issues that we know are kind of top issues amongst youth. So in the USA, the DACA program is for undocumented immigrant youth, so very relevant to them.” (Ellen Middaugh)

They sampled around 900 tweets and quantitatively coded them

“and trained undergraduate research assistance to code them for things like who produced it, whether there was evidence in the Tweet, and then analyze them statistically based on factors such as how many tweets were produced by official sources vs. everyday citizens vs. celebrities or included links to evidence.” (Ellen Middaugh)

Another facet of her work involves two distinct projects. One focused on gender-expansive youth utilizing TikTok to find community, advocate, and educate. In this project, Ellen and her colleagues, including two undergraduate researchers, used grounded theory to qualitatively code and understand youth practices. The focus was to identify emergent phenomena, such as new forms of gender expression and creative media practices for building community.

The researcher is also involved in a second project tracking youth activists across various social media platforms to explore how they are using them for their advocacy efforts, particularly regarding climate change. Her research topics are strategically selected to address pertinent issues within youth activism or the broader youth sphere, with a keen emphasis on qualitative coding methods to dissect and interpret the data collected.

“So I try to pick topics that are kind of pressing and relevant in youth activism, space or just youth space in general and sample that way.” (Ellen Middaugh)

When asked if it is possible to be always innovating in terms of methodologies, Ellen Middaugh replied stating that she has institutional freedom to do interdisciplinary research. The opportunity to work with students, according to the researcher, brings added value in terms of innovating and bridging the digital generational gap as she explains.

“That’s what’s exciting about this work, and I am fortunate enough to be at a university where I am allowed to take novel approaches, and it’s appreciated. My university likes that I do interdisciplinary research (...) So I really appreciate that and because I’m working with undergraduate students, they are very innovative. And so they make suggestions. You know, I’m not young anymore. So I’m not in those spaces. And so I really love partnering with the research assistance for them to help me understand how people are using these and options we have for innovating methodologically. So that’s been crucial, the partnership with the students.

In the US, it was funny because the definition of youth kept expanding as I was in graduate school, so I stayed within the window for much longer than I would have expected, and then, at some point, I’m like, Nope, I’m old now.” (Ellen Middaugh)

When it comes to sampling social media posts, the methodology presents its own set of challenges that come with the complexity of navigating a vast open space, and the difficulties in delineating the boundaries of a specific topic. Determining the endpoint for data collection can also pose a significant challenge in this context. Drawing from her own experiences and insights gleaned from other colleagues’ work, she underscores the importance of defining the approach early on, whether it is a topic-centered methodology utilizing hashtags and key terms, a user-centered approach, or a networked approach that follows user interactions within the platform. Each approach offers distinct advantages and limitations that researchers must consider.

For instance, a topic-centered approach may inadvertently focus more on discussions about youth rather than genuine youth perspectives. Upholding a commitment to embracing intersectional

perspectives is a guiding principle for her, ensuring that research efforts encompass a diverse range of viewpoints.

“(...) you really need to think about, are you taking a topic-centered approach using hashtags and key terms? (...) And so, being clear in your mind which approach you’re taking and what that does and doesn’t tell you. (...) are you actually including youth perspectives? Are you just following people talking about youth with a user-centered approach? There are decisions you need to make about how inclusive you’re being. It’s really important to me to represent intersectional perspectives, not just, you know, privileged youth and so making sure you’re kind of reaching saturation, which was how we talk about it in qualitative research of really kind of getting widening the net and making sure you’re getting adequate perspectives.” (Ellen Middaugh)

DATA USAGE AND SHARING

The public-private dyad and the role of researcher in research present big challenges and demand constant reflexivity in Ellen Middaugh’s research.

One big issue is the fact that social media is public. “and so, from a research ethics point of view, you’re allowed to code it without getting consent. “So the researcher questions herself: “what’s the ethical way to capture that?”

Reflecting on a recent discussion with one of her undergraduate research assistants “about which posts we felt ethically were okay to share, and which ones the user might not be thinking that their posts are going to be shared”, they made conscious decisions opting for accounts of public activists or individuals with established audiences who are likely aware of the visibility of their content. The “Research Ethics Review doesn’t really require us to do that (...), [so] we need to think that through.” In the realm of social media research, a multitude of ethical and methodological considerations demand careful navigation to uphold integrity and respect for those represented in the data.

The research wants to be inclusive in the sampling, but she does not want to fall into issues outside of her positionality and expertise. From Ellen Middaugh’s point of view, in her research, with youth

from minoritized communities, it is paramount to partner with those communities.

“They talk a lot about Black Twitter. And when you have white women or men or gender expansive folks who are trying to represent those issues through their consumption of that...That’s like an ethical no, from my perspective, right? So when I am focused on issues that specifically impact kind of minoritized youth. It’s really important to me to partner with colleagues from those communities or with research assistants from those communities, so that I am not speaking for those communities.” (Ellen Middaugh)

Another issue resides “outside of this specific methodology”. The researcher speaks about what she considers to be a huge ethical issue around social media.

In Ellen Middaugh’s research, she is “not trying to train young people to be consumers of TikTok, or Facebook. And so I need to be careful that any intervention I come up with is not introducing them to or encouraging them to use something their parents would not want them to use. I’m trying to help them be more efficacious in the environments they’re already active in.”

This requires a lot of ethical attention when she’s partnering with teachers to make sure of “what are students already using? What are they already doing?”. But in research in classrooms, she does not ask students to use the social media environment. Instead, she brings posts from social media to analyze the content with them. “I try to choose things I think they would see through even if they’re not on social media.” And she avoids exposing them to content “they wouldn’t otherwise see through either their own experience or through other experiences.”

When parents say ‘my kids are not on social media at all.’ They never see it. So Ellen Middaugh asks “Do they read the news?” and they say, ‘Yes’, to what the researcher argues that “they see social media because journalists bring in information from social media and share it.”

When working with students, the researcher uses software like Canva or Adobe for students to create posts to protect against encouraging social media use that they may not otherwise want to do. Posts can be shared on project accounts, but not on individual accounts, and student names or identifying information are removed. As they create posts, they discuss the effects a social publication may have, how it is going to be used, and what the potential reactions might be.

Ellen Middaugh's intention is to make them more critical consumers, because then "You're more aware of the choices people make."

Considering that in California there are a lot of young people who are either immigrants themselves or from families who immigrated, Ellen makes sure to have an inclusive approach. Young people have different platforms, and different affordances, so the researcher makes research questions that are not completely dependent on a specific platform because research can be easily outdated "if you don't think beyond the current trend."

To make sure the analysis is inclusive, she works closely with masters and undergraduate students to establish a reliable coding system that pays attention to the lived experiences of the young people whose media they are sampling. Working with Ellen Middaugh is a diverse population of students, from low-income backgrounds to other diverse backgrounds.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

Ellen's suggestions to young researchers are ethically grounded in her academic experience and also address life considerations as the two intertwine. She begins with the importance of managing time to open the recommendation, "You don't have to do it all at the same time. That's important to remember."

The publish or perish topic also was brought up during the conversation. The advantages of partnership collaborations, the pressure of publishing with peer review and communicating science to different audiences.

“I think it’s important to have scrutiny and other people really looking closely at our methodology, our ethics. (...) And at the same time, most of the public doesn’t read those. So if you want your work to have an impact, you may wanna interact with other audiences. So for me, they’re both important.” (Ellen Middaugh)

Third, the importance of paying attention to methodological choices, “how does this help me accomplish that goal? (...) I pay attention to the methodologies. So I think, having those kinds of what makes it worth it, is to deal with some of the challenges is always worth it to me if I feel like it is accomplishing that goal.”

The sense of what is worth your time takes time to develop. Thus, for Ellen, it is important to “pay attention to what energizes you as you’re doing the research.” Some people may be energized by other things, like getting published in a top peer-reviewed publication. What energizes Ellen is to think of her work as a mission, because work “can’t always be fun. It’s gonna be hard” and the freedom she has at her university to pursue work that is applied and interdisciplinary.

Being aware of self-worth, “don’t let one single person tell you you’re not good at this”. So for Ellen, besides the advisor “it’s really important to find mentors. And they could be peer mentors, people who are other students, or they can be mentors who are in other departments in your university. I cultivated a number of mentors who really helped me find my way, and those who are other graduate students, but also people that I met through conferences.”

Cultivating self-confidence is a process. Ellen shares with her students how fearful she was about public speaking. She sees herself as an introvert who has found an environment where she can flourish. Leaving the comfort zone was a process. “It’s not something I just did right away (...) I felt like being introverted was gonna limit my opportunities.” The mentors she found along the way helped her figure out how to do that. And she carries this legacy to her students.

“I have worked on that, but I’m still a person at the end of the day, who prefers to be alone in my house, and like shut out all the noise at

the end of the day. So I've just found an environment that I feel like I could grow in." (Ellen Middaugh)

■ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF ELLEN MIDDAUGH:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/education/community/clarion-project.php>

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“I’M TELLING YOU THIS BECAUSE I KNOW YOU HAVE THE DUTY OF CONFIDENCE”

Perspectives on being a technographer in a world of smartphones, with John Magnus Dahl




Keywords:

- Youth
- Digital citizenship
- Media technology and innovation
- Smartphone
- Social media
- Popular culture
- Cultural identity
- Ethnographic research
- Qualitative methods

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WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM THIS CHAPTER?

In this chapter, methodological issues and ethical challenges in research on the impact of technology and media in the everyday life of young people are the focus of the researcher John Magnus Dahl’s reflection. This chapter draws on the interview with the researcher and summarises the main ideas, which can also be explored in more detail by listening to the inspiring interview. At the end of this chapter, it is possible to find some reading suggestions shared by John.

You can listen to this conversation in full on  Spotify

WHO IS JOHN MAGNUS DAHL?

John Magnus Dahl is a postdoctoral researcher at University of Bergen’s Media Futures - Research Centre for Responsible Media Technology & Innovation, Norway. He holds a MA from the University of Amsterdam (2014) and a PhD from the University of Bergen (2021),

with a dissertation on how Scandinavian comedy contributes to the wider discussion of immigration in the public sphere. He is interested in the relationship between politics and popular culture, cultural identity, and qualitative methods, with a particular interest in how these questions play out in the lives of young people. He has published on these topics in journals like *Javnost – The Public*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *Journalism Studies*, and in a selection of edited volumes. Currently, he works on a postdoc project on the role of smartphones in the lifeworld of older teenage boys, where he has conducted ethnographic research in Bergen, Norway. The project will result in an academic monograph (under contract with Palgrave Macmillan) which conceptualises smartphone use as worldmaking and investigates what it is like to be a teenage boy on the verge to become a man in the age of the smartphone.

CONTEXTUALIZING JOHN'S RESEARCH

John Magnus Dahl has been interested in researching how technology and new media change the everyday lives of young people. In particular in what he calls the third space (Livingstone, & Sefton-Green, 2016). He is interested in the way young people relate, first and foremost to difference. Also, to the young people's life that is not at school and not at home, but in larger contexts. For example, within different organisations, sports clubs, and in what he likes to call "the wider world and everything else out there".

He has dedicated special attention to certain minorities that he expected would use the technology and the smartphone in different ways than most of the young people. People with a migrant background, people with queer identity.

From an ethical perspective, in his recent research, the plan was to study teenagers based on ethnographic research. He wanted to know what the smartphone brings to the table. How do they use smartphones? How do they try to make a world, or different worlds, with the smartphone being between 16 and 19 years old?

The groups he had followed ended up being groups of boys. It is not new that they can use smartphones everywhere, but everything

now is more established. If everyone has a smartphone, its importance and use in different contexts is really established. There is still the promise of Internet connectivity, in which you can be anyone you want, and you can reach anyone through the Internet. The smartphone is, somehow, a new proliferation of this which he thought it was interesting to investigate.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

What John Magnus Dahl really wanted to do was to follow the boys, to do participant observation in their offline lives, and follow them online on as many different social media accounts or in other platforms that they use. Besides, he also wanted to ask them about what they did online to get more context and explanation based on their own interpretations.

The longest time he followed some boys was almost one and a half years, others around four months. That was quite an extensive time span and a lot of things happened in the young people's life during that time. Following them over time, both online and offline, has given a texture and richness in the data material. This grounded the understanding and opportunities to take descriptions about their lives.

“There were lots of challenges, some of them practical. I mean the classic. The really classic technographer goes away as social anthropologists or cultural anthropologists. Staying somewhere else for a year was challenging, of course, but maybe somehow, it's easier than when you do ethnography in your own hometown (...) and you still have all other obligations. We were a kind of family, but I was not hanging around with these kids all the time. So, I have to ask, you have to try to get into different fields. That's also one of the reasons why I chose not to follow them in school, for example, because then I would also have to relate to teachers and other friends, and with all that practical and ethical matters this would involve.”(John Magnus Dahl)

John Magnus Dahl realised that following the same people offline and online and following them online on so many platforms and in such an intensive and systematic way as a researcher, presents some

ethical challenges and even pitfalls. In particular, because he compiled much more of what they were doing online than anywhere else. As a result, the researcher gets a sort of a different picture of them than their friends and possibly of the way they know themselves. “What this totality of their online presence is, and has been (...), still is a challenge when I’m writing about the fieldwork”, he says.

ENTERING THE RESEARCH FIELD

John Magnus Dahl has entered the research field in two different ways. On the one hand, he tried to reach the young people through schools and diverse after-school clubs. He was allowed to hang around in these youth centres and approached the young people by asking them: “Hi, I’m this researcher from the University of Bergen. I’m having this project about teenagers and smartphones. Do you want to participate?” Someone gave him a positive answer and then introduced him to other friends.

On the other hand, he used certain apps to recruit the teenagers. He had chosen to use an app called Yubo which is more popular with younger teens, but some older than 16 were using it, too. He also used different dating apps and made a profile saying: “I’m a researcher” which yielded some results because it made people curious about it.

In some cases, he gave the boys a gift card when he was allowed to observe them or be together with them in the physical world at least three times or more. This option has been interesting because there were three groups of boys, all very different. The main thing he noticed is that he was an adult person who is older than them, but not as old as their parents. It was like 15 to 20 years of age difference and obviously he didn’t represent any authority. So, there was a sort of a friendly relationship. He thought of himself like a young uncle, for example, not a peer or a friend, but still quite different from how they would talk to a teacher or a parent. That’s been interesting and quite useful in developing reports and making them take him to do things, especially into the spaces shared with friends.

ETHICAL CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS

The first dilemma John Magnus Dahl encountered relates to that one of the boys, at the time 16 years old, who showed him a lot of things on his phone, including different people he talked with. One of these people sent to the boy some kind of a dating app, showing an anonymous profile of an adult man selling alcohol. The boy told him “I am telling you this because I know you have the duty of confidence. Don’t tell this to anyone.” John Magnus Dahl did not tell his parents, but that was still illegal and potentially dangerous. How to handle this sort of situation? He decided to talk with colleagues and got details of the profile and reported the profile to the police, but not the boy. This was potentially dangerous for other people than him as well.

All that happened quite early in the fieldwork, so, he felt quite dramatic and worried. “Will this be like the routine, will this kind of thing be happening all the time?” Luckily it has not.

However, there were other more subtle challenges. One situation was with a guy in the fieldwork who had an Arabic name. He has observed him a lot when he talked with friends, and when he made posts on social media. There were small hints about him being Muslim, about him having a religious identity. John Magnus Dahl started to question: “How important is this for him? How believing piously makes him feel differentiated from the majority who are non-muslim in Norway?” He observed that it was important, but, at the same time, he wondered if he could rely on his own interpretation. So, he ended up asking him questions about these issues in an interview, which made things a lot easier. He was confident that the Muslim identity was important to him, but there were still some things that he was not sure about. For example, how could he state that the religious difference would be problematic or not? He observed, but the boy did not tell him this kind of thing. So, it was important to ask.

A third dilemma that popped up in John Magnus Dahl research relates to things that are randomly happening online when he followed them online and he did not think these boys thought would happen. For example, one is the geolocalization on Snapchat. Most of the boys have it turned on or for all of them all the time. If this geolocation

is turned on for everyone, or if you are one of the people that have turned it on, you can really see on the map where they are more or less at all times, and sometimes at strange hours. On one occasion, quite late in the night, some would just appear somewhere else, not in their school, not in their home, but in a new place and sometimes they would turn this off for a short time, while always being on. So, there was information about their movements that he thought he was not meant to see. He was not sure if he should have asked about it. However, who knows if they were observed by not just a friend, but someone they will be frightened about, who makes interpretations about what their lives are like. That was hard for John.

Other things they commented on or did online that they thought he would not see. For example, one of the boys allowed John Magnus Dahl to follow him on Reddit because he was into a TV show that they had discussed about. So, he could see all the comments the boy made. Suddenly, the boy made a comment, not on this TV show, but on a porn video. This was very interesting for the research, but, at the same time, he was not sure if the boy meant he would see this. Again, John Magnus Dahl thought about that and what to do. Should he talk with the boy about it? Should he bring it up or should just write about it without bringing it up? This is one of these dilemmas that it is not easy to solve or to have a definite answer.

CHALLENGES IN RESEARCH ON DIFFERENCES, CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND OTHERS

Research on cultural, religious or other differences raises challenges. One challenge pointed out by John Magnus Dahl refers to how a researcher feels at the entrance on the field or when participating for the first time in a group. On one occasion, he was a bit critical or even scared. It was the first time he would meet one of the boys and it was in a sports gymnasium. On the bus out there, he got a flashback since these were exactly the kind of guys he never wanted to hang out with when he was 16. So, to calm down he thought about the guy in relation to its research code participant, for instance, participant n.⁹ 35.

When you spend time with some people and also watch a lot of what they like to watch or the things they make themselves on Instagram or YouTube or TikTok, you start to accept. The question raised was to understand why this matters for them and how they do it.

John Magnus Dahl found himself watching YouTube videos and even laughing at things that he thinks are very boring or offensive, without necessarily being something he will see again. As a researcher, he manages to do it and this is one of the strengths of the research. At least, the researcher has to work with him/herself.

In his study, he would systematically manage to get into some other people's perspectives, and not from his own perspective. It can still be critical, but one starts to see why the participants do the things they do and it becomes easier to understand the data collected.

Once, he had to make a presentation for colleagues and wanted to use material from one of these guys who was making YouTube videos that were quite offensive and even misogynistic humour. He realised that it was not showing the video, instead he made adapted descriptions that fit in a lecture. However, people who saw it still seemed a bit shocked or offended. Then, he thought that he was not shocked or offended anymore, even though he saw that the content was problematic.

As a researcher, he managed to place himself in the shoes of the research participants and see why that was important. That is a strength of the new ethnographic methods, besides being also ethically relevant.

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUNGER RESEARCHERS

When combining online and offline ethnography, John Magnus Dahl's first suggestion is that you should not be afraid of asking. Do not be afraid of asking to be a part of the participant's life as much as possible. Also, ask about the things you see online. Ask in a nice way and do it maybe in private, just the two of you. If you see something that you thought was strange, or did not understand, or even something that you think is important about them, but you are afraid of telling something private or categorising them in a certain way, just ask the

participants. It might be uncomfortable there and then, but asking them does not really hurt them and probably it does not hurt you in your relationship with them, either.

In his ethnography, there has been a big debate on the moment of leaving the field since he considers that you do not have to leave the field completely. If some people want to have contact with the researcher, it is possible to have the contact. What is important, he suggests, is to make it very clear that the data collection is over, he is not researching that person anymore. It is essential to make sure the participants understand that if they post something now on Instagram, the researcher would not write about it. You can still keep in touch with the participants if that would be nice for both sides. It is natural for people to like some better than others, that this relationship can be friendly. They can even give you something back when you write about them. They can comment. They can explain things better. So, the researcher could absolutely keep in touch with them. He concludes: "I don't think it is so important to do a hard cut here, especially if dealing with young people!"

- TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORK OF JOHN DAHL:

<https://www4.uib.no/en/find-employees/John.Magnus.Ragnhildson.Dahl>

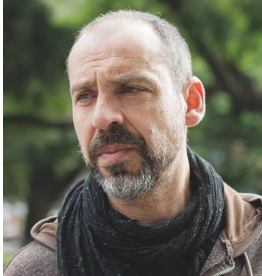
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“TER SEMPRE A NOÇÃO DAS IMPLICAÇÕES QUE EXISTEM PARA AS PESSOAS, PORQUE ISSO NA VERDADE É O MAIS IMPORTANTE.”

Perspetivas éticas sobre anonimato, consentimento e legalidade na investigação com Ricardo Campos




Keywords:

- Artivismo Digital
- Consentimento informado
- Graffiti
- Legalidade
- Anonimato
- Metodologias mistas
- Etnografia
- Diário de campo
- Métodos participativos e colaborativos
- Photovoice


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O QUE PODEMOS ESPERAR DESTE CAPÍTULO?

Nesta conversa, Ricardo Campos faz-nos uma visita guiada pelo Artivismo Digital, a conceptualização do conceito e suas conexões com a metodologia e a ética num contexto que por vezes esbarra com a prática ilegal do graffiti no panorama urbano. A sua preferência pela experimentação de metodologias e métodos de abordagem etnográfica ou participativa interage com os seus interesses de pesquisa a par com várias e complexas preocupações éticas. Interroga-se, e interroga-nos, sobre estas demandas que evoluem de mão dada com a complexificação da investigação e dos tempos. É o trabalho do investigador, diz-nos, e este deve importar-se com aquilo que realmente importa, as pessoas. Não havendo receitas no campo da investigação, destaca como o bom senso parece ser um ponto de chegada.

No final deste capítulo, pode encontrar as sugestões de leitura partilhadas pelo investigador. Pode ouvir esta conversa na íntegra no  Spotify

QUEM É RICARDO CAMPOS?

Ricardo Campos é investigador principal e membro da direcção do Centro Interdisciplinar de Ciências Sociais da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas (CICS.NOVA) e professor convidado nos Mestrado e Doutoramento em Relações Interculturais (Universidade Aberta). É membro fundador e cocoordenador da Rede Luso-Brasileira de pesquisa em Artes e Intervenções Urbanas (RAIU). Coordenou os projectos Artcitizenship – Young people and the arts of citizenship: activism, participatory culture and creative practices (2019-2022), TransUrbArts - Emergent Urban Arts in Lisbon and São Paulo (2016-2020) ambos com o apoio financeiro da Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia. Ao longo dos anos tem realizado pesquisa em vários centros de investigação, em torno das temáticas das culturas juvenis urbanas, da arte urbana, dos media digitais, da antropologia visual e da cultura visual, tendo diversos capítulos de livros e artigos em revistas nacionais e internacionais sobre estes temas. É autor de várias obras sobre Artes Urbanas, Cultura Visual, juventude, práticas criativas e ativismo, música, jovens e migração.

CONTEXTUALIZANDO A INVESTIGAÇÃO DE RICARDO CAMPOS NO CAMPO DO ARTIVISMO

Ricardo Campos começa por nos explicar o conceito Artivismo. Um conceito que trabalhou no âmbito de um projeto que coordenou recentemente, o ArtCitizenship - Juventude e as artes da cidadania: práticas criativas, cultura participativa e ativismo. Neste contexto empregou um conceito original e mais amplo - artes da cidadania. No entanto, do ponto de vista prático e conceptual, recorre com frequência ao termo de artivismo, uma vez que este é um conceito razoavelmente estabilizado na academia nos últimos anos, que assenta na fusão entre a arte e o ativismo.

O Artivismo, segundo o investigador, é um neologismo que surge da fusão entre estas duas dimensões. O que está em causa no artivismo são práticas criativas e artísticas que, de alguma forma, estão diretamente associadas a um conjunto de causas e de lutas sociais.

Ricardo Campos refere-se aqui quer a artistas profissionais, quer a amadores que desenvolvem práticas criativas e artísticas através da ilustração, da música, da pintura, da fotografia, do vídeo, etc., mas em torno de um conjunto de causas sociais diversas, como é o caso da luta climática, do feminismo, da causa LGBTQI+ ou da defesa animal, entre outras. Ou seja, um conjunto vasto de matérias. O Artivismo Digital é a aplicação deste conceito ao meio digital, isto é, remete para a forma como os recursos digitais são empregados no artivismo contemporâneo. Esta foi inclusive uma questão que surgiu ao longo da sua pesquisa.

“Nós notámos, e não foi uma surpresa para nós, que de alguma forma grande parte daquilo que é o ativismo contemporâneo passa pelos meios digitais, a ubiquidade do digital atualmente favorece um ativismo que ocorre com e através dos meios digitais, isto tem implicações a diferentes níveis, quer ao nível da produção de conteúdos, por exemplo vários entrevistados produziam ilustrações digitais que depois colocavam no Instagram, ou tinham um podcast, ou faziam música por meios digitais e disseminavam-na por meios digitais” (Ricardo Campos)

Este investigador considera que há o nível da produção de conteúdos, e depois um segundo nível, o da sua difusão, da disseminação. Os meios digitais têm imenso impacto atualmente, ao permitirem uma ampliação gigantesca das redes e da audiência. É completamente diferente alguém que faz pintura ou ilustração e a expõe numa galeria, ou produz fanzines ou folhetos que divulga pela rua, ou alguém que as coloca nas redes sociais. São impactos completamente distintos. E, ainda, além do impacto que decorre da ampliação das redes, encontra-se também a questão da interação e do feedback que se torna possível a partir da utilização destes circuitos digitais. Quando se produz uma ilustração ou escreve um texto que é colocado nas redes sociais, imediatamente é recebido feedback e comentários, e portanto, esta reciprocidade é também muito importante e é algo de novo relativamente às outras formas de participação e de ativismo por parte dos jovens. Em suma, o artivismo digital é a aplicação deste conceito, deste neologismo ao âmbito digital, à esfera digital.

CRUZAR OLHARES E CRUZAR METODOLOGIAS

O interesse no Artivismo Digital relaciona-se também com a trajetória acadêmica de Ricardo Campos, que já empregou múltiplas metodologias, desde as de natureza quantitativa às de natureza qualitativa, mas confessa ser um acérrimo adepto da utilização de metodologias diversificadas, porque considera que não existem umas melhores do que as outras. Defende que as metodologias devem ser pensadas em função das temáticas, dos contextos de terreno, da população com que se pesquisa, e ao longo dos seus projetos já utilizou várias ferramentas de recolha e de análise de dados, desde os inquéritos até às entrevistas aprofundadas, passando pela observação participante de natureza etnográfica, até aos métodos participativos e colaborativos.

“Conheço bem essas diferentes metodologias e os prós e contras de cada uma delas, e considero que é muito relevante que as pesquisas, no fundo, cruzem vários olhares e os olhares também estão condicionados pelas metodologias que nós empregamos, e portanto sou um adepto das metodologias mistas, digamos assim. E isto permite de facto uma triangulação também de dados e de fontes que é muito enriquecedor para a pesquisa.” (Ricardo Campos)

Nos últimos anos, muito em função do seu doutoramento, no âmbito da antropologia, o investigador desenvolveu uma etnografia e as suas pesquisas mais recentes têm sempre como pano de fundo ou inspiração uma abordagem etnográfica. Isto significa que tem que haver uma presença no terreno, uma presença relativamente prolongada, que pode ou não ser intermitente, mas uma presença prolongada e alguma proximidade com as pessoas com quem se trabalha. Uma questão importante neste caso é a empatia, porque passou a conhecer as pessoas, a ter uma proximidade e uma familiaridade com estas pessoas.

A etnografia permite a aplicação de um conjunto de ferramentas de recolha de dados. Na pesquisa usa a clássica observação no terreno, participante ou não participante, embora Ricardo Campos não goste

do termo não participante, já que “toda a observação no terreno é participante de alguma forma.” Também recorre a entrevistas formais gravadas, que considera serem um bom método para recolher e analisar a informação, a par com as conversas informais e o diário do campo associado à observação. Esta conjugação de métodos permite-lhe ter uma visão muito ampla de determinados contextos, que são também contextos circunscritos, porque a etnografia não permite abordagens muito amplas do ponto de vista do contexto territorial da pesquisa e da escala humana.

Outra abordagem que considera interessante é a de natureza participativa ou colaborativa, assumindo ter mais experiência com as metodologias visuais neste campo. Utilizou Photovoice num projeto com jovens em que, embora não fosse coordenador, era coordenado por um orientando seu. Daqui retira como muito interessante a possibilidade de co-criação de conteúdos, co-criação de conhecimento. Uma perspetiva que gostaria de explorar no futuro, é a possibilidade da abordagem participativa e colaborativa não se colocar apenas ao nível da co-criação do conhecimento, mas também ao nível de uma co-criação da própria investigação, que, de alguma forma, tende a ser dominada pelo investigador, através dos seus modelos e dos seus formatos de pesquisa. Na perspetiva de Ricardo Campos é uma “forma de fugirmos também um bocadinho do adultocentrismo da academia e da nossa pesquisa, temos que explorar as possibilidades epistemológicas de co-criar também o próprio projeto de pesquisa com os jovens.”

OS DESAFIOS ÉTICOS NA FRONTEIRA DA LEGALIDADE

As questões éticas e ideológicas, segundo Ricardo Campos, fazem parte do trabalho dos investigadores. Porém, estas questões estão cada vez mais presentes, porque os investigadores têm cada vez mais a noção das implicações da sua pesquisa e, por isso, as preocupações que tem hoje em dia não são as mesmas que tinha há 20 ou 30 anos. As exigências são outras também.

A forma como os investigadores dispõem dos dados também é completamente distinta. Há 20 ou 30 anos os dados existiam em

suporte físico, anotações de campo, fotografias. Hoje em dia os dados estão disponíveis por via digital e, portanto, isto também tem outro tipo de implicações.

Para o investigador, as matérias de foro ético decorrem basicamente de três níveis. Num primeiro nível há a metodologia que os investigadores empregam. Por exemplo, a etnografia tem implicações éticas muito precisas, a utilização de metodologias visuais tem outras relativas à imagem, à privacidade e à identidade das pessoas em função da sua imagem. Para além disso, a etnografia levanta questões particularmente complexas, por causa dos contextos de pesquisa de forte proximidade e familiaridade com as pessoas, em que as fronteiras são por vezes difusas entre a formalidade e a informalidade. Nestes contextos é, por vezes, difícil garantir que os investigadores têm a aceitação de todas as pessoas no quadro da pesquisa que estão a fazer.

“Vou dar um exemplo simples, quando eu pesquisava para o meu doutoramento sobre o graffiti urbano, tive muitos contextos coletivos, festas por exemplo, em que havia dezenas, centenas de pessoas e aquilo que acontece é o que é comum em etnografia, nós observamos o contexto, falamos com as pessoas, conversamos, vamos tomando notas mentais sobre o que está a ocorrer e dificilmente temos capacidade de explicar a toda a gente o que é que estamos ali a fazer ou qual é o nosso papel.” (Ricardo Campos)

Isto aplica-se a tudo o que é o terreno etnográfico e há essa exigência de transparência e de informação relativamente ao papel do investigador e qual é a sua função. Isto deve ser algo que deve estar explícito. Mas há contextos onde isso é mais difícil e portanto isto remete para a metodologia e para a questão da temática em causa. Há temas que são mais sensíveis e isso traz diferentes exigências.

A um segundo nível, há várias preocupações éticas. Recorrendo novamente ao exemplo do graffiti, que é no contexto de uma prática que pode ser ilegal, o investigador tem um conjunto de preocupações sobre como é que pode devolver a sua pesquisa aos participantes, mas também sobre como trazer à luz um conjunto de dados e de informações garantindo sempre o anonimato das pessoas. Por vezes,

não é fácil garantir esse anonimato, porque se houver imagens sobre produções visuais destes jovens, nomeadamente o grafitti, é muito fácil associar as produções às pessoas. Nos contextos de informalidade e ilegalidade, o Ricardo Campos tem cuidado sobre o que é possível filmar, fotografar e como expõe essa informação em termos públicos, tal como a informação que lhe é transmitida oralmente.

“Como é que eu poderia trazer à luz essa informação, garantindo a segurança e a privacidade das pessoas?” Estes são alguns pontos de compromisso ético que Ricardo Campos partilhou connosco.

Um terceiro nível, é o da população em estudo, porque é diferente estar a trabalhar com crianças, jovens ou adultos.

Com crianças, com menores, tem que haver uma negociação com os pais. Embora trabalhe com jovens, em quase todas as suas pesquisas tem trabalhado com maiores de idade. Uma faixa etária alargada, que começa nos 18 anos e pode ir até aos 35, aos jovens adultos. Portanto, não teve propriamente esse tipo de questão de natureza formal, mas ainda assim tem sempre esses cuidados e pensa nos impactos que a informação pode ter a diferentes níveis. Esta é para Ricardo Campos uma dimensão central.

Este é um pressuposto de base para poder garantir a transparência relativamente ao seu papel e objetivos da pesquisa. Dar toda a informação sobre o projeto às pessoas com quem se vai trabalhar e garantir que essas pessoas têm sempre a liberdade para recusar a participação ou abandonar, desistir da sua colaboração ao longo do projeto.

E, cada vez mais, esta é uma questão que preocupa o investigador. Pensar nas pessoas com quem trabalha em pesquisa, pensando sempre numa relação de pesquisa mais democrática e horizontal e não tão verticalizada como é o modelo clássico de pesquisa. Pensar até que ponto é que a própria construção do conhecimento também não deve ter a participação das pessoas com quem os investigadores trabalham. Isto é mais fácil numa situação do que noutras. Mas uma coisa é trabalhar com crianças, outra coisa é trabalhar com jovens ou adultos.

Isto, segundo Ricardo Campos, remete para o que é o bom senso. “Um pesquisador tem que ter bom senso, tem que ter determinados cuidados, tem que pensar nas implicações, e isto é

muito importante, nas implicações que o seu trabalho tem ao nível da população com quem está a trabalhar, isto são impactos diretos. (...) e portanto, antes de ir para terreno, é preciso ponderar seriamente sobre essas implicações para os próprios jovens, para as famílias, para o seu contexto social.”

Ainda a respeito da ética há as implicações relacionadas com a difusão, a disseminação da informação e do conhecimento que é gerado pela pesquisa. Mais uma vez, é preciso ter uma visão equilibrada das coisas e algum bom senso. “E eu, por vezes, noto que o que falta é precisamente bom senso.”

Isso é mais do que conhecer de “fio a pavio”, todas as regras metodológicas e operacionais. Por vezes, há falta de algum bom senso na forma como se desenvolvem e como se desenrolam as pesquisas. E por isso, é importante estar atento a essas questões, tendo consciência que “os contextos de pesquisa são todos muito diferentes. E não há receitas pré-formatadas, e portanto, há que ser sensível ao terreno, ser sensível às pessoas com quem estamos a trabalhar, e é normal também que nós cometamos erros.”

Para o investigador “isso é algo que a experiência de pesquisa também nos traz. Eu também já estive em várias situações complexas do ponto de vista ético, e fui aprendendo com o tempo. E já tive pessoas que aceitaram participar em pesquisas e depois levantaram questões mais tarde, e portanto tive que lidar com situações desse género.”

Olhando para trás, há uns anos não era habitual pedir o consentimento informado, formal, escrito e assinado. Hoje em dia isso já é mais comum, embora em alguns contextos seja muito complicado. Pensando novamente no seu doutoramento e na temática ilegal do graffiti, “difícilmente eu terei um consentimento informado e assinado de alguém que age sob anonimato num contexto ilegal.”

Se isto do ponto de vista operacional é impossível, “portanto resta-nos o quê?” Para Ricardo Campos resta ter bom senso e cumprir um conjunto de regras. Ter a noção de que neste contexto de pesquisa há implicações legais relativamente aos atos que aquelas pessoas praticam. Isto também coloca o investigador numa situação complexa. Até que ponto é que pode ou quer estar envolvido em situações que

são de natureza ilegal? “Porque de alguma forma há limiares que não podem ser ultrapassados.”

Esta questão tem gerado algum debate, porque algumas pesquisas, até clássicas, ultrapassam esses limiares de alguma forma. E por isso, não há receitas, “há que saber ler o terreno, ler as pessoas, interpretar bem os contextos e seguir aquilo que são as regras básicas da profissão e que nós conhecemos e ter sempre a noção das implicações que existem para as pessoas, porque isso na verdade é o mais importante.”

■ LEITURAS SUGERIDAS POR RICARDO CAMPOS:

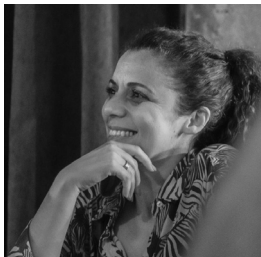
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“VOCÊS VÊM AQUI COMO SE ISTO FOSSE UM JARDIM ZOOLÓGICO!”


Perspectivas sobre ética na investigação em centros educativos com Vera Duarte



Keywords:

- Sociologia do crime e das marginalidades
- Delinquência juvenil
- Criminalidade feminina
- Sistema de justiça juvenil
- Violência
- Privação de liberdade
- Metodologias qualitativas


VERA DUARTE

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O QUE PODEMOS ESPERAR DESTE CAPÍTULO?

A investigação em contexto de privação de liberdade de jovens no seio da administração da justiça juvenil é o tema central da conversa com Vera Duarte, investigadora com larga experiência nas áreas da sociologia e da criminologia. O testemunho sobre as principais questões metodológicas e éticas emergentes no seu percurso neste campo, e trazidas para este texto, interpela o olhar sobre uma população particularmente desafiante para a investigação.

No final deste capítulo, poderá encontrar as sugestões de leitura partilhadas pela investigadora.

Pode ouvir esta conversa na íntegra no  Spotify

QUEM É VERA DUARTE?

Vera Duarte é doutorada em Sociologia pela Universidade do Minho (2011), com um projeto sobre delinquência juvenil feminina

financiado pela Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia. Iniciou a sua atividade docente em 2001 na Universidade do Minho e na Universidade Católica Portuguesa. Desde 2011, é Professora Auxiliar na Universidade da Maia (UMAIA, Portugal). É investigadora integrada do Centro Interdisciplinar de Estudos de Género, Instituto de Ciências Sociais e Políticas (CIEG, ISCSP, Portugal) e investigadora colaboradora no Centro Interdisciplinar em Ciências Sociais da Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (CICS.NOVA). Desde o início da sua carreira tem exercido funções de gestão académica nas diferentes instituições de ensino superior onde trabalhou. Na Universidade da Maia, foi diretora da Unidade de Investigação em Criminologia e Ciências do Comportamento (UICCC) (2012-2020), membro da Comissão de Ética (2018-2021) e do Conselho Científico (2021...), e, atualmente, é coordenadora do Mestrado em Criminologia.

O trabalho de docência, produção científica e investigação tem sido, predominantemente, nas áreas da sociologia do crime e das marginalidades, com foco na delinquência juvenil, criminalidade feminina, sistema de justiça juvenil, violência e metodologias qualitativas. Em torno destes temas, é autora de vários livros, capítulos de livros e artigos em revistas científicas; coordena projetos nacionais, tais como “Intervenção Responsável pelo Género no sistema de justiça juvenil”, em parceria com a DGRSP – Direção Geral de Reintegração e Serviços Prisionais, e integra equipas de investigação científica de outros projetos; e dá formação para profissionais da área de justiça juvenil.

CONTEXTUALIZANDO O PERCURSO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO DA VERA DUARTE

O envolvimento de Vera Duarte em projetos de investigação ao longo dos anos tem passado pelos centros educativos do país. A partir da sua tese de Doutoramento sobre discursos e percursos na delinquência juvenil feminino, defendida em 2011 (e publicada em 2012), muito do seu pensamento e da sua prática e reflexão foi orientada para estes temas. Estudou um tema pouco investigado em Portugal, as raparigas em contexto de privação de liberdade. Uma população de difícil

acesso e que colocou muitos desafios. A escolha metodológica que fez conduziu-a para dentro dos centros educativos, da Direção-Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais, Ministério da Justiça, e exigiu a sua permanência lá. Neste estudo fez análise de processos e entrevistas a raparigas, com o objetivo de construção de retratos sociológicos, e fez observação participante dos seus quotidianos em centro educativo. E quem são estas raparigas? São jovens que estão a cumprir uma medida de internamento pela prática de atos qualificados pela lei como crime cometidos entre os 12 e os 16 anos e que são internadas nos centros educativos por decisão do Tribunal de Família e Menores.

REFLECTINDO SOBRE METODOLOGIA E ÉTICA EM CONTEXTO DE PRIVAÇÃO DE LIBERDADE

Há uma frase do sociólogo Howard Becker (1994) que Vera Duarte destaca nas suas aulas: “a metodologia é importante demais para ser deixada aos metodólogos”. Como salienta, a metodologia é um assunto de todos e todas que fazem investigação científica. A investigação que tem desenvolvido nestes contextos de privação de liberdade de jovens é maioritariamente de carácter qualitativo, utilizando técnicas como as entrevistas, os grupos focais, análise documental, observação, abordagens etnográficas.

Uma das características destas metodologias é precisamente a ênfase na compreensão aprofundada e contextualizada dos fenómenos estudados, e isso implica normalmente a permanência nos locais. Ora, a condição de permanência é um dos grandes desafios que se levanta quando se pretende fazer recolha de dados em espaços privativos da liberdade.

Os centros educativos, assim como os estabelecimentos prisionais, são espaços fechados ao exterior, com necessária regulamentação institucional, restrições legais e impedimentos relacionados com a segurança. Quando Vera Duarte se propõe fazer a observação dos lugares, dos acontecimentos, das pessoas, das interações, das rotinas e das suas práticas, o primeiro grande desafio passa pela dificuldade na obtenção das autorizações para acesso a estes espaços. Uma espera que nem sempre é compaginada com os

tempos de investigação e nem sempre a resposta é positiva porque há, de alguma forma, uma certa saturação das instituições, que têm muitos estágios e intervenções a decorrer em simultâneo.

Depois, quando se tem as autorizações, não raras vezes surgem dificuldades no acesso às instalações e às participantes. Como destaca, não se pode esquecer a questão da permanência numa investigação qualitativa, um passo que exige muita negociação e cedência.

Um outro desafio na investigação qualitativa em centro educativo identificado por Vera Duarte prende-se com a necessidade de garantir a confidencialidade e o anonimato das participantes devido ao ambiente institucional. O facto de as histórias das jovens poderem ser rapidamente identificadas pelos profissionais implica que a gestão dos dados e o compromisso à entrada no terreno são muito importantes para evitar comprometer a investigação em curso.

O que é que as metodologias qualitativas permitem? Para Vera Duarte, estas metodologias permitem uma compreensão aprofundada das realidades, precisamente sobre as experiências, as perspetivas e as necessidades das jovens em contexto de privação de liberdade. Possibilitam olhar a realidade por dentro e, assim, ajudar a informar melhores políticas e práticas dentro das instituições. Oferecem também a oportunidade para amplificar as vozes destas jovens, que, muitas vezes, são marginalizadas, negligenciadas pela sociedade e, portanto, desta forma, é uma metodologia que também contribui para uma maior inclusão e justiça social.

SUPERANDO DESAFIOS ÉTICOS E CONDICIONAMENTOS METODOLÓGICOS

“Investigar em espaços privativos de liberdade é desenvolver uma pesquisa num contexto que é marcado pelo confinamento do e no espaço, por rotinas que são muito marcadas e até por alguma sensação de insegurança. Por exemplo, insegurança refletida na violência da própria arquitetura que o espaço transmite, como portas fechadas à chave, grades, arames farpados, muros altos, e no próprio condicionamento de acesso ao próprio espaço interno, a que se junta também a natureza da informação a que queremos aceder e que normalmente é relacionada com o comportamento criminal. No

caso dos centros educativos junta-se ainda um outro desafio, que é o facto de estarmos a fazer a investigação com menores de idade, sob a tutela do Estado. É uma investigação desafiante não só pela relação que estabelecemos com os jovens, mas também pelos superiores cuidados éticos exigidos.” (Vera Duarte)

Para superar desafios éticos e outros condicionamentos metodológicos, Vera Duarte aponta que, obrigatoriamente, tem de fazer a interseção entre dois níveis. O primeiro é ter sempre presente que os desafios éticos se colocam antes, durante e depois da recolha de dados. Um segundo nível é que esses desafios dialogam constantemente no cruzamento entre aquilo que chamamos de uma ética procedimental, ou seja, que se refere aos procedimentos necessários para a obtenção das autorizações, para a realização da pesquisa, assim como as normas estabelecidas e que estão formalmente pensadas para guiar a investigação, e uma ética na prática, que se refere à resposta a questões éticas que se levantam no decorrer da investigação, principalmente quando se entra no terreno (Gomes & Duarte, 2018).

Tendo este quadro presente, esta investigadora elegeu alguns dilemas e desafios ético metodológicos que se colocam à investigação (qualitativa) em contextos privativos de liberdade:

1. Há um longo processo burocrático que o/a investigador/a tem de negociar com êxito com as entidades que gerem as instituições, e que vai além da submissão do projeto à Comissão de Ética da Universidade. Além dessa submissão, há sempre mais questões que se levantam por conta da natureza da própria informação a recolher. São as exigências burocráticas e os compromissos deontológicos exigidos - e muito bem, como realça Vera Duarte - pela Direção Geral de Reinserção e Serviços Prisionais, mas que levam o seu tempo. Questões que se colocam com maior acuidade quando se está a desenvolver uma investigação com crianças e adolescentes.

2. Um outro desafio tem a ver com toda a ideia ficcionada, e um profundo desconhecimento, em torno dos centros educativos. Filmes, séries, livros, a comunicação social, descrevem estes espaços de uma forma que, em grande parte, não correspondem, de facto, à realidade. Espaços onde estão os ditos ‘delinquentes’, o que cria um certo fascínio para quem quer estudar as questões criminais, muitas vezes um fascínio pouco informado e até tendencioso.

“Há também sempre questões ideológicas subjacentes às definições em torno destas populações vulneráveis. Quem são os ‘delinquentes’? Quem são as crianças institucionalizadas? Por isso, a vigilância crítica em torno destas pré-noções, o estar constantemente atento à própria posição enquanto investigadora, aos preconceitos, às influências, é fundamental para que possamos garantir uma investigação informada e responder de forma ética e responsável aos dilemas éticos que vão surgir ao longo do caminho. Ainda antes de entrarmos no terreno, temos uma série de desafios éticos que se vão colocando.” (Vera Duarte)

3. Outras questões surgem. E a garantia de privacidade, anonimato e confidencialidade das participantes é uma delas. Garantias que são muitas vezes ameaçadas nestes contextos por vários motivos. Desde a presença dos profissionais de reinserção social nas imediações do local onde estão a decorrer as entrevistas. Cabe à instituição definir onde vão decorrer as entrevistas. Depois há a suspeição das jovens de que a informação partilhada pode ser transmitida à equipa técnica ou à direção, que são responsáveis pelos relatórios periódicos enviados ao tribunal.

Há que perceber que há muito cuidado naquilo que é dito no âmbito das entrevistas, e há também uma certa desejabilidade social associada. O papel da investigadora, ali, é importante e tem de ser bem demarcado e

esclarecido. Por exemplo, uma das primeiras coisas que as jovens perguntam à Vera Duarte é se ela é assistente social. O que é que está ali a fazer? Porque é que quer saber da vida delas?

“Se acharem que somos assistentes sociais, imediatamente associam a sua história de vida. Tudo isto vai efetivamente condicionar o nosso sucesso como investigadores no próprio terreno. Nós somos elementos externos neste espaço.” (Vera Duarte)

Um outro motivo que pode pôr em causa a garantia da privacidade, do anonimato, da confiança e da confidencialidade diz respeito às informações sensíveis que, muitas vezes, são reveladas durante as entrevistas. De facto, acontece ter-se acesso a informações sobre práticas de facto que não foram ainda objeto de decisão ou que estão a ser criminalmente investigadas, que envolvem, por exemplo, outras pessoas ou até práticas de factos qualificados pela lei penal como crime que estão a ser planeadas dentro do centro educativo. Como se imagina, são questões que colocam quem investiga perante um conflito grande entre o pacto de confidencialidade e, por outro lado, as normas institucionais e as exigências de segurança.

“Assim, é preciso sabermos muito bem qual é o nosso lugar, como é que nós, quando há questões de segurança, o que podemos informar a quem de direito. Não é para evitar uma situação pior, mas para não comprometer o contexto. Podemos ter diretrizes, mas não existem soluções mágicas para estas situações.” (Vera Duarte)

4. Por isso, na obtenção do consentimento informado das jovens tem de se ter a garantia de que as participantes compreendem bem os objetivos, os procedimentos e os riscos da pesquisa antes de consentirem participar,

especialmente em contextos como os Centros Educativos, onde há uma desigualdade de poder e potencial vulnerabilidade das participantes. A obtenção destes consentimentos é ainda mais desafiante quando se está a falar de um consentimento tradicional que é meramente informativo. A investigadora realça que até será mais uma proteção para investigadores e destaca como alguns autores têm defendido que o consentimento informado na pesquisa qualitativa deveria ser algo mais negociado, mais próximo daquilo que são chamados os contratos de confiança, como João Teixeira Lopes, no seu livro *Elas: Percursos inesperados de jovens mulheres das classes populares*. Mas não deixa também de realçar que aqui também há um caminho a fazer porque a escolha por um consentimento informado de estilo, mais negociado, pode embater, desde logo, com as exigências da ética procedimental.

5. Para Vera Duarte, um dos maiores desafios que lhe traz sempre maiores dilemas éticos são os que se prendem com as nuances das microrrelações em que as pessoas investigadoras devem entrar para negociar, diariamente, o seu acesso ao espaço e às pessoas, e que podem trazer tentações que conduzem a erros de ética.

“Depende sempre da capacidade para negociar a nossa presença, o nosso papel e as nossas múltiplas identidades e pertenças. Identidades influenciam. A nossa idade, o género, a nossa pertença étnica. Fazem toda a diferença nessa capacidade negociada. Nestes espaços, quando entramos, temos que ter essa noção.” (Vera Duarte)

Estes são apenas alguns dos muitos desafios éticos que podem surgir e é crucial abordá-los de forma sensível, reflexiva e responsável, mantendo sempre em mente a importância da ética em todas as etapas do processo de investigação.

SUGESTÕES PARA JOVENS INVESTIGADORES

Em primeiro lugar, Vera Duarte salienta a importância de se avaliar o benefício do uso de populações privadas de liberdade como objeto de estudo se sobrepõe ou não ao risco desse uso. E quando se sobrepõe, como refere muitas vezes acontecer, há que garantir que a participação na pesquisa é voluntária e é informada. Isto pode parecer uma ideia feita, mas não é de todo. Há uma frase de uma jovem que ecoa sempre que Vera Duarte vai fazer investigação de campo em espaços desta natureza: “você vem aqui como se isto fosse um jardim zoológico. Vem ver os animais exóticos e depois vão embora e nós ficamos aqui.” Isto é algo que se tem sempre que pensar, porque é isto que muitas vezes estas populações sentem. Investigadores fazem a sua ronda e depois vão embora contentes porque têm a informação que necessitam para o seu estudo.

Uma segunda sugestão desta investigadora passa por conhecer bem as ideologias e as dinâmicas organizacionais dos centros educativos antes de iniciar a investigação. Há desafios reais e só quando se conhecem é que se pode melhor perceber também os ajustamentos e as reorganizações necessárias às condições da própria pesquisa.

Uma terceira e última sugestão de Vera Duarte, que não é menos importante, é a procura de formação e orientação ética adequadas, antes e durante a pesquisa. Na sua opinião, se é verdade que nem sempre prepara os investigadores para todos os desafios que encontram no terreno, ter formação e orientação sobre ética dá estrutura para responder de forma mais adequada e para adaptar a abordagem e os procedimentos, se necessário, além da capacidade crítica para refletir de forma continuada sobre esses desafios.

Importa não esquecer, como também destaca, que a investigação é mais processo do que resultados: quer-se que seja rápido, ter os resultados dentro de um tempo, e muitas vezes atrapalha-se o processo. Da sua experiência, salienta que não se pode esquecer que há erros que se fazem, grande parte deles erros honestos ou por negligência, às vezes provocados pelo próprio cansaço do processo. Sobre estas situações sugere que deve manter-se um diálogo sem tabus com os orientadores, com os supervisores, com os colegas. Na

altura em que a Vera Duarte fez a investigação de doutoramento, e em que estas questões éticas não eram tão discutidas, descobriu que poderia ter feito muito melhor se tivesse partilhado mais as suas dúvidas, as suas preocupações.

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“PERGUNTAR É UM ATO DE PODER”

Perspetivas sobre metodologia e ética nos estudos sobre juventude, com Vítor Sérgio Ferreira



Keywords:

- Juventude
- Culturas juvenis
- Transições juvenis
- Abordagens geracionais
- Desigualdades sociais
- Vulnerabilidades
- Processos de inclusão/exclusão ao longo do curso de vida
- Políticas públicas
- Métodos de Investigação Social
- Cultura, Comunicação e Sociedade


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O QUE PODEMOS ESPERAR DESTE CAPÍTULO?

Na conversa com Vítor Sérgio Ferreira, o tema central foi pensar como na ética de pesquisa se deve refletir criticamente sobre os objetivos, os processos e as implicações da investigação sobre os interlocutores, em todas as suas fases, e nos seus eventuais danos e benefícios de várias ordens. Mais do que fazer subsumir os atuais dilemas e desafios éticos por entre procedimentos burocráticos que protegem mais investigadores (perante investidas jurídicas) do que participantes dos estudos, debate-se como o investigador deve pensar-se a si próprio enquanto pessoa e a sua prática de pesquisa como prática relacional. Isto porque, desde logo, os principais desafios da prática de pesquisa ocorrem nas interações de investigadores com os seus interlocutores, nos seus encontros de pesquisa, na forma como jovens são envolvidos voluntária e conscientemente no estudo, como com eles se fala no decorrer do mesmo, o que se lhes pergunta e como são escutados, e o que deles se solicita no processo de produção de dados.

No final deste capítulo, pode encontrar as sugestões de leitura partilhadas pelo investigador.

Pode ouvir esta conversa na íntegra no  Spotify

QUEM É VÍTOR SÉRGIO FERREIRA?

Vítor Sérgio Ferreira é doutorado em Sociologia (2006, Iscte-IUL) e Investigador Principal no Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa (ICS-ULisboa). Atualmente, é subdiretor desta instituição, onde também coordena a Linha Temática Inclusão e Vulnerabilidades. Entre 2016 e 2023 foi coordenador do grupo de investigação LIFE – Lifecourse, Solidarity and Inequality: practices and policies, dedicado a pesquisa sobre idades, percursos e estilos de vida. Tem desenvolvido e coordenado diversos projetos de investigação com principal incidência na área dos estudos de juventude e estudos sociais do corpo.

Atualmente, interessa-se pela forma como a juventude tem sido moldada pelo neoliberalismo global e como os jovens experienciam e lidam com estas novas condições. Mais especificamente, tem-se interessado sobre i) discursos e categorias geracionais como expressão de desigualdades sociais em contextos de policrise; ii) economia política da juventude como força de trabalho, formação de novas subjetividades e aspirações laborais, e novos percursos de formação e trabalho; e iii) políticas de juventude como dispositivos de socialização neoliberal e novas formas de cultura política entre os jovens.

Vítor Sérgio Ferreira tem tido uma atividade de formação regular no ICS-ULisboa, onde tem desempenhado um papel significativo na consolidação do campo dos métodos qualitativos, nomeadamente de gestão de dados de investigação, integração de Inteligência Artificial na análise de dados qualitativos, e produção e análise de dados narrativos (MetódICA). Entre 2018 e 2024 coordenou no ICS-ULisboa o Programa Interuniversitário de Doutoramento em Sociologia: Conhecimento para Sociedades Abertas e Inclusivas (OpenSoc), onde coordena e leciona a unidade curricular de Métodos e Técnicas de Pesquisa Qualitativa. Foi também professor visitante em várias universidades no estrangeiro, incluindo a Universidade de São Paulo e a Universidade Federal de São Carlos, no Brasil, a Goethe University Frankfurt, em Main, e a Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, na Alemanha.

A natureza inter e transdisciplinar da sua experiência reflete-se na procura crescente da sua supervisão por parte de doutorandos e

investigadores de pós-doutoramento de vários países e áreas científicas como a educação, a terapia ocupacional, a psicologia, a antropologia, a saúde pública, a ciência política, a ciência da comunicação e a sociologia.

CONTEXTUALIZANDO O PERCURSO DE INVESTIGAÇÃO DE VÍTOR SÉRGIO FERREIRA

Vítor Sérgio Ferreira começou a desenvolver estudos de juventude de uma forma relativamente inesperada, não foi algo programado. Enquanto estudante, tinha colaborado num projeto sobre jovens artistas em Portugal. Ao terminar a licenciatura, o Professor José Machado Pais – uma das principais referências dos estudos sobre juventude em Portugal e internacionalmente –, endereçou-lhe um convite para colaborar no Observatório Permanente da Juventude.

Dessa altura e até ao início do seu doutoramento, o trabalho foi realizado no âmbito deste Observatório como assistente de investigação. Teve a oportunidade de participar na realização de grandes inquéritos nacionais, levantamentos de dados secundários em várias fontes, num tempo em que ainda não existiam outras entidades, como a Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos que atualmente recolhe e gere muitos dados de diferentes áreas.

O Observatório Permanente da Juventude compilou um conjunto de dados secundários de vários ministérios e do Instituto Nacional de Estatística. Informação que estava muito dispersa sobre a população jovem em Portugal e que possibilitou a criação de uma grande base de dados longitudinal. Na altura, este foi um processo inovador a que também se associou a realização de vários inquéritos nacionais e vários estudos monográficos sobre as condições juvenis. Não há investigação sem financiamento e como Vítor Sérgio Ferreira nota “as agências de financiamento constroem também uma agenda de investigação.”

Um dos exemplos que cita é de estudos sobre jovens negros - na altura a primeira vez que em Portugal se utilizou esta nomenclatura de ‘jovens negros’-, sob a coordenação do Professor Jorge Vala. Foi muito controversa a utilização desta designação. Vítor Sérgio

Ferreira era o único sociólogo da equipa de investigação, constituída maioritariamente por psicólogos sociais onde estas questões já eram tratadas desta forma e não da forma como a sociologia ainda via esta questão em Portugal, ainda à procura de algum tipo de nomenclatura supostamente mais neutra.

Posteriormente, perante o desafio de fazer o doutoramento em Sociologia, procurou um campo de inovação dentro dos estudos de juventude. Encontrou-o na forma como os jovens utilizavam o corpo em termos simbólicos e performáticos, isto numa altura em que começavam a aparecer em Lisboa os primeiros espaços de tatuagem, no virar para o século XXI.

Mais tarde, de 2010 até 2024, assumiu o papel de Vice-coordenador do Observatório Permanente da Juventude, o que constituiu uma grande experiência e lhe proporcionou a possibilidade de lidar com estudos encomendados por outras entidades.

“É muito diferente sermos nós a propormos aquilo que queremos estudar ou vir a alguém nos dizer o que é que lhe interessa que seja estudado sobre os jovens. (...) Foi uma trajetória muito enriquecedora desse ponto de vista em que consegui sempre equilibrar, digamos assim, aquilo que são as minhas curiosidades pessoais em termos de investigação, com aquilo que também são as demandas institucionais por parte de entidades que têm os sujeitos jovens, digamos assim, como público-alvo.” (Vítor Sérgio Ferreira)

DESENVOLVER UMA ÉTICA COLABORATIVA E DE CO-CRIAÇÃO DE CONHECIMENTO

Quando Vítor Sérgio Ferreira fala de formas de colaboração, a primeira interrogação que levanta é sobre o significado do termo ‘colaborar’: colaborar no sentido de trabalhar em conjunto e criar em conjunto essa ideia de criação de algo – uma noção que tem vindo a ser mais desenvolvida, nos dias de hoje, de uma forma mais explícita no âmbito dos designados ‘métodos participativos’. Vê a colaboração como um princípio ético entre investigadores e aqueles que são os sujeitos de um estudo, os colaboradores, sem os quais não se consegue

nem se pode criar ciência. Destaca que sem a colaboração com os sujeitos da pesquisa não se pode criar conhecimento.

Ao refletir sobre a sua experiência com métodos participativos no quadro dos estudos de juventude salienta como estes métodos

“não se limitam ao gesto de dar a voz e ouvir as preocupações e experiências juvenis a partir das suas categorias e formas discursivas. São métodos que, também e sobretudo, solicitam o envolvimento dos jovens nas ações e decisões metodológicas, ao longo das várias fases do processo de pesquisa, como colaboradores ativos na pesquisa e co-produtores de conhecimento.” (Vítor Sérgio Ferreira)

Na sua opinião, desenvolver uma ética colaborativa e de co-criação de conhecimento relevante entre todas as partes envolvidas no decorrer de cada projeto de investigação, poderá atenuar uma profunda desigualdade epistémica que a ciência social de orientação positivista criou, bem como os respectivos impactos que pode causar nos resultados científicos.

Esta colaboração começa, desde logo, por aquilo que se vai perguntar. Fazer perguntas é um ato de poder. Como é que um investigador faz as perguntas? As perguntas têm de ter relevância para ambos os envolvidos. Os estudos não terão sentido se não fizerem sentido para aquelas pessoas. Esta questão assume especial importância em qualquer investigação, mais ainda em processos de formação:

“Sobretudo os estudantes, quando estão em processo de doutoramento, têm muito cuidado. Tendem a ter muito cuidado com o guião da entrevista, sobretudo quando estamos a falar de métodos qualitativos. Esta ideia do plano, do projeto, de ter uma matriz, um design, tudo muito lógico, muito bem feito. Tudo isto são pontos de partida e devemos ver isto, de facto, como pontos de partida. E, muitas vezes, os nossos pontos de partida (...) são desenhados a partir das nossas próprias experiências enquanto cidadãos, enquanto investigadores.” (Vítor Sérgio Ferreira)

Como refere, o trabalho de investigação em ciências sociais é feito em relação social. Por isso, a flexibilidade é fundamental. Seja com aqueles que lidamos no dia a dia, nas relações académicas, mas também com aqueles que são “fantasmas, com aqueles que fazem parte dos nossos quadros teóricos, com os quais aprendemos e com os quais dialogamos nos nossos trabalhos em termos históricos, tudo isso faz parte dessa lógica da co-laboração.” Este é um dos princípios que Vítor Sérgio Ferreira partilha com os seus alunos.

“Digo junto dos meus alunos, aos meus orientandos, em aulas de métodos qualitativos: a boa pergunta não é obrigatoriamente a pergunta que nós levamos de casa! A boa pergunta é aquela que faz sentido no decorrer de uma conversa que estamos a ter e é desse ponto de vista que a ética de co-laboração tem de ser praticada. Não é só praticada naquilo que são chamados os métodos participativos, deve estar presente em todos os designs metodológicos (...) [de natureza qualitativa, onde] há essa grande potencialidade que é a flexibilidade.” (Vítor Sérgio Ferreira)

Quando se lida com jovens numa investigação, é preciso concretizar de que jovens se trata, pois há jovens em condições muito diferenciadas, em situações mais ou menos vulneráveis. É essencial o investigador adotar uma postura de escuta ativa (Ferreira, 2014) com as diversas formas juvenis de estar e narrar o mundo, sem imposição de categorias e de sequências narrativas ou visuais. Como defende Vítor Sérgio Ferreira, este posicionamento “potencializa a atenuação das relações de poder no processo de investigação, a compreensão mútua entre o investigador e os sujeitos de investigação, bem como as necessárias condições de confiança, empatia e envolvimento de jovens nos processos de pesquisa, com interesse para todos os envolvidos, pesquisadores e interlocutores.”

Quando se pretende desenvolver investigação suportada no questionamento por inquérito, que é, por definição, um instrumento padronizado que para aplicar a uma grande população, para se chegar ao instrumento final há que ter muitas etapas anteriores de consulta

à população em análise, nomeadamente a jovens. Assim, poderá minimizar-se muito os riscos de desadequação do instrumento.

Vítor Sérgio Ferreira sugere que qualquer operação de inquérito implica, à partida, uma operação qualitativa para melhor se poder atender ao sentido das perguntas para aquela população, pois o que é interessante para uma determinada população pode não ser para outra, pode sequer nem ser pertinente para o estudo em causa. O que quer dizer é que “muito provavelmente nós não fizemos as perguntas corretas ou não estivemos atentos.” Há expressões de conforto e de desconforto que os sujeitos vão manifestando ao longo da entrevista e que ajudam o investigador a ir mais além do que inicialmente teria pensado.

DILEMAS EM TORNO DO CONSENTIMENTO INFORMADO

Uma das principais questões que se levanta em qualquer investigação tem a ver com o processo e procedimento de consentimento informado.

Vítor Sérgio Ferreira aponta como, no início, havia a ideia da obrigatoriedade de se ter um consentimento escrito, como um contrato. Atualmente, na forma como interpreta a lei – e não é o único a pensar assim-, considera que o consentimento pode ser feito de formas diferenciadas, mesmo dentro do mesmo projeto, tendo em atenção as diferentes pessoas.

É fundamental que a pessoa se sinta livre e esclarecida para tomar as decisões, e que a sua participação em qualquer estudo seja voluntária. Tudo isto tem de ficar claramente explicado, o que não implica necessariamente que seja assinado um protocolo. Normalmente, não pede a assinatura de qualquer documento no início por considerar que não é um bom começo. A não ser que, de facto, a agência de financiamento a isso obrigue. Será mais fácil depois de uma relação de confiança estar estabelecida, no decorrer da conversa em que haja uma escuta ativa, em que o investigador seja capaz de responder a solicitações e de corresponder às questões da pessoa. E isso, no seu entender, não passa necessariamente por um termo de consentimento livre e esclarecido na forma escrita.

Como nota, quando se pretende realizar estudos com jovens, aparecer assim com este tipo de documentos fechados faz lembrar uma prática burocrática formal, integrada, por exemplo, nas culturas escolares, possibilitando que o investigador possa ser confundido com alguém que vem da escola. E isso pode suscitar desde logo uma relação de desconfiança, de autoridade formal, impedindo a criação de uma relação de confiança, um clima de empatia, um clima de segurança. Assim, na sua opinião, assinar documentos escritos logo no início pode ter um efeito perverso, exatamente contrário ao pretendido. Nomeadamente, junto de algumas populações esses tipos de documentos podem constituir uma forma de violência simbólica uma vez que podem não entender o que está escrito. Isso pode vir a comprometer uma relação durável com determinados interlocutores que são importantes para a investigação.

Quando se trata de jovens menores de idade, outras questões se levantam.

“Quando estamos a falar de menores, a conversa é outra (...) Já não é só ética, é uma conversa jurídica também, não é? E apesar de tudo há um quadro legal com o qual nós temos de lidar, os consentimentos têm de passar pelos seus pais ou, pelo menos, os encarregados de educação, ou as instituições que tutelam os menores.” (Vítor Sérgio Ferreira)

No caso da aplicação do Regulamento Geral de Proteção de Dados na União Europeia, foi dada autonomia a cada país para a definição do limite etário sem ter de passar pelo consentimento de outrem. No caso português, a idade de 13 anos (Lei n.º 58/2019, de 8 de agosto) foi definida para esse efeito. Mas, na realidade, há experiências muito diversificadas de maturidade e de autonomia pelo que se tem sempre de lidar de maneira que a linguagem seja adaptada.

Da sua experiência muito rica com a academia brasileira, Vítor Sérgio Ferreira destaca o conhecimento sobre o trabalho que é desenvolvido com pessoas em situações de extrema vulnerabilidade. Por exemplo, pessoas que não têm estatuto de cidadania, que estão ilegais no país, ou que trabalham em segmentos informais do mercado

laboral e para quem a ideia de estar a assinar um documento para uma pesquisa é algo que lhes causa medo. Podem até nem entender a língua, todos estes detalhes têm de ser pensados à priori para garantir que todos os sujeitos de um estudo entendem mesmo o que se pretende que se assinem.

SUGESTÕES PARA JOVENS INVESTIGADORES

“Cada projeto é um projeto metodológico. De facto, [o método] deve coadunar-se com as nossas perguntas, com as nossas interrogações, com as pessoas com as quais nós vamos lidar. E que vamos lidando também. E aqui o gerúndio faz toda a diferença, porque muitas vezes vamos ter de reprogramar coisas no decorrer do próprio projeto de pesquisa. Para bem do conhecimento, sim.” (Vítor Sérgio Ferreira)

Com base na sua vasta experiência, Vítor Sérgio Ferreira destaca a importância de três tipos básicos de reflexividade a que importa atender nas etapas de planeamento da investigação e no seu decorrer: reflexividade metodológica; reflexividade posicional e reflexividade ética.

A reflexividade metodológica tem a ver com essa ideia de, enquanto investigador, se ter de estar muito atento ao conjunto de pequenas e/ou grandes decisões que têm de se ir tomando no decorrer do processo de investigação.

A reflexividade posicional remete para a ideia de que quem investiga em ciências sociais não se deve esquecer de que o/a próprio/a é o principal instrumento da pesquisa enquanto pessoa, o que vai além de pensar apenas naquilo que se é enquanto investigador ou investigadora. Cada pessoa é muito mais ‘coisas’ além de investigador, mesmo enquanto exerce a sua atividade de pesquisa. Muitas vezes pode-se nem saber as posições sociais que nos são atribuídas, porque tudo passa pela forma como outros nos olham e se posicionam socialmente dentro da relação entre quem investiga e os sujeitos da investigação. Vítor Sérgio Ferreira defende esta consciência de se ter presente a pessoa que cada investigador ou investigadora é, na sua multi posicionalidade, o corpo que cada um assume e é visto, bem

como as ideias que cada um tem enquanto cidadão. As várias posições do investigador fazem com que as perguntas que se colocam numa pesquisa não sejam neutras, sejam sempre ‘interessadas’ — não no sentido pejorativo, mas na ideia de que partem sempre de um interesse particular para uma equipa, muitas vezes com interesses vários. E o que se espera é que as perguntas possam ser interessantes também para os sujeitos participantes. Por isso, Vítor Sérgio Ferreira advoga que “esta ideia da neutralidade da ciência é completamente errónea.”

Por fim, a reflexividade ética associada à importância “de também trazermos o que somos para a investigação. E descobrimos outras facetas que nós temos, (...) e de tentar ao máximo possível, colmatar os riscos que a nossa ação, enquanto investigadores ou enquanto pessoas, pode trazer de alguma maneira, para ver se há algum tipo de desvantagem para quem connosco está a colaborar. Isso é, de facto, a grande preocupação ética que nós devemos defender.”

- PARA CONHECER MELHOR O TRABALHO DE VÍTOR SÉRGIO FERREIRA:

<https://www.ics.ulisboa.pt/pessoa/vitor-sergio-ferreira>

- LEITURAS SUGERIDAS POR VÍTOR SÉRGIO FERREIRA:

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