Enhancing agency through information: A phenomenographic exploration of young people's political information experiences

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the findings of research into young people's experiences of political information. We used a phenomenographic approach to identify variations in experiences of political information. The research explores how young people use information and technology to mediate political information to develop knowledge to become informed citizens. It focuses on how processes of discovery, production, retrieval, manipulation, dissemination, use, and evaluation of information are utilised in different ways by young people through a range of information behaviour techniques. 23 interviews and 3 focus groups were conducted with pupils aged 14-15 at a secondary school in England. The interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcripts and notes taken during the data collection sessions formed the data for analysis. Phenomenographic analysis was carried out, utilising manual coding and NVivo software. A phenomenographic outcome space represents the six qualitatively different ways in which the participants experienced political information, and identifies a range of political information sources, including social media and online news sources, which inform young people's political knowledge and attitudes. The outcome space illustrates the differences in ways young people experience political information and suggests potential for development to more complex ways of understanding the information they encounter. This represents a contribution to understanding the variation in information experiences and is of theoretical and practical value.

Introduction

This paper addresses one of the questions from a larger doctoral research project: *In what qualitatively different ways do young people conceive of the sources of information which influence their political opinions and worldviews?* Access to and good use of information is crucial to meaningful engagement in political processes and other forms of democratic engagement. The library and information profession has made many claims relating to the contribution of library and information services to access to information and information literacy support, the outcome of which is a strengthened democracy. However, little is known about the differing needs of citizens relating to political information rather than information in general, and even less is known about the needs of young people, whose experiences of political information at a formative age may influence their later engagement with political processes. Through identifying the different ways in which young people conceive of and experience political information sources, this study addresses that gap in knowledge.

Much research has explored the causes of youth disengagement from politics. To take one example, Nelson, Wade and Kerr (2010) found a strong relationship between civic knowledge and participation. Young people who had higher levels of civic knowledge were found to have a greater likelihood to participate in society, suggesting that knowledge is a key ingredient for participation. Other research has explored the complexities of youth political disengagement. Manning and Edwards (2013), for example, argue that a normative conception of political participation has resulted in the perception of young people as politically apathetic, when in fact they are engaged in non-normative forms of participation, suggesting that "the discourse of youth apathy holds the institutions of this narrow regulatory model of politics as its focus, as 'real politics'. If young people lack knowledge and interest in electoral politics, then they are deemed to be lacking knowledge and interest in politics."

Many studies have identified a lack of political knowledge and engagement in young people (for example Henn and Weinstein, 2006; HeadsUp, 2009; Hansard Society, 2014; MYPLACE, 2014), but few studies have sought to understand in depth how young people experience political information, how this relates to their political knowledge and potential disengagement, and how young people's different ways of experiencing political information use relates to their decisions about their political views and actions. To most effectively support young people to meaningfully participate in democracy, educators (including librarians) would benefit from an insight into how young people encounter, use and perceive sources of information that influence their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. This study contributes to understanding the qualitatively different ways young people experience political information, in order to understand how they may be supported to use information in more sophisticated ways to improve their political participation, which in turn contributes to the validity and strength of democratic political systems.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The doctoral research from which this paper originates is based on a constructivist conceptual framework incorporating phenomenography, personal construct theory and critical pedagogical theory. It is not possible to discuss the full breadth of the study within this paper; therefore only the methods, analysis and results relating to the former are discussed here. Future papers will discuss how the application of critical pedagogy to the phenomenographic outcome space and personal constructs relating to political information can be used to strengthen phenomenographic research and actively seek to support learning in ways which consider both the individual and structural basis of differences in experience.

This study applies a phenomenographic approach, which although not currently widely used has been applied to research in librarianship and information science. It is a theoretical framework within the interpretivist research paradigm which aims to explore *"the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualise, perceive, and understand various aspects of, and phenomena in, the world around them"* (Marton, 1986, p.31). Although phenomenographic research typically avoids influencing data collection, analysis and production of findings through the application of theory, phenomenography is itself grounded in constructivism. It is "sensitive to the individuality of conceptions" of research phenomena (Ashworth & Lucas 2000, p.297). Phenomenography looks at

a research phenomenon from a second order perspective, which focuses on the ways of experiencing phenomena from the perspectives of the people experiencing them (Marton, 1997; Limberg, 2000; Andretta, 2012), and establishes variation in the collective ways these phenomena are experienced in practice.

A benefit of the phenomenographic approach is that the research outcomes focus on how the variation of experiences and different ways of thinking about a phenomenon can be used as *'a powerful way of seeing'*, which in turn can be supported by educators to become *'powerful ways of acting'* (Marton and Tsui 2004, p.8). This outcome lends itself to this study, which seeks to support young people's political agency and participation through recommendations for the development of information literacy practices. It is an appropriate way to answer the research question relating to the different ways in which young people experience political information, because its conceptual framework explicitly identifies that people experience phenomena in a variety of ways, without seeking to record every possible way of experiencing the phenomenon under analysis. This leaves space for the further development of the outcome space in future research, and with different demographics.

Phenomenography has been most frequently used within LIS in the field of information literacy (Boon et al. 2007; Yates et al. 2010, 1999; Nielsen and Borlund 2011; Diehm and Lupton 2012; Partridge and Bruce 2012; Bruce 2013; Whitworth 2014; Forster 2015, 2013). Although no previous studies have focused specifically on experiences of political information, the findings from these studies provided a useful conceptual framework for the current study.

Participants in the study were Year 10 students (aged 14-15) in a school in South Yorkshire, England, which was selected as a school with which the researcher was familiar and local and would not be an obvious 'outsider'. We selected this age group because although not legally allowed to vote, they had begun to engage in political discussion as part of the educational curriculum. As a matter of access and availability, this year group were also not in the process of revising for and sitting exams, unlike the year groups above and below them. We asked all the students in the year group (approximately 180 students) if they would like to participate in the study, through an introduction in a year group assembly and follow-up introductions in tutor groups (with an average of 30 students across six tutor groups). We asked participants to seek consent from a parent or guardian, in line with the ethical requirements of

the university at which the study was based, and the school itself. A total of 36 students volunteered to participate in the first stage of data collection (a political knowledge survey to gauge an appropriate level to hold discussions). 23 participants continued to the next stage of data collection (interviews and focus groups). This number of participants exceeds the recommended minimum number to achieve the expected degree of variations of experience among a sample population in a phenomenographic study (Trigwell, 2000) and generated a manageable amount of data.

Interviews formed the basis of data collection, and were conducted in line with all three theoretical approaches. The 23 interviews of between half an hour and an hour in length focused on the participants' experiences and understanding of political information sources to reveal their beliefs, values and experiences (Barnard, McCosker, and Gerber, 1999). We determined the structure of the interviews from the sources of political information the participants themselves identified, and used minimal prompting and open-ended questions. During the unstructured components of the interview, we sought to ensure that ideas were not introduced into the interview which the participant had not already expressed (Åkerlind et al. 2005).

The interviews enabled us to build a sense of how the research participants perceive politics, the information sources they use and the relationships they create between them. In the interviews, we asked participants to describe in their own words the sources of political information they encounter, and what characteristics they think of as significant. The interviews represented what is phenomenographically considered a *"conversational partnership"* (Ashworth and Lucas, 2000, p.302) in which the interviewer supported the participants' reflection on the similarities and differences between their sources of political information.

After we completed the interviews, we held three focus groups. Through these we hoped to identify the ways in which participants may communicate information and meaning to each other which may have resulted in them changing or developing their opinions about the topics being discussed (Neuman 2014, p.472). Although it was not possible to conduct what could be considered completely unstructured focus groups due to some topics being discussed in the interviews, we made an effort to avoid developing hypotheses prior to the analysis of the transcripts, in keeping with the phenomenographic approach. The largely unstructured nature of the focus groups allowed the responsiveness to individual and situational changes that are one of the major benefits of unstructured interviews (Wildemuth 2009, p.224).

We based the focus group questions on the themes emerging from the repertory grid interviews. These included talking points around sociopolitical issues of concern to the participants, their political attitudes, whether they intend to vote, views on votes at 16, politics education, television news, and use of social media. We used the talking points as a broad guide rather than a set structure, which provided a certain degree of consistency in discussion topics across the different focus groups.

Phenomenographic studies do not make use of predetermined hypotheses or coding categories. We examined the focus group and interview transcripts in their entirety and alongside the other transcripts to uncover the full range of participants' experiences and the relationships between them. Through a process of re-reading, we identified common themes and theoretical concepts, which were coded as they emerged. We identified similarities and differences in the ways the participants experienced political information, which we then grouped, to produce categories of description, dimensions of variation and structures of awareness.

The focus in phenomenographic research is not on an understanding of the experience of single individuals; instead, analysis focuses on identifying the qualitatively different ways in which a phenomenon is experienced by a group of people. Categories of description describe experiences of the phenomenon on a collective level (Limberg 2000) and often relate to one another hierarchically (Åkerlind, 2005). There are a limited number of categories, which must be faithful to the data collected and relate to each other logically. Together, the categories of description form an *outcome space*. This is a representation of the findings; a set of categories of description which present the different ways a group of individuals experience a particular phenomenon.

The outcome space and the relationships between the categories within it provide an explanation of the different ways individuals experience the phenomenon being explored. These explanations include *dimensions of variation* which describe what is being experienced within each category of description, and *structures of awareness* which describe *how* political information is experienced within each category of description.

FINDINGS

A broad overview of the categories of description is presented below. This study identifies six different ways in which the participants experience political information:

1) Political information as a range of sources of information;
2) Political information as something which is encountered out of context;
3) Political information as something to fill a knowledge gap;
4) Political information as something through which to gain meaning and context;
5) Political information as something relevant to one's own life;
6) Political information as something which can help to achieve social change.

Categories of description

Categories of description represent the different conceptions participants express about the research phenomenon; a *'conception'* being a *'qualitatively distinct manner in which the subjects were found to voice the way they thought'* about the phenomenon (Marton and Booth 1997, p.36). In this study, the phenomenon under analysis is political information.

It should be emphasised that the categories of description within an outcome space do not represent the experience of specific and identifiable individuals, but are formations of characteristics identified in the analysis of the data from the participant group as a whole, and describe one way of experiencing political information.

Category one: political information is experienced as a range of sources of information

Category one represents the most simplistic way of experiencing political information. People see political information and information sources as external to the self, and the focus is on the characteristics of the information source rather than the content or characteristics of the information itself. Individuals are aware that potential sources of political information exist, but do not consider themselves to engage with the information provided by the sources.

People experience sources of political information as being different in content to sources of information more generally (although information sources may be seen as being sources of political information as well as other types of information). In this category, people engage extremely little with the content of the information sources. People identified social media, news websites, newspapers, television, radio, family and friends among their sources of information.

Category two: political information is experienced as something which is encountered out of context

In this category, young people experience political information out of context. Information is acquired both passively and actively, but outside of a specific and acknowledged political information *need*. This decontextualisation of the information renders the category distinct from category three, in which the information and aspects of its production are not consciously acknowledged or understood, but are used to meet an information need. Although people consciously acknowledge political information as part of their information landscape, but this information is not actively used for any particular purpose. Participants who expressed conceptions relating to this category did not seek to make meaning from the information they encountered because they did not perceive it as having relevance to their lives or contexts:

> *My mum always has the radio on in the car...it's not really anything to do with me. I don't get most of it. (P15)*

Category three: political information is experienced as something to fill a knowledge gap

Category three represents a more complex understanding of political information, in which young people deliberately acquire information for in order to form an opinion about a political issue (in the broadest sense of the term political, from the perspective of the participant, or in order to achieve an educational qualification.

In this category, people experience political information as an external object which can help to meet an internal need:

> *If I want to find out more about something I've heard on the news I'll Google it, just to find out the basic facts so I know what's going on. (P26 FG3)*

The perceived need can either be for a basic current awareness or in order to have an opinion about something political. When experiencing political information as something to fill a knowledge gap, people view political information sources as beneficial but not essential. There has to be a payoff to engaging with the information sources, be that the ability to present an opinion to peers or authority figures, or a qualification:

> *I can see the value of learning about politics but I wouldn't want to do it at school unless I could do it as a GCSE. (P8 FG1)*

Category four: political information is experienced as something through which to gain meaning and context

In this category, people experience political information as something to through which to gain meaning and context to their emerging political attitudes and opinions, and the information they encounter on a daily basis more broadly. People experience the information sources they encounter as potentially useful resources for sense-making with regard to political systems and socio-political issues, and to give context to the other opinions and worldviews they encounter. People have some awareness that the topics learnt in school subjects such as sociology are relevant to everyday life:

> He [the sociology teacher] always brings up things in the news, like how does that fit in with what we're doing, like family or youth or something. (P15 FG1)

In this category, people experience information as something which can be used to develop opinions, beliefs or attitudes, and contribute to understanding real-life situations. This reflects a shift from experiences in the previous categories of information being external to the individual, to an experience of information as being *internal* to the individual.

When information is experienced as something through which to gain meaning and context, individuals are drawn to information sources which are part of a wider process but which present an easy to manage amount of information which does not fundamentally challenge existing worldviews. More challenging information sources are not the preferred source of information, although there is an awareness that these information sources may have something valuable to contribute in terms of providing a background context and deeper explanation for sociopolitical issues.

Category five: political information is experienced as something which is relevant to one's own life

In category five, people experience political information as something which is relevant to the life of the young person. Participants who expressed conceptions which fitted into this category had a more sophisticated and complex understanding of the use of political information and how it was relevant to their own lives. People see political information as something which can be used to develop an understanding of politics and society and to form opinions and meaning about the world. In this category, the experience of political information is internalised because it is used to make sense of the world, as in category four, but is also applied to personal lived experiences.

In this category, participants perceive politics as a phenomenon which is or should be closely related to everyday life. There may be an awareness of a disparity between the lived experiences of the political class and the general public:

> It kind of annoys me, the fact that the Prime Minister is usually someone who's been brought up middle class, that's never had to pay for anything, so they don't quite know how our parents feel, they don't quite know what it's like to work and have to earn and stuff like that. (P18 FG2)

Participants relate perceptions of political information to experiencing political information as relevant only if it was readily apparent that it is of direct relevance to one's own circumstances:

> I think the only time I care about politics, is if it affects me or my family. If it doesn't, I have no reason to care about it. (P23 FG2)

Category six: political information is experienced as something which can help the individual work towards social change

Category six is located alongside category four on level four of the outcome space. It represents a way of experiencing political information as something which can be actively used, understood and applied to not only one's own personal context, but a wider social context, in order to work towards social change and political reform.

The perception of political information from category four is built upon not only with a sense of the potential for political information to inform action, but also with a critical exploration of the information and application of the information to wider contexts.

This was the least heavily populated category in the coding of the interview and focus group transcripts, but nonetheless does represent an important aspect of participants' experiences of political information, which bears phenomenographic validity and should be considered equally as important as other more populated categories of description.

Levels of the outcome space
In addition to discrete categories of description, the outcome space has four levels:
1) Awareness of information (includes category one)
2) Acquisition of information (includes category two)
3) Engagement with information (includes categories three and four)
4) Application of information (includes categories five and six)

These levels indicate that although hierarchical in structure, the outcome space is not a representation of developmental phases of political activism, but is a representation of the different ways in which the participants experience political information and how they reported using information to become informed or take action (or not). Although these levels do not directly correlate to information literacy or informed learning processes, they may be viewed as a rough process of information use.

DISCUSSION
The categories of description within the outcome space may be compared to previous phenomenographic studies and other explorations of young people's experiences of information.
Category one of the outcome space in this study represents the least sophisticated way of experiencing political information, in which it is conceptualised as a range of sources of information. Previous studies, such as Diehm and Lupton (2014), have identified that young people draw upon a broad range of information sources to meet their information needs, including other people such as their peers, lecturers, friends, library staff and experts and networks outside of the university; books, journal articles and websites; and information tools such as the Internet, Google, library databases and the library catalogue. Sonnenwald (1999) presents this range of sources of information as an *'information horizon'*, which can vary from person to person and are determined both individually and socially.

Other phenomenographic studies have identified that the most basic way of experiencing information is to understand it as a repertoire of information sources. For example, Yates (2013) identifies category one of her outcome space as a *'knowledge base'*. However, whereas Yates' participants, in the context of health information, experience this knowledge base as something which they actively construct, the participants in the present study experience the range of sources of information as something they are passively aware of but do not engage with or use. More similarly to this study, Smith (2010) presents category one of her outcome space as an *'information landscape'*,

which participants experience as an *'external entity'* and do not actively engage with. This form of engagement with information bears similarities to the uses and gratifications theory relating to passing time, which Curnalia and Mermer (2013, p.76) directly connect to the way people may feel pressure to be politically informed, but not care about political outcomes.

In category two, people experience political information as something which is encountered out of context, in which political information sources are acknowledged as being potentially relevant and useful, but are not actively engaged with. Wilson (2000) acknowledges this passive way of experiencing political information as one of the forms of information behaviour, with specific reference to face-to-face communication and exposure to television content, with no intention to act on the information. Experiencing information as external and decontextualized in this way is again reflective of Bruce's (2008, p.54) description of information as objective and decontextualized within the first and second faces of informed learning.

Similarly, Bates (2002) refers to passive information behaviour in which the individual is available to *'passively absorb'* information. This conception is in line with the passive monitoring described by some participants, who talked about how they liked to know *'what's going on'*, through listening to the radio, watching the news or browsing a newspaper to keep an eye on current events. This is also reflective of Savolainen's (1995, p.273) discussion of passive information seeking, which is exemplified by *'routine, sometimes absent-minded watching of television news'*.

Savolainen discusses the use of this method of 'passive monitoring' as relating to maintaining a background level of awareness of everyday conditions, such as the weather, and describes how certain current events or particularly dramatic events may sharpen individuals' focus on forms of information if they are of specific personal interest or come close to the individuals' own life world. This change from passive information behaviour to active information seeking behaviour is reflected in the outcome space of this study between Categories Two and Three, where there is a need to fill an information gap, for example to find out the *facts* around a specific event or social issue of particular interest or of emerging relevance to the individual.
In category three, people experience political information as something to fill a knowledge gap, where political information as objects which can meet a superficial information need.

Mawby, Foster, and Ellis (2015) present this relationship with information as *'disposable information seeking'*, in which individuals use information on a task-specific basis and only require a certain piece of information on a one-off basis. In category three, this manifests itself as a perceived need to use information sources to find a *fact* about politics or current events, or a particular opinion that the individual can align themselves with, so that this knowledge or opinion can be articulated and enable the individual to present themselves as sufficiently knowledgeable or informed.

In this category, people acquire information with a minimal amount of effort, both in seeking and evaluating the information. This reflects findings from several studies of information behaviour in which the principle of least effort is invoked, including that of Shenton and Dixon (2004) who described inquirers as being concerned with finding sufficient information while expending a minimum amount of effort. Agosto and Hughes-Hassell (2006) explored the everyday life information needs of urban teenagers. They found that participants rely on information behaviours relating to the principle of least effort, but argue that it *'does not represent laziness or carelessness'*, but instead can be viewed as rational behaviour for participants who have limited resources, including time, effort and money.

In category four, people experience political information as something to through which to gain meaning and context to their emerging political attitudes and opinions, and the information they encounter on a daily basis more broadly.

People experience information as something which can be used to develop opinions, beliefs or attitudes, and contribute to understanding real-life situations. People experience political information as something to help an individual make the *right* choices and express the *right* opinions. The experiences of political information in this category bear some similarities with experiences of information reported in previous studies. One such study is Smith (2010), in which one way of experiencing information involves conceiving it as factual knowledge which can be stored and *'regurgitated'* when necessary. This is in line with the way in which political information in this category is not meaningfully engaged with for the creation of meaning or deep understanding, and is instead used solely for the purpose of having something to say about things that are happening in the world.

Most significantly, the experience of political information as a source of development of political attitudes and opinions echoes the way in which

Lupton (2008, p.112) describes the potential for information to be used for transformation of the self. This translates similarly in the present study; information as it is experienced in this fourth category has the theoretical potential to be used for questioning the claims being made, the narrative being promoted and the way in which information is used to inform political attitudes. However, in this category, individuals do not seek to develop meaningful knowledge and attitudes from engagement with political information, and the encounters are superficial.

In category five, individuals experience political information as something which is relevant to their own lives. People see political information as something which can be used to develop an understanding of politics and society and to form opinions and meaning about the world. People not only acknowledge and encounter information, but also actively engage with it in the form of evaluation and discussion. The focus of the experience of political information when it is experienced as something relevant to one's own life, is on making informed decisions, with one's own social and political context in the background of the experience. This is similar to the *'deep approach to learning'* described by Andretta (2007). People experience information as subjective, as in Bruce's fifth face of informed learning, in which information is conceived as being a part of *'who we are'* and subject to reflection (2008, p.53).

A previous phenomenographic study identified an experience of learning information literacy which is similar to the discursive element of category five. Diehm and Lupton's (2012) outcome space included multiple levels of awareness involving the role of interacting with other people for growth, learning and understanding. One example of this is how individuals learn through having their thinking challenged by people in positions of authority, such as academic supervisors.

Although in the context of Diehm and Lupton's study this experience relates to the development of disciplinary knowledge, this is similar to the way in which participants in this study experience political information as helping them to develop an understanding of political issues and their attitudes towards them through discussion with others. *'Learning to use information to grow as a person and to contribute to others'* is another level of awareness in the study. This includes an aspect of the experience described as *'growing and contributing through interacting with other people'*, in which participants engage with information through interaction with others, with a focus on *'learning to use information*

appropriately' and *'as a means to learn to understand others'*. This second focus is similar to the dimension of experience in this study in which young people use discussion with others as a means of developing their understanding of other people's opinions and attitudes and how these relate to other sources of political information and their own political identities.

In category six, people experience political information as something which has the potential to help individuals make decisions and take actions which can effect social change and help the individual to take informed action in civic life. The focus of the experience is the relevance of the information to effecting social change. The individuals' personal context and evaluation of information is in the background of awareness. In relation to the outcome space from this study, Lupton's (2008) phenomenographic research into students' experiences of information when researching an essay revealed three categories of experience, the third of which is *'learning as a social responsibility'*. In this category, individuals feel a responsibility to work towards social change. Although the experience focuses on an academic project, this bears a resemblance to category six of this study, in which individuals experience political information as having the potential to be used to effect social change.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explores the different ways in which young people construe and experience the information sources. The phenomenographic analysis of the focus group and interview transcripts identified six qualitatively different ways in which political information is experienced by young people. Together, these categories represent the phenomenon of the experience of political information. This study has identified the differences in the range of ways political information is experienced by young people. These differences are what Marton and Booth describe as being *'educationally critical'* (1997, pp.56-81). It is through these differences that educators may more deeply understand young people's perceptions and be able to develop learning materials which account for the variations in experience of the phenomenon and support learners to develop their understandings from less complex to a more complex conceptions, thereby developing their capacity for political agency.

It may also be possible for practitioners to replicate either the repertory grid interviews or phenomenographic focus groups before engaging in democratising projects with their own learning communities. The methods may be a useful way of exploring young people's conceptions in a relatively structured way, and the findings from such engagement may allow educators to gain insight into learners' conceptions and avoid making assumptions about their attitudes, knowledge and conceptions.

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. First, the research sample was relatively small, and although it surpasses the minimum suggested sample size for phenomenographic studies, the findings cannot be considered to be generalisable. Although this was not the aim of the research project, it does limit the potential usefulness of the research findings.

Second, in phenomenographic analysis, is it usually recommended that coding is inter-judged by multiple researchers. This verifies the effectiveness with which the categories explain the ways participants have experienced the research phenomenon (Pang and Marton 2005, p.172). It was not possible for anyone other than the solo researcher working on the doctoral study to analyse and check the data analysis.

Third, phenomenography offers an outcome spaced based on the experiences of the participants of one specific study relating to one specific phenomenon. The outcome space is not designed to be a comprehensive report of every possible way of experiencing a phenomenon, nor does it seek to be universal.

Finally, the phenomenographic approach does not seek to address structural issues for inequalities in learning (Ashwin and McLean, 2005). The doctoral study from which this paper was produced addressed this by the application of critical pedagogical theory (most significantly the work of Henry Giroux). The application of relevant critical pedagogical theory to the outcome space provided insights which complemented the bottom-up approaches of phenomenography and personal construct theory. It was not possible to discuss the application of critical theory in this paper, but this will be addressed in a later publication.

The full study explored the potential application of critical pedagogical theory, including recommendations relating to ways educators may support the development of more complex ways of understanding political information. This will be addressed in later publications. Nevertheless, the presentation of the outcome space from the study into young people's experiences of political information provides an insight into the variety of their experiences, constructs and perceptions of a heterogeneous demographic of the population. No previous studies have focused specifically on experiences of political information, and this study

therefore represents a contribution to an under-theorised area of the discipline. The findings address an empirical gap in research, and the outcome space contributes to the understanding of young people's experiences of political information. The findings may be used to inform the development of information literacy for supporting meaningful and informed political participation.

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