

**Mariam Kourabi**

Hello, everyone. My name is Mariam Kourabi from the JRP Canada team. Welcome to the second episode in our new series of research updates. We're going to revisit some of the research shared at last year's Between Ideals and Practices conference to see how it has evolved since May of 2023. Joining me today is Dr. Ricardo Ferreira, it's a pleasure to have you here today.

**Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

Thank you for having me.

**Mariam Kourabi**

Where has your research that you presented at the JRP evolved since the conference?

**Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

I think the participation in the conference like helped a lot to to evolve. I have like a draft, the first version of the paper. The paper was a part of my PhD project at the time. So there was a great feedback, some valuable comments from senior scholars that helped me to improve the discussion in the paper. And I also was still conducting further analysis, collecting more data. So, and then after that, uh, I believe one year or so we, we, we, we published, I managed to publish, uh, uh, the data that I presented at the conference, but this was, uh, benefited from a lot of, uh, valuable feedback that I got at the conference.

**Mariam Kourabi**

The research looks to study and examine how media and Journalism in particular, covered events in Brazil that have led the country to basically de-democratize. Can you describe what de-democratizing means using a real-world example?

**Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

Yeah, because broadly the project is, the aim was to analyze the role of journalists and news organizations in democracy, right, which is a discussion that is happening across the globe, uh, lots of changes in political landscapes and, and, and some new challenges to what we call it like liberal democracy, but then specifically in the paper engage with this idea of de-democratization. Right? Because, well, the process is not set in stone. So countries, they evolve, they can evolve towards democracy. Or you have a regime that crumbles and, and you try to build institutions so the country develops toward democracy. But the other way around is also true. So we have countries that are used to be full democracy is more mature democracies, if you want, or, or even they don't reach this status, but they have a decent level of democracy, but then they slide back, right? Like informally, there's a lot of, uh, use of the term democratic backsliding, right? But the democratization process, uh, is defined as an erosion of, uh, democratic freedoms, democratic norms. and an erosion of these institutions of democracy in a country. So it's, it's defined as a de-democratization. So it moves away, instead of going towards democracy, it's a process that consolidates democracy in a country, it's, it's when the country goes the other way around. So, and then it goes towards a more authoritarian regime, if you want. Uh, to give you

real, uh, examples. Uh, this has been recorded in, in several countries, for example, in, in East Europe, but Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, more recently, when you see, uh, uh, uh, erosion or a decrease and an inequality of the institution of the separation of powers, uh, the integrity of elections, all of that starts to decline in terms of the quality or the strength of these institutions.

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

The U. S. is a clear example that, according to several indexes that measure the quality of democracy, is being downgraded in recent years. It doesn't have the same strength that, according to researchers, it used to have. So there is a decline. It's another example. And then we have examples in South America. And I focus on Brazil. It's my case study. And we can always argue that, well, Brazil never had a democracy in the same level, uh, that Norway, Sweden, uh, for instance, but it had, uh, good levels in, in the 90s and the 2000s. And then, reliable indexes, they show a decline in the quality and the functioning of the institutions after 2016, more or less, right.

### **Mariam Kourabi**

And you just brought up data and kind of certain indexes, and in your research, you draw from the varieties of Democracy Project. Um, what are some of the key elements they use to get reliable data to measure democracy and how that is changing in different countries?

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

Yes, so yeah, I use the VDEM, the Varieties of Democracy Project and several researchers, engaged with this data is considered very reliable. Uh, nowadays, I think it's a great advantage is the VDEM then doesn't put the countries and rigid boxes like it's difficult to establish like a tag or this country is a democracy. This country is not this country is a democracy This is an authoritarian. This is a hybrid regime and you have a mix of futures of both Types of regimes or this is a democracy, but not so much You It's not a great measure. So for them, uh, we call it a continuum. So it levels the levels because it varies. It's been varying. So it allows you to, to, to see the levels of democracy at different degrees. We use the gradability a lot as a term. So different levels of the quality of democracy over time. in a country and also to compare different countries, right? Uh, so I'm not part of VDEM. I'm, I'm engaged with, with this data and there was a lot of recent research, uh, debating the, the reliability, uh, of VDEM and, and most of them are very positive in terms of, uh, the reliability. of this data. They used hundreds of components. These are like more than 400 variables, uh, to measure, the quality of democracy in a country, right? Uh, so I can cite some of them, if the elections are free and fair, so the integrity of the elections, but a level of political participation. If the executive power is, is their accountability, of the executive power, the separation of powers, the implementation of the rule of law, separation of courts, inequalities, social and political rights, participation in elections, Freedom of the press, media bias, and so on. And they have, you can check for one specific variable, or you can check for a, uh, a group of variables because they have different indexes. Liberal democracy, electoral democracy, which focuses more on elections, of course. Uh, participatory democracy, which engages with all the aspects of, uh, uh, participation in society. So I use a couple of those, indexes to, to get a sense, of the situation or the condition. And Brazil, because I was looking for a country, uh, with a decline in democracy to see how the media reacted to that. So, so be them,

uh, rely on these, uh, hundreds of variables to come up with number, and then we can have an a scale of the quality of those variables. And mostly, we then rely on the assessment of experts that research these areas in those countries. So it's mostly based on, experts assessment, of these conditions. That's a huge amount of data they try to study to be able to put it into one component of democracy.

### **Mariam Kourabi**

You highlight Brazil, who rank in a troubling threshold. You highlight, obviously, a lot of these keys are, uh, not necessarily impacted by events, but do study big events like elections. And it does feel like Brazil has had quite a busy time with events. What are some of those issues? major political events that have caused some unrest that you reference to in the research.

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

I mean, Brazil is a fascinating country because it's a very complex political environment that way, and it's, and changes quite fast these days. Of course, it's complex in many places in the U. K. and the U. S., but Brazil has a very, interesting, political composition, and also is, is a bit understudied, I would say, because, uh, well, it's the fourth largest democracy, in the world, in terms of, uh, population, and it is the largest country in South America, both economically and in population, so that makes it worthy a case study for that as well. So VDEM points to a decline after 2016 and this time I and I look and analyze, uh, the actions of journalists between '16 and 2021, right? Because I need to stop the study in 21 to conduct my analysis. So between '16 and '21, the quality of democracy in the country according to VDEM is Uh, several variables, uh, decline it. And I also use all the indexes, a more qualitative assessment of what changes in regulations or a loss of rights in the country, attacks on the press and so on. So this also accounts for a decline in democracy in the country in that period. So this timeline correlates with some key events, uh, that all the political science and scientists pointed this, uh, pivotal moments and Brazilian politics between '16 and 2021 that kind of explain this decrease in the quality of democracy that we then recorded. So most of them, the ones that I focus on my study, And I have three case studies. The first one is what we call a car wash operation, but it was this biggest task force against corruption in the country, which is very similar to the one that was conducted in Italy. And during the time of Silvio Berlusconi, and kind of put in jail several politicians in Italy, reshaped the political landscape in the country. The prosecutors used it as a as a blueprint to to try to do the same with different problems. Uh, so connected to this period, we have an impeachment. Uh, and there was a lot of discussion about the impeachment of the President Dilma in 2016. That was some of the misconduct in the process was a bit ignored at the time and also the arrests of former President Lula. As part of car wash operation, right? And then after that, several allegations that it was a misconduct from from the courts and from the judges, that was in a way ignored by the press as well. And the press was just supportive of some of constitutional guarantees that were not respected at the time. So this is a car wash operation. The second case is the election in 2018. It was a very unique election. Uh, we have a new kind of far right in the country that was, uh, rising in the years before. And it was the first time that they, they were in the full force in terms of a national election in 2018. And eventually Bolsonaro was elected in the election, so it was our first far right president. So my third case

was trying to analyze how the press engaged, uh, with, with this government, what was kind of a different government in recent, uh, democratic history in Brazil. You've given me sneak peeks of how these events were covered, um, and you really dig deep into how those events were, were portrayed, were written about, were told, and which stories were told and which were attempted to be hidden.

### **Mariam Kourabi**

Can you describe to me how these events were covered by the media?

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

Yes, so there are a lot of content analysis in this period, about Brazil, trying to give him some directions on how the press cover those events and how the press... how the journalists or their organizations, what their stance is and what kind of positions they took in relation to those events. I engage with this material to, to kind of build. I focus on interviews with journalists, like qualitative interviews because I wanted to understand, how it was, in terms of the news production process, instead of the content analysis. Which gives you a picture, but it's limited.

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

I wanted understand how this play played out in the newsroom, and I also wanted to hear from the professionals, how it was in the perception and, and engaging with those events. Uh, but to summarize, uh, in relation to cohort, what appears,... what is in the content analysis, but also in my, in my, my data, in my interviews with the journalists, there was a sense that it was, uh, the mainstream news organization because I focus on the legacy news media, like the three biggest media groups, uh, that they were in some many ways, uh, overly positive of the operation, and they relied too much on official information from the prosecution, which ended up producing a coverage that was a bit unfair or unbalanced in a way that they supported too much the narrative from the prosecution and kind of overlooked some misconduct that were part of the judicial process. Did not entirely respect the rule of law, but it's something that was, uh, uh, agreed with the courts recently because some of these convictions were, were canceled and were revised, right? Uh, but took like many years and, and kind of alter the conditions of the election in 2018. Basically, there was, I engaged with this idea that it was, uh, kind of a private interests from the news organizations shaped the news coverage too much more than usual, right? There is always a tension between what media owners, media managers want and what the newsroom can do. Uh, but in this period was a very, very heavy top down approach, uh, and, and that push for a more positive view of car watch, which ended up, uh, benefiting some political actors and criminalizing others. So this kind of changed the conditions of the election after that. Okay, during the election, uh, most of the media, uh, I used the term in the paper strategic support to Bolsonaro. They don't actually embrace all of the values of Bolsonaro, eh was not the, the favorite candidate for most of the news organizations. They are usually more connected to, other political actors in the center right spectrum, uh, but they were interested in push for a more neoliberal economic agenda. So, since Bolsonaro was promising that, there are lots of journalists in the interviews, they report, uh, kind of instructions and a pressure, uh, from managers to focus on the economics and the good promises that were coming from Bolsonaro,

it kind of downplay, uh, his authoritarian past or the risk that it will be for democracy, uh, to vote for a candidate like that. So this kind of creates an imbalance in terms of the, the election coverage, right? So they were extra, uh, critical of all the candidates, but perhaps less critical and Bossanera's values in a way, right? And then in the third case for for go Bossa Nera government, it's a bit different because then we have the pandemic. And economics in the country were also not great. So the government never delivered the promises in the economy that was, uh, the business elites controlling the media were interested in. And also his management of the pandemic made very difficult at some point for news organizations to be sympathetic of the government or supportive of the government. And also Bolsonaro escalates their attacks on the press. So out of self preservation, uh, many news organizations started to become more critical of the government towards the end, right? Apart from Record, which is one of the biggest TV's in Brazil, they still maintain it for a long time, more, more, uh, Supportive relationship with the government, but then we have a bit of this, uh, this changes.

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

But what is interesting to see that this, this, um, three media groups, uh, they have a very clear preference in terms of the economic policies in the country. Even if sometimes they're not, uh, it's not a matter of preference, ideological preference in politics, but there was a concern with the economic agenda. And they saw in Bolsonaro this opportunity. So to give you a practical example, so Folha de São Paulo, which is considered a very progressive newspaper.

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

And they, in fact, they published several critiques of Bolsonaro regarding Bolsonaro's social values or Bolsonaro's approach to democracy. But, uh, the senior editor of politics in the newspaper said to me, one of them, uh, well, the newspaper disagreed with Bolsonaro's approach to democracy. But regarding the economy, We are on the same page. I'm quoting, he said, we agreed 100 percent with his view of the economy. The issue, he was not able to approve anything because there was too much fight, too much noise in the government because it's the way he conducts politics. It was not effective. So, so they were not concerned, uh, that, they kind of, they were willing to downplay the risk to democracy and kind of bet on Bolsonaro because of this, uh, this, uh, support for his, uh, uh, proposals for the economy, or, or the promises that, that could be more in a way that these news organizations wanted.

### **Mariam Kourabi**

I find it fascinating how you reference, one of the newspapers where the media managers issued kind of an internal announcement saying that they banned the use of the term far right when describing Bolsonaro, which to me is, it really got me thinking to how did this impact voters? Um, and I'm really glad you brought up the idea of it's not whether they should be critical or not, but it's a matter of, you know, Are they being critical fairly and consistently in terms of not serving political interests?

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

I think with the research and the data and you just highlighting now, I think clearly that was not being accomplished. How do you think that did impact voters when there was political interests

being served and how this huge event was being covered? Yeah, it's, I think, What I argue in the papers is, of course, the voters, they vote for all kinds of reasons, right? So, they have like several, um, um, types of information and several commitments You know, weigh this in and make a decision, but it plays a role, right? So public deliberation is based on information that the public acquires. So it's kind of shaped the narrative at the time and we looked at this, uh, three cases also because there were Three cases with massive news coverage, but particularly car wash was, was always on, on, on the news. But everything that Bolsonaro says, also because of audience, audience interests, it's, it's always on the news. They always, they always reproduce some of those more bold statements because there is a lot of interest on that. And, and so the narrative is, is being reinforced all the time in the news, right? So with the car wash, it creates a narrative that all these traditional they were involved in corruptions, they are not to be trusted, and that's not to say that there was not corruption. Yes, there was corruption, but perhaps, not in the way that the prosecution was, was putting out there, but this also helped all the antiestablishment narrative from both scenarios, despite being a politician for 30 years. His campaign was saying, and he was an outsider, not politician against the system. You, you, you, we all heard that in other countries, right? Just look to the US on your border. There you, you're gonna see it, right? So, so it's, but with the, the media kind of reinforced these messages because of the way they cover car wash and because of the way they, they were, uh, willing to kind of. downplay, uh, Bolsonaro in different degrees, right? Folio was a bit more progressive with a bit more space for critique, but they protect a lot as well Bolsonaro because of his economic agenda um global a little bit between in the mid level and I'm preparing another paper that look into these three organizations in detail, how they differ for each other, but it's not ready yet. But I recall was the most strong case because they had a stronger ties to Bolsonaro. Right. So it's good shapes the deliberation of the public, if you, if you provide this information, and it's not to say that, well, uh, the press shouldn't be critical, right? Because impartiality is a myth, right? Uh, and, and South America has a tradition of watchdog journalism. Going to the roles that we discussed in the conference, watchdog journalism, or a more opinionated coverage, if you want, because the political landscape is, is, um, uh, characterized by loss of conflict. And several other researchers already, uh, showed, uh, before that when you have these conditions, uh, so the journalists, they, they, they engage more in this conflict. So there is more, uh, critical coverage, even opinionated coverage. But what happened in this period of '16 and 2021 at the way that it was done. was to promote a very specific private agenda from the news organizations and sometimes for from the journalists itself in an individual level, because they were trying to promote their careers, right, embracing the agenda from the organization, or even to to have a scoop, or this kind of things, right. These things, they happen and they used to happen in Brazilian journalism. Yes, it's not new, right? But the level, what the data shows that the level that happened in this period in 16 was much higher than before because, uh, the, what we call it, the negotiation in a newsroom because the news production is negotiated, right? So you go to, you know, You go to the field, you have the information, so, so you talk with your, with your editor, you try to convince your editor, your editor need to keep attention to the editorial guidelines, sometimes the interest from the owners, this come up, and then there is a negotiation. Negotiation used to be bad before, and they were able, uh, to publish, uh, more diverse coverage, look to different angles, different frames, different sources, and so on. But this negotiation was severely diminished between '16 and 2021, which is something that we

discussed in the conference, why this happened. Yes, the interest of the organizations become more and more strong, but also the working conditions deteriorated a lot. So the journalists in the newsroom are in a more and more precarious condition. So they are not able to push back some instructions. They're not able to negotiate for a more fair or less self serving news coverage. So more of these unfair, I use this term in the paper, unfair representations, those that are more based on private interests of the organization, they, we have more of that in the news coverage because of the, the precarious conditions of the reporters in the newsroom.

### **Mariam Kourabi**

It's all fascinating to see that there's a lot that happens behind the scene of this all of this media being produced. Um, and in fact, the research does really take us from behind the scenes of three different practices that were taking place of soft steering, hard steering, and anticipatory steering. Can you tell me a little bit about how different these look?

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

Yes. Yes. Uh, there is a lot of discussion in research about what we call a media capture. Well, I know, and that's what I was telling about all these private interests. They become more important in a news coverage. Ideally, or the normative idea is that the news coverage is focused on the private interests. So I give you the information that is for the interest of the public. I don't try to give you skewed information to try to sway your opinion. Ideally, right? It's not an editorial. So we talk about media capture. We talk about the political instrumentalization of news organizations and journalists. And what the content analysis show some of these disparities, but we don't still don't have detail on how these is operationalized and the news production process. I wanted to understand. Okay, so fairly has. This particular interest in the economic agenda or global has this interest. They don't want the workers party back because they think this bad for business and they own different business. So how they translate this interest to the newsroom, because it's not that easy. It's not that connected. So I don't imagine that someone is going to make, and from my time as a journalist, I know that for instance, no one's going to make a meeting. Whoa. From now on, we're just going to support Bolsonaro in the election, right? Well, you can find that in the smaller groups, but we are talking about this very traditional big news organization. So it would be a scandal if you have someone making a meeting to the whole staff in the BBC, or we're not talking about this topic anymore, just in that way. I wanted to understand how this will translate in the news production process, because we know there is pressure, influence, instrumentalization. So the only way to do it was to talk with the journalists, right, in detail. And, to avoid some vague answers because journalists as, uh, participants in their research, they are the worst kind because they know, uh, about interviews, right? I used to be a journalist. I know how it was. So they give you some vague answers about what are the values and the standards of the profession that we have on paper. And they are always great on paper. So I try to focus the questions on very specific news coverages. That's why I have three cases. That's why I studied what was published during this time. And then I come up with some questions and try to get this data from the journalists. So that's why I arrived to these three categories. We claim in the paper that we don't have a very systematic analysis of the practices itself. And then we don't have a great cohesive

categorization system in the literature.

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

So I try to provide that with this and then I have this three broad categories, soft steering, hard steering, and anticipatory steering. So, all of these three categories, these, these are about, uh, the way that the journalists, they, they check information, how they investigate it, how they write, how they edit, and how they publish, right? The angles they choose, the framing, the kind of sources, all this decision making, how it's done. Right. So, but with the soft steering, what happens is these are very discreet suggestions. It's mostly top down. So from the owners to the managers, to the managers, to the editors, and to the editors, to the reporters. So, um, as my participants described in, in, in the paper, uh, so an editor will call you aside or in the room and say, well, maybe you should listen to these particular experts, but not this one. Uh, or maybe we should write something about this or let's focus on this particular topic for the election Uh, or we already said about how many times bolsonaro, uh defend the dictatorship in brazil Let's not write about this. Let's focus on his plans to the economy So this kind of suggestions that are usually presented according to the participants as a way to improve The news article, right? It's a very discreet. It's not an order. It's just a suggestion. I think your news report would be better if you include this expert here. For instance, all these experts, they advocate for austerity measures. None of them, uh, criticize the austerity measures, but these are just suggestions, right? But it's your boss giving you a suggestion. So it's Right. That's kind of implied, right? But then we move to hard steering at some point when the editors or the managers, they give you an order. We're not publishing anything about that anymore. We're not supposed to listen to anyone from the Workers Party because it's going to give too much space.

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

I don't want to talk with these other smaller parties from the opposition, avoid this particular source. So they give you an order. And there's some extreme forms of hard steering that I present in the case when the journalists were describing to me. Sometimes I receive the entire story already defined by my manager or my editor. You're going to talk about this topic, you're going to listen to this guy, this other guy, and this other guy, and you're going to present it in that way. So it's already decided, right? Or they veto a topic, or we should not talk about this corruption case because it's connected to Bolsonaro's son, we're not going to publish this, uh, not for now, and so it's like, in a form of censorship. As well, right? Or so, but these are direct orders top down. And then we have anticipatory steering. Because what happened when you have too much soft and hard steering, what the data showed me, the participant showed me that the journalists, they embrace all this previous instructions. So they already create a perception of what the house wants. They call it what the news organization wants. So they started to implement some of these decisions. Uh, on their own, so they stop, uh, listen to particular sources because, oh, this sort of, the, my editor doesn't like, we're going to stop to listen to this guy, I'm not going to pursue this particular topic, because it's not what the newspaper wants. So it becomes automatic and it kind of, they anticipate, uh, this, uh, this agenda or anticipate some forms of censorship or, or vetoes from editors and so on, which is, is, is an interesting dimension, but it's, it's a really bad one. Right. It goes a bit beyond self censorship because it's not that they just avoid, uh, covering a particular topic, but they also



started to work in a particular way. So it pushes them to act not, not, not just in a passive way, not to do something, but to, to do something in a particular way that benefits the private agenda of the news organization.

### **Mariam Kourabi**

It's fascinating data that really takes the journalist, the, the, I mean, the regular news consumer into the newsroom, into the newsroom. What is happening before anything is published and before anything is drafted up to the editor for news consumers? What can they learn from this kind of research?

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

Yeah, I think it's important to Point it out that we should not Destroy the news organization altogether, right? My work is sometimes very critical of news organizations, but also to highlight the important role they play in and democracy When we criticize the conditions of democracy, it doesn't mean that I want dictatorship back in Brazil. I think we need to improve the conditions of democracy. When we, I criticize the EU, uh, because there is some problems in the way the policy is making, is, is being made, uh, but we need to improve the way that this is being made. And the same with, with, with journalism. And we have this saying in Brazil that we should not throw away the baby. With the water of the bath, right, careful not to just throw away the baby, just the water, right, so there is a lot of issues, and it's important to understand the pressures the journalists are under, and the kind of capture and instrumentalization, especially with these private organizations, they are, they are important experiencing, uh, but doesn't mean that nothing that is published from this news organization should be trust because there, there, there are important journalistic work being done in this news organizations. And, and it's always a negotiation within the newsroom. What the research shows that recently the negotiations are not going well and there was a decline in the quality of the news reports they produce. But it still extends the argument or the evidence that quality news reports helps to consolidate democracy. helps to protect democracy, right? But we are just signing the danger that when we don't protect those organizations from this private capture, uh, these same organizations and their news outputs can undermine the democracy they are supposed to protect. My recommendation for readers is not to stop reading altogether, but to always approach critically. Everything they read, you shouldn't read just one source, you should read more, uh, more than one news organizations or a range of news organizations. It's always comfortable to, uh, go outside our, our, our bubble. It's always recommended. It's not comfortable, but it's so it's recommended, right? Because one, one thing that we have now is people started to just isolate themselves with polarization. echo chambers that they only read the, those, uh, news outlets. They, they agree on, they trust because they agree on, but we should, I think readers should go for a range of news organizations and, and approach, uh, the news output itself like critically. Right. And I think one important thing is to pay attention to, to the political economy of the media. Right. Uh, So you should approach critically the news output itself. See, see, see the story that is there. See what kind of sources they use.

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

Well, maybe they didn't listen to everyone. So you go to another source, you go to another news

outlet and try to get a full picture of things. But this is important. And also consider the, the, who owns their news outlet. What are the implications here? So you already know. So you read with a pinch of salt in your hand. Well, there's lots of good people in the Washington Post, but we know who owns the Washington Post now. And we saw everything that happened with the election. It was the first time they didn't put an editorial out there, uh, supporting a candidate for president in the crucial election of the U. S. And, and we know the, the role that Bezos played on that. And then, so News organizations are Uh, susceptible to, to, to these conditions, but the reader can, can decide for themselves, right? So it's a go, go for different sources, go for different news outlets, and, and, and judged the evidence and, and the different sources they are listening to have, to, to, to have a full picture, a more comprehensive picture of the fact, the facts before, before you form your, your, your opinion, you make your decision. One key factor, and I think it's relevant for Canada. Yes, Canada has a strong, uh, or used to be, uh, the conditions are changing, but I used to have a strong public service media, right? So I think there's two things. The conditions in Brazil are also very complicated because we don't have a strong public service media. So the market is, is highly private. Uh, and it's a monopoly and a hand of a few families that control the main news organizations, right? So, so we have two problems when I have a market that without the public service media as a free independent public service media, well funded and independent to act as a counterpoint. It's always an issue. It's always complicated things, but at the same time, we are seeing a Of public service media in several countries, especially in Europe from governments that are undermining the independence of public service media. So these are two things that we should look out for the future. We should have a very strong public service media, but also try to keep their independence from governments and political actors that try to capture them.

### **Mariam Kourabi**

It's important to move away from having an echo chamber from a specific news outlet. Be critical, like you highlighted, be out of your comfort zone, listen to different sources, diversify your sources. It's all super important. Um, and I think it's, again, studying and critiquing journalism as there's huge political events is also very important to improve the quality of journalism and also the trust that the public has in journalism. Ricardo, I really appreciate you joining me today to talk all about your research. Thank you very much.

### **Ricardo Ribeiro Ferreira**

Well, thank you very much for having me. It was a pleasure. Uh, it's always great to, to talk about, uh, research.