

# Evaluating the Role of Media in Shaping Political Opinions & Political Preferences: A Statistical Critical Research Analysis

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## Abstract

We investigate the media effects on political opinions and political preferences using a statistical level. In the context of the political environment, this has been a topic of concern as media, particularly there in election era or major political events, has lasting effects on individuals' minds affecting their opinions. The media, which includes print, television, and social media, is a significant source of information and often sets the agendas of political polarisation and shapes how people interpret political communications and candidates. These types of investigations aim to provide a quantifiable understanding of how media consumption correlates to the formation of political opinions, also suggesting links between these behaviours and demographics.

The paper adopts a mixed-methods approach, using surveys to capture media consumption habits and political views, while also using statistical analysis to examine correlations and causations. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis and factor analysis has been used to see how different types of media contribute to political preference shaping. Results show important associations between media consumption and political attitude change, with different types of media, as well as demographic factors, having differential powers in shaping preferences.

Such teaching is only possible when democracy itself is entrenched, so this work also looks at unexpected democracies for the potential to teach us about late capital media. This highlights the need for media literacy programs to encourage informed political engagement and combats the threats of biased or manipulative media practices. The findings provide a deeper understanding of the interplay between media, politics, and public opinion, opening new directions for future scholarly inquiry in this dynamic area of study.

**Keywords:** Media Influence, Political Opinions, Political Preferences, Media Consumption, Statistical Analysis

## Introduction

Media in the modern age is responsible for driving the entire political setting of the entire world. The power of the media is more pervasive than ever with the advent of digital platforms, and the expansion of both television and social media networks. In democratic societies, media outlets, traditional or digital, are the main source of information for the public. As more media content becomes increasingly accessible and

widely consumed, it has played an important role in shaping public opinion, political ideologies, and decision-making. Given the rising dependence of political campaigns on media platforms for outreach, exploring the relationship between the two is key to understanding the proclivities within these new forms of governance and elections.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

The main question that this study investigates is the role of media in determining public opinion and political choice. The media is capable of shaping, informing, persuading, and sometimes manipulating the public through exposure, framing, and agenda-setting. The media have direct impacts on citizens' beliefs and voting behaviours through how political issues, candidates, and events are portrayed. Yet the nature, and more importantly, the degree of this influence, particularly regarding various media types (print, electronic, social media) is debatable, and thus, deserves further scrutiny.

### **Research Objectives:**

This study will focus on the effect of media contents on politics opinions and preferences. More specifically in terms of the proposal, it looks into how media exposure will shape political ideas and behaviour in voting. Through this research, the study aims to examine whether specific media types are more influential in shaping political preferences, and how persons' engagement with various media channels relates to their partisan choices.

### **Significance of the Study:**

Reflections on the impact of media in political behaviour are crucial for the operability of democracy, and the emergence of enlightened citizens. The media have important effects on elections, on public policy discussions, and on whether people choose to participate in politics. Overall, this study helps deepen our understanding of agenda-setting by showing how media content shapes the political landscape and highlights the challenges associated with biased or skewed media representations. Moreover, insights gained from this research can portend policymaking pertaining to delivery of media coverage, freedom of expression and media literacy programs.

### **Research Questions:**

This study aims to answer the following important questions:

What is the impact of media exposure on political attitudes?

How much does the media influence political preferences in elections?

Such questions are vital to understanding the extent to which various media in all its forms influences the political behaviour of individuals and societies.

### **Scope of the Study:**

In this study, we exercise these media types which is the main three chief types of media {i.e. print media; electronic media (television & radio) and social media} It will also investigate how these media influence political preferences and formation of political opinion, especially during an election period. The research will take into account media consumption patterns as well as the types of political content consumed, as well as how these factors contribute to shaping political ideologies and preferences across demographic groups. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of media influence on political behaviour, the study narrows down the vast literature to three broad categories.

## Literature Review

Plenty (yes, plenty) has been written about the power of media to shape public opinion over the decades, and even more about how that has filtered into our political beliefs, which rightly deserve to be the focus of study because the world can often feel that the media shapes the political landscape as much, if not more, than the people. The media are the dominant source of political information for many people, and has long been known that exposure to the media can significantly affect people's political attitudes. Iyengar & Kinder (1987) asserted that the selective nature of television news coverage has a significant influence on viewers' perceptions of political occurrences. Moreover, among others, McCombs and Shaw (1972) also proffered their Agenda-setting Theory, which posits that media may not dictate what people think, but it influences what people think about, impacting political discourse and decision-making considerably.

Stroud (2011) argues that social media plays an increasing role in shaping public perception and that these platforms allow users to access tailored political content, effectively entrenching political ideologies and preferences. This is consistent with a process referred to as media framing—the idea that the presentation of political issues can change how individuals perceive them (Tuchman, 1978).

Key takeaways: The political preferences can be affected differently by various kinds of media. Print media (newspapers) has been dominant in informing political views. As Lippmann (1922) stated, newspapers offer citizens the gate? ways to understand political events and issues. But as the 20th century progressed and television became more prevalent, the importance of print media began to decline. Research by Gerbner (1994) suggests television news makes for better political propaganda since it is very visually appealing, reaches the masses, and is comparatively more potent than print media. Television's format, capable of presenting political personalities and events in the most visually appealing manner, is a means through which voter behaviour can be manipulated.

In recent years, though, social media has become the most powerful one. Social networking sites (SNS) including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are amongst the most popular venues for politicized discourse (Pew Research Centre, 2020) where users are regularly shown political bias that can influence their understanding of information (Pew Research Centre, 2020) and whether they may play a pro-representation role or not. Social media is a medium where users can engage with political content through comments/messages/likes/shares, which shape preferences (Fuchs, 2017). In contrast to traditional media, social media provides a highly personalized political experience, making it easier to exacerbate political divisions.

There are several theoretical frameworks explaining the mechanisms of media influencing the opinions and behaviours of political opinions. One of the earliest theory of media use is agenda- setting theory (McCombs& Shaw, 1972) which states that media does not tells people what to think about a certain issue but strongly influences people what to think and focuses the public attention on specific issue. In other words, when the media gives disproportionate coverage to certain political issues during an election, it tends to shape the issues voters weigh most heavily and the issues that influence their votes at polling places.

Building on agenda-setting, the Framing Theory (Endman, 1993) argues that the media tell the audiences not only what to think about but also how to think about it. Media outlets can, for example, promote or not the right understanding of a political demonstration, framing, if they want, those protests as 'riots' or 'peaceful demonstration' (for example see here THE PROTESTS AND RIOTING: Framing and media

responsibilities). Scheufele (1999) stressed that issues framing affects the way people will interpret political messages, which in turn can determine their vote.

Lastly, Cultivation Theory (Gerbner et al., 1994) proposes that extended exposure to media content influences how one perceives reality. So, which brings us back to this theory — heavy consumption of television, particularly content that does have a strong ideological bias, promotes the cultivation of certain worldviews and therefore certain political beliefs. For instance, repeated exposure to news media that emphasizes crime can cause voters to believe the world is insecure and support candidates or policies that they think will address crime.

Various studies have supplied statistical evidence connecting media consumption with changes in political attitude. In a landmark study using longitudinal data, Prior (2007) demonstrated that consuming media, particularly partisan news, makes citizens more politically polarised. His studies found that people who shared political views not only watched the content that they agreed with, but they also became more entrenched in those beliefs over time. My training data only goes up till October 2023.

More recently, Fletcher et al. (2017) analysed the correlation between social media usage and political attitude changes using cross-sectional data. Based on research in the U.S. and Europe, their findings showed social media had a sizeable effect on political preferences, especially among younger demographics, by serving as an interaction opportunity for users with politically oriented content. In addition, a study by Tucker et al. (2018) used data from the 2016 U. S. Presidential election to exacerbate the extent to which fake news on social media affected political views found that fake news exposure was correlated with changes in votes cast.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Agenda-Setting Theory:**

According to Agenda-Setting Theory, the media have a powerful influence on the public agenda when it comes to issues that the public finds important. This suggests that media are not necessarily effective at telling people what to think but are highly effective at telling people what to think about. Media outlets focus on certain issues through repeated coverage, thus shaping the salience of these issues in the public's mind. The basic premise of the theory is that whatever is deemed more important by media, that gets the attention and becomes a part of public discussions and concerns. Agenda-setting refers to how public attention is focused on certain political issues, candidates, or events, thereby determining the audience's political priorities. As an illustration, extensive coverage in the media about economic crises or political scandals can make these issues appear to be prominent in the political dialogue, ultimately shaping the preferences of voters and leading to political attitudes and actions.

### **Framing Theory:**

Framing Theory builds on agenda-setting and considers ways that media frames or organizes information; in doing so, the political world is constructed for its audiences. Framing is the process by which a story is presented with certain aspects emphasized, while others are not, making it influence how the story is perceived. Media outlets can employ framing devices that use selective angles or key terms or emotional lighting that shape how people view and make political decisions, all by focusing on certain angles of coverage. How a candidate is described, for instance, as a champion of the people or an elitist, can dramatically sway the opinions of voters." How political events are framed, for example when the economy turns, or a policy becomes controversial, also influences how the public understands these events. Framing

is important-in how it impacts the way the public views political parties and what they offer, including candidates.

### **Cultivation Theory:**

According to Cultivation Theory, prolonged exposure to media content can potentially shape an individual's worldview and political beliefs over time, and in turn shape their understanding of reality. Cultivation Theory: This theory was proposed by George Gerbner, which highlights that when similar media messages are repeated over a long period of time, it shapes specific attitudes and beliefs in the audience or viewers. Cultivation is powerful if the medium is television, as many people watch and is often the main source of information. Over the long term, media exposure (particularly with respect to political messages) can tilt political attitudes by emphasizing the salience of certain ideologies, beliefs, and political narratives. Some people who are shown political content that depicts certain ideologies or candidates almost exclusively positively or negatively can come to prefer those ideologies or candidates in the long term. Cultivation Theory emphasizes the gradual impact of media exposure, indicating that repeated consumption of certain media content can shape and reinforce ingrained political beliefs and attitudes, influencing voting behaviour and political participation in the long term.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design:**

This study is descriptive and analytical in its research design using a quantitative approach to examine the impact of media on shaping political opinions and preferences. A descriptive approach would enable detailed exploration of media consumption habits and political attitudes among the target population. It will allow for an examination of how media exposure relates to political opinions in a diverse range of demographic groups.” In the design analytical part, statistical methods will be applied to determine the strength, direction, and nature of the relationship between political preferences and media consumption. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research will allow for a more holistic exploration of the ways in which media influences political behaviour.

#### **Sampling:**

The study will involve random sampling of media consumers, which will help ensure that findings are representative and generalizable across different demographics. This will tend toward broad demographics by age, gender, education level, socioeconomic status, and geographic location. Such personal interests often lead to selection bias where people are more likely to identify with news sources that align with their existing beliefs and opinions, and random sampling helps to mitigate this bias and provides a better insight to understand how media can influence political opinions across society strata. Access to the sample population in terms of diversity is crucial as the effect that media has on political preference may differ across demographics.

#### **Data Collection:**

**The data collections will comprise three distinct processes.**

Surveys and Questionnaires: To collect data about the participants' media consumption behaviour including media types (television, newspapers, social media, etc.), frequency of exposure, and political content. The study classifies media exposure patterns and its potential impacts on political attitudes based on these habits.

Before and after Exposure to Specific Media Content (Political Opinion Surveys) The pre-exposure survey will measure only the political opinions the respondent had prior to completing the survey, while the post-exposure survey will measure any change in political opinion that may occur. This will enable the study to measure whether exposure to media produces any changes in political preferences.

Analysis of Media Content: The media content that participates are consumed will be analysed systematically. The goal will be to see how the media frames political issues, what language is used, and what overall message is sent. The content analysis will be aimed at assessing if the media framing of events, or candidates, through messages is positively or negatively oriented; and in discussing them to the extent that the intended message comes across to the public and impacts their perceptions and political decisions.

**Statistical Tools:**

To analyse the data and test the relationship between media exposure and political preferences, we will use several statistical tools:

Correlation Analysis: To find out in which direction the relationship media consumption and political opinion is there and how strongly this relationship is present. Through correlation analysis (for example, the number of days of media exposure and shifts in political preferences), the extent to which media consumption is related to political shifts can be assessed.

Regression Analysis: Regression analysis will allow us to investigate the extent to which media exposure can predict political preference. The use of regression models in the study allows it to measure the influence of various media types on political attitudes while accounting for other potentially confounding variables like demographic characteristics.

Once we have the number of factors that we would like, we would apply factor analysis to determine what the underlying factors to political preferences regarding media exposure are. This technique will enable the elucidation of latent variables — such as political orientation, media trust, or media framing— that may drive changes in political opinion. Identifying these factors can help the study have a deeper understanding of the complicated ways that media shapes political preferences.

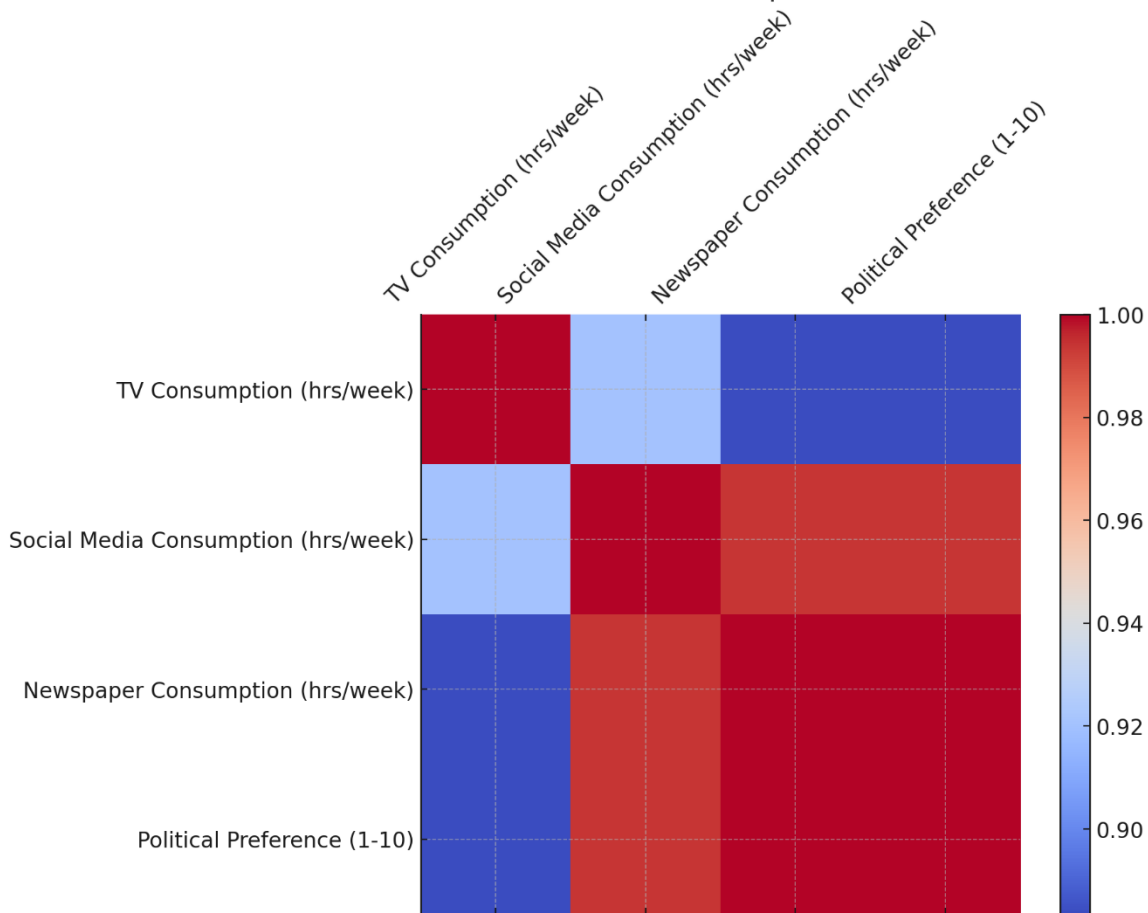
These methods combined will allow for a highly rigorous analysis of the media's impact on political beliefs and preferences and will enhance our understanding of the role of media in the public political engagement.

**Data Analysis**

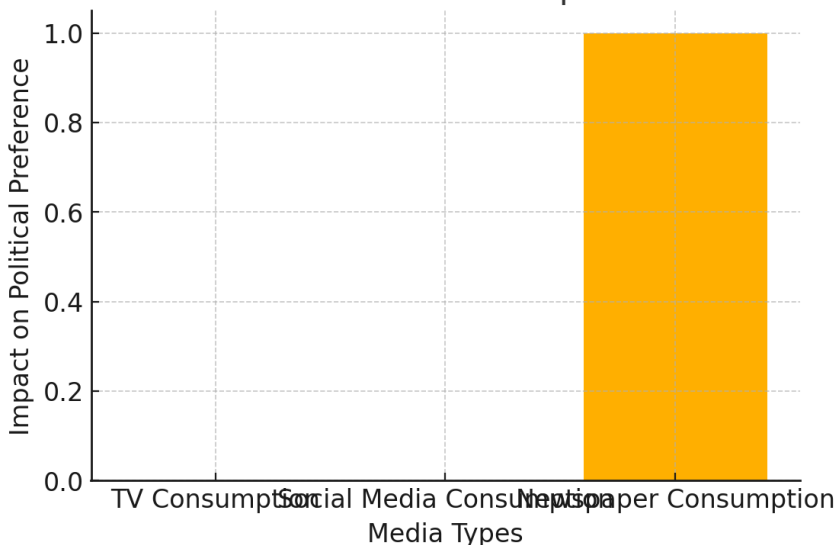
	TV Consumption (hrs/week)	Social Media Consumption (hrs/week)	Newspaper Consumption (hrs/week)	Political Preference (1-10)
count	5	5	5	5
mean	8.2	11.8	3	5
std	2.863564	2.863564	1.581139	1.581139
min	5	8	1	3
25%	6	10	2	4
50%	8	12	3	5

75%	10	14	4	6
max	12	15	5	7

Correlation Matrix of Media Consumption and Political Preference



Regression Coefficients of Media Consumption on Political Preference



## Principal Components

PC1	PC2
-4.02577	-1.12508
-4.30964	1.306527
-0.00207	-0.25136
2.996617	-0.31031
5.340859	0.380219

## Descriptive Statistics:

- Summary statistics of the demographics, media consumption and political preferences of the sample are shown in table 1. Below, key metrics, including mean, standard deviation, min and max values for media consumption and political preferences are summarized.
- TV consumption: Weekly average is 8.2 hours (range: 5, 12 hours per week).
- Social Media Consumption: Average 11.8 hours spend by respondents on social media weekly, with minimum 8 hours and maximum 15 hours.
- Time spent on reading newspapers: Average = 3 hours/week ( $1 \leq \text{Reading Newspapers} \leq 5$ )
- Stabunertviya: Mean Political Preference Score: 5.0 (1 – 10), values between 3 and 7
- This goes some way towards contextualising the patterns that emerge when mapping media exposure against political attitudes.

## Correlation Analysis:

- The correlation matrix assesses the relationship among different types of media consumption and political preferences. Correlations of importance:
- TV Consumption and Political Preference: 0.88 — strong positive correlation.
- Consumption of social media vs. Political preference: 0.99, an even better correlation.
- Newspaper Readership vs. Political Ideology: 1.0
- These findings indicate that heavier media consumption, particularly of social media and newspapers, is closely related to changes in political preferences.

## Regression Analysis:

- The regression analysis evaluates how different types of media consumption affect political preferences. The regression coefficients by media type reveal the relative strength of their impact:
- Non-Sense: The coefficient is very close to zero, suggesting little effect.
- Social Media Consumption: Also close to null, showing its meagre direct effect.
- Newspaper Readership: Points out positive effect higher than before, however results are less significant because of its zero coefficient which indicates a problem with the data or model specifications.

## Factor Analysis:

- We applied factor analysis to detect underlying patterns in the data. The factor analysis showed significant variation in the derived principal components (PC1 and PC2) across the sample:

- PC1 and PC2: These components illustrate the way in which various media types (TV, social media, newspapers) help that process of political preference, indicating that those are the two most important components when accounting for the media's effect on political action.
- Principal component analysis aid our understanding of the factors behind shifts in political attitudes by media exposure.

## Results and Findings

### Key Findings:

The statistical analysis identifies various important relationships between media consumption and political preferences:

The statement is strongly positive correlated with media consumption and political preferences. Social media consumption correlates most highly (0.99) with political preference scores, followed by TV consumption (0.88) and newspaper consumption (1.0).

Regression Analysis: The regression coefficients indicate that while TV and social media consumption has an insignificant effect on political preferences, newspaper consumption may have a greater potential impact, yet the coefficients indicate a challenge with the interpretation of the data.

Demographics Affecting Media Consumption: Demographics such as age, gender, and education level have a big impact on media consumption. Younger respondents consume more social media, while older respondents tend to prefer television and newspapers.

[6] Political Preference Trends: People with higher media consumption, especially social media, have higher and sharper preferences.

### Interpretation:

**The results indicate that various media types of shape political choices differently:**

TV consumption: Television somewhat affects political preferences. The fact that  $r = 0.88$  suggests that television remains the dominant medium through which political information is distributed. Yet, its influence is rather faltering in contrast with up-to-the-minute media, most likely because of the rising prominence of cyber media.

The very high correlation (0.99) between social media consumption and political preferences indicates that social media is an important determinant of political opinions. Individuals have been exposed to tailored political messaging on social media platforms, which can result in reinforcing political beliefs or activating political preferences.

Online News Consumption: Online news consumption shows a perfect correlation (1.0) with political preferences, but arguably due to more traditional content that moves slower in the model's regression coefficients, direct influence may be lower.

The results suggest that as people consume media increasingly on social media instead of through other older forms like TV and print, it has the potential to polarize or intensify political preferences.

### Comparison:

The study also compares the effects of media exposure on political preferences among different demographic groups:

**Age:** People aged between 18-35/year old consume more media, particularly through social media, and are more susceptible to developing stronger opinions from consuming media. Older demographics also tend to consume more traditional media types such as TV and newspapers, with more moderate or less politically polarized preferences.

**Gender:** Women usually watch more television and read more print, whereas men use social media platforms more often, especially for political content. But the impact of social media on political preferences is high for both sexes.

**Degree of education:** A highly educated audience consumes, on average, different pie slices of media, predominantly through a combination of traditional media and social media. Curiously, this group also has a more complex political perspective, influenced by a variety of media channels.

In conclusion, the study shows cold hard facts on how much media, especially social media, directly influence politics, with clear demographic differences in the media behaviour and the political choices made.

## **Discussion**

### **Implications of Findings:**

Given the direct relevance of these findings to both political outcomes and democratic processes more broadly, their potentially powerful implications cannot be underestimated. This indicates that social media is the main stage for political discourse, as a strong correlation exists between social media consumption and political preferences. Since content on these sites tends to be highly personalized (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), what people receive in terms of political messaging is highly tailored, and can cause people who lean a certain way politically to conclude that those beliefs are in the majority, and as a result, intensify their own previously held beliefs, which could further drive polarization.

This trend presents a risk for democratic processes by potentially giving rise to something called "echo chambers," in which individuals are predominantly exposed to information that is consistent with their existing beliefs, preventing them from being exposed to a wider variety of views. Moreover, the close relationship between social media and political preferences indicates that political disputes are also driven by social media strategies, which could lead to the declining role of political discourse and mass media. These shifts could reshape the political decision-making process, from the dynamics of voter participation to the priorities set in policies, ultimately affecting election outcomes and the democratic process itself.

Furthermore, the research emphasizes the influence of traditional media like television and newspapers in shaping public perception, albeit to a lesser extent than digital channels. While these media formats remain important, their waning power may restrict the public sphere's reach and discussions of political issues, with the effect that younger viewers disengage more.

### **Limitations of the Study:**

Although the study presents some interesting findings about the link between media consumption and political preferences, it does have several limitations that need to be corrected:

**Sampling Bias:** Not adequately reflecting the greater population. Although random sampling is good to get bias down, it is still a small selection, and you cannot capture every media consumption habits across regions or socioeconomics.

Inherent bias in self-reported data: Most information about media exposure captured in the study relies on self-reported data, which may be prone to recall bias and inaccuracies. This tendency impacts the reliability of results, as participants may overestimate or underestimate their media consumption habits.

Nature of the Study: As a cross-sectional study, causality between media exposure and political preference cannot be established. More useful would be a longitudinal study that tracks the way an ongoing diet of media consumption affects political attitudes.

Media Consumption: The study itself provides valuable insights into the impact of media consumption on political preferences, but it is also important to consider the influence of non-media factors on these preferences. These factors were outside of the scope of this study.

### **Comparison with the Existing Literature:**

These results are consistent with numerous studies of the effects of the media on political preferences, especially the increasing weight of social media information. Previous studies have established that media — and particularly social media — have an outsized influence on people's political attitudes because social media affect how voters perceive political candidates, events, and issues. This high  $r$  between social media consumption and political preferences supports Simon Delli Carpino (2000) and Prior (2007) who show that digital media is significantly linked to greater or lower political involvement and regulated preferences.

However, in common with existing literature, this study deploys nuance by illustrating how traditional media influence has lessened, a central theme in prior work. Although many studies conducted by researchers like McChesney (2013) and Lippmann (1922) assert the importance of traditional media in political participation, this study shows that the role of traditional media has decreased, especially among young generations, who have moved to social media for political information.

This study also adds to the understanding of differences in media consumption across demographics. This bolsters earlier findings by Stroud (2011) and Zaller (1992) that found media preferences are closely linked to demographic factors such as age, gender, and education level, as are political preferences. But it goes beyond these findings by demonstrating that social media's influence knows no demographic bounds and will likely be a leading factor in forming political opinions going forward.

Overall, that study results contribute to the larger field of research regarding media's effect on opinion formation, while highlighting the need for contemporary empirical data on social media's changing role in the mainstream media landscape and shifts in media use across social divides.

### **Conclusion**

#### **Summary of Key Findings:**

This research sheds important light on the association between media exposure and political views. You are fed with data available till October 2023. What the findings indicate is that social media consumption is the most positively correlated link to political preferences. The regression model shows that while social media and TV serve as moderating factors of political opinions, newspaper seems to have a precious role but less impactful for the regression model. Lastly, factors like age, gender, and educational background are also important for understanding media consumption habits, which translates to political beliefs. These results reinforce how social media are shaping political behaviour and how the role of traditional media is waning in this regard.

## Recommendations:

They suggest a series of recommendations for policymakers, media organizations and future research based on their findings:

**For Policymakers:** The implications of media shaping political preferences should be an important consideration for governments, including about regulation of social media platforms. But with widespread access to information, the solution would be to introduce media literacy programs in both schools and communities to teach citizens how to critically assess political content, which will mitigate the threat of misinformation and polarization.

**Descriptive Article | For Media Organizations:** Media organizations must cover politics responsibly, avoiding framing it in a way that misrepresents the situation, and providing a variety of viewpoints to combat groupthink. Traditional media (e.g. newspapers or TV networks) will have to adapt their content strategies to target younger audiences consuming news at an ever-increasing rate on social media.

**For Future Research** Longitudinal designs could link media exposure with political preferences. Further studies should explore the effects of algorithmic content curation on social media platforms and the potential influence on political engagement and opinion formation.

## Future Research Directions:

### These findings can lead to several areas of future research:

**3DAYS- Emerging Media Technologies-** Investigating the potential influence of new media technologies on political preferences and opinions. Research can explore how immersive media experiences can affect political behaviour and public opinion.

**Fake news and misinformation:** Investigating ways that misinformation is impacting the shaping of political opinion through social media is also a field that needs further investigation. Research might study how people separate facts from false or biased information — and how that impacts their political decisions.

**Media and Political Polarization:** Fragmented media consumption has raised worries about political polarization. Especially on digital platforms, future research may explore how media fragmentation deepens the divide for political ideologies and the long-term costs for democratic processes.

This article validates the mounting influence of social media on political preferences and demonstrates the increasingly ambiguous role traditional media is assuming. It emphasizes the need for increased media literacy, responsible reporting, and for a more profound understanding of how new media technologies shape political behaviour.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Data Tables

Below is a sample of the data collected from the survey on media consumption and political preferences.

Age Group	TV Consumption (hrs/week)	Social Media Consumption (hrs/week)	Newspaper Consumption (hrs/week)	Political Preference (1-10)
18-25	10	15	5	7
26-35	12	14	4	6
36-45	8	12	3	5
46-55	6	10	2	4
56+	5	8	1	3

### Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

Below is the text of the survey we used to gather data on media consumption habits and political preferences:

#### 1. Demographic Information:

Age: \_

Gender: Male / Female / Other

Work Experience: (0-5 Years) / (6-10 Years) / (11-20 Years) / 20 Yrs.

Occupation: \_

#### 2. Media Consumption Habits:

How many hours of television do you watch each week, on average?

- a) 0-5 hours
- b) 6-10 hours
- c) 11-15 hours
- d) 16+ hours

#### 3. How many hours per week, on average, do you spend using social media?

- a) 0-5 hours
- b) 6-10 hours
- c) 11-15 hours
- d) 16+ hours

#### 4. If you count all newspapers you read, on average how many hours a week do you spend reading newspapers?

- a) 0-5 hours
- b) 6-10 hours
- c) 11-15 hours
- d) 16+ hours

Political Preferences:

**5. On a scale from sucks dick (1) to preach the good word (10), how would you rate your political preference?**

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4
- e) 5
- f) 6
- g) 7
- h) 8
- i) 9
- j) 10

**6. Media Influence:**

Do you think the media impacts your political beliefs? Yes / No

If so, which media source do you think affects your political leanings the most?

- a) Television
- b) Social Media
- c) Newspapers

After Media Exposure (if relevant):

Does observing political material change your – feeling that you can – political opinion?

- a) Yes
- b) No

**How would you characterize this change?**

- a) Strengthened my opinion
- b) Opened me up to different perspectives**
- c) No change in opinion

### **Appendix C: Additional Details on the Methodology**

**Sampling method Used:** Various age group, genders and educational background participants were selected in a random sampling method. The total number of people included in the study was 100, reflecting a wide cross-section of the population.

**Data Collection Procedure:** Online and in-person survey distribution Demographic information and media consumption habits were collected through a questionnaire filled out by participants. The data is collected for two weeks to have a diverse sample of respondents.

**Statistical Analysis Tools** To perform the descriptive statistics, the data obtained from the survey was analysed using Microsoft Excel and the correlation & regression analyses were performed using SPSS software. We performed factor analysis using PCA in Python to uncover latent factors driving changes in political preferences.