“How can different social media engagement affect voting?“

Bachelor thesis in political science

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Abstract

This paper explores various facets in how different social media engagement can affect voting. It does a deep dive on previous literature as well as presenting and analysing data which were used to conclude the question at hand. Many of the hypotheses crafted showed no significant correlation. However many were worth exploring more in other, more recent, datasets. The analysis did yield results regarding a relationship when controlling for usual variables between media commentators and whether or not you had voted.

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1. Introduction

How does politics in the new age of media where everyone may engage more than merely viewing work? Does some social media affect your chance of voting more than others? If so, which ones? How do social media tendencies differ between those who vote more radical and those who vote more traditional?

1.1 Background

The best way to introduce the themes of this paper is by asking the above questions, which spark interest in this topic. This paper will delve into the correlation between social media and politics. Despite the research question and technique being broad and seemingly simple, it will cover several specific hypotheses. As someone with an interest in politics who has grown up alongside social media as it has evolved, I have been exposed throughout my life to various political communities on all sides of the spectrum. I believe that these online experiences have had a strong hand in shaping the values and beliefs that I hold today. In this paper, I will explore the possibility of these various hypotheses.

1.2 Research Question

How can different social media engagement affect voting? This question is way too broad to answer in depth. What type of engagement am I researching? Which social media are taken into account? What aspects of voting will be focused on? All of these questions may quickly arise. Because of this the question may be poorly formulated, but I beg to differ.

This thesis will on a fairly basic level attempt to either falsify or prove previous literature. It may not be as intriguing as researching something completely new. Yet I can still produce literature which may interest people. This is precisely because of our rather broad research question. Of course we have to put some restrictions on what it is exactly that I am researching. To narrow this down let’s look at the hypotheses I will research.

1.3 Hypotheses

I will research four different groups of social media variables. These will be analysed together with two different groups of voter tendencies. The social media variables are as follows:

- *How often do you use x (unique social media)?*
- *How often do you share/comment on news/political debates?*
- *How important is x (unique social media) as a source of news?*
- *How influenced are you by social media/media commentators?*

To categorise we have: Social Media Usage, Different Social Media Engagement, Trust in Social Media, Perceived Influence by Social Media/Commentators.

The voting variables are as follows:
- *Will vote edge-party (Rødt, SV, FrP)*
- *Has voted*

To categorise we have two categories of two values. What you vote - edge / traditional. Alongside if you've voted in the last election - yes / no.

When we combine these I can analyse multiple ways different engagement may affect aspects of voting. So let's narrow these down to some hypotheses. Keep in mind there will be quite a few. However some do not make it past initial correlation testing.

H1.1 *- How often you use certain social media affects what you vote for.*
H1.2 *- How often you use certain social media affects if you vote.*
H2.1 *- How you engage in social media content affects what you vote for.*
H2.2 *- How you engage in social media content affects if you vote.*
H3.1 *- How much you trust certain social media affects what you vote for.*
H3.2 *- How much you trust certain social media affects if you vote.*
H4.1 *- How much you perceive to be influenced by social media affects what you vote for.*
H4.2 *- How much you perceive to be influenced by social media affects if you vote.*

1.4 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is not to make broad sweeping statements about Norwegian citizens. Rather this is a thesis which builds upon previous literature regarding social media and voting. Perhaps the variables chosen yield interesting correlations. In layman's terms, this thesis is more or less a treasure hunt for interesting social media tendencies in radical-, traditional- and non-voters. While simultaneously discussing the findings in respect to previous literature mentioned in the theory portion of this paper.

If the analysis yields noteworthy findings then that's great. If the analysis disagrees with previous literature then that is still good. If there is nothing new and merely confirmations of previous research then I would still be content. The purpose of this research is just to better understand how different social media usage and engagement may affect voting.

1.5 Structure

Now that the introduction is almost completed let's quickly go over what to expect in this paper. In order to understand the topic and themes further I will bring up theory. The first theory portion, which is next, will make clear distinctions on what constitutes "Social Media" and "Edge Parties". However the more crucial part of this chapter will be the latter in which I cover previous research. This research will be in regards to how social media affects both radicalization and voter turnout / mobilisation.

Afterwards I will explain the methodology used. In this portion I elaborate on why the method of choice is appropriate to the research question. I will cover which data I used, why and the limitations of it. I also explain the analysis techniques I used. Then I give an overview of the raw data and the data's validity and reliability. I will be analysing this data in the following chapter and discuss the results further. In the last chapter I will conclude the whole paper. The goal of the final chapter is to sufficiently give a succinct answer to a rather broad research question. The general structure for this paper will range between focusing on analysis, discussion and both. Therefore it may read as quite rigid at times and quite loose at others.

2. Theory

This chapter will cover the definitions of terms I will use throughout the paper. Afterwards it covers previous literature in regards to radicalization and mobilisation.

2.1 Definitions

I will explain social media using two sources and explain it's growth with another. When defining "Edge parties" I will briefly discuss what ought to constitute as one in the Norwegian political system.

2.1.1 Social Media

The Cambridge Dictionary defines social media practically as "websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet using a computer or cell phone" (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Social media refers to online platforms and virtual communities in which people communicate, exchange information and share ideas. Examples of social media include social networking services such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Yet social media also encompasses other genres such as discussion forums like Reddit, video sharing platforms like Youtube and Tiktok, streaming services such as Twitch as well as instant messaging applications like Snapchat.

In "Advances in Social Media Research: Past, Present and Future," social media is defined as being "made up of various user-driven platforms that facilitate diffusion of compelling content, dialogue creation, and communication to a broader audience" (Kapoor et al., 2017, How is Social Media Defined in the IS Literature, para. 3). This audience ranges all over the world at all different levels. From personal and professional to political and societal.

Social media has continued to rise in popularity as it has evolved and advanced over the course of the last two decades. In 2005, Pew Research Center found that only 5% of American adults used social media. In 2011, they found that this percentage had risen to half of all Americans. Today, Pew Research Center estimates 72% of all Americans use social media (Social Media Fact Sheet, 2021).

2.1.2 Edge Parties

I will quickly define what I will refer to as "Edge Parties". These are parties that are, as the name implies, at the edges of the typical political spectrum. The reason as to why this needs a definition is because of the left wing in Norway. The party on the right with enough votes to pass the 4% barrier and make it into the parliament is FrP. On the left this used to be SV. However in the last election Rødt has now become the edge party on the left wing. Our dataset which I will elaborate on later in chapter 3 is from 2014. Rødt, in the following "kommunevalg" or commune election did not pass the barrier if it were to be a "stortingsvalg" or parliamentary election ("Valgresultat for Hele Landet," n.d.).

This leads me to the conclusion that we ought to include both SV and Rødt from the left wing given the time period. Arguments against SV being an edge party in current times may or may not be fruitful. Because of this I made a variable which only includes Rødt and FrP and one which adds SV. Although I believe having all 3 is the most appropriate. I should also mention that I do not attempt to imply that these parties are any more radical than what they themselves say publicly.

This thesis will not argue whether or not these parties are radical or how radical they may be. But literature regarding radicalization may still be convenient. This is because even if a party's program isn't inherently radical, it is inevitable that some amount of radical people will vote for them, purely because of their placement on the political axis. Nor do I attempt to bring or imply judgements about whether or not you ought to vote for these edge parties.

2.2 Previous Research

There is a substantial amount of studies and research examining the possibility of a correlation between social media and mobilisation, as well as social media and radicalization. A considerable amount of this research comes to the conclusion that a correlation does exist, though with differing consensus as to what extent. Let us briefly explain radicalization before delving into the previous literature. The same layout will be used for mobilisation.

2.2.1 Social Media & Radicalization

Radicalization refers to "the gradual social process into extremism and is often applied to explain changes in ideas or behaviour" (Ahmed & Obaidi, 2020, para. 1). More specifically, radicalization is concerned with political, social and religious ideas. Radicalization does not always necessarily lead to violence, but it can. Acts of terrorism are often committed by radicalized individuals or groups with political motives.

The 2011 *Journal of Strategic Security* paper "Radicalization and the Use of Social Media" analyzes how social media is used by individuals and groups to radicalize others, as well as how and why social media has become "the perfect platform for the radical voice" (Thompson, 2011, p. 2). It examines how social media aided in radicalizing people in Northern Africa and the Middle East during the protests and instability of 2011 as an example. The paper argues that social media is a highly effective tool for radical individuals and groups, especially those with high levels of power and notoriety. It is also argued that intelligence and national security groups should familiarise themselves more with social media. This so that they can adequately recognize and fight against radicalization and extremism.

2.2.2 Social Media & Mobilisation

In "Individuals and parties—changes in processes of political mobilization," political mobilization is defined as "the actors' attempt to influence the existing distribution of power" (Nedelmann, 1987, para. 1). It is further described as being composed of three processes. The process of interest formation, the process of community building, and finally the process of employing means of action (Nedelmann, 1987).

In the 2012 *New Media and Society* article "Social Media and Mobilization to Offline Demonstrations - Transcending Participatory Divides," Norwegian researchers examine whether or not social media unites people in mobilization and transcends socio economic differences, as well as the extent to which social media affects mobilization. Using data from a web survey conducted in Norway, the researchers also define what demographics are most mobilised through social media, determining that this demographic primarily consists of younger people of lower socioeconomic status.

Ultimately, the conclusion and determined thesis was that "social media represent an alternative structure alongside mainstream media and well-established political organisations and civil society that recruit in different ways and reach different segments of the population" (Enjolras et al., 2012, para. 1). The researchers also referred to the organization of the Rose March after the 22/7 terror attacks to determine levels of mobilization and participation.

In the 2022 paper "The Effect of Social Media on Elections: Evidence from the United States," researchers study the correlation between social media and election results in the United States. The study specifically focuses on the social networking service Twitter, and how usage of it impacted Republican vote share in both the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections. The paper suggests that Twitter users are more likely to identify as Democrats and that Democratic politicians find more success on twitter than Republican politicians. It also suggests that Twitter may have increased political polarisation and persuaded moderate and independent individuals to cast their votes for the Democratic candidate. From this paper, it seems that Twitter likely had a significant impact on the elections. Slanting the favour and mobilization towards the Democratic party

In November of 2012, the American nonpartisan think tank Pew Research Center conducted a study on the relationship between social media and voting titled "Social Media and Voting." The study was focused around the 2012 United States presidential election between incumbent Democratic President Barack Obama and Republican candidate Mitt Romney. Results were gathered from a nationally representative sample of around 1,000 American adults via telephone interviews, which were conducted by the research firm Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The study determined that 22% of registered voters had announced to others how they voted on social networking sites. It concluded that social media is a major method by which voters discuss their ballot selections and encourage others to vote, with 74% of voters having "socially voted" (Social Media and Voting, 2012, p. 1).

In the Norwegian article "How Do Social Media Change the Conditions for Civic and Political Mobilization?," researchers examine how the unprecedented and fast emergence of social media has affected political participation and mobilization. In the

article, mobilization is shaped into two levels, individual agency and mobilising agency. The effect of social media on mobilization is then examined more closely at these two levels. Facebook was the primary social media platform used in this study, with researchers determining that participation in Facebook groups had significant effect on mobilization. The researchers found that their results indicated "quite profound individual and structural level changes," with social media mobilising more specific demographics of people (Enjolras et al., n.d., p. 15). The article concludes that social media is a powerful supplement to more traditional forces of mobilization, and that "what we might see is the beginning of a transformation of civic and political mobilization" (Enjolras et al., n.d., p. 15).

Lastly, in the 2018 *Advances in Political Psychology* article "How Social Media Facilitates Political Protest: Information, Motivation, and Social Networks: Social Media and Political Protest," protest movements from the United States, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine are examined and analysed in order to ascertain three main points. The first of these points is that social media makes the spreading of information related to protest coordination easier. The second is that social media aids in the sharing of feelings in support of or in opposition to protests The third point is that social networks have a crucial role in ensuring information is sent and received so that protests are able to be organised (Jost et al., 2018). The article concludes that social media is a major factor in whether the organisation of protest movements succeeds or fails

3. Methodology

This chapter will explain what type of data I chose and why. It will also describe the limitations of our data before elaborating on the analysis techniques used. This chapter ends with covering the validity and reliability of this research.

3.1 Gathering Data

For this research I will analyse secondary data which cover different social media usage and engagement. This was chosen because I will analyse and explore sensitive information such as political information. Even though having a questionnaire and doing my own quantitative data gathering would add some life to the thesis. Sensitive

information such as politics is easier to access and research through an already established dataset.

The dataset I ended up analysing is one that was recommended by my counsellor because of the attributes mentioned above. Namely including the relevant questions of usage and engagement with social media alongside what and if you vote. I also went through newer iterations of this internet-based questionnaire. Even so the newer rounds have not had as much variation in questions regarding different social media usage. Hence I deemed it better for this thesis to use the following dataset.

Norsk medborgerpanel runde 2, 2014.
https://doi.org/10.18712/NSD-NSD2112-V6

I did wonder if it's perhaps better to see if there is a better dataset from the U.S. with all the factors I will analyse. However this idea quickly got overthrown. This is because I cannot analyse the groups who vote on "Edge-Parties". Thus our hypotheses stemming from a Norwegian viewpoint is not suited for the U.S. and its two-party system.

3.2 Limitations of the Dataset

The dataset chosen has some limitations which are worth addressing. These are not all bad however. Considering they help narrow down our research question to something which can reasonably be done for this thesis.

The participants were randomly recruited from the Norwegian population register with the condition of being at least 18 years of age. Thus any analysis and conclusion we draw will be contained to adult citizens of Norway. It's also worth mentioning that the data may already be quite dated. As I covered in chapter 2.1.1, social Media isn't exactly known for being stagnant. Therefore I shouldn't make statements about how certain sites affect voting currently. The dataset document also describes all the facets of the data. Which includes reason to take precaution about making sweeping statements about the population of interest.

In order to increase participation the University of Bergen which gathered the data would give a gift card with the value of 25 000 NOK. This in and of itself will somewhat scue the sample from the general population. Considering other observed bias, they opted to include weights in their data. The weights are based on the participants' county, age and gender. I will be using Jamovi for the analysis portion of this thesis. Jamovi has not added a feature yet where we can include weights. Hence we will not be making sweeping statements about the raw data. Yet we can still find interesting trends among the participants which deserve further research. To reiterate; I do not make broad statements about the adult citizens of Norway in 2014. Instead I investigate if there are facets worth exploring even further.

The dataset provides us with statistics regarding different social media usage and how they engage with it. It also provides us with the likelihood of them voting, what they would vote and if they have voted prior. Yet we find another predicament regarding the likelihood of voting. Coded as ocgb8_1, the question in the dataset reads: “What is the likelihood of you voting at the next election to the Storting?”. The answers are listed from 0 (I most certainly will not vote) and 10 (I most certainly will vote). No matter how this data and the statistics regarding social media had no overlap. At first I thought this was an error. Yet this is not the case. There is simply no crossover between the two questions topics in our group of participants (See tables below).

Table 1: No overlap in dataset

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Likelihood of voting	Usage of Facebook
Likelihood of voting	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
	N	—	
Usage of Facebook	Pearson's r	NaN	—
	p-value	NaN	—
	N	0	—

Table 2: Raw numbers for likelihood of voting and SM usage

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Likelihood of voting	Usage of Facebook
N	867	836
Missing	2505	2536

Out of the net sample of 3372 persons, only 867 were asked our first variable prompt. A completely separate group of 836 persons were asked about social media usage. Thus I had to take a different approach to the voting variable.

3.3 Analysis Techniques

Firstly I wish to address the issue of how our data may not be suitable for what we wish to research. There was another voting variable which had a complete overlap with the rest of the data. The variable in question is "Voted in elections". What are the benefits and downsides of using this variable? Using this we can minimise some human error. We exclude what we subjectively perceive us wanting to do. Instead we get raw data on whether or not we have voted. The downside is of course that elections are not held every day. Meaning that participants may not have had the chance of voting yet.

In order to minimise the downside of using this variable. I will conduct research which includes frequency tables, correlation matrices and most importantly; linear regression.

The frequency tables will give us a good view of the raw data. It's the simplest form of analysing data (Halvorsen, 2008, p. 181) . I will also include relative distribution in the form of percentages. Yet this analysis will be used in 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6. This is because the research question has nothing to do with raw answers by themselves. However the data is still interesting in terms of how we ought to approach certain variables. Which is why they are included in this chapter about methodology and not the following one regarding analysis.

The correlation matrix will be used to spot correlations between two variables using Pearson's r. This measures if high values in one variable correlate with high values in

another variable for a positive correlation. We can also get a negative correlation if high values in one variable correlate to low values in the other (Halvorsen, 2008, p. 184).

Lastly I will use linear regression in order to account for other variables. Unlike frequency tables which look at one variable and Pearson's r which look at two. Linear regression is the main tool used for multiple variables. When doing a linear regression analysis, we research how one or more independent variables affect one dependent variable (Stuvøy et al., 2021, p. 2). It will be especially important for accounting for independent factors such as age. Which is crucial considering one of our variables is "Have Voted".

Analysing multiple variables can easily introduce two sources of error. One is that a third hidden variable may be the cause for the other variables' effect. Perhaps it can better explain two variables by being in between. Does IQ affect the results on a bachelor thesis? Or is there a third variable of "time spent studying" which is better suited for explaining the results? In that case one might make a causal model which predicts IQ -> Time spent studying -> Results on Thesis (Halvorsen, 2008, p. 199).

If I were to have a model of causality it would have Voting as the dependent variable and Gender, Age and Education as the independent variables. Then we would add the different variables regarding social media to point towards Voting. This model would also include age as a variable affecting social media variables. Voting would also be assumed to cause different engagement with social media (commenting on political debates). We can account for this by using linear regression. However we cannot account for if the hypotheses are backwards.

The other source of error which can easily present itself is switching cause and effect (Halvorsen, 2008, p. 198). This is a lot trickier to avoid. Nonetheless our model of causality would include cause and effect in both directions. So the issue of which direction the cause lies is not as prevalent. However it does make it a lot more difficult to draw conclusions from the analysis.

I might also mention that this research will be conducted in a deductive manner. That is to say that I already have a theory and hypotheses which I will analyse. In the conclusion I nevertheless switch to some inductive reasoning in order to discuss further.

3.4 Data regarding Voting

In this section I will showcase some of the data. Let's start by looking at our voting variables before going over the social media variables.

Table 3: Voting Variables Data

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Preference of Party in the election tomorrow	Edge party voter	Edge party voter(+SV)	Traditional Party voter	Has voted
N	3011	3011	3011	3011	3351
Missing	361	361	361	361	21
Mean	3.31	0.124	0.176	0.824	0.899
Median	3	0	0	1	1
Standard deviation	2.48	0.329	0.381	0.381	0.301
Minimum	1	0	0	0	0
Maximum	10	1	1	1	1

The most important takeaway from this table is the number of people who have answered. 3011 persons have answered what they would vote for. 3351 persons have answered whether or not they've voted. Another aspect we can notice is the mean. On average we can see that "Traditional Party Voter" has 0.824. Or rather a 82,4% rate as opposed to the edge parties. To make the percentages more clear we can include tables which showcase the percentages for each separate party alongside the other relevant variables.

Table 4: Frequencies for "Preference of Party in the election tomorrow"

Frequencies

Frequencies of Preference of Party in the election tomorrow

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Arbeiderpartiet	979	32.5 %	32.5 %
Fremskrittspartiet	307	10.2 %	42.7 %
Høyre	850	28.2 %	70.9 %
Sosialistisk Venstreparti	157	5.2 %	76.2 %
Senterpartiet	91	3.0 %	79.2 %
Kristelig folkeparti	137	4.5 %	83.7 %
Venstre	223	7.4 %	91.1 %
Rødt	65	2.2 %	93.3 %
Miljøpartiet de Grønne	168	5.6 %	98.9 %
Annet	34	1.1 %	100.0 %

These numbers seem to be somewhat accurate in regards to the population. Especially considering the commune election held the year after. The biggest deviation was Høyre from 28,2% (in this dataset, 2014) -> 23,2% (in the election of 2015). The question for this variable was “What would you vote if there were an election to the Storting tomorrow?”. The name of the variable is not to say the election actually was the day following the survey.

Table 5: Frequencies for “Edge party voter(+SV)”

Frequencies of Edge party voter(+SV)

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	2482	82.4 %	82.4 %
1	529	17.6 %	100.0 %

The level 0 is equal to “Traditional Party Voter” and 1 for the variable in question. Also it's worth reiterating that this is not showcasing if you’ve voted for these groups of parties. It only shows what the participants' preference would be. This variable was created by using “transform” in Jamovi to add all respondents who chose Rødt, SV or FrP in the table prior.

Table 6: Frequencies for "Has voted"

Frequencies of Has voted

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
0	338	10.1 %	10.1 %
1	3013	89.9 %	100.0 %

The first thought upon seeing this may be that it doesn't seem applicable to the population at all. In the "Norwegian Citizen Panel 2014, second wave - Methodology report" they address this. Even when using their weight we can see the election turnout go from 89.9% -> 88,6%. Which is still far off the actual number of 77,7%. However they mention that a substantial part of the difference is most likely caused by an over-reporting tendency in regards to voter turnout. Also to clarify regarding the prompt for this variable. The question was "Did you vote during the parliamentary election this autumn?". We are not measuring a variable of participants who either have or haven't voted during their entire lifetime.

3.5 Data regarding Social Media

Now let's move onto the social media variables. The percentages for each social media will not warrant its own table in order to not clutter this paper . However we can include the frequency table for one of them in order to better explain the variables.

Table 7: Usage of Social Media Variables

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Usage of Facebook	Usage of Twitter	Usage of own blog	Usage of others blogs	Usage of CSON	Usage of Online Forums	Usage of other SM
N	836	833	831	834	832	828	827
Missing	2536	2539	2541	2538	2540	2544	2545
Mean	2.54	4.54	4.89	4.30	4.13	4.25	3.76
Median	2.00	5	5	5.00	5.00	5.00	4
Standard deviation	1.73	1.01	0.480	0.994	1.15	1.11	1.39
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Frequencies

Frequencies of Usage of Facebook

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Daglig	391	46.8 %	46.8 %
Ukentlig	114	13.6 %	60.4 %
Noen ganger i måneden	51	6.1 %	66.5 %
Sjeldnere	46	5.5 %	72.0 %
Aldri	234	28.0 %	100.0 %

The question for these variables was “How frequently do you use social media?...X”. The values each unit could answer were from 1-5. 1 - Daily, 2 - Weekly, 3 - A few times a month, 4 - Less frequently, 5 - Never. Therefore it’s important for our analysis to keep in mind that the higher this number is, the less they use the given social media. The variable of “Usage of CSON” refers to comment fields in online newspapers. We can already spot some results from looking at the mean. Facebook had the highest usage by quite a large margin. Followed by “other” social media, CSON, Online Forums, other blogs, Twitter and lastly others blogs.

We can also see from Facebook that it has a congregation towards its end values. Most people used Facebook daily, followed by never. There are approximately 800 valid answers for each variable. The voter variables all had roughly 3000 valid answers. Thus we are bound to find some decent overlap seeing as how the survey in total had a net sample of 3372.

Table 8: Engagement in Social Media Variables

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Share news on SM	Share political debates in SM	Comment on news in SM	Comment on political debates in SM
N	826	824	826	823
Missing	2546	2548	2546	2549
Mean	4.06	4.36	4.31	4.45
Median	4.00	5.00	5.00	5
Standard deviation	1.05	0.902	0.936	0.850
Minimum	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5

Frequencies

Frequencies of Share news on SM

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Svært ofte	19	2.3 %	2.3 %
Ofte	50	6.1 %	8.4 %
Noen ganger	165	20.0 %	28.3 %
Sjelden	218	26.4 %	54.7 %
Aldri	374	45.3 %	100.0 %

The question for these variables was “How often do you do/experience the following?...X”. Again we will use the frequency of one variable to demonstrate the values. The values listed are in the same direction as the ones prior. 1 - Very Often, 2 - Often, 3 - Sometimes, 4 - Rarely, 5 - Never. The same observation regarding valid applicants can be made here considering there’s roughly 800 answers. Let’s have a quick look at what type of engagement people did more often. By looking at the mean we can tell that the average person is most likely to share news in social media (out of these variables). Followed by commenting on the news, sharing political debates and lastly comment political debates.

Table 9: Trust in Social Media Variables

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Important source of news: Facebook	Important source of news: Twitter	Important source of news: Blogs	Important source of news: Others
N	827	806	811	800
Missing	2545	2566	2561	2572
Mean	3.70	4.61	4.65	4.39
Median	4	5.00	5	5.00
Standard deviation	1.34	0.858	0.697	1.02
Minimum	1	1	1	1
Maximum	5	5	5	5

Frequencies

Frequencies of Important source of news: Facebook

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Svært viktig	72	8.7 %	8.7 %
Viktig	108	13.1 %	21.8 %
Noe viktig	148	17.9 %	39.7 %
Lite viktig	169	20.4 %	60.1 %
Ikke viktig i det hele tatt	330	39.9 %	100.0 %

One would be correct to point out that the question in the survey may not correctly indicate trust. The question reads “How important are the following media to you as a source of news?...X”. However I would argue that if one believes that X is an important source of news to oneself, one would have to have a certain level of trust in X. Therefore at the very least this implies some amount of trust. If the question was written without mentioning the applicant specifically. One might make their answer based on another principle entirely. Perhaps their views on free speech. But seeing as how the question entails how important X is to the applicant we will assume there is a level of trust in X involved.

The values for these variables range from, 1 - Very important, 2 - Important, 3 - Somewhat important, 4 - Not very important, 5 - Not important at all. There are still roughly 800 valid answers. On average the most important source out of these variables was Facebook by a solid margin. Followed by Others, Twitter and lastly blogs. Although it is a bit unclear what “others” refers to. The way this is coded reads as though others refer to other social media. This is because of how these variables are read “dt209c_1-4”. The same question was asked but in groups replacing the c with a or b while asking in regards to radio and TV channels. Thus I imagine the “other” category does not entail absolutely all other sources of news besides Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

Table 10: Influenced by Media Variables

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Influenced by Media Commentator	Influenced by Social Media
N	805	788
Missing	2567	2584
Mean	3.51	4.30
Median	3	5.00
Standard deviation	1.02	0.879
Minimum	1	1
Maximum	5	5

Frequencies

Frequencies of Influenced by Media Commentator

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
I svært stor grad	15	1.9 %	1.9 %
I stor grad	118	14.7 %	16.5 %
I noen grad	271	33.7 %	50.2 %
I liten grad	244	30.3 %	80.5 %
Ikke i det hele tatt	157	19.5 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Influenced by Social Media

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
I svært stor grad	4	0.5 %	0.5 %
I stor grad	30	3.8 %	4.3 %
I noen grad	107	13.6 %	17.9 %
I liten grad	231	29.3 %	47.2 %
Ikke i det hele tatt	416	52.8 %	100.0 %

We might as well have both frequencies available because our final social media variables come in a pair. The scale is still coded so that the lower the value the higher the use/engagement/importance/influence. The question was “To which extent would you say that the following people and stakeholders influence your views on issues in politics and society?... X”.

The values are as follows: 1- To a very great degree, 2 - To a great degree, 3 - To some degree, 4 - To a small degree, 5 - Not at all. We can immediately point out that more people appear to be influenced more by Media Commentators. This is because the mean number is lower in addition to how it's coded. I should also make it clear that media commentators do not 100% overlap with our theme of social media. There exists media commentators both online in social media and on TV. Media commentators which have some amount of following usually transfer somewhat to social media. Seeing as there's also media commentators who are exclusively on social media I chose to include this variable.

3.6 Data regarding control variables

Before we discuss the validity and reliability we ought to include some descriptives about the control variables.

Table 11: Control Variables

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Age	Gender	Education	Satisfied with Norwegian Democracy	Satisfaction with current government
N	3372	3372	3183	3362	3363
Missing	0	0	189	10	9
Mean	3.81	1.50	8.38	2.08	2.83
Median	4.00	1.00	9	2.00	3
Standard deviation	1.60	0.500	3.26	0.771	0.963
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	7	2	14	5	5

Frequencies

Frequencies of Age

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
18-25	337	10.0 %	10.0 %
26-35	463	13.7 %	23.7 %
36-45	594	17.6 %	41.3 %
46-55	704	20.9 %	62.2 %
56-65	737	21.9 %	84.1 %
66-75	456	13.5 %	97.6 %
75 og oppover	81	2.4 %	100.0 %

There won't be too much to mention here apart from showcasing the raw data. We can still point out that gender has a mean of 1,5 between the values of 1 and 2. On that

account the distribution of which gender the applicant is would approximately be 50%. I also wish to point out that there were only 10% who were in the age bracket between 18-25. Hence our worry of there being applicants who haven't had the chance to vote is not too big of an issue. As long as we apply it as a controlling variable when making larger claims. I also included variables of satisfaction towards the government and the democracy of Norway. These may be useful and could uncover more interesting correlations. Which is why I will include them in this showcase of the data.

The questions regarding satisfaction towards Norwegian democracy and government ranged with values from "Very satisfied" to "Not satisfied at all". The average for satisfaction with democracy was 2 - "Satisfied". The average for satisfaction with the government leaned towards 3 - "Somewhat satisfied". The education variable is made ordinal. This level of measurement has variables which are categorical yet ranked in some way. One could have "County" as ordinal if one were to rank them based on population (Halvorsen, 2008, p. 178). So although the values in education are categories they still go from "low" to "high" in our dataset.

I would also have liked to include "household income", but this variable was not available. Another facet worth addressing would be that all these variables had 2 additional values. The values were "Not asked" and "No Answer". These are of course taken care of and do not influence the valid responses.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

Now to follow the tedious yet necessary part of the data showcase. We shall briefly discuss the validity and reliability of this data. These terms can refer to multiple ideas. I will refer to reliability as "How well can we reproduce these results". Validity will be thought of as "Do we measure what we aim to measure". If you gave an IQ test to French students twice you would probably get high reliability. However the validity would be quite low as it would only measure their knowledge of the English language (Halvorsen, 2008, p .70).

Although I am not so much concerned with the validity or reliability of our dataset. This is because the dataset is from NSD. NSD is open for further research on the exact same dataset for students and researchers. Therefore the reliability should be fairly high through the lense of research and analysis in this paper. Given that I do not run into easy mistakes such as those discussed in 3.3.

Through the lense of the data itself things get a bit difficult. We probably cannot reproduce the same results because of the time frame involved. However the data can still be compared to other datasets and surveys at the same time to see whether or not it's credible or reliable. And through their reputation I will argue the dataset is quite valid as well. Any questions I may have had regarding the validity of the dataset have already been discussed. Such as the weights they discussed in the information document to compensate for bias.

4. Analysis

Now onto the exciting part of the paper. It's time for the analysis. First and foremost I will elaborate on what the numbers and values in the correlation matrix entail. Then I will check for correlations between the various variable groups using this analysis tool. Afterwards I will research correlations further with linear regression. After a quick briefing on what the numbers and values entail here as well. This will all be prior to me making any solid statements which may be brought into the conclusion.

4.1 Correlation Matrix

This dual variable analysis tool will be our filter in which I decide which hypotheses are most likely true. To understand this tool we have to understand Pearson's r and the p-value. Pearson's r has already been briefly covered in 3.3. But to reiterate it simply tells us if there is a correlation between two variables and how strong it is. In addition to the direction of the correlation. I wish to focus on testing my hypotheses. Therefore the p-value is essential. The p-value serves as a mechanic which assumes our null hypothesis to be true. A null hypothesis is the inverse of our hypothesis. For example

H1.1's null hypothesis would be "How often you use certain social media does not affect what you vote for".

The correlations this paper finds will be statistically significant if the p-value is less than 0,05. Even further so if less than 0,01. Lastly the statistical significance will be very high if the number is below 0,001. All variables who make it through the 0,05 barrier of significance will be carried over for the multi variable test.

4.1.1 Hypothesis 1.1 & 1.2

Table 12: H1.1 correlation testing

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Edge party voter(+SV)
Edge party voter(+SV)	Pearson's r	—
	p-value	—
Usage of Facebook	Pearson's r	0.004
	p-value	0.914
Usage of Twitter	Pearson's r	0.028
	p-value	0.452
Usage of own blog	Pearson's r	0.004
	p-value	0.922
Usage of others blogs	Pearson's r	0.058
	p-value	0.113
Usage of CSON	Pearson's r	−0.046
	p-value	0.210
Usage of Online Forums	Pearson's r	−0.068
	p-value	0.067
Usage of other SM	Pearson's r	0.060
	p-value	0.107

H1.1 *- How often you use certain social media affects what you vote for.*

We can see that there seems to be no significant correlations between how much you use certain social media and if you vote for an edge party over the traditional parties. That being said, "Usage of Online Forums" is very close to hitting the p-value needed.

Because of this it is difficult to conclude the null hypothesis for H1.1 to be true. Yet we will not investigate this further. Considering the paper is built upon doing a broad overview before delving deeper and discussing particular findings.

Table 13: H1.2 correlation testing

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Has voted
Has voted	Pearson's r	—
	p-value	—
Usage of Facebook	Pearson's r	0.060
	p-value	0.082
Usage of Twitter	Pearson's r	−0.002
	p-value	0.945
Usage of own blog	Pearson's r	0.115 ***
	p-value	< .001
Usage of others blogs	Pearson's r	0.019
	p-value	0.589
Usage of CSON	Pearson's r	−0.030
	p-value	0.385
Usage of Online Forums	Pearson's r	0.051
	p-value	0.140
Usage of other SM	Pearson's r	0.053
	p-value	0.126

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

H1.2 *- How often you use certain social media affects if you vote.*

Here we see that there is indeed one correlation which is quite significant. Almost two given "Usage of Facebook"'s p-value. The category of using your own blog seemed quite unique. As a consequence I wish to discuss the validity of this particular variable.

Table 14: Usage of Own Blog frequency

Descriptives

Descriptives

	Usage of own blog
N	831
Missing	2541
Mean	4.89
Median	5
Standard deviation	0.480
Minimum	1
Maximum	5

Frequencies

Frequencies of Usage of own blog

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Daglig	2	0.2 %	0.2 %
Ukentlig	8	1.0 %	1.2 %
Noen ganger i måneden	18	2.2 %	3.4 %
Sjeldnere	26	3.1 %	6.5 %
Aldri	777	93.5 %	100.0 %

Although I found a strong correlation. I need to be cautious about making statements after looking at the frequencies. The overwhelming majority chose “Never”. Only 2 answered daily and 8 answered weekly. Considering how few valid participants actually chose other answers than “never”, I cannot comfortably make claims about this variable. Thus I will rather play it safe than come to conclusions based on what might very well be outliers.

One may inductively reason that those who vote for parties that wish to have their voices heard, rather than more traditional parties, would be more likely to write a blog. Thus more data regarding bloggers and politics could be generative of interesting research. In spite of that both hypothesis H1.1 and H1.2 will not be tested further.

4.1.2 Hypothesis 2.1 & 2.2

Table 15: H2.1 correlation testing

Correlation Matrix

		Edge party voter(+SV)
Edge party voter(+SV)	Pearson's r	—
	p-value	—
Share news on SM	Pearson's r	0.004
	p-value	0.915
Share political debates in SM	Pearson's r	−0.021
	p-value	0.577
Comment on news in SM	Pearson's r	−0.022
	p-value	0.560
Comment on political debates in SM	Pearson's r	−0.061
	p-value	0.099

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

H2.1 *- How you engage in social media content affects what you vote for.*

Again we find no solid significant correlations. The one that comes rather close is "Comment on political debates in social media". So, we move straight onto H2.2.

Table 16: H2.2 correlation testing

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Has voted
Has voted	Pearson's r	—
	p-value	—
Share news on SM	Pearson's r	0.040
	p-value	0.251
Share political debates in SM	Pearson's r	−0.034
	p-value	0.325
Comment on news in SM	Pearson's r	0.043
	p-value	0.223
Comment on political debates in SM	Pearson's r	0.007
	p-value	0.844

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

H2.2 *- How you engage in social media content affects if you vote.*

Again we see no significant correlation. The only thing left to report is that I was rather relieved. Considering how complex it would be to go about proving if online engagement causes political participation and not vice versa, or both.

4.1.3 Hypothesis 3.1 & 3.2

Table 17: H3.1 correlation testing

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Edge party voter(+SV)
Edge party voter(+SV)	Pearson's r	—
	p-value	—
Important source of news: Facebook	Pearson's r	−0.028
	p-value	0.454
Important source of news: Twitter	Pearson's r	0.012
	p-value	0.749
Important source of news: Blogs	Pearson's r	0.024
	p-value	0.521
Important source of news: Others	Pearson's r	−0.004
	p-value	0.908

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

H3.1 *- How much you trust certain social media affects what you vote for.*

Yet again I find no statistical significance. Let's see if the next hypothesis will finally yield some valid correlations.

Table 18. H3.2 correlation testing

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Has voted
Has voted	Pearson's r	—
	p-value	—
Important source of news: Facebook	Pearson's r	0.069 *
	p-value	0.048
Important source of news: Twitter	Pearson's r	0.030
	p-value	0.398
Important source of news: Blogs	Pearson's r	0.084 *
	p-value	0.016
Important source of news: Others	Pearson's r	0.119 ***
	p-value	< .001

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

H3.2 *- How much you trust certain social media affects if you vote.*

Apart from Twitter. We can clearly see that this hypothesis is onto something. There is a low yet statistical significance in both Facebook and blogs correlating with voting. Not only that, but there is a high statistical significance for those who deem "other" sources important. This category is of course a bit special. Considering it may be difficult to have an appropriate theme for "How important is X as a news source". However before we rejoice or discuss an appropriate way to go about this hypothesis, I will make sure there aren't any outliers which may cause issues such as in the "Usage of own blog" variable.

Table 19: Frequencies of "How Important is X as a news source" variables

Frequencies

Frequencies of Important source of news: Facebook

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Svært viktig	72	8.7 %	8.7 %
Viktig	108	13.1 %	21.8 %
Noe viktig	148	17.9 %	39.7 %
Lite viktig	169	20.4 %	60.1 %
Ikke viktig i det hele tatt	330	39.9 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Important source of news: Blogs

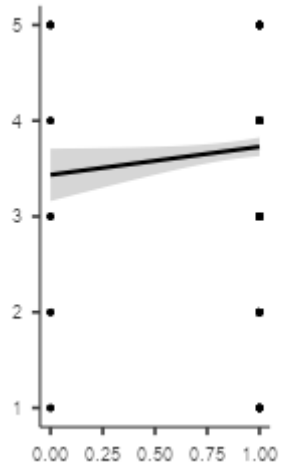
Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Svært viktig	4	0.5 %	0.5 %
Viktig	11	1.4 %	1.8 %
Noe viktig	48	5.9 %	7.8 %
Lite viktig	137	16.9 %	24.7 %
Ikke viktig i det hele tatt	611	75.3 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Important source of news: Others

Levels	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Svært viktig	24	3.0 %	3.0 %
Viktig	31	3.9 %	6.9 %
Noe viktig	82	10.3 %	17.1 %
Lite viktig	132	16.5 %	33.6 %
Ikke viktig i det hele tatt	531	66.4 %	100.0 %

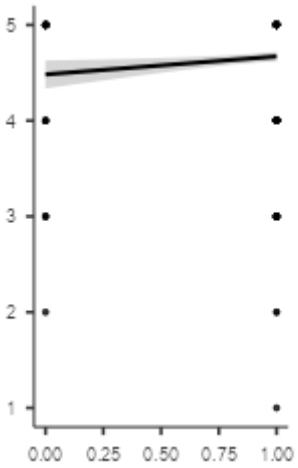
Although the variable regarding blogs may be slightly problematic. Almost 25% of the participants who answered chose something besides the value “Not important at all”. As a consequence, all of these variables except “Important source of news: Twitter” will be used to further test hypothesis 3.2. Keep in mind that the wording on the questions as well as what the “other” category may entail are important before concluding this hypothesis as true or false in chapter 4.2. I will now demonstrate some plots for the correlations.

Figure 1: Has voted x Important source of news: Facebook



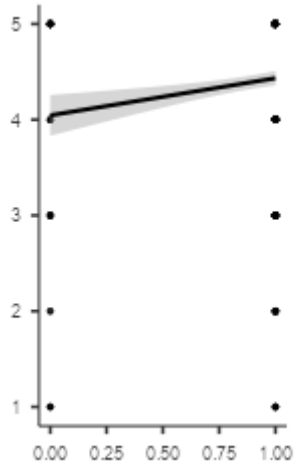
As mentioned previously, these variables were coded as 1 - “Very important” and 5 - “Not important at all”. Our “Has Voted” variable is a binary 1-yes and 0-no. Judging by Pearson’s r we see a positive correlation. Which means those who found Facebook as a news source less important had significant correlation with having voted.

Figure 2: Has voted x Important source of news: Blogs



The direction of the correlation at hand is the same direction as the prior variable.

Figure 3: Has voted x Important source of news: Others



Yet again the trend is the same. The more likely one is to have voted the more likely one is to deem these sources of news negligible or inconsequential. This will be interesting to explore further in 4.2.1.

4.1.4 Hypothesis 4.1 & 4.2

Table 19: H4.1 correlation testing

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Edge party voter(+SV)
Edge party voter(+SV)	Pearson's r	—
	p-value	—
Influenced by Social Media	Pearson's r	0.008
	p-value	0.838
Influenced by Media Commentator	Pearson's r	0.044
	p-value	0.240

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

H4.1 *- How much you perceive to be influenced by social media affects what you vote for.*

Our last hypothesis regarding whether you vote for edge parties or traditional parties has not passed our correlation testing. This is of course also par for the course of research. You may not always find something interesting in a given variable you wish to explore.

Because it's somewhat of a letdown that this endeavour was not as fruitful as I hoped, I added some interesting findings about Edge Party voters in chapter 4.1.5.

Table 20: H4.2 correlation testing

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

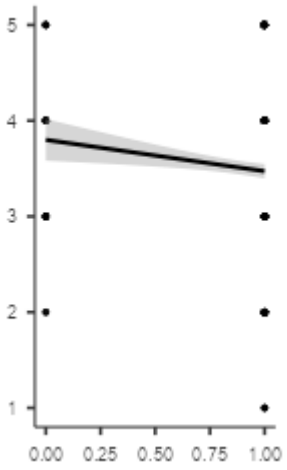
		Has voted
Has voted	Pearson's r	—
	p-value	—
Influenced by Media Commentator	Pearson's r	−0.099 **
	p-value	0.005
Influenced by Social Media	Pearson's r	0.026
	p-value	0.468

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

***H4.2** - How much you perceive to be influenced by social media affects if you vote.*

We find ourselves with an interesting correlation. It is exactly the amount needed for a moderate statistical significance and the direction is negative. In this case, this means that those who had voted reported higher degrees of being influenced by media commentators.

Figure 4: Has voted x Influenced by Media Commentator



The x axis is, consistent with the prior figures, having voted. The number 0 for not having voted and 1 for having voted. The y axis is being influenced by media commentators. The number 5 in this case means “Not at all” and 1 is “To a great degree”. As we have discussed prior in 3.5, media commentators and social media overlap, but to which extent is hard to pin down. Therefore we ought to be careful making statements about this variable as well going into the linear regression.

4.1.5 Interesting Findings regarding Edge Party Voters

Table 21: Edge Party Voter correlations

Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix

		Edge party voter(+SV)	Edge party voter	Would Vote FrP
Edge party voter(+SV)	Pearson's r	—	0.813 ***	
	p-value	—	< .001	
Edge party voter	Pearson's r	0.813 ***	—	
	p-value	< .001	—	
Would Vote FrP	Pearson's r	0.730 ***	0.897 ***	—
	p-value	< .001	< .001	—
Gender	Pearson's r	−0.066 ***	−0.137 ***	−0.137 ***
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001
Satisfied with Norwegian Democracy	Pearson's r	0.171 ***	0.204 ***	0.166 ***
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

I want to briefly mention that both “Gender” and “Satisfied with Norwegian Democracy” had a very significant correlation with “Edge party voter”. Because of the direction of the correlation. We can determine that there was a high correlation between both being a man and being less satisfied with Norwegian democracy and edge party voters. These correlations got even stronger if you removed SV as one of the edge parties. The gender difference did not appear to get stronger nor weaker once Rødt was also removed. Nevertheless satisfaction with democracy dropped a considerable amount considering how few people would have voted Rødt as opposed to FrP.

This may not be incredibly shocking or new. Yet I still deem this as interesting, or at the very least “fun” data which I wish to include.

4.2 Linear regression analysis

In this portion of the paper I will be going over the terms in a linear regression analysis. Afterwards I will use this multivariable analysis to test our causal hypotheses which made it through the "correlation filter". Lastly I will discuss our findings in light of previous research.

4.2.1 Explaining technical terms

We will get different and important numbers from this type of analysis. Such as the R squared. Which will tell us the significance of our independent variables upon the dependent. If R squared is equal to 0,45 then the independent variables explain 45% of the variance in the dependent variable.[1] I will be using the adjusted R squared as it adjusts according to the predictors. Although I expect this number to be extremely low considering how many factors play a part in voting.

The regression coefficient will determine the size and direction of the correlation we're researching.[2] If the coefficient were to be 0,14 it would necessarily mean that whenever the independent variable increases by 1, our dependent one increases by 0,14. The only crucial term left to explain is p-value. But this has already been explained in chapter 4.1.

4.2.2 Does trust in specific social media platforms affect whether or not you vote?

Table 22: Linear regression on social media trust / importance

[1] En smak av forskning - Analysis of surveydata 1, p7
[2] En smak av forskning - Analysis of surveydata 1, p8

Linear Regression

Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	0.166	0.0276	0.0198

Model Coefficients - Has voted

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Stand. Estimate
Intercept [a]	0.77235	0.08607	8.974	< .001	
Important source of news: Facebook	−0.00226	0.00927	−0.244	0.807	−0.00999
Important source of news: Blogs	0.01000	0.01836	0.545	0.586	0.02230
Important source of news: Others	0.01257	0.01262	0.996	0.319	0.04178
Gender:					
Woman – Man	−0.00676	0.02245	−0.301	0.763	−0.02247
Education	−0.00630	0.00344	−1.832	0.067	−0.06677
Age	0.02399	0.00732	3.279	0.001	0.12784

[a] Represents reference level

The results of doing our data analysis with linear regression is rather "disappointing" in some sense. However it is important to explain the results. The adjusted R squared and coefficients are rather low, which were to be expected. With 0,0198 on R squared and 0,01257 as a coefficient on "Important source of news: Others". Age is, as expected, the clearest variable which determines if you had voted in the last election. Nevertheless in this analysis we may have fallen into the "over analysing" trap of multivariable analysis. Let's remove the independent variables so only the strongest correlating one remains besides the control variables.

Table 23: Linear regression for "other" variable

Linear Regression

Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	0.177	0.0312	0.0261

Model Coefficients - Has voted

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Stand. Estimate
Intercept [a]	0.76730	0.06066	12.650	< .001	
Gender:					
Woman – Man	−0.00696	0.02193	−0.317	0.751	−0.0229
Education	−0.00583	0.00340	−1.714	0.087	−0.0615
Age	0.02486	0.00702	3.540	< .001	0.1317
Important source of news: Others	0.02029	0.01116	1.818	0.070	0.0677

[a] Represents reference level

When we don't control for other social media's importance we still do not reach the p-value required for statistical significance. It is, however, very close. Because the p-value is 0,07 the best analysis of this result I can do for this linear regression analysis is as follows. Placing importance on other social media besides Facebook, Twitter and blogs in regards to being a news source *may* cause a higher chance of voting.

Nonetheless as we have discussed previously. If we were to have a model of causality it could very likely point both ways. Political interest may influence choice of social media which you deem important. Which social media which you deem important may influence if you vote. Not to mention the issue of the "other" category being rather ambiguous. Although the question did come in the same bracket as social media. Without seeing the layout of the survey it's hard to conclude if "other social media" was the intent of the question. Better yet how the participants may reasonably interpret the question.

There may be some controlling variables who barely push this variable over the line of statistical significance. But this is probably the biggest room for bias on my part. It could easily be a desperate attempt to find a way for this variable to be significant instead of solid research. Hence we will move onto the other hypothesis.

4.2.3 Do media commentators affect whether or not you vote?

Table 24: Linear regression for "Media commentator" variable

Linear Regression

Model Fit Measures

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	0.185	0.0341	0.0291

Model Coefficients - Has voted

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Stand. Estimate
Intercept [a]	0.94927	0.05911	16.060	< .001	
Gender:					
Woman – Man	−0.00298	0.02128	−0.140	0.889	−0.0100
Education	−0.00735	0.00330	−2.227	0.026	−0.0796
Age	0.02651	0.00663	4.000	< .001	0.1433
Influenced by Media Commentator	−0.02381	0.01053	−2.260	0.024	−0.0811

[a] Represents reference level

The p-value is at 0,024. Hence we can see a decent statistical significance even when accounting for age, gender and education. The adjusted R squared indicates that roughly 2,91% of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variable in addition to the controlling ones. The regression coefficient on our dependent variable was -0.02381. When we consider that our variable has 5 valid values we see it's quite a sizable factor for our binary "voted in last election" variable. It's also worth noting the direction of the connection is still negative. Which entails that the more you're influenced by media commentators the more likely you are to have voted in the last election.

The issues regarding this variable have been discussed prior. However there's also issues which arise for the purpose of this paper. This paper is on how different social media can affect voting. Yet the only thing we found with statistical significance was a variable which goes across social media and traditional media lines. Even then it's hard to determine whether you seek and are influenced by media commentators because

you're somewhat involved in politics, vice versa or both. I personally believe that it goes both ways. Considering which party or political wing you may pertain to will influence which media commentators you seek. Political commentators on social media however may have the opposite causal effect. Turning the previously non-politically affiliated person into following or believing what the "thought leader" on the internet may believe or espouse. These are of course just personal theories based on the literature and personal experience. Yet they might spark intrigue for further research regarding specifically political commentators on social media and how it may affect voting.

5. Conclusions

How can different social media engagement affect voting? In the adult Norwegian population of 2014 we explored multiple hypotheses and found some weak correlations and a couple which warranted further research. Based on the previous literature, I suspect that because of this dataset being somewhat dated. This is what I believe caused some of the variables such as "Usage of Online Forums" to not have a statistically significant correlation with "Edge Party Voter" ($p = 0,67$). The literature regarding both radicalization and mobilisation would lead us to believe that there should have been more analysis results to match our hypotheses. Even though we found plenty of variables which almost significantly correlated, there was one which did. And ironically enough, it reached further than the already broad yet isolated theme of social media. Nevertheless we did find a connection between how much media commentators influence participants and if they had voted.

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