

How Does the Media Influence Our Political Beliefs?

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Abstract:

The influence of media on our political beliefs has been a hotly debated topic for many years due to the increasing power of the media in our daily lives and the various ways it shapes our thinking. We accept that the media powerfully influences how we view politics and politicians and cast our votes during elections. Consequently, this piece aims to focus more on whether the outcomes of elections genuinely reflect people's will, how psychological theories are applicable in defining how the media can alter our perceptions and beliefs regarding political issues, and the media's role in influencing public opinion, its potential impact on election results, and the dangers of media manipulation. Understanding the influence of the media on our political views is critical and this article will delve into whether change is needed to foster a more authentic voting ideology. This topic is important to me because as a 18-year-old global citizen, I want to have the ability to think critically and I hope I could explore more about this social phenomenon of media influences.

Key words: media influence, political beliefs, television and radio influence, media narratives influence, celebrities influence

Introduction

The influence of media on our political beliefs has been a hotly debated topic for many years due to the increasing power of the media in our daily lives and the various ways it shapes our thinking. We accept that media powerfully influences how we view politics and politicians and cast our votes during elections. Consequently, this piece aims to focus more on whether the outcomes of elections genuinely reflect people's will, how psychological theories are applicable in defining how the media can alter our perceptions and beliefs regarding political issues, and the media's role in influencing public opinion, its potential impact on election results, and the dangers of media manipulation. Understanding the influence of media on our political views is critical and this article will delve into whether change is needed to foster a more authentic voting ideology.

Television and radio influence

The media has been a significant source of information and entertainment since the advent of television and radio. These mediums have significantly impacted how people perceive and interact with political beliefs and issues. Television and radio broadcasts have become integral to public education, disseminating information on current events, history, and politics (İnce et al., 2018, p.10). They have ensured that people understand political decisions better.

The media's substantial influence on politics is evidenced by enabling people to become more actively involved in the political process and providing an arena for political debates and discourse. Moreover, it has allowed for greater political participation, with people able to access opinions and perspectives on various political issues. As such, they have enabled people to become more knowledgeable and informed on political issues.

Over the years, television and radio have allowed people to engage in political discourse and dialogue (İnce et al., 2018, p.8). This has led to greater political engagement, as people can participate in debates, discuss their views, and even challenge the perspectives of others. People also become more aware of the complexities of politics and diverse perspectives and opinions. Importantly, the advent of television and radio has led to a democratization of information, thus facilitating a broader understanding of political ideologies, and enhancing voter engagement and participation. As such, television and radio have become invaluable sources of information and entertainment and are crucial to the political process.

Media narratives influence

Another significant way media influences our political beliefs is through narratives. News outlets often use discriminatory language and frame stories to favor a particular political view (Enders et al., 2021, p.22). For example, a story about a politician's policy may change to make it appear suitable, even if it is harmful. This kind of biased reporting can lead to people believing that a particular procedure is a good idea, even if it is not. Social media narratives have become increasingly influential in shaping people's political beliefs. Users expose themselves to various opinions and statements by sharing content. As these narratives spread, they can shape how people perceive specific issues and, in turn, how they think about politics. In the long run, these skewed narratives

can polarize public opinion, lead to misinformation, and potentially influence election outcomes, thus impacting economic, social, and political landscapes.

Social media platforms influence

Politicians use social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram to spread political opinions and news (Shafaq et al., 2022, p.12). They post blogs and website links allowing citizens to access relevant information. The citizens also interact and raise their concerns by replying to their leaders. Political videos are often uploaded to platforms like YouTube, where citizens can stay updated on critical political debates, news, and political progress of their time. However, these platforms are not immune to misinformation. For example, the "Pizzagate" conspiracy theory that circulated during the 2016 United States presidential election illustrates how false information can manipulate public opinion.

Celebrities and influencers

Celebrities and influencers often have a large following on social media, which gives them the power to promote particular political views and candidates. They can also use their influence to sway public opinion, significantly impacting voting behavior. This power is often harnessed due to the trust and admiration people place in these figures, leading to a willingness to adopt their political leanings without critical evaluation. This inevitably shapes public opinion and mobilizes people to act on important issues. They can sway the masses' opinion and influence public policy decisions (Kiran, 2020, p.710). For example, in 2020, celebrities like Taylor Swift, Oprah Winfrey, and former First Lady Michelle Obama endorsed presidential candidates and encouraged their fans to get out and vote. Influencers often use their platforms to share their views on current events, create conversations around controversial topics, and call for action. Shaping public opinion and compelling people to support specific causes or candidates can significantly impact voting behavior.

Conclusion

In conclusion, various forms of media have a powerful influence on our political beliefs. These media platforms shape our attitudes, opinions, and beliefs about the political world by providing various information sources. Through carefully crafted messages, these sources can shape how we view current issues, candidates, and policies. Influencers, celebrities, and other public figures can reinforce our beliefs by being an example. Therefore, while these platforms have the capability of reaching a wider audience, encouraging meaningful discussion and debate, and providing a platform to express our views, it is crucial to approach this information with critical thinking and discernment, thus ensuring the creation of well-informed and authentic voting ideologies.

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