



# Relationship between Consumption of Partisan Cable News Shows and Trust in the Government



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## Introduction

- There are indications of political polarization in the television news media and the body politic at large in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2025, 2014).
- Additionally, there are several hypotheses rooted in research which indicate various causes for the declining trust in government based on television news media consumption (Avery 2009, Prior 2007, 2002) it remains uncertain whether there is any significant connection between the phenomena.

## Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between the kind of polarized televised cable news shows consumed and trust in the government compared with non watchers?
- Does this relationship differ between men and women?
- Does this relationship differ between people registered as Democrats or Republicans?

## Methods

### Sample

- Data for research is drawn from the American National Election Studies (ANES) 2024 Time Series Study data set (n=5,521) which collected political and social data immediately prior to the 2024 American Presidential election.

### Measures

- Variable measuring Government trust was created by aggregating responses to three questions: Trust in government to do what is right, trust in the courts to do what is right, and amount of political officials in the government which respondents would consider corrupt.
- A variable was also constructed which reflects the political affiliation of cable shows (based on research in political affiliation of news talk shows by Pew) (Rosentiel 2009) watched by respondents as liberal, conservative, both, or neither based on shows mentioned when asked about regularly watched programs

## Results

### Bivariate

- Chi-Square analysis showed significant difference in trust in government reported among people who watched different Cable news shows ( $p = 4.42e-25$ ).
- Overall people who reported watching liberal cable news talkshows reported trusting in the government at greater rates than people who watched conservative new talk shows (Fig. 1).
- People who reported watching liberal leaning cable news talk shows were roughly 210% more likely to trust in the government than people who didn't report watching cable news talk shows

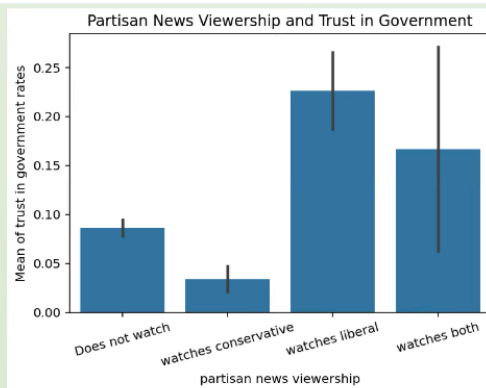


Figure 1. Relationship between trust in government political affiliation of news shows watched

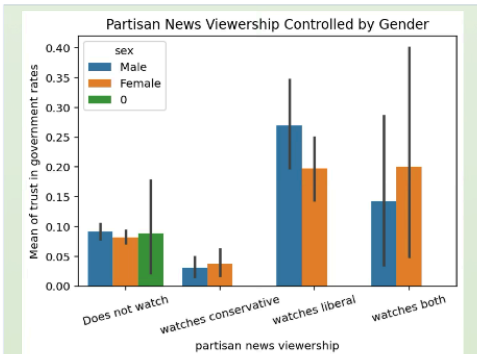


Figure 2. Relationship between trust in government political affiliation of news shows watched controlled by gender

### Multivariate

- Logistic regression did not find sex to be a moderator or predictor of trust in government outcomes (Fig. 2)

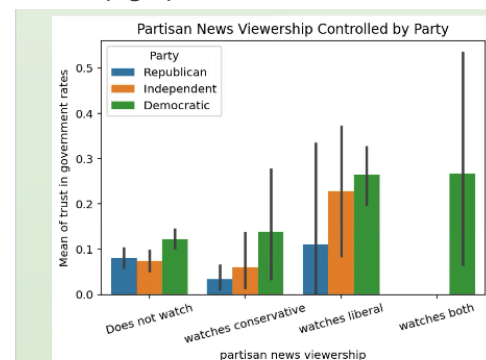


Figure 3. Relationship between trust in government political affiliation of news shows watched controlled by party

## Discussion

- Logistic regression of the variables measuring Trust in government and political affiliation of cable news show watched determined that people who consumed conservative news talk shows had lower odds of trusting in the government while people who consumed Liberal leaning shows had higher odds.
- These result can help us deepen our understanding of the impact of partisan news media on people who are consuming these types of cable news talk shows and the implications of its effect on politics and the viewing of government as a trusted authority.

## References

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### Multivariate

- Logistic regression found when controlling for party registration the relationship between watching conservative news talk shows and trust in government was no longer significant (Fig. 3). (coef= -0.5128 P-value= 0.065).
- Logistic regression showed when controlling for party people who reported watching liberal leaning news shows had 162% higher odds of trusting in government