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"What Kind of Bias Do I Want?" How Cross-Pressured Voters Select Political Media

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Research Article

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Abstract

Media selection is an important form of political behavior that often shapes public opinion and voting. While most people select like-minded media, recent evidence suggests that media markets do not represent the growing populations of cross-pressured voters (CPVs) with "mixed" ideological positions. CPVs consist of two groups: "left-conservatives" are economically leftist and culturally conservative, while "right-progressives" are the reverse. Since CPVs are under-represented by political media outlets, how do they select outlets and content? My theory draws on another type of political behavior — voting — and adapts the prominent spatial voting model to political media selection. Hence, I argue that salience shapes outlet selection. Moreover, within an outlet, both salience and outlet ideology influence content selection.

I administer a pre-registered survey to British CPVs that simulates the media selection process with two experiments. This is supplemented by large-scale, representative panel data from the UK, US, and Germany. My results indicate that (1) CPVs usually select right-conservative outlets, (2) salience likely has some influence over content selection within outlets, and (3) outlet ideology has a powerful effect on content selection. However, surprisingly, salience might not drive the initial outlet selection process, pointing to new avenues for research. This study has important implications for selective exposure, media effects, public opinion, and voting behavior.

Keywords: cross-pressured voters, ideology, media selection, selective exposure, experiment, panel data

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Statements and Declarations

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Competing Interests

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study was performed in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Approval was granted by a research ethics committee. To ensure anonymity, more information can be provided at a later stage.

Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Data and Code Availability

All replication materials, including data and code, will be made available in an online repository.

Pre-Registration

The original survey is pre-registered. I discuss any deviations from the pre-registration in the manuscript below. The anonymous version of this pre-registration is available here:
https://osf.io/zcxpj/overview?view_only=e1655b918bcc4ed7b089c7238000a378

Note for Editors and Reviewers

Another paper based on the same survey is currently under review at a journal. If both papers are accepted, some parts of the online appendices may be included in only one paper and referenced in the other to avoid duplication. The anonymous pre-registration for the other paper is available here:
https://osf.io/3gkae/overview?view_only=fbf874550c634d59926eabf65bf09646

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TBD for anonymity

1 Introduction

Media outlets hold considerable sway over public opinion and even elections (Ladd and Lenz 2009; McCombs and Shaw 1972). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the strategies that people employ to select different types of media outlets and content in the first place. The established literature on selective exposure has found that audiences select like-minded ("congruent") political media (Festinger 1957; Iyengar and Hahn 2009; Knobloch-Westerwick and Meng 2009; Metzger et al. 2020). However, what do audiences do when they have no congruent media?

Cross-pressured voters (CPVs) are in this position. They have ideological positions that seemingly cut against each other on the two prominent dimensions of ideology — economic and cultural (Dassonneville 2022; Gidron 2022). The economic dimension includes issues related to economic prosperity and distribution, like redistribution, government spending, fiscal policy, and monetary policy (Dalton 2009; Piketty 2020). Meanwhile, the cultural dimension includes issues related to the roles and rights of socio-cultural groups, like immigration, race, gender, LGBT rights, and crime (Bornschier 2010; Norris and Inglehart 2019). While other ideological dimensions exist, this is a parsimonious, relatively comprehensive, and prominent model of domestic policy ideology (De Vries et al. 2013; Kitschelt 1994). Hence, my definition of CPVs — based on the economic and cultural dimensions — is also the most common definition, although other valid definitions exist[1] (Gidron 2022; Surridge et al. 2018). CPVs consist of two groups: "left-conservatives" combine leftist economic positions with conservative cultural positions, while "right-progressives" combine rightist economic positions with progressive cultural positions. CPVs are a growing population that already amounts to between 25-50% of many Western populaces (Bartels 2013; Dassonneville 2022; Gidron 2022).

Recent evidence shows that political media outlets usually vary from left-progressive to right-conservative, with few outlets representing CPVs (Author 2026).[2] For example, a left-conservative individual would often have to select between left-progressive outlets (with which they disagree on the cultural dimension), right-conservative outlets (with which they disagree on the economic dimension), and centrist outlets (with which they somewhat disagree on both dimensions). Hence, CPVs must make ideological trade-offs when selecting outlets. After choosing a given outlet, CPVs are then often exposed to both incongruent and congruent content within the outlet. However, most CPVs do not necessarily identify as cross-pressured nor even conceptualize a two-dimensional ideological landscape (Feldman and Johnston 2014; Fowler et al. 2023). Therefore, it is unclear how they navigate this complex media choice environment and whether they are able to select congruent content strategically.

I conceptualize political media selection as a form of political behavior and therefore adapt the prominent spatial voting model to explain it (Downs 1957; Kurella and Rosset 2018). First, when faced with outlets that are

[1] These include definitions based on particular ideological issues or cross-pressures between partisan identification and voting (Scacco and Peacock 2014).

[2] This study is an important reference for the current manuscript. Since reviewers could deduce that it is written by the author of the current manuscript, I have provided a link to an anonymous preprint in the references.

congruent on one ideological dimension (economic or cultural) but not the other, CPVs should favor outlets that are congruent on the more salient dimension, *ceteris paribus* (Fowler 2020; Gidron 2022; Metzger et al. 2020). Second, within outlets, CPVs (like general audiences) must filter for relevant news in an information-saturated landscape (Volk et al. 2025). Therefore, they select content about topics that are more salient to them (Chaffee and Frank 1996; Graber 1988). Finally, the ideology of the outlet also shapes which types of content CPVs select (Festinger 1957; Fischer 2011), similar to the important role of perceived party positions in the spatial voting model (Chou et al. 2021; da Silva 2026). Accordingly, CPVs should select content about the congruent dimension and avoid the incongruent dimension (Bakshy et al. 2015; Klapper 1960; Saulīte and Ščeulovs 2022).

Thus, for example, a right-progressive individual with high economic (versus cultural) salience[3] would opt for right-conservative outlets, since they agree with these outlets on the more salient dimension. They would then select more economic content, since this dimension is more important to them and it is the content with which they agree with right-conservative outlets. However, audiences may engage with media differently than with parties, so the spatial model might not accurately represent political media selection.

To test this theoretical argument, I employ experimental and panel data methods. I administer a pre-registered[4] survey to 3,632 British individuals and use a novel filtering method to obtain 1,137 CPVs. These are split almost evenly between 591 left-conservatives and 546 right-progressives. The survey includes an experiment that manipulates respondents' economic/cultural salience and then establishes a realistic forced-choice scenario where they must select between a left-progressive and right-conservative outlet. Respondents then proceed to another scenario where they must select between an economic and cultural article within one of these (randomly-selected) outlets.

To incorporate real-world data, longer time periods, and more representative political contexts, I also conduct similar tests with panel data from the UK, US, and Germany when possible. Due to the available variables, this data can support the descriptive results and first hypothesis, but not the latter two hypotheses.

The results tell an interesting and consequential story. First, descriptively, both groups of CPVs select more right-conservative than left-progressive media, especially among left-conservatives in the UK. Second, most models do not show that salience plays a significant role in how CPVs select outlets. I suggest that high salience for an ideological dimension may be different from an individual's actual interest in consuming media content about that dimension. Future research should explore this proposition and its implications in further depth. Third, salience influences the topics that CPVs select within outlets, especially for left-conservatives, though not in the experimental models. Fourth, there is strong evidence that an outlet's ideology shapes how CPVs select its content. Finally, I show how this entire process is likely to favor right-conservatism.

This topic is of theoretical interest in its own right because it sheds light on the behavioral strategies that

[3] When I refer to economic or cultural salience, this is always relative to salience on the other dimension.

[4] See the URL for the anonymous pre-registration under Author (2025) below. Please do not click on "Leave this view" or access the other OSF pre-registration that I reference in Author (2025), as doing so could reveal author information.

large and growing numbers of CPVs employ to select political media. Furthermore, the study speaks to similar situations where CPVs are forced to decide between ideological trade-offs. Examples include CPV voting behavior and support for social movements in environments that do not represent them (Dassonneville 2022; Gidron 2022). Additionally, I speak to the literature on selective exposure and its possible mechanisms among general audiences.

This study also presents far-reaching implications. Most non-CPV people select political outlets that generally align with them ideologically (Klapper 1960; Metzger et al. 2020). This reduces the space for potential media effects since they already agree with their chosen outlets. However, CPVs often disagree with their outlets on many issues, providing more space for them to be convinced. They also have ideological reasons to support both left-progressive and right-conservative parties. This has led scholars to consider CPVs as "persuadable voters" (Fowler et al. 2023; Hillygus and Shields 2014; Treier and Hillygus 2009). Based on the results, we can expect that CPVs generally select right-conservative outlets and that (within these outlets) left-conservatives select more cultural content and right-progressives select more economic content. This process may shift their ideological positions, perceptions of party positions, salience, and other voting calculations in ways that generally favor right-conservative parties (da Silva 2026; Gidron 2022). Given the large and growing segments of CPVs in many electorates — and their greater persuadability — media may impact elections powerfully by influencing CPVs. It is therefore pivotal to understand how CPVs make political media decisions in the first place.

2 Theory

Below, I begin by discussing the general theoretical framework for modeling how people select political media. Next, I discuss the literature on political media selection among general audiences. Finally, the study applies these insights and the spatial voting model to CPV outlet and content selection.

2.1 The Outlet-Content Selection Model

I begin by presenting a simple two-stage model of political media selection called the "outlet-content selection model" (McQuail 1987; Weibull 1985). First, media consumers select an outlet — a newspaper, website, smartphone app, YouTube channel, podcast, etc. (Che and Mierendorff 2019; Metzger et al. 2020; Saulīte and Ščeulovs 2022). Second, having decided on a media outlet environment, they then select particular content — articles, videos, podcast episodes, etc. — from this outlet (Cinelli et al. 2020; McQuail 1987).

Of course, this model simplifies reality and is sometimes unrealistic. First, linear media platforms do not allow audiences to distinguish as easily between the two stages of media selection. Most notably, radio or television channels do not usually have a subsequent menu of program options (Hernandez 2017). However, the majority of media — including most new media — are non-linear, like newspapers, websites, apps, and online audio/video platforms (e.g., YouTube, Spotify, etc.). These do feature two stages of media selection (González-Neira et al. 2022).

Second, on social media platforms, users often quasi-circumvent the first stage by directly selecting content that is recommended by other social media users or algorithms (Thorson and Wells 2016). While the outlet is often visible and can still be used in the selection process, it is usually less prominent than the content itself (Bakshy et al. 2015; Saulīte and Ščeulovs 2022).

Finally, people can select content based on other information rather than the outlet, like a specific journalist or format.

In such circumstances, some of the theoretical expectations and empirical findings below may be less relevant than when audiences have a clearer outlet-content selection process.

2.2 Media Selection among Regular Audiences

A longstanding literature develops the selective exposure theory, which argues that people generally select congruent media. There are two primary explanations for this.

Traditionally, selective exposure theory argues that exposure to incongruent media causes cognitive dissonance, the mental discomfort created when one experiences contradicting opinions (Festinger 1957). Relatedly, Fischer (2011) argues that processing such information requires greater cognitive resources. Media consumers attempt to minimize cognitive dissonance and/or cognitive resources by selecting congruent media outlets and content instead (Iyengar and Hahn 2009; Klapper 1960; Lazarsfeld et al. 1968).

Meanwhile, Metzger et al. (2020) forward another possibility — that people select congruent media because it is more credible to them. Studies have indeed found that audiences rate congruent media outlets as more credible (Clark III and Maass 1988; Stroud 2011). This credibility gap also influences how audiences select outlets and content (Knobloch-Westerwick and Meng 2009; Tsfati and Cappella 2003). In fact, Metzger et al. (2020) find that credibility probably explains selective exposure more than the cognitive dissonance argument.

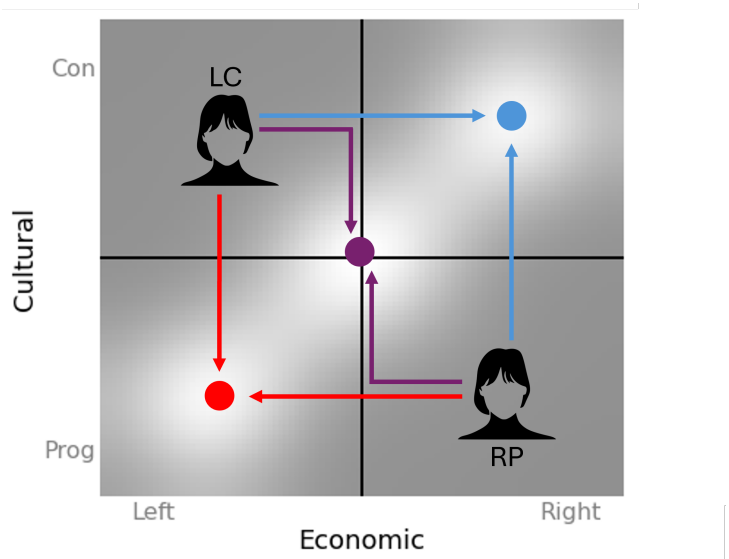
Regardless of which causal mechanism is more influential, there is strong evidence that people do select congruent media outlets and content after removing various sources of endogeneity (Bennett and Iyengar 2008; Che and Mierendorff 2019; Mutz 2007). This relationship persists even within media ecosystems that are dominated by social media and algorithmic recommendations (Bakshy et al. 2015; Cinelli et al. 2020; Steppat et al. 2022).

2.3 Outlet Selection among CPVs

How do these insights extend to CPVs? To my knowledge, no study has examined media selection among CPVs in particular. Since they lack media outlets that are congruent on both the economic and cultural dimensions (Author 2026), CPVs may employ different media selection strategies than non-CPV audiences in both outlet and content selection (Dassonneville 2022; Gidron 2022).

First, CPVs must often select outlets that are incongruent on either the economic or cultural dimension. Figure 1 visualizes this dilemma. It displays the ideological distances between hypothetical CPVs and three outlets which follow the regular outlet structure found in Author (2026) — left-progressive, neutral, and right-conservative.

Figure 1: Visualization of CPV Media Selection Dilemma



Note: This figure displays hypothetical left-progressive (red), centrist (purple), and right-conservative (blue) outlets, assuming a regular outlet structure. It shows the ideological distances between these outlets and hypothetical left-conservative ("LC") and right-progressive ("RP") individuals. "Prog" is progressive and "Con" is conservative.

There are considerable distances between the CPVs and each outlet option. In such situations, the salience of the ideological dimensions becomes more important for CPVs than for non-CPV audiences. Salience should shape whether CPVs prioritize economic or cultural ideological proximity (Gallego and Rodden 2016).

To consider the influence of salience, I borrow from the literature on spatial voting (Downs 1957; Fowler 2020; Stokes 1963). According to this model, voters attempt to minimize the ideological distance between themselves and their party selection. When the ideological space has more than one dimension, this distance is the weighted Euclidean distance across the dimensions (see Equation 1). The weights are the salience of each dimension for the voter (Kurella and Rosset 2018).

I argue that CPVs select political media outlets in much the same way as voters select parties. Both acts are inherently political and reward people when their selection minimizes the weighted Euclidean ideological distance. For voting, these rewards are usually favorable future policies (Downs 1957; Fowler 2020). Meanwhile, for outlet selection, the rewards are lower cognitive dissonance, expending fewer cognitive resources, and/or obtaining more credible information (Festinger 1957; Iyengar and Hahn 2009; Metzger et al. 2020).

Accordingly, an individual selects an outlet based on minimizing the weighted Euclidean distance (WED) between oneself and the outlet, as given by the formula below:

$$WED_{\alpha,\beta} = \sqrt{\sum_{d=1}^{n} \pi_d(\alpha_d - \beta_d)^2} \tag{1}$$

where π is the salience of ideological dimension d, α is the individual's position on that dimension, and β is the outlet's respective position, across n ideological dimensions (Gallego and Rodden 2016). While the equation

above only models the selection of a singular outlet, CPV audiences often consume several outlets regularly and may select from across the spectrum. Nevertheless, I argue that the average positions of their media repertoires will conform with Equation 1.

This "spatial media selection" model may work as well for non-CPV audiences as it does for CPVs. However, since non-CPV audiences are structured along a single ideological axis that matches media outlets, the model is less relevant for them (Author 2026; Gidron 2022). For example, right-conservatives will probably select a fairly right-conservative media repertoire regardless of whether economic or cultural issues are more important to them (Bakshy et al. 2015; Klapper 1960).

However, for CPVs, the spatial outlet selection model provides compelling insights. Of course, the ideological positions of CPVs is important, but this is already expected from selective exposure theory. A key difference is that salience now plays an influential role. CPVs must often select between outlets that are congruent on the economic or the cultural dimension and incongruent on the other dimension (Author 2026). They can also select neutral outlets, on which they disagree somewhat on both dimensions. Regardless, salience allows them to prioritize — CPVs can select outlets with which they (1) agree on the dimension that is more important to them and (2) disagree on the dimension that is less important, similar to how voters use salience to select parties. This model gives rise to the following hypotheses:[5]

H_{1a}: *Left-conservatives with higher economic (versus cultural) salience will select more left-progressive outlets.*

H_{1b}: *Right-progressives with higher economic (versus cultural) salience will select more right-conservative outlets.*

2.4 Content Selection among CPVs

Per Section 2.1, the next step is for CPVs to select content within outlets. Media outlets usually offer content about a variety of topics. Insofar as there is content about economic and cultural issues — the situations of interest when studying CPV audiences — salience should again play a role in selection between these.

The literature on bounded rationality argues that people have limited time, capacity, and resources, and therefore rely on heuristics to guide decisions (Jones 1999; Simon 1997). This is especially relevant for online media selection, where individuals are now inundated with information (Schulz and Volk 2023; Volk et al. 2025). As a result, they prioritize content that is more salient, *ceteris paribus* (Chaffee and Frank 1996; Downs 1957; Graber 1988). This proposition leads to the following hypothesis:

H_2: *CPVs with higher economic (versus cultural) salience will select more content about economic (versus cultural) issues.*

Moreover, another factor that plays a key role in content selection is the outlet's ideology itself. Audiences form predictions about what kinds of positions they will encounter in a piece of media content based on the reputation of the outlet brand (Saulīte and Ščeulovs 2022). They then use these outlet reputations as heuristics for selecting

[5]The wording of these hypotheses and H_2, H_{3a}, and H_{3b} is slightly different from the wording in the pre-registration's hypotheses (Author 2025). The reason is to make these hypotheses clear to a broader audience and conform with the wording in the rest of the paper.

content (Festinger 1957; Metzger et al. 2020). This functions similarly to how citizens support policies based on party reputations (da Silva 2024). Furthermore, content positions are often clear via the title, image, or other information that is available in the content selection phase. As mentioned in Section 2.2, the selective exposure literature argues that people filter for congruent media, which applies to both outlets and content (Bakshy et al. 2015; Klapper 1960). Hence, audiences have both the ability and motivation to select congruent media content.

CPVs are often exposed to an outlet environment with congruent content on one dimension and incongruent content on the other (Author 2026). Therefore, there should be an especially strong relationship between the outlet's ideology and whether they select economic or cultural content. According to both selective exposure theory and the spatial media selection model, CPVs should opt for content about the congruent dimension. Thus, the final hypotheses state:

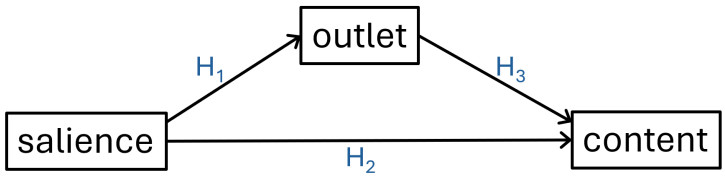
H_{3a}: *Left-conservatives will select more content about economic (versus cultural) issues from left-progressive outlets than from right-conservative outlets.*

H_{3b}: *Right-progressives will select more content about economic (versus cultural) issues from right-conservative outlets than from left-progressive outlets.*

Figure 2 displays a simple directed acyclic graph (DAG) of the theory presented above. The hypotheses and later statistical tests cover each of the relationships displayed.

Of course, there are many non-ideological factors that influence media outlet and content selection. In fact, a lot of media content is not even politically-relevant in the first place, like most sports or celebrity content (Foos and Bischof 2022). First, these other factors include media supply-side variables, like ownership, format, platforms, topic coverage, journalists, language, and branding (Hassell et al. 2022; Ladd and Lenz 2009; McQuail 1987; Saulīte and Ščeulovs 2022; Shoemaker and Reese 1996; Tuchman 1978). Second, audiences' own attributes play an important role. The prominent "uses and gratifications" literature demonstrates that audiences select media to satisfy particular socio-psychological desires, like entertainment and information retrieval (Katz et al. 1973; Ruggiero 2000). Furthermore, audiences' interests, lifestyles, professions, opinions, identities, and demographics shape which types of media they select (Metzger et al. 2020; Napoli 2011; Steele and Brown 1995; Stroud 2011). In the interest of brevity, I do not explore these other important factors in detail. However, I do account for endogeneity through experimental and panel data methods below.

Figure 2: DAG of CPV Media Selection Theory



3 Methods

3.1 Research Design

There are several challenges associated with testing these hypotheses. Above, I mention several potential confounding variables. Reverse causality is also a considerable problem, since audiences' political opinions can (1) be shaped by media selection and (2) influence media supply (da Silva 2026; Mutz 2007). Finally, many existing surveys that include necessary political variables lack detailed media-related variables. Although some include questions about news outlets, they rarely delve further into questions about particular types of content.

To address these endogeneity and data challenges, therefore, my primary data consists of an original survey (OS) with experiments. These experiments leverage causal inference through random assignment to control and treatment groups (Angrist and Pischke 2008; Gerber and Green 2012). Meanwhile, the ability to design a bespoke survey allows one to delve deeper into media content selection in a realistic online environment. Therefore, the OS provides internal validity.

However, external validity is also a key concern. I supplement my experimental analysis with observational panel data across several years in the UK, USA, and Germany. This allows the study to capture real-world effects that may take longer time spans to fully manifest. Furthermore, panel data is more temporally-representative than surveys with a single fielding period.

These experimental and panel datasets also offer contexts with different party, electoral, and legislative systems (Dejaeghere and Dassonneville 2017; Gallagher and Mitchell 2005). The UK is a two-and-a-half-party, plurality voting, parliamentary system; the US is a two-party, plurality voting, presidential system; and Germany is a multi-party, mixed-member proportional representation, parliamentary system. Between the OS and panel datasets, the timespan covers both left-progressive and right-conservative governments in each country. Furthermore, the British datasets allow me to compare experimental and observational results in the UK context.

Below, I begin by describing the OS and its experiments in Section 3.2. I then discuss the three panel datasets in Section 3.3. I conclude by describing the statistical methods and models in Section 3.4.

3.2 Original Survey (OS)

I conduct the OS between 24 January and 6 February 2025. Prolific is used to obtain the sample and administer the survey. Prolific is a global platform with over 200,000 paid participants who primarily answer surveys. These people have Prolific profiles that include answers to about 300 questions about demographics, lifestyles, socio-economic behavior, and attitudes. This information can be used to pre-screen participants, design quotas, and analyze results. The platform takes measures to reduce satisficing and detect bots. Several studies show that Prolific users are more attentive and less likely to be bots than participants on other popular platforms (Albert and Smilek 2023; Douglas et al. 2023).

I use the screeners to select a sample of 3,632 respondents that are eligible to vote in the UK. I also establish sex and voting quotas that are proportional to the population distributions, based on the 2021 UK Census and 2019 UK General Election.[6] See Appendix A for the exact breakdowns. Proportional quota sampling based on voting behavior provides a fairly representative sample for the variables of interest, which are all political in nature. Respondents could use computers, phones, or tablets to access the survey. All participants provided informed consent for their data to be used.

The entire survey and all experimental conditions are displayed in Appendix B. Questions that do not require a particular order are randomly ordered, as are all answer categories.

To maximize the number of CPVs in the study, I must filter out non-CPVs. Prolific has recently released a function that allows researchers to screen out participants based on custom questions in the survey itself. I develop a unique method to identify CPVs using the survey software Qualtrics. The survey begins with four policy-related statements with sliders for participants to rate how much they agree. These include two economically leftist statements (about income inequality and taxes for public services) and two culturally progressive statements (about immigration and gender equality). My survey calculates the average economic and cultural positions for each respondent based on these answers. The survey then identifies people who are left-conservative (N=591) or right-progressive (N=456) and only these are allowed to continue (N=1,137). Appendix C discusses this process in greater detail and displays a scatterplot of all participants' economic and cultural positions. Appendix D displays basic descriptive statistics about the CPV sample.

The first experiment for this study provides the main independent variable for H_1 and H_2 — salience. For this study, I define salience as the amount of importance that respondents put onto economic issues relative to cultural issues. This experiment has three conditions, each composed of a different hypothetical media article excerpt and a related image. The images are designed to be realistic for online news articles and enhance the power of each condition through a visual attachment to its argument. All images are obtained under the conditions of their licenses (see Appendix E).

The first treatment discusses the importance of economic issues alongside an image of a homeless person, which should increase economic (versus cultural) salience. The second treatment discusses the importance of cultural issues alongside an image of a person being arrested by police. This treatment should increase cultural (versus economic) salience. Finally, the control vaguely indicates that there are different types of political issues, and many are either economic or cultural. The control's image is a hand placing a voting ballot in a box. This should not influence salience.

After the salience experiment, the survey asks a question about the relative importance of economic issues versus cultural issues. This functions as a manipulation check to validate whether the salience treatment works. It also serves as an alternative (observational) measure of salience for some models in Section 4. As an attention check, the next question asks respondents to select two types of issues that are discussed in the previous excerpt

[6]This was the most recent election available on Prolific when the survey was conducted in early 2025.

and question (economic and cultural).

Next, the survey begins to simulate a media selection environment. Respondents are told that they will select between an economic or cultural media excerpt, but first they must select an online outlet. There are two hypothetical outlet options. The ideological positions of the two outlets on two economic issues (income redistribution and government spending/taxes) and two cultural issues (gender equality and immigration) are displayed. One outlet is clearly left-progressive ("*The Connect*") and the other is clearly right-conservative ("*The Nation Live*"). To better reveal CPV preferences for ideological media, there is no moderate outlet option.

The outlets are hypothetical to avoid reputations and past media habits from playing a role (Saulīte and Ščeulovs 2022). Their names and logos are custom-designed by a branding consultant for this survey and are realistic for their ideologies. Figure 3 displays an image of this question, which serves as the main dependent variable for H_1 — whether respondents select the left-progressive or right-conservative outlet. The wording for the policy positions in the figure is guided by open-text feedback from two pilot surveys (N=100) to ensure clarity. Some of the policy stances would not usually be endorsed openly by real media outlets (e.g., high immigration). However, the point here is to communicate the perspective of the outlet as perceived by the audience, whether or not the outlet would explicitly state such a position. For example, audiences could believe that many left-progressive outlets support high immigration, even if the outlets never endorse this position openly (Vallone et al. 1985; Wagner and Meyer 2023). These perceptions would be due to other cues, like outlets criticizing strict border control policies.

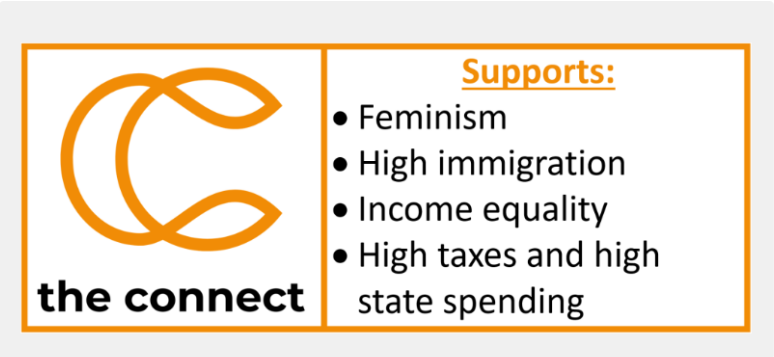
Next, in the second experiment, participants are randomly exposed to *The Connect* or *The Nation Live*. This random assignment serves as the independent variable for H_3. If they see the outlet that they did not select in the previous question (see Figure 3), the question mentions the following: "Suppose that you had to select an article from [outlet] instead." (In Section 4.5, I test whether there are differences between those assigned to their selected versus non-selected outlet.) In either case, within the outlet's "website," participants are asked to choose between two articles based on their titles. One is about an economic issue (redistribution) and the other is about a cultural issue (immigration). For comparability, the economic and cultural articles from both outlets are almost identical to one another, except for 1-2 words that reaffirm the outlet's ideological position. See Figure 4 for images of each option. The website aesthetics were created in collaboration with a branding consultant and use modified HTML from real British media websites. They are intended to be realistic for left-progressive and right-conservative outlets. This choice between an economic or cultural article is the dependent variable for H_2 and H_3.

Randomization for these experiments is performed through Qualtrics random number generators, embedded data, and branching logic. For the salience experiment, the probability of receiving the control is 42%, while it is 29% for each of the treatments. This ratio maximizes statistical power when there is a control and two treatments (Muralidharan et al. 2025). The outlet experiment only has two treatments — assignment to *The Connect* or *The Nation Live* — with equal probabilities.

There are also several variables that I later use as covariates. Some of these are from the survey itself, including

Figure 3: Simulation of Selecting between Opposing Political Outlets

The Connect and *The Nation Live* are two British news websites. Please read their political perspectives below. From which website would you rather pick the article that you will eventually read?

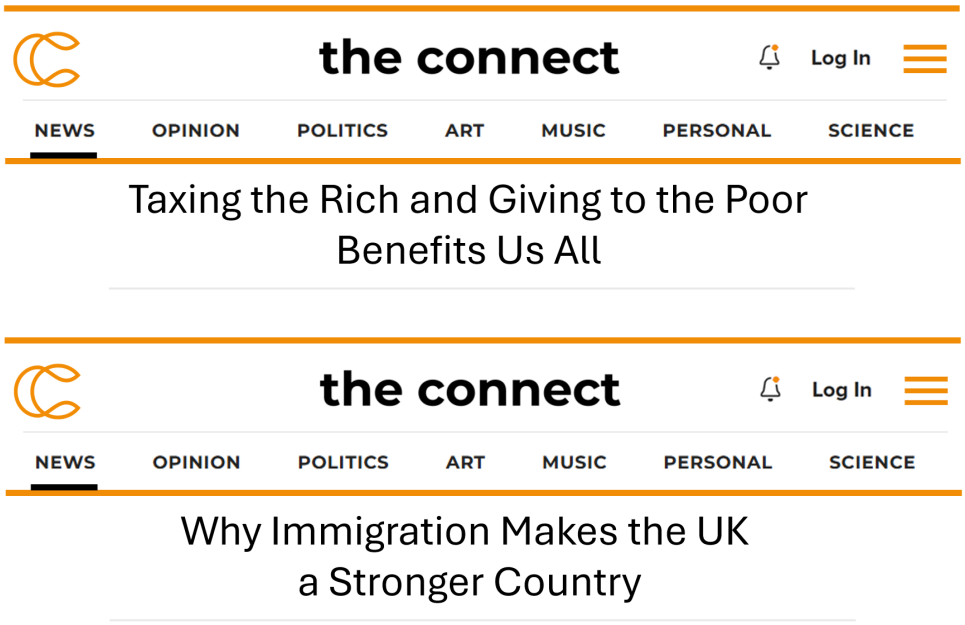




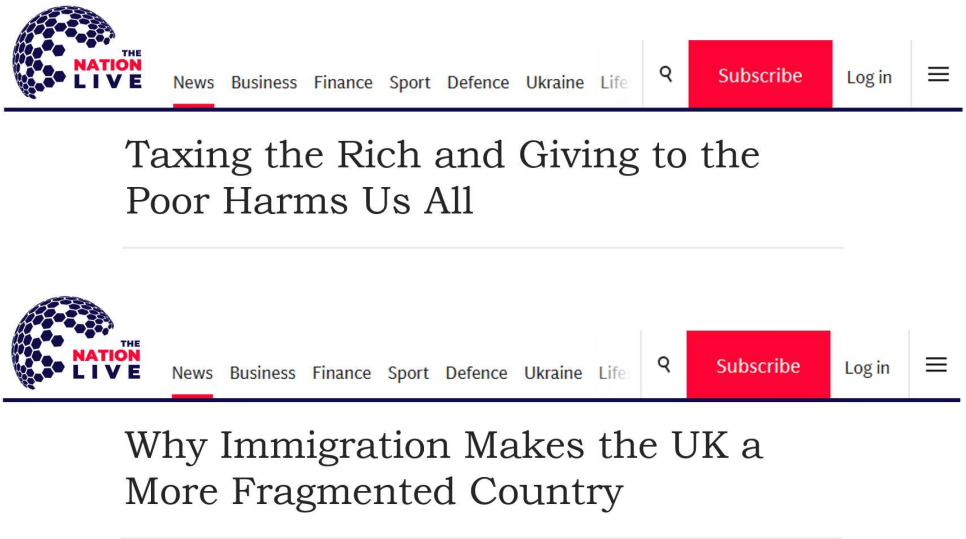
Note: This question is used as the dependent variable for H_1.

Figure 4: Simulation of Selecting between Economic and Cultural Articles

(a) Choices if randomly assigned to *The Connect*



(b) Choices if randomly assigned to *The Nation Live*



Note: This question is used as the dependent variable for H_2 and H_3.

economic/cultural positions, political interest, and past media habits.[7] I also use Prolific profile variables as covariates. These include ethnicity, sex, immigrant status, UK constituent country, age, education level, income, voting in the 2017/2019 UK general elections,[8] and previous party identification (Hooghe and Dassonneville 2018). The recoded categories for all covariates and other variables are available in Appendix F and follow my pre-registration (Author 2025). See Appendix G for balance plots, which show that there is no imbalance between the experimental condition groups. Nevertheless, including control variables can still be useful for covariate adjustment (Gerber and Green 2012).

3.3 Existing Panel Data

I supplement this experimental data with three panel datasets for the UK, US, and Germany. For UK panel data, I use waves 1-29 of the British Election Study (BES) panel dataset, which runs from 20 February 2014 to 19 July 2024 (Fieldhouse et al. 2024). This data is representative of the UK adult population in England, Wales, and Scotland. For the US, I use the American National Election Studies (ANES) Social Media Panel Study, a smaller panel dataset that includes more media-related variables than other ANES datasets (ANES 2023). It consists of three waves, which take place between 20 August 2020 and 2 January 2023. The sample is representative of US adult citizens. For Germany, I use the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) Panel Study (GLES 2023). This includes waves 1-27, running from 6 October 2016 to 8 October 2024. The population of the sample includes German citizens aged 16 and above.

These datasets are selected because they consist of panel data and include most of the necessary variables for this study across several waves. The only exception is that there are no variables measuring content selection. Unfortunately, this means that I can only use the panel studies for descriptive results and testing H_1, since H_2 and H_3 have content selection as the dependent variable.

The included variables are fairly similar between my survey and the panel studies below and differ mostly based on question availability. I now describe these variables in general. In Appendices H and F, I describe the coding procedures and variable categories in greater detail for each individual panel dataset.

To identify the CPV groups and exclude non-CPVs, I create an economic ideology variable and cultural ideology variable. These are based on one or more survey questions about different types of economic redistribution (for the economic variable) or race and immigration (for the cultural variable). The panel datasets do not consistently measure attitudes about gender, LGBT rights, or crime across waves, so I am unable to integrate these issues into the cultural variable. However, the issues of race and immigration that are used for this variable are core cultural issues as identified by the literature on cultural ideology (Halikiopoulou and Vlandas 2020; Norris and Inglehart 2019). I only keep participants who are left-conservatives or right-progressives (according to these indicators) in a given wave. This reduces the observations to 106,975 (BES), 4,330 (ANES), and 54,235 (GLES).

[7] This is the average economic and cultural position of the participant's media repertoire, based on measurements from Author (2026).

[8] This question was not yet asked for the 2024 general election.

To measure salience (the independent variable for H_1 and H_2), I use "most important issue" questions in the UK and US data. I create a dummy variable that denotes whether participants identified an economic or cultural issue. For the German data, I subtract ratings of the importance of immigration from ratings of the importance of "taxes and spending."

To measure the ideology of the outlets that respondents select (the dependent variable for H_1), I use variables about outlet preferences and trust. For the BES, I use the numeric economic/cultural ideology score — measured by Author (2026) — for the participants' favorite newspaper. These scores are computed using large language model classifications of many randomly-selected news articles from each outlet. The BES newspaper question is measured less frequently than other variables, so it exhibits less intra-individual variation. For the GLES, I calculate the number of outlet-days per week that respondents read right-conservative news outlets (*Bild*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, and *Welt*) minus left-progressive newspapers (*Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and *taz*) (Dallmann et al. 2015; Hinrichs et al. 2025). For the ANES, I subtract trust in *MSNBC* from trust in *Fox News*. There is a strong connection between media credibility and consumption, so I argue that trust can be used as a proxy (Metzger et al. 2020; Stroud 2011). While imperfect, these are the best available measures of selected outlet ideology that are asked consistently across panel waves.

Covariates include CPV group, economic position, cultural position, ethnicity (BES and ANES), religion (GLES), region, urban/rural residence (ANES and GLES), age, education level, income, personal finances, class (BES), marital/relationship status, political interest (ANES and GLES), voting in recent general elections, and Brexit support (BES).

3.4 Statistical Modeling

Before running regression models, I rescale all numerical variables in the OS and panel datasets to range from 0 to 1. The only exceptions are the age, birth-year, and day variables, which would be difficult to interpret if rescaled. This recoding system increases interpretability and comparability both within and between models. Thus, 1 denotes the following values for each recoded variable: high economic (versus cultural) salience, selecting right-conservative (versus left-progressive) outlets, selecting an economic (versus cultural) article, economic rightism, cultural conservatism, high political interest, positive finances, and high class. Conversely, 0 denotes the opposites. Appendix F includes the scales or categories of every variable.

The pre-registration states that if more than 90% of participants in the OS pass the aforementioned attention check, then those who fail will be excluded (Author 2025). Since 94.8% pass, I remove the others.

In the pre-registration, I mention using logistic regression (logit) for models with dichotomous dependent variables (Author 2025). However, the results of linear probability models are displayed below. Experimental and quasi-experimental research often uses linear probability models for dichotomous dependent variables (da Silva 2024; Slothuus and Bisgaard 2021). This allows the treatment coefficients to be easily interpreted as percentage point changes in the dependent variable. The problem of not having an S-shaped curve is also reduced since the

experimental conditions are usually dichotomous variables anyway (Angrist and Pischke 2008; Gerber and Green 2012). Nevertheless, Appendix I includes all of these experimental models as logits instead. The direction and statistical significance of the coefficients are very similar. This issue does not affect the panel data models, since the dependent variable for these models — selected outlet ideology — is always interval.

Section 4 displays 20 models based on different datasets and specifications. Unless otherwise indicated, models include the covariates discussed above and separate estimates for left-conservatives and right-progressives (via an interaction). All panel data models include clustered standard errors (by individual), wave fixed effects, individual fixed effects, and post-stratification weights. Appendix J displays results for panel data models without individual fixed effects, since many variables exhibit little variation at the individual level.

The regression equations for OS models generally follow this pattern:

$$DV = \beta_1(IV \times group) + \beta_2 IV + \beta_3 group + X'\gamma + \varepsilon \tag{2}$$

where DV is the dependent variable, IV is the independent variable, $group$ is the CPV group (either left-conservative or right-progressive), $X'\gamma$ is the vector of covariates, and ε is the error term. Meanwhile, panel data models generally follow this pattern:

$$\begin{aligned} w_{it}\, DV_{it} = w_{it}\big[&\beta_1(IV_{it} \times group_{it}) + \\ &\beta_2 IV_{it} + \beta_3 group_{it} + X'_{it}\gamma + \alpha_i + \delta_t + \varepsilon_{it}\big] \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

where w_{it} is the post-stratification weights, i is the individual in time t, α_i is the individual fixed effects, and δ_t is the wave fixed effects.

4 Results

In Figures 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 below, I display descriptive results and regression models. The datasets, specifications, and regression model numbers are displayed to the left of the plots. When there are multiple datasets, the original survey (OS) results are displayed in the first part of the figure (A) and the panel data results are in the second part (B). The right-hand "Group" column shows whether the results refer to left-conservatives ("LC"), right-progressives ("RP"), or both groups together ("All").

Since the experiments ("exp") often have three conditions — a control and two treatments — the coefficients for these are indicated with different shapes and colors. Observational ("obs") results only have a single coefficient each — represented as black circles — because these independent variables are either on interval or dichotomous scales. Violins are distributions, dots are means or coefficients, and whiskers are 95% confidence intervals. Coefficients for covariates are available in Appendix J.

4.1 Descriptive Results

First, Figure 5 begins with descriptive results. The panel data descriptive results are pooled across waves. However, Appendix K displays the same descriptive results based on regression models with wave fixed effects and weights, and these are very similar.

Part 5A uses OS data. The first row displays the distribution of economic-versus-cultural salience on a scale from 0 (much higher cultural salience) to 1 (much higher economic salience). The second row ("Media") displays the proportion of respondents who select the right-conservative outlet rather than the left-progressive outlet. Finally, the third row ("Topic") displays the proportion that select the economic article rather than the cultural article.

Part 5B uses the three panel datasets. The first three rows display salience on the same scale as before. The latter three rows show the average ideology of respondents' media repertoires from 0 (very left-progressive) to 1 (very right-conservative). There is no "Topic" row in Part 5B since the panel datasets do not ask specific questions about content.

In general, both left-conservatives and right-progressives have higher economic salience than cultural salience, except for the BES. Both CPV groups also select more right-conservative media outlets than left-progressive outlets. In the OS and BES data, this preference is usually quite strong, especially among left-conservatives. Indeed, left-conservatives select the right-conservative outlet 76.6% of the time, even though the outlets are hypothetical and respondents have no prior opinions or habits associated with these outlets. In the ANES and GLES, participants only lean slightly toward right-conservative outlets. This preference is clearer and statistically significant when wave fixed effects and weights are applied in Appendix K. Finally, the "Topic" row in Part 5A shows that both CPV groups are more likely to select the economic (rather than cultural) article in the OS, independently of which outlet they are randomly assigned.

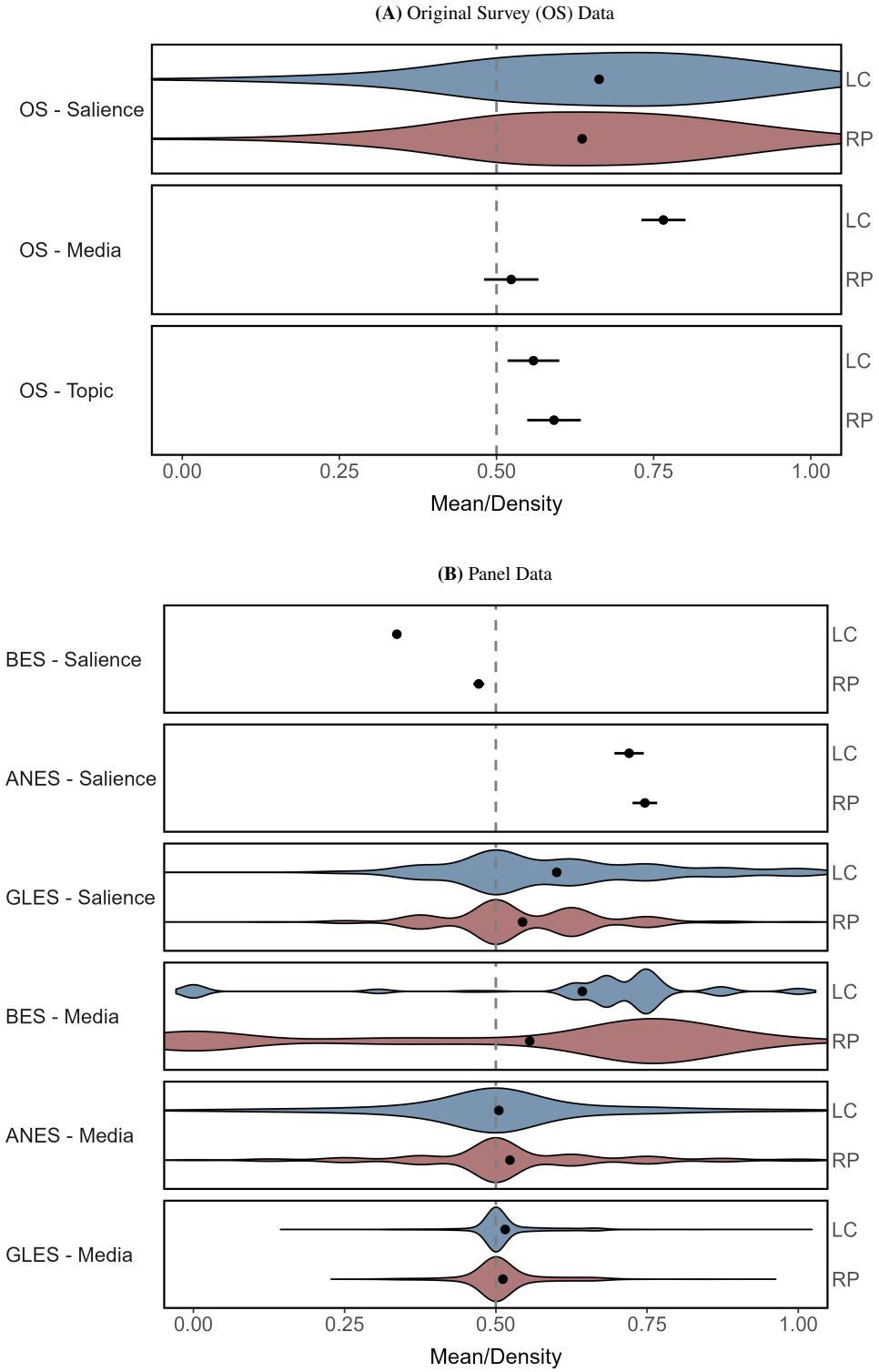
Overall, these descriptive results indicate that CPVs generally have high economic salience, select right-conservative outlets (especially in the OS and BES), and select somewhat more economic content.

4.2 Salience Manipulation Test

Before testing H_1 and H_2, I perform a manipulation test for their key independent variable (salience) in Figure 6. This shows whether the salience experiment in the OS actually influences salience. I regress an 11-point measure of salience (where 0 is much higher cultural salience and 1 is much higher economic salience) on the experimental salience variable. Model 1 pools all CPVs together, while Model 2 displays different results for left-conservatives and right-progressives by interacting the experimental salience conditions with the CPV group.

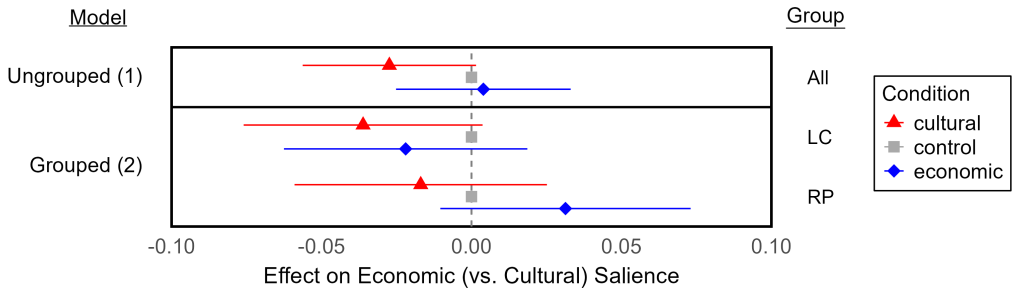
Figure 6 shows that salience generally moves in the expected direction for each condition. In the pooled model (1), the cultural treatment increases cultural salience with a p-value of 0.0636 (relative to the control) and 0.0547 (relative to the economic treatment). The economic treatment only increases economic salience slightly relative to

Figure 5: Descriptive Results Comparing Left-Conservatives and Right-Progressives



Note: "LC" is left-conservatives and "RP" is right-progressives. On the x-axis, higher numbers indicate more CPVs who either (1) have higher economic (versus cultural) salience, (2) select more right-conservative outlets, or (3) select more economic (versus cultural) content.

Figure 6: Manipulation Test for Salience Experiment



the control.

In the grouped model (2), the difference between the cultural and economic conditions is statistically significant (p=0.0393) among right-progressives.[9] The other p-values are larger. In Model 2, the economic condition even increases cultural salience relative to the control condition among left-conservatives. However, this is not statistically significant and the cultural condition increases cultural salience even more. The size of the salience gaps between the conditions is never larger than 0.05 — or 5% of the full salience scale — which is also small.

These results indicate that the effects are statistically weak, though generally in the predicted directions. Part of the reason for this probably derives from the nature of salience itself. It is difficult for a short condition in a survey to alter the importance of different political issues, because these issues are often by nature important to respondents. While the economic and cultural salience treatments make a strong case for the importance of economic and cultural issues, respectively, this is still not enough. Future attempts could use quasi-experiments that benefit from longer-lasting and stronger treatments (da Silva 2024).

Thus, in the hypothesis tests below, when the salience experiment has small and statistically insignificant coefficients, this may be due to the relatively weak effect of the experiment on salience rather than the weak effect of salience on the dependent variables. It is therefore important that I include models that use the observational measures of salience in the OS and panel datasets.

4.3 How Salience Influences Political Outlet Selection (H_1)

I now turn to testing H_1, which predicts that higher economic salience causes CPVs to prioritize the economic dimension when selecting political media outlets. In other words, with higher economic salience, left-conservatives should select more left-progressive media outlets and right-progressives should select more right-conservative outlets, and vice versa.

Figure 7 displays seven models that test these relationships. Models in Part 7A use the OS dataset, while models in Part 7B use the panel datasets. The dependent variable is always the ideology of the media outlet(s)

[9]Note that the whiskers in the figure are the 95% confidence intervals of treatments relative to the control and include the control's uncertainty too. Therefore, large overlaps between the whiskers of the two treatments does not necessarily mean that they are statistically insignificant.

that respondents select on a scale from 0 (left-progressive) to 1 (right-conservative). In Part 7A, Models 3-4 use the experimental ("exp") measure of salience. Model 4 excludes covariates ("simple"). None of the experimental conditions are statistically significant relative to each other. Models 5-6 use the observational ("obs") measure of salience as the independent variable instead. Salience has almost no effect on the outlets that left-conservatives select. Among right-progressives, high economic salience increases the likelihood of selecting the right-conservative outlet — as expected by H_1 — by about 10-29 percentage points. However, this is only statistically significant in Model 6.

Models 7-9 show the relationships between salience and outlet selection using the panel datasets. These are not statistically significant. Since these models have individual fixed effects, the null results may be due to limited variation at the individual level. The BES dataset has little individual-level variation in the media use variable because it is collected by YouGov less frequently than other variables. Meanwhile, there are only three waves in the GLES when individual covariates are included (due to listwise deletion) and in the ANES overall. I describe this further in Appendix H. Similar models without individual fixed effects are displayed in Appendix J. While most of those results are still statistically insignificant, they generally point more strongly in the hypothesized directions.

Overall, there is only minor evidence to support H_1. It is possible that this is due to the salience experiment being statistically underpowered (see Section 4.2) or perhaps another related variable (like media interest) is more important than salience. I discuss these and other possibilities for the surprising results in Section 5.

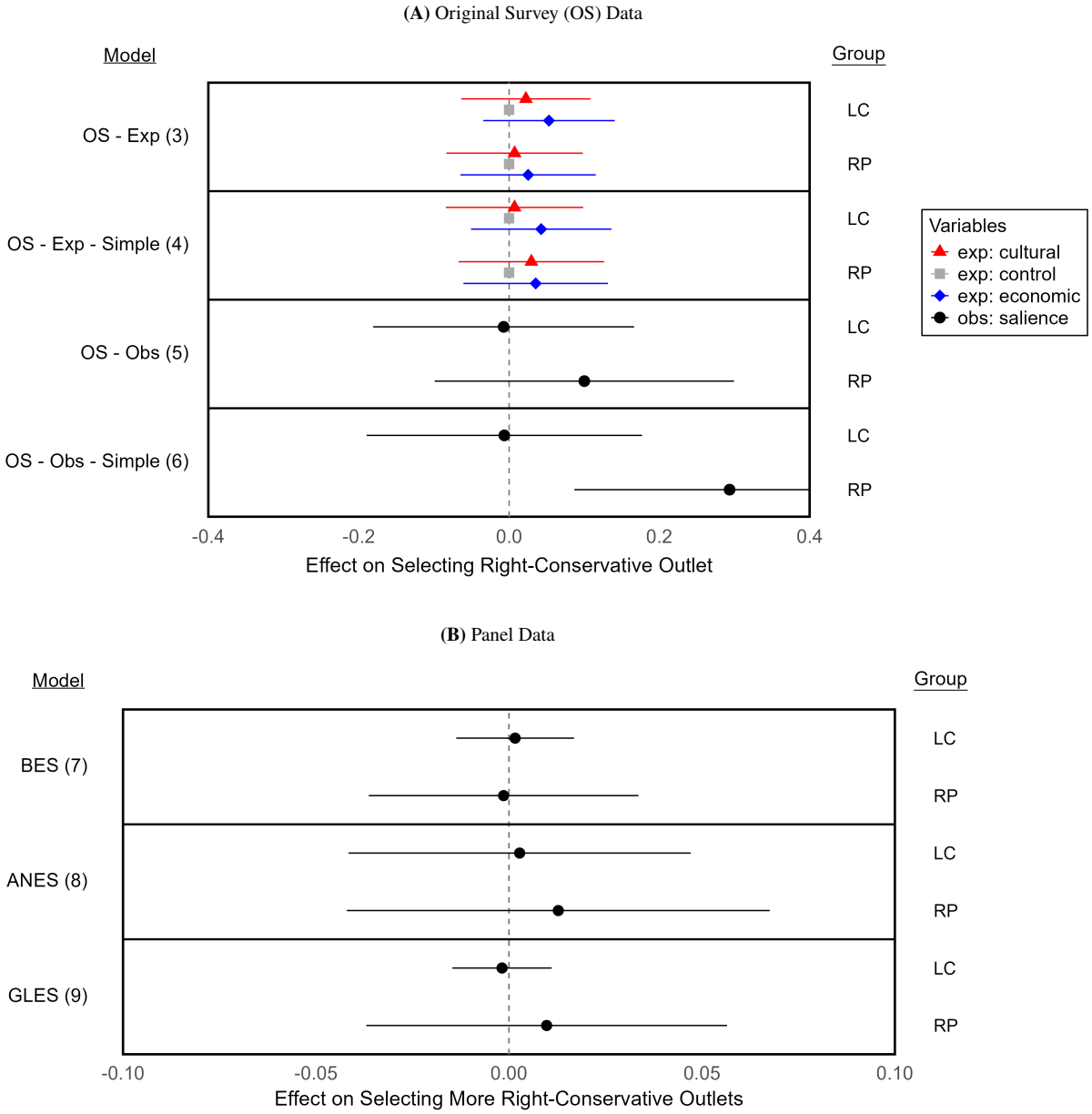
4.4 How Salience Influences Content Selection (H_2)

H_2 predicts that high economic (versus cultural) salience causes CPVs to select more economic (versus cultural) content. Since the dependent variable (content selection) is not asked in the panel datasets, Figure 8 only includes models based on the OS data. The dependent variable is 1 when respondents select the economic article and 0 when they select the cultural article in the media selection simulation. These models are "ungrouped" (other than Models 12 and 15), because H_2 does not depend on the CPV group.

Models 10 (preferred), 11 (without covariates), and 12 (grouped) use the salience experiment as the independent variable ("exp"). These do not exhibit statistical significance. However, when the non-experimental measure of salience is the independent variable, the results generally support H_2. Models 13 (with covariates) and 14 (without covariates) indicate that CPVs with higher economic salience are about 23 percentage points more likely to select economic articles than CPVs with higher cultural salience. Based on Model 15 (grouped), salience plays a more important role in content selection among left-conservatives than right-progressives. These effects are usually statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level.

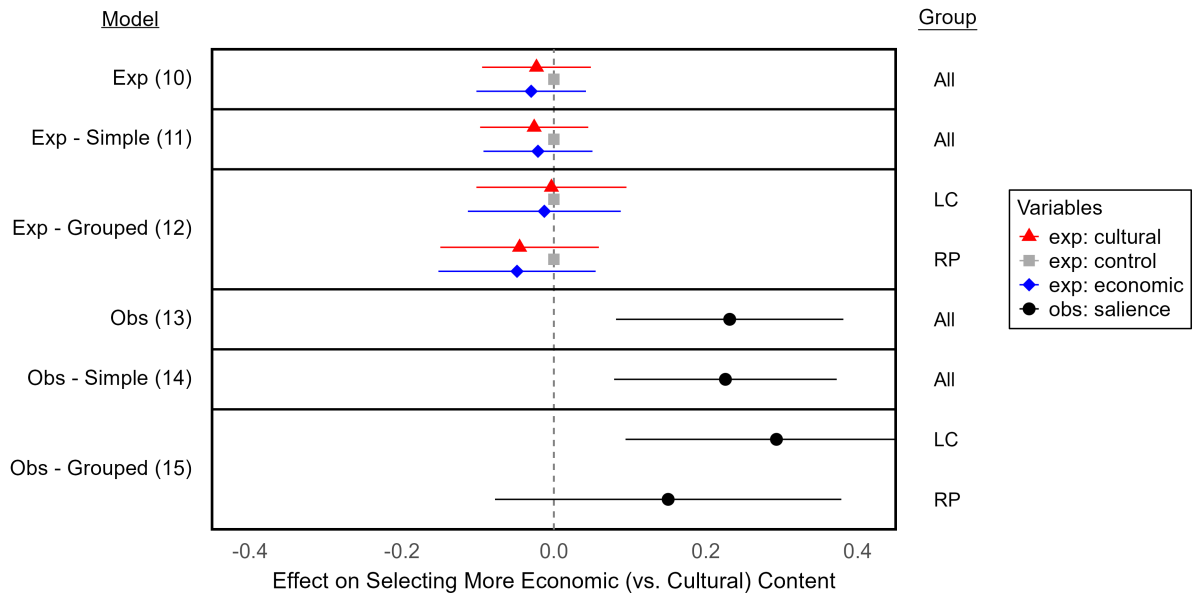
Overall, there is moderate support for H_2. However, I discuss the possible reasons for the different experimental and observational results in Section 5.

Figure 7: The Effect of Salience on Political Outlet Selection (H_1)



Note: "LC" is left-conservatives and "RP" is right-progressives. On the x-axis, positive numbers indicate that higher economic (versus cultural) salience increases respondents' selection of right-conservative (versus left-progressive) outlets and vice versa.

Figure 8: The Effect of Salience on Content Selection (H_2)



Note: "Exp" is experimental, "Obs" is observational, "LC" is left-conservatives, and "RP" is right-progressives. The legend indicates the colors and shapes of the coefficients for experimental conditions ("exp") and observational variables ("obs"). On the x-axis, positive numbers indicate that higher economic salience increases respondents' selection of economic (versus cultural) articles and vice versa.

4.5 How Outlet Ideology Influences Content Selection (H_3)

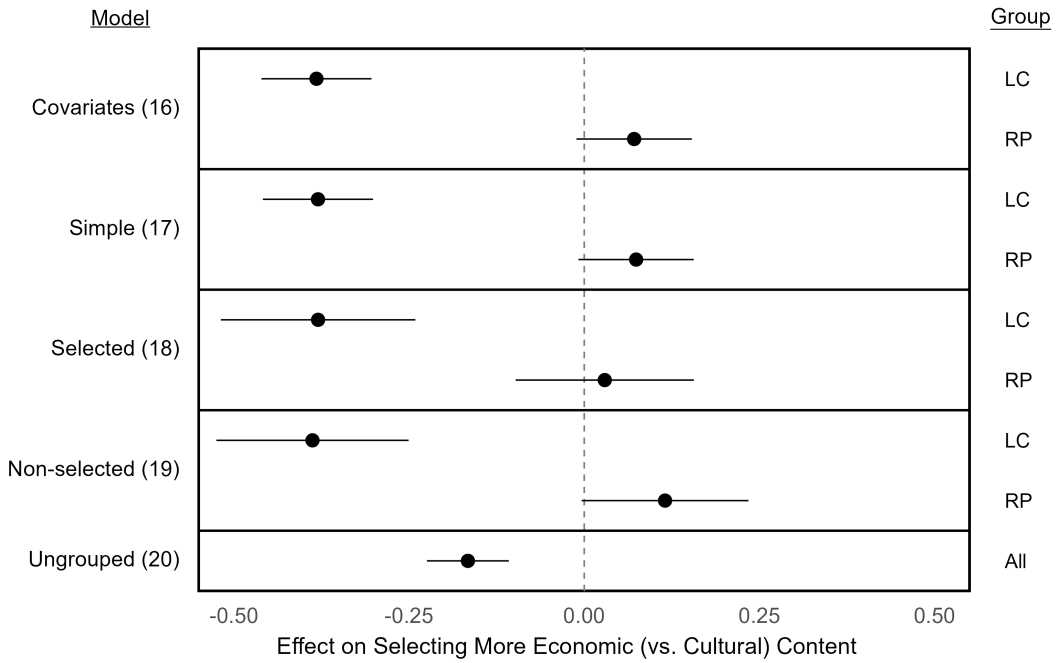
The final hypothesis predicts that political content selection is influenced by the ideology of the outlet environment itself. Within a given outlet, CPVs should select topics on which they agree with the outlet. Thus, left-conservatives would select more economic content from left-progressive outlets and more cultural content from right-conservative outlets, while right-progressives would do the opposite. Since the dependent variable is content selection again, I cannot use the panel datasets. The only measure of the independent variable (outlet ideology) is the experiment that randomly assigns participants to one of the two hypothetical outlets in the media selection simulation.

Figure 9 displays models that test the effect of random exposure to the left-progressive outlet (0) versus the right-conservative outlet (1) on selecting a cultural article (0) versus an economic article (1). Positive coefficients indicate that participants were more likely to select economic articles from right-conservative outlets than from left-progressive outlets, and negative coefficents indicate the opposite.

In Figure 9, Models 16 (preferred) and 17 (without covariates) include all respondents and are grouped. Next, it is possible that respondents react differently when they are randomly exposed to the outlet that they had selected previously. Therefore, Model 18 only includes people who are exposed to their selected outlet, while Model 19 only includes the others. Model 20 is ungrouped.

These models produce quite strong, statistically significant, and consistent evidence in favor of H_3. Left-conservatives who are randomly assigned to select content from a right-conservative outlet are about 38 percentage points more likely to select cultural content compared to those who are in a left-progressive outlet environment

Figure 9: The Effect of Outlet Ideology on Political Content Selection (H_3)



Note: "LC" is left-conservatives and "RP" is right-progressives. On the x-axis, positive numbers indicate that being exposed to the right-conservative outlet (versus the left-progressive outlet) increases respondents' selection of economic (versus cultural) articles in the simulation, and vice versa.

($p < 0.001$). Right-progressives are about 45 percentage points higher than left-conservatives ($p < 0.001$), and almost statistically significant in the opposite direction. Both of these groups are in the hypothesized directions. In general, I conclude that CPVs are strongly influenced by the outlet's ideology when selecting content, especially when comparing one CPV group to the other.

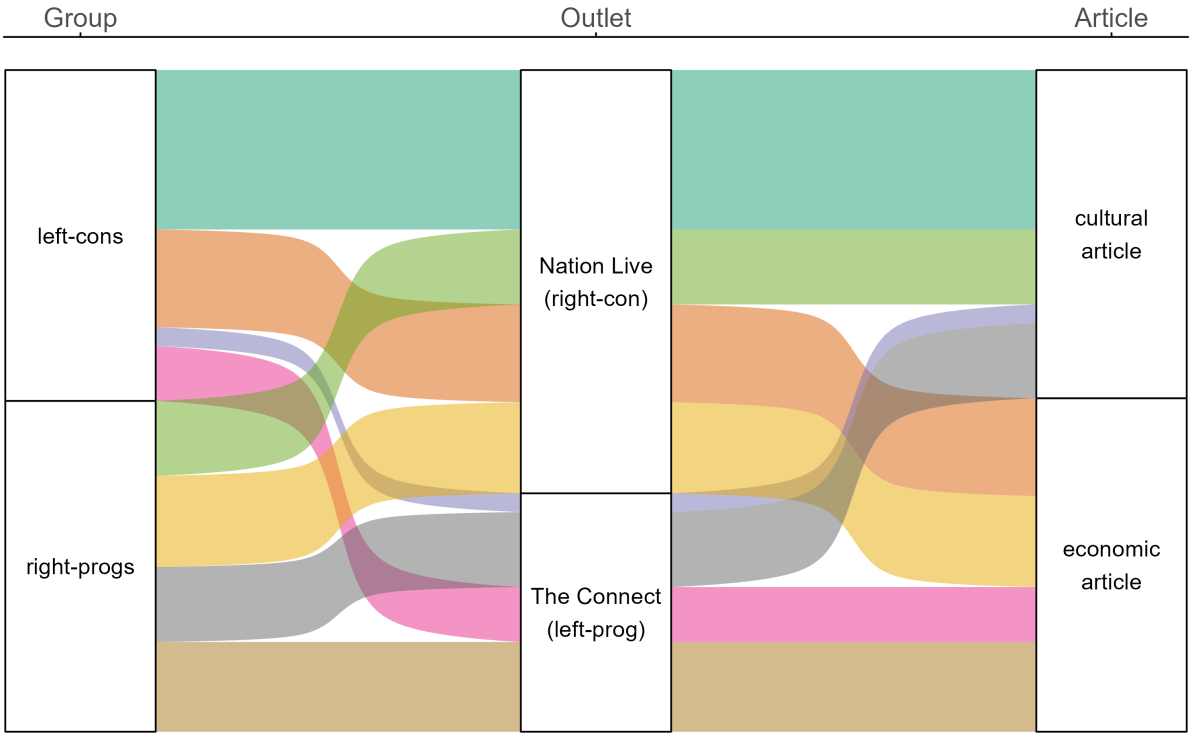
In Figure 10, I use a Sankey Diagram to show the entire outlet-content selection process (see Section 2.1) for CPVs in the OS. The figure demonstrates how this process favors right-conservatism. Both left-conservatives and right-progressives are more likely to select the right-conservative outlet. Subsequently, they select articles about congruent topics, so that left-conservatives typically consume more cultural (conservative) content and right-progressives consume more economic (rightist) content.

4.6 Robustness Checks

The appendices include a variety of robustness checks in line with the pre-registration (Author 2025). First, there are models for different participant groups in Appendix I. This includes groups that randomly see different experimental blocks first, which addresses order bias and attrition bias. There are also different models for people who answer the survey at different times in the fielding period.

As discussed in Section 3.4, I use linear probability models for the OS analyses. This enhances interpretability and follows common experimental conventions (da Silva 2024; Slothuus and Bisgaard 2021). Nevertheless, Appendix I includes these models as logistic regressions, since the dependent variables are binary.

Figure 10: Sankey Diagram of Media Selection Process for CPVs



Note: "Left-cons" is left-conservatives, "right-progs" is right-progressives, "right-con" is right-conservative, and "left-prog" is left-progressive.

Appendix J includes models for H_1 that have wave fixed effects but not individual fixed effects. This is useful because some variables (e.g., media ideology for the BES) have little individual-level variation.

Finally, Appendix L displays the preferred models from above but uses a stricter definition of CPVs. This excludes people who are more moderate on the economic and/or cultural dimensions.

The results in these appendices are generally similar to the main results. This demonstrates robustness to different statistical and data specifications.

5 Conclusion

Media plays a key role in shaping politics. Therefore, the selective exposure literature is crucial for understanding political behavior. It sheds light on the act of media selection that triggers media influence in the first place. This work generally finds that people select media with which they agree ideologically (Festinger 1957; Klapper 1960; Metzger et al. 2020). However, previous research does not examine how people select media when they have no congruent outlets. This is a common dilemma for a large and growing population of CPVs who generally disagree with major outlets on either the economic or cultural dimension (Author 2026; Dassonneville 2022; Gidron 2022). Hence, this study tackles how CPVs navigate this tradeoff.

I argue that salience shapes (1) which ideological dimension CPVs prioritize when selecting outlets and (2) the

types of content that they select within outlets. The outlet's ideology should also play a powerful role in influencing content selection.

To gain causal inference, I administer a pre-registered survey to 3,632 British adults, of which 1,137 are CPVs (Author 2025). Embedded in this survey is a media selection simulation with two experiments. To gain external validity, I also supplement this experimental data with panel data from the UK (BES), US (ANES), and Germany (GLES).

First, descriptively, I generally find that both groups of CPVs have high economic salience, select more right-conservative outlets (especially among left-conservatives), and select more economic content than cultural content. Second, there is only little evidence for the effect of salience on outlet selection among CPVs. Third, there is stronger evidence to suggest that salience influences how CPVs select media content within outlets. Finally, I find that content selection is powerfully shaped by the interaction between the CPV group (left-conservative or right-progressive) and outlet ideology.

What does this mean in practice? These results indicate that right-progressives will select somewhat more right-conservative outlets and then rightist economic content from these outlets. Meanwhile, left-conservatives overwhelmingly select right-conservative outlets and then conservative cultural content within these outlets. According to the media effects literature, this process could result in right-progressives becoming more economically-rightist and left-conservatives becoming more culturally-conservative (Barnes and Hicks 2018; Foos and Bischof 2022). Moreover, the agenda-setting literature would suggest that this exposure increases salience on the selected dimensions (Hayes 2008; McCombs and Shaw 1972). Hence, left-conservatives would develop higher cultural salience and right-progressives would develop higher economic salience, as found by Gidron (2022). According to spatial voting theory, these downstream effects could have consequential implications for elections, generally favoring right-conservative parties (Dennison 2019; Kurella and Rosset 2017).

This paper leaves several interesting questions open due to limitations. First, the statistically underpowered salience experiment may not be able to detect real effects of salience on outlet and content selection among CPVs (though the latter is evidenced by non-experimental results for H_2). Quasi-experimental work could provide a treatment that is powerful enough to adequately test this part of my theory while leveraging causal inference.

Second, it is possible that salience in fact does not play an important role in outlet selection among CPVs. This would suggest that another variable shapes how CPVs prioritize different ideological dimensions during outlet selection instead. For example, perhaps there is a distinction between salience and "media interest." CPVs (and possibly also general audiences) could even sometimes prefer content about *less* salient topics, which may be less distressing (Carbone et al. 2024; Prior 2003). Future research that explores this variable in depth could make promising advancements for the literatures on selective exposure and news avoidance.

Finally, to simplify the ideological space and understand CPVs broadly, I use the prominent two-dimensional ideological model (De Vries et al. 2013; Kitschelt 1994). Future research could also examine how individuals who are cross-pressured on other ideological dimensions (e.g., foreign policy, governance, etc.) or specific political

issues (e.g., immigration, gender, etc.) select media. It is possible that people who are cross-pressured in these ways respond differently to media than the CPVs in this paper.

Since CPVs are more likely to be "on-the-fence" voters, media effects on this group may play a more significant role in electoral behavior. Specifically, this could partially explain high electoral support for right-conservative parties among CPVs (Gidron 2022). Media markets do not even need to be biased in aggregate for such media effects to occur. This study shows how the unique dilemma of CPVs and the media selection process itself could shape these political outcomes. Given the large and growing population of CPVs in many countries and their persuadability, the process by which CPVs select media carries considerable consequences.

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