

This study helps understand media's conditional effects by investigating the role of mediating attitudinal factors in explaining the relationships between media, and civic attitudes and behaviors. This study attempts to understand the mechanism by which media influence how much optimism people have in perceiving economic issues, which accordingly could influence people's possession of social capital. Analyzing the 2004 ANES data by using the structural equation modeling approach, this study finds a path model that links news media to various dimensions of social capital through people's optimism about economic issues. The findings suggest that news media influence people's possession of social capital indirectly through influencing people's optimism about issues that are highly important and relevant to their lives.