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“How is exposure to video games associated with political
attitude among young adults in Sweden”

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between video games exposure and political attitudes among young adults in Sweden. As video games have become one of the most prominent forms of contemporary popular culture and entertainment media, and Sweden ranks as one of Europe's most founded gaming industries. It is important to understand whether gaming engagement is associated with political socialisation.

Adopting a quantitative research analysis design, all data were collected from an online survey improvising a Likert-scale, distributed through university networks and online communities, comprising a sample of 72 respondents who aged around 18 to 35. The analysis used descriptive statistics, Spearman rank-order correlations, and Mann-Whitney U tests to examine associations between gaming exposure which measured from frequency, session duration, and genre. While investigating political attitudes through political interest, political trust, and perception on political influence of gaming.

The findings suggest that gaming exposure is selectively associated with political attitudes. Both gaming frequency ($r= 0.298$, $p= 0.011$) and hours per session ($r= 0.453$, $p< 0.001$) appeared to be significantly and positively correlated with the belief that gaming shapes individuals' political thinking, and excessive gaming was found negatively associated with political trust ($r= 0.264$, $p= 0.025$). There were no significant associations found between gaming exposure and general political interest, freedom of speech attitudes, or political issues priorities. However, a significant gender difference was identified, with male respondents reporting a substantially stronger perception that gaming is more likely to influence their political thinking compared to female respondents' perspective ($M= 3.75$ vs $F= 2.78$, $p= 0.001$).

These findings indicate that video games function as a selective rather than broad site of political meaning-making, especially among young men who generally engage intensively with gaming. The study contributes to intersection of game studies, media studies, and political socialisation research, and highlights the need for further investigation using larger or more diverse samples, and more dynamic or longitudinal designs.

Keyword: video games, political attitudes, gaming exposure, political socialisation, young adults, Sweden, gender differences. *(Word Count:16,758)*

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

In the recent decade, video games have evolved from a niche hobby into one of the most influential forms of global entertainment media. With the expansion of digital technology and the increasing accessibility of gaming platforms which include personal computers, consoles, and mobile devices. Thus, video games have become deeply integrated into everyday life. For many people, especially young adults, video games are no longer solely a leisure activity but also a social environment, a competitive space, and, immensely, a cultural and economic sphere.

As digital media have become central to everyday social life, scholars have increasingly recognised that entertainment media consumption may influence how individuals understand society, identity, and politics. Traditionally, political socialisation has been associated with institutions such as family, schools, news media, and peer groups. However, contemporary digital environments such as video games may also shape how young people encounter ideas related to authority, conflict, governance, morality, cooperation, and ideology.

1.2 Video Games as Political and Cultural Media

Video games are often treated primarily as entertainment, yet they also function as cultural contexts that may contain political narratives, ideological assumptions, and representation of social order. As part of popular culture, or called pop-culture, following the article from popular culture and world politics, it explains how pop culture influenced world politics through many ways. It illustrates the importance of pop-culture and world politics including state use of pop-culture to engage cultural diplomacy and develop ‘soft power’ an ability to infiltrate through other countries and obtain preferred outcomes via attraction, persuasion and agenda-setting rather than coercion or payment (Caso & Hamilton, 2015).

For the global political economy, pop-culture manifests as industrial forms beginning from inputs such as materials or technology, practices such as production or consumption, and outputs like films, merchandise or collectibles. In terms of global flow, this can be seen as cultural imperialism and modernisation. Conceptualisation through world politics can be influenced through pop-culture media; depiction of certain ethnicity for specific stereotypical visual representation, or impression toward some culture in a different direction, likewise. Broadly, pop-culture evidently contributes and influences people's perspective on how they perceive society in any scale, whether in global, region, nation, or local.

This way, it affirms that video games allow cultural manifestation to cultivate perspectives of people to understand and perceive things differently. Which could be improvised and adapted to the video games, a major component in modern pop-culture. Essentially, video games can reproduce, challenge, or normalise particular understandings of power, war, leadership, nationalism, social hierarchy, and moral choice. In this sense, video games are not politically neutral spaces, instead, they may expose players to political meanings through gameplay mechanics, narratives, and in-game decision-making.

This is especially relevant in some genres in video games. For example, strategy genre where players are usually required to manage resources, make decisions about governance, engage in diplomacy or warfare, and evaluate consequences within structured systems. Such mechanics may indirectly simulate political thinking, potentially influencing how players interpret real-world political ideas or social issues (Bogost, 2007). To explore more, some study highlights about Ludopolitics which describe Persuasive Games, Ethical Games, and Transgressive Games; these three concepts of games agree on how mechanisms of games tend to reflect players' morale and how players reciprocate to certain circumstances.

1.3 Swedish Context in Gaming Industry

The Swedish context is particularly relevant for this study. Considering Sweden has a well-established video game culture and globally recognised game industry. Following from Research Institutes of Sweden (ri.se), the topic of the future of the Swedish games industry (Flintberg & Nylander, 2025), along with the Game Research in Sweden by Skövde (Backlund et al., 2025). This will highlight the importance and reveal why the foundation of the Swedish game industry seems to be thriving and prosperous, it can be owing to how the gaming industry around here tends to have unique characteristics, plans for overarching challenges, and key areas for change.

About the Swedish games industry, it is a complicated industry that comprises both global, big companies and tiny indie producers with a small number of employees, this diversity creates the industry to be strong and robust. The majority of famous studios and companies in Sweden such as Mojang, EA DICE, and Paradox Interactive have contributed significantly to the international gaming market and industry. Statistically, there are many companies located around the country. Primarily most companies are located in Stockholm, while the others like the local games industry are located in municipalities or other parts of Sweden. Malmö, Skövde, and 'Artic Game', an intermunicipal cooperation among Umeå, Skellefteå, Luleå, and Boden. Apart from these major parts there are also 19 municipalities that hold more than ten game companies, and 45% of municipalities in Sweden host a game company (Flintberg & Nylander, 2025).

With this wide variety of companies in Sweden, during 2022 to 2023, the games industry had succeeded in providing revenues estimated at 32.5 and 35 billion SEK in Sweden respectively, with almost over 1,000 companies and 8,000 employees in the Swedish games industry working and some others were employed by Swedish companies abroad. In terms of academics, there are also games programmes on higher educational levels among institutions in Sweden, with almost one thousand students who are passionate and thrive to excel in the games industry. Considering these matters, it is one of the reasons to study furthermore about the games industry in Sweden and see how the direction it goes in succession.

This is a great step of development for the Swedish games industry, proving the value of being a powerhouse in the games industry within the Europe region; ranked fourth, after France, Germany, and Finland. Sweden is indeed a great country for the games industry, and has great potential that

has not been uncovered. Additionally, Sweden is well-known internationally for its integrated and growing industry, attracting young people in the labour market to participate, and strong likelihood to be a bigger industry in the future. Altogether, the games industry in Sweden has a great potential to gradually become a main industry, as well as the possibility to be an innovative inspiration for other industries. However, there are some issues and challenges identified in this industry. Because the industry itself developed from the grassroots level and depended on local enterprise, importantly, its infrastructure is inadequate. Similarly to Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs), it required financial aids, skilled labour, and development infrastructure that could support the industry. If the games industry in Sweden were to put more effort, and prioritise likewise other Swedish exports such as food, textiles, or vehicle industries, Sweden would have had a higher chance to lead the games industry among European countries .

The uniqueness of the video game industry is that they have some peculiar characteristics and conditions, particularly in some challenging issues. Game industries face structural obstacles more often compared to other industries, some entrepreneurs require business counselling more greatly than other companies, this could be due to they are not solely pursuing commercial or profitable revenue but also thriving to be creative and passionate with their ambition.

Additionally, the business model and development process in this industry seems to be built differently, as it tends to be more collaborative and open to cooperation. And unlike other cultural and creative industries, games are considered as born-global and born-digital industry, as games themselves nowadays need to be sold on the global market and almost entirely in the digital market. Thereby, with great uniqueness comes great overarching challenges such as lack of legitimacy, systematic challenges, development resources, and international competition. Though, the changes have been ongoing, with support in business and product development, and greater prevalent among culture and society: with academic research results on ‘gaming literacy’ showing there are several societal benefits, for example, gamer girls are more likely to select to study in a STEM program. Moreover, Sverok or The Swedish Gaming Federation discovered that young people who play games in properly way tend to development skills in leadership, and result from international survey from almost 13,000 gamers reveal that gaming activity improve variety of skills includes creativity, problem-solving and cognitive skills, and reduce stress and loneliness (Backlund et al., 2025).

Provided recommendations and proposals for actions, begins with national infrastructure: implement a long-term strategy for local and national games companies to be able to function, and support with incubators. Next is business and exports, providing a Swedish financial model for game development, structures and regulation for exports. Then skills and labour market, research funding and educated researchers, game culture in cultural policy and research development for game creators. Lastly, overcoming overarching national issues: cooperation between ministries, national strategy for the games industry, and establishing a national game institute.

In addition, Sweden has a strong e-sport presence, and organised competitive gaming has gained institutional recognition. This includes Dreamhack, a famously e-sport event founded in Sweden, known for hosting competition areas, social hub and industry marketplace. Sverok, considered Sweden's biggest gaming organisation that supports local gaming clubs, operates in helping grassroots e-sport communities, a bottom-up institutional structure where e-sports were developed through civil society, not as formal sport systems.

Therefore, given the strong integration of the gaming industry in Sweden, it is highly relevant to further examine not only the games industry but also broader societal implications. Particularly, young adults in Sweden, who represent a significant population for investigating how media consumption, especially video games, possibly relate to formation or develop some political and social attitudes. The Swedish context is strongly compatible with this study not only because of the high level of games engagement among this population but also gaming is evidently popular, culturally adapted in general activity, and economically relevant in this country. Consequently, video games constitute a meaningful part starting from the player's everyday lives, to become one of the innovations that export from Sweden and contribute matters in economic growth. Thus, it is relevant to explore the potential relationship between gaming exposure and political perceptions.

1.4 Research Problem and Gap

This general field is underexplored, and thereby why this study is required to examine more detail in some specific areas. Although existing research has examined more in context of cultural, psychological, and social effects of video games and the players, the relationship between games exposure and political attitudes appear to be underexplored. Research regarding political

socialisation generally focuses on other primary institutions such as news media, social media, peer network, and family influences, while video games are usually overlooked and neglected as a potential site of political meaning-making.

Furthermore, there is limited research examining whether the relationship varies across gender and generational groups, particularly among young adults. Prior studies suggest that men and women tend to share differences in both gaming habits and political orientation, while younger cohorts could affect forming political attitudes differently owing to the cultivation from the environment and patterns of media consumption. However, relatively few studies have specifically aimed to explore whether exposure to video games is associated with political attitudes differently for young men and young women.

This study intends to address a gap at the intersection of media studies, political socialisation, and game studies by examining whether exposure to video games is associated with political attitudes among young adults in Sweden, how and what is the association.

1.5 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to examine whether video games exposure or gaming activity is associated with political attitudes and political orientation among young adults in Sweden.

More specifically, the study aims to explore whether factors such as:

- Frequency of gameplay
- Duration of gaming session
- Preferred Game Genres
- Patterns of media or game engagement

These matters are related to how young adults perceive political issues, authority, governance, conflict, or ideological positioning.

Research Questions

Main Research Question: How is exposure to video games associated with political attitude among young adults in Sweden?

RQ1: What political attitudes and ideological orientations are expressed among young adults who engage in gaming in Sweden?

RQ2: To what extent is the level of video game exposure (frequency, duration, and genre) associated with political attitudes among young adults in Sweden?

RQ3: Does the relationship between video games exposure and political attitudes differ between young men and young women in Sweden?

Hypotheses

H1: Higher levels in exposure to video games are associated with stronger perception that games influence political thinking among young adults in Sweden

H2: The association between video games exposure and political attitudes is expected to be found more among young men than young women

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Video games, in general, play an important role in the everyday lives of young adults in Sweden and conceivably a significant part of contemporary popular culture. As they are remarkably known for interactive media, they are broadly consumed and actively engaged with, allowing players to engage and participate in such virtual experience and almost limitless environment, and decision-making processes. Video games not only provide entertainment but also generate some trivial knowledge and can potentially inspire people to develop interest in certain topics.

Particularly in the 21st century, video games have come a long way and are considerably a format of art and media platform that took a big leap from niche hobby into a major cultural, economic, artistic medium, vast industry and even expand into the competitive sport scene known for e-sport (Jewell, 2012). Beyond entertainment and economics, they also function as platforms for education, space for creativity and social interaction, and serve as places where meanings, values, and worldviews are produced and negotiated.

In general, video games are considered a form of popular culture which integrate in world politics. As part of pop-culture, video games are filled within broader social and political contexts. A subject of pop-culture depiction of specific stereotypical visual representation; world political conceptualization. Overall, pop-culture is surprisingly significant to us owing to the fact that we are all immersed in these discourses in our daily lives and common sense. Media scholars argue that cultural products are also regarded as political propaganda, as they are always part of the media, and we cannot extract political aspects from media. Politics affect culture, culture affects society, and politics are products of society, relatively (Lorenzo & Daniel, 2021). Therefore, video games remarkably can be understood as sites where political meanings are being displayed and interpreted.

This literature review intends to examine the relationship between video games exposure and reflecting players' political attitude and orientations. By gathering from scholarly articles, academic papers, empirical studies, and other relevant subjects to explore how video games

function as cultural and political media, how players engage with these meanings and how individuals reflect their thoughts regarding social issues, and how personal factors such as gender and psychological engagement could influence this relationship.

The chapter aims to explore more about video games history and how it functions as to the player's political views and compass. The focus on young adults is significant due to their influence, drive, and identity establishment and potential of new experience in multi-media consumption.

2.1 The development of video games as media and popular culture

The beginning of how video games are no longer considered as trivial entertainment, but regarded as an important cultural medium. Video games have continued and surpassed from a niche technological hobby in the old days, into such a humungous cultural and economic force within contemporary media landscapes. As Jewell (2012) notes, the video games industry now has turned into one of the most significant media industries, even exceeding many traditional media industries in profitable revenue and cultural influence. This change indicates how more recognisable of video games are, considering them more than only cultural artefacts rather than trivial entertainment.

Apart from entertainment, games currently function as platforms for other variety of purposes such as education, creativity, social interaction, and commercial activity. Scholars and academic fields increasingly conceptualise video games as cultural spaces where meanings, values, and ideologies are produced and negotiated. This aligns with Bogost's claims that video games are an expressive medium that represents real or simulated systems and allows players to interact with them and form judgments (Bogost, 2007). This development is crucial due to its progression on how video games are not remarked as only a product for entertainment and leisure, but also regarded as cultural spaces for cultivating meanings, values, and social perceptions.

Furthermore, video games contribute to pop-culture by cultivating how individuals understand the world around them. As similar to other media forms, they engage in constructing narrative about conflict, governance, identity and social relations. Thus, analysing video games as part of pop-culture is relevant for understanding how they impact on player's political and social attitudes.

2.2 Video Games as Political Spaces

Games and political messages, game cultures are political arenas, game mechanics can simulate governance conflict.

1. *Video Games as Political Media*

Video games can be viewed as a form of political media because they communicate ideas about system mechanisms. Regarding Bogost's claims, games use the terms of **procedural rhetoric**, this means they tend to persuade players through rule-based systems and interactions dynamically rather than commonly narrative or merely visual representation (Bogost, 2007). This indicates that players do not just observe political ideas, rather they apparently experience them via game play mechanics. For example: strategy games normally require players to manage resources, govern people, or engage in conflicts, seemingly resembling political systems and decision-making processes. Likewise, Lorenzo and Daniel (2021) describe that video games tend to reflect broader social norms and power structures, backing the thought that games are not politically neutral. Instead, they function as sites where ideological assumptions are being used to interpret and reproduce.

2. *Playful Politics and Game Culture*

Jørgensen (2022) conceptualised video games as a form of political arena which allows players to encounter, interact, and interpret political meanings. Within the concept of ludo-politics, video games can be inferred as spaces where political tendencies enter game culture in forms such as persuasive games, ethical games, and transgressive games. This perspective is important since it emphasises that political engagement in video games could emerge not only through explicit context, but also through interpretation from the player, sensational response, and playful context interactions. Jørgensen emphasises the context and conceptualises the ludo-politics. With the ludo-politics framework, Jørgensen identifies different types of politically relevant games:

Persuasive games or PG, designed to influence player's attitude, behaviour regarding real world issues such as social, politics, or health. This aligns with Bogost's main idea that games can shape beliefs through rather than passive information consumption but visual information interaction (Bogost, 2007). Bogost primarily inclines to consider video games as an expressive

medium. As they represent how realistic and imagined systems function. The video games provide players to interact with certain and specific systems and produce thoughts and judgements about them. In political processes, video games are inherently useful and beneficial tools for visualising the logics that make up a worldview, the ideological distortion in political situations, or the state of such situations. In terms of procedural literacy, it is more productive to inquire how a particular user community understands things to be educational. If something is educational, what does it teach and how does it teach it? Early behaviourists such as Edward Thorndike and B.F. Skinner, studying reinforcement theory. Organisms or groups of humans, respond to positive and negative incentives, when they find themselves in familiar situations with familiar incentives, they will respond in similar ways. Transfer of learning, and persuasive and problematic concepts in educational theory. Similar to the idea from Fröbel, he highlights and depicts this concept as kindergarten. As it relies on play, material, and encourages 'players' to develop creativity and personal experience. Video games may not be complete mode be complete models of material or realistic world. But they are certainly microcosms or a miniature replica of the world mechanism. Consider some examples from actual games such as Flight Simulator, Sims, Sims City, etc., how they demonstrate the system and simulate the real-world mechanism. Infamous criticised games such as the Grand Theft Auto franchise also remarked as intensive and caused controversy among interactive media. But playing role-playing games does not validate behaviour from the game models. Additionally, video games can also provide players opportunities to emphasise with people and under uncanny situations. Even though players are exposed to criminal related action or violent agenda, or questionable humanitarian. Players do not necessarily adopt and imbue them outside from virtuality. This approach highlights video games ability to stimulate higher order thinking skills, and they cultivate specific experiences that create insights into the general relationships that drive those experiences.

Ethical Games or EG, the type that was designed and produced with a core focus on player well-being, social responses. Scart argues that games tend to engage players ethically by making them complicit in decisions, and creating moral experience (Scart, 2013). As fiction, they have a fictional element that is sufficient for explaining the morality of the game experience. The relationship between fiction and ethics can be explained by the fact that ethical fiction is capable of understanding and rationalising the world, which led to the discovery of realism, naturalism, and fictional novels. Jesper Juul (2005) argues that video games are half-real, and should take a

significant consideration from its component of fictionality. Another important aspect of ethical gameplay is how players engage with it, how the content is represented, why it is relevant to the play, and importantly, how the players are going to interact with it. Overall, ethical gameplay means a game as a virtual experience which influences players out of conventional interaction and decision-making, to achieve the goals. The gameplay itself imbues players' thoughts and habits to be challenged in terms of thinking morally.

Transgressive Games or TG, deliberately challenge social norms, players' sensibilities or inducing discomfort, moral questioning including violence and taboo. Research shows that such games could evoke strong emotional and intellectual responses, highlighting their capacity as aesthetic and moral experiences (Mortensen & Jørgensen, 2020). Considering TG as an artistic experience. Disrupting how players respond to certain game contents which cause players to be shocked, disturbed, and distressed, and some contemporary and modern games tend to stimulate and induce intense emotional and sentimental reactions. Although, sometimes TG tends to evoke players to feel overwhelmingly emotional and distress. In game studies, scholars found that occasionally players are also exposed to the mechanism of the game that enables possibilities in the games. Owing to the rise of cross-disciplinary in game studies, the field such as humanities, social science and computer science. There has been sensitive analysis about games as cultured products and activities, for instance, as social arenas, or representational and computational media. Thus, understanding the meaning-making process in games is less about personal interpretation, rather more like examining how game is being interpreted, and played, Importantly, to discover people as players, may change their course of action during the play, based on how in-game events change in real life. Altogether, these perspectives illustrate that political engagement in games is not just limited to explicit narrative media but also emerges through gameplay systems and player experiences.

3. *Games as Simulated Political Environments*

Video games, especially the genre of strategy and simulation games, which provide structured environments in which players make decisions under certain constraints. Kemper (2025) highlights the relevance of video games for political science research because of rule-bound environments

that replicate real life systems created from video games. In many video games, players tend to make a decision under structured constraints, which could reflect their preferences, values, or attitudes that correlate with real life political reasoning. This indicates and leads to strategy and simulation games are crucially important because the mechanism of following genres generally associated with resource management, conflict resolution, choices and decision-making.

This idea is likely related to procedural systems in games. As Bogost explains, games model how systems function through specific rules and interactions, allowing players to explore the consequences of different choices (Bogost, 2007). Particularly, some genres of games such as strategy, simulation, or role-playing games, are important since they mostly simulate governance, conflict, resource management, action-choices, and decision-making processes. These mechanics rely on players to prioritise, take action, decide, and make strategic decisions which these processes tend to reflect their political reasoning in real life. Thus, such games could not only mirror players' political attitudes but also shape players' thoughts as well.

4. *Political Content and Classification in Games*

Gutwenger with his study (2024), provides a benefit overview of how political matters can be represented in the media such as video games through allocating political contexts regarding activity, purpose, player perspective, world building, historical setting, and government representations. The study claims that game genres and political content could be related, and that there is a possibility of specific genres that contribute to a player's political perspectives.

2.3 Political Attitudes, Youth, and Gender Differences

Research on political behaviour among young people points out that both age and gender are considered as relevant factors in shaping political orientation. Political attitudes are not entirely individualistic, but rather as they are influenced by socialisation processes, life-stage experiences, and structural conditional such as socio-economic, for instance. In Sweden, a previous study has

revealed that young people often demonstrate different patterns of political participation and engagement compared to older generations, especially in terms of institutional politics and digital forms of participation (Grahm & Uba, 2026).

Milosav and others in the study (2025) successfully identify a youth gender gap in claiming for far-right politics, insisting that young men are more likely to support or lean toward the radical right wing compared to young women. This gap concerns other factors such as economic insecurity, identity concerns, and difference in social norms about prejudice and political risk. At the same time, the study also differentiate between age-based and cohort-based explanations, revealing that political behaviour among youth could reflect both effects from life-stage and generational experiences.

These findings are consistent with broader research on youth political behaviour in Sweden. Grahm and Uba (2026) note that Swedish youth generally participate less in formal political activities, such as voting and party membership, compared to adult groups, despite Sweden' strong democratic institutions and youth-oriented political initiatives. However, the authors also observe that political interest among Swedish youth has increased in recent years, especially through less conventional and more digital forms of participation (Grahm & Uba, 2026). This implies that younger generations may engage in political content that differ from traditional participation.

Research also indicates that men and women tend to differ in political ideology and political participation. Apparently, women are more likely to participate less confrontational or privately in political activity, while men seemingly prefer to engage political activity directly publicly, and institutional forms of participation (Coffé & Bozendahl, 2010). This suggests that political behaviour does not just concern about participation, but also show qualitatively different patterns cultivated by gendered socialisation.

Furthermore, research on populist radical-right voting shows that the gender gap cannot entirely be explained by differences in attitudes solely. Instead, scholars sort it into two mechanisms; mediation is where men and women are different in socio-economic characteristics or political beliefs, moderation is where similar attitudes lead to different outcomes depending on gender. Importantly, results from the study suggest that moderation is strongly effective, indicating that even when men share mutual or similar views, they could interpret or act them differently

(Harteveld et al., 2015). For instance, some certain issues such as immigration or national identity may be more notable toward men's perspective, contributing to higher support for radical-right politics.

Additionally, the distinction between age-based and cohort-based from Milosav (2025) provided some helpful explanations for additional insight. The age-based perspective suggests that young people tend to be more open to new experiences and less attached to established institutions, making them susceptible to and influenced by media. Meanwhile, the cohort-based perspective emphasises that people who grow up in similar media environments may develop shared patterns of political socialisation, especially in the digital era.

This is particularly relevant in the video games context, which forms a significant part of contemporary digital culture. Nowadays young adults are more exposed to interactive media environments that are entirely different from previous generations. In this case, video games may contribute to shaping people's political attitudes not only through content but also through repeated engagement, prolonged session duration, and important to their social life.

Moreover, Swedish research suggests that youth political engagement increasingly occurs through digital participation instead of solely through traditional political institutions. Grahn and Uba (2026) highlight that younger generations in Sweden may prefer more contemporary and digitally mediated forms of engagement compared to older cohorts. This observation is particularly important for the study, as video games represent one of the most popular and interactive forms of digital media among young adults.

Altogether, this literature suggests that young adults are not politically consistent and their political orientations are shaped by multiple interesting factors including gendered socialisation, generational context, and pattern of media exposure. Therefore, if gaming engagement differs between young men and young women, the relationship between video game exposure and political attitudes may also potentially vary by gender.

2.4 Video Games and Psychological, Social Functioning

Research on video games and psychological functioning creates more perspective on how gaming activity may contribute in influencing attitudes and behaviours among players. The study from

Von der Heiden et al. (2019) demonstrates that gaming is associated with both positive and negative outcomes depending on the intensity and context of use. Moderate gaming can improve positively and provide benefits for players such as attention, working memory, and problem-solving, as well as provide stress relief.

However, excessively in gaming is potentially associated with negative outcomes, including lower-self esteem, maladaptive coping, loneliness, anxiety, and reduced social functioning. Notably, this excessive gaming that is problematic generally is more found among young people and male players.

Although this research is not directly related to examining political attitudes, it is highly relevant for understanding how media effects occur. Psychological and social functioning can act as mediating factors that influence how individuals engage with and interpret media content. For example, individuals who engage in intensive gaming may experience higher levels of immersion and identification with in-game systems, which could shape how they process themes such as conflict, authority, and identity.

Additionally, differences in gaming habits such as time spent playing, preferred genres, and levels of engagement, may lead to different cognitive and emotional experiences. For instance, some players may engage more thoroughly with decision-making systems or moral dilemmas, while others could interact more casually with game content. These variations suggest that the impact of video games is depending on individual patterns of engagement.

Empirical evidence from adolescents further supports the importance of individual and social factors in shaping gaming behaviour. A study by Olsen (2024), based on children aged 9 - 15 years old in Sweden, shows that gaming is nearly universal among youth, but patterns of engagement varied by gender and social context. Boys tend to spend more time gaming overall, whereas girls are usually more active on other digital platforms such as social media. At the same time, the study discovers that girls are more likely to express a desire to increase their gaming time, suggesting that actual behaviour and motivation do not always align (Olsen, 2024).

Importantly, Olsen et al. also highlight the role of family dynamics and parental involvement. Conflicts with parents, lack of supervision, or restrictive rules are associated with increased desire to gaming more, indicating that game behaviour is shaped not only by individual preferences but

also by social relationships. This suggests that gaming should be understood as a socially embedded activity, rather than purely an individual one.

These findings support the idea that gaming exposure is not uniform across individuals. Differences in gaming intensity, motivation, and social environment may lead to different psychological experiences. For example, players who engage more intensively or view gaming as a central activity may be more susceptible to narrative influence, including themes related to power, conflict, or identity.

Likewise, Sicart's concept of ethical gameplay supports the importance of individual differences. Sicart (2013) argues that games tend to create ethical experiences by placing players in decision-making processes, requiring players to reflect on their actions and consequences. This implies that players' personal characteristics, including values, emotional responses, and levels of engagement, may play a crucial role in cultivating how these experiences are interpreted.

In sum, this body of research suggests that video games do not influence all players in the same way. Instead, their impact is mediated by psychological engagement, social context, and individual differences. This helps explain why some players may be more affected by politically relevant content than others, supporting the importance of considering factors such as gender, intensity of engagement, and social environment in this study.

2.5 Research Gap and Contribution

Altogether, the existing literature suggests that video games have turned into an important cultural medium that is filled with political contents, narratives, and ideological messages. Academic researchers have demonstrated that video games can function as political and ethical spaces, where players engage with systems of governance, conflict, and decision-making. At the same time, research on political behaviour reveals that political attitudes among young adults are not uniform, but are shaped by factors such as gender socialisation, generational experiences, and broader media environments.

In addition, studies on gaming and psychological functioning from Von De Heiden et al. (2019) indicate that gaming engagement is associated with individual cognitive, emotional, and social

outcomes. Research on adolescents' gaming habits in Sweden from Olsen et al.(2024) further shows that gaming behaviour is widespread but varies gender and social context. These findings suggest that gaming is not only a form of entertainment but also a meaningful activity that contributes to players socially and psychologically.

However, despite these developments, there remains a significant gap in the literature. While prior studies have further explored video games as cultural, political, and ethical media, there is still limited empirical research directly examining the relationship between games exposure and political attitudes individually. In particular, few studies explore how engagement with video games relates to players' real-world political orientations, such as their views on political issues, institutions, or ideological positions.

This gap is particularly evident in research focusing on young adults, a group that is both highly engaged with digital media and actively experienced in political socialisation frequently. Moreover, there is a lack of studies focused on specific national contexts, such as Sweden, where both gaming culture or industry, and political environments may cultivate this relationship differently. Existing research also seldom considers whether the association between video game exposure and political attitudes varies by gender, in spite of the evidence that suggests that both political behaviour and gaming habits differ between men and women.

Therefore, this study intends to contribute to the literature by examining the relationship between video games engagement and political attitudes among young adults in Sweden. Through integrating perspectives from media studies, political behaviour, and psychological research. The study intends to explore whether video game exposure is associated with political orientations, and whether this relationship differs across gender. In doing so, this study seeks to provide empirical insight into the role of interactive media in contemporary political socialisation.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

This chapter aims to establish the theoretical framework that can be implemented in the analysis of this study. Rather than conceptualising video games as merely entertainment media, with this framework it helps the study to navigate and position them as an interactive cultural environment through which players are able to express their political thoughts and cultivate individuals' political and social attitudes. By doing so, it allows for the examination of how video games exposure could be associated with individuals' political attitudes.

This chapter of theoretical framework is formulated around three main approaches by introducing three main themes of this study. Primarily, video games as political media, political attitudes among young people, and relationship between media exposure and individual psychological functioning and well-being.

Together, these concepts establish a foundation for understanding how video games engagement may influence political orientations among young adults in Sweden.

3.1 Video Games as Political Media

Video games can be perceived as more than leisure activities, apparently they are more than meet the eyes; a cultural artefacts that embedded political message, narratives, and structures. As part of broader media environments, games are filled within social and political meanings and can reflect, reproduce, or challenge ideological assumptions. Consequently, through this point of view, video games should not be considered politically neutral as they often expose players to representation of authority, governance, conflict, and social organisation.

A key theoretical approach to understanding the concept of procedural rhetoric from Bogost, which claims that video games communicate ideas through rule-based systems rather than traditional forms of representation. In this sense, players do not passively gain political messages but actively engage with systems that model how the world works. These systems shape how players

understand processes such as decision-making, responsibility, and institutional control. Through gameplay, players engage with structures of decision-making, constraint, and consequence, which can shape how they understand concepts such as governance, responsibility, and institutional power.

Jørgensen (2022) conceptualises this relationship through the notion of ludo-politics, which explains how political ideas can be expressed and experienced through virtual environments or gameplay. Within this perspective, the mechanism of games functions as a virtual space where political meanings are constructed through play, interaction, and interpretation. Political content may appear to be explicit, such as through narratives that contain the topic of war or governance, but it can also appear implicitly through gameplay mechanics, ethical dilemmas, and decision-making processes.

This perspective can be further supported through the idea from Sicart regarding the concept of ethical games, which emphasises that video games engage players morally by making them responsible for their in-game actions. Sicart claims that games can create ethical experiences in which players must reflect on their decisions and their consequences, thereby activating their moral values. In this sense, players are not perceiving political messages passively but actively experience moral conflicts and political dilemmas through gameplay.

In addition, research on transgressive games highlights how video games can challenge social norms and provoke critical reflection. These games normally expose players to morally ambiguous topics that encourage players to question established values and assumptions. This supports the idea that video games function as spaces for political and ethical exploration.

Furthermore, video games can be viewed as systems built by rules that simulate the real-world structure but less complexity and more simplified. Kemper (2025) mentions that games provide controlled environments where it allows players to act within certain rules and constraints, normally making strategic decisions that resemble political reasoning in real life.

Moreover, some video games usually require players to manage resources, make decisions, and engage in conflict, and handle the consequences of their choices. These mechanics could reveal players to forms of thinking related to their trustworthiness toward leadership, authority, institution, and government.

Additionally, following Gutwenger and his study (2024), conceptual classifications of political context in games indicate that different genres could change in games' degree of political representation. Also, repeated engagement to these virtual environments could cultivate players with particular ways of understanding political processes.

Overall, this concept provides the foundation for considering video games exposure as a potential independent variable. It suggests that engagement with game systems that simulate political processes could be associated with the player's perception of political ideas in the real world.

3.2 Political Attitudes and Young People

Political attitudes are not fixated but rather cultivated through the process of socialisation and influenced from the environment that occur across different stages of life. Importantly, young adulthood is a crucial stage of life where individuals can develop, shape, and form their own political orientations. During this stage, a lot of young adults tend to be exposed to a variety of influences, starting from education, peer network, society and environment, and media consumption, all of which contribute to cultivating individuals' political beliefs.

Research on youth political behaviour focuses on two primary perspectives, age-based and cohort-based explanations (Milosav et al., 2025). The age-based perspective suggests that younger people normally open for more change, less concerns to institutions, and more receptive to new experiences, this includes media influences. On the other hand, the cohort-based is more likely about people who grow up in similar historical and technological context could share mutual perspectives of political socialisation. For contemporary young adults, digital media such as video games, is a crucial part of this shared environment.

Gender is one another matter that also shapes political attitudes. Empirical research claims that young men tend to be differ compared to young women in terms of their political preferences and orientations. For example, men are often found to be leaning to support in right or anti-establishment positions, while women tend to incline toward progressive and egalitarian views. These differences could be influenced by cultural norms, social status, economic experience, and identity-related factors.

More importantly, differences in genders are also reflected in gaming habits. Existing research claims that men tend to be more gaming and the ratio of men as players are higher compared to women. This could suggest that the relationship between video game exposure and political attitudes could not be compatible to all people, but rather, this could vary depending on gendered patterns of media consumption.

This concept supports the idea of young adults in Sweden as the target population and aims gender as a key analytical dimension. It suggests that if video games influence political socialisation, their effect could be different among young men and young women owing to the difference in their political orientation and gaming habits.

3.3 Media Exposure and Individual Psychological Engagement

While exposure to media content is significant, its effects are not universal across many people. The relationship between media and attitudes is cultivated by patterns of consumption, levels of engagement, and individual psychological characteristics. Video game research provides insights into how different forms of engagement could influence cognition, emotion, and behaviour.

Following the study from Von der Heiden et al.(2019), video games are associated with both negative and positive results depending on intensity of using, and objective of using them. Moderate gaming could benefit cognitive ability, such as improved attention and polish problem-solving skills, as well as help in relieving short-term stress. However, excessive or intensive gaming could be considered as problematic gaming, usually related with lower self-esteem, increased loneliness, and maladaptive coping strategies. These patterns are more likely to be found among younger individuals and male players.

This perspective can also be supported by the Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model developed by Valkenburg and Peter (2013), which argues that media effects are conditional and influenced developmental and social susceptibility factors. The model suggests that individuals respond differently to media exposure depending on personal characteristics such as gender, social environment, and emotional well-being. In the context of video games, this implies that gaming

engagement may not be equally associated with players but vary according to individual conditions.

From a conceptual perspective, these findings indicate that intensity in gaming matters. Frequency of play, session duration, and genre preference could all influence how deeply people engage with game content. High levels of engagement could increase immersion, emotional investment, and identification with in-game systems, potentially enhancing the impact of the content encountered. Other genres could create different types of experiences. For example, strategy games often involve long-term planning and complex decision-making which sometimes reflect real-world mechanisms (Bogost, 2007). These features could encourage players to think in ways that resemble analytical or strategic reasoning, which could extend beyond the game context.

Overall, this concept supports the inclusion of variables such as gaming frequency, gaming hours, and genres. It suggests that the relationship between game exposure and political attitudes may be influenced not only by exposure, but also through intensity of engagement.

3.4 Conceptual Integration

Taken together, these three theoretical frameworks suggest that video games function as interactive political media, that young adults are particularly susceptible to media influences during political socialisation, and that the effects of media exposure depend on levels of psychological engagement. This study therefore assumes that video games exposure, moderated by other factors such as gender, intensity of engagement, may be associated with differences in political attitudes among young adults in Sweden.

Chapter 4

Methodology

Method or methodology, this chapter intends to explain and outline the details of the methodological approach used to investigate the relationship between gaming exposure and political attitudes among young adults in Sweden. It explains the research design, data collection methods, sampling strategy, and analytical frameworks implemented in the study.

The chapter is guided by the theoretical framework introduced in Chapter 3 and intends to adapt and improvise its key concepts into measurable variables. Initially the chapter explains the preliminary findings related to the topic and applies them with theoretical frameworks. The following paragraph will illustrate detail regarding the research methods, particularly about quantitative methods, and the reason upon applying the method in this study, sampling strategies and target audience, data collection and analysis, and importantly, ethical considerations, concluding with research limitation and further possibility.

Research Questions

Main Research Question: How is exposure to video games associated with political attitude among young adults in Sweden?

RQ1: What political attitudes and ideological orientations are expressed among young adults who engage in gaming in Sweden?

RQ2: To what extent is the level of video game exposure (frequency, duration, and genre) associated with political attitudes among young adults in Sweden?

RQ3: Does the relationship between video games exposure and political attitudes differ between young men and young women in Sweden?

4.1 Research Design

Primary intention of the study is to investigate young adult experience and their political perspective, especially when they are exposed to entertainment media such as video games. The

research seeks to examine how individuals engage with video games; what are the reasons and motivations behind playing, and whether gaming habits are associated with political attitudes and orientations.

The study adopts a quantitative research design because of its function that allows for the systematic measurement and comparison of attitudes, behaviours, and patterns across a broader population. Quantitative research is appropriate for examining associations between variables and identifying trends within social phenomena. Following prior research on gaming behaviour and psychological function from Van der Heiden et al. (2019), the study focuses on measurable variables including gaming frequency, duration, genre preference, and political attitudes.

The theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3 conceptualises video games as political and cultural media that may have a possibility in influencing political socialisation among people. Therefore, the research design aims to operationalise these concepts into measurable questionnaires in the survey variables compatible for statistical analysis,

Quantitative Approach

To insightfully investigate video games consumption, gaming duration, session frequency, and genre preferences among young adults in Sweden. The study applies the quantitative methods in the analysis part, which primarily focuses on data collecting through an online survey, and implemented Likert-scale measurements.

Because of majority of young adults nowadays, in general, are highly engaged with various digital platforms including smart phones, laptops, tablets, personal computers, and other devices such as video game consoles. Particularly in Sweden, notably video games are relevant due to the country's strong gaming culture among players and internationally remarked game development industry for games developer (Flintberg & Nylander, 2025). This indicates and implies how video games are considerably accessible interactive media and socially integrated form of media among young adults. It is noteworthy to navigate the integration of entertainment and pop-culture into daily lives, associated and related to people or players' political perspective and orientation.

Notably, according to Creswell (2014), regarding the research design on quantitative, he underlines on how quantitative strategies are mostly alternative research designs for quantitative are referred to both experimental designs and non-experimental, including survey research. Survey research enable researcher to provides a quantitative and numerical description of trends, attitudes, or opinions from certain group of population. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies implementing questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection, with the purpose of generalising from a sample to a population (Creswell, 2014).

This study adapts and improvises a cross-sectional survey design due to this design allows the collection of data from a large number of participants efficiently and effectively. Also, the design is compatible for examining relationships between variables such as gaming habits and player's political attitudes.

Likert-Scale Online Survey

The study adopts a quantitative research design as Likert-scale online survey as the primary method in data collecting process. This is a choice informed by the frameworks established by Creswell (2014), which emphasize the use of statistical data to derive numerical conclusions. This approach is particularly effective for examining cause-and-effect relationships and inquiring into connections within datasets. Following the precedent set by Van De Heiden et al. (2019), an online survey was selected as the primary instrument for data collection. This method is preferred due to its ability to generalize findings from a small sample to a larger population (Fowler, 2009). Furthermore, the survey design allows for both cross-sectional and longitudinal perspectives, providing the flexibility to collect data either at a single point in time or dynamically over the time. While the study acknowledges the inherent limitations of quantitative methods, including lack of qualitative context and the impersonality of data, the alignment with numerical analysis remains the most effective path for addressing the core research questions.

Central to this quantitative approach is the implementation of a Likert-scale online survey. The implementation was chosen after considering the strengths and weaknesses of various survey formats, with cost, data availability, and participant convenience serving as the deciding factors. Online surveys allow for the collection of raw primary data that aligns specifically with goals of

the study, granting participants the convenience to respond at their own pace and from any location. This structured approach, inspired by Creswell's (2014) research design framework, ensures a comprehensive methodology that prioritizes statistical validity. By applying Likert scales, the study can effectively quantify respondent attitudes and perceptions, transforming subjective feedback into measurable data points suitable for rigorous analysis.

Justification the selection on this type of survey likewise of quantitative Likert-scale survey. The choice of a quantitative Likert-scale online survey is likely aligned with the objectives of this study and correlated with the theoretical framework established in Chapter 3. The main focus of this research is to examine the relationship between video game exposure and player's political attitudes, which it needs to identify patterns, associations, and potential differences across a relatively large group of participants in a specific community. Primarily, one of the national survey codebooks "Kodbok för den nationella SOM-undersökningen" also implemented Likert-scale to collect data that contains a self-reported survey form including section of news and media consumption, internet and digital media site (University of Gothenburg, SOM institute, 2024) . Thereby it matters to adapt and improvise this form of questionnaire for this study's survey.

A quantitative approach is particularly suitable for this purpose since it allows the measurement and comparison of attitudes in a structured and standardised way. Political attitudes and social perceptions, even though considerably an important subjective, can be operationalised into measurable variables by implementing Likert-scale components. This allows for the transformation of individual opinions into numerical data and ordinal data that can be statistically analysed, thus it is possible to find some correlations and trends across the sample. Furthermore, using this type of survey method is appropriate and suitable because the study seeks to capture and collect self-reported behaviours and attitudes as data. Variables including gaming frequency, session duration, and political beliefs are perfect fit through direct responses from participants, as they reflect personal experiences and perceptions that cannot be simply observed externally. Thus, surveys potentially provide an efficient and practical way to collect the following data from such a broader population and in a certain community.

The selection of a format as an online survey is also justified by the characteristics of the target population. As the target audience is young adults in Sweden, they are highly engaged more with digital platforms and are accustomed to interacting through online media. Consequently,

distributing the survey through online platforms and channels should increase accessibility and response rates, while also granting participants to do and complete the survey at their convenience; at any place and any time. This reduces the participation barriers for participants and encourages them to complete the survey, and help increasing in data collection.

Additionally, Likert-scales are inherently useful for this study since they enable respondents to express the range and level degrees of agreement and disagreement, rather than using binary to collect only yes or no answers. This is important when measuring data such as political attitudes, which are usually complicated and exist along a spectrum. The use of scaled responses allows an analysis of attitudes to be more refined, and provide more reliability of the data.

One more key advantage of this method is its compatibility with statistical analysis techniques like correlation and regression analysis, which are primary to the study. By quantifying both independent variables and dependent variables, the design of the survey allows these variables to be used in systematic examination. The independent variables consist of gaming frequency, duration, genre, for example. While dependent variables are political attitudes, political trust, political interest, for instance.

While Likert scales are widely used in survey research, it is clear that they carry inherent limitations. Likewise, single-item likert measures that were implemented in this study, may lack the reliability and validity of multi-items. Future research or further study could adopt validated multi-item instruments such as standardised political interest or the Political Trust Scale to strengthen measurement reliability.

4.2 Data Collection: Participation and Sampling

The data will be collected through online questionnaires distributed via digital platforms including university networks and associations (such as LAGA), online communities (Discord, Facebook, Reddit), and other social media groups. The target population consists of young adults in Sweden, approximately at the range around 18 to 35 years old, who have experience and generally play video games on any platform including PC, console and mobile gaming.

The study applies a non-probability sampling method, particularly snowball sampling where participants may share the survey to other potential respondents with similar traits, under the social communities or networks. Snowball sampling is generally used when the study intend to access certain group or specific communities in broader populations. However, this method could also introduce bias from selection owing to participants are recruited through existing social connections instead of random selection (Segdwick, 2013).

With online survey format, it allows participants to fill the questionnaire anonymously and at their convenience, this could increase response rates, reduce liability, and extend credentials when participants were answering questions related to personal beliefs and political orientations or attitudes. The study aims to collect responses from participants for approximately 100 or more, considering applied population and sample framework from Creswell (2014). Importantly, the participation will be, certainly, voluntary and respondents will be informed about the purpose of study, data privacy, and their rights to withdraw from the participation.

Inclusion Criteria

To ensure that participants are relevant to the research objectives, respondents must meet the following criteria:

- Be between 18 and 35 years old
- Be eligible to vote in Sweden or currently residing in Sweden
- Have experience playing video games, regardless of platform (PC, console, or mobile)
- Provide voluntary consent to participate in the survey

Participants who do not meet these criteria or who submit incomplete responses may be excluded from the final analysis.

4.3 Participation Procedure

Participation in this study will be voluntary and anonymous. Individuals who choose to participate will access the survey through an online link distributed across digital platforms. Before beginning the survey, respondents will be informed with an information sheet explaining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, the confidentiality of responses, estimated time to complete the survey, and rights to withdraw before they will further respond to questionnaires or submission.

The online survey is expected to take approximately 5 to 8 minutes to complete. Participants will answer a series of questions regarding their video game engagement, playing habits, and political attitudes, and simple demographic background, primarily using Likert-scale and multiple-choice formats.

Importantly, no personal related or identifiable information will be collected, and all data will be used only for academic research purposes.

Survey Structure

The questionnaire will contain mostly closed-ended questions implementing Likert-scale measurement, with this format, it allows respondents to reflect their level of agreement with sets of statements. The survey will be sorted and arranged in sections.

Video game engagement:

frequency of playing, average times of playing per week, most played genres

Political Attitudes (Likert):

- Political interest
 - Scale 1 to 5 (Not at all interested - Very interested)
- Eligible to vote
 - Yes,

- No,
- I was not eligible to vote
- Prefer not to say
- Thought on freedom of speech
 - Freedom of speech should be protected even for controversial or offensive opinions
 - Freedom of speech should generally be protected, but some harmful or offensive opinions should be restricted
 - Freedom of speech is important, but strong limits are needed to prevent harmful speech
 - Freedom of speech should be restricted whenever speech may offend or destabilise society
 - I don't know / Prefer not to say
- Political trust
 - Scale 1 to 5 (No trust at all - Complete trust)
- Political news source
 - Traditional media (SVT, SR, newspapers)
 - Social media (Instagram, TikTok, X/Twitter, Reddit)
 - YouTube / podcast
 - Friends and family
 - Gaming communities / Discord servers
 - I don't follow political news
- Politics in gaming

- Yes, often
 - Yes, occasionally
 - Rarely
 - Never
- Games influence in political orientation
 - Scale 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree)
- Important political issue
 - Climate & environment
 - Immigration
 - Economy & jobs
 - Education
 - Healthcare
 - Crime & Security
 - Digital rights & privacy
- Political spectrum
 - Far left
 - Left
 - Centre-left
 - Centre
 - Centre-right
 - Right

- Far right
- I don't know / Prefer not to say

Demographic Information:

age, gender, occupation, education level, and location

Optional Open-Ended Question could be included in the survey, in addition to qualitative findings, open-ended question enables participants to elaborate and emphasise whether video games have contributed to their political attitude or orientation. Open-ended questions are added to inquire more insightful descriptive findings from participants to extend in qualitative findings.

4.4 Data Analysis

The collected data will be analysed using statistical methods to identify patterns and relationships between variables. Following the framework proposed from Blaikie (2003), the study emphasises on type of analysis, and particularly on descriptive analysis: univariate and bivariate descriptive analysis.

Primarily, univariate analysis is used to represent the characteristics of some social phenomenon, for instance, tracking student performance in certain courses. It is concerned with summarising the characteristics of some particular in terms of distributions on variables. Univariate analysis can be implemented in this study to summarise distributions and characteristics within the sample such as frequencies, percentages, counts, distributions, for instance. Additionally, it can be used to examine one variable at a time, an important foundation for further analysis such as bivariate analysis.

Secondly, bivariate analysis can be implemented to establish mutual or difference between characteristics of events or people, for example, thoughts on tallest people are also heaviest. Bivariate enables describing in form and strength of association between variables, also comparing characteristics of same variables in different populations, or different variables in the same population. Compare categories such as difference scores between female and male students, and different ethnic backgrounds. In addition, examine association between two variables. Bivariate

analysis in this study can be adopted to examine two variables through these analyses, including cross-tabulation, group mean comparisons, correlation analysis, or chi-square tests.

To examine association between ordinal variables, this study adopts Spearman's rank-order correlation. Spearman's correlation is a non-parametric statistical method used to measure the strength and direction of monotonic relationship between two ordinal variables. The method is particularly compatible when data do not satisfy assumptions of normal distribution and when variables are measured using ordinal scales such as Likert-responses (Looney & Hagan, 2011). In this study, Spearman's correlation is here to examine relationships between gaming exposure variables and political attitude variables.

Chi-square tests of independence are going to be used to examine whether there is association between categorical variables, such as gaming frequency and political attitudes. The chi-squares test is practical for analysing relationships between categorical survey variables and examining whether observed distributions varied significantly from expected distributions (McHugh, 2013).

For comparison between two independent groups where data may not follow normal distribution assumptions, a Mann-Whitney U test can be implemented in the analysis. As the Mann-Whitney U test is inherently compatible for ordinal data and smaller samples which normally can be found in social science research (Nachar, 2008).

During the analysis the process will mainly focus on these following.

Descriptive Statistics:

to summarise participant characteristics and their gaming habits

Correlation Analysis:

to examine associations between video games engagement and political attitudes

Comparative Analysis:

to explore whether specific types of video games exposure are differences in political perspectives

Overall, with these concerns, the analysis intends to be conducted by using statistical software. Particularly the R language, SQL or Python, owing to these programs allows for efficient data

processing and visualisation of results. Thus, during the analysis, the study plans to analyse with Python coding on Visual Studio given the reason of integrity and convenience of the software.

Descriptive statistics

- Frequencies
- Counts
- Distributions

Comparative analysis

- Crosstabs
- Group means

Interpretation

- Linking gaming behavior ↔ political attitudes ↔ demographics

4.5 Quantitative Coding and Variable Operationalisation

To start the statistical analysis, the collected data will be coded and operationalised into measured variables. The responses from Likert-scale questions will be transformed into numeral data, typically ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 represents “Strongly Disagree” and 5 referred as “Strongly Agree”. This transformation allows subjective attitudes to be able to be used in analysis and can be analysed quantitatively. The study categorised variables into independent variables, dependent variables, and control variables.

Independent Variables

In this variable, primarily focus on video game exposure including: frequency of gaming (e.g. days per week), duration of gaming (one or two hours per session in daily), and genre preference (categorical variables such as action, strategy, RPG, simulation, for instance).

Dependent Variables

This variables mostly consist of political attitude related responses, and measured through Likert-scale items such as: political interest, political trust, views on freedom of speech, perception of politics in video games, and self-reported political spectrum

Control Variables

Other factors that may vary the analysis, which includes: gender, age, educational level, occupation, for instance.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is a notably important matter when it comes to survey data being collected. Participants will be informed regarding the purpose of the research and the voluntary nature of their participation before completing the survey. There will be no personal information or data related to privacy threats to be collected, and all responses will remain anonymous.

Limitation

Despite the strengths of the selected methodology, this study has several limits that should be informed and acknowledged.

Firstly, the usage of online surveys and voluntary participation may result in sampling bias. Participants in the survey could be people who are more engaged with gaming or particularly interested in gaming topics, which may limit the representativeness of the sample.

Second of all, the reliability of self-reported data tend to raise the likeness of response bias. Participants may not be able to fully evaluate their gaming habits fully or provide accurate social attitudes when they are reporting in the survey.

Third matter is the adaptation of cross-sectional design, meaning that data is collected at a certain point of time. In the end, the study can identify associations between different variables but cannot establish causal relationships between video games exposure and political attitudes.

Another matter is the amount of sample size which is approximately 100 participants, the study may limit the generalisability of finding to the border population of young adults in Sweden. This is a challenge from the distributed process. Lastly, even though quantitative methods allow for statistical analysis of patterns and relationships, they may not entirely collect the depth and complexity of personal experience and their interpretations. Political attitudes and media engagement are complicated and detailed subjects that could be more beneficial with working with qualitative methods.

Chapter 5

Analysis and results

In this chapter, the study presents the findings from the online survey regarding the gaming habits data and their political and social attitude from young adults in Sweden. It explores participants' experience of gaming; frequency of activity, session duration, preferred genre of games, and their interest in political content such as political interest, political spectrum, political rights, and political influence in video games. The chapter is organised according to the research questions which uncovered respondents' habits of gaming, self-report of their thoughts on political and social attitudes, and how these are associated with one another. And linked to prior studies about the pattern of young adult behaviour on political content. Through participants' responses on the online survey, the chapter discovered intersectional dimensions between independent variables and dependent variables, and control variables.

5.1 Sample Description

Beginning with the demographic information, following the results from the online survey. In the demographic section, it consists of the simple details from participants so the study can capture demographic data for determining the difference in age group, gender, educational level, and occupation. Particularly these three of age, gender, and educational level. The age group contains the range spectrum to examine the percentage of a certain age range that may become potential for further analysis. As well as for gender, considered as a potential significant control variable due to the prior research about gender dynamics. Lastly, the educational level tends to be strongly related and have similar dynamics to gender; it can determine whether individuals with academics tend to share differences in political contents.

Primarily, a total of 72 respondents that completed the survey. The sample was predominantly male (n= 44, 61%), with women representing as runner-up (n= 23, 32%), followed by non-binary respondents (n= 4, 6%), and one respondent identifying as Other. The group age reveals that the majority fell within the 21-24 age group (n=30, 42%), followed by 25-29 (n= 18, 25%), 18-20 (n=

14, 19%), and 30-35 (n= 10, 14%). Evidently the gender and age group apparently varied, meanwhile most respondents held or were pursuing a university-level education or finished their upper secondary school, and the sample was mostly students, correlates with the recruitment and distribution strategy through university networks and online communities around Malmö and Lund. A full sample demographic figure is provided in [Appendix A \(Figure A1\)](#).

5.2 Political Spectrum

Regarding the ideological orientation of respondents, 66 respondents answered the political spectrum questions in the survey. Apparently, the sample leaned notably left and centre, with most of participants identifying their spectrum as Left (n= 20), Far Left (n= 12), followed by the Centre-left (n= 11) and Centre-right (n= 10). This distribution will be included in the limitations section regarding the missing political spectrum from previous respondents due to false and technical issues during the making of the online survey. A figure of political orientation can be seen in [Appendix A \(Figure A2\)](#).

5.3 Gaming Exposure

In terms of gaming exposure, the majority of respondents reported that they play video games frequently, with most playing several times a week or every day. Also respondents seemingly reported that the session duration was most commonly 1-4 hours. While the most popular genres among this were role-playing games or RPG, Action and Shooting, and Strategy. The distribution of gaming frequency and session duration is shown in [Appendix A \(Figure A3\)](#).

RQ1: Political Attitudes Among Young Adults Gamers

Political Attitude Attributions

Descriptive statistics showed samples likely to score between moderate and high across political attitude variables, which implies respondents seem to be politically interested. According to the graphic chart below, political interest appears to have the highest mean ($M= 4.00$, $SD= 1.09$), implying that respondents were, on average, seemingly engaged in political content. Moving on to the influence of games on politics also have similar scores as relatively high ($M= 3.97$, $SD= 0.77$), indicating the mutual agreement that games tend to carry political relevance. Although the assumption on gaming shapes players' own political thinking is apparently lower scored compared to the two before ($M= 3.46$, $SD= 1.11$), along with the political trust score which is considered as lowest mean among others ($M= 3.17$, $SD= 0.93$), implying that the respondents in the sample is moderately trust in political institution but not strongly.

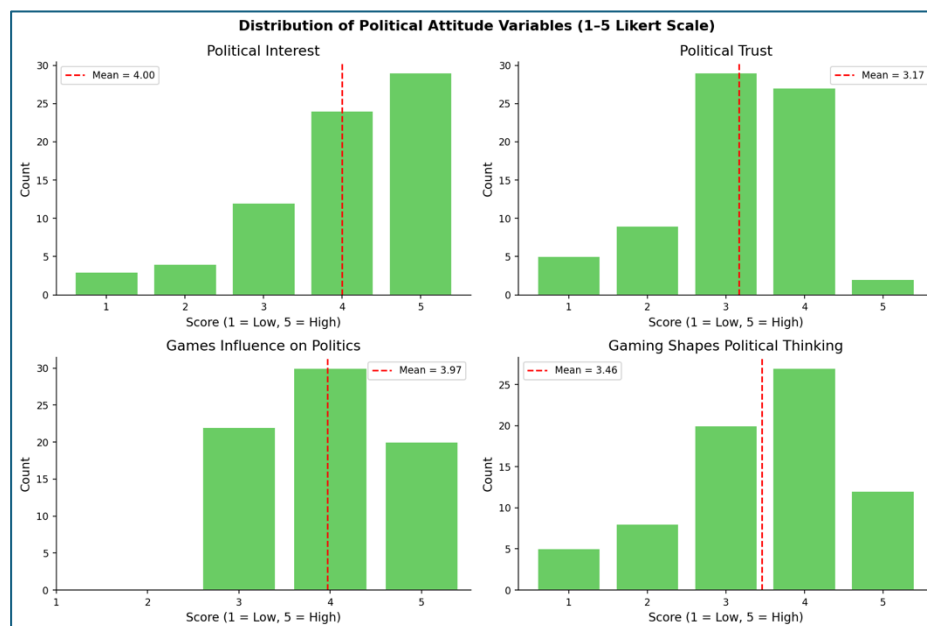


Figure 1: Political Attitudes Variables (Political Interest, Political Trust, Games Influence on Politics, Gaming Shapes Political Thinking)

Engagement with Politics Through Gaming

Following ideological orientation, the sample was inherently leaning toward the left approach, with most of the respondents identified as left or far-left. When they were questioned about encountering political content in games, most respondents reported doing so at least occasionally. Likewise, when questioned whether games contributed to political reflection, the responses were distributed across the scale, with the likelihood of games making them think politically frequently.

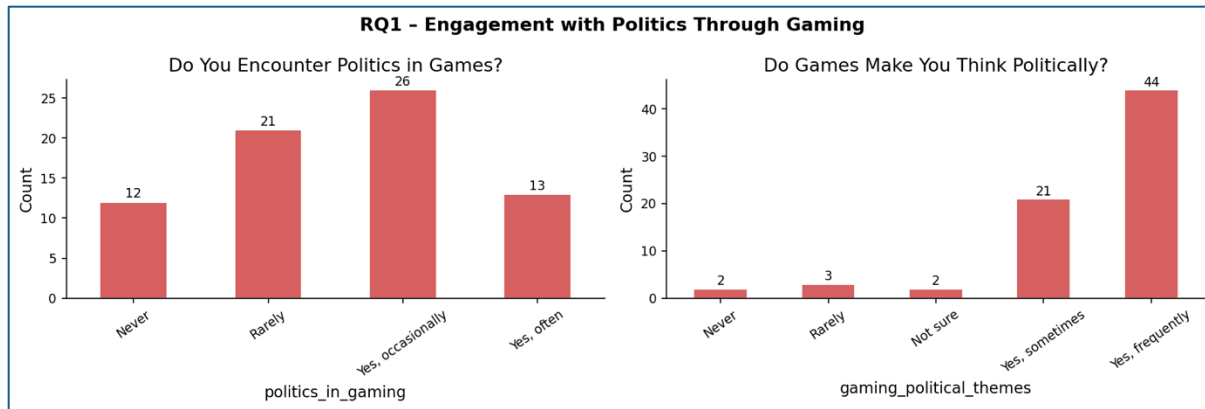


Figure 2: Engagement with Politics Through Gaming

Freedom of Speech Attitudes

In this section of the survey, respondents were inquired about their thoughts toward freedom of speech. The majority of common positions was a moderate one. 40 respondents (56%) agreed that freedom of speech should generally be protected but that some harmful or offensive opinions should be restricted. The second most common attitude was the more liberal perspective, with 24 respondents (33%) stating that freedom of speech should be protected even for controversial or offensive opinions. While only 5 respondents (7%) agreed about strong limits to prevent harmful speech, and only 1 respondent supported the idea that restricting speech may offend or destabilise society. And other 2 respondents (3%) pointed that they did not know or preferred not to say.

Cross-tabulation with control variables such as gender, showed that there is no statistically significant difference in freedom of speech attitudes between male and female respondents ($\chi^2=8.43$, $p=.751$, $df=12$). Likewise, while descriptive patterns indicated that left-leaning respondents were quite more likely to agree on restrictions and right-leaning respondents more likely to support unrestricted speech, this pattern has potentially to show the difference with the political spectrum. On the other hand, right-leaning respondents seem to agree on protected speech even if offensive, although noted that it is in a small subgroup size.

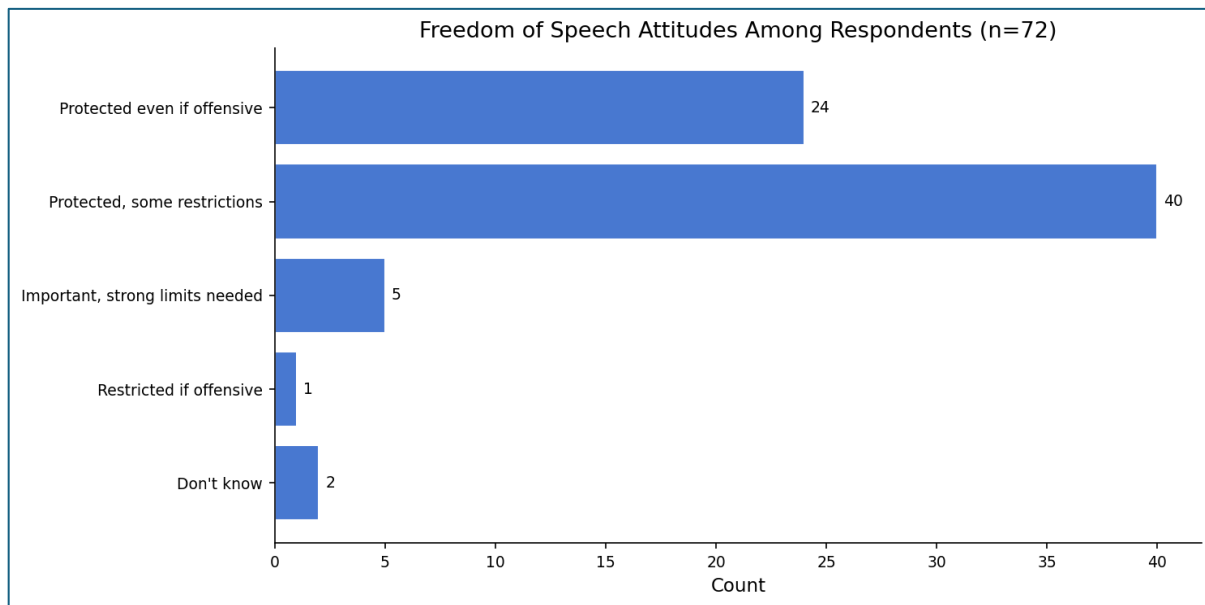


Figure 3: Respondents' thoughts on Freedom of Speech

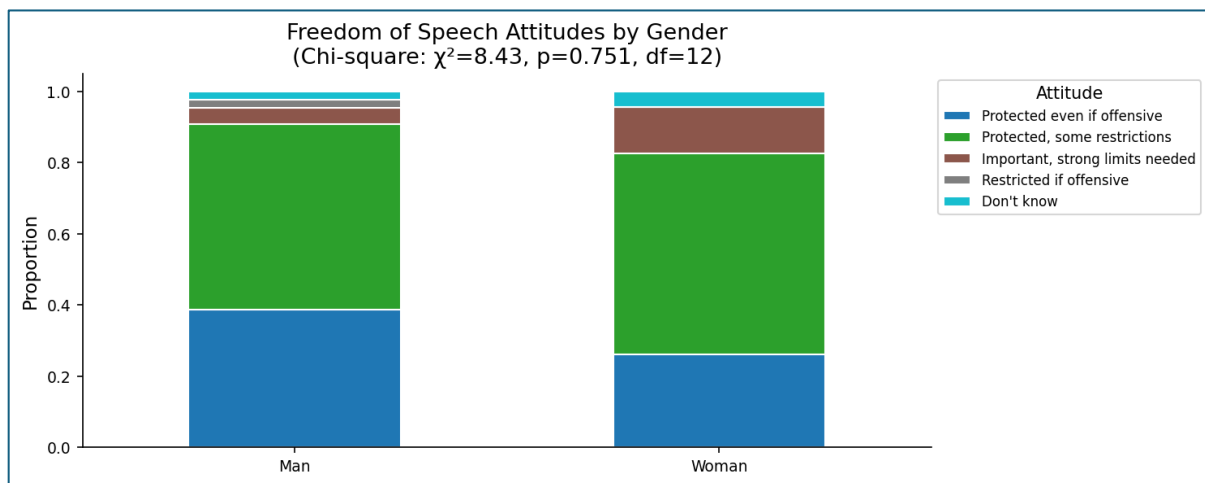


Figure 4: Freedom of Speech Attitudes varied by Gender

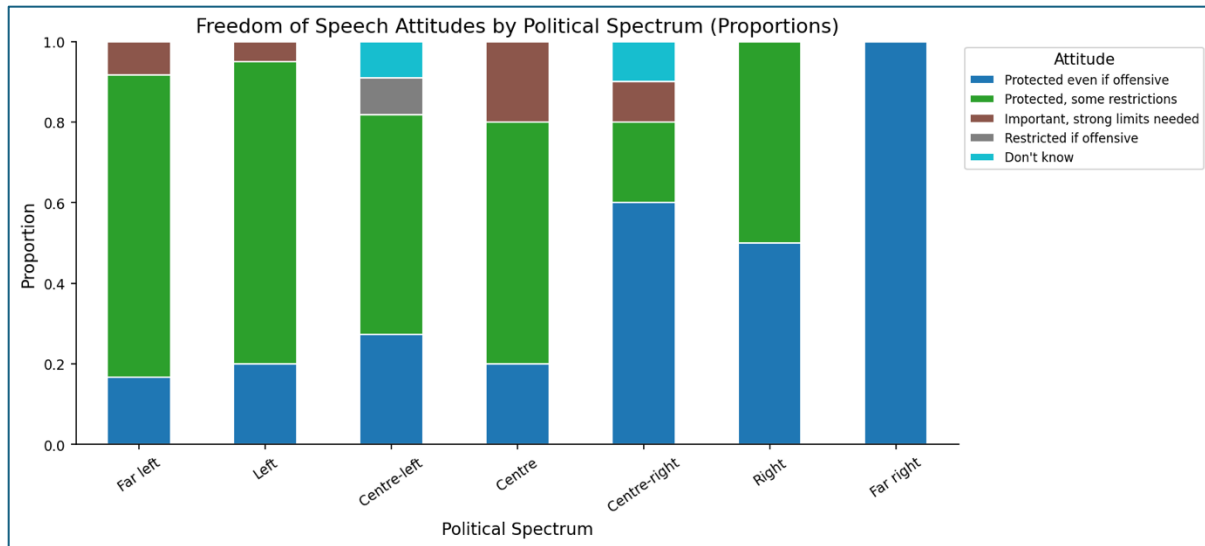


Figure 5: Freedom of Speech Attitudes varied by Political Spectrum

Important Political Issues

In this part, regarding the important political issues that tend to play crucial aspects in political attitudes. In the survey, respondents were inquired to identify the most relevant and important political issues according to their perspectives. Evidently, the topic of economy and jobs was the most frequently cited issue ($n=24$, 34%), followed by the climate and environment ($n=18$, 25%), healthcare ($n=8$, 11%), and education ($n=7$, 10%). Other issues such as immigration, and digital rights and privacy were each cited by 5 respondents (7%), while crime and security was selected by 4 respondents (6%). One respondent did not answer. The supporting figure was provided in [Appendix A \(A4\)](#).

Cross-tabulation with gaming exposure such as gaming frequency and political spectrum, shows that there are no statistically significant associations ($\chi^2=21.90$, $p=0.858$). Similarly, the association between political spectrum and relevant political issues was also not statistically significant ($\chi^2=48.68$, $p=0.077$), though it remarked as borderline results, as it shows but not considered as statistical significance.

One possible explanation of these non-significant findings is the relatively small sample size of the study, as small size may decrease statistical power and difficult to detect meaningful

relationships between variables even if patterns were found. In cross-tabulation and chi-square analysis, small cell frequencies can reduce reliability, especially when responses on multiple categories (Shreffler & Huecker, 2023).

In terms of descriptive, left-leaning respondents appear to be concerned and prioritise climate and environment and healthcare. Meanwhile, compared to centre-right respondents tend to be more frequently concerned about the economy and crime. These patterns seem to correlate with broader ideological differences in political priorities among the Swedish population. According to the report of Swedish Voting Behavior from Swedish National Election Studies program or SNES, the section of important various issues areas reveals that from 2002 to 2014, majority of people or voters tend to concerns more concerned about health care and welfare service as the top ranked priority, and followed by education, employment, immigration, and environment (Oscarsson & Holmberg, 2017). This pattern appears to partially resemble this sample. However, these observations need to be interpreted with caution since the presence of small cell sizes in the sample may limit the reliability when doing the comparison.

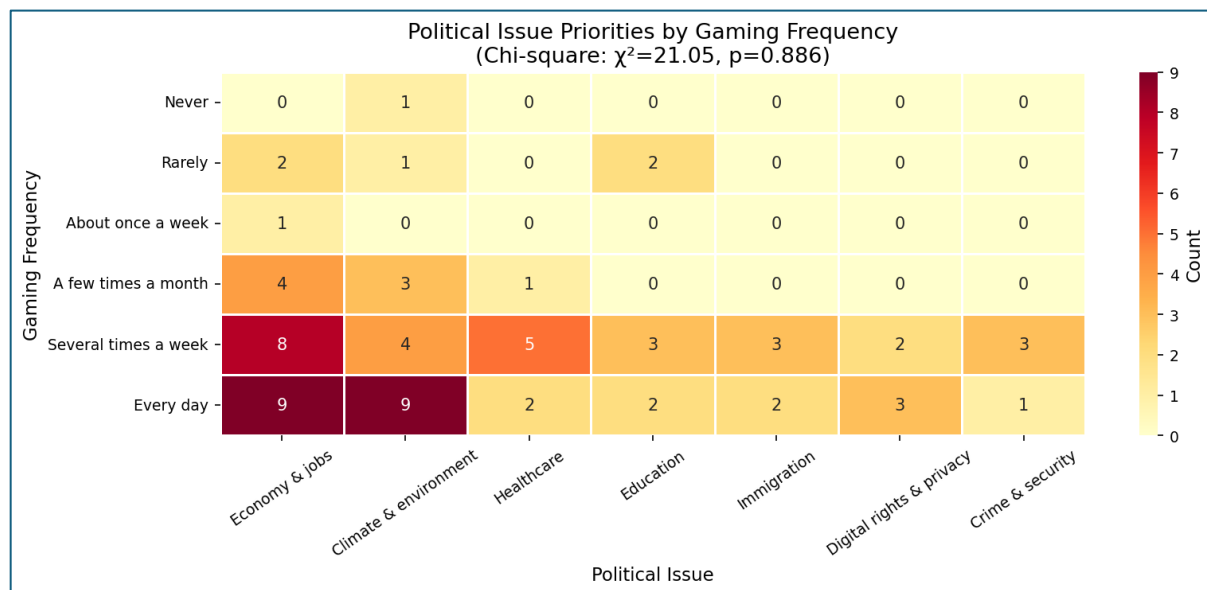


Figure 6: Political Issue Priorities varied by Gaming Frequency

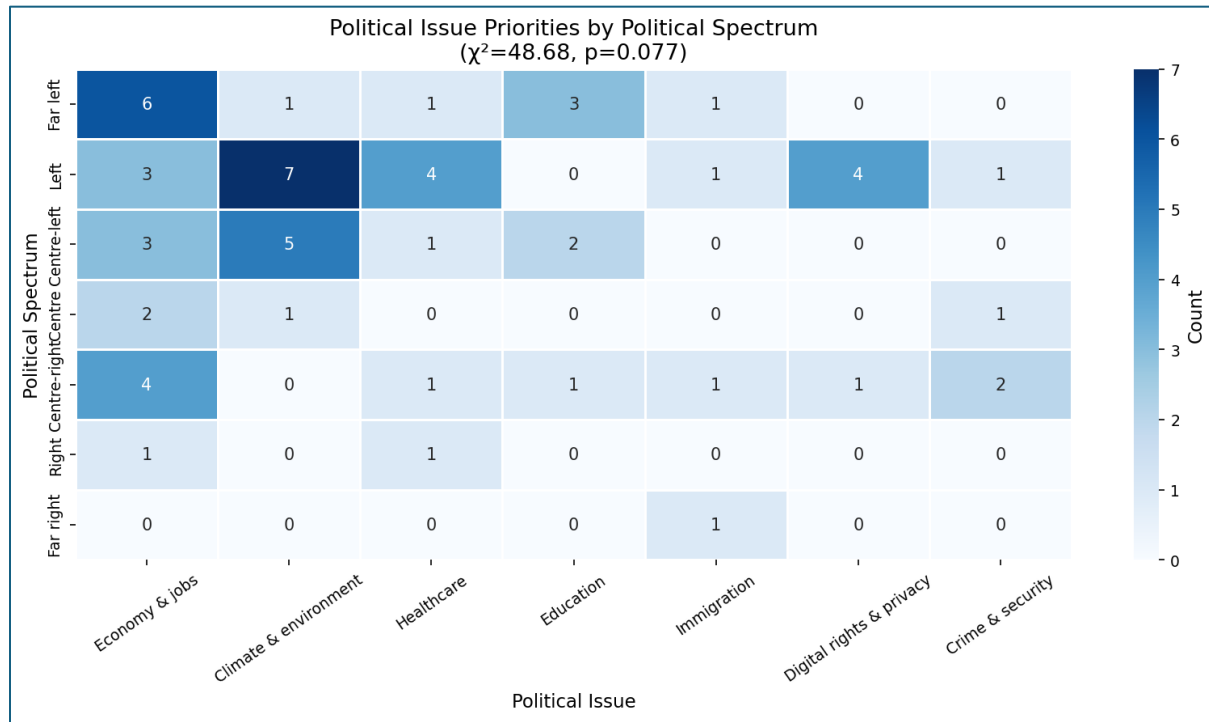


Figure 7: Political Issue Priorities varied by Political Spectrum

RQ2: Gaming Exposure and Political Attitudes

In these findings, the study applies the approach of Spearman correlation which implements the rank-order correlation to examine the associations between gaming exposure (gaming frequency, and and political attitude variables, due to the ordinal nature of the data.

Apparently, prominent factor from gaming exposure: gaming frequency appear to have no significant association with political interest among participants ($r= 0.018$, $p= 0.880$), political trust ($r= 0.079$, $p= 0.507$), or viewed games influence on politics ($r= 0.133$, $p= 0.267$).

However, there is a weak positive correlation was observed between gaming frequency and the assumption that gaming shapes players' political thinking ($r= 0.298$, $p= 0.11$), this suggests that the more frequent and repetitiveness players were more likely to incline gaming engagement was associated with perceptions that games influence political thinking. However, this relationship

does not appear to be statistically significant. Likewise, the second factor from gaming exposure: gaming hours per session seemingly share a similar pattern. As it has no significant associations were found with political interest ($r = 0.038$, $p = 0.750$) or seen games influence on politics ($r = 0.084$, $p = 0.482$).

However, there is a significant negative correlation discovered between gaming hours and political trust ($r = -0.264$, $p = 0.025$), indicating that respondents who played games for longer sessions appeared to report having lower trust in political institutions. Regardless, there is one strong finding in this study, it suggests the positive correlation between gaming hours and gaming shaping political thinking ($r = 0.453$, $p < 0.001$), implying that the more gaming engagement was greatly associated with a perspective that gaming influences player's political thinking. Other factors from game exposure: preferred genre were exploratory and analysed descriptively. The result suggests that players who prefer Strategy and Action/Shooter are reported to be slightly higher means on gaming shaping political thinking compared to players who prefer Puzzle/Casual genre, though there is no further tests were implemented at genre factors due to the overlapping and inclusive nature of genre categories. Supporting figures of political attitudes and gaming exposure can be seen in [Appendix A \(A5-7\)](#).

One limitation of these findings is that the small sample size may decrease statistical power and cause risk of Type II errors (Shreffler & Huecker, 2023). Therefore, those non-significant findings should be interpreted with caution, as such weak relationships could not be detectable within the current sample.

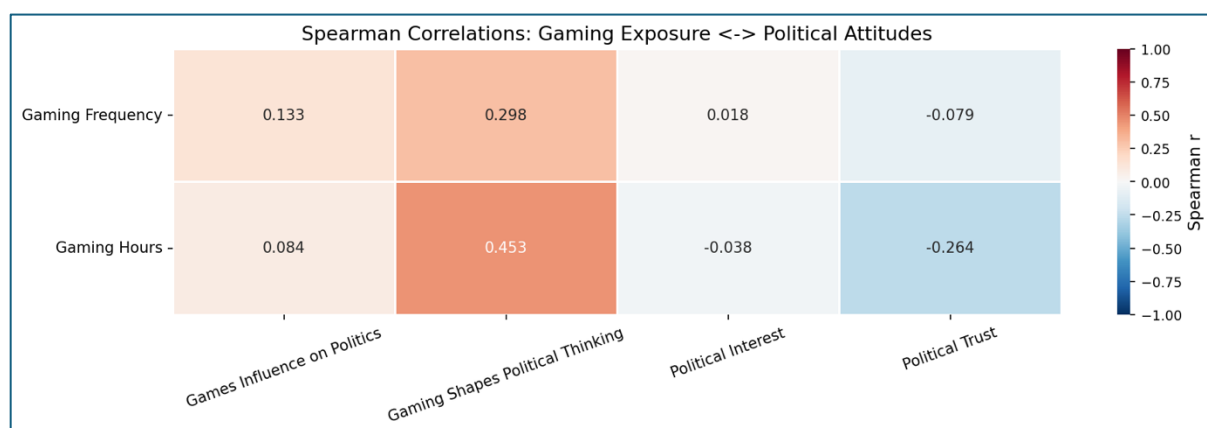


Figure 8. Spearman Correlations of Gaming Exposure and Political Attitudes

RQ3: Differences in Gender Perspectives

Control variables are also important to be included in the analysis, to examine whether the relationship between gaming exposure and attitudes varied by difference in gender, the study applies the Mann-Whitney U tests were used for comparing male (n= 44) and female (n= 23) respondents. Non-binary respondents (n= 4), and those who identified as Other (n= 1) were excluded from the comparison owing to the insufficient group size for reliability. However, the result suggests that no significant gender differences were found for political interest (U= 433.5, p= 0.311), or viewed games influence on politics (U= 533.5, p= 0.703).

Although, a statistically significant difference was found for the variable measuring whether gaming shapes political thinking (U= 742.5, p= 0.001). This implies that while both groups reported the levels of political interest and trust relatively, men were significantly more likely to view gaming as an influence on their political reasoning compared to women's perspective. Supporting figures regarding gender and age variables can be viewed in [Appendix A \(A8-10\)](#).

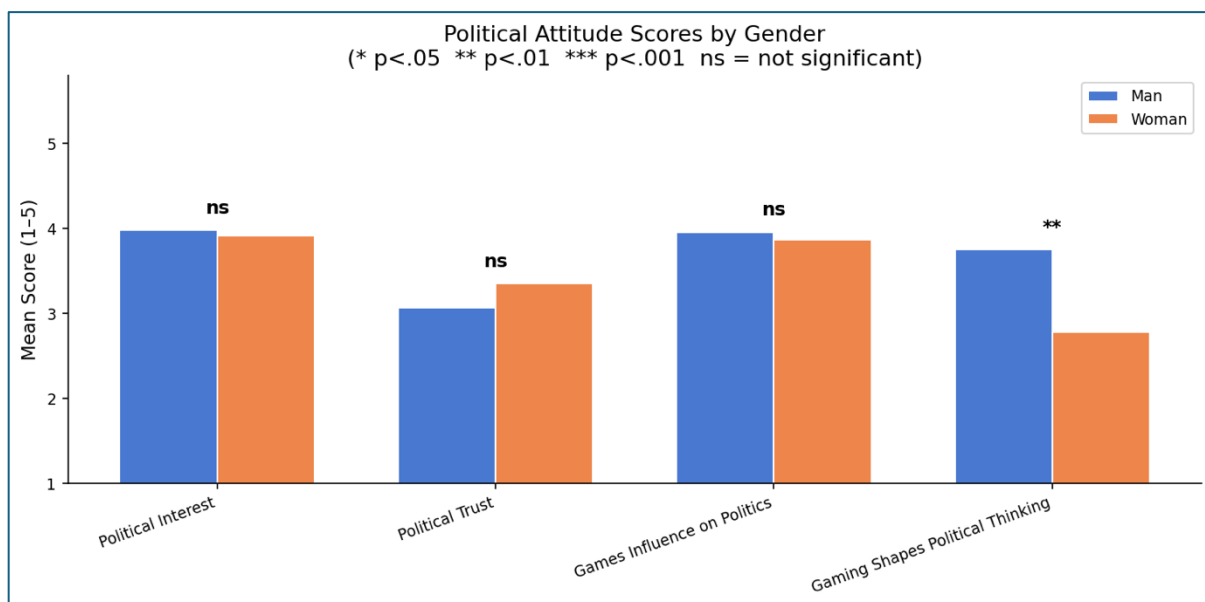


Figure 9: Political Attitudes Scores by Gender (Man, Woman)

Chapter 6

Discussion

6.1 Overview

In this chapter, I interpret the results and findings in Chapter 5 in relation to the theoretical frameworks and empirical literature reviewed from Chapter 2. The discussion is organised around the three research questions, followed by a clarification on the limitation and border implication from the study.

6.2 RQ1: Political Attitudes, Freedom of Speech, and Problem Issues

The descriptive results and findings suggest that respondents in this sample reflected moderately high levels of political interest ($M = 4.00$) and quite strong perception that games have political relevance ($M = 3.97$), while political trust remained relatively lower ($M = 3.17$). These patterns appear to be broadly consistent with existing research on youth political engagement, which indicates that younger generation people tend to have more level of political interest, but they somewhat have sceptical political institutions (Milosav et al., 2025).

In terms of political ideology, the outcome of the analysis reveals that a majority of respondents clearly referred to themselves as left or centre-left. Although, there is limitation of the generalisability of the findings, it may also reflect the social composition of survey distribution and recruitment strategy, mostly university networks such as student association between Malmö and Lund area, where majority of participants are students who mostly share left-leaning ideology. It is also worth considering that people with higher political interest may be inclined to participate in survey research regarding this topic, this may lead to a level of self-selection bias.

In part on freedom of speech, the findings show a quite moderate stance among respondents. The majority of participants appear to have mutual thoughts and agree in protecting speech while allowing some restrictions on harmful content, rather than favoured fully unrestricted or heavily restricted speech. This moderate in positioning is consistent with the broadly left and centre

political spectrum oriented individuals of the sample, where genuine civil liberties positions tend to be more common than absolutist groups. Notably, no significant gender differences were discovered in freedom of speech attitudes, implying that whether males or females, they are likely to share similar thoughts on this matter.

About the political issues priorities, the most relevant issues appear to be economy and jobs as the top, followed by climate and environment as runner-up. This correlates with broader patterns in the political priorities of young people in Sweden and is in line with a sample of most students and young workers who generally have concerns about money and jobs, economic stability, as well as environmental problems. The lack of significant association between gaming frequency and political issues priorities indicates that gaming exposure does not cultivate political issues that young adults tend to consider most concerns.

Most respondents reported that they occasionally come across political content in games, and many also reported that gaming tends to make them consider and think of political issues. This aligns with Jørgensen's (2022) conceptualisation of ludo-politics. This suggests that individuals find political meaning in games not just in those that are explicitly political, but inexplicit political content in different types of games, through game mechanics, narrative, and players' interpretation. This also connects with Bogost's (2007) notion of procedural rhetoric. This implies that virtual dynamic interactive entertainment such as games, could persuade players to think and perceive differently depending on whether variety of contents or excessive in engagement, similar to other like passive visual narrative representation.

6.3 RQ2: Gaming Exposure and Political Attitudes

According to Spearman correlation analysis, it shows a pattern of results that contains careful interpretation. Primarily, gaming frequency and hours per session revealed no significant association with political interest or general understanding that games influence politics. However, these two exposure variables appear to be significantly associated with more certain political attitudes that gaming shapes players' political thinking. Particularly for gaming hours ($r = 0.453$, $p < 0.001$) is strong, and moderately for gaming frequency ($r = 0.298$, $p = 0.011$).

This result is theoretically meaningful. It indicates that gaming exposure and engagement do not seem to shape general political interest or political awareness in the same way as other media or activities. Instead, more gaming engagement is linked to a stronger, and more personal feeling that games contribute to shaping how individuals are critical thinking and analytical in politics. This correlates with Bogost's argument that games do persuade players through interaction and systems instead of passive consumption. This means players who spend more time in gaming may develop a stronger awareness of how virtual mechanics of gameplay model political and social systems.

Another result is noteworthy, the negative correlation between gaming hours and political trust ($r = -0.264$, $p = 0.025$). Firstly, excessive gamers in this sample appear to report that they tend to have lower trust in political institutions. Following Von der Heiden et al. (2019), intensive gaming engagement tends to be associated with psychological dysfunction such as social withdrawal and reduced social interaction, which may lead individuals to feel more cynical and refrained from political engagement formally. On the other hand, gamers who spend more time significantly with games that simulate governance, social conflict and systems or simulation or strategy genres, could develop more critical thinking about politics and scepticism in political institutions, this matter can be used for further study or examination.

The lack of significant associations between gaming exposure and political interest is also worth discussing. Instead, it suggests that games have no particular political relevance, this null result may show that gaming functions as one of the many overlapping influences on political socialisation, and its contribution on broad political interest is hard to examine without concern for confounding variables such as education, news media consumption, or others. For further study or future research, it can use multivariate regression to explore whether gaming exposure could predict political attitudes while keeping other factors constant.

The comparison among genre-levels were exploratory and descriptive. Players who preferred Strategy and Action/Shooter were reported to have slightly higher means of shaping political thinking compared to those players who preferred Puzzle/ Casual genre. This correlates with the idea from Kemper (2025) that rule-bound, decision-oriented game environments may influence and develop players' skill in political reasoning. However, given the nature of self-reported genre categories, these differences should be understood with caution.

6.4 RQ3: Gender Differences

The most statistically robust findings in this analysis, regarding the gender difference in the belief that gaming shapes individuals's political thinking. Apparently, male respondents' scores has higher in significant compare to female respondents on this variable ($M= 3.75$, $F= 2.78$, $p= .001$), while there is no significant gender differences were found for political interest, political trust, freedom of speech attitudes, or perception of political influence in games. This finding correlates with broader patterns found in the literature. Milosav et al. (2025) discover an important gender gap in youth political engagement, as young men tend to adopt politically engaged or political stances through entertainment media. The present findings may reveal not only differences between men and women related to gaming as a political space, but also different types of games played and intensity of engagement. Regarding the descriptive analysis, male respondents in this report showed higher overall gaming frequency, which correlates with the outcome in question.

Notably, it should consider how gendered gaming cultures could shape this relationship. Generally, the report shows that men and women tend to engage games differently, this includes genre preferences, playtime, and social context. Moreover, given that gaming communities have been culturally aligned with male identity and predominantly by men communities (Von der Heiden et al., 2019). If men are more likely to engage in a particular genre such as political simulation or strategy games, and report gaming as a meaningful part of their social identity, it should be more likely that they view gaming as an influence on their political thinking.

However, it is crucial to note the lack of gender differences in political interest, political trust, and freedom of speech attitudes. This means that the gender gap found is specifically about how much people think gaming influences their political views, not about overall engagement. In other words, gaming may play a more important role in cultivating political views for young men than for young women, but this does not entirely imply that young women are less interested or involved in politics overall.

6.5 Limitations

There are some limitations that should be considered and must be acknowledged in interpreting these findings. First, the sample of 72 people ($n = 72$) was chosen for convenience from university networks and online groups, so the results may not entirely apply to all young adults in Sweden. Most participants from the survey were students, shared left politically, and lived in the Malmö and Lund area, which might not be able to represent the broader population regardless even if other participants were from other cities in Sweden. Second, due to this study being considered as static analysis since it focuses at one point in time, it cannot say for sure what is causation or casual relationship here. The connections found could mean that people who are interested in politics choose political games, or that engaging these games influence their political thinking.

Third, the data are self-reported, which could potentially lead to bias or inaccuracy when recalling gaming habits or political opinions. Also, using only single questions to measure political issues and freedom of speech may limit how deeply or insightful the study can analyse these topics. Lastly, the small subgroup sizes in demographic such as non-binary respondents ($n = 4$) and those with right-leaning views, so doing the comparison between these groups to others was not entirely reliable.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Summary of Findings

This study embarks to examine whether players' exposure to video games is associated with political attitudes among young adults in Sweden, and whether this relationship varies by gender. Emphasising on quantitative online survey (n= 72), and a theoretical framework that oriented around concepts of procedural rhetoric, ludo-politics, and youth political socialisation, the study produced several findings that provide meaningful interpretation.

In response to RQ1, regarding the inquirement of **Political Attitudes Among Young Adults Gamers**, the sample of young adult gamers revealed moderate to high levels of political interest and a strong perception of seeing games as politically relevant spaces, while trust in political institutions appeared to be relatively lower. In terms of other components in political attitudes, a perception of viewing freedom of speech attitudes appears to be primarily moderate, with most of the participants inclining of protected speech with some restrictions on harmful content. Among top political issues priorities, the majority of participants concern more about economy and jobs, followed by climate and environment issues.

In response to RQ2, concerning the question of **Gaming Exposure and Political Attitudes**, gaming exposure appeared to have no significant association with political interest, freedom of speech attitudes, or political issue priorities. However, particular components in gaming exposure such as gaming frequency and session hours seem to have significant and positively associated with the personal belief that gaming shapes individuals' political thinking. Moreover, excessive gaming sessions appear to have negative correlation with political trust. These findings indicate that the political influence from gaming is more likely to be personal and thoughtful, rather than manifesting in broad civic engagement or specific political positions.

To respond to RQ3, in the matter of **Differences in Gender Perspectives**, there is a statistically significant gender difference that is specifically found in the belief that gaming shapes political thinking ($p= 0.001$). As a result, male respondents scored significantly higher than female

respondents. However, there were no notable gender differences in political interest, political, trust, freedom of speech attitudes, or political issue priorities. This shows that the gap is specifically related to gaming as a perceived source of political influence which means that the difference between males and females is only seen from their thoughts of gaming affects their political views.

7.2 Theoretical Implications

These findings contribute to growing research showing that video games are important cultural and political media. The results support the idea of procedural rhetoric from Bogost (2007), which means that games in general share political content and message through how they function and how players interact with them, not just passively informed players or audiences. This is shown by the fact that people who engage more tend to feel a stronger political influence from gaming. The findings also correlate with the concept of ludo-politics from Jørgensen, which perceive games as virtual spaces for players to experience, express, and interpret political contents and messages while playing them.

Similarly, the findings are consistent with concept of ludo-politics from Jørgensen (2022) and other such as Sicart (2013) or Mortensen & Jørgensen (2020), conceptualises video games as political spaces where players experience, interpret, and negotiate political ideas during gameplay. Likewise, the result reflects how strategy genre preferred players tend to be politically interested from the highest mean which correlate with the idea of ludo-politics.

Simultaneously, owing to the fact that there were no significant differences in political interest, freedom of speech attitudes, or political issues priorities. It indicates that games are considered as one of the many influences on how people learn and develop about politics, as they are not primary or main influence to people. This is consistent with the cultivation theory, which emphasizes how repeated exposure to media gradually cultivates people's thoughts and perception over time, but it does not entirely replace other important or strong influences such as family background, education level, environment, or news media (Shrum, 2017).

Furthermore, the findings can be connected to border discussions of youth political engagement in Sweden. One study argues that even though Swedish youth often participate less in conventional

political activities such as voting or party membership, younger generations increasingly engage politically through digital and alternative forms of participation (Grahn & Uba, 2026) . This observation is relevant to the present study, as video games represent as famous platforms of digital media engagement, especially among young adults. The findings thereby support the idea that political socialisation among younger generations may be cultivated from digital culture environments more than traditional environments.

In addition, the study's findings regarding gender differences provide partial support for existing research on youth political behaviour. Previous studies have shown that young men and young women differ both in patterns of media consumption and political engagement. This supports arguments from youth political behaviour research that political socialisation is shaped not only by attitudes themselves, but also by how individuals experience and engage with media environments.

Overall, the study contributes theoretically by connecting perspectives from game studies, media effects theory, and political socialisation research. Instead of considering video games as politically neutral entertainment, the findings advocate the view that gaming environments may operate as subtle but meaningful spaces through which younger generations encounter, interpret, and reflect upon political ideas within contemporary digital culture.

7.3 Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, these findings suggest that video games can be considered as an informal site where young people, particularly among young men who tend to engage game excessively, develop their political thinking and ideas. This may be crucial for political communication and civic education because if games are viewed as shaping political thinking, they could potentially be a useful but overlooked way to engage young adults in political conversations. On the other hand, the negative association between gaming and political trust raises concerns about whether intensive gaming may lead some people to be less interested in politics, or even more cynical among certain groups, which needs more research.

7.4 Directions for Future Research

There are many directions for future research and possibility to examine mutual topics from this study. First of all, a larger and bigger demographic sample would allow for more robust subgroup comparison and multivariate analysis, granting researchers to be able to control for confounding variables such as educational level, news media consumption, and political socialisation. Secondly, in further study, a longitudinal design would be greatly helpful in forming causal direction, for example, whether gaming engagement shapes individuals' political attitudes over time or whether high politics interested individuals preference fit to certain gaming genres and habits. Third, qualitative methods could potentially complement the quantitative findings from this study through navigating and capturing insightfulness from descriptive data through individual players' experience and interpret political content in games. Lastly, for the future research and further study, future researchers could adapt this study to research in the gaming industry whether to explore more in social science aspects, laws and regulation, economic study, business and finance, or other relevant studies.

7.5 Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, this study provides preliminary evidence that game exposure is linked to certain political attitudes among young adults in Sweden, particularly in relation to the personal perception that gaming influences their political thinking and trust in institutions. However, attitudes about freedom of speech and political issues priorities were not entirely connected to gaming, suggesting that the political impact of gaming showed no significant link toward gaming exposure, highlighting the boundaries of gaming's political influence and emphasising the importance of varying between different dimensions of political attitudes when measuring media effects.

Consequently, while this study is based and grounded in the Swedish context, the findings suggest that it may carry broader relevance. As in terms of Sweden, they have high gaming engagement and strong democratic culture which make a useful starting point to investigate, but the relationship between gaming exposure and political socialisation is likely to manifest in other countries that have similar traits in highly economic stability, and digitally connected democracies. As the gaming industry continues to globalise, with a variety of platforms, genres, and communities that

transcend national borders. Future research and further study could examine whether these associations replicate in different political and cultural contexts, such as other Nordic countries, leading gaming industry countries in Europe, or other nations that may carry greater weight and involvement in gaming industry, as well as concerns in the political environment and contents.

Lastly, this study invites researchers and policymakers to prioritise and take concern of political dimensions of nowadays media consumption among young people. If gaming environments are indeed becoming spaces where political contents are encountered and reflected upon, then understanding these processes become more important as digital media continues to reshape how younger generations engage with the political world.

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Appendix

Appendix A (Supporting Figures)

Figure A1. Sample Demographic Results

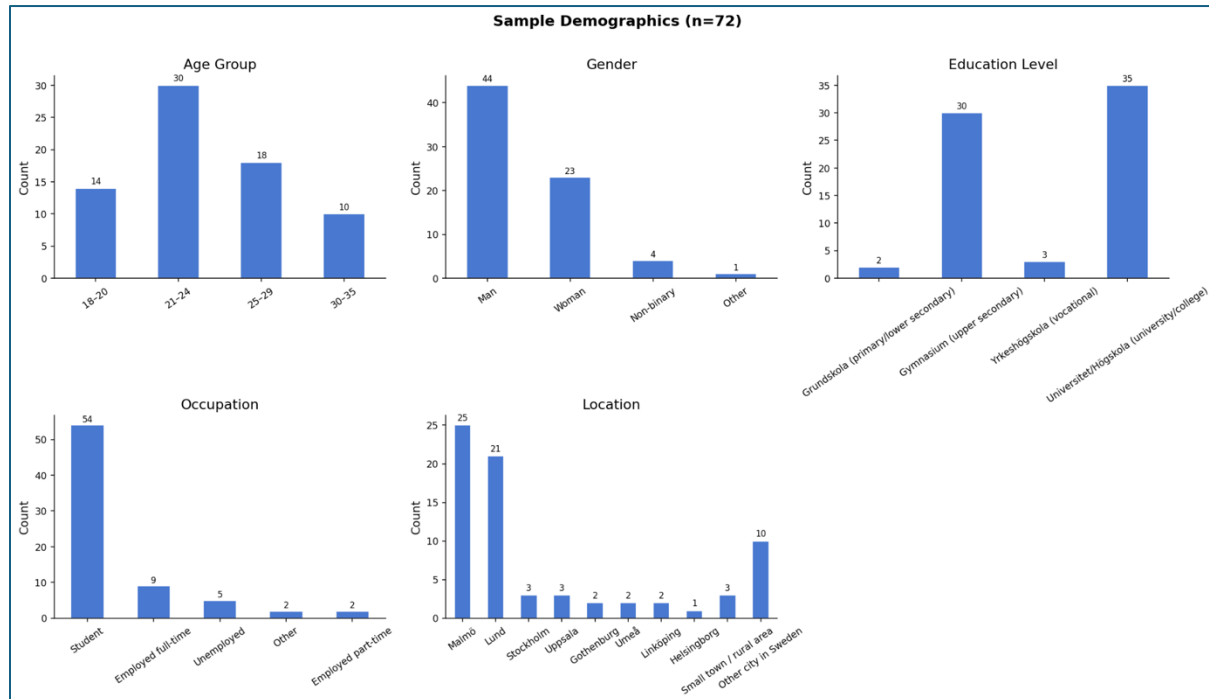


Figure A2. Political Spectrum of Respondents

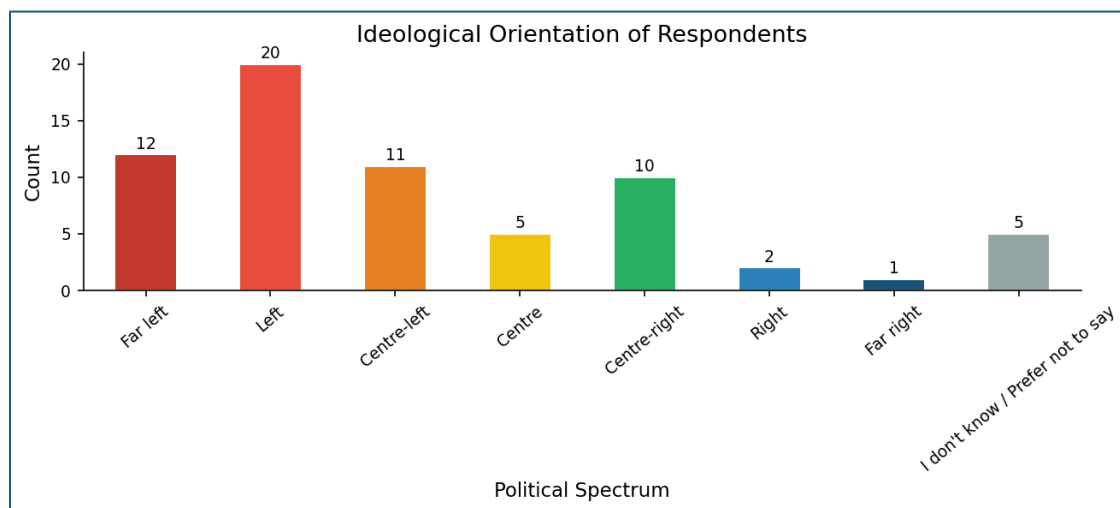


Figure A3. Gaming Exposure with Gaming Frequency and Hours per Session

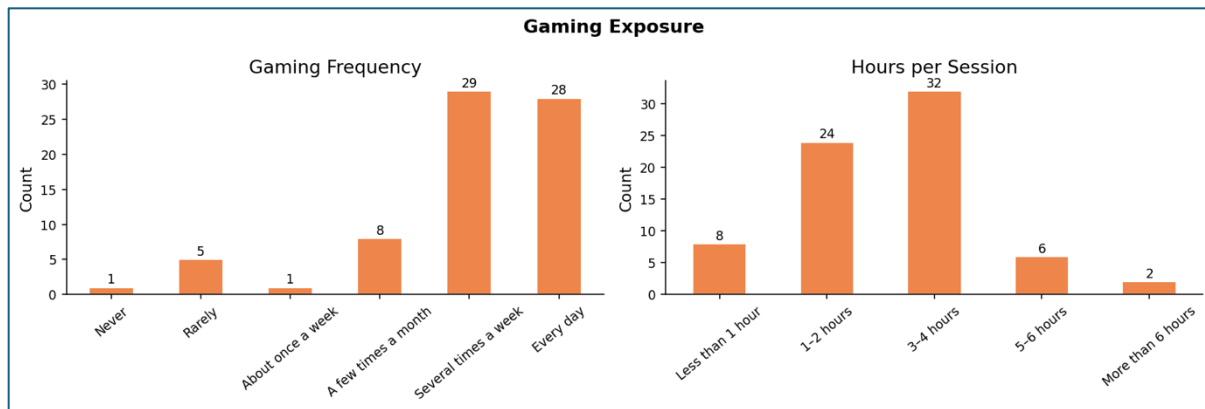


Figure A4. Most Important Political Issues By Respondents

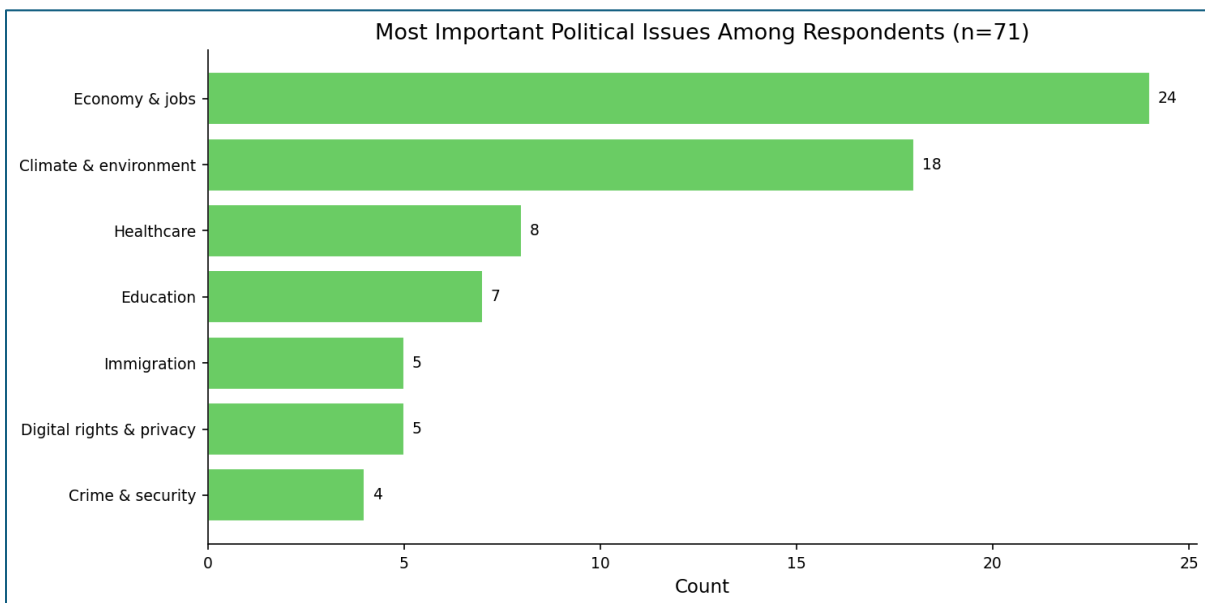


Figure A5. Mean Political Attitudes (Interest, Trust, Influence, Shaping) by Gaming Frequency

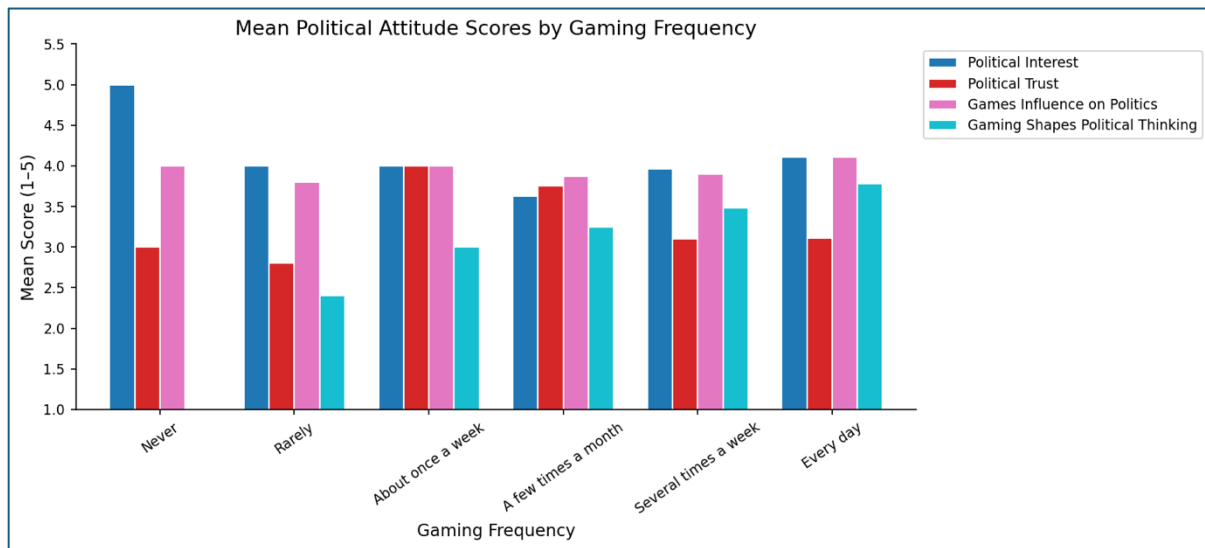


Figure A6. Mean Political Attitudes (Interest, Trust, Influence, Shaping) by Gaming Hours

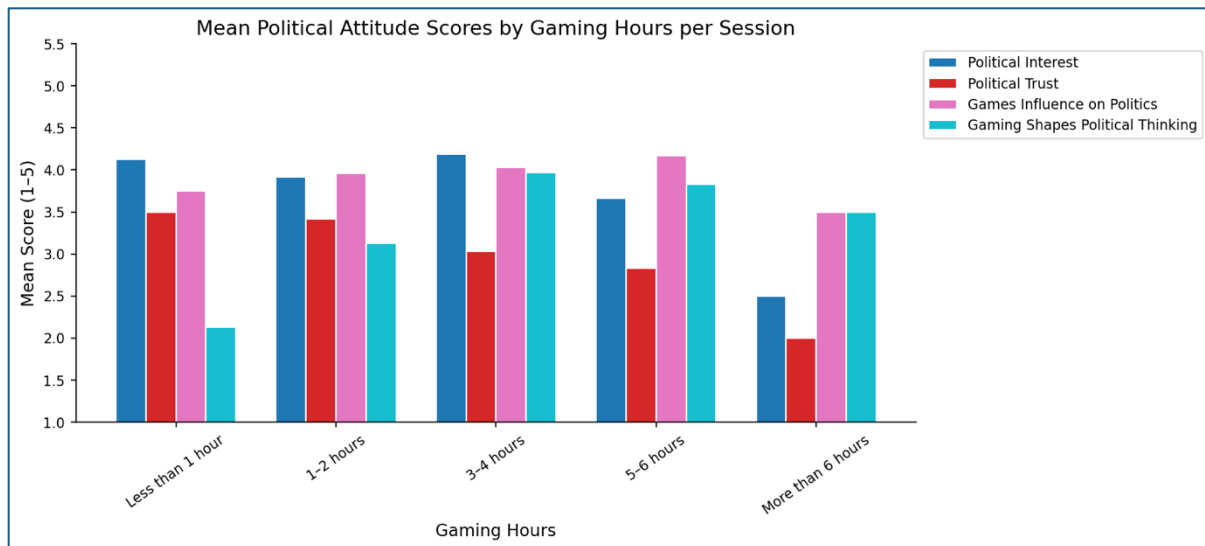


Figure A7. Mean Political Attitudes (Interest, Trust, Influence, Shaping) by Gaming Genre

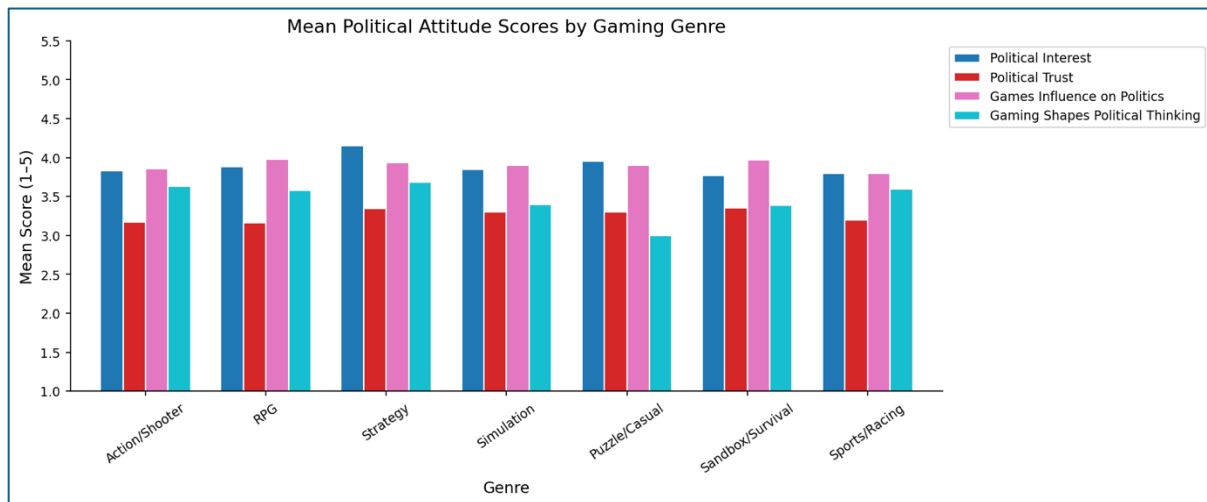


Figure A8. Gaming Frequency by Gender (Man, Woman)

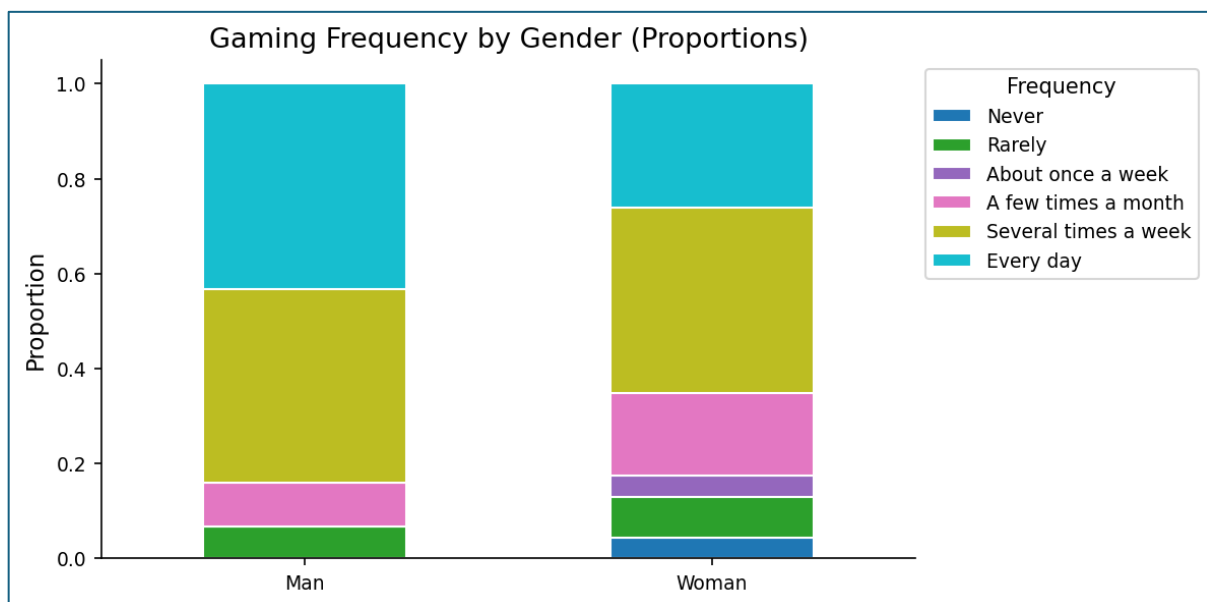


Figure A9. Political Interest by Gaming Frequency and Gender (Man, Woman)

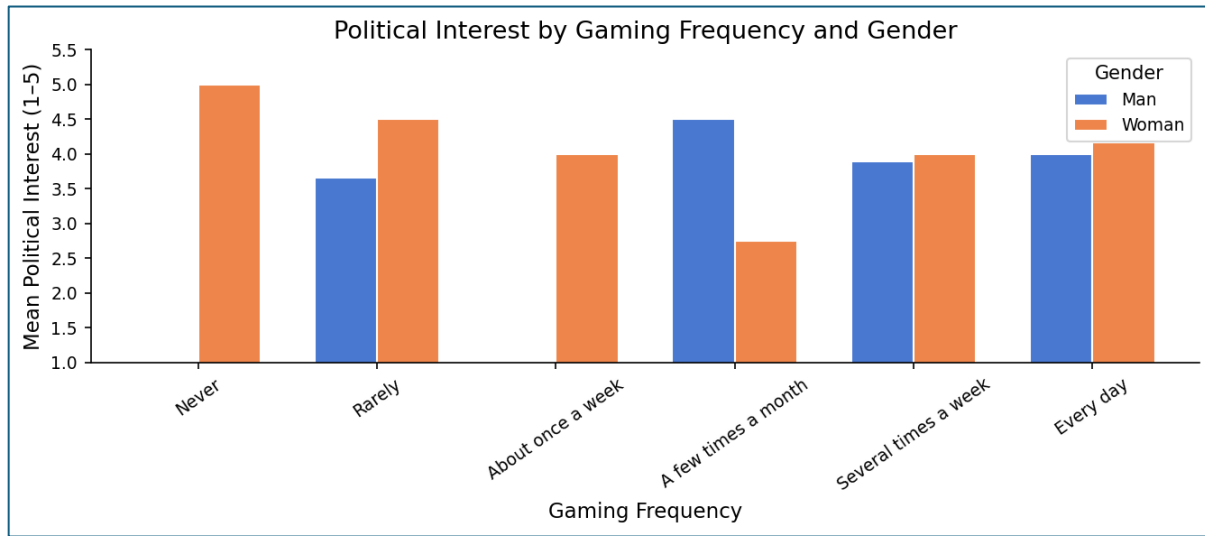


Figure A10. Political Interest by Education and Age

