

Media consumption in Hungary

Television channels, news portals, social media

A STUDY OF THE REPUBLIKON INSTITUTE



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SUMMARY

- The overarching conclusion is that the Hungarian population's majority still gets their information from television. Most people watch RTL Klub, followed by TV2 closely. These two channels attract the most interest daily out of all the mediums.
- 56% of the respondents gain information from news portals on the internet. The three most popular news portal is Origo, Index and 24.hu.
- Social media is an increasingly important area of political communication and it is not a coincidence: looking at the daily traffic of all the mediums in this research, Facebook has a clear dominance. Half of the respondents use it on an everyday basis. Despite all of this, a clear opposition to Facebook is visible: about one third of the respondents said that they never use Facebook. Instagram has also gained influence in the past years. It is used by one third of the respondents; however, 60% said they do not use the app at all. All in all, Instagram on a daily basis is still used by as many people as watches the state television.
- There is a demographic cleavage between the people who watch news on the television and who read it on news portals. TV news is watched by older people and people with a lower level of education, moreover by people who live in civil perishes. Gaining information from news portals is more common among younger respondents with a higher level of education, living in bigger cities.
- The mode of media consumption is more influenced by social status than by party preference. From a media consumption perspective, unsure voters often differ more from both the voters of the opposition and the government than the two groups from each other. The reason of this could be the unsure voters' apolitical attitude.

INTRODUCTION

The state of the Hungarian media was a fiercely debated topic in the past years. The media dominance of the party in government is often discussed, as well as the appropriation of the state media to spread political messages. We label every Hungarian medium as either government or opposition sided, and we create our own information bubbles according to this. However, into these bubbles only truths we personally accept can get through. In the Republikon Institute’s following analysis, the Hungarian society’s media consumption habits are going to be presented based on a large-N study. The ratings of some of the most popular TV channels, news portals and the two most prevalent social media platforms are going to be discussed. After which the question of how often these mediums is used to gain information is going to be analyzed. The purpose of this research is to provide insights to the readers on how the different demographic cleavages gain their information and through what kind of mediums. The demographic characteristics used in this research are for example age, sex, level of education and party preference.

GENERAL MEDIA CONSUMPTION

The daily and weekly ratings of TV channel’s newsprograms (%)

Daily ratings, TV channels (%)		Weekly ratings, TV channels (%)	
RTL	37	RTL	78
TV2	31	TV2	73
MTVA	19	MTVA	46
ATV	11	ATV	38
HírTV	5	HírTV	28

Figure 1. The daily and weekly views of TV channels for the purpose of gaining information(%)

In the first figure the studied TV channels are presented in an ascending order. The order is based on the proportions of the respondents who answered that they watch one of the channels news/political program daily or at least once a week in order to gain information. By these responses, on both occasions RTL Klub is the most popular TV channel followed closely by TV2. The two commercial channel by far are the most popular in our society, both are watched by three-thirds of the respondents at least once a week. They are followed by the public service TV with a notable fallback; less than half of the respondents (46%) said that they watch the

channel's news programs at least once a week. In this perspective MTVA is closer to ATV rating wise than to the two leading commercial channels.

The views of newsportals for the purpose of gaining information (%)

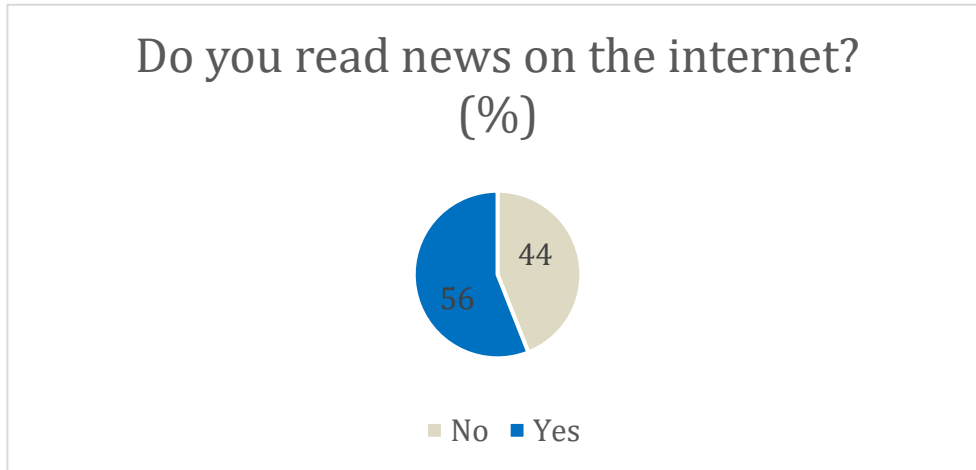


Table 2. The views of newsportals for the purpose of gaining information (%)

Only 56% of the respondents answered that they read news on the internet or visit news portals. This is a surprising number since we often talk about internet usage as something most of the population takes part of. However, it is still prevalent that media on the internet still does not get to a notable part of the population. Questions about news portals were only asked to respondents who answered yes to this question. Henceforth when one of the news portal's usage is discussed, it is only this 56% that it relates to.

Daily ratings, news portals (%)		Weekly ratings, news portals (%)	
Origo	17	Origo	65
24.hu	14	24.hu	64
Index	13	Index	60
444	8	444	42
Hvg	8	Hvg	41
Blikk	5	Blikk	36
Telex	5	Telex	22

Table 3. Daily and Weekly views of news portals for the purpose of gaining information (%)

It is visible, that Origo, Index and 24.hu are by far the most visited news portals. In a close competition Origo is currently the most popular both from the perspective of daily and weekly usage. Origo is visited at least once a week by two-thirds of the respondents. 444.hu, hvg.hu, blikk.hu and telex.hu are all close to each other, but have fewer daily viewings than the first three. It is important to note however, that the data was collected in February and as a relatively young portal telex.hu most likely have significantly increased its popularity ever since.

Facebook's usage in the whole population (%)

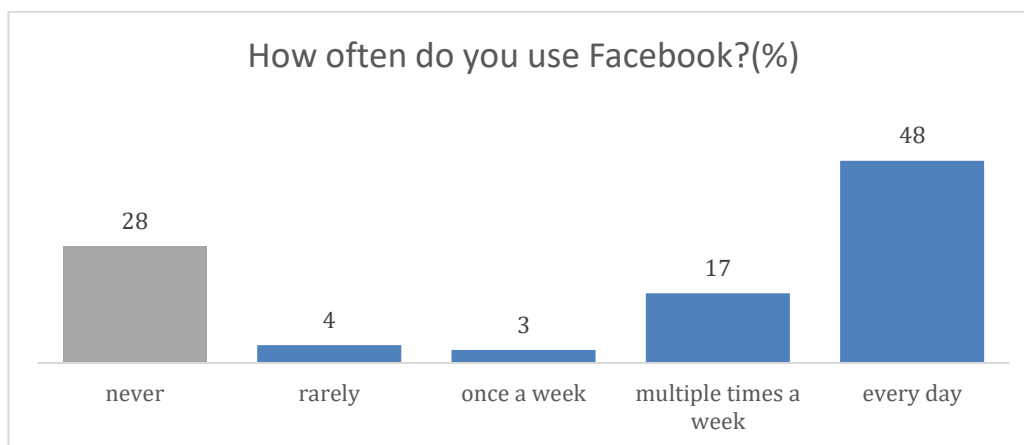


Table 4. Usage of Facebook in the whole population (%)

Close to half of the population uses Facebook every day, it is significantly more used than any of the news portals. 68%, so two-thirds of the respondents use Facebook at least once a week. This is a higher number than the top three news portal's (Origo, Index, 24.hu) weekly views combined. Even though the commercial TV channels (RTL, TV2) are viewed more in the weekly breakdown, there is no medium which is visited more on a daily basis than Facebook.

It is important to mention, that more than one fourth of the population (28%) never uses Facebook.

Usage of Instagram in the whole population (%)

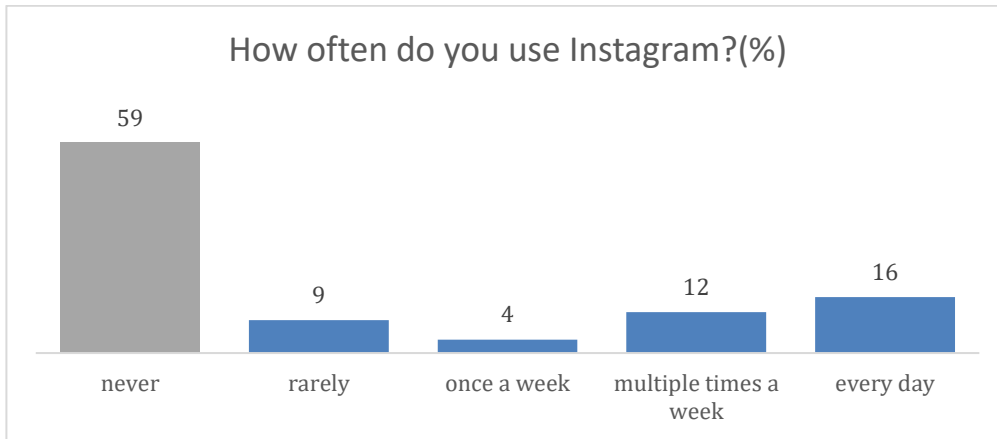


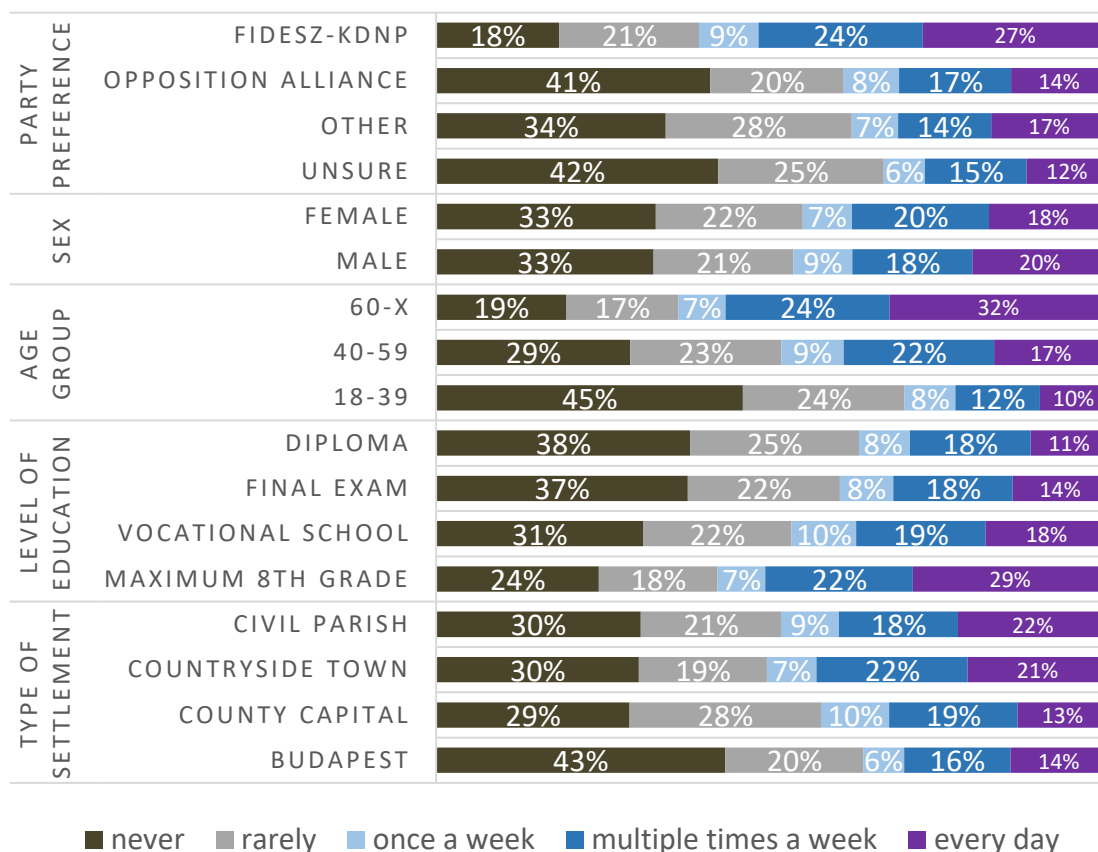
Table 5. Usage of Instagram in the whole population (%)

By looking at the whole population, Instagram has not yet reached Facebook's popularity in Hungary. 59% of the respondents answered that they never use Instagram, the proportion of daily visitors is 16% and the proportion of the people who use it at least once a week is 32%. Compared to the news portals the proportion of daily visitors is notable here as well. Although Instagram's 16% daily views could be called small compared to Facebook's 48%, it is still higher than any of the news portals. It is visible, that it is not by accident that social media platforms are becoming the focus of political communication. It is a fast, easy and accessible medium which could be a pivotal tool to stay connected to the voter base. Let us not forget however, that there are people who are impossible to reach through Instagram.

DEMOGRAPHICS

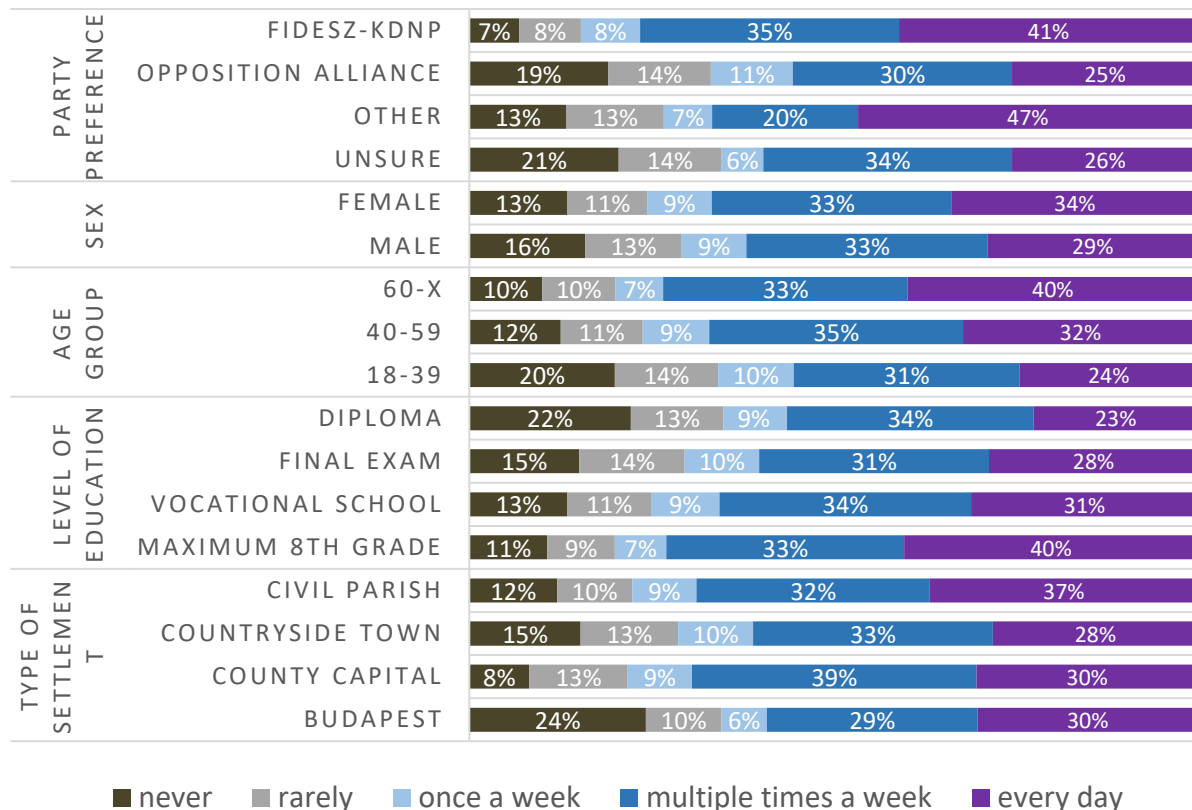
The ratings of the most popular TV channels' news programs in demographic groups

HUNGARIAN TELEVISION



With the help of the demographic breakdown, we can create the viewer profile of the mediums. The daily views of MTVA are very high in three groups: voters of Fidesz-KDNP, people above age 60 and people with maximum 8th grade education. These news programs' views are less than average between the youth, people with a diploma, unsure voters, opposition voters and people in major cities. It is a though a misconception that opposition voters do not watch the public service TV, since 40% watch it at least once a week.

TV2



TV2's views are pretty high in the whole population; the demographic proportions are close to what was seen in the case of MTVA. Fidesz voters, people with lower education and older people here as well are eminent. The lowest ratings of TV2 are among people with a diploma, opposition and unsure voters. Moreover, the views are less than average among people from Budapest too.

RTL KLUB

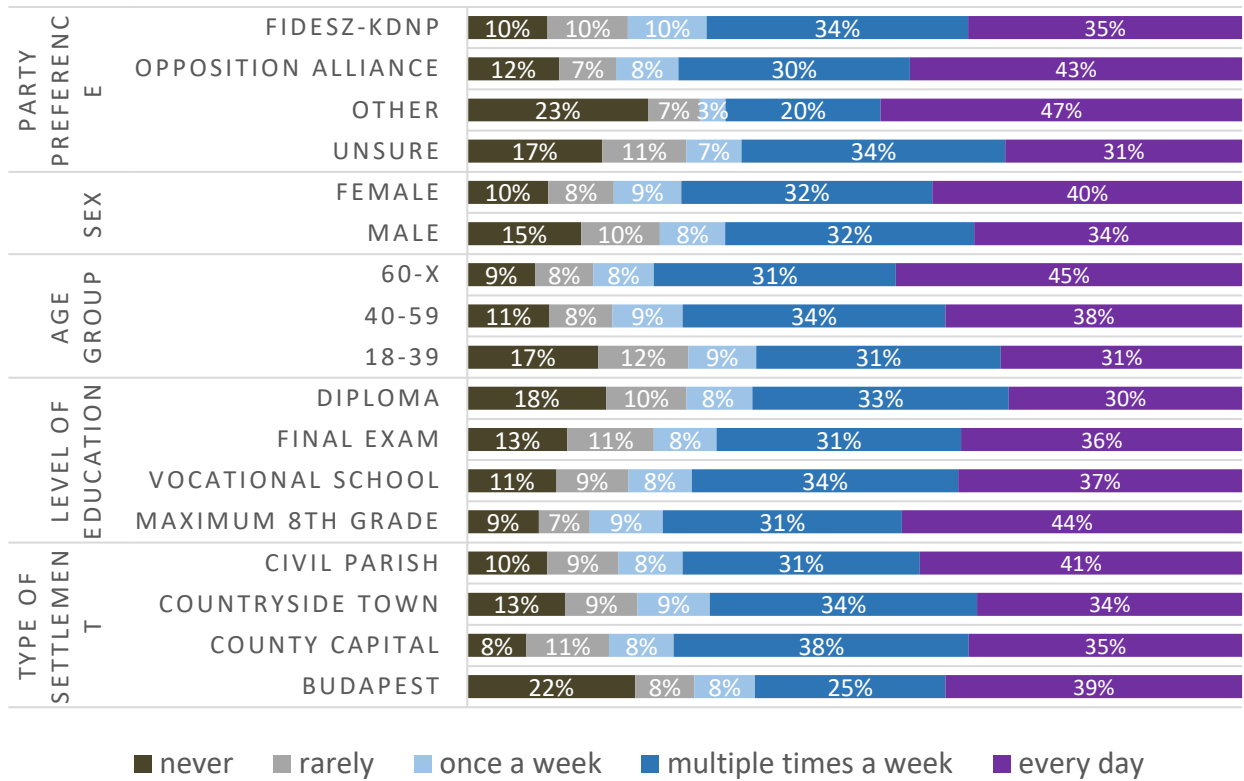


Table 6-8. MTVA, TV2 and RTL news programs' ratings in the whole population (%)

Overall, there is a lot of people who watch RTL Klub, however old people and people with lower levels of education here too are eminent. Therefore, based on the three TV channel's data, one is able to draw the conclusion that these groups watch significantly more television than an average Hungarian, and are more likely to use TV as an information source. People with diploma and unsure voters watch this channel less as well.

It is a visible trend, that people from Budapest often state that they do not gain their information from television. The same statement applies to respondents with a diploma. Based on the above discussed data, it is important to note the following connections: (a.) the more education the respondent has, the less TV they watch or rely on television for information, (b.) the older the respondent is, the more they rely on TV for information and most likely they watch more TV as well, (c.) for younger people the opposite applies, in general they do not gain their information from TV.

Demographic groups gaining information from sources on the internet

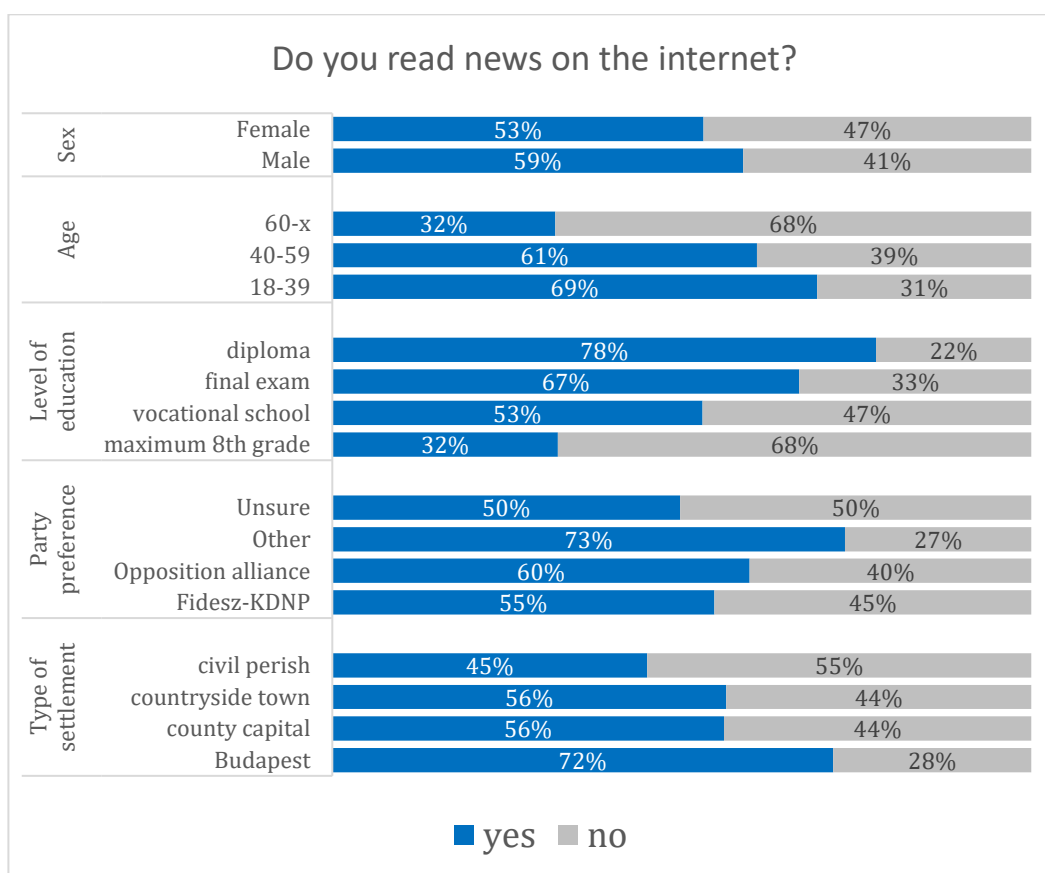
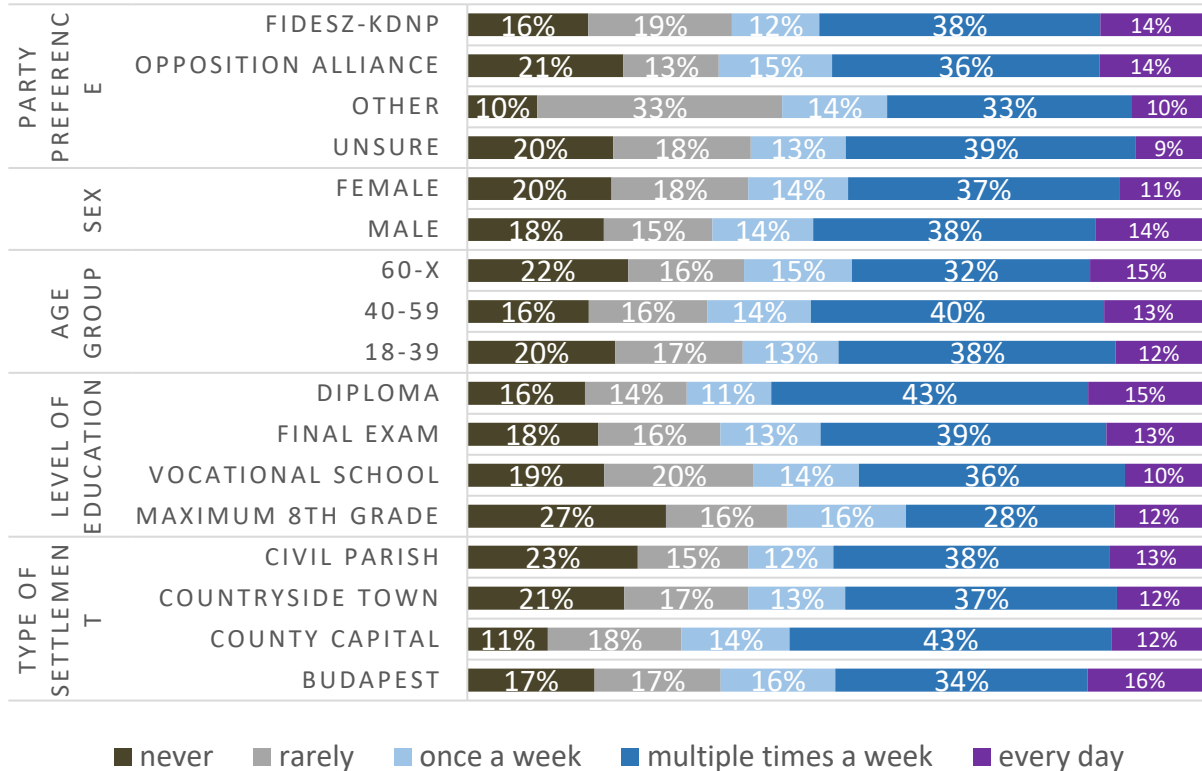


Table 9. Use of the internet for information in demographic groups (%)

The demographic data on the usage of internet is very similar to the trends discussed about TV. The level of education and settlement size both are significant factors of gathering information on the internet. The higher the education is, the more likely that the respondent visits news portals and the bigger the settlement they live in the same applies more. The trends about age are reversed: the older the respondents, the less likely they visit news portals. Therefore, it is concludable, that there is a cleavage in the modes of gaining information: there are multiple significant demographic distinctions between the people who watch TV and the people who use the internet. The younger people with a higher education living in bigger cities prefer internet, while the older people with lower education living in smaller settlements prefer television. It is interesting however, that apart from the public service TV, party preference is less of an influential factor, than other demographic characteristics.

The ratings of the most popular news portals in demographic groups

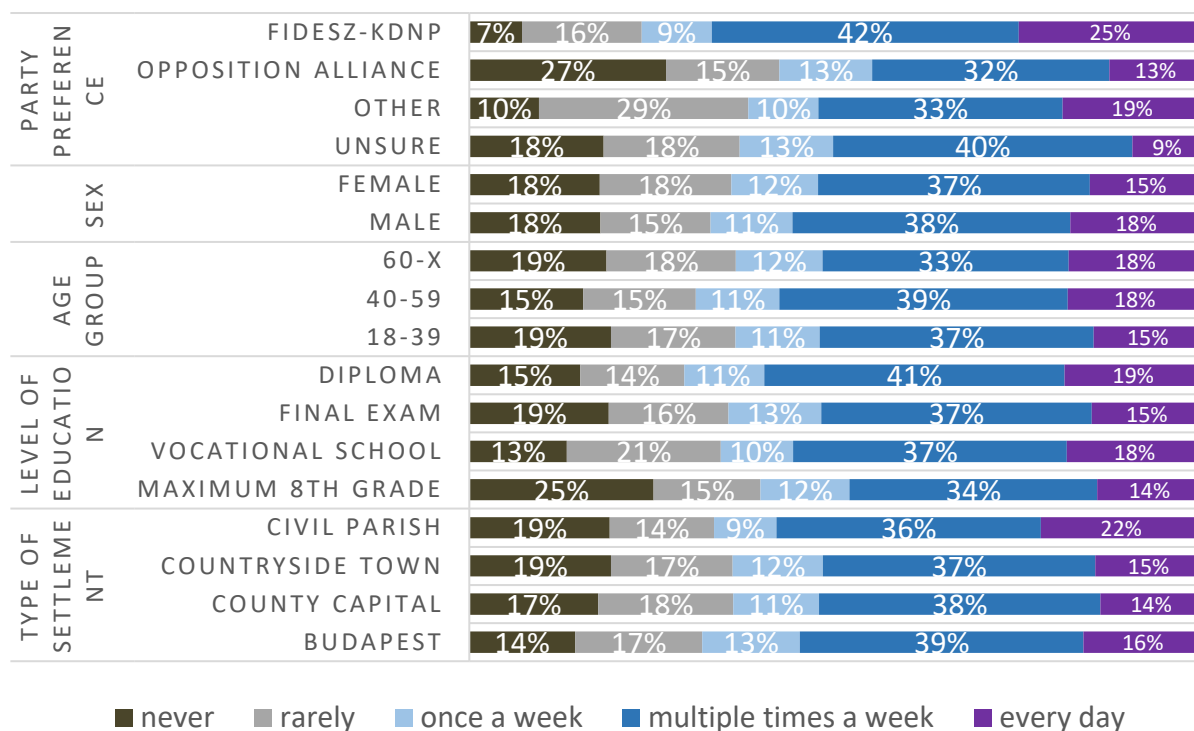
INDEX.HU



Similarly, to the most popular TV channels, in the case of popular news portals we can also find differences between certain demographic groups. For instance, Index's weekly views are significant in the population of county capitals and within the people with higher education. Among people with lower levels of education Index has low ratings.

While in the ratings of 24.hu and Origo it is recognizable which political groups consider it as their own, Index has a balanced readership. Index's ratings are more or less equal between Fidesz and opposition voters, thus Index has a significant reach in both camps.

ORIGO.HU



Origo, not surprisingly, has a significant following among Fidesz voters, moreover, here even the previously discussed trends are not fully applicable: Contrary to what is expected, this news portal's ratings do not increase in proportion to the size of the settlement, it is even the highest among people living in civil parishes (same with Fidesz-KDNP). In addition, a high percentage of people with a diploma read Origo as well.

24.HU

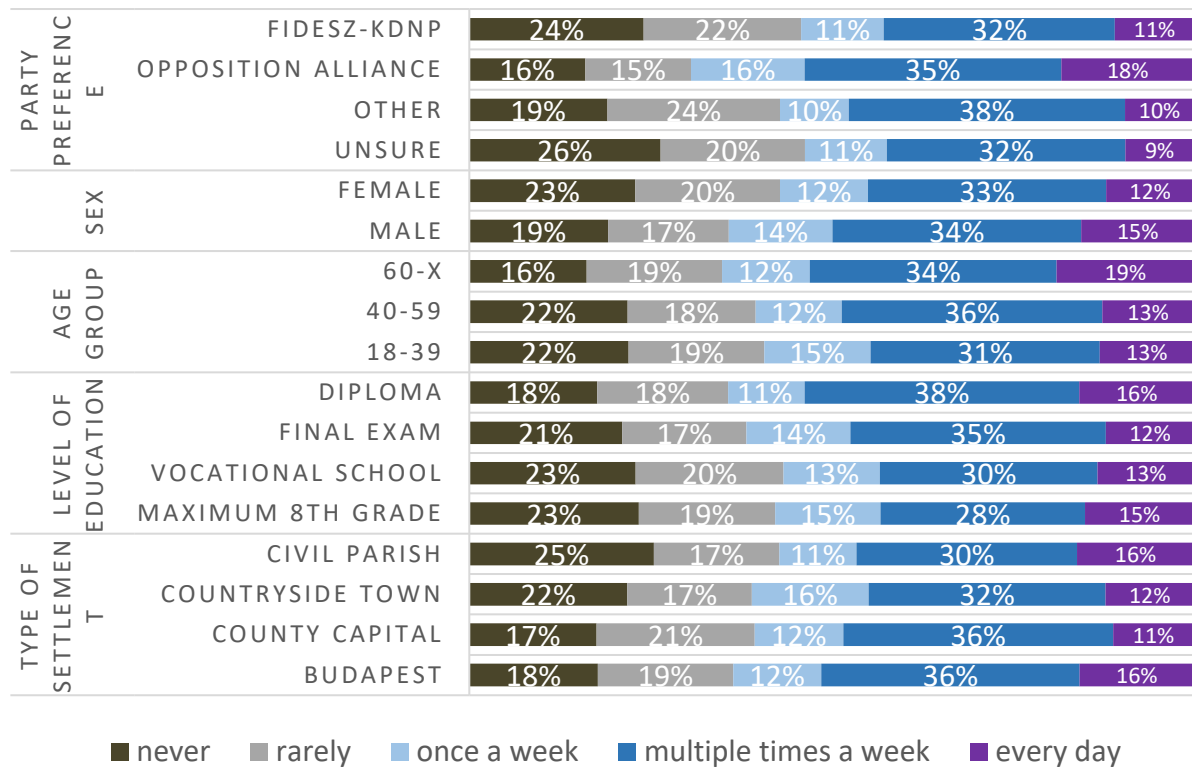


Table 10-12. The ratings of Index, Origo and 24.hu among internet users (%)

The demographic profile of 24.hu is somewhat unique, it is most popular among opposition voters, people above age 60, people with diploma and the population of Budapest and bigger cities. For some reason, this portal is visited by a bigger proportion of senior people than young ones, which is contrary to the demographic trends about the habits of internet usage. Fidesz-KDNP voters and people with lower education visit this site less often.

Usage of social media in demographic groups

HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE FACEBOOK?

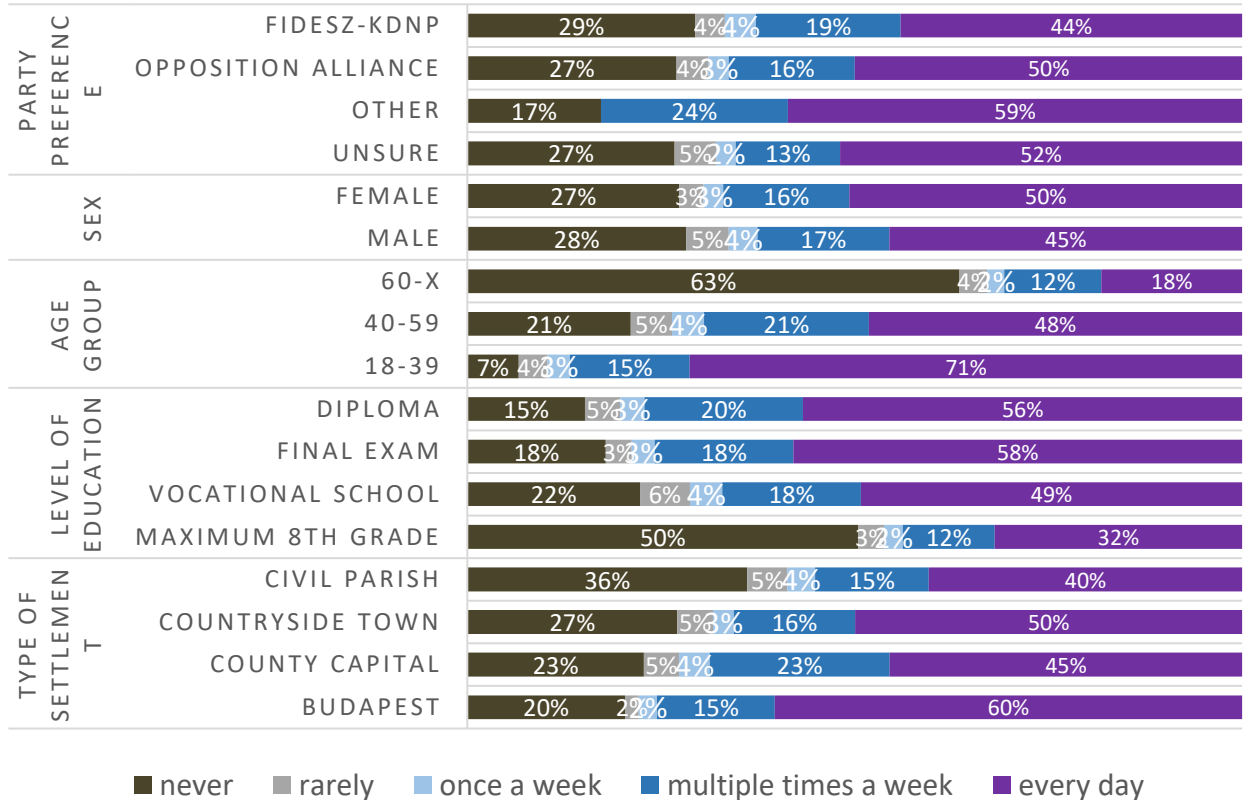
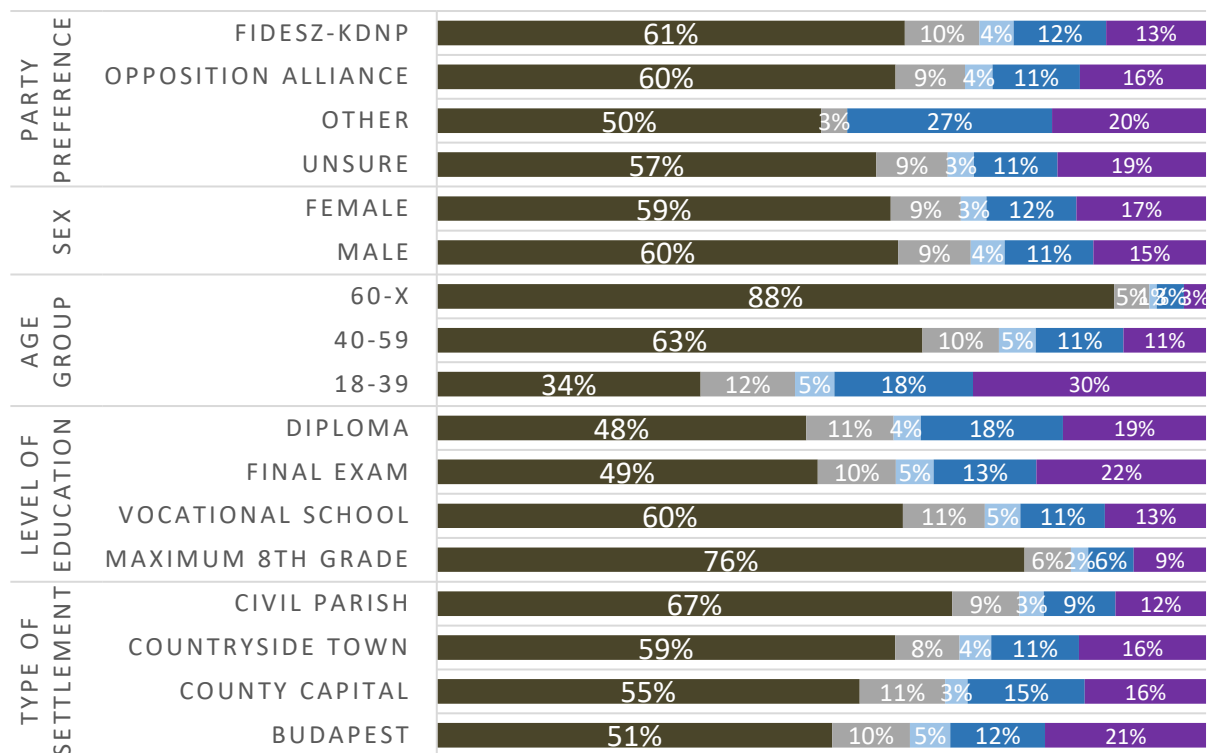


Table 13. Usage of Facebook in demographic groups

Facebook usage decreases proportionally with age, only 36% (around one third) of the people above age 60 use it. Higher education generally comes with higher Facebook usage, moreover settlement size has an effect on the ratings of the portal as well: more people use Facebook in bigger cities than in civil parishes or countryside towns. Unsure voters use Facebook around the same amount as opposition or Fidesz voters do, therefore this platform can be useful to reach such people.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE INSTAGRAM?



never
 rarely
 once a week
 multiple times a week
 every day

14. ábra: Az Instagram használata egyes demográfiai csoportokban

We can see similar trends in the case of Instagram as with Facebook. The cleavage between age groups is even wider here: people only 12% of the people above the age of 60 is present on the site while among people between 18-39 this number is 65%. Instagram therefore has a key role in reaching the younger generations. On this platform the differences between the levels of education are also sharp. 52 percent of the people with a diploma use Instagram, this number is 40% among the people who did vocational school, while only 24% among people with maximum 8th grade education.

To conclude, there are well demonstrable cleavages in the media consumption habits of the Hungarian society. While one would assume, that which mediums and channels we use to gain information is influenced most by our political preferences, this study shows, that there are demographic cleavages that significantly influence how we gain/receive information. Naturally, political allegiance has a significant effect on what kind of information reaches us and how, however, these political differences cannot overwrite characteristics unique to our social position. In relation to this, it is important to mention the media consumption habits of unsure voters, who often differ more from 'both sides' than, the government and opposition side from each other. For example, Index.hu is more popular among Fidesz voters than among unsure voters, and more people from the opposition side watch the Hungarian Television than unsure voter. The explanation for this could be that the category 'unsure' includes those, who stay away from public life and inform themselves less about the country's affairs.

Thus, in our media consumption habits there is a striking cleavage, but this depends more on unique demographic characteristics and on general interest in politics than on political preference.



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