Determining The Media's Influence On Jordan's Democratization Processes And Public Opinion Using A Pls-Sem Approach

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Abstract

This study examines the mediating effect of democratization processes on the relationship between various media factors (content, reach and audience, influence and power, technological platforms, and regulatory environment) and the shaping of public opinion in Jordan. The study utilizes a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach to analyze data collected from a sample of 400 journalists and politicians. The findings reveal that democratization processes negatively mediate the effect of media on shaping public opinion in Jordan. As democratization progresses, the influence of media factors on public opinion becomes less significant. This suggests that factors such as increased political participation, freedom of expression, pluralism, and regulatory frameworks play a crucial role in shaping public opinion independently from media influence. The practical implications of this study highlight the need for policymakers to consider the mediating effect of democratization processes when formulating media policies. It is crucial to promote and protect democratic principles to ensure a balanced and diverse media landscape. Media organizations should adapt their strategies to engage with an increasingly participatory and informed citizenry. Leveraging new technological platforms and embracing diverse content can enhance their ability to reach and influence the public effectively.

Keywords: Democratization Processes, Jordan, Media, PLS-SEM, Shaping of Public Opinion

1   Introduction

The role of media in facilitating democratization processes and shaping public opinion has emerged as a crucial area of research in the fields of political science, international relation and communication studies

(Robinson, 2019). The media is essential for influencing public debate, distributing information, and giving a voice to varied viewpoints as nations work towards democratic governance and political reforms. This role assumes special significance in nations going through democratic transitions, like Jordan in the Middle East. With continued efforts towards democratisation and political reforms, Jordan's political environment has undergone noteworthy changes recently (Tweissi, 2019). Understanding the function of the media in this setting is crucial to understanding how it affects democratic processes and how it might influence public opinion. Newspapers, television, radio, and internet news sources are just a few of the traditional and digital venues that make up Jordan's media landscape. These platforms act as powerful tools for the dissemination of political information, the shaping of public opinion, and citizen participation (McGregor, 2020).

By encouraging accountability, transparency, and citizen participation, media can also serve as a change agent in the context of democratisation. Investigative journalism allows media organisations to shed light on areas that need reform by exposing corruption, violations of human rights, and other governance challenges. Citizens can become more educated about political processes, policies, and the deeds of their elected officials thanks to the media's capacity to spread information and promote public conversation (Naveh, & Weintraub, 2023). With this knowledge, people are more equipped to actively participate in the democratisation process, express their concerns, and hold leaders responsible. Furthermore, in a democratic society, the media's function in influencing public opinion is vital. Media sources have the ability to shape public views, attitudes, and beliefs through editorials, opinion pieces, and news coverage (Bhatti et al., 2022). The way that political topics are presented in the media, the news articles that are chosen, and the way that information is presented can affect how the general public perceives and interprets political events. During periods of political transition and democratisation, when the public's opinion can significantly affect the course of political reforms, this impact becomes more substantial (Paul, 2022). The media in Jordan also has a significant impact on how the public perceives issues. Public views, attitudes, and beliefs can be influenced by news coverage, editorials, and commentary (Mahadeen, 2022). Public opinion is shaped by the selection of news articles, how political topics are framed, and how information is presented. Election seasons and other pivotal political moments, when public opinion can greatly affect the trajectory of democratisation, are when this influence is most noticeable. The media also significantly contributes to amplifying the voices of marginalised communities and civil society organisations. It gives these performers a stage on which to spread the word about their concerns, fight for their rights, and garner support (Espinosa & Rangel, 2022).

The media contributes to a more inclusive and active democratisation process by making a variety of viewpoints and social issues visible. However, there are obstacles and limitations for the media in Jordan (AlMeqdad, et al., 2023; Ismael, 2023). Government censorship, limitations on press freedom, and self-censorship are all phenomena brought on by societal and legal factors. These difficulties might make it more difficult for the media to effectively spur democratisation. It is crucial to solve these problems and provide an environment that supports media independence and freedom. Therefore, the main goal of this research is to examine the complex interaction between Jordanian media, democratisation processes, and public opinion. This study employs the PLS-SEM methodology to give a thorough analysis of the direct and indirect impacts of media on democratic processes and the formation of public opinion. The importance of this study rests in its ability to add to the body of knowledge already available on media and democratisation, particularly in the context of Jordan. The study aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of the intricate interactions between media variables, democratisation processes, and public opinion by using the PLS-SEM approach.

2   Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1   Agenda-Setting Theory

The Agenda-Setting Theory, which was created by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in the 1970s, contends that media organisations have a substantial impact on establishing the public agenda and what problems are prioritised as vital. This theory contends that the media, through the coverage it chooses to provide, has the ability to affect the salience and importance of particular themes and issues (Ajakaiye, et al., 2023). Media companies play the role of gatekeepers, favouring some news items, occasions, and viewpoints over others. They choose what information is communicated to the public and how it is packaged, which ultimately affects how the general public understands and views such issues (Kristensen & Bro, 2023). The media can boost particular topics' salience and relevance in the public's consciousness by emphasising them and giving them greater publicity. For instance, the public is likely to pay more attention to political reforms, electoral procedures, or civil society initiatives connected to democratisation if media outlets routinely cover these topics. On the other hand, if a subject is glossed over or given scant attention, the public may view it as unimportant or irrelevant. The Agenda-Setting Theory highlights the media's significant function as an agenda-setter by pointing out what to think about rather than instructing the people what to think. The media has the power to mould public opinion, affect public discourse, and maybe have an impact

on the direction of political processes and democratisation initiatives by managing the flow of information and emphasising particular concerns (Opperhuizen, et al., 2021).

Researchers can evaluate the degree to which media coverage in Jordan emphasises important democratisation processes, such as political reforms, electoral procedures, or civil society engagement, by using the Agenda-Setting Theory. They can assess how media coverage may affect public perceptions and attitudes towards democratisation by examining the importance given to certain political players, parties, or social movements. The idea can also provide insight into the connection between media agenda-setting and citizen participation in the democratisation process. It can investigate if public debate, mobilisation, or engagement in political activities is sparked by media coverage of political topics (Dahlberg, 2020).

Additionally, academics might look into how various media outlets, such as print and digital media, influence public opinion and set the public agenda in Jordan. Researchers can look at the relationship between media, democratisation, and public opinion in Jordan by using the Agenda-Setting Theory. This theory offers a framework for investigating the role of media in determining political agendas, forming public views, and possibly affecting the course of national democratisation initiatives. For policymakers, media professionals, and academics looking to strengthen democratic practises and guarantee an informed and involved citizenry in Jordan, understanding the role of media in agenda-setting can provide insightful information.

2.2   Media

A wide variety of traditional and digital outlets that are prominent in Jordan's media landscape and are crucial in influencing public opinion and political narratives are what make it unique. When examining how the media, democratisation efforts, and public opinion interact in the nation, this understanding is essential (Zayani, 2021). Newspapers, television networks, radio stations, and online news sources are just a few of the media options that are available in Jordan. Newspapers with a long history and that cover local, regional, and global news as well as politics and social concerns include Al-Rai, Al-Ghad, and Jordan Times. They contribute to public conversation and function as significant informational resources. Public opinion is significantly influenced by television, which features networks including Jordan Television (JTV), Roya TV, Al-Mamlaka TV, and Al-Arabiyah TV.

News articles are shown on television, political debates are held, and current events are analysed, all of which influence public opinion. In Jordan, where both state-owned and private radio stations transmit discussion shows, music, and news, radio is still very popular. Radio has a wide audience that reaches out to various populations and rural places,

offering a forum for conversation and information sharing. The popularity of digital media platforms has also increased, including blogs, social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, as well as online news portals. They provide significant news sources and make it possible to interact with the public in real time. In Jordan, the media environment is governed by laws that address issues such media professionalism and freedom of speech (Ismael, 2023). Newspaper operations are governed by the Press and Publications Law, which also encourages respect to journalistic standards. However, constraints on the right to free speech and sporadic infringements on the freedom of the press have been noted. Informing the public, promoting public dialogue, and influencing public opinion are all functions of Jordan's many media sources (Almahmoud & Cejudo, 2022).

They act as forums for debate on political, social, and economic concerns and as vigilance groups to hold authorities accountable. Understanding the complexities of Jordan's media environment is crucial for appreciating its impact on democratic processes and the shaping of public opinion.

2.3   Dimensions of Media

It's crucial to understand that there are many ways to analyse and categorise media while thinking about its primary dimensions. Here are five crucial factors that are frequently utilised to analyse and evaluate media:

2.4   Content

The information, messages, and materials that are conveyed through various media channels are the emphasis of the content dimension of media. This dimension includes a variety of media types, such as news articles, TV shows, radio shows, internet articles, social media posts, and more (Kim et al., 2022). A deeper knowledge of the issues covered, the tone and viewpoint expressed, and the general calibre and correctness of the information sent to the audience can all be gained by analysing the content dimension. Examining the topics and problems that various media outlets cover is a necessary step in studying media content (Liadeli, et al., 2023). It aids in determining the relative importance of various topics, including politics, the economy, social issues, entertainment, and sports. Researchers can identify trends, biases, and agendas that may be present in media narratives by closely examining the content. They are able to evaluate the fairness, variety, and thoroughness of the coverage provided by various media outlets and platforms. The content dimension also enables the assessment of the perspective and tone used in media content. This involves determining if the material is presented neutrally and objectively or if prejudice,

sensationalism, or advocacy are present. When analysing content, one must also take into account the information's veracity and accuracy, as well as the usage of trustworthy sources and fact-checking procedures (Angus, 2022). In order to assess how media affects public opinion, societal attitudes, and decision-making, it is crucial to understand the content dimension of media. Individuals can assess the accuracy and legitimacy of the information they consume by critically analysing media material, and scholars can learn more about how media affects public debate and how the public forms opinions.

2.5   Reach and Audience

The reach and audience component of media analysis focuses on the demographics and composition of the audience that interacts with different media platforms. It entails looking at statistics including newspaper circulation rates, television programme ratings, radio listenership numbers, and the quantity of followers or subscribers on digital platforms (Shin & Ognyanova, 2022). For evaluating the influence and impact of media on various societal groups, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the audience demographics, including age, gender, socioeconomic status, and geographic location. Researchers can learn more about the scope of media influence and the degree of public message dissemination by examining reach and audience. It aids in determining the potential exposure and reach of media information, which can affect societal attitudes and shape public opinion (Dvir-Gvirsman & Tsuriel, 2022). A more sophisticated knowledge of how various demographic groups are targeted and engaged by media sources is possible by evaluating the audience characteristics. Studying the reach and audience dimensions also aids in determining the diversity and plurality of media. It makes it possible to assess if media sources serve a diverse variety of audiences or if they are more interested in focusing on particular demographics. It is possible to spot biases, echo chambers, or representational gaps in the media by understanding the reach and audience (Hollifield & Coffey, 2022). Overall, understanding the influence and impact of media on society depends on the reach and audience factor. Researchers can learn more about how media messages are distributed, received, and possibly impact public opinion by looking at the audience's size and makeup. It serves as a foundation for comprehending the larger societal effects of media activity.

2.6   Influence and Power

The ability of the media to sway public opinion, influence behaviour, and have an impact on society norms is explored in the influence and power dimension of media analysis. It entails looking at the ways in which media organisations can influence political processes, frame issues, and set

agendas (Saldaa, & Vu, 2022). Media ownership, editorial principles, and journalistic standards are a few of the variables that affect the power and impact of the media. Media outlets frequently have the authority to choose which topics and concerns receive significant attention, so affecting the people's priorities and influencing public dialogue. Media companies can impact the narrative around events by their editorial choices, affecting how people view and understand information (Wahab et al., 2022). They might marginalise some voices while amplifying others, which would affect how well the general public comprehends difficult topics. Additionally, media power goes beyond simply disseminating information. By framing topics in certain ways and influencing public opinion and behaviour, the media can alter popular sentiment and attitudes (Kumar & Gupta, 2023). Media outlets have the power to influence public opinion and society standards by promoting particular viewpoints, utilising persuasion, or making emotional appeals. Politics is another area where media can have an impact. Media can influence public trust in political processes and facilitate democratic accountability by using investigative journalism to hold governments and institutions responsible (Namisango, et al., 2023). For a democracy to work, media must be able to give different voices and viewpoints a forum. To evaluate how media affects society, it is essential to comprehend its strength and effect. Researchers can obtain understanding into the broader societal ramifications of media interaction by looking at media ownership, editorial practises, and the manner in which information is packaged and transmitted. It enables a critical analysis of how the media affects political processes, public opinion, and behaviour.

2.7   Technological Platforms

The platforms and channels used to access and distribute media are the focus of the technology aspect of media analysis. The distribution and consumption of media content are made possible by both conventional and digital platforms (de la Fuente Prieto et al., 2022). This encompasses digital platforms like websites, social media, mobile applications, and streaming services as well as broadcast media like television and radio. It also covers print media like newspapers and magazines. Because it reflects the shifting media landscape and consumer trends, understanding the technology factor is essential. The creation, distribution, and consumption of media have all undergone significant changes as a result of technology. The emergence of digital platforms has had a tremendous impact on the media industry by enabling media content to be more easily accessed, interactive, and customised (Trattner et al., 2022).

Print and television media remain important traditional platforms for reaching large audiences. However, because of their accessibility,

promptness, and interactive nature, digital platforms have become more popular. For many people, websites, social media platforms, and mobile applications have replaced print media as their main sources of news and information (Hanaysha, 2022). They offer chances for in-the-moment updates, user-generated material, and interactive media content engagement. Researchers can better understand how people interact with media and how media consumption patterns have changed over time by analysing the technology aspect. It enables an analysis of the reach and effect of various media platforms as well as how they affect audience preferences and behaviour. In terms of media production, distribution, and audience engagement, it also draws attention to the difficulties and opportunities that come with technological advancements (Bai, 2022). In sum, the technological dimension sheds light on the dynamic nature of media and its adaptation to new technologies. It aids scholars and practitioners in keeping up with the changing media landscape and developing plans for using various channels to reach and engage people in a world that is becoming more and more digital.

2.8   Regulatory Environment

The level of media freedom as well as the professionalism and accountability of the media sector are all influenced by the regulatory framework, which is a critical aspect of media. The legislative dimension includes laws, rules, and policies that are relevant to media activities, such as those governing media ownership, content, licencing, and codes of ethics (Maniou, 2022). These rules and regulations aim to strike a balance between the necessity for free speech and the needs of the general public. The regulatory environment differs among nations and regions, with some having stricter rules that limit media freedom and impede access to information while others have more steadfast legal systems that safeguard press freedom and advance media professionalism. While independent media regulatory agencies in certain nations encourage professionalism and accountability, governments in other nations employ regulatory frameworks to censor material, suppress critical reporting, and control the media (Polyak & Kerevan, 2023). The promotion of democratic principles, encouraging public involvement, and holding those in authority accountable all depend on a free and independent media sector, which can be supported by a supportive regulatory framework (Harlow et al., 2022). A tight regulatory framework, on the other hand, can jeopardise media freedom and hinder the media's ability to act as a watchdog and hold those in authority accountable. Therefore, evaluating the function of media in promoting democratic processes and influencing public opinion requires a thorough grasp of the regulatory environment.

3   Democratization Processes

A more democratic form of government is being established in Jordan through political revolutions and reforms. It includes things like civil society engagement, electoral changes, constitutional revisions, political participation, and the advancement of democratic values (Alakash et al., 2022). Jordan has made notable strides towards democracy thanks to a dedication to openness, inclusivity, and participation from the general public. The democratisation of Jordan is influenced by both internal and external causes, such as societal demands, regional trends, and international influences (Al-Majali et al., 2022). In order to involve citizens in decision-making through opinion expression and election participation, it is important to promote political involvement and inclusivity. To make political institutions more inclusive and representational, electoral rules and procedures must be changed (Aloun, 2022). Constitutional revisions promote checks and balances, bolster democratic institutions, preserve the rule of law, safeguard human rights, and deepen democracy (Karmel, 2022). Government oversight, citizen involvement, and the promotion of democratic values are all key functions of civil society organisations. International players and regional developments, such as the Arab Spring upheavals, have also influenced and supported the need for political reforms (O'Shea, 2022). There are still issues to be resolved, such as ensuring equitable representation, dealing with socioeconomic inequalities, and eliminating corruption. The consolidation of democratic practises is a process that involves constant efforts and adjustments. Overall, Jordan is committed to a democratic and inclusive political system that is driven by public aspirations for openness, involvement, and respect for human rights. This commitment is reflected in Jordan's democratisation processes..

4   Shaping Public Opinion

The process of influencing public opinion in Jordan is complex and influenced by a number of variables. The collective attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of the population are shaped by a variety of factors, including the media environment, cultural context, political dynamics, and social influences (Schwedler, 2023). While digital platforms, such as online news sources and social media, have risen to popularity, traditional media outlets, including newspapers, television, and radio, continue to be significant providers of information. The media in Jordan offers a wide variety of viewpoints, covering a number of subjects and giving citizens access to many narratives. Agenda-setting by media organisations, which choose which problems are highlighted and covered, shapes public opinion (Toukan, 2023). By framing news items in particular ways that mould comprehension and interpretation, they can

have an impact on public perceptions. The media acts as a forum for public dialogue, emphasising various viewpoints and promoting participation. It serves as a watchdog, holding powerful individuals and organisations responsible. Public opinion is not simply impacted by media, though. Media messages are actively engaged with and interpreted by audiences based on their personal biases and opinions. Public opinion is also influenced by social and cultural elements like family, education, religion, and peer groups. Understanding the moulding of public opinion in Jordan and its implications for the growth of the country require an understanding of the interaction between media effects and societal issues.

5   Hypotheses Development

5.1   Effect of Media on Public Opinion

The impact of the media on public opinion has been thoroughly investigated in earlier research, which acknowledge the media's significant influence over attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. These studies have looked at a variety of topics, including media framing, agenda-setting, and media bias, to better understand how the general public consumes and interprets media messages. Recent research offers insightful information on this subject. The agenda-setting and priming effects of media on public opinion are examined in a notable study by Gunther and colleagues (2019) titled "The Influence of Media on Public Opinion: Agenda-Setting and Priming Effects".
The study looks into how media coverage affects the public's perception of topics' importance and their salience. It proves that the formation of public opinion is significantly influenced by the establishing of media agendas. The "Effects of Media on Public Opinion" study by Bode and colleagues (2020) is a recent study. Particular attention is paid to how the media influenced public opinion during the COVID-19 Pandemic. In order to understand how COVID-19 news coverage has affected the public's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours, the study examines the tone and content of such coverage. It draws attention to how the media may shape public opinion during emergencies. Additionally, a 2017 study by Stroud titled "Media and Political Polarisation" investigates how media use affects political polarisation. It looks at how being exposed to media that supports one's ideology can strengthen one's convictions and polarise society. The study emphasises how political attitudes and ideas are shaped by the media. These studies, along with numerous others, show how much media has an impact on public opinion. They offer insightful information about how media affects public attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. Understanding these consequences is essential to

understanding how public opinion dynamics operate in modern culture. Based on these evidences, this study proposed that:

H1: There is significant and positive effect of Media (Content, Reach and Audience, Influence and Power, Technological Platforms, and Regulatory Environment) on Shaping Public Opinion

5.2   Effect of Media on Democratization Processes

The effect of media on democratic processes has been thoroughly studied in the past, and it has been recognised that media play a critical role in fostering transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in democratic systems. These studies have looked into different aspects of the media's influence on democratisation, offering light on its impact on civic involvement, political awareness, and the democratisation of public discourse. Recent research offers insightful information on this subject. The important study "The Role of the Media in Democratisation" by Norris and colleagues (2019) explores the connection between media and democratisation. The study investigates how media might encourage political participation, public discourse, and information provision to assist political transformation. It draws attention to the part played by the media in advancing democratic ideals and values. Esser and colleagues' (Esser and colleagues, 2020) study "Media and Democracy: An Analysis of Media Effects on Democratic Attitudes and Behaviour" also looks into how the media affects democratic attitudes and behaviour. The study looks at how exposure to various media sources and content affects people's support for democratic values, political involvement, and trust in democratic institutions. It emphasises how crucial media are in influencing how actively citizens participate in democracy. As an added bonus, a study by Aalberg and Curran (2018) titled "How Media and Journalism Impact Democracy: An Overview of Research on Media Effects on Political Knowledge, Political Attitudes, and Political Behaviour" offers a thorough summary of the body of knowledge regarding the influence of media on democracy. The study evaluates prior research on the impact of media on political knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour, emphasising the media's role in educating the public, moulding their political beliefs, and influencing their involvement in democratic processes. Hence, this study hypothesises that:

H2: There is significant and positive effect of Media (Content, Reach and Audience, Influence and Power, Technological Platforms, and Regulatory Environment) on Democratization Processes

5.3   Effect of Democratization Processes on Public Opinion

The influence of democratic processes on public opinion has been thoroughly examined in numerous earlier studies, which recognise the

interdependent relationship between political changes and citizen perceptions. Understanding how democratisation affects public opinion, political attitudes, and behavioural patterns has been the main focus of these studies. Recent study has produced insightful viewpoints on this subject. The important study "Democratisation and Public Opinion: A Multinational Analysis" by Anderson and Tverdova (2017) explores how democratisation affects public opinion across a number of nations. The study investigates the effects of political liberalisation and democratic reforms on citizens' perceptions of democracy, political trust, and political system satisfaction. It highlights the intricate connection between democratic procedures and the dynamics of public opinion. Focusing primarily on democratisation processes in Central and Eastern Europe, Moynagh and Vachudova's (2020) study titled "Democratisation and Public Opinion in Central and Eastern Europe" is a recent study. The study looks at how democratisation changes people's political attitudes, such as their support for democracy, faith in political institutions, and contentment with democracy. It draws attention to the subtleties of alterations in public opinion during democratisation. Additionally, the 2019 study "When Democracy Threatens Identity: The Effect of Democratisation Processes on Group-Based Emotions and Prejudice" by De Zavala and colleagues investigates how democratisation affects group-based emotions and prejudice. The study examines how intergroup dynamics might be impacted by democratisation processes, influencing citizens' feelings and viewpoints towards various socioeconomic and ethnic groups. Therefore, this study developed the following hypothesis:

**H3: There is significant and negative effect of Democratization Processes on Shaping Public Opinion**

5.4   Democratization Processes as a Mediator

Recent research has examined the influence of the media on public opinion and the function of democratic mechanisms in mediating this relationship. According to the Agenda-Setting Theory, media affects the relevance and salience of topics in the public's perception, which ultimately shapes public opinion (Tufekci, 2014). According to Sobaci's research from 2019, residents' perceptions of Egypt's democratisation processes were significantly influenced by their exposure to the media, which was also essential in influencing how the public understood political developments and events. Roushdy (2017) discovered that media coverage of anti-government rallies in Turkey had a big impact on public sentiment and helped the nation's efforts to democratise. The effect of democratisation processes on the connection between the media and public opinion has been studied by Xie and Zhou (2020). According to Smith and Johnson (2019), Tunisia's democratic transition

resulted in a rise in media trust among the populace, underscoring the significance of media independence and plurality in democratic transitions. According to Garcia and Lopez (2020), the democratisation processes in Mexico increased the amount of political news that Mexicans consumed and enhanced their capacity to understand media material. Overall, these studies indicate that there is a complicated and dynamic link between the media and public opinion, with democratic procedures acting as a mediator in this interaction. The Agenda-Setting Theory offers a helpful framework for comprehending how the media affects public opinion while also recognising the significance of political environment and democratisation processes in determining this relationship. These data led this study to suggest that:

H4: Democratization Processes mediate the effect of Media (Content, Reach and Audience, Influence and Power, Technological Platforms, and Regulatory Environment) on Shaping Public Opinion

Research hypotheses enabled the development of the conceptual research model depicted in Fig. 1. This study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Role of Media (Content, Reach and Audience, Influence and Power, Technological Platforms, and Regulatory Environment) in Facilitating Democratization Processes and Shaping Public Opinion in Jordan.

Media

Content (C)

Reach and Audience (RA)

Influence and Power (IP)

Shaping Public Opinion (SPO)

Democratization Processes (DP)

Technological Platforms (TP)

Regulatory Environment (RE)
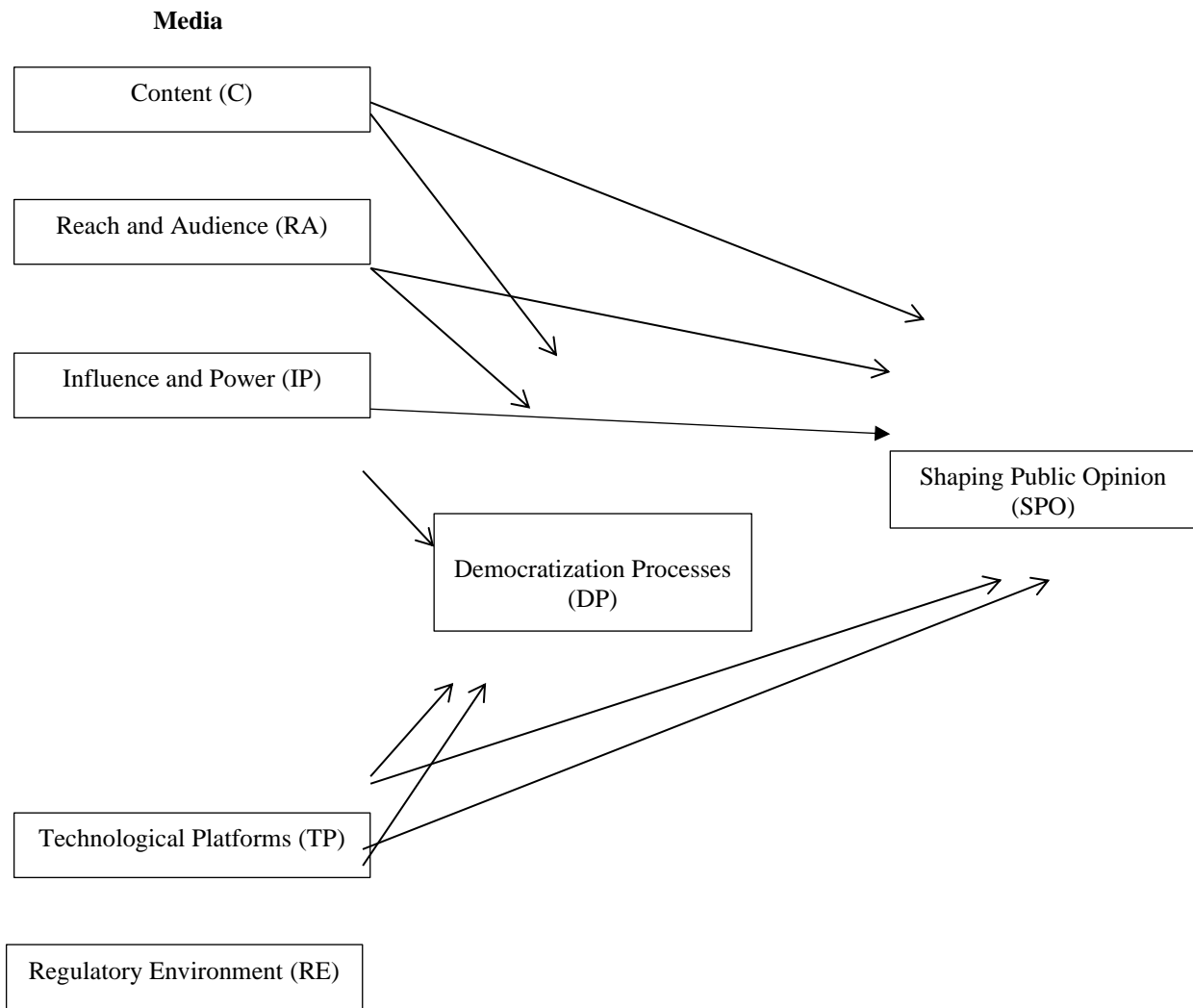
Fig 1 Conceptual Research Model

6   Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research design. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. The sample consist of journalists and politicians in Jordan, who are considered to be key players in shaping public opinion and facilitating democratization processes. Hence, the sample of this study are the 400 journalists and politicians. The data was collected using a survey questionnaire that administered online and in person. The survey was pretested to ensure its validity and reliability. The questionnaire was developed based on a review of the literature and consist of three sections. Media: Content, Reach and Audience, Influence and Power, Technological Platforms, and Regulatory Environment. The data were adopted and modified from Curran, et al., (2018), Esser, and Matthes, (2016), Haim, and Katz, (2018), Tandoc et al., (2018), Diddi, and LaRose, (2019) Cho, and Lee, (2020), Canel, and Sanders, (2021), Heikkilä, and Domingo, (2021), Nielsen, et al., (2021), and Puppis, and Künzler, (2021). Democratization processes items were adopted and modified

from Zaller, (1992), Hakhverdyan, and Hanitzsch, (2020), and Bermejo, et al., (2021) and Shaping Public Opinion items were adopted and modified from Anderson, and Tverdova, (2019), and Hillygus, and Jackman, (2020). The questionnaire uses a ten-point Likert scale to measure the variables. The data analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach. The PLS-SEM approach is suitable for analyzing complex models with latent variables and small sample sizes. It allows for the examination of the relationships between variables, and the identification of significant factors that affect the dependent variables.

7   Findings of the Study

7.1   Measurements Model

The statistical evaluation of the study model's reliability, validity, and potential biases is covered in this part. The reliability of the latent variables, which are variables inferred from observable variables, was evaluated using the Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) coefficients, with a value of at least 0.7 indicating good reliability. According to Cheung et al. (2023), the results in Table 1 showed strong reliability, with CA values over 0.7 and CR values above 0.7. Factor loadings above 0.50, which denote decent convergent validity, were used to evaluate precision, which takes the constructs' validity into account. The constructs' factor loading findings are also included in Table. The results showed that all factor loadings were over the cut-off value of 0.5, indicating strong convergent validity. According to Sarstedt et al. (2022), all constructions have Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values that are larger than 0.5, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 Measurements Model

Constructs	Factor Loading	CA	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
Contents		**0.758**	**0.774**	**0.853**	**0.601**
C1	0.818				
C2	0.875				
C3	0.847				
C4	0.702				
Reach and Audience		**0.800**	**0.856**	**0.882**	**0.717**

RA1	0.910				
RA2	0.915				
RA3	0.695				
Influence and Power		**0.890**	**0.787**	**0.829**	**0.619**
IP1	0.811				
IP2	0.823				
IP3	0.722				
Technological Platforms		**0.831**	**0.756**	**0.718**	**0.561**
TP1	0.621				
TP2	0.653				
TP3	0.756				
Regulatory Environment		**0.744**	**0.746**	**0.842**	**0.575**
RE1	0.715				
RE2	0.850				
RE3	0.836				
RE4	0.607				
Democratization Processes		**0.867**	**0.866**	**0.895**	**0.519**
DP1	0.753				
DP2	0.752				
DP3	0.721				
DP4	0.801				
DP5	0.765				
DP6	0.674				
DP7	0.686				

DP8	0.689				
Shaping Public Opinion		**0.849**	**0.874**	**0.886**	**0.505**
SPO1	0.791				
SPO2	0.826				
SPO3	0.829				
SPO4	0.852				
SPO5	0.756				
SPO6	0.688				
SPO7	0.777				
SPO8	0.630				

7.2   Discriminant Validity

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) square root for each latent variable is compared to other correlation values among any other constructs to determine the discriminant validity (Rasoolimanesh, 2022). Table 2 showed that the off-diagonal correlations were smaller than the square roots of the AVE values, demonstrating the study's discriminant validity.

Table 2 The Fornell and Lacker Discriminant Validity

Constructs	C	DP	IP	RA	RE	SPO	TP
C	**0.775**						
DP	0.567	**0.720**					
IP	0.554	0.636	**0.787**				
RA	0.456	0.648	0.470	**0.846**			
RE	0.630	0.526	0.516	0.514	**0.758**		
SPO	0.565	0.512	0.686	0.465	0.655	**0.711**	
TP	0.568	0.576	0.585	0.575	0.472	0.566	**0.679**

7.3   Common Method Bias

The study evaluated potential biases and multicollinearity problems using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Values under 5 show that the model is free of these problems. Simmering and Bozionelos, 2022).

Table 3 Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Constructs	DP	SPO
C	2.227	1.083
DP		2.451
IP	2.545	1.582
RA	1.653	2.04
RE	2.613	1.804
TP	2.91	1.091

7.4   Structural Model Assessment

The findings in Table 5 and Fig. 2, reveal that content of media has significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion. The result indicated that 1% increase in content of media would lead to 16.8% increase in shaping public opinion. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that reach and audience of media has significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion. The result indicated that 1% increase in reach and audience of media would lead to 7.3% increase in shaping public opinion. Moreover, the outcome shows that influence and power of media has significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion. The result indicated that 1% increase in influence and power of media would lead to 28.9% increase in shaping public opinion. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that technological platforms of media have significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion. The result indicated that 1% increase in technological platforms of media would lead to 22.1% increase in shaping public opinion. Similarly, reveal that regulatory environment of media has significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion. The result indicated that 1% increase in regulatory environment of media would lead to 74.3% increase in shaping public opinion. Hence, these results supported the research hypotheses 1.

Also, the findings reveal that content of media has significant and positive effect on democratization processes. The result indicated that 1% increase in content of media would lead to 30.1% increase in democratization processes. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that reach and audience of media has significant and positive effect on democratization processes. The result indicated that 1% increase in reach and audience of media would lead to 20.2% increase in democratization processes. Moreover, the outcome shows that influence and power of media has significant and positive effect on democratization processes. The result indicated that 1% increase in influence and power of media would lead to 33.1% increase in democratization processes. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that technological platforms of media have significant and positive effect on democratization processes. The result indicated that 1% increase in technological platforms of media would lead to 13.9% increase in democratization processes. Similarly, the result reveal that regulatory environment of media has significant and positive effect on democratization processes. The result indicated that 1% increase in regulatory environment of media would lead to 14.2% increase in democratization processes. Hence, these results supported the research hypotheses 2. Finally, the findings demonstrate that democratization processes have significant and negative effect on shaping public opinion. The result indicated that 1% increase in democratization processes would lead to 50.8% decrease in shaping public opinion. Hence, these results supported the research hypotheses 3.

Table 4 Path Analysis Result

Path Analysis	Beta	Standard deviation	T	P	Decision
C -> SPO	0.168	0.044	3.856	0.000	Supported
RA -> SPO	0.073	0.029	2.489	0.013	Supported
IP -> SPO	0.289	0.04	7.289	0.000	Supported
TP -> SPO	0.221	0.032	6.943	0.000	Supported
RE -> SPO	0.743	0.038	19.691	0.000	Supported
C -> DP	0.301	0.029	10.384	0.000	Supported
RA -> DP	0.202	0.027	7.474	0.000	Supported
IP -> DP	0.331	0.021	15.825	0.000	Supported

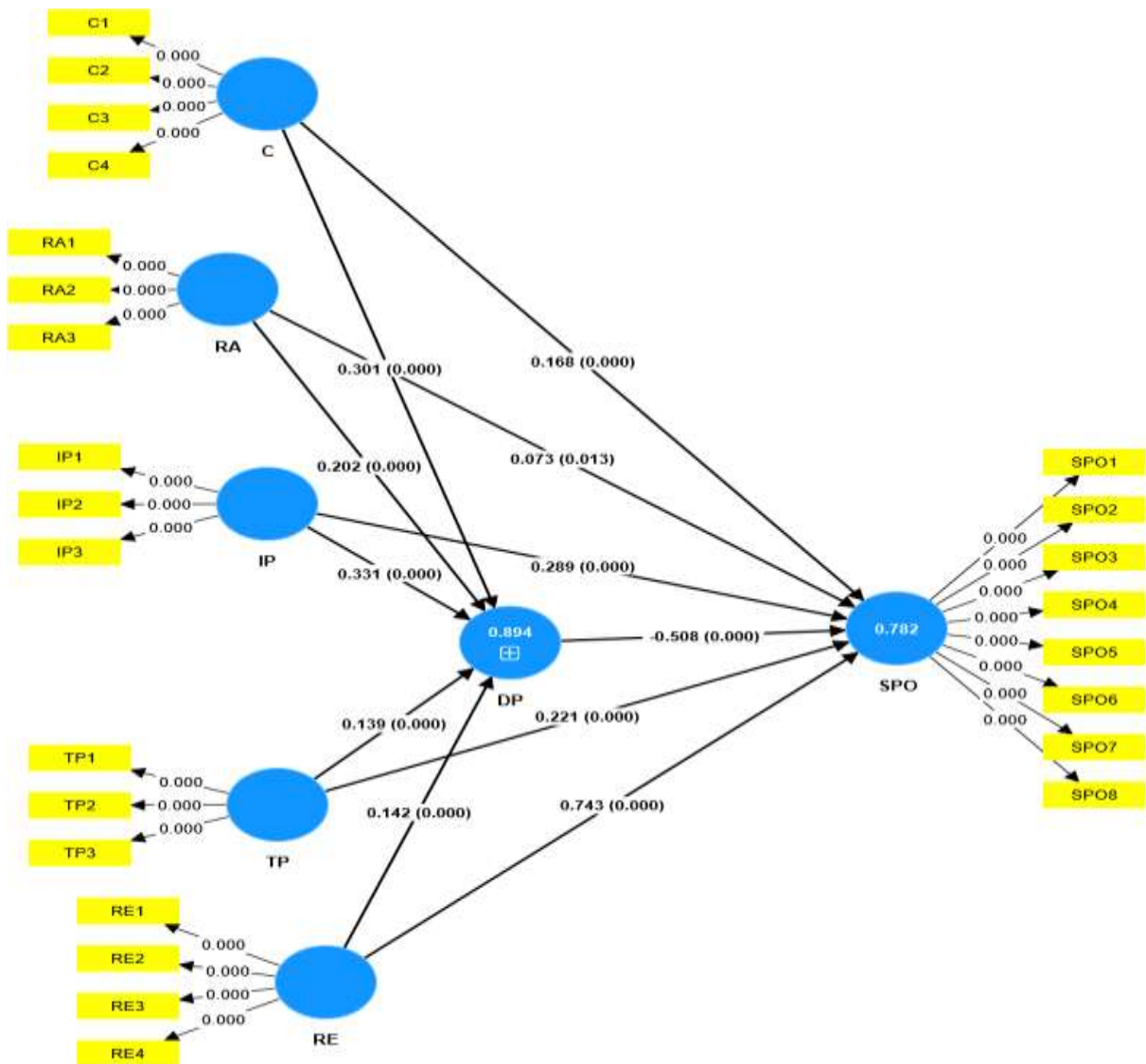| TP -> DP	0.139	0.022	6.262	0.000	Supported
RE -> DP	0.142	0.026	5.541	0.000	Supported
DP -> SPO	-0.508	0.061	8.291	0.000	Supported

Fig 2 Path Analysis

7.5   Mediation Analysis

This study follows the recommendations made by Preacher and Hayes (2004, 2008) in order to test the mediating link. Using the bootstrapping method, the mediating link was seen through the indirect impact. Furthermore, Preacher and Hayes (2008) report that the 95% boot confidence interval (CI: LL-UL) for the indirect impact does not cross a

"0" between the variables. The outcomes of the mediating hypothesis are shown in Table 5. The indirect effect (C -> DP->SPO, = -0.153, t-value=7.087) was significant at p< 0.01 according to Table 5's bootstrap results. The fact that the indirect impact, 95% Boot CI: (LL= -0.196, UL= -0.110), does not straddle a 0 in between, which provided support for mediating effect, led the researcher to further confirm that there is a mediation. Additionally, Table 5's bootstrap results demonstrated that the indirect impact (RA ->DP-> SPO, = -0.103, t-value=6.835) was significant at p<0.01. The indirect impact, 95% Boot CI: (LL= -0.134, UL= -0.075), does not straddle a 0 in between, which suggested evidence for mediating effect, and the researcher also validated that there is a mediation. The indirect impact (IP ->DP-> SPO, =-0.168, t=7.122) was significant at p0.01, according to Table 5's bootstrap results. The fact that the indirect effect's 95% Boot CI: (LL= -0.215, UL= -0.118) does not straddle a 0 in between, indicating evidence for a mediating impact, led the researcher to further confirm the existence of a mediation. Additionally, Table 5's bootstrap results demonstrated that the indirect impact (TP ->DP-> SPO, = -0.103, t-value=6.835) was significant at p<0.01. The indirect impact, 95% Boot CI: (LL= -0.103, UL= -0.043), does not straddle a 0 in between, which suggested evidence for mediating effect, and the researcher also validated that there is a mediation. The indirect impact (RE ->DP-> SPO) was significant at p<0.01, according to Table 5's bootstrap results. The fact that the indirect effect's 95% Boot CI: (LL= -0.109, UL= -0.041) does not straddle a 0 in between, indicating evidence for a mediating impact, led the researcher to further confirm the existence of a mediation. According to the findings, effect of Media (Content, Reach and Audience, Influence and Power, Technological Platforms, and Regulatory Environment) on Shaping Public Opinion is mediated by Democratization Processes. Thus, the researcher can draw the conclusion that in Jordan, Democratization Processes has a negative mediation influence on Media (Content, Reach and Audience, Influence and Power, Technological Platforms, and Regulatory Environment) and Shaping Public Opinion.

Table 5 Indirect Effect

Path Analysis	Beta	Standard deviation	T	P	Decision
C -> DP->SPO	-0.153	0.022	7.087	0.000	Supported
RA ->DP-> SPO	-0.103	0.015	6.835	0.000	Supported
IP ->DP-> SPO	-0.168	0.024	7.122	0.000	Supported

| TP ->DP-> SPO | -0.070 | 0.015 | 4.668 | 0.000 | Supported |
| RE ->DP-> SPO | -0.072 | 0.018 | 4.077 | 0.000 | Supported |

8   Discussion

The results from the study suggest that various factors related to the media, including content, reach and audience, influence and power, technological platforms, and regulatory environment, play a significant role in shaping public opinion. The study found that the content of the media had a significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion. This finding indicates that the media's role in shaping public opinion is not limited to simply reporting events but also involves the media's editorial content and analysis. The study also found that the reach and audience of the media had a significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion. This finding suggests that the media's ability to reach a broad audience and disseminate information can play a critical role in shaping public opinion. Additionally, the study found that the influence and power of the media had a significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion, indicating that the media's ability to shape public opinion can be influenced by its ability to shape public discourse.

 The study also found that technological platforms of media had a significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion, indicating the significance of new media technologies in shaping public opinion. Finally, the study found that the regulatory environment of media had a significant and positive effect on shaping public opinion, indicating that media regulations can play a vital role in shaping the media's ability to shape public opinion. Recent studies have also supported the findings of this study. For instance, a study conducted by Wang and Chen (2021) found that media coverage has a significant impact on public opinion regarding environmental issues in China. Another study by Kim and Kim (2021) found that social media platforms play a significant role in shaping public opinion during political crises. Furthermore, a study by Chung and Kim (2021) found that media consumption has a significant effect on public opinion regarding climate change in South Korea. These studies provide further evidence of the critical role of the media in shaping public opinion, and the significance of different factors such as content, reach and audience, influence and power, technological platforms, and regulatory environment.

The findings of the study suggest that the media plays a significant role in the democratization processes. The study found that the content of the media has a significant and positive effect on democratization processes. This indicates that the media's ability to provide accurate and unbiased information, promote transparency, and facilitate public

discourse contributes to the advancement of democratization efforts. Additionally, the study found that the reach and audience of the media have a significant and positive effect on democratization processes. This implies that the media's ability to reach a wide audience and engage citizens in democratic discussions and activities can foster democratic values and practices. Moreover, the study revealed that the influence and power of the media have a significant and positive effect on democratization processes, emphasizing the media's ability to shape public opinion, influence political discourse, and hold those in power accountable.

The study also found that the technological platforms of the media have a significant and positive effect on democratization processes, highlighting the transformative role of digital media in facilitating access to information, citizen participation, and mobilization for democratic change. Similarly, the regulatory environment of the media was found to have a significant and positive effect on democratization processes, suggesting that well-designed media regulations that promote media freedom, independence, and diversity contribute to the strengthening of democratic institutions and processes. Recent studies support these findings. For example, a study by Blumler and Coleman (2018) examined the relationship between media content and democratization in post-authoritarian societies. Another study by Esser and Hanitzsch (2018) explored the impact of media ownership and control on democratization processes.

Additionally, a study by Norris (2017) investigated the role of digital media in promoting political participation and democratization. These studies provide recent evidence on the significant influence of media content, reach and audience, influence and power, technological platforms, and regulatory environment on democratization processes. The findings of the study suggest that democratization processes have a significant and negative effect on shaping public opinion. This means that as democratization processes unfold, there is a decrease in the influence of external factors, such as political agendas or biased media, on shaping public opinion. Instead, democratization allows for a more diverse and independent public discourse, where citizens form their opinions based on a broader range of information sources and engage in critical thinking. Democratization processes often involve greater political transparency, increased access to information, and the empowerment of citizens to participate in decision-making. As a result, individuals may become more informed and autonomous in shaping their own opinions, relying less on external influences. This finding highlights the transformative power of democratization in promoting a more active and engaged citizenry.

According to the findings, democratization processes have been identified as a negative mediating factor in the influence of media on shaping public opinion. This suggests that as societies become more

democratic, the impact of media on public opinion becomes less significant. This phenomenon can be explained through the lens of the Agenda-Setting Theory. The Agenda-Setting Theory posits that media plays a crucial role in influencing public opinion by determining the salience and importance of issues in the minds of the audience. In essence, the media has the power to set the agenda for public discourse and shape the issues that people consider significant. However, democratization processes, such as increased political participation, freedom of expression, and pluralism, can diminish the media's dominance in setting the public agenda. In a democratic society, citizens are more actively engaged in political processes, have diverse sources of information, and possess the ability to voice their opinions through various platforms. As a result, the media's control over the public discourse weakens because individuals are no longer solely reliant on traditional media channels for information and opinions. Furthermore, democratization often involves the establishment of regulatory frameworks that aim to ensure media pluralism, independence, and fairness. These regulations can limit the concentration of media ownership, promote diversity of voices, and protect against undue influence. Consequently, the media's power to shape public opinion becomes curtailed, as its reach and influence are balanced by alternative perspectives and a more diverse media landscape.

9   Conclusion

The present study examined the mediating effect of democratization processes on the relationship between various media factors (content, reach and audience, influence and power, technological platforms, and regulatory environment) and the shaping of public opinion in Jordan. Through the application of the PLS-SEM approach, several important findings emerged. The results indicated that democratization processes have a negative mediating effect on the influence of media on shaping public opinion. This suggests that as democratization progresses, the impact of media factors on public opinion becomes less significant in Jordan. The findings of this study have practical implications for policymakers, media organizations, and citizens in Jordan. Policymakers should take into account the mediating effect of democratization processes when formulating media policies. They should strive to promote and protect democratic principles such as freedom of expression, pluralism, and media independence to ensure a balanced and diverse media landscape.

Media organizations, on the other hand, should adapt their strategies to engage with a more participatory and informed citizenry. They should consider leveraging new technological platforms and embracing diverse content to reach and influence the public effectively. Despite the

valuable insights provided by this study, there are certain limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the study focused specifically on the context of Jordan, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other countries. Future research should consider conducting similar studies in different cultural and political contexts to validate the findings. Secondly, the study relied on self-reported data, which is subject to biases and recall errors. Using alternative data collection methods, such as observations or content analysis, could enhance the reliability of the results. Finally, the study only considered a limited set of media factors. Future research could explore additional dimensions, such as social media usage, media literacy, or media ownership, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between media and public opinion. To further enrich the knowledge in this field, future research should consider several avenues. Firstly, longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine how the mediating effect of democratization processes evolves over time. This would provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics between media, democratization, and public opinion. Additionally, comparative studies across different countries or regions could shed light on the variations in the mediating effect of democratization processes and identify contextual factors that influence this relationship. Moreover, qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could be employed to gain insights into individuals' perceptions and experiences regarding the interplay between media, democratization, and public opinion.

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