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Public opinion polarization on immigration can hinder social cohesion, integration policies and economic growth. Political campaigns and partisan news media systems have long been investigated in terms of potential drivers of mass polarization, often through a focus on one news media. Utilizing survey data collected by the Pew Research Centre, the purpose of the present study is twofold: first, to provide insight into the state of polarization of the Italian public on immigrants-related issues during the campaign for 2018 General Elections, that is, in a context of increasing struggle on immigration between political elites and partisan news media; second, to analyze whether and how the frequency of use of traditional and digital news media and/or the political similarity of (online and offline) information networks have affected the probability of Italian citizens having polarized opinions on immigration. This study shows no significant divergences in the Italian public opinion toward extreme positions, but provide evidence of one-side extremism and alignment along two irreconcilable views. Furthermore, findings indicate deep differences in the effects of traditional and digital news media practices on individuals' extreme and aligned positions on immigration. When various news media are considered, the effect of television is always the more robust.

Keywords: hybrid media system, news media, echo-chambers, immigration, political polarization

Introduction

Public opinion polarization on parties, ideologies and socio-political issues can constitute a threat for social integration, political stability, and economic cohesion: it can foster social polarization outside the political sphere (Mason, 2015), connect to a growing conflict among political elites (Prior, 2013), and follow the same trajectory of economic inequality (McCarty et al., 2006). When a society polarizes, in particular on immigration-related issues, this phenomenon can decrease contacts and interactions between immigrants and natives, it can also increase intolerance towards diversity, hinder policies of social cohesion, and undermine the economic benefits of immigrants' integration (OECD, 2018).

Given the multi-dimensional nature of polarization that can unfold as a societal-, group-, and individual-level phenomenon, in public opinion literature, some conceptual ambiguity exists on what polarization means and how it should be measured (Wojcieszak, 2015). The increasing use of the term "polarization" in the public debate to generically depict a context wherein opposing and conflicting positions occur does not help to reduce conceptual and methodological confusion (Lelkes, 2016). Particularly after the 2020 US Presidential Elections, "polarization" risks becoming a new fuzzy buzzword in public debate and scientific literature, like the word "fake news" after Trump's election (European Commission, 2018). But an intuitive notion of political polarization is not enough for those studies that aim to grasp the diverse dynamics in which polarization can manifest itself – challenging social integration, political stability, and economic cohesion – and the role played by the media in the construction of polarized positions.

Communications and political science have provided diverse definitions of public opinion polarization which help to refocus this umbrella term on specific manifestations of opinion formation that indicate unsustainable conflicts for democratic societies. A democratic society, as long-discussed in democratic theory (Carpentier, 2011), is not a society in which

conflict is absent, but rather one in which conflict expresses itself through non-encompassing interests and identities, and some consensus can be reached. Therefore, the diverse definitions of political polarization provided by public opinion literature identify societies, groups, and individuals that disagree to the extent that democratic conflicts become unsustainable, with no cross-cutting interconnections between fragmented groups, and increasing political tensions and hostility.

In some of the definitions specified by public opinion literature, extreme position taking matters, and polarization occurs to the extent that the distribution of political opinions radicalizes, clustering toward the extremes (e.g., Fiorina et al., 2005; Fiorina & Abrams, 2008). In other definitions, polarization constitutes a threat for democracy at the extent to which individuals align along with multiple domains of political conflict, even when individuals do not take extreme positions (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008; Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008). For these scholars, the final result of these multiple and overlapping lines of disagreement is a polarized society, as individuals are organized in opposite factions with alternative and irreconcilable systems of beliefs. Some other scholars define polarization as a tendency connected to partisan affect: it occurs when party supporters view each other as a disliked out-group, while holding increasing positive in-group feelings (Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar et al. 2018). Other scientific contributions have investigated whether and how individuals perceive ideological and issue-based polarization in the political system, mass (electorate), and/or the news media system (Yang et al., 2016; Levendusky & Malhotra, 2015; Vegetti et al., 2017). Each of these diverse conceptualizations of political polarization requires a distinct empirical strategy.

The present work approaches polarization by focusing on two of the above-mentioned dynamics in which polarization can unfold: divergence (opinion radicalization) and consistency (opinion alignment). Utilizing survey microdata collected by the Pew Research

Center in Autumn 2017 (Pew, 2017), the study explores the state of public opinion polarization (divergence and consistency) on immigration in Italy during the campaign for the 2018 General Elections and analyzes the role played by traditional and digital news "media practices" (Couldry, 2004) in the construction of polarized (extreme and aligned) positions on this topic.

Immigration is one of the most debated topics in the "boot" of Europe. In Italy (one of the first points of access from the Mediterranean Sea) and in the whole European Union, political and social divisions around immigration became particularly prominent after the "refugee crisis" exploded in 2015, with the Syrian war and the collapse of the Libyan state (Ambrosini, 2019; Percoco & Fratesi, 2018). From 2013 to 2016, Italian representatives' positions on the repercussions of immigration for the national economy have significantly polarized (Di Mauro & Verzichelli, 2019). These divisions between political elites on immigration have been amplified by the news media during the campaign for Italy's March 2018 General Elections (Bentivegna & Boccia Artieri, 2019). In the months leading up to that election, the most shared online news covering immigration presented high levels of partisanship (Giglietto et al., 2018), in line with the traditional tendency of the Italian news media system toward a high "political parallelism" (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

Linking this scenario of polarized messages on immigration from political elites and partisan news media during the campaign for the 2018 Italian General Elections with a significant mass polarization is tempting. Political communication research has provided good theoretical reasons to expect polarized elites and partisan media to enforce citizens' polarized opinions, and good reasons to expect that citizens resist polarized messages (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2015; Robinson, 2005; Zoizner et al., 2020). At the end of 2017, Italians shared a widespread belief that immigration had divided the country (Dixon et al., 2018). However, despite this high "perceived polarization" to the best of the authors' knowledge, there are no

empirical analyses that can point out whether the Italian public opinion was polarized in that context of increasing political elites' divisions on immigration, amplified by a very partisan news media system.

The purpose of the study is twofold. First, to provide insight into the state of polarization on immigration in the Italian public during the campaign for the 2018 General Elections, by applying strategies of measurement of divergence and consistency of positions suggested by seminal and contemporary literature on political polarization (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008; DiMaggio et al., 1996; Lee, 2016; Lelkes, 2016; Pew, 2014) and by analyzing the distribution of positions in relation to the major specific issues used by news media and political actors to "frame" immigrants (cultural, security and economic issues) (Binotto et al., 2016; Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Dennison & Dražanová, 2018; Eberl et al., 2018; Musarò, 2019).

Second, this study aims to analyze the role played by the various communication environments in which individuals use to consume and discuss news in the construction of polarized positions on immigration. A number of studies have investigated the role of the "older" and "newer" media in political polarization processes in terms of potential drivers of polarized opinions. The present study is differentiated from existing ones as it takes a wide range of news sources that individuals can use in the contemporary "hybrid media system" wherein older and newer media logics, contents, and practices compete and overlap (Chadwick, 2013; Iannelli, 2016). Moreover, following this hybrid approach to the study of news media as driver of polarization, the present analysis also explores the controversial relations (Dubois & Blank, 2018; Bruns, 2019) between polarized opinions and the so-called "echo-chambers", that is, communication environments characterized by high levels of political similarity that can emerge both "online" and "offline", even if most research on echo-chambers focuses only on the online relations (Sunstein, 2017). A set of logistic

regression models has been utilized to explore whether and how the frequency of use of traditional and digital news media and/or the political similarity of (online and offline) information networks have affected the probability of Italian citizens having extreme and/or aligned positions on immigration. In order to "control" for the associations between the diverse news media practices and polarized opinions, the analysis ponders the effect of other potential predictors of opposite attitudes and opinions on immigrants (i.e., socio-demographics and economic/political profiles of the individuals).

The paper beings with a review of the literature on public opinion polarization and the (media, demographic, economic, political) predictors of polarized opinions (on immigration). The next section presents the measures of divergence and consistency as well as the empirical strategy of logistic regressions adopted in the present study. Following this, the paper reports and discusses the results concerning the polarization of public opinion on immigration, as well as the relations between hybrid news media practices and polarized positions about immigration. The final section provides the main concluding remarks.

Literature review

Public opinion polarization as multifaced phenomenon: divergence and consistency

Following Lelkes (2016), we can maintain that the public opinion literature has approached mainly four distinct manifestations of polarization: divergence, consistency, affective polarization, and perceived polarization.

According to the scholars who define polarization as divergence, polarization occurs, at the societal level, when the distribution of opinions in relation to parties, ideologies, and specific political issues cluster toward the extreme poles (Fiorina et al., 2005; Fiorina & Abrams, 2008). So, in this first approach to political polarization, it constitutes a threat for democratic societies to the extent that it unfolds as extremism and opinion radicalization. Exploring radicalization as an individual-level phenomenon (Wojcieszak, 2015), scholarship

has investigated three guises of attitude extremity, that is, party-, ideology-, and issue-based extremity (Wojcieszak & Rojas, 2011), which occur when a person strongly favors or opposes, respectively, a given party, ideology, and issue-related position.

While in this first definition without extreme position taking there is not polarization, in the second definition, the dynamic that matters is the consistency of positions across multiple lines of disagreement. In this second approach, polarization occurs when citizens consistently align along with opposite positions in various areas of potential conflict, even if they do not take extreme positions (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008; Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008). Conceiving polarization as consistency means considering it not only as a phenomenon of opinion radicalization, but also as a process of opinion alignment along with multiple political domains, such that citizens are organized in opposite factions with alternative and irreconcilable systems of beliefs (Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008). Opinion consistency (alignment), as well as opinion divergence (radicalization), can increase political tension and hostility (Lelkes, 2016; Mason 2015), making democratic conflict unsustainable (Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008). Consistency has been studied as partisan sorting (when individuals' partisanship and ideology converge), as issue partisanship (when people adopt policy preferences of their chosen party), and as issue alignment (when there is a strong coherence among the people's opinion within an issue domain and/or across diverse issue domains) (Down & Wilson, 2010; Mason, 2015; Davis & Dunaway, 2016).

Affective polarization (or interparty hostility) occurs when party supporters view other parties (leaders, supporters) as disliked out-groups, underrating the relevance of dissenting views, and holding positive in-group feelings (Iyengar et al., 2012; Iyengar et al. 2018). The concept of affective polarization considers emotions towards out-group members and in-groups as fundamental drivers of political opinions. This approach has attracted several studies, mainly developed in two-party systems, showing the direct influence that partisan

affect can have in interpersonal relations, outside the political sphere, generating

discriminatory behavior in workplaces or romantic relations (Iyengar & Westwood 2015).

Few authors have considered the concept of affective participation in Europe (Reiljan, 2020;

Westwood et al., 2018), where multiparty parliamentary contexts and the growth of

"exclusionary" populism (Mudde, 2019), with parties encouraging the "politics of

resentments" (Fukuyama, 2018), require ad hoc conceptualization and measurements of inter-

party hostility (Reiljan, 2020; Tucker et al., 2018).

Perceived polarization is another dynamic that can unfold in contemporary

democracies. Scholars defined it as the extent to which citizens perceive the political system,

the electorate, and/or the news media system as polarized in terms of ideological positions or

issue-related attitudes (Yang et al., 2016; Levendusky & Malhotra, 2015; Vegetti et al., 2017).

In order to measure these diverse dimensions of political polarization, public opinion

literature has suggested diverse empirical strategies.

To study divergence at the societal level, public opinion literature has adopted

measures that point out the presence of bimodal and dispersed distributions of positions

(DiMaggio et al., 1996; Freeman & Dale, 2013; Lee, 2016; Lelkes, 2016; Pfister et al., 2016).

As explained in the seminal work of DiMaggio et al. (1996), a natural measure of opinion

spread (dispersion) is the variance of the distribution, which is affected by the proportion of

the extreme responses. However, to analyze whether (and to what extent) positions cluster

around two contrasting extreme modes that are isolated from one another, with few moderate

views in between, it is necessary to analyze the distance between the polar stances

(bimodality). For this purpose, Kurtosis is employed as it "serves to tap bimodality" (detected

when the result is near -2; DiMaggio et al., 1996, p. 694) and - unlike Skewness – it is

sensitive to the proportion of the extreme responses, and thus, is capable of distinguishing

between consensus around a single pole and bimodal polarization. A disadvantage of kurtosis

as a measure of polarization is its sensitivity to the length of a scale. To overcome the bias of kurtosis and variance, various indexes of bimodality have been proposed by political polarization literature. Freeman and Dale (2013) and Lelkes (2016) have shed light on the utility of a measure of bimodality known as the "bimodality coefficient" (BC). Similarly to Di Maggio et al. (1996), Lee (2016) developed an index that helps to capture the percentage of respondents at the two extreme of a scale and the evenness of the diffusion of these extreme positions between the two poles. However, neither index is perfectly sensitive and specific at the same time, and the best strategy is to investigate distributions by comparing diverse index and descriptive statistics (and to inspect by eye the distributions' appearance) (Pfister et al., 2016).

Scholars have also developed diverse measures of consistency (Lelkes, 2016), orientated to understand the degree of coherence of people's positions on multiple issues within the same thematic domain or on multiple issue domains. Abramowitz and Saunders (2008), as well as the longitudinal studies on US polarization conducted by the Pew Research Center (e.g., Pew, 2014), have relied on issue consistency scales to measure ideological constraint. These scales are built through a set of issue questions included in longitudinal public opinion surveys. The idea behind these measures of constraint is that views on these issues "have a traditional 'left/right' association" (Pew, 2014). Therefore, as a first step, the original issue questions are trichotomized to indicate the liberal position, the conservative position, or the moderate/no-opinion position. Then, the absolute value of the difference between the number of "liberal" positions and the numbers of "conservative" positions on the diverse issue questions are computed (Abramowitz & Saunders, 2008: 544). The final consistency scales range between a score that indicates that a respondent gave a liberal response to all items and a score that indicates that a respondent gave a conservative response

to all items. In the last step, respondents are grouped into categories according with the scores they reach on the full scale (Pew, 2014).

To measure affective polarization, surveys' respondents are usually asked to indicate how "warm" or "cold "they feel toward parties and leaders, through the so-called "feeling thermometers" (Lelkes, 2016), but also through specific questions asking about their happiness/unhappiness in developing professional or romantic relationship with a member of the other party (Iyengar et al., 2012). To measure perceived polarization, respondents are asked to locate major political parties, or party supporters, or news media on scales that can refer to ideologies or issues (Yang et al., 2016).

All these scientific contributions points out the importance to develop analyses that overcome the umbrella term "polarization", focusing on the distinct components of polarization, in order to measure better whether and how contemporary societies polarize. Moreover, these scientific contributions show that most polarization studies focus on the United States (Lelkes, 2016; Wojcieszak, 2015); thus further research (and further effort of conceptualization and measure validation) is required to analyze the multiple manifestations of polarization that can unfold in non-US countries (Reiljan, 2020; Tucker et al., 2018; Wojcieszak et al., 2017).

Starting from this conceptual and methodological suggestions and challenges, the present study investigates polarization in Italy by focusing on two distinct dynamics that can unfold in the public about immigrants-related issues, that is, divergence and consistency (Lelkes, 2016).

The first purpose of this study is to analyze, at the societal level, the state of these two dynamics of polarization on immigration during the campaign for the 2018 General Elections – a context of increasing political elites' divisions on immigration (Bentivegna & Boccia Artieri, 2019; Giglietto et al., 2018). A previous study has shown that, in the leading up to

those elections, at the end of 2017, Italians had a high perceived polarization of the country on the topic of immigration (Dixon et al., 2018). However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, there are no empirical analyses that can point out whether the Italian public opinion diverged toward extreme opinions on specific immigrants-related issues, and/or whether it was divided between two consistently opposite visions of immigration, assuming conflicting positions across all the specific immigrants-related issues. As the analysis is based on secondary data collected in a survey that did not adopt feeling thermometers or other specific questions concerning partisan affect (Pew, 2017); therefore in the present study, affective participation remains unexplored.

Traditional and digital media as drivers of opinion polarization

Several studies have explored the relations between (traditional/digital) media and opinion polarization on policy issues, ideologies, parties, and political leaders.

There is no firm evidence that traditional media makes ordinary citizens more polarized (Prior, 2013). In the US, traditional media has been proved to be positively related to partisan sorting and affective polarization for those individuals highly interested in news and politics (Davis & Dunaway, 2016; Levendusky & Malhotra, 2015). Moreover, in the US, traditional media has proven to be unrelated to perceived polarization of political parties' positions on policy issues, including immigration (Yang et al., 2016). On the contrary, this relation between traditional media use and perceived elite polarization is very significant (Yang et al., 2016) in "polarized pluralist" contexts (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), such as Italy, which are characterized by high political parallelism of the media system. Scholars focusing on the role of traditional media on issue-based polarization have found that some television formats are able to "cultivate" attitude extremity on recurring and divisive themes (Shrum, 1999; Sotirovic, 2001), while newspaper use is associated only with ideological extremity

(Wojcieszak & Rojas, 2011) and the print does not seem to encourage a polarized public discussion on controversial issues (McFarland, 2011).

The effects of digital media on the diverse forms of opinion polarization have been also widely investigated; similarly to traditional media, the results are mixed, depending on the context and the form of polarization being investigated. In the US, the increased availability of broadband Internet seems to lead to affective polarization between partisans (Lelkes et al., 2016) and online "niche news" have been shown to exacerbate partisan sorting and the polarization of preferences for Presidential candidates (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Stroud, 2010). In the run-up to the 2018 US midterm elections, a large-scale experiment showed how deactivating Facebook reduces both exposure to polarizing news and polarization of the views on policy issues (Allcott et al., 2020). In the majority of EU countries, including Italy, positive associations between online news use and perceived polarization of the party system have been found (Yang at al., 2016). Working on issue-based attitude extremity in Colombia, Wojcieszak and Rojas (2011) demonstrated the "correlates" between this particular type of extremism and online entertainment, but only on some specific issues and not on others.

Over the last decade, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have attracted a number of reflections on political polarization. One of the main issues under research is whether social media enables the formation of "echo-chambers" (Sunstein, 2017) – where individuals are exposed to like-minded information and rarely other viewpoints – and whether the similarity/dissimilarity of views on social media affect political polarization (Bail et al., 2018; Bruns, 2019; Wojcieszak, 2010). Extant findings on the relations between online echo-chambers and polarization are rather mixed. Moreover, "offline" echo-chambers have also been proven to be significant for political polarization, even if it is still unclear whether

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like-minded friends and relatives exacerbate (Binder et al., 2009) or moderate (Wojcieszak & Price, 2010) extremism.

Most studies on media and polarization have primarily focused on a few types of media, if not only one. To the best of the authors' knowledge, few studies have compared the effect of diverse media (platforms, formats, and practices) on public opinion polarization, in its diverse forms, e.g., ideological-partisan sorting (Stroud, 2010; Davis & Dunaway, 2016), affective polarization (Levendusky & Malhotra, 2015), perceived polarization (Yang et al., 2016), and issue-based extremism (Sotirovic, 2001; Wojcieszak & Rojas, 2011).

The "single media" approach also characterizes studies that have focused on the role of media in opinion polarization regarding immigration. Research on this issue-specific form of opinion polarization has focused, in particular, on the analysis of newspapers articles, showing their effects on polarized attitudes about immigration (Dennison & Dražanová, 2018; Harteveld et al., 2017; Klingeren et al., 2017).

Despite the prevalent single media approach, media does not exist in isolation, but is part of more complex patterns of communication (Dubois & Blank, 2018). The cycle of political news making, in particular, has become "hybrid" (Chadwick, 2013; Iannelli, 2016) involving both "older" and "newer" media practices. Unlike previous studies, the present analysis takes into account a wide range of news media sources that individuals can use in the contemporary hybrid media system to build their opinions about controversial public issues and to act politically.

Resting on the mixed available findings on the effects of traditional and digital media on polarized opinions, the second purpose of this study is to explore the relations between the various media practices (Couldry, 2004) that can emerge in the Italian hybrid media system and the extreme/aligned opinions on immigration. The aim is to understand whether and how the frequency of use of traditional and digital news media has affected the probability of

Italian citizens having extreme and/or aligned positions on immigration in a context – the campaign for the 2018 General elections – that was characterized by increasing political elite divisions on immigration and a very partisan news media system (Bentivegna & Boccia Artieri, 2019; Giglietto et al., 2018). Moreover, this study aims to understand whether and what differences emerge in the relations between the diverse news media practices and polarized opinions, by also considering the controversial effect of online and offline like-minded communication environments

Other drivers of opposite attitudes and polarized opinions on immigration

Research on public opinion regarding immigration has noted how opposite attitudes (both positive and negative) can change in relation to the individual socio-demographic and economic profiles. A series of recent papers found common results on this association (Constant & Zimmerman, 2009; Dahlberg at al., 2012; Young et al., 2018; Alesina at al., 2018; Dustmann & Preston, 2007: Dustmann et al., 2018; Valentino at al., 2019). Overall, negative opinions are associated with low- and medium-income individuals, low-skilled natives working in sectors more exposed to immigrants, non-college educated individuals, women, and individuals living in municipalities with high unemployment and high immigrant shares or a past immigration settlement. Positive perceptions are associated with younger individuals, highly skilled and college-educated individuals, and individuals living in urban municipalities. Research on Italy confirms these associations between individual socio-demographic/economic profiles and opinions about immigration (Eurobarometer, 2018; OECD, 2018).

Political ideology has been proven to be a strong predictor of polarized opinions on immigration too. Extant EU research has shown, for example, that people moving to far-right or far-left positions are more extreme in their attitudes towards immigration policy goals (Harteveld et al., 2017). Interest in politics, a predictor of participation, has been proven to

affect partisan polarization (Levendusky, 2009), although – to our knowledge – its direct effect on forms of polarization on controversial issues has not yet been demonstrated (Wojcieszak & Rojas, 2011).

With the above in mind, the present study "controls" for the effect that the diverse news media practices can have on extreme and consistent opinions about immigration by including in the logistic regression models individuals' socio-demographic, economic, and political variables.

Data and methods

The present analysis is based on a representative survey, "Media and Politics in Western Europe", which was conducted by the Pew Research Center between October 31st and December 15th, 2017 (Pew, 2017). The survey has been administered by telephone interviews on a sample of adults (+18), representative by country and weighted by gender, age, education, and region[1]. In Italy, a total of 2,043 individuals were interviewed. The final sample that has been used in the present analysis excludes missing values and inconsistent responses.

Measuring polarization: divergence and consistency of public opinion about immigration

In order to measure Italian public opinion divergence and consistency on immigration, this study has considered six questions by Pew (2017) asking respondents to take a position on the three major (positive and negative) frames used by news media and political actors in the last years to represent immigration in Europe (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017; Dennison & Dražanová, 2018; Eberl et al, 2018), and in Italy too (Binotto et al., 2016; Musarò, 2019). The

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[1]. The questionnaire, the codebook and the original dataset that support the findings of the present analysis are available, upon registration on the Pew Research Center's website, and in agreement with Pew's use policy, at https://www.pewresearch.org/global/dataset/fall-2017-media-and-politics-in-western-europe-survey-data/. The countries involved in the Pew survey are Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

first issue is national cultural identity; newcomers can either be represented by media (and seen by the public) as agents of interculturalism and cultural metissage or as threats to native culture's preservation. The second issue is national security and the role played by newcomers from outside the EU with regard to the strengthening/weakening of crime and the threat of terroristic attacks (multiple incidents of which took place in various EU countries throughout 2017). Finally, the third issue is the positive/negative impact of immigrants on the national economy; this was a very controversial issue in a period of high economic insecurity, particularly when the costs of rescue and reception of migrants increased for Italy.

The Pew's survey asked, through three questions[2], if it was necessary for immigrants to adopt Italian customs and traditions (cultural issues concerning immigration); if immigrants increase the risk of terrorist attacks in Italy (security issues concerning immigration); and if immigrants made the Italian economy stronger with their work and talents or if they are a burden due to their competition in the national labor market (economic issues concerning immigration). The response options asked which statement was closer to their view. For each of these three questions, respondents who took a position were asked to define the strength of this position, indicating – through other three questions[3] – if they felt it strongly or only somewhat.

In the present work, starting from these six questions by Pew (2017), three measures of opinions about immigrants-related issues were created. Each measure ranges from 1 to 5. Specifically, regarding the opinions about cultural issues, the scale (Qa) measures more (1) or less (5) extremely favorable positions to interculturalism; the scale (Qb) concerns the security issues and measures the level of extreme favor (lower [1] or higher [5]) towards the association between immigrants and the risk of terrorist attacks; the scale (Qc) concerns the

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[2]. The original questions numbered Q28a, Q29a, Q30a (Pew, 2017)

[3]. The original questions numbered Q28b, Q29b, Q30b (Pew, 2017)

economic issues and measures more (1) or less (5) extremely favorable positions with regards to immigrants' economic integration. Figures A1, A2, and A3 in Appendix show the distribution of the positions on these three scales.

Moreover – following the literature on issue consistency scales (Abramowitz and Saunders, 2008; Pew, 2014) – a measure of the consistency of positions on the three major migration-related issues has been built. To build this measure of opinion consistency on immigration, positions on each issue[4] have been associated with an "open", "none", or "closed" view of immigration, without considering the strength of the positions on the diverse issues. Following this, the absolute value of the difference between the number of open positions and the numbers of close positions on the three diverse issue questions related to immigrants have been computed. The final 7-point consistency scale ranges between +3 (consistently open views of immigration, along the three issues) and -3 (consistently closed views of immigration). In this consistency scale, -2 indicates moderately closed views (two closed and one open positions to immigration); +2 moderately open views (two open and one closed positions); -1 low closed views (at least one of the answers is closed); +1 to low open views (at least one is open); 0 is assigned to none views (at least one missing or "neither" response).

To check the state of polarization of the Italian public opinion in relation to immigration, the analysis is performed in two steps: in the first step some measures of dispersion and bimodality adopted in previous works (Freeman & Dale, 2013; Lee, 2016; Lelkes, 2016; Pfister et al., 2016) have been calculated on the three scales of opinions about immigrants-related issues (Qa, Qb, Qc) to test the state of *divergence* toward the extreme positions; in the second step, the distribution of the *consistency* scale is analyzed to

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[4] Recorded through the original questions numbered Q28a, Q29a, and Q30a (Pew, 2017). The responses "Neither", "Don't know" and "Refused" have been classified as "no views".

understand whether and to what extent public opinion is aligned in two consistently alternative, open and closed, views of immigration.

Modelling polarization: (media) drivers of extreme and consistent opinions on immigration

In order to explore whether and to what extent the use of (like-minded) news in relation to diverse communication environments has affected the probability of Italian citizens having extreme and/or consistent positions on immigration, four sets of logistic regression models were performed based on a general theoretical model. The base model is illustrated in Equation 1:

$$IO_{ij} = f(traditional\ media_i,\ digital\ media_i, echochambers_i, socio - economics\ controls_i)\ (1)$$

where IO (Immigration Opinion) is the dependent variable that, for each individual *i*=1, 2, 3, …*n* in the sample, varies according to the issue *j* under analysis (Qa, Qb, Qc, and the consistency scale).

The independent variables used to test the effect of the diverse news media practices are the following: traditional media (television, radio, print); digital media (internet and social media); and echo-chambers (online and offline). News media use through traditional and digital media was measured by Pew through five questions.[5] Respondents were asked to report the frequency with which they obtained news from five media sources: television, radio, print media, Internet, and social media. Five measures of the frequency of use of the above news media were created on these scales, where higher values indicate a more frequent use.

The political similarity of the news consumed on social media was measured working upon a question by Pew.[6] Respondents were asked to say whether the news on social media

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[5] The original questions numbered Q6a, Q6b, Q6c, Q6d, Q14 (Pew, 2017). See also Table A1 in the Appendix.

[6] The original question numbered Q17 (Pew, 2017, Table A1).

were (often, sometimes, or rarely) in line with their political views. A measure of perceived political similarity of social media news was created (*echo-chamber online*), where 1 indicates (very or somewhat frequent) exposure to like-minded social media news and 0 indicates no exposure to like-minded social media news. The perception of political similarity of offline interpersonal networks of discussion about news was measured through an original question wherein respondents were asked to say whether, when talking about news with their friends, they found those views as -often, sometimes, or rarely- in line with their political opinion.[7] A measure of perceived political similarity of the interpersonal networks of discussion has been created (*echo-chamber offline*), where 1 indicates (very or somewhat frequent) exposure to like-minded interpersonal discussions about news and 0 indicates no exposure to like-minded interpersonal discussions about news.

The models include a set of controls for individual characteristics that have been proven to influence opposite attitudes and polarized opinions towards immigrants (age, gender, education, household income, worries for the current economic situation in Italy, identification in left/right ideology, and interest in politics). Table A1 and Table A2 in the Appendix provide descriptions and descriptive statistics of the independent variables and controls.

Results

The "state" of polarization on immigration in the Italian public

To provide insight into the "state" of divergence of the Italian public opinion on immigration, a set of measures of dispersion and bimodality have been computed on immigration-related questions (Qa, Qb, Qc). Table 1 shows some descriptive statistics of the distribution, a bimodality coefficient (BC) adopted in previous works (e.g., Freeman & Dale, 2013; Lelkes, 2016; Pfister et al., 2016) and a polarization score (PS) proposed by Lee (2016).

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[7] The original question numbered Q19 (Pew, 2017, Table A1).

[Table 1 here]

All bimodality coefficients are lower than the benchmark value of 0.555 that would be expected for a unimodal distribution. The distribution of the opinion on the cultural issue of immigration is the less unimodal (BC: 0.34) as a significant majority of positions (68.8%) concentrate on the extreme "poles" (PS: 50,19). However, as shown by the descriptive statistics, public opinion converges around one extreme position: "it is necessary for immigrants to adopt Italian customs and traditions". The majority of Italians (50.48%, Figure A1) expressed this extreme view.

On terrorist attacks, the majority (62.5%, Figure A2) of responses were at the extreme positions, but in this case – unlike cultural issues – the moderate locations were less sparse (BC: 0.24) as confirmed by descriptive statistics of the distribution. Looking only at the extremes on this issue, there is a higher evenness of the diffusion of these positions (PS: 0,57) which, compared to cultural issues, are more balanced between the two "poles".

When people think about immigration through the lens of economic issues (PS: 0,47), extreme positions represent a narrower majority (52%, Figure A3). Moreover, unlike cultural issues and like security issues, between the two extreme positions, there are more moderate and central views (BC: 0,24) as described also by the descriptive statistics.

Table 2 shows results from the second step of the analysis on the state of polarization on immigration of the Italian public, looking at the distribution of the issue consistency scale.

[Table 2 here]

A slight majority of respondents indicate "low open" and "low closed" positions about immigration (51.4%). Consistently open views of immigration have been expressed by 21.4% of Italians, while 18.9% consistently aligns along closed views of immigrants. These results show that consistent positions involve 40.3% of Italians and that the two opposite "poles" of

the consistency scale (consistently open views and consistently closed views of immigration) have a balanced consensus.

Hybrid news media practices as drivers of polarized opinions on immigration

Four sets of regressions have been performed to investigate the relationship between the diverse news media practices and the probability, for the individuals, to have extreme opinions on immigrants-related issues (Qa, Qb, Qc) and/or consistent views of immigration (consistency scale).

The model illustrated in Equation 1 has been applied by using logistic regressions. Each dependent has been coded as dummy variable. Specifically, for each immigrant-related issue, five models have been performed, one for each position: extremely favorable (1 if the respondent expresses an extremely favorable position; 0 otherwise); somewhat favorable (1 for a somewhat favorable position; 0 otherwise); neutral (1 for a neutral position; 0 otherwise); somewhat unfavorable (1 for a somewhat unfavorable position; 0 otherwise); and extremely unfavorable (1 for an extremely unfavorable position; 0 otherwise). The same approach was applied to each position on the issue consistency scale.

The analysis shows that a higher use of *Social media* news does not lead to higher extremely favorable or unfavorable opinions regarding interculturalism (Models 1 and 5, Table 3). In contrast, higher use of *Social media* news increases the likelihood of having positions that are extremely favorable to the association between immigrants and the risk of terrorist attacks (Model 5, Table 4). Regarding the economic issue (Table 5), the higher the use of *Social media* news, the lower the likelihood of having positions that are extremely (and somewhat) favorable to immigrants' economic integration (Model 1 and 2) and the higher the likelihood of having extremely unfavorable positions on this issue (Model 5). Thus, the use of *Social media* reinforces positions that are extremely unfavorable to immigrants, by considering them economic and security threats. This effect of *Social media* on extremely

unfavorable positions is particularly robust when immigrants are seen through the lens of the national economy: for people who consume news on social media more frequently, there is a higher probability of strongly believing that the presence of immigrants is detrimental for the national economy.

A heavy use of *Television* news fosters opinions that are extremely unfavorable towards immigrants across all three issues (Model 2 and 5, Table 3; Model 1, 4, and 5, Table 4; Model 5, Table 5). While the effect of *Social media* on extremely unfavorable positions is more robust in the economic issue (Table 5), the results show a more robust effect of *Television* on extremely unfavorable positions on cultural and security issues (Table 3 and 4).

Exposure to news in online environments that are different from social media (*Internet*) does not show a relationship with issue-specific extreme opinions about immigration, either favorable or unfavorable. Furthermore, the *Radio* use does not affect opinion on immigration issues: the only exception is found for economic issues in which the coefficient of *Radio* is negative and significant at 10%, however, this only occurred in Model 5 (Table 5). The higher use of press news (*Print*) does not affect extreme opinions on immigration for none of the items.

Echo-chambers, both online and offline, are barely or not significant across all models. *Echo-chambers online* barely reduce the probability of having an extremely favorable position to the association between immigrants and terroristic attacks (Model 5, Table 4), while *Echo-chambers offline* reinforces extremely unfavorable positions on immigrants' economic integration (Model 5, Table 5).

Considering the set of controls on socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents, higher levels of *Education* reduce the probability of having unfavorable extreme positions on all issues. This is especially confirmed when individuals express their opinions on immigrants' impact on the Italian economy: the less educated (and *male*)

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individuals tend to see immigrants as an economic threat more than higher educated (female) persons. *Age* is strongly related to favorable and unfavorable extreme positions on cultural issues, while this relationship is less robust for the other issues: older respondents have a higher likelihood of being extremely unfavorable to interculturalism. Work-related status (*Employment)* affects extremely favorable and unfavorable positions on immigrants only when they are seen as a resource or a threat for the national economy. On the contrary, concerns for the state of the "health" of the economic situation in Italy *(Economic perception*) affects extreme positions on both economic and security issues of immigration. For people who see the general economic situation as extremely good, the probability of strongly believing that immigrants are a burden for Italian economy and a risk for national security is lower, while the probability of strongly believing that immigrants represent an economic opportunity and that they do not increase the risk of terrorist attacks is higher.

Extremity on all issues of immigration is significantly driven by *left/right ideology*. For people who identify themselves as far-right, the probability of considering the presence of immigrants as a cultural, economic, and security threat is higher, while for people that identify themselves as far-left, the probability is lower. Moreover, *Interest in politics* reduces the likelihood of having extremely unfavorable opinions about interculturalism (Model 5, Table 3) and increases the probability of having extremely favorable opinions towards immigrants' economic integration (Model 1, Table 5).

[Table 3 here]

[Table 4 here]

[Table 5 here]

The set of regressions illustrated in Table 6 allows the investigation of the relationship between diverse news media practices and consistently open and closed views on immigration.

The results confirm the role played by *Social media* and *Television* on shaping

extreme positions on immigrant-related issues. Regarding television, the higher the use, the

higher the probability of having a consistently closed view of immigration (Model 6, Table 6)

and the lower the probability of having a consistently open view (Model 1, Table 6).

Similarly, the use of *Social media* increases alignments towards consistently closed positions.

The relationship between consistent positions and (online/offline) echo-chambers are not

significant, and furthermore, the use to other news media does not demonstrate significant

associations with consistent opinions.

As for issue-specific extreme positions, *Left/right ideology* and consistent views of

immigration are strongly related: the more the individuals move to the far-right, the higher the

probability is of having a consistent alignment on closed positions (Model 1 and 6, Table 6).

Interest in politics increases the probability of having consistently open views of immigration

(Model 1, Table 6).

Higher levels of *Education* reduce the probability of having consistently closed views

of immigration, while for younger individuals the probability of having consistently open

views is higher. Confirming previous findings, the *Economic perception* affects alignment on

consistently closed and open views of immigration.

[Table 6 here]

Discussion

Overall, measures of dispersion and bimodality suggest that the Italian public opinion on

immigrant-related issues did not diverge toward the two most extreme poles at a time of

significative divisions between political elites on immigration such as the campaign for the

2018 General Elections (Bentivegna & Boccia Artieri, 2019; Giglietto et al., 2018). Despite

the widespread belief that immigration had divided the country (Dixon et al., 2018), findings

showed no significant divergence toward the two extreme positions on immigrant-related

issues in the Italian public opinion. This does not mean that there are no signals of issue-based extremism. When immigration was looked at through the lens of national culture, peak consensus was recorded on one extreme "pole": viewing interculturalism unfavorably. Additionally, the majority of Italians do show low levels of position consistency along all immigration issues. However, the "state" of consistency is not minimal in Italy at the end of 2017: 40% of respondents were divided (in a balanced way) between two opposite and consistent positions on immigration.

Concerning the individual level, the present study has provided some insights into the role played by news media practices in building polarized opinions about immigration. Findings from the regression analyses have shown a strong relationship between the frequency of use of television and social media as news sources and the probability of having extreme and aligned positions. When diverse news media sources are considered together, only these two mainstream news media seem to affect extreme and consistent positions on immigration. Specifically, a higher use of tv is strongly related to the probability of having extremely unfavorable positions towards immigrants across all three issues and consistently closed views of immigration. The use of *Social media* as news source does not show a relationship with extreme positions (either favorable or unfavorable) on the cultural issue related to immigrants. However, social media use for news reinforces positions that are extremely unfavorable to immigrants, by considering them economic and security threats. Elitist media sources, such as radio and offline newspapers, do not lead to more extreme or consistent positions on immigration.

The strong relationship between television and polarized opinions on immigration is in line with some previous studies. In particular, this finding confirms the centrality showed by television use in fostering perceived polarization (Yang et al., 2016) in certain countries, such as Italy, that are characterized by "polarized pluralist" models of journalism (Hallin &

Mancini, 2014). Moreover, the robust effect of television is in line with the analysis developed by Wojcieszak and Rojas (2011) on issue-based polarization in Colombia: while television is associated with extremism regarding controversial issues such as the rights of sexual minorities, higher usage of newspapers is only associated with ideological extremism. The present analysis shows that television use for news is strongly related to both extremism and consistency of opinions on immigration.

In the present study, echo-chambers, both online and offline, are not related to consistent views, and there are barely significant relationships with some extreme positions. Similarly to some of the mixed findings of previous research (Binder et al., 2009; Wojcieszak, 2010), the present study found that like-minded news on social media reduces extremism on one specific issue of immigration (the probability to associate immigrants and terroristic attack), while like-minded interpersonal networks of discussion about news reinforce extremism on another issue (the probability to see immigrants as an economic threat).

Conclusions

By employing seminal and contemporary literature on political polarization, the present study conceptualized and measured public opinion polarization on immigration in Italy in terms of divergence and consistency of positions (Lelkes, 2016). A set of logistic regression models have been used to explore whether and how traditional and digital news media practices affect extreme and aligned opinions on immigration. The data originates from a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in Autumn 2017 (Pew, 2017), during the campaign for the 2018 Italian General elections.

Findings "minimize" the worries about the radicalization of the Italian public opinion on immigration at the end of 2017: as suggested, among the others, by Fiorina et al. (2005) and Wojcieszak (2015), highly dispersed and bimodal distributions are unlikely to occur when research looks at mass public. However, results provide evidence of one-sided extremism on

the cultural issue concerning immigrants and consistent views of immigration. These findings underscore the importance of refocusing the umbrella term "polarization" toward the distinct dynamics in which this phenomenon can emerge, threatening integration and cooperation at the social, political, and economic levels (Mason, 2015; McCarty et al., 2006; Prior, 2013).

Furthermore, the present study provides evidence that social media use for news is not always related to polarized opinions on immigration (depending on the specific issue that is under investigation), that the effect of online/offline political similarity on polarized opinions on immigration is barely or not significant, and that the effect of television news on extreme and consistent positions is always more robust than that of social media news. These findings underscore the importance of overcoming the single-(social) media approach in polarization research, and taking into account the "hybrid media system" (Chadwick, 2013), where television compete with mainstream online news media.

As with any study, this comes with several limitations.

A key limitation is related to the cross-sectional nature of data. Longitudinal panel studies – a "tradition" for US literature on political polarization – allow capturing, at the societal level, the changes (increases/decreases) in the state of polarization of public opinion over time. On the contrary, the cross-sectional analyses conducted in this exploratory study only "photograph" the state of polarization on immigration in Italy during the last electoral campaign. However, through these findings, the study contributes to the development of knowledge on the diverse manifestations of political polarization at the societal level beyond the over-investigated US context (Wojcieszak, 2015), building measures of opinion divergence and consistency along with immigrants' related issues that deserve to be validated in future cross-national research. Moreover, at the individual-level analysis, longitudinal data allow robust assessments of the relations between the changes in news media use (e.g., during and after an election campaign) and the changes in polarized opinions. Otherwise, the cross-

sectional nature of this study prevents robust assessments about the direction of causality of the observed relationships between some news media practices and polarized opinions. However, these results are robust to several econometric specifications and statistical checks: controls variables already employed in previous studies are statistically significant with the expected signs, confirming the robustness of the specification and of the results of the main variables of interest (i.e., the news media use). Given the reliability of the studied relationship, the research design and the measures of extremism/alignment presented in this study deserve further investigation in order to build theory on media and polarization in contemporary hybrid media systems.

Furthermore, due to data limitations, affective participation remains unexplored in the present study, as well as in the majority of polarization studies developed in Europe, where the multiparty systems demand ad hoc conceptualization and measurements of inter-party hostility (Reiljan, 2020; Tucker et al., 2018). More research is then required on the processes driven by partisan affect in EU countries, particularly when the topic under investigation is immigration, given the rise in Europe of "exclusionary populism" (Mudde, 2019), with parties employing divisive rhetoric that identifies in-groups and out-groups in terms of nation, religion, race, ethnicity, and offering an irresistible call to both positive sentiments for in-groups and "resentments" for out-groups (Fukuyama, 2018).

Finally, this study adopts fairly broad measures of news media use. It does not explore the effects of specific patterns of news consumption on television and social media (Sotirovic, 2001; Wojcieszak & Rojas, 2011), nor the role of other media experiences that could be related to polarized opinions, such as "hate speech" or "fake news" (Giglietto, Iannelli, Valeriani, & Rossi, 2019). This is another key challenge that ought to be explored in future communication research on political polarization.

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Appendix

Figure A1. Distribution of positions on cultural issues related to immigrants (Qa)
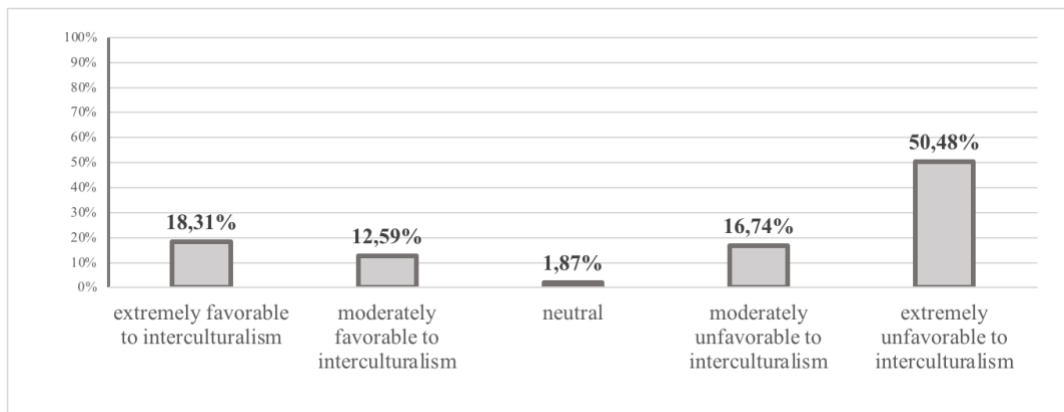
Source: Elaboration on Pew Data 2017 (v. %, N=1977)

Figure A2. Distribution of positions on security issues related to immigrants (Qb)

Source: Elaboration on Pew Data 2017 (v. %, N=1953)

Figure A3. Distribution of positions on economic issues related to immigrants (Qc)

Source: Elaboration on Pew Data 2017 (v. %, N=1950)

Table A1. Independent variables and controls: description

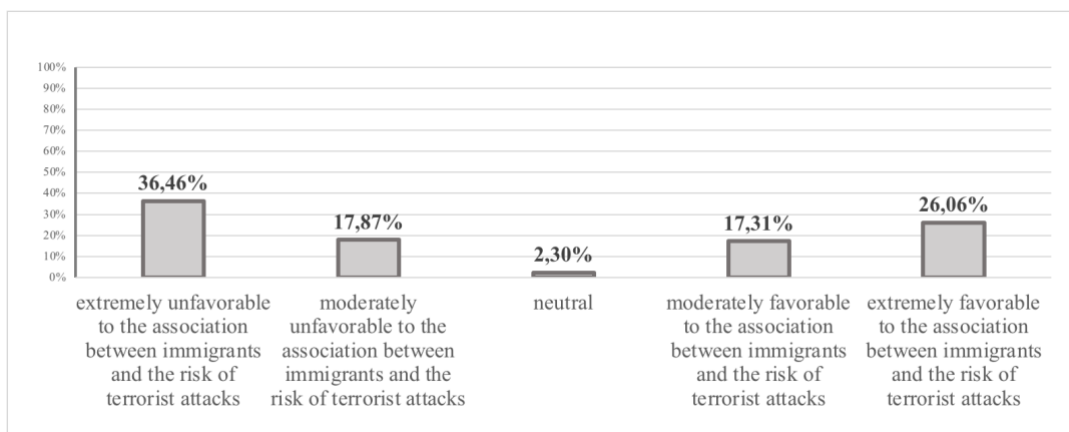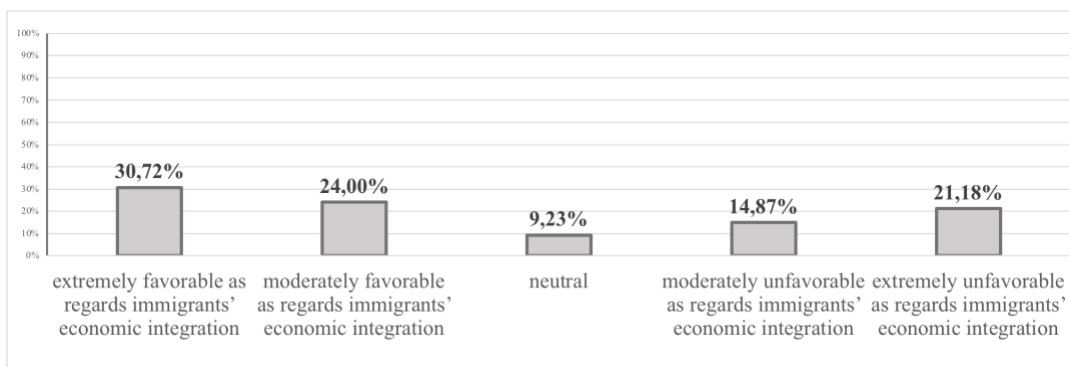| Variable	Description	Corresponding number of questions in Pew 2017
Social media	Discrete var. that account for how often the respondent obtains news on social media such as Twitter or Facebook. The response options are: 1=never, 2=once a week or less, 3=several times a week, 4=once a day, 5=several times a day.	Q14
Television	Discrete var. that account for how often the respondent obtains news on television. The response options are: 1=never, 2=once a week or less, 3=several times a week, 4=once a day, 5=several times a day.	Q6a
Radio	Discrete var. that account for how often the respondent obtains news on radio. The response options are: 1=never, 2=once a week or less, 3=several times a week, 4=once a day, 5=several times a day.	Q6b
Internet	Discrete var. that account for how often the respondent obtains news online. The response options are: 1=never, 2=once a week or less, 3=several times a week, 4=once a day, 5=several times a day.	Q6c
Print media	Discrete var. that account for how often the respondent obtains news in print media. The response options are: 1=never, 2=once a week or less, 3=several times a week, 4=once a day, 5=several times a day.	Q6d
Echo-chamber online	Dichotomous var. that takes the value one if the respondent thinks that the news she/he see on social media are at least sometimes in line with her/his political views; zero otherwise.	Q17
Echo-chamber offline	Dichotomous var. that takes the value one if the respondent thinks that when she/he talks about the news with her/his friends, their views are at least sometimes in line with her/his political views; zero otherwise.	Q19
Age	Continuous var. that accounts for age of respondent.	Q33
Male	Dichotomous var. that takes the value one if male; zero otherwise.	Q43
Education	Discrete var. The response options are: 1=no title, 2=primary school, 3=secondary school, first degree, 4=secondary school, diploma, 5=professional specialization, 6=secondary degree, "laurea triennale", 7=secondary degree, "laurea magistrale", 8=post-laurem, 9=Ph.D.	Q34IT
Income	Discrete var. The response options are: 1=up to 12,000€, 2=12,001–16,799€, 3=16,800–20399€, 4=20400–25,199€, 5=25,200-29,999€, 6=30,000 or more	Q35b
Employed	Dichotomous var. that takes the value one if the respondent works at the moment of the interview; zero otherwise.	Q36
Interest in politics	Discrete var. The response options are: 1=no interest in politics at all, 2=only a little interest in politics, 3=a fair amount interest in politics, 4=a great deal interest in politics.	Q39
Left/right ideology	Discrete var. that ranges from 1 to 6, where 1=far left and 6=far right.	Q37
Economic perception	Discrete var. The response options are: 1=very bad, 2=somewhat bad, 3=somewhat good, 4=very good.	Q1

Table A2. Independent variables and controls: descriptive statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Social media	1991	3.049	1.759	1	5
Television	1988	4.073	1.153	1	5
Radio	1985	3.228	1.592	1	5
Internet	1987	4.048	1.335	1	5
Print	1983	2.639	1.283	1	5
Echo-chamber online	1992	0.104	0.306	0	1
Echo-chamber offline	1992	0.342	0.474	0	1
Age	1992	4.869	1.562	18	99
Male	1992	0.527	0.499	0	1
Education	1984	4.787	1.613	2	9
Income	1617	4.301	1.774	1	6
Employed	1986	0.635	0.481	0	1
Interest in politics	1982	2.491	1.007	1	4
Left/right ideology	1736	3.163	1.457	0	6
Economic perception	1981	1.920	0.688	1	4

Source: Elaboration on Pew Data 2017

Tables

Table 1. Positions on immigrant-related issues: descriptive statistics, bimodality coefficient, and polarization score

Immigrant-related issues	Position on immigrant-related issues	N	Mean	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis	(BC*) Bimodality Coefficient	(PS**) Polarization Score
Cultural issues	**Qa** –Extremely favorable to interculturalism (1) / Extremely unfavorable to interculturalism (5)	1977	3.68	2.58	-0.73	1.82	0.32	50.19
Security issues	**Qb** –Extremely unfavorable to the association between immigrants and the risk of terrorist attacks (1) / Extremely favorable to the association between immigrants and the risk of terrorist attacks (5)	1953	2.77	2.81	0.21	1.32	0.24	57.08
Economic issues	**Qc** –Extremely favorable regarding immigrants' economic integration (1) / Extremely unfavorable regarding immigrants' economic integration (5)	1950	2.72	2.39	0.32	1.56	0.24	46.89

Source: elaborations on Pew data 2017

* The BC of a given empirical distribution is compared to a benchmark value of 0.555 that would be expected for a uniform distribution; higher numbers point toward bimodality whereas lower numbers point toward unimodality (Freeman & Dale, 2013; Lelkes, 2016; Pfister et al., 2016).

** This polarization index suggested by Lee (2016) ranges between 0 and 100, and is the square-root of the product of two components: the total percentage of people at the two extremes of a scale and the evenness of the spread of the "extreme respondents" towards both the opposite directions.

Table 2. Distribution of the positions on the issue consistency scale

Views of immigration	N	%
consistently closed views (-3)	355	18.94
moderately closed views (-2)	60	3.20
low closed views (-1)	513	27.37
no views (0)	4	0.21
low open views (1)	451	24.07
moderately open views (2)	90	4.80
consistently open views (3)	401	21.40
Total	1874	100

Source: Elaboration on Pew Data 2017

Table 3. Regression on the cultural issue related to immigrants

Dependent Qa	(1) Extremely favorable to interculturalism	(2) Somewhat favorable to interculturalism	(3) Neutral	(4) Somewhat unfavorable to interculturalism	(5) Extremely unfavorable to interculturalism
Social media	0.0167	0.00952	-0.0701	-0.0707	0.0242
	(0.0495)	(0.0541)	(0.148)	(0.0486)	(0.0394)
Television	-0.0733	-0.114*	0.0253	0.0263	0.133**
	(0.0626)	(0.0675)	(0.220)	(0.0654)	(0.0556)
Radio	-0.0188	0.0198	0.126	-0.0271	0.0194
	(0.0474)	(0.0521)	(0.149)	(0.0466)	(0.0379)
Internet	0.0489	-0.0368	0.340	-0.0479	0.0155
	(0.0712)	(0.0755)	(0.227)	(0.0644)	(0.0528)
Print	-0.0691	-0.00694	0.0480	-0.0192	0.0514
	(0.0602)	(0.0656)	(0.182)	(0.0588)	(0.0472)
Echo-chamber online	0.140	-0.0834	-0.841	0.0435	-0.0828
	(0.219)	(0.249)	(1.068)	(0.232)	(0.197)
Echo-chamber offline	0.0570	0.0120	-0.186	-0.0766	-0.0179
	(0.153)	(0.167)	(0.502)	(0.153)	(0.124)
Age	-0.0250***	-0.0233***	0.0266	-0.0136**	0.0350***
	(0.00552)	(0.00614)	(0.0186)	(0.00549)	(0.00463)
Male	0.0881	-0.179	-0.288	0.0113	0.0357
	(0.154)	(0.167)	(0.475)	(0.152)	(0.124)
Education	-0.00419	0.107**	0.0405	0.128***	-0.144***
	(0.0487)	(0.0514)	(0.149)	(0.0462)	(0.0389)
Income	-0.0105	0.0595	-0.213	0.0420	-0.0236
	(0.0469)	(0.0529)	(0.145)	(0.0483)	(0.0382)
Employed	0.0525	-0.192	0.210	0.221	-0.0633
	(0.159)	(0.173)	(0.526)	(0.163)	(0.129)
Interest in politics	-0.0345	0.128	-0.140	0.145*	-0.138**
	(0.0786)	(0.0867)	(0.243)	(0.0781)	(0.0630)
Left/right ideology	-0.271***	-0.134**	-0.318*	-0.207***	0.407***
	(0.0526)	(0.0576)	(0.171)	(0.0529)	(0.0451)
Economic perception	0.0197	0.234*	0.0424	0.102	-0.187**
	(0.111)	(0.121)	(0.334)	(0.108)	(0.0888)
_cons	0.691	-1.195*	-5.477***	-1.389**	-2.334***
	(0.603)	(0.654)	(2.006)	(0.596)	(0.506)
N	1422	1422	1422	1422	1422
pseudo R^2	0.054	0.047	0.054	0.040	0.121
AIC	1280.0	1125.7	230.9	1302.0	1764.7
BIC	1364.2	1209.9	315.0	1386.1	1848.8

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Source: Elaboration on Pew Data 2017

Table 4. Regression on the security issue related to immigrants

Dependent Qb	(1) Extremely unfavorable to the association between immigrants and the risk of terrorist attacks	(2) Somewhat unfavorable to the association between immigrants and the risk of terrorist attacks	(3) Neutral	(4) Somewhat favorable to the association between immigrants and the risk of terrorist attacks	(5) Extremely favorable to the association between immigrants and the risk of terrorist attacks
Social media	-0.0519	-0.0446	-0.0684	0.00537	0.113**
	(0.0394)	(0.0470)	(0.160)	(0.0488)	(0.0475)
Television	-0.212***	0.0395	-0.126	0.211***	0.129*
	(0.0534)	(0.0652)	(0.216)	(0.0731)	(0.0715)
Radio	-0.0261	0.0349	0.190	0.0245	-0.0328
	(0.0377)	(0.0454)	(0.155)	(0.0463)	(0.0450)
Internet	0.0123	0.0453	-0.122	0.00572	-0.0372
	(0.0526)	(0.0643)	(0.182)	(0.0655)	(0.0625)
Print	-0.00597	-0.0482	0.0614	-0.0113	0.0693
	(0.0474)	(0.0568)	(0.181)	(0.0581)	(0.0552)
Echo-chamber online	-0.185	0.387*	-0.729	0.256	-0.416*
	(0.195)	(0.214)	(1.077)	(0.222)	(0.243)
Echo-chamber offline	0.0658	-0.213	0.491	-0.0632	0.113
	(0.123)	(0.150)	(0.465)	(0.152)	(0.146)
Age	-0.00395	-0.00364	0.0205	-0.00894*	0.0132**
	(0.00446)	(0.00534)	(0.0188)	(0.00542)	(0.00538)
Male	-0.0324	-0.0941	-0.251	-0.0913	0.289*
	(0.123)	(0.147)	(0.482)	(0.151)	(0.150)
Education	0.0331	0.0777*	0.0667	0.0564	-0.206***
	(0.0384)	(0.0453)	(0.149)	(0.0478)	(0.0502)
Income	0.0351	0.0405	-0.0678	-0.0743	-0.00331
	(0.0384)	(0.0464)	(0.154)	(0.0456)	(0.0443)
Employed	0.0437	0.0781	1.023	0.00530	-0.178
	(0.129)	(0.156)	(0.652)	(0.157)	(0.151)
Interest in politics	0.0827	0.0652	0.0605	-0.105	-0.121
	(0.0629)	(0.0754)	(0.242)	(0.0772)	(0.0743)
Left/right ideology	-0.390***	-0.0239	0.118	0.0335	0.479***
	(0.0448)	(0.0506)	(0.167)	(0.0506)	(0.0521)
Economic perception	0.251***	0.188*	0.0362	0.118	-0.655***
	(0.0878)	(0.105)	(0.335)	(0.109)	(0.111)
_cons	0.917*	-2.521***	-6.373***	-2.089***	-1.818***
	(0.488)	(0.597)	(2.046)	(0.619)	(0.613)
N	1422	1422	1422	1422	1422
pseudo R^2	0.078	0.017	0.057	0.017	0.155
AIC	1776.0	1374.0	230.4	1323.2	1339.3
BIC	1860.1	1458.2	314.5	1407.4	1423.5

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$
Source: Elaboration on Pew Data 2017

Table 5. Regression on the economic issue related to immigrants

Dependent: Qc	(1) Extremely favorable to immigrants' economic integration	(2) Somewhat favorable to immigrants' economic integration	(3) Neutral	(4) Somewhat unfavorable to immigrants' economic integration	(5) Extremely unfavorable to immigrants' economic integration
Social media	-0.0958**	-0.0979**	0.0928	0.0347	0.217***
	(0.0418)	(0.0425)	(0.0696)	(0.0519)	(0.0548)
Television	-0.0779	-0.0256	-0.0906	0.0502	0.231***
	(0.0563)	(0.0570)	(0.0941)	(0.0744)	(0.0830)
Radio	0.0336	-0.0143	0.0612	0.0302	-0.0870*
	(0.0400)	(0.0408)	(0.0671)	(0.0501)	(0.0501)
Internet	0.0121	0.0324	0.0285	0.00824	-0.107
	(0.0551)	(0.0573)	(0.0951)	(0.0706)	(0.0717)
Print	0.0136	-0.00266	0.0622	-0.0566	0.0275
	(0.0504)	(0.0513)	(0.0820)	(0.0620)	(0.0618)
Echo-chamber online	0.205	0.208	-0.353	-0.391	-0.247
	(0.204)	(0.204)	(0.361)	(0.273)	(0.252)
Echo-chamber offline	-0.0925	-0.238*	0.0827	-0.0266	0.392**
	(0.131)	(0.135)	(0.214)	(0.163)	(0.160)
Age	0.00876*	-0.0121**	0.00753	-0.00978*	0.000640
	(0.00473)	(0.00486)	(0.00799)	(0.00592)	(0.00585)
Male	-0.132	-0.113	-0.0925	0.00509	0.454***
	(0.130)	(0.133)	(0.217)	(0.163)	(0.169)
Education	0.0909**	0.114***	-0.0905	-0.0485	-0.247***
	(0.0402)	(0.0409)	(0.0719)	(0.0532)	(0.0590)
Income	-0.0336	0.109***	-0.00832	0.00966	-0.0541
	(0.0410)	(0.0424)	(0.0661)	(0.0495)	(0.0480)
Employed	0.277**	-0.119	0.131	0.203	-0.454***
	(0.139)	(0.140)	(0.227)	(0.172)	(0.164)
Interest in politics	0.220***	-0.0913	-0.00999	-0.121	-0.110
	(0.0667)	(0.0687)	(0.109)	(0.0831)	(0.0823)
Left/right ideology	-0.475***	-0.0800*	0.0161	0.264***	0.456***
	(0.0487)	(0.0463)	(0.0714)	(0.0558)	(0.0553)
Economic perception	0.362***	0.300***	-0.381**	-0.105	-0.685***
	(0.0925)	(0.0957)	(0.159)	(0.119)	(0.126)
_cons	-1.058**	-1.147**	-2.177**	-1.859***	-1.342*
	(0.511)	(0.529)	(0.870)	(0.671)	(0.687)
N	1422	1422	1422	1422	1422
pseudo R^2	0.116	0.038	0.020	0.038	0.195
AIC	1619.2	1588.3	771.6	1177.7	1125.4
BIC	1703.4	1672.5	855.8	1261.9	1209.6

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$
Source: Elaboration on Pew Data 2017

Table 6. Regressions on the positions of the issue consistency scale

Dependent: issue consistency scale	(1) consistently open views	(2) moderately open views	(3) low open views	(4) low closed views	(5) moderately closed views	(6) consistently closed views
Social media	-0.0676	0.0265	0.0113	-0.0746*	0.0304	0.130**
	(0.0494)	(0.0996)	(0.0439)	(0.0413)	(0.122)	(0.0508)
Television	-0.162***	-0.197	0.0675	0.00169	-0.284**	0.295***
	(0.0615)	(0.138)	(0.0625)	(0.0573)	(0.144)	(0.0833)
Radio	0.0122	0.105	0.00191	-0.00720	0.0364	-0.0383
	(0.0479)	(0.0963)	(0.0418)	(0.0397)	(0.124)	(0.0479)
Internet	0.0560	-0.0172	0.0137	-0.0158	0.182	-0.0405
	(0.0705)	(0.124)	(0.0587)	(0.0540)	(0.192)	(0.0671)
Print	-0.0831	-0.0241	0.00904	0.0264	0.110	0.0167
	(0.0611)	(0.115)	(0.0520)	(0.0497)	(0.153)	(0.0589)
Echo-chamber online	0.313	-0.632	0.252	-0.192	0	-0.411
	(0.221)	(0.630)	(0.203)	(0.215)	(.)	(0.257)
Echo-chamber offline	-0.0156	0.284	0.128	-0.149	-0.468	0.0355
	(0.154)	(0.303)	(0.135)	(0.131)	(0.445)	(0.156)
Age	-0.0284***	0.0389***	-0.00322	0.00915*	0.00231	0.00401
	(0.00563)	(0.0125)	(0.00492)	(0.00476)	(0.0150)	(0.00567)
Male	-0.0997	0.216	0.142	-0.121	0.220	0.183
	(0.154)	(0.318)	(0.137)	(0.130)	(0.402)	(0.159)
Education	0.129***	-0.0961	-0.0462	0.0480	0.0826	-0.154***
	(0.0469)	(0.105)	(0.0443)	(0.0401)	(0.124)	(0.0537)
Income	0.0507	-0.0271	-0.0439	0.0859**	-0.0504	-0.0152
	(0.0492)	(0.0955)	(0.0413)	(0.0413)	(0.127)	(0.0467)
Employed	-0.00226	-0.0857	0.00919	0.0403	0.401	-0.147
	(0.162)	(0.325)	(0.142)	(0.138)	(0.446)	(0.160)
Interest in politics	0.190**	-0.0397	-0.104	0.0167	-0.199	-0.0903
	(0.0799)	(0.155)	(0.0693)	(0.0666)	(0.203)	(0.0790)
Left/right ideology	-0.472***	0.281***	0.173***	-0.211***	-0.429***	0.429***
	(0.0570)	(0.107)	(0.0459)	(0.0458)	(0.143)	(0.0539)
Economic perception	0.433***	-0.152	-0.0595	0.221**	-0.192	-0.535***
	(0.111)	(0.222)	(0.0988)	(0.0919)	(0.281)	(0.119)
_cons	-0.185	-4.943***	-1.376**	-1.526***	-2.428	-2.533***
	(0.599)	(1.329)	(0.556)	(0.516)	(1.498)	(0.673)
N	1422	1422	1422	1422	1257	1422
pseudo R^2	0.139	0.061	0.023	0.045	0.075	0.132
AIC	1249.7	438.7	1532.1	1640.2	292.0	1217.2
BIC	1333.9	522.8	1616.3	1724.3	369.1	1301.3

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$
Source: Elaboration on Pew Data 2017