Media Consumption and Tolerance Regarding Immigration: The Influence of Negative Media on Public Opinion Towards Immigration in 2015

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Introduction

Europe experienced a game-changing year in 2015 due to the so-called migration crisis (Dell'Orto & Wetzstein, 2019). The crisis originated in the war-torn regions of the Middle East and Africa, which led to an increase in first-time applications to Europe and of migrants from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other diverse countries (Eurostat, 2016). The number of migrants in Europe was said to have reached an all-time high in 2015, as a result of receiving over 1.3 million applicants, which was more than twice the previous year's figure (Eurostat, 2016; d'Haenens, Joris, & Heinderyckx, 2019). Therefore, this 2015 migration crisis is considered to represent "not only momentary emergency but a critical juncture with a potential to reshape Europe and affect the international order for decades" (Dell'Orto & Wetzstein, 2019, p. 1).

Due to the extraordinary rise in the number of refugees and migrants, the topic of immigration has preoccupied governments, their news industry, and public opinion in Europe (d'Haenens et al., 2019). Most scholars agree that throughout the events, the "media played a central role in providing information about the new arrivals and in framing these events as a 'crisis'" (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017, p.3). Arguably, media contribution had considerable effects on both public opinion and governments during the migration crisis (Dell'Orto & Wetzstein, 2019). Dell'Orto and Wetzstein (2019) argue that the media influence the framing of public discourse, in which ordinary citizens and politicians "evaluate, debate and ultimately act on particular issues" (p. 6). Indeed, the remarkable media attention on the migration crisis had contributed to producing a polarized public discourse, that pressured EU institutions and other national governments into forming public policies (Carrer., Blockmans, Gros, & Guild, 2015). Hence, knowing about media and its effects on public opinion is essential to understand the policy shift, as well as the increasing success of extreme and populist parties across Europe (Burscher, van Spanje, & de Vreese, 2015).

Since the crisis occurred, with increased numbers and increased threats of insecurity, the negative feelings have been growing in the majority of European nations (d'Haenens et al., 2019). Although some variation did exist, as Eastern Europe held more of a negative view on immigration compared to Western and Northern European states, several survey studies reveal that there was specifically an increase in pushback toward migrants across Europe during 2015 (Kosho, 2016; d'Haenens et al., 2019). Sides and Citrin (2007) argue that anti-immigration sentiment is greatly influenced by social-psychological factors and that the

source of information can become the trigger for feelings of anxiety. Social identity theory implies that news media can become an important source in producing and enhancing negative feelings, as they are considered to be the primary actor to frame the societal image of who immigrants are (Billig & Tafel, 1973; van Dijk, 2000). Interestingly, previous research suggests that there is a relationship between media consumption and the change in perceptions among viewers (Chiricos, Eschholz, & Gertz, 1997; Hericourt & Spielvogel, 2014; Bursher et al., 2015). Some studies claims that heavy media consumption can negatively affect people's feelings by increasing the level of fear or hostility towards the 'out-group' (Chiricos et al., 1997; Hericourt & Spielvogel, 2014). Besides, many studies point out the prominence of negative immigration coverage amongst news media during the migration crisis (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017; Joris, d'Haenens, van Gorp, & Mertens, 2018). Some argue that salience of such media coverage has led to a repeated exposure to negative images of immigrants, potentially activating stereotypical cognitions, which in the long run increase the fear and hostility towards immigration (Schemer, 2012; Eberl et al., 2018).

As the flow of migration substantially increased in 2015, it has heightened the visibility of immigration issues across Europe (Berry, Garcia-Blanco, & Moore, 2015; Spindler, 2015). In such a situation, the media was playing a central role in framing the new arrivals and events, which significantly affected public opinion (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). Yet, only a few studies analyze the relationship between media consumption and public perceptions on immigration cross-nationally (Eberl et al., 2018). Even though the topic is widely researched, the bulk of research focuses on content or discourse analysis, and little has explored the quantitative side. Additionally, Ebert et al. (2018) argue that most research is restricted to a handful of European countries, while media coverage and its effects in newer EU member states, in particular, is still lacking. Hence, this paper will fill the gap by quantitatively analyzing the media's effect in 28 European countries, including the newly admitted states, through a cross-national analysis.

Taking everything into consideration, this paper seeks to address the question: *Did media consumption influence people's feelings negatively towards immigration in 2015?* This study not only contributes by filling the gap of research, but also provides insight into the rapid change in public perception of immigration. To understand such change, it is necessary to elucidate some factors that contributed to such a shift. Moreover, understanding public

opinion would allow us to unravel reasons behind the increasing success of extreme and populist parties throughout Europe, since public opinion plays a significant role in the process of setting national immigration policies (Burscher et al., 2015).

<div align="center">**Literature Review & Theoretical Framework**</div>

News Reports During the Migration Crisis

The media plays a major role in framing the arrival of immigrants (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). Jim (2006) argues that "public attention relies solely upon the information that the press decides to share with us and these framings provide the interpretative cues for otherwise neutral facts" (p. 7). This implies that media coverage not only shapes what the public will consider as a societal problem, but can also provide biased cues to interpret the neutral social reality. Therefore, it is crucial to know how the media has been reporting about immigration during the crisis.

Many studies show that the media tends to cover immigrants as harmful to their society, rather than considering their benefits' (Berry et al., 2015; Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017; Joris et al., 2018; Nerghes & Lee, 2019). In particular, van Dijk (2000) argues that the media often emphasizes the unfavorable consequences or potential issues of accepting immigrants, for instance, "reception problems (housing, etc.), social problems (employment, welfare, etc.), public resentment, complications and negative characterization of migrants" (p. 37). Some also suggest that the focus is more on the arrival of new refugees and migrants, while paying limited attention to them leaving the host country (van Dijk, 2000). The report released by the UNHCR, on news reporting on the migration crisis in five major European countries, concludes that although some news reports were portraying immigrants slightly more positively than others, the overall media coverage was predominantly in a negative tone (Berry et al., 2015). Furthermore, a study that analyzes the press coverage across eight European states made it evident that a large proportion of press coverage in 2015 was in fact promoting suspicions and hostility towards immigrants (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). In addition, across all analyzed countries, "59% of all articles mentioned no positive consequences" of accepting refugees and immigrants to Europe (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 8). In brief, pre-existing studies show that the European press has contributed to constructing a negative narrative, by emphasizing the undesirable consequences of accepting immigrants.

On the other hand, a very limited amount of news coverage has included the immigrant's success, or the potential benefits they bring to the host country. Some argue that a large amount of news media afforded much less attention to the story about the economic contribution and cultural benefits that migration bring to a host society (van Dijk, 2000; Berry et al., 2015). For instance, only few covers the stories about how immigrants workers contributes to the economy (Berry et al., 2015). Joris et al. (2018), at the same time, found a high prominence of the 'increased insecurity' frame, such as worry towards economic insecurity and increase in crime rate, as well as the 'western responsibility' frame used by European news media. The responsibility frame was used to promote a pro-immigration idea, which implies western responsibility to help refugees and immigrants, but was also used to blame other countries by indicating "we have too many, you should take them too" (Joris et al., 2018, p.13). Likewise, van Dijk (2000) also suggests that immigrants are stereotypically represented as deviant and threat to the society in media, whereas the host nations are represented as victims. Furthermore, he criticized how limited attention was put on the negative aspects of the host society, such as the act of discrimination and racism against these immigrants. These studies show that, when it comes to the topic of immigration, media often framed in a way that emphasizes "their bad actions and our good ones", and largely ignores "their good actions and our bad ones" (van Dijk, 2000, p. 38).

Nevertheless, the media did not always provide negative aspects of refugees or immigrants. Joris et al. (2018) argues that some media indeed promoted the open-door policies by avoiding the use of words such as, 'illegal' or 'deportation' which connote a negative feeling among readers. Some news reports emphasized the necessity of accepting refugees and immigrants by using the 'victim' frame (Joris et al., 2018). For instance, when the media reported the shocking image of the dead body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi, the narrative to help and accept refugees was "significantly dominated over a measure to protect the country" (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 7). Therefore, the media was also encouraging an inclusive attitude by encompassing the story of the plight of refugees. However, Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) contend that "when positive consequences were mentioned, they were framed predominantly as a moral imperative of empathy or even solidarity" and most of the time framed in a way that "strongly links negative consequences to 'real', tangible developments in European countries, while very few positive aspects beyond a moral frame are outlined" (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017, p. 8). van Dijk (2000)

also agrees that even neutral topics were in some way topicalized as threats or problems to society, and minorities were often associated with "news about crime, drugs, and violence" (p. 38).

In sum, studies suggest the predominance of negative reporting on immigration during the migration crisis. Yet, it is undeniable that some media did push forward to be inclusive and promote an open-door policy by emphasizing the need for humanitarian aid, and through reporting stories in a way that elicited empathy toward refugees and immigrants. Moreover, some argue that there was variation between countries regarding the narratives and tones of the content, such as the British mass media favoring negative news about the immigration, compared to Swedish media (Berry et al., 2015; Kosho, 2016; Joris et al., 2018). Nevertheless, for the most part, news media paid little attention to the positive consequences, favouring negative issues brought by accepting immigrants. Although these results do not include all the countries that will be examined in this research, and only present general trends in major European states, previous studies illustrate the general negative trends among European news media during 2015.

The Role of Mass Media in Shaping Public Opinion

Mass media influences both citizens and political actors through leading the direction and content of public discourse, by establishing the significance of some issues over others (Jim, 2006; Esses, Brochu, & Dickson, 2012; Dell'Orto & Wetzstein, 2019). Given the freedom of the press, the media is not merely the primary actor to provide the facts to the mass public, but also provides "first definitions of the situations and a first opinion" (van Dijk, 2000, p. 38). In fact, during the migration crisis, the media had a prominent role in framing the arrival of refugees and immigrants (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). Besides, d'Haenens et al. (2019) argue that the media also plays a vital role in mental representations as they provide common knowledge and understanding about many issues. They argue that this is even truer for reporting about immigration, as most people have less chance to encounter immigration issues in person "but will instead refer to real-life experiences communicated to them by the media" (d'Haenens et al., 2019, p. 57). Thus, the media assumes a central part in influencing the way people act and reacts towards certain issues (d'Haenens et al., 2019).

Various studies suggest that the media mainly influences the public through promoting certain positions and emphasizing "keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images,

sources of information and sentences", which can lead to the formation of a stereotyped opinion or image on a particular topic (Entman, 1993, p. 52; d'haenes & Joris, 2019; Jacobs, Hooghe, & de Vroome, 2017; Nerghes & Lee, 2019). Sides and Citrin (2007) argue that anti-immigration sentiment can be greatly influenced by social-psychological factors and that the source of information can become the trigger to increase those feelings. Social identity theory will help to untangle and further investigate the social-psychological reason behind holding discriminatory ideas against certain groups, and how the media can promote such ideas.

To understand the social identity theory, it is necessary to define what social identity is. Social identity is a process in which individuals define others or self through "locating oneself or another within a system of social categorizations to any social categorization used by a person to define him/herself and others" (Turner, 2010, p. 17-18). Thus, social identity derives from social categorization, and it refers to a process of clarifying intergroup boundaries by defining oneself and others systematically through assigning people, including themselves, into a relevant social category (Tajfel, 1982; Hogg, 1996; Turner, 2010). In other words, it is a process in which an individual orders the social environment by grouping people in a manner that is meaningful to them (Tajfel, 1982; Turner, 2010). As a result of this categorization, individuals create mental boundaries of 'us (in-group)' and 'them (out-group)' (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Hogg, 1996). From an empirical test, Billig and Tafel (1973) found that when people were placed in explicit categorized conditions, such as when respondents were clear that they were either in group A or B, or when an experimenter explicitly mentioned the word 'group' during the experiment, it produced strong out-group discriminatory responses and strong in-group favoritism behavior among the participants (Billig and Tafel, 1973). Similarly, Tajfel (1970) found that the simple categorization of social groups into 'us (in-group)' and 'them (out-group)' was a sufficient condition to generate "certain forms of in-group favoritism and discrimination against the out-group" (as cited by Billig & Tajfel, 1973, p. 27-28). This in-group favoritism can be explained through the assumption of self-esteem motives, which postulates that individuals have a "very basic need to see themselves in a relatively positive light in relation to relevant others" (Hogg, 1996, p. 67). Therefore, people naturally assign "positive characteristics to a member of the social group they belong to (in-group favoritism), and a negative character to a member of the

social group they do not belong to (out-group discrimination)" (Tajfel and Turner, 1979; van Klingeren et al., 2014 as cited by De Coninck et al., 2018, p. 406).

The concept of social identity is also key to understanding how the media can influence and shape public perceptions. van Dijk (2000) asserts that the general strategies of "positive self-representation and negative other presentation" is prevalent in most immigration coverage (p. 38). Equally important, Schemer (2012) claims that the way the media portrays immigrants can automatically elicit the categorization process. More specifically, when immigrants are presented in a negative way, it not just negatively affects public perception, but can also reinforce the mental categorization of 'us (in-group)' and 'them (out-group)' amongst people (Schemer, 2012). Indeed, Marta (2017) argues that the media had significantly contributed to consolidate the idea of 'us' and 'them' during the 2015 migration crisis. The possible consequence of an increase in in-group favoritism is the increase in people who elicit hostility towards the group that is distinct to them (Side & Citrin, 2017). Interestingly, an increase in in-group favoritism happens more often when out-group identity increases their salience. This can be linked to the situation in 2015 when migrants and refugees received remarkable attention from various media, resulting in an increase in the visibility of their identity among the public (Schemer, 2012; Carrera et al., 2015; Matar, 2017). Given that immigration-related media coverage was overwhelmingly negative in 2015, the high exposure to those sources of information most likely elicited the categorization of 'us' and 'them', which can activate and reinforce the stereotypes and negatively bias views towards immigration (Schemer, 2012).

In conclusion, social identity theory has illustrated how news media can influence people's attitudes towards immigrants by emphasizing the social categories of out-group and in-group. The fact that the media was predominantly promoting negative images about immigration contributed not only to activate and reinforce out-group discrimination, but also increased negative feelings towards immigration. The enhanced accessibility to such stereotyped views consolidated "stereotypical cognition in the mind of recipients" (Schemer, 2012, p. 741). Therefore, repeated exposure to a negative image of immigration overtime can activate and reinforce stereotypical cognitions of migrant groups, and in the long-run can consolidate and alter public perception of immigration negatively (Schemer, 2012; Eberl et al., 2018).

Media Consumption and Its Effect on Public Opinion

The question is then, how does media consumption relate to change in public opinion? A large body of research suggests that the media can create an impact on people's perception (Chiricos et al., 1997; Gadarian, 2010; Hericourt & Spielvogel, 2014; Burscher et al., 2015). According to the cultivation theory, media does, in fact, have enormous power to shape how individuals view certain social realities (Gerbner, 1998). Moreover, the theory states that constant exposure to negative media messages can cultivate feelings of threat and distrust among viewers (Gerbner, 1998; Nerghes & Lee, 2019). Given the situation that the news reported unfavorable facts about immigrants, this can impact what kind of image people receive about immigration. In addition, Gerbner (1969) argues that being exposed to many media sources, especially television, can increase the number of people who perceive ethnic minorities as a threat to their society (as cited by Vergeer, Lubbers, & Scheepers, 2000). Likewise, several studies found that people who have heavy television habits have more stereotypical and negative ideas towards out-group members (Lee, Bichard, Irey, Walt, & Carlson, 2009; Schemer, 2012). Furthermore, Iyengar et al. (1982) emphasize that television news has a profound influence on what topics or issues viewers will consider the most important for them. Hence, it is plausible to argue that media greatly affects public perception.

However, in contrast, Vergeer et al. (2000) assert that media consumption alone does not necessarily affect people's perception negatively. From their research, they found some contrary results to Gerbner (1998). They conclude that simply being exposed to various media sources, specifically newspapers and television, did not necessarily increase the feelings of the threat and distrust towards ethnic minorities (Vergeer et al., 2000). Hence, the amount of media consumption was not a prominent factor that affected people's views on certain social realities. Besides, they found that an increase in media consumption would rather decrease the feelings of threat against ethnic minorities (Vergeer et al., 2000). Therefore, from their research, it is hard to contend that media consumption has a major effect on the cultivation of negative feelings.

Nonetheless, many studies indicate that media exposure to be the key determinant of cultivating negative feelings (Chiricos et al., 1997; Hericourt & Spielvogel, 2014; Gadarian, 2010). For instance, Burscher et al. (2015) argue that, regardless of the content, being exposed to immigration-related newspapers and television was significantly associated with

the likelihood of voting for an anti-immigration party. Therefore, as cultivation theory premised, news media exposure did contribute to increasing hostility and threat perception towards immigration. Chiricos et al. (1997) similarly found that consuming negatively biased news media has increased the level of fear among the viewers. However, in contrast to what Burscher et al. (2015) had found, Chiricos et al. (1997) conclude that there was no significant association between newspaper consumption and an increase in the level of fear. They suggest that the level of fear increased only among the people who got information from radio or television news (Chiricos et al., 1997). Likewise, Hericourt and Spielvogel (2014) have found similar results. They conclude that television news exposure will lead to a more negative opinion on the economic impact of immigration, whereas newspaper exposure will lead to a more positive opinion on immigration (Hericourt & Spielvogel, 2014). Gadarian's (2010) threat theory was in line with these findings. She maintains that compared to written press, television news significantly enhanced the feeling of fear and vulnerability. Based on her empirical results, participants who were exposed to the negative television news were more likely to support hawkish foreign policy, while newspapers did not affect the attitude on foreign policy (Gadarian, 2010). Regarding the effect of television news, Gadarian (2010) explains that visualized images have more power to evoke negative emotions and influence attitudes independently from the news story messages. Igartua et al. (2007) provided another reason for the larger impact of television on the audience, that "news items that linked immigration with a crime were given better coverage space, especially in on television, which is much more sensationalist than the written media" (as cited in Etchegaray & Correa, 2015, p. 3605). All in all, prior studies suggest the significant effect of media on shaping public perception towards certain social realities. More specifically, studies indicates that an increase in media consumption, especially television, is likely to increase the negative feelings towards the out-group.

Taking all together, most research agrees that media exposure can affect people's attitudes and feelings towards certain social realities. Based on social identity theory, we know that people inherently carry negative feelings towards out-group members and that those feelings can be reinforced by the way the media portrays those groups (Billig & Tafel, 1973; Tajfel, 1982, p. 69; Turner, 2010). The fact that media was predominantly spreading negative images about immigration during 2015, it has consolidated the negative stereotypes about immigration, and at the same time reinforced the categorization of out-group and

in-group. Besides, several studies suggest that exposure to negative media messages can increase the feelings of threat and hostility (Gerbner, 1998; Chiricos et al., 1997; Gadarian, 2010). Hence, one can expect that an increase in media consumption will lead to an increase in a negative feelings towards accepting the immigration of people from outside of the EU. Therefore we can hypothesize that:

H1: Media Consumption, both television and newspaper, will have a negative impact on the peoples' feelings towards the immigration of people from outside of the EU.

In addition, as most studies suggest that television consumption has a more negative impact on peoples' attitudes, one can expect that people who spend more time watching television will likely have a more negative opinion on immigration, compared to newspaper consumers. Hence, based on previous studies, we can hypothesize that:

H2: Higher television consumption expected to have a stronger negative impact on the peoples' feelings towards the immigration of people from outside of the EU than reading newspapers more often.

Data & Methods

This study examines whether media consumption, specifically regarding television and newspaper, affects peoples' feelings towards immigration. To test the strength of the relationship, this study relies on data from Eurobarometer 84.3 (2015), which was collected during November 7th, 2015 to November 17th, 2015. The data is retrieved from the Leibniz Institute for the Social Science (GESIS), an institution that makes the data publicly available by converting and storing the data in SPSS format. Eurobarometer 84.3 (2015) is the survey data that covers the random probability sample of 32,833 citizens in the 28 countries of the European Union after the 2013 enlargement (the accession of Croatia) (Eurobarometer 84.3 Variable Report, 2019). All respondents are residents in the respective country and aged 15 or above. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes, and in their respective national languages (Eurobarometer 84.3 Variable Report, 2019, p. 10). The sample size is about 1000 respondents per country, with some exceptions. For the UK and Germany, there are more than 1000 respondents each, and for Luxembourg, Cyprus, and Malta there are about 500 respondents each (Eurobarometer 84.3 Variable Report, 2019).

Dependent Variables: People's Feeling Towards Immigration

Social identity theory denotes that individuals define oneself through creating the mental boundary of 'us (in-group)' and 'them (out-group)', and that this categorization could greatly affect how people act towards the other individuals (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Hogg, 1996). Prior research explains that people naturally assign positive features to the social group they belong to (in-group favoritism) and negative characteristics to the social groups they do not belong to (De Coninck et al., 2018). Lahav (2009) argues that the idea of who lives within the EU could become the way to identify the in-group/ out-group membership. Hence taking this idea into account, this study has considered the people who already reside within the EU as an in-group member, and people who migrate from outside of the EU as an 'out-group' member (Lahav, 2009; Turner, 2010).

To measure such effect, this study relies on the survey data that asks the respondent what feeling is evoked when they were presented with the statement "immigration of people from outside of the EU" (Eurobarometer 84.3 Variable Report, 2019, p. 605). The respondent can answer by indicating a number, ranging from 1 (very positive) to 4 (very negative). However, this variable is a problem. It does not have a midpoint and also could not be treated as an interval-level scale. Hence, conducting linear regression analysis would be problematic. Therefore, in order to analyze the data, the variable is recoded into dichotomous categories (0, 1) and binary logistic regression analysis is performed. As this research is based on the puzzle of whether negative news media can increase negative feelings towards immigration, the negative feeling is considered as our target category. Hence, 1 indicates that European citizens (in-group members) have negative feelings on immigration of people from outside the EU (out-group members), and 0 signifies the positive feelings towards immigrants coming from outside of the EU (out-group members). As the question being answered here includes the word "people from outside of the EU" this statement will allow us to measure the in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination, which was hypothesized and demonstrated by several social identity studies.

Explanatory Variables: Media Consumption

There are two main independent variables for this research: television consumption and newspaper consumption. These two types of media sources were selected based on the previous study demonstrating that television and written press are still the most regularly

consulted source of news among most generations (Hericourt & Spielvogel, 2014; Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). Indeed, there is an undeniable fact that younger people tend to replace traditional news outlets, especially newspapers, with the internet and social media. Yet, studies suggest that "despite the vast universe of alternatives, Television remains the most popular choice for news in most countries" with the printed press and the internet following second place (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013, p. 701). Furthermore, Papathanassopoulos et al. (2013) claim that the audience who watch television remain stable, and hardly diverge from watching television "at least for the near future" (p. 701). Accordingly, the research will only consider traditional media outlets as a way to measure the media's effect.

As most studies indicate that level of media exposure has an influence on public perception, this study has decided to analyze the effect of media by measuring the amount of time people consumes television and newspaper (Chiricos et al., 1997; Hericourt & Spielvogel, 2014; Burscher et al., 2015). The level of media consumption will be measured using the survey question: "To what extent do you read written press/ watch television?" (Eurobarometer 84.3 Variable Report, 2019, p. 876). Respondents were asked to answer it by indicating the number that fits with their situation the most (1 = Never, 2 = Two or three times a month/Less often, 3 = 1-3 times a week, 4 = (Almost) every day).

As explained, based on the studies and theories, an increase in media consumption is expected to increase negative feelings towards the immigration of people from outside of the EU. Furthermore, television consumption is expected to result in more negative feelings towards immigration compared to newspaper consumption.

Control Variables: Gender, Age, Political Orientation, Income Level, Education Level
Media's framing effects can be moderated by numerous factors such as individual predispositions, education level, political orientations, age, gender, and income level (Chong and Druckman, 2007; Wei & Lo, 2008; Kim, 2008; Etchegaray & Correa, 2015). Regarding income level, several researchers suggest that the lower the income level is, the more people will perceive immigrants as a threat to their society (Vergeer et al., 2000; Chiricos et al., 1997). Political orientation can also affect the outcome. Many studies confirm that people who support right-wing parties are more likely to have an anti-immigration sentiment, while people who support the left are likely to show a favorable attitude towards immigrants

(Vergeer et al., 2000; Hericourt & Spielvogel, 2014). Concerning education level, the knowledge gap hypothesis suggests that there is a considerable knowledge gap between highly educated and less educated citizens (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970). Some found that the more knowledgeable were more resistant to negative news, while the less educated were more susceptible (Kim, 2008; Schemer, 2012). Regarding age and gender, Chiricos et al. (1997) note that the television effect was stronger among female respondents and middle-aged people. In short, these variables can affect the relationship between media exposure and public perceptions. For this reason, demographic variables are included as control variables in this analysis.

Firstly, gender is a dichotomous indicator, where 0 = female and 1 = male. Secondly, regarding the age variable, people were asked to numerically present their age. Some remarks about this variable are that Eurobarometer only includes respondents aged over 15, and data only covers the people up to 99 years old, and therefore, people older than this will be categorized as 99 years old. In order to identify the income level, the self-assessed social class measure was used. In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate what social class they see themselves belonging to. The variable is coded into 0 = working-class, 1 = Lower middle class, 2 = Middle class, 3 = Upper middle class, 4 = Higher class. Measuring the education level was difficult since the survey only includes the survey data asking respondents at what age they stopped full-time education. Therefore, this study measured education level based on the Eurobarometer report (no education, 0-15, 16-19, 20+), and assumed the older the age the respondent finished their full-time education, the higher their education level is. For the research, this variable has been recoded into 0 = No full-time education, 1 =Up to 15 years old, 2 = 16-19 years old, 3 = 20 years and older. Finally, to measure the political orientation, people were asked to indicate where they place themselves in the scales ranging from 1(extreme left) to 10 (extreme right). The value closer to the center value, five, implies the centrist political views.

Results

Figure 1 shows the bar chart that demonstrates the variation of feelings across the countries. Regarding the values in the bar chart, 1 indicates the negative feelings and 0 indicates the positive feelings. Hence, growing bar chart signifies that the counties have a negative feelings towards immigration. As the graph shows, it is obvious that some countries, on average, have

more negative feelings than others. For instance, Eastern European states show fairly negative feelings towards the immigration of people from outside of the EU, while the Swedish and Spanish have shown the most positive attitude towards immigration compared to all the others. Hence, it is necessary to take these variations into account. For this reason, country variable is also included as the control variable in the statistical analysis.

Figure 1

Bar Chart Presenting the Mean of Respondent's Feelings Towards Accepting Immigration of People From Outside of The EU Counties by Country
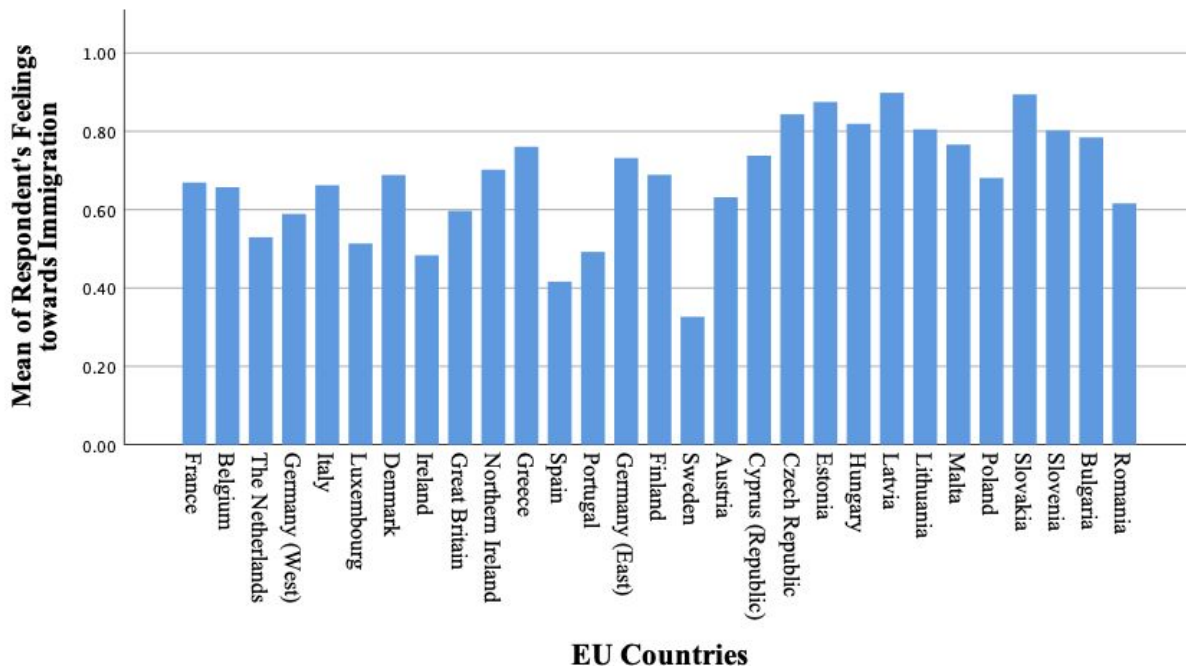
A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to test whether media exposure has influenced the people's feelings towards immigration negatively in 2015. Based on the previous studies, two hypotheses were formulated: 1) Media Consumption, both television and newspaper, will have a negative impact on peoples' feelings towards the immigration of people from outside of the EU, and 2) Higher television consumption is expected to have a stronger negative impact on peoples' feelings towards the immigration than reading newspapers more often. The statistical analysis was performed after checking the assumptions of the binary logistic regression analysis,[1] and the results of each explanatory variable are presented in Table 1.

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[1] The assumption for logistic regression, the linearity of logit and multicollinearity, was tested and met. The assumption test for linearity of the logit suggests that all independent variables have significance values greater than 0.05, which means that that assumption of linearity of logit has been met. For multicollinearity, the statistical test suggests that all predictor variables have the tolerance values greater than 0.1 and VIF values less than 10. This indicates that there is no collinearity detected between the variables.

Table 1

Logistic Regression Analysis of the Probability of Carrying Negative Feelings Towards Immigration From Outside of the EU.[2]

	Negative Feelings	
	B (SE)	OR [95% CI]
(Constant)	− .775***	.461***
	(.179)	
Newspaper	− .110***	.896***
	(.019)	[.864; .929]
Television	.222***	1.249***
	(.035)	[1.166; 1.338]
Education	− .182***	.834***
	(.027)	[.791; .879]
Political orientation	.138***	1.148***
	(.008)	[1.130; 1.166]
Age	.007***	1.007***
	(.001)	[1.005; .1.009]
Social class	− .189***	.827***
	(.019)	[.797; .859]
Gender (Male)	.053	1.054
	(.033)	[.988; 1.126]
- 2LL	21519.371	
Cox and Snell's R^2	.133	
Nagelkerke's R^2	.185	
Country's N	28	
N	19140	

Note: binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in brackets, and odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals in brackets.
***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

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[2] For the estimation, countries are included to control for country difference, however, the results are not reported in this table. The detailed results are reported in the appendixes.

Beginning with the model assessment, the result suggests that explained variance of the model is low, as Cox and Snell's R-square (0.133) and Nagelkerke R-square (0.185) is not close enough to 1. However, despite this fact, the predicted probability of 71.3% in the classification table denotes that the model has overall correctly predicted 71.3% of people who carry negative feelings towards immigration. Moreover, the loglikelihood ratio statistic (-2LL), found at the bottom of table 1, also suggests that the model as a whole has statistically significant improvement over the null model that only includes constant ($x^2(36) = 21519.371$, $p < .001$).

The overall results suggest that there is a significant association between the media consumption and change in peoples' feeling. Table 1 shows the results of how negative feelings changed with increased media consumption. The results suggest that there is a significant association between newspaper consumption and peoples' feelings towards immigration, while holding other variables constant ($b = -.110$, $p < .001$). With regards to television consumption, the results also indicate a significant association with peoples' feeling towards immigration, while controlling for other variables ($b = .222$, $p < .001$). These results confirm the previous research which suggests the substantial correlations between media exposure and change in peoples' feelings towards out-group members (Gadarian, 2010; Hericourt & Spielvogel, 2014; Burscher et al., 2015). While this may be true, the results also suggest a different impact of newspaper consumption and television consumption on peoples' perception. Interestingly, the findings from the newspaper variable indicate that if newspaper consumption increases by 1, the odds of carrying anti-immigration sentiment decreased significantly by around 10 %, while holding other factors constant (Exp (B) = .896, $p < .001$). Unexpectedly, this implies that people who tended to read more newspapers tended to be more tolerant about accepting immigration of people from outside of the EU than those who read less. On the other hand, the results show that heavy television consumption has a negative impact on peoples' perceptions. Finding suggests that for 1 unit increase in television consumption, the odds of carrying anti-immigration sentiment increased significantly by about 25 %, while controlling for all other variables constant (Exp (B) = 1.249, $p < .001$). Importantly, this finding denotes that people who tended to watch more television tended to be more likely to express negative feelings about immigration than those who watch less.

To restate the first hypothesis, the increase in media consumption of both television and newspapers was expected to have a negative impact on how respondents felt towards the immigration of people from outside of the EU. According to the result, this hypothesis was not fully supported. The outcome denotes that newspaper consumption was associated with positive feelings towards immigration rather than negative. In contrast, television consumption did increase the feeling of negativity. Hence, the first hypothesis was only partially supported. Nevertheless, the second hypothesis, which states that higher levels of television consumption are expected to have a more negative impact on individuals' feeling towards immigration than reading newspapers more often, was supported by this analysis. The result suggests that individuals who take more information from television were more likely to elicit negative opinions towards immigration, while newspaper readers did not. Stating it in the terms of social identity theory, it can be concluded that in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination were reinforced among people who watched television, but not for newspaper readers. Accordingly, these results only support the argument that television consumption can affect peoples' opinions negatively.

Concerning the control variables, the results indicate that, education and social class variables are negatively correlated with the negative feelings towards immigration, and age, political orientation and gender (male) are positively correlated with the negative feelings towards immigration. Firstly, the result suggests that there is a significant and negative relationship between the education level and anti-immigration sentiment (b = −.182, p < .001). This finding denotes that highly educated people tended to be more lenient and open minded towards accepting the immigration, while less educated people become more skeptical of accepting immigrants from outside of the EU. Secondly, the result of political orientation variable indicates that a 1 point increase on the political orientation scale will increase the odds of developing anti-immigration feelings significantly by about 15 %, while holding other factors constant (Exp(B) = .1.148, p < .001). This signifies that as people support more rightist politics, they tend to be more anti-immigration. This outcome implies that political placement and perception towards immigration has a significant relationship. The third control variable, age, was also significantly related to the increase in negative feelings, while holding others constant (Exp (B) =1.007, p < .001). The result denotes that the older one gets, the more they become skeptical about immigration. Regarding the social class variable, the analysis suggests that if social class increases by 1 point on the 5-point scale, the

odds of having negative feelings decrease by around 17%, while controlling for other factors (Exp (B) = .827, p < .001). This implies that the higher the income people obtain, the more likely they will show a favorable attitude to immigration, while a lower-income will result in a more resistant attitude. Finally, for the last variable, gender, findings signify that males tend to have an overall negative opinion on immigration when compared with females. However, although there is a positive relationship between negative feelings, the influence of gender on perceptions towards immigration did not reach statistical significance (b = .053, p = .112).

To summarize the points, even though these findings suggest the significant impact of media consumption over feelings towards immigration, there was no support that both types of media will negatively impact peoples' feelings towards immigration. Hence, the first hypothesis was only partially supported by this research. Nevertheless, the results illustrate that heavy television consumption has a significant negative influence on the attitude towards immigration when compared to newspaper readers. For this reason, the second hypothesis was supported. Additional to this finding, the outcomes of the control variables suggest that lower the income, less educated, right-wing, and older individuals are expected to have a more negative feelings towards accepting the immigration of people from outside of the EU.

Discussion & Conclusion

This paper analyzed the influence of media exposure on people's' feelings towards immigration in 2015. A number of studies have maintained that most of the reporting on immigration was predominantly negative during 2015 and only a few media reported the positive aspects of immigration. Besides, several social identity studies have suggested that people naturally carry negative feelings towards out-group members, but those feelings can be reinforced and activated by the way the media portrays those groups (Billig & Tafel, 1973; Tajfel, 1982; Schemer, 2012; Matar, 2017; Side & Citrin, 2017). These researches imply that the media has not just negatively influenced the public perceptions but has also contributed to increasing the out-group discrimination by reinforcing the mental boundary of 'in-group (us)' and 'out-group (them)'. Regarding the effect of media consumption, cultivation theory suggests that media have enormous power to shape individuals perception towards certain social realities (Gerbner, 1998). As the theory states, Burscher et al. (2015) found that both newspaper and television have substaintial impact on the anti-immigration sentiment. In

contrast, Hericourt and Spielvogel (2014) have found the slightly positive impact of newspaper on opinion towards immigration, while strong negative impact of Television on opinions towards immigration. Likewise, some scholars have argued that not all media equally influence public opinion, but in exchange, certain media can have more of an impact than others. Chiricos et al. (1997), for instance, found that watching television news had significantly increased the level of fear, while reading newspapers did not. Many others have also agreed that television has more power to impact and evoke negative emotions (Gadarian, 2010; Etchegaray & Correa, 2015). Taken all together, this research has aimed to analyze whether media consumption has an impact on how people feel towards accepting immigration of people from outside of the EU countries. Based on the existing knowledge, this research was conducted upon two hypotheses: 1) an increase in media consumption will increase negative feelings towards immigration of people from outside of the EU, and 2) television consumption is expected to have a stronger negative influence on the feelings towards immigration than newspaper consumption.

Statistical analysis has shown that there was a significant relationship between media exposure and people's feeling towards immigration. However, the results suggest that newspapers and television have different impacts on the audience. Television had a negative impact on public opinion, while newspapers had a positive impact. In other words, television was more likely to reinforce and activate the mental category of 'in-group' and 'out-group', which increases the negative feelings on immigration, compared to newspapers. This aligns with the explanation that television has more power to evoke negative emotions, even when they reported similarly as newspapers (Chiricos et al., 1997; Gadarian, 2010). Moreover, some claim that television purposely gives better coverage on a news item that links immigration with crimes, and also reported more sensationally than written media (Igartua et al., 2007). In brief, not all media will impact public opinion similarly, but some mediums can negatively influence and some can positively influence the public perception. Regarding the control variables, except for gender, most of the variables were significantly related to the dependent variable. In addition, the results indicate that lower-income, less educated, right-wing supporters, and older individuals are likely to express negative feelings towards immigration. In short, the results suggest that media consumption is associated with people's feeling towards immigration; however, in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination was only enhanced among the people who watched television, not for the newspaper readers.

There are some limitations that have to be acknowledged. Firstly, this study did not include specific media content analysis. Because it included 28 European countries as the case, it was difficult to analyze the media content from each country within the restricted time frame. As an alternative, this study relied on the existing content analyses and used them to generalize the trend of European media content during 2015. However, we should not underestimate the variation of news content among the countries, since the degree of negativity might affect one's perception significantly. Therefore, it would be desirable for future work to conduct both qualitative and quantitative analysis to measure the relationship of media effect on public perception more accurately. Secondly, some scholars argue that the majority of people use more than one news media source (Papathanassopoulos et al., 2013). Due to the availability of the questionnaire items, it was difficult to control for all potential media sources people had consumed. Hence, future research should take into account the effect of being exposed to several forms of mass media simultaneously. Thirdly, this research did not incorporate the difference in the number of migrants accepted by each country. Kosho (2016) suggests that the difference in the rate of acceptance can change people's tolerance towards immigration. To illustrate, Greeks and Italians had more negative views on immigrants compared to Germans and the British, as a result of the numbers the countries accepted (Kosho, 2016). Hence, the number of accepted cases might have also affected the outcome of peoples' feelings towards immigration. Thus, including such variables enables more precise analyses for future analysis. Finally, this research did not distinguish the type of immigrants. Some people might have different opinion towards different types of immigrants, and negative feelings might not be related to all immigrants in the same way (Lee et al., 2019). Due to the data limitations, this was not captured in this study. However, future study should including such variables in order to obtain more precise measurements of opinion towards immigration.

Limitations notwithstanding, this research contributes to the study of media and public opinion by providing a quantitative cross-national study, including 28 countries in Europe. As preexisting studies argue, the media has considerable effects on both public opinion and the government, and hence, understanding the effect of news content will allows us to understand the underlying factors that contribute to the rapid shift in public opinion and the increasing success of extreme and populist parties across Europe (Burscher et al., 2015). As the study suggest some medium have more power to influence people negatively, this

calls our attention to a need for caution towards media use in the democratic process. During the migration crisis, the media had a prominent role in framing the arrival of immigrants, and it was one of the significant factors that was shaping evolving public discourse in Europe (Berry et al., 2015; Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017). If negatively biased news can greatly affect the viewer's interpretation of social reality, it is necessary to encourage people to think and analyze the reported information in a skeptical way (Lee et al., 2009). It might also be necessary to encourage media critiques in order to produce more diverse and neutralized opinions. However, one important finding from this research is that not all media negatively skewed our understanding. As the analysis suggests, different mediums can have different impact on people, in this case newspapers can increase the positive opinion and television can increase negative opinion on immigration. Therefore, public should be encouraged to not just rely on single source of media, but to utilize various sources of information to compensate for the biased information they get from television news.

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Appendix

Table 1

Binary Logistic Regression Analysis of the Probability of Carrying Negative Feeling Towards Immigration From Outside of The EU.

	Negative Feelings
	B (SE)
(Constant)	− .775*** (.179)
Belgium	− .617*** (.112)
The Netherlands	.580*** (.108)
Germany (West)	.157 (.105)
Italy	.332** (.108)
Luxembourg	.563*** (.121)
Denmark	.113 (.131)
Ireland	.777*** (.111)
Great Britain	− .260* (.107)
Northern Ireland	.074 (.108)
Greece	.585* (.178)
Spain	.963*** (.122)
Portugal	− .607*** (.112)
Germany (East)	.544*** (.115)
Finland	.917*** (.136)
Sweden	.728*** (.113)

Austria	$-.700^{***}$
	(.108)
Republic of Cyprus	$.516^{***}$
	(.109)
Czech Republic	$.755^{***}$
	(.170)
Estonia	1.548^{***}
	(.125)
Hungary	1.885^{***}
	(.152)
Latvia	1.179^{***}
	(.120)
Lithuania	1.993^{***}
	(.153)
Malta	1.361^{***}
	(.130)
Poland	$.888^{***}$
	(.178)
Slovakia	$.592^{***}$
	(.125)
Slovenia	2.047^{***}
	(.145)
Bulgaria	1.349^{***}
	(.136)
Romania	1.007^{***}
	(.124)
Croatia	$.320^{**}$
	(.120)
- 2LL	21519.371
Cox and Snell's R^2	.133
Nagelkerke's R^2	.185
Country's N	28
N	19140

Note: *binary logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in brackets.*

$***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05$