

How do media, social trust, and political institutions shape attitudes and behaviors in
Italy and Norway
Social Research

Gabriele Durante
Department of Computer Science
University of Verona

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Outline

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Research Question:

How do media, social trust, and political institutions shape attitudes and behaviors in Italy and Norway?

Literature Review: Media and Trust

- **Media** as channels of information transmission (print, TV, social media).
- Agenda-setting theory: Media influence on public opinion by highlighting specific issues.
- **Social trust**: Belief in the reliability of others, crucial for cooperation and democratic stability.
- **Political trust**: Confidence in political institutions, often shaped indirectly by media exposure.

Literature Review: Key Theoretical Insights

- **Social capital theory:** Trust arises from community involvement and voluntary associations.
- Distinction between **social** and **political trust**:
 - Social trust: Based on personal interactions.
 - Political trust: Formed through indirect institutional experiences.
- **Importance of media type:**
 - Traditional media often linked to higher trust.
 - Social media can decrease institutional trust due to misinformation.

Dataset

Data from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 11 (2023)

- Cross-national survey with standardized data collection across countries.
- Italy and Norway chosen due to differing political and social contexts.

Methodology: Python Pipeline

```
1 values_remove = [6666,7777,8888,9999]
2 ds3_new = ds3[~ds3['nwspol'].isin(values_remove)]
3 ds3_new = ds3_new[~ds3_new['netustm'].isin(values_remove)]
4
5 fig, axes = plt.subplots(1, 2, figsize=(10, 5), dpi=300)
6 axes = axes.flatten()
7
8 labels = ['News about politics and current affairs,\nwatching, reading or listening, in minutes',
9           'Internet use, how often']
10
11 for i, col in enumerate(colm2):
12     sns.kdeplot(data=ds3_new, x=col, ax=axes[i], fill=True, palette='viridis')
13     axes[i].set_xlabel(col)
14     axes[i].set_ylabel('Density')
15     axes[i].grid(False)
16     axes[i].set_title(f'{labels[i]} - NO')
17
18     # mean and median
19     mean_val = ds3_new[col].mean()
20     median_val = ds3_new[col].median()
21
22     # vertical lines
23     axes[i].axvline(mean_val, color='blue', linestyle='--', linewidth=1.5, label=f'Mean: {mean_val:.2f}')
24     axes[i].axvline(median_val, color='red', linestyle='-.', linewidth=1.5, label=f'Median: {median_val:.2f}')
25
26     axes[i].legend(fontsize=8)
27
28 plt.tight_layout()
29 plt.savefig(f'images/image11.pdf', bbox_inches='tight', dpi=300)
30 plt.show()
```

Figure: Part of Python pipeline to automate the data preprocessing process. Full code available on [GitHub](#)

Methodology: Key Variables Analyzed

Example

- **Media consumption:** Print, TV, social media, online platforms.
- **Social trust:** Trust in others and fairness perceptions.
- **Political trust:** Confidence in national and international institutions.
- **Civic engagement:** Voting patterns, political participation.

Findings: Italy

- **Media Consumption:**
 - 59.2% report high internet usage.
 - Print and TV media less frequently consumed.
- **Social Trust:**
 - Moderate social trust, concentrated around midpoints of trust scale.
- **Political Engagement:**
 - Fragmented voting patterns, with PD and FdI dominating.

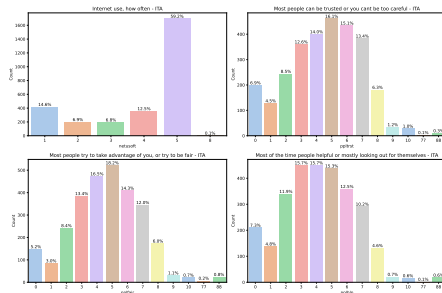


Figure: Internet use (netusoft) and measures of social trust (ppltrst, pplfair, and pplhlp) among Italian respondents. Most individuals report high internet usage and moderate levels of trust, fairness, and helpfulness, with peaks around the midpoints of the scales.

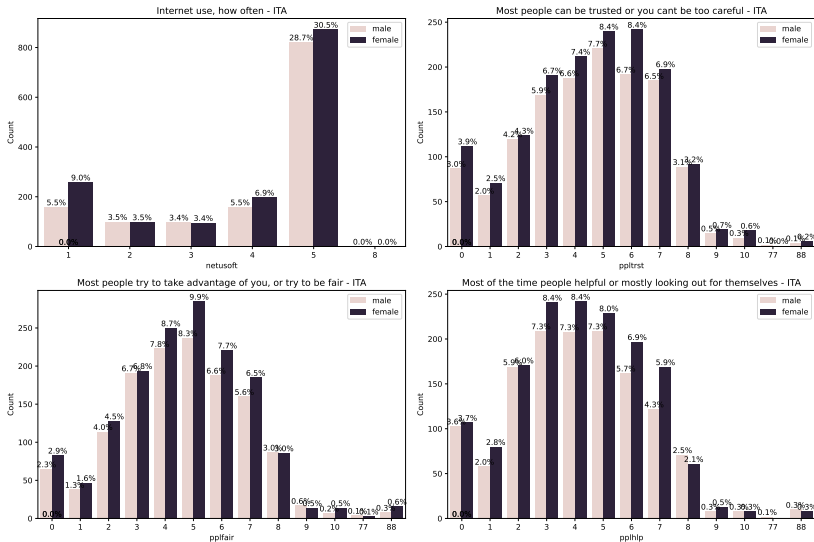


Figure: Gender Differences in Internet Usage and Social Trust in Italy

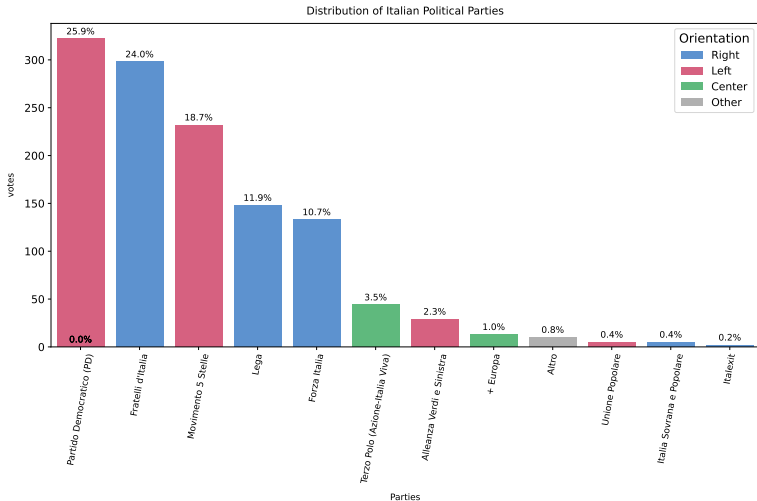


Figure: Distribution of political parties in Italy. The current government majority is the result of alliances between right-wing parties

Findings: Norway

- **Media Consumption:**

- 89.5% report very high internet usage.
- Higher use of print media compared to Italy.

- **Social Trust:**

- Consistently high trust levels.

- **Political Engagement:**

- Strong support for the Center Party and Labour Party.

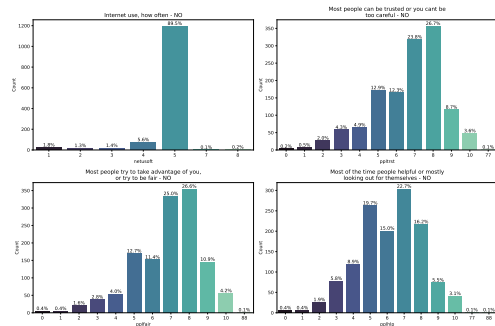


Figure: The majority of respondents report frequent internet use, with 89.5% at the highest frequency level. Trust, fairness, and helpfulness scores are generally high, with peaks near the upper end of the scales

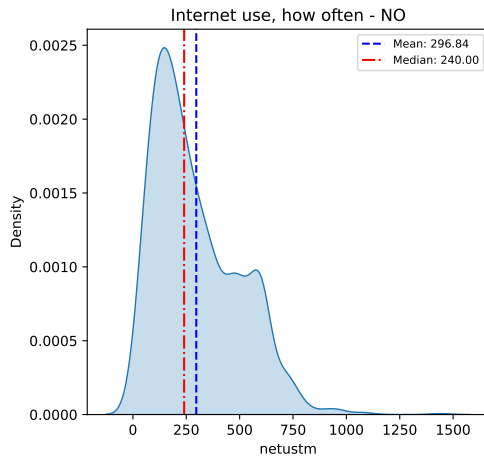
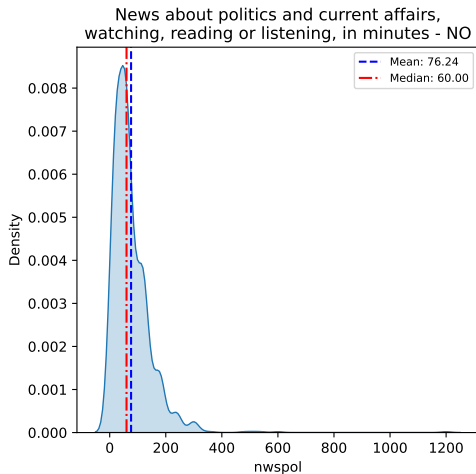


Figure: Political News Consumption and General Internet Use in Norway. Political news consumption is lower compared to overall internet use.

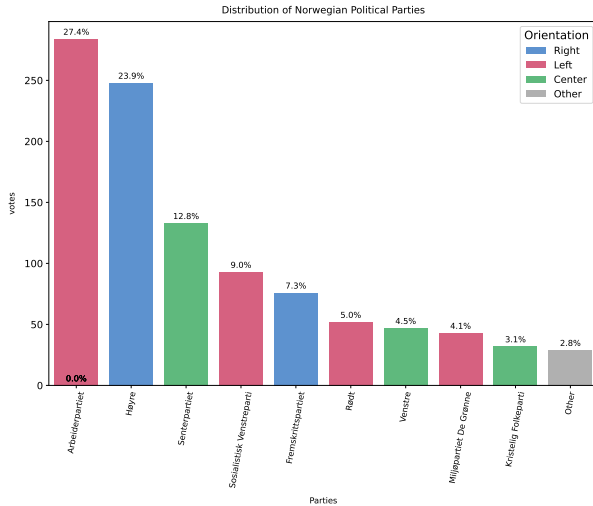


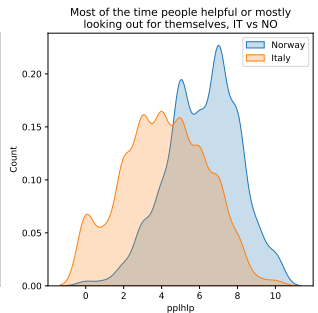
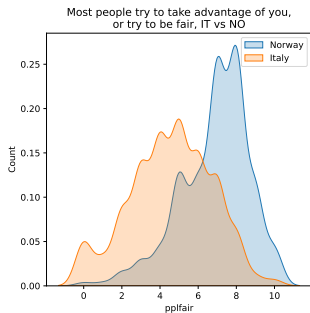
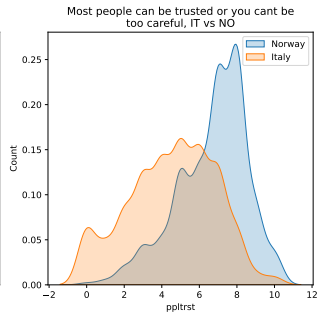
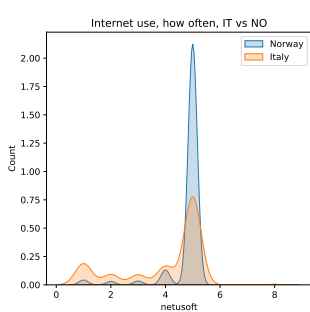
Figure: Distribution of political parties in Norway.

Findings: Comparative Insights (Italy vs. Norway)

- Higher social trust and political participation in Norway.
- Italy shows more varied trust levels and lower political engagement.
- Political news consumption higher in Norway.

check also this [link](#) for the full comparative graph

Norwegian respondents show a higher tendency towards maximum internet use, reflecting broader digital integration. Italian respondents, however, display a wider distribution of usage patterns, with significant representation across moderate and high usage levels. Norwegian respondents generally report higher levels of trust, fairness, and helpfulness, while Italian responses are more varied, reflecting differences in societal cohesion.



Discussion of Results

- Trust patterns linked to media consumption habits.
- Norway's higher trust linked to institutional stability and media literacy.
- Italy's fragmented trust may reflect political instability and media polarization.






Figure: Correlation matrix between Internet use and news reading. Nothing special but the negative correlation between Internet use (how often) and Internet use (minutes)

Conclusion and Implications

- Norwegian respondents exhibit higher social trust and civic engagement.
- Italian respondents show fragmented trust and lower political participation.
- Need for media literacy programs to improve trust in Italy.

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The End

check the [GitHub repository](#) for more infos and data