

ID: MSCA-19-Picone04

Discipline: Journalism

Title: Understanding Foreign Policy Public Opinion. Examining the determinants, structure and robustness of individual attitudes

Abstract: The relationship between citizens, the press and politics has dramatically changed over the past decades, from a CNN effect in the 1990s to a Youtube effect in the 2000s and, more recently, the diffusion of fake news. The numerous (r)evolutions in communication and information technologies has decreased the dependency on official sources and diminished the gatekeeping role of news media in informing the public and shaping public opinion. Along with these evolutions, public opinion has become the target of manipulations and campaigns of misinformation from specific groups in society and even from external powers. Hence, this research project aims to examine how public opinion regarding foreign policy and international politics is organized and structures, what determines citizens' opinions and what makes certain individuals' opinions and attitudes more coherent and robust than others? To examine these questions, this project proposes to examine foreign policy opinion and attitude formation among the general and student populations. Surveying students will provide us with the unique opportunity to track individuals over a longer period of time (three years) and understand what forms their opinion and what makes their opinion more robust to manipulations, focusing specifically on formal education, personality, norms, values and heuristics. Surveys among the general population will allow us to compare and generalize these findings.

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