

ARTICLE

Shades of incivility in Reddit: A comparison between echo chambers and plural spaces

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Abstract

This research relies on a two-stage content analysis of Reddit to test the assumption that by emphasizing othering and polarizing opinions, homogeneous ideological spaces trigger impolite and uncivil comments towards others, as opposed to spaces that enable cross partisan-ideological exposure, which overall are seen as positive for democracy. It examines subreddits with varying probability of occurrence of echo chamber effects to measure the prevalence and the targets of incivility and studies the interactions in which these comments emerge in discussions about immigration. Findings show that incivility is higher in subreddits that bring together users with the same ideological and political profile, in which echo chamber effects are more likely to occur, but the redditors' reactions are similar in both types of environments. The targets of incivility vary according to the political orientation of the comments and the political context of the country.

1 | INTRODUCTION

Concerns about the spread and prevalence of hate speech and incivility, more generally, have occupied research in the last few years. Interdisciplinary studies on these phenomena have focused on the development of tools to automatically detect hate and hostility (Fortuna & Nunes, 2018; Gagliardone, 2019; Jahan & Oussalah, 2023); on normative and legal debates surrounding free speech and its regulation (Alkiviadou, 2019); on the relationship between civility and recognition (Mitchell, 2018) or on the impact of uncivil discourse on democratically relevant political talk (Rossini, 2020). However, less is known about the specific characteristics of the online environments that boost such content, namely their main political ideology and the prevalence of diverse vs uniform views, for example. Although cross-ideological exposure is usually considered positive for democracy, as it is believed to increase political knowledge and tolerance for opposing opinions (Rossini, 2020, pp. 16), the exposure to homogeneous ideological views tends to be associated with polarization, extremism and intolerance (Sunstein, 2007).

The present study addresses this lacuna by investigating whether online environments with potential echo chamber effects are more prone to the expression of incivility by analysing the interactions in which these emerge. It assesses the prevalence of impoliteness, incivility and hate speech in dif-

ferent types of Reddit communities closely linked to the United States and the United Kingdom in discussions on immigration. The issue of immigration is extremely relevant in both countries and Reddit is particularly suited for this purpose because it combines a mix of subreddits created specifically for users that share similar political ideologies (e.g. *r/Conservative*) and for those who are interested in plural political discussions (e.g. *'r/Politics'*). Extant research suggests that hate speech towards minorities originates mostly from alt-right users and groups, but not much is known about the origin and spread of online hate in general, how liberal and conservative users react to it, and what kind of online interactions escalate hate speech and incivility more broadly.

2 | THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The growing use of social media in politics has drawn attention to the harmful effects of online echo chambers (e.g. Sunstein, 2007). Echo chambers are 'contexts in which connections are made preferentially within a group rather than with outsiders' (Rathnayake & Suthers, 2019, pp. 1) and are 'characterized by selective exposure, ideological segregation, and political polarization' (Barberá et al., 2015, pp. 1532). Such processes and the ensuing concerns are not new or observable on online environments only. In fact, extant research had already signalled other cases, such as the conservative news media's role in creating a knowledge base and fostering an in-group identity (Hemmer, 2018; Jamieson & Cappella, 2008).

Some studies portray social media platforms as echo chambers (e.g. Goldie et al., 2014; Jacobson et al., 2016) that are often further reinforced by algorithms. Cinelli et al. (2021), for example, found significant differences across platforms in terms of echo chamber formation depending on whether the social platform provides a user-modifiable feed algorithm (e.g. Reddit) or not (e.g. Facebook and Twitter). Other authors, however, dispute the supposed inexistence of cross-ideological exposure (Bakshy et al., 2015; Dubois & Blank, 2018; Graham, 2016), precisely due to social media's potential to enact exposure to diverse viewpoints (e.g. Conover et al., 2012; Himelboim et al., 2013). With the notion of 'divergence of exposure', Rathnayake and Suthers (2019) illustrated the coexistence of user groups with varying degrees of cross-ideology exposure related to the same issue. The same affordances offered by platforms (e.g. creating groups to discuss specific topics) can produce different levels of exchange between ideologies depending on the social elements surrounding such exchanges, thus reducing the technological determinism that often accompanies debates on social networks. According to these authors, the political and social contexts in which such interactions occur thus determine diverse exposures. Similarly, Barberá et al. (2015) highlighted that the levels of ideological homophily or polarization on Twitter do vary significantly depending on the topic and that political issues tend to provoke low cross-ideology exchanges, whereas non-political topics seem to stimulate discussions among users with different political views. This means that online discussions about political issues have more probability of resembling echo chambers than those on non-political topics. Extant research thus suggests that more than a predetermined feature of technology, online cross-ideology exposure is a context-specific phenomenon. Furthermore, there are well-known cognitive processes that explain why people tend to selectively expose themselves to information that confirms their pre-existing ideas and beliefs, such as dissonance reduction, identity maintenance, motivated reasoning and confirmation bias (e.g. Barberá et al., 2015; Kahan, 2013).

The most noted political effects of echo chambers include the limited access to plural information, the increase of polarization and the development of extreme positions (e.g. Cinelli et al., 2021; Dubois & Blank, 2018), and all of these are potentially conducive to the manifestation of incivility and hate. Sunstein (2007) saw the Internet as a breeding ground for extremism for three main reasons: users are disproportionately exposed to arguments from one side; users tend to adopt certain positions to show a desirable image to their peers; and in-group solidarity generates greater confidence, which favours more extreme positions. Conversely, other authors prefer to highlight the positive effects of echo

chambers linked to reinforcement, such as the promotion of political participation and commitment (O'Hara & Stevens, 2015).

The scarcity of empirical, systematic studies partly explains this disparity in findings and opinions. Furthermore, research examining the conditions for the expression of online hate and how hate is expressed in different environments is also missing. Although some studies do seem to associate uncivil comments and hate speech to some online environments that fit into the image of echo chambers, these are often extreme right-wing, which hinders any attempt at generalizing this association to other types of online environments and communities. Ottoni et al. (2018), for example, demonstrated how hateful vocabulary and violent content are more prevalent in right-wing YouTube channels.

Barfar (2019) found lower levels of anger and incivility in comments published on mainstream newspapers' Facebook pages than in posts published in hyper partisan pages on Facebook, where echo chamber effects are more likely to occur. For this author, echo chamber environments facilitate certain negative behaviours because they show users that their opinions do not deviate from the group norm. Furthermore, 'to present herself in a socially desirable light, the user may even push her opinions towards the extremes of the perceived partisan norm, which could in turn polarize her political attitudes' (Barfar, 2019, pp. 175). Such conclusions suggest that denigration and hostile behaviour towards outsiders are more likely to occur in online communities that bring together like-minded people than in plural environments. The probability of experiencing disapproval for expressing certain opinions and attitudes will be lower in communities of like-minded people than in heterogeneous settings, where such opinions could be considered deviant from the social norm and, therefore, would be disapproved or censored. In fact, Bursztyn et al. (2017) have demonstrated that individuals are judged less negatively when they express a xenophobic opinion in environments where this view is popular or socially accepted. As the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) proposes, individuals' behaviour and attitudes are downstream from their perception of subjective norms, that is their perception of social pressure to perform some specific behaviour, and that that perception can be influenced by biases, namely the false consensus effect (FCE), or the tendency to overestimate support for one's positions, which has been shown to enhance the likelihood of engaging in behaviours that are coherent with perceived norms, even if the perception is incorrect (Bauman & Geher, 2002). The FCE has been shown to be stronger when people are involved in ideologically homogeneous online groups, since they are especially prone to radicalize due to the prevalence of reinforcing opinions and lack of counterarguments (Wojcieszak, 2008), as well as with the strength of individual support for a specific position (Wojcieszak & Price, 2009). Recent studies have further demonstrated that interacting with ideologically homogeneous networks contributes to higher estimation of public support for one's own opinions (Luzsa & Mayr, 2019). Thus, participants in communities created specifically to aggregate ideologically committed users, like certain subreddits, would be more likely to be affected by the FCE and to perceive the community's norms as encouraging radicalized behaviour. In sum, there seem to be compelling arguments to expect that users will be more likely to produce and share uncivil and hateful content in like-minded communities on social media, due to the absence of fear of disapproval and the desire for social acceptance.

Nevertheless, extant research has also documented other reactions by users when they encounter alternative views online and perceive those as a threat to their own identity, which include avoidance (e.g. John & Dvir-Gvirsman, 2015), attack (e.g. Mor et al., 2016; Chen & Lu, 2017) or polarization (e.g. Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; Suhay et al., 2018; Cassese, 2018). Suhay et al. (2018) found that partisan criticism in online comment sections leads to affective and social polarization; and Chen and Lu (2017) showed that challenges to one's own beliefs lead to negative emotions and aggressive intentions, while exposure to content that aligns with the users' pre-existing political orientations in partisan outlets produces less frustration and opposition and consequently, less extreme reactions.

As for the ideological orientation of these phenomena, the online use of hate speech and other forms of linguistic injury (Butler, 2021) has been extensively linked to the alt-right and right-wing extremism (Hanzelka & Schmidt, 2017; Koulouris, 2018; Lima et al., 2018; Costello et al., 2019; Zannettou et al., 2018). For Costello et al. (2019), this ideological sector is principally concerned with

identity, advocating heteronormative, white, male, Christian superiority, thus opposing those who are perceived as threatening their culture or values (e.g. immigrants, racial/ethnic minorities and liberals). Although research suggests differences, not much is known about the potential dissimilarity between liberals and conservatives in their expression of online hate and uncivility. Soliman et al. (2019) identified a greater usage of strong negative language in the most popular right-wing subcommunity on Reddit. Su et al. (2018) further explained that compared to liberals, conservative commenters seem more likely to employ insulting language, name-calling and ideologically extreme language in online discussions, which is likely related to the differences in their political identity. Political context also seems to be relevant, as this study relied on data collected during the Obama administration, which could explain why conservatives showed stronger political opposition and more negative attitudes than liberals, whereas Barfar (2019), using data collected during the Trump administration, found that the responses to posts on extreme liberal Facebook pages were more uncivil than on the conservative counterparts. Su et al. (2018) and Barfar (2019) thus stress that online incivility should not be attributed to a specific political party or ideological sector without considering the concurrent political context. Specific events (e.g. Nithyanand et al., 2017) or audience enlargement strategies through the use of incivility as entertainment (e.g. Kosmidis & Theocharis, 2020) have also been considered drivers of hateful and uncivil language.

Another element to consider pertains the potential escalation effects of uncivil and hateful messages in online interactions, that is the specific circumstances in which they emerge, whether they are posted in response to dissent, and the extent to which they are a reaction to prior, similarly hostile messages. If that were the case, then a single message, coupled with a degree of mob mentality or coordination, could influence entire online discussions (Demsar et al., 2021). Research has shown that online interactions can escalate users to anger, reinforcing echo chamber dynamics (Wollebæk et al., 2019), as well as hate (Ermida, 2017; Muddiman & Stroud, 2017), and that users tend to use more aggressive language as a reaction to aggressive online comments posted by their peers when the social group norm is aggressive (Rösner & Krämer, 2016).

In sum, research proposes that users are more likely to express negative and hateful attitudes towards the different other in their own group because the feeling of belonging facilitates the disinhibition of users (Suler, 2004) and the fear of being disapproved for showing negative attitudes is lower. However, research also reveals that certain negative online behaviours can arise when people face disagreement (Suhay et al., 2018), which is more likely to occur in cross-ideological environments, and that the expression of hate is often reactive (Rösner & Krämer, 2016), suggesting some escalation effect. Our approach is designed to contribute to a better understanding of the links between echo chambers and the expression of impoliteness, incivility and hate through an analysis of the Reddit users' messages and interactions guided by two research questions:

- RQ1: Is the prevalence of impoliteness and incivility higher in online environments where echo chamber effects are more likely to occur?
- RQ2: Is there an observable escalation effect in conversations containing uncivil messages in discussions about immigration?

3 | RESEARCH DESIGN

The methodological approach is based on a two-stage content analysis design. To check whether the prevalence of incivility is higher in online environments where echo chamber effects are more likely to occur, we measured the manifestation of hate and incivility on different types of subreddits. Then, to check what spurred those messages, we further analysed the online interactions immediately preceding and following them.

Because Reddit is built around communities (called subreddits) based on different interests (e.g. sports, music, politics etc.) and characteristics (e.g. ideological affiliation), it is the

most suited social media platform to test RQ1. Our approach examined the prevalence of impoliteness, incivility and hate speech in subreddits that identify their ideological or political identity (e.g. *r/Conservative*, *r/askaconservative*, *r/AskThe_Donald*, *r/socialism*, *r/ToiletPaperUSA*, *r/GeneralStrikeUSA*, *r/stupidpol* and *r/AskALiberal*) and in subreddits without any predetermined ideological or political identity (e.g. *r/Politics*, *r/washingtondc*, *r/worldnews*, *r/europe*, *r/CasualUK* and *r/PoliticalHumor*). Reddit provides three additional, but equally important, affordances for this research, particularly for RQ2: It tolerates anonymity; allows any user to become a moderator, which fosters an uninhibited user ethos that Nithyanand et al. (2017, pp. 2) equate with ‘free-speech culture’; and does not limit posts by length, thus enabling long and complex conversations. In this context, affordances refer ‘perceived actual or imagined properties of social media (...) that enable and constrain specific uses’ (Ronzhyn et al., 2023, pp. 3181).

The empirical analysis relied on a two-stage, quantitative content analysis. The unit of analysis was each single post on the topic of immigration. The issue of immigration has gained increasing relevance in recent years and has been a highly controversial and polarizing topic, particularly since the Brexit referendum and the US presidential election in 2016. These two events have profoundly marked American and British politics and have been interpreted as part of the wider authoritarian and xenophobic reactions shaking Western societies in the face of the rapid social, economic, cultural and political changes of recent decades (Norris & Inglehart, 2019). According to the United Nations, the United States and the United Kingdom are the first and fifth countries, respectively, with the highest number of foreign-born residents in the world, and both countries have experienced a substantial increase in migration flows in recent decades.¹

In the United States, immigration issues played a crucial role in the election of President Donald Trump. The Republican Party adopted a hardline stance on immigration during the 2016 presidential campaign and subsequent administration of Donald Trump, emphasizing border security, the construction of a border wall, and stricter enforcement of immigration laws. Trump’s restrictive positions on immigration contrast with the move towards the left of Democratic voters on the issue, especially since Trump took office (Kefford & Ratcliff, 2018). The Democratic Party has generally favoured more lenient immigration policies, including pathways to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and protections for refugees and asylum seekers. This divergence in party platforms has further entrenched the polarization surrounding immigration, not only in election periods, but also during Donald Trump’s administration. The sharp disagreement between the two parties over the handling of immigration led to tense clashes between local administrations governed by Democrats – many declared as sanctuary cities or states, that is jurisdictions that refuse to cooperate fully with US immigration enforcement officers (Pierce & Selee, 2017) – and the Trump-led federal administration. The growing polarisation around the issue of migration came against a backdrop of changing migration patterns in the country. According to the Migration Policy Institute, the last wave of migration to the United States began to take shape in the 1970s (Batalova, 2024). Foreign-born people increased from 4.7% of the US population in 1970 to nearly 14% in the current decade.² In addition to the substantial increase, the origin of the immigrant flows has also changed notably. Until the mid-20th century, immigration to the US came mainly from Europe. Since the 1970s, however, the origin of immigration has changed steadily in favour of Latin American and Asian countries, especially Mexico (by far the largest group), China and India.³ These changes in migration patterns pose a new challenge to American society as it faces a much more religiously, culturally and racially diverse migration.

The Brexit referendum significantly intensified the debate on immigration in the United Kingdom as well. The 2016 referendum on EU membership saw immigration as a central issue, with the Leave campaign emphasizing the need to ‘take back control’ of UK borders and warning against the supposed massive arrival of Turkish immigrants if the country remained in the EU. The promise to reduce immigration and regain sovereignty resonated with a substantial portion of the electorate, particularly in areas experiencing rapid demographic changes. As Goodwin and Milazzo (2017) showed, strong public concerns over immigration were central to explaining the 2016 Brexit vote, especially in local communities that had experienced higher rates of ethnic change in the period preceding the

referendum. The Brexit vote was preceded by the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ in Europe and a steady increase in migrant arrivals in the United Kingdom: from 1995 to 2015, the proportion of foreign-born people in the United Kingdom almost doubled from 7% to 13%.⁴ The increase in immigration and its politicization by certain actors placed the issue as one of the most salient in British politics, a characteristic that persists in the post-Brexit period. Unlike in the United States, the politicisation of the migration issue came mainly from the margins of British politics, with Nigel Farage’s UK Independence Party and later the Brexit Party – now Reform UK – being the main bastion of anti-immigration politics in the country. However, fearing electoral losses in the face of an increasingly salient issue, the Conservative Party has contributed to the normalisation of anti-immigration discourses in recent years, proposing very restrictive immigration policies, such as the controversial Rwanda deportations law.

Therefore, owing to the complex nature of the phenomenon and to the strong polarization it usually generates, the issue of immigration has strong potential to elicit hostility against different types of targets: immigrants and refugees themselves, when they are perceived as an economic or security threat to the country’s natives or to their cultural identity; specific racial, ethnic and/or religious minority groups most commonly associated with migration flows; or ideological groups, institutions and politicians who publicly hold positions on immigration and push forward a policy agenda on the issue.

Diagram 1 provides an overview of the research phases. We used digital data collection methods supported by an algorithm written specifically for the automated extraction of posts that filtered the data with the keyword ‘immigration’ and the subreddits’ location during a 1-year period (July 2019–2020). We resorted to Reddit’s API and a Python tool was developed to fetch, collect and process the data, which was scraped to include the posts on ‘immigration’, and then filtered by ‘user_location’ to retain those posts from the United Kingdom and the United States. Comments on immigration were collected from a total of 429 subreddits. Among the most frequent non-ideological or plural subreddits are r/ukpolitics, r/IWantOut, r/worldnews, r/unitedkingdom, r/politics, r/AskReddit, r/news, r/urope, r/badunitedkingdom, r/immigration, r/changemyview, r/pics, r/ukvisa, r/unpopularopinion, r/NoStupidQuestions and r/AskAnAmerican; and among the most frequent ideologically defined subreddits are r/ToiletPaperUSA, r/AskTrumpSupporters, r/LabourUK, r/Conservative, r/Libertarian, r/neoliberal, r/AskALiberal, r/LibertarianPartyUSA, r/askaconservative and r/AskThe_Donald. The sample that was content analysed was composed of 3158 items (1579 from each country) randomly selected in the first phase (from the initial 9953 comments collected) and of 1657 items (UK: 836 and US: 821) in the second phase. The new comments that were collected in phase two were the three comments immediately preceding and the three comments immediately following⁵ the reference comment, that is the original posts coded as containing incivility and hate speech in phase one of the content analysis (UK: 195; US: 213).

Two trained coders manually classified these posts using a detailed content analysis coding scheme. First, we coded the ideological/political description of the subreddits in which the relevant posts had been published: *Does the subreddit have a clearly identified ideological or political position?* This was the main independent variable and classified the subreddits as clearly ideologically defined (e.g. r/Conservatives) or plural (e.g. r/Politics). In addition to explicit ideological positioning (e.g. r/Democrats, r/Neoliberal etc.), we also considered in this category the subreddits that displayed clear political/policy positions and support for specific politicians or political organizations (e.g. r/Progun, r/AskTrumpSupporters, r/RevolutionUK, r/Monarchism etc.). Second, we coded the relevant subreddits for the presence/absence of guidelines against uncivil behaviour and hate speech. The subreddit ‘r/Politics’ stated, for example: ‘No incivility, personal attacks, hate speech, etc. Our full civility rule is here. Be civil and constructive at all times. Attack ideas, not users. Personal attacks are not permitted. (...) Hate speech is not permitted. (...)’. This variable was included to control the effect of moderation and guidelines against hate speech and incivility, as these are expected to reduce the prevalence of such content.

Next, we coded the posts for four characteristics. The main dependent variable of the study was the prevalence of incivility. As shown by Ng et al. (2020), there are several ways of operationalizing this

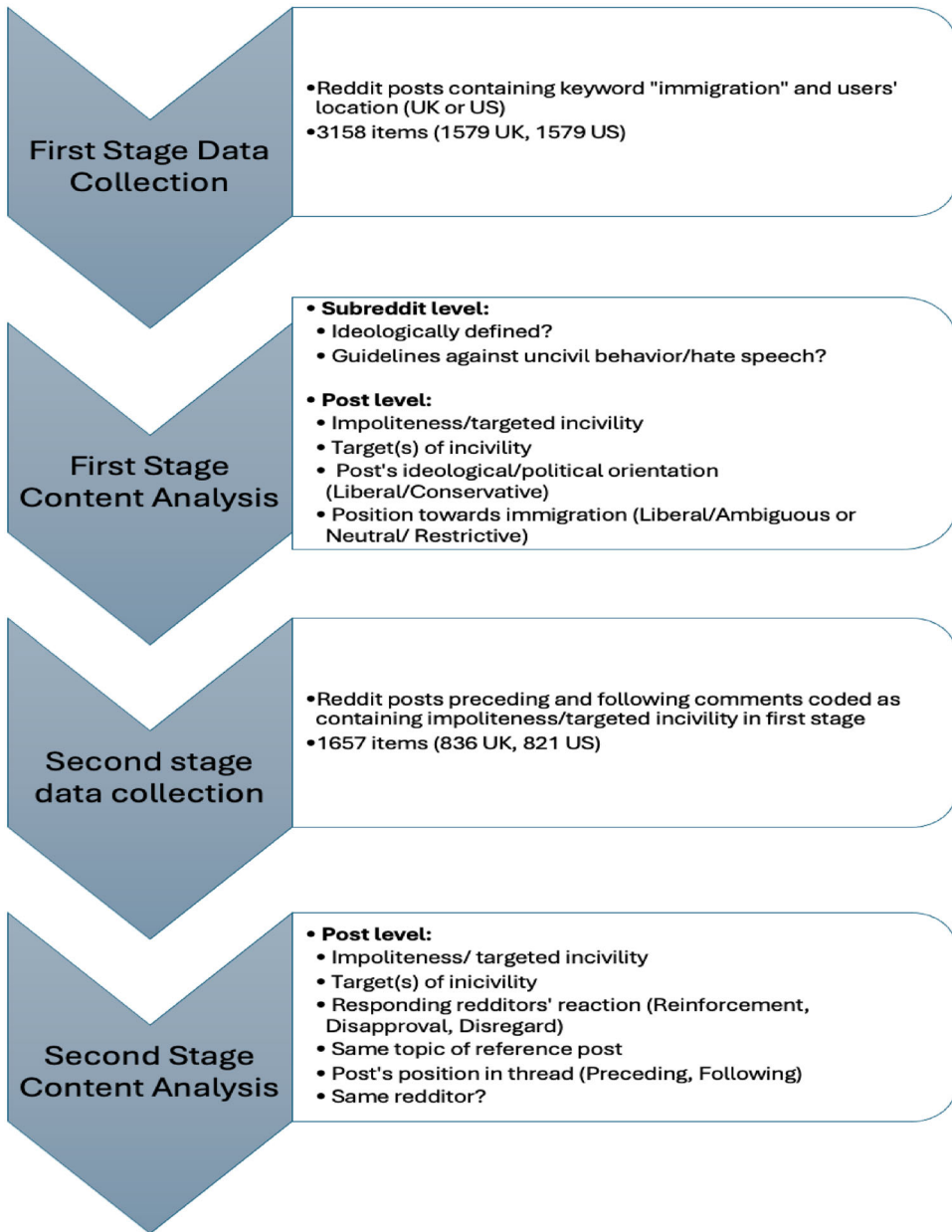


DIAGRAM 1 Schematic diagram of research. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

phenomenon in online discourses. For example, studies that use large-scale data often rely, according to the authors, on a rather simplistic operationalization, for example, by using a swearwords dictionary. Other studies such as Santana's (2015) take a broader view of incivility by including not only foul language and vulgarities but also personal attacks, hateful language, xenophobic or racist content and language that assigns stereotypes. Finally, some studies proceeded from Papacharissi's (2004) distinction between incivility and impoliteness to guide the coding of these online phenomena. Based on this distinction, online comments are considered 'as uncivil if they involved abusive language, ethnic slurs, disparaging on the basis of race, personal attacks, racist sentiments, threats, vulgarities,

or xenophobia' (Ng et al., 2020, pp. 2), whereas impoliteness refer to the presence of 'poor manners' in conversation.

We followed this distinction to measure messages that include personal attacks or threats, assign stereotypes, or show intense aversion towards certain people, social groups or institutions. We call this variable *targeted incivility* to reflect that we are dealing with a type of message that seeks to attack individuals, social groups or institutions. We thus included attacks not only on people based on protected features, such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religious beliefs etc. (hate speech), and considered instead any expression of violence or attacks against a person, group, or institution. In our analysis, targeted incivility was thus operationalized to consider all attacks or threats to others or to their rights, insults towards other people, groups or institutions, as well as other types of negative and diminishing content based on personal or group characteristics (e.g. use of negative stereotypes), including attacks on other social media users involved in the conversation, on other people based on political or ideological reasons, or on politicians, political organizations, government institutions, journalists and news media organizations or interest groups. The specific targets of incivility were then coded individually as binary variables (presence/absence). Such wide-ranging operationalization intends to capture all the nuances and targets of incivility in immigration discussions that an approach based on the legal definition of hate speech (e.g. immigrants, refugees and racial/ethnic minorities) would not encompass. The final goal is to map out the different forms of incivility arising in online discussions on immigration. A prime example of a comment that would not be considered in a legalistic understanding of hate speech is, for instance: 'But, as always, I appreciate when Trump supporters show the world how truly fucking stupid they really are'.

We also coded the presence/absence of *impoliteness* to detect the use of language that disrespects social, polite norms of conversation. Impoliteness, while it does not need to be directed against someone in particular, can set the tone of discussions and create conditions for incivility to emerge and spread. Posts were thus checked for the prevalence of vulgarity, swear words, obscenity, curses, mockery and words in capital letters indicating yelling or insulting. For example: '(...) but that's my own personal preference that neither companies nor immigration laws give a crap about'.

Each post was then coded for its *ideological/political orientation*. Posts were considered liberal or conservative when the comment supported liberal or conservative politicians and political parties, regardless of whether the subreddit was itself partisan, or not; when redditors explicitly positioned themselves in one of these ideologies (e.g. 'Yes, I voted for Conservative as I believe Boris will push on with brexit and not dither about wanting another referendum...'); or when posts displayed positions typical of the liberal or conservative ideological spectrums (traditional/modern family values, anti/pro-abortion, anti/pro-gun, against/pro state intervention, reducing/increasing taxes etc.) (e.g. 'Only the right offers something akin to a return to traditional values. Only the right even pretends to care about your personal liberty...'). Finally, we coded the *position of the comment towards immigration* as liberal (e.g. '...Immigrants are good for the economy...'), restrictive (e.g. '...I (...) wanted immigration to be cut down to almost none'.) or ambiguous/neutral (e.g. '...No one is saying the immigration is perfect by any means, but often when you scratch at the surface of why people oppose immigration it can become an argument over some very loose and poorly defined ideas regarding identity, values, and culture'.).

In the second phase of the content analysis, we focused on the comments preceding and following the posts previously identified as containing incivility by collecting six additional comments (three immediately preceding the original post and three immediately succeeding it) to analyse users' interactions before and after the original post. These additional posts were coded for the presence/absence of impoliteness, presence/absence of incivility, whether they targeted a person, a group, or an institution, the specific target(s) of incivility, the users' reaction (reinforcement; disapproval; disregard) to the previous comments, and if the topic of the comment was the same of the reference post (yes/no). We also noted the position of each post in relation to the reference post and whether it had been posted by the same redditor.

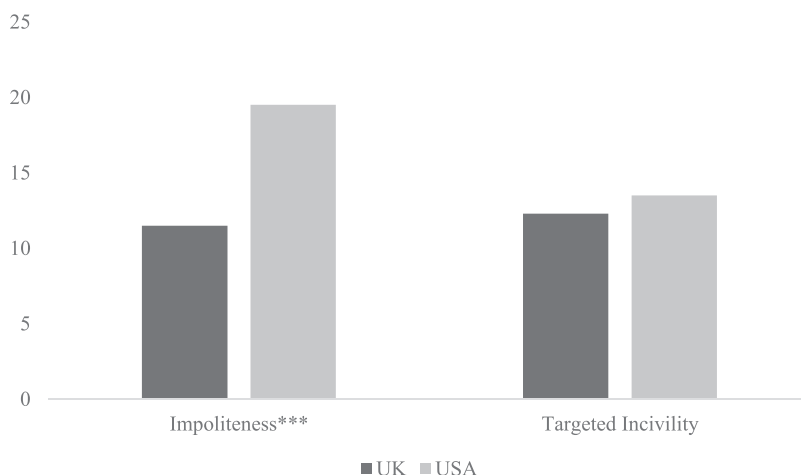


FIGURE 1 Impoliteness and targeted incivility in Reddit posts on immigration (% of the total posts analysed). *N* valid (UK: 1579; USA: 1579). Chi-square test of Independence: ****p*-value < 0.001. Incivility: $\chi^2(1, 3158) = 39.03, p = 0.000$; hate: $\chi^2(1, 3158) = 0.912, p = 0.340$.

Intercoder reliability was assessed in two tests and Cohen's kappa coefficient measured the levels of agreement between two coders. The tests revealed high and medium levels of agreement; for example the variables of 'incivility' and 'ideological/political positioned subreddits' had 0.8 and 0.9 of agreement and the variables of 'ideological/political position of the post' and 'position towards immigration' had 0.6 and 0.77, respectively. Such levels of agreement are in line with studies on similar topics (Rowe, 2015). In total, the sample size used in the tests represented 8.5% of the total number of posts analysed.

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | The prevalence of impoliteness and targeted incivility

The levels of impoliteness and targeted incivility in discussions on immigration were slightly higher in the United States (8% more in impoliteness and 1.2% in targeted incivility) than in the United Kingdom, but the differences between the two countries are not statistically significant in the variable of targeted incivility according to the chi-square test of Independence (Figure 1).

The samples from the two countries display similar patterns. As shown in Figure 2, other Reddit users involved in the conversations were the main targets of the insults (e.g. 'Every word you write outs you as an imbecile'), attacks and derogatory language were identified in both countries (34.7% in the USA and 28.2 in the UK). Targeted incivility towards opposing ideological groups or other people based on political or ideological reasons (e.g. '...Do I make excuses for the braindead/brainwashed [T]rump supporters...?') was the second most frequent type (28.7% in the United Kingdom and 25.4 in the United States), followed by attacks on immigrants and refugees (e.g. '...mass immigration from the Global South into [E]urope has led to the creation of parallel communities hostile to the larger society') (27.7% in the United Kingdom and 18.3 in the United States). Comments from both countries had similar levels of incivility targeted at specific nationalities (e.g. 'Why are we importing Pakistanis into our country who create costly health problems for the NHS by inbreeding?') (9.4 in the United States and 9.2% in the United Kingdom) but differed in religious groups (e.g. 'A majority of people in Britain don't want mass immigration and don't want more Muslims here') (more in

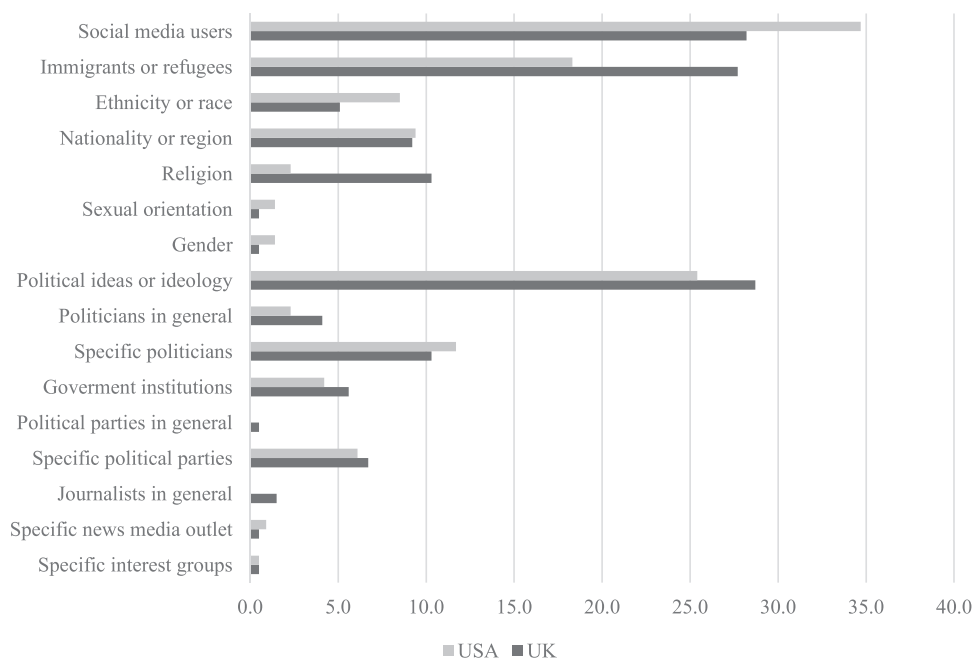


FIGURE 2 Targets (% within comments containing incivility). *N* valid (UK: 195; USA: 213).

the United Kingdom, 10.3%, than in the United States, 2.3%) and racially or ethnically motivated attacks (e.g.: ‘...Blacks in USA have higher crime rate, various multiples of those of whites and Asians...’) (slightly more common in the United States, 8.5%, than in the United Kingdom, 5.1%). In the UK’s subreddits, users expressed concerns about Islam’s alleged incompatibility with British values and lifestyle and some of these comments attacked Islam and shared negative stereotypes, portraying Muslims as retrograde and engaged in unacceptable cultural practices (e.g. ‘masses of [I]slam... causing social conflict, raising FGM [Female Genital Mutilation] rates, raising incestuous marriages, committing terrorism, and raping young children on an industrial scale’). This topic was not as salient in the US sample as the concerns about demographic change and race (especially the increasing presence of ‘brown people’ and ‘continued decline of WASPs’, that is *White, Anglo Saxon and Protestant* people), echoing popular conspiracy theories in right-wing spaces, prominently Renaud Camus’ ‘Great Replacement’ (Bhatt, 2020). Specific politicians were also targeted (e.g. ‘We have 2 choices, a psycho (Trump) and a babbling idiot (Biden)’ (11.7% in the United States and 10.3 in the United Kingdom), as well as political parties (e.g. ‘...Republican proto-fascist bullshit’. (6.7% in the United Kingdom and 6.1 in the USA). In the US posts, the most frequent targets of the insults and attacks were Donald Trump and the two mainstream parties (Democratic Party and Republican Party), whereas in the UK, the two major parties (Labour and Conservatives) and political leaders linked to these parties (David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn) were the main targets.

Focusing on RQ1, namely if the prevalence of impoliteness and incivility is higher in subreddits with clear ideological and political identity, in which echo chamber effects are more likely to occur, Figure 3 shows that posts violating polite norms of conversation were more frequent in partisan or ideological subreddits (23.7%) than in those without clear political or ideological bias (14.8%). The same holds for the prevalence of targeted incivility, being the differences between these two environments greater and more significant than in the previous variable (23.7% and 12.1%, respectively). These patterns were also clear when the two countries were analysed individually, and the differences were statistically significant (chi-square test of Independence).

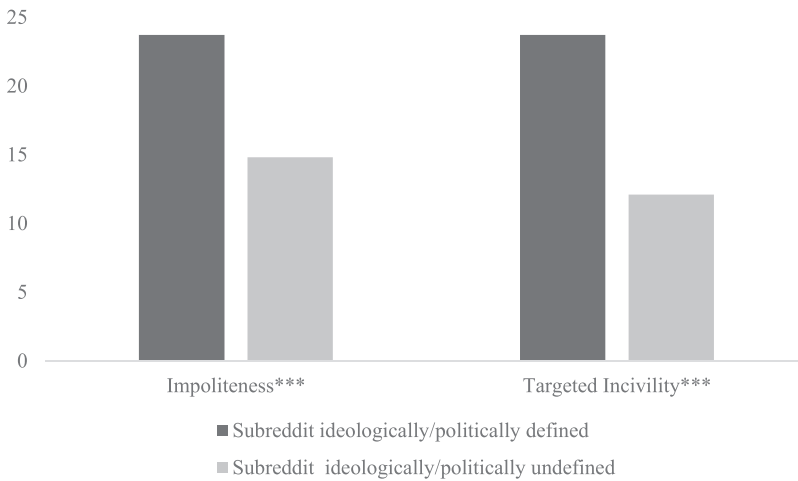


FIGURE 3 Impoliteness and targeted incivility in Reddit's posts on immigration by type of subreddit (% within type of subreddit). *N* valid (3158). Chi-square test of Independence: ****p*-value < 0.001. Incivility: $\chi^2(1, 3158) = 12.63, p = 0.000$; hate: $\chi^2(1, 3158) = 25.31, p = 0.000$.

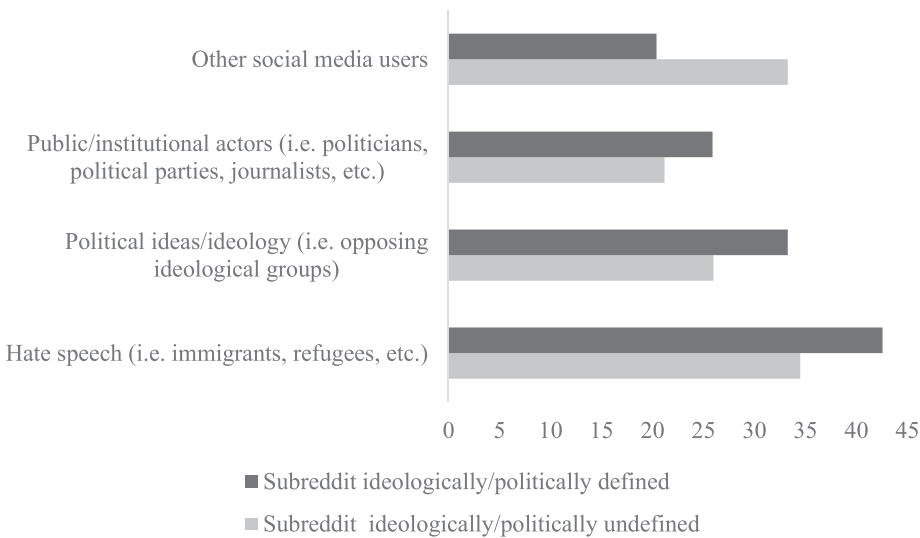


FIGURE 4 Targets by type of subreddit (% within incivility). *N* valid (408).

The targets of incivility were different in the two types of subreddits (Figure 4). The incivility directed against those groups that usually fall into the category of ‘hate speech’ (i.e. attacks based on race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, immigration status, sexual orientation and gender) was more common in subreddits with clear political/ideological identity. The same holds for political or ideological antagonism and institutional, political or public actors. Conversely, attacks, insults and threats directed towards other users involved in the discussion were more frequent in the Reddit communities without a predetermined political/ideological identity. In ideological or partisan communities, incivility tends to be targeted against minorities, opposing ideological groups or public actors and represents the expression of attitudes in an online environment in which ideas or opinions are shared with other ideologically or politically like-minded people, which favours the disinhibition of users. Although attacks directed at these targets are also present in non-ideological/non-partisan communities, it is

TABLE 1 Impoliteness and incivility by position towards immigration of the comment (% within position towards immigration).

	Position towards immigration	Against	Ambiguous/neutral	Pro
UK	Impoliteness***	13.4	8.4	21
	Incivility***	30.8	6.2	13.2
USA	Impoliteness***	32.1	15.3	28.1
	Incivility***	36.3	7.3	21.2
Total	Impoliteness***	21.4	12.1	24.1
	Incivility***	33.2	6.8	16.7

Note: Chi-square test of Independence: *** p -value < 0.001. Total position towards immigration: impoliteness: $\chi^2(2, 3158) = 60.23, p = 0.000$; incivility: $\chi^2(2, 3158) = 281.63, p = 0.000$.

TABLE 2 Impoliteness and incivility by ideological orientation of the comment (% within ideological orientation).

	Ideological orientation	Conservative	Liberal	Ambiguous/neutral
UK	Impoliteness***	13.1	24.6	9.9
	Incivility***	34.1	13.8	9.2
USA	Impoliteness***	43.1	30.1	16.7
	Incivility***	45	27.4	9.8
Total	Impoliteness***	24.6	27.2	13.4
	Incivility***	38.2	20.2	9.5

Note: Chi-square test of Independence: *** p -value < 0.001. Total ideological orientation: impoliteness: $\chi^2(2, 3158) = 51.80, p = 0.000$; incivility: $\chi^2(2, 3158) = 201.06, p = 0.000$.

proportionally similar to incivility towards other users involved in the conversation, and thus it is more diluted. This finding also reinforces the argument that disagreement can produce hostile reactions between the parties involved in a conversation. Given that discordant points of view are more likely to be found in plural settings, it would be expected that this type of acrimony ends up being less prevalent in homogeneous communities.

Although the prevalence of incivility was slightly higher in conservative subreddits (26%) than in liberal ones (20.6%), these differences are not statistically significant (chi-square test of Independence⁶). The differences found in the analysis of impoliteness were even smaller and in the opposite direction (slightly more present in liberal, 25.8%, than conservative communities, 22.8%). Rules or guidelines against hate speech and incivility did not seem to have a compelling effect on the production of this type of content, as the results were very similar independently of whether a subreddit had those rules or not, suggesting that their presence may not deter incivility and hate speech.

When the ideological orientation and position towards immigration of the comments were considered, the prevalence of incivility revealed similar patterns in the two country samples (Tables 1 and 2). Comments holding conservative positions and against immigration were more likely to contain incivility than comments with liberal positions. However, the ideological bias of impolite comments was less straightforward. These comments were more frequent among redditors posting liberal comments in the UK sample, but in the US sample they were more common among conservative comments also against immigration.

Conservative comments by redditors who were also against immigration contained more hate speech (targeted attacks against immigrants, refugees, ethnic or religious minorities, LGBT people etc.) than liberal comments. These patterns were observed both in general and in the two countries individually. Targets of incivility based on race or ethnicity (e.g. 'brown people') were mostly found in comments posted by US conservative users, but a few liberal users also attacked 'white people', whereas UK users mostly targeted religious groups, specifically Muslims. There was also incivility

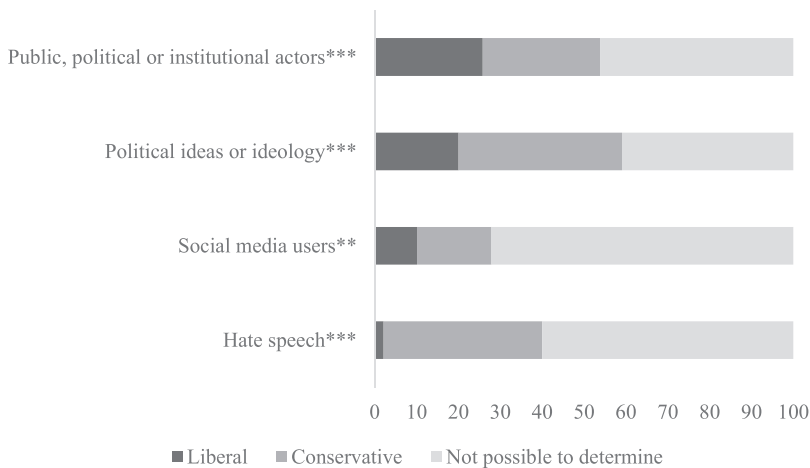


FIGURE 5 Targets by ideological orientation (% within incivility). Chi-square test of Independence: *** p -value < 0.001; ** < 0.01; * < 0.05. Public, political or institutional actors: $\chi^2(2, 408) = 22.51, p = 0.000$; political ideas or ideology: $\chi^2(2, 408) = 26.83, p = 0.000$; social media users: $\chi^2(2, 408) = 9.77, p = 0.008$; hate speech: $\chi^2(2, 408) = 29.16, p = 0.000$. Hate speech includes hate based on immigration/refugee status, nationality, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and/or gender.

targeting foreign nationalities or regions of origin, like Latin America, Pakistan, China or ‘middle eastern males’. Although among US users, comments against specific nationalities shared negative stereotypes (e.g. ‘Mexican nationals illegally cross our border, seek out sanctuary cities, steal an identity, illegally gain employment, the next step either they’re caught deported/released and the vicious cycle starts again’.) and proposed immigration policies that negatively discriminate these nationalities in favour of others from western, white and wealthy countries (somewhat echoing Trump’s ‘shithole countries’ comment), in the United Kingdom, the discourse was linked to Brexit: users against immigration were split between those advocating measures to benefit citizens of Commonwealth countries over Europeans and, especially, Eastern Europeans (e.g. ‘... Bulgarian who has never been to the UK, doesn’t speak English and knows nothing of British culture and traditions has more rights to work in the UK than a Jamaican who has family in the UK and wants to join them in the house they own. That’s not fair or just’.), and those emphasizing the race issue (e.g. ‘...the reality is the most Britons would prefer white immigration to that of African/Asian’.). Uncivil comments targeting immigrants and refugees were posted by users holding anti-immigration positions both in the United Kingdom and in the United States, often portraying migrants as criminals and threats to the prosperity and security of the country (e.g. ‘Almost all modern-day immigrants hate America’; ‘When automation takes the majority of jobs, immigration will seem like a very bad idea in hindsight, as crime will skyrocket due to the large amount of young foreign men, and the UK government will have to pay to support a larger number of people’). There were also uncivil comments, attacks and insults from liberal, pro-immigration users, mostly towards other social media users, particularly those with different political ideas, ideologies and positions on immigration, and political or institutional actors (e.g. ‘...racism and bigotry are two fundamental parts of conservatism’) (Figure 5). Incivility targeting specific politicians was slightly more prevalent in posts by liberal than conservative users (e.g. ‘[David Cameron’s] a lying pig-fucker’; ‘Boris Johnson is a London, Europhile liberal and always has been, aside how stupid he is’; ‘Priti [Patel] is an absolutely [ridiculous], hypocritical woman’; ‘... pigs like Trump of Mc[C]onell’; ‘I do not like the democratic party as is. (...) I’ve hated them my whole life. Their ‘victory’ isn’t a victory for me. Biden winning isn’t a victory to me. It’s god damn stasis *at best*’). Such patterns could be explained by the fact that both countries were led by conservative politicians that hold very restrictive positions towards immigration. These messages in the US sample targeted mainly President Donald Trump, whereas in the UK sample the

TABLE 3 Reactions to comments containing incivility (%).

Type of reaction	UK	USA
Reinforcement	36.3	37.6
Disapproval	48.8	49.7
Ignoring	14.9	12.8
Total	100	100

Note: *N* (424).

attacks from liberal redditors targeted members of the Conservative Party and right-wing voters in general.

4.2 | The escalation of incivility

Focusing on RQ2, which looked at the conversational circumstances in which incivility emerges and escalates in discussions about immigration on Reddit – the second phase of the content analysis – the results reveal some escalation effect as users' interactions progress, culminating in the reference comment (the one originally identified as containing incivility) and then gradually shifting in the reverse direction, that is, progressively decreasing the prevalence of incivility in the conversation. This suggests that redditors engaged in conversations about immigration reacted to each other's positions and sometimes these reactions triggered moments of friction which evolved into the expression of incivility. These expressions of aggression then triggered new reactions, which nevertheless gradually decreased in intensity as the conversation progressed.

The second phase of the content analysis also confirmed that the main topic of these interactions was consistently 'immigration', that is, redditors were in fact engaged in discussions about immigration and did not just mention it while discussing other issues. The prevalence of incivility in the comments preceding the reference post containing both incivility and the keyword immigration was very similar in the two types of subreddits (28.6% in ideological; 27.1% in plural), but in the comments following the original post it was slightly higher in plural subreddits (28.4%) than in the clearly defined ideological subreddits (20.3%). The prevalence of impoliteness and incivility in the interactions among users can also be seen as a means of producing meaning, as they convey information to users about what are and who has opposing views. The manner in which opposing views and conflict are communicated results in metainformation about the topic under discussion, which also contributes to constructing meaning about the topic itself.

The analysis did not find evidence suggesting that redditors interacting in clearly defined ideological communities (in which echo chamber effects are more likely to occur) react differently to incivility compared to those engaged in discussions in plural subreddits (Table 3). The most common reaction in both types of subreddits was confrontation based on disapproval, and the levels of confrontation were similar in clearly defined ideological and in plural subreddits. This suggests that seeking approval or the feeling of belonging might not be the main motivation of redditors discussing immigration with peers with similar positions, as they engage in confrontation as much as redditors in plural subreddits. It could be the case that the immigration issue is more politicized in ideological or political defined subreddits than in plural ones, leading to more heated interactions. Discussions on immigration in some plural subreddits (e.g. 'r/ukvisa') were often about recommendations for dealing with migration processes. Interestingly, when presented with a comment containing incivility, redditors mostly disapproved and disagreed with the message (United Kingdom: 48.8%; United States: 49.7%), less have reinforced it (United Kingdom: 36.3%; United States: 37.6%), and even less have disregarded those messages (United Kingdom: 14.9%; United States: 12.8%), which demonstrates that this kind

of intervention does have a meaningful impact on users' reactions and the overall tone of online conversations, although it does not seem to automatically spread.

5 | DISCUSSION

To contribute to a better understanding of the links between impoliteness, incivility, hate speech and echo chamber effects, this research studied text interactions in ideologically defined and non-ideologically defined subreddits. Specifically, we compared the prevalence of impoliteness and incivility in comments posted in two types of subreddits: those created to bring together users who share the same ideological or political affiliation, where echo chamber effects are more likely to occur, and plural subreddits without a predetermined ideological or political identity. The analysis shows that ideologically defined subreddits display higher levels of impoliteness and incivility. Additionally, we addressed the question of whether incivility is related to observable escalation effects in discussions about immigration on Reddit, finding that, although expressions of disagreement regarding such a politicized topic do often escalate to uncivil outbursts, this dynamic is not significantly different in ideologically defined and non-ideologically defined subreddits, and redditors in both types of communities are more likely to reject and confront incivility than to ignore it or reinforce it.

These findings bring some nuance to current knowledge about the relation between incivility and echo chamber effects. The higher frequency of uncivil comments on ideologically defined subreddits aligns with the prior assumption that these communities would be more likely to develop echo chamber effects due to the aggregation of like-minded people inducing disinhibition and, thus, making users more likely to use incivility to express hostility towards different ideas and outgroups (Barfar, 2019; Brown, 2018; Costello et al., 2019) or, in Rossini's words, that 'intolerance is most likely to surface in homogeneous threads – indicating that people feel more comfortable expressing extreme opinions when there is a lack of diverse expressions' (2020, p.2). Extant research also holds that these digital environments can create FCEs, the homogeneity of the opinions expressed influencing users to overestimate the amount of social consensus about their own opinions, and skewing their perception of the conversational norms they are expected to adhere to in discussions, potentially facilitating radicalization (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Luzsa & Mayr, 2019; Wojcieszak, 2008). Furthermore, the analysis reveals that the inclusion of guidelines or rules against uncivil rhetoric does not seem to have a significant effect in the presence of this type of comment, suggesting that the influence of moderation may be limited, at least on this level. However, participants in online discussions, even ones happening in ideologically homogeneous spaces, do not always tolerate incivility and, instead, sometimes act to counter and contain it, and thus self-regulate to avoid further spread of uncivil remarks.

We contribute to scholarly discussion on incivility and its effects by focusing on the concept of targeted incivility rather than adhere to legalistic definitions of hate speech, which are commonly used in similar studies. We acknowledge the relevance and usefulness of hate speech as a concept in research, as well as that its legal understanding is crucial to the enactment of policies aiming to ensure the truly universal nature of rights in democratic regimes, and we do not wish to replace or supersede it. Nevertheless, we argue that using the more capacious concept of targeted incivility allows analyses to go beyond attacks on legally protected groups, such as immigrants and ethnic, racial, religious or sexual minorities, and also take in uncivil attacks on other groups and targets, such as interlocutor redditors, politicians, political parties or journalists, among others. Thus, the concept of targeted incivility allows research to get a fuller picture of how uncivil expressions appear in and influence the flow of online discussions by taking in a wider swathe of potential targets of incivility. In fact, our analysis's results demonstrate that although attacks that would fall under the legal conceptualization of hate speech do occur in Reddit discussions, they are less frequent than other types of attacks included in our concept of targeted incivility: other redditors participating in conversations are the most frequent targets for uncivil attacks, suggesting that a significant amount of uncivil behaviour derives from disagreements expressed during conversations, especially in plural spaces. Conversely, participants in ideologically

defined subreddits often denigrate opposing political or ideological groups and specific politicians in an uncivil manner, suggesting that these spaces are, indeed, ‘characterized by selective exposure, ideological segregation, and political polarization’, as advanced by Barberá et al. (2015, pp. 1532).

Adopting the concept of targeted incivility also allows research to capture a fuller view of the ideology of uncivil Reddit comments than would be possible using a legal definition of hate speech. Previous studies have highlighted how right-wing users – especially those closer to the alt-right and who hold more extreme positions – engage in hateful rhetoric more frequently than left-wing users, which has been associated with supremacism (Costello et al., 2019) and norms associated with participation in ‘politically incorrect participatory media’ (Topinka, 2018), wherein users would be incentivized to lightly ‘cloak’ their racist views with humour. Other studies had also extensively linked right-wing extremists to the spread of hateful rhetoric online (Hanzelka & Schmidt, 2017; Koulouris, 2018; Lima et al., 2018; Zanettou et al., 2018; Costello & Hawdon, 2018), as well as to the use of strong negative language (Soliman et al., 2019) and of insults and ideologically extreme language (Su et al., 2018). However, the analysis shows that incivility is not just the province of right-wingers and extremists, as liberal redditors engage in attacks, insults and threats to other users, people with different ideologies at a similar pace, confirming previous cautions from authors such as Su et al. (2018) and Barfar (2019), namely that incivility in online political discussions cannot be solely attributed to specific political or ideological sectors while neglecting to consider the wider context wherein discussions are held. Political context is relevant, and the fact that data for this study were collected in a period wherein politicians holding restrictive stances on immigration were in power in the USA and the United Kingdom may help explain the salience of incivility from liberal users opposed to then-current restrictive migration policies.

Additionally, the contextual salience and politicization of certain issues seems to play a role in the amount of incivility present in discussions, as well as its targets. There are similar patterns to be found in the United States and British samples of Reddit posts, namely its greater frequency in ideologically defined subreddits, but differences are also informative: For instance, it is notable that Muslims are one of the main targets of attack for British redditors, portraying Islam as incompatible with British values and referring to right-wing talking points such as ‘grooming gangs’, whereas US redditors engaging in this type of rhetoric targeted other races and ethnic groups, frequently referring to white supremacist conspiracy theories such as the ‘great replacement’. These types of targets obviously fall within the legal concept of hate speech and were more prevalent among conservative and anti-immigration redditors. Additionally, the analysis shows that this incivility is intersectional in nature and, thus, that attacks frequently conflate several identities as equally undesirable or incompatible with alleged national values (i.e. Muslims and certain nationalities are associated with poverty and crime in racist discourse).

Thus, our research suggests that online interactions have the potential to escalate to incivility and contribute to instigate hostility towards different groups, that is, not only those targeted by hate speech, such as immigrants and refugees, but also other social media users, politicians and other social and political actors. Even though they can represent discursive strategies of othering or more raw, emotional reactions to online content, these dynamic interactions overall contribute to a toxic online environment and, very likely, to the normalization of online (and, potentially, offline) hateful rhetoric.

6 | LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite this work’s contributions to ongoing discussions about the causes and effects of online incivility and hateful rhetoric, it is still beset by limitations and leaves more to be done by future research. First, as argued by Chen et al. (2019), the concept of incivility is itself limited and difficult to universalize as, on the one hand, ‘nobody really agrees on what incivility is’ (2019, pp. 1) since it can be used to describe a wide range of acts, and, on the other hand, incivility is not necessarily as normatively bad as some research assumes, given that it can be used to entertain, create bonds between different people, and it can even be ‘required for groups to get their point across’ (2019, pp. 2).

Thus, research should have a nuanced view of incivility, and the concept of targeted incivility can be useful to that end, as it allows for a wider view of who engages in it and whom it can be directed to.

Time and resource constraints meant that data collection had to be restricted to a single topic and platform. Although the topic of immigration is undoubtedly salient and intensely politicized in the USA and the UK, and the analysis shows that uncivil remarks are very frequent in these Reddit discussions, the results we obtained do not necessarily tell us much about discussions of other equally salient and politicized issues or other controversial topics. The same is true for the analysis's focus on discussions on Reddit: The platform is more attractive than competitors like Facebook or Twitter for this kind of research as it affords users to post long, expressive comments in different types of online communities while not mandating they reveal their real names, favouring disinhibition. However, it is not the most used platform or the one with the greatest influence in how issues are approached and covered, so it is difficult to ascertain how representative of overall online interactions discussions on Reddit are. Finally, although the data collection strategy aimed at capturing an extensive cross-section of discussions on the platform by focusing on a relevant keyword ('immigration') and user location data, this meant that any implicit discussion of the theme was not captured, at least in the first stage of data collection.

Additionally, there are still abundant avenues for scholarly work on this topic. To begin with, it does not provide in-depth insights regarding the role of moderation. Although it does consider whether subreddits have explicit bans on incivility or hate speech, it does not investigate whether and how those bans are enacted in practice and does not analyse how moderation practices are disputed among regular users, moderators and platform administrators. This could prove to be a fruitful path for further research, for instance by shining a light into how moderators of ideologically defined subreddits deal with uncivil comments that share the community's defining worldview and those who do not. Similarly, the ways in which platforms deal with controversial content could still be further investigated. Although some research has looked into, for instance, Reddit's decision to remove some especially extreme subreddits, such as r/The_Donald (e.g. Trujillo & Cresci, 2022), the fact remains that platforms extract profits from engagement, and controversial posts are especially engaging (Massanari, 2017). Platforms thus feel concurrent pressures to adhere to governmental regulation (Alkiviadou, 2019) and thus adopt stricter guidelines relating the contents they allow (Tuters & Hagen, 2019; Wiggins, 2020), but also to allow the largest possible swathe of opinions, including uncivil and even hateful rhetoric, in order to maximize profits. How different platforms resolve this dilemma could provide interesting future research questions.

Finally, technological advances provide new and productive ways to collect and automatically analyse uncivil discourses (e.g. Jahan & Oussalah, 2023). Thus, future research could replicate this analysis relying on larger samples and new methodological approaches or could provide a more in-depth understanding of the differences between ideologically defined and plural digital spaces and thus enlighten how they encourage and produce different conversational patterns.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

PEER REVIEW

The peer review history for this article is available at <https://publons.com/publon/10.1111/issj.12536>.

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ENDNOTES

¹ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/immigration-by-country>

² <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states-2024#:~:text=Nearly%2046%20percent%20of%20all,percent%20have%20come%20since%202010.>

³ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/regions-immigrant-birth-1960-present>

⁴ <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/immigration-diversity-and-social-cohesion/>

⁵ 14 of these comments had been deleted and could not be included in the analysis.

⁶ $\chi^2(2, 228) = 0.88, p = 0.643$

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