**Results**

**Latent Class Analysis**

In the first stage of the analysis, the four indicators of involvement were entered into a Latent Class Analysis (LCA). The correlations among the four variables are relatively strong (.34 < *r* < .52, *p* < .001 for all coefficients, see Table B1 online for a full correlation matrix), indicating that they may be empirical manifestations of a common underlying construct—that is, they arise from related dimensions of involvement with the news and political information. To establish the best number of latent classes, we compared the fit statistics for models ranging from 2 to 5 classes, using the BIC as the primary criterion for model selection (lower BIC indicates better model fit). The BIC is generally better than *G*2 or χ2 for establishing model fit, as these statistics almost always decrease when the number of classes increases, regardless of concern for overfitting. Additionally, the BIC typically outperforms the AIC for model selection, as it presents a stronger penalty for adding parameters (i.e., classes). Based on these considerations, we selected the model with the lowest BIC, which has 3 latest classes (see Table B2 online).

The first latent class, which we have labeled the *low-involvement group* is the biggest of the three classes (n = 968), making up 48% of the sample and has a predicted probability of group membership of ~.49. On average, individuals in this group do not view social media as a news source, the have medium levels of self-reported interest in news and politics, they do not frequently follow accounts for news or political information, and Facebook’s algorithm has not classified them as interested in news or politics (see Figure 1 for within-group sample distributions on the four manifest variables). The second group, which we have termed the *medium-involvement group* is the next largest (*n* = 788), comprising 38% of the sample with a predicted probability of class membership of .39. This group has roughly equal numbers of individuals who do and do not view social media as a news source, as well as an even split for Facebook’s classification algorithm. The typical group member also has above average self-reported interest in the news and politics, as well as above-average frequency of following accounts for news or political information. The third group, which we call the *high-involvement group* is the smallest (*n* = 252), as it makes up only 15% of sample and has a ~.13% predicted probability of membership. The typical individual in this group views social media as news source; reports high levels of interest in news and politics, frequently follows accounts for news or politics, and has been classified as interested in news or politics by Facebook’s algorithm.

Thus, the three groups are arrayed in roughly linear fashion—from low involvement to high involvement—based on covariation in the four manifest variables. With these results in hand, we extracted the grouping (i.e., class) variable from the LCA model for use in subsequent regression analyses.

**Regression Analyses: Exposure**

If incidental exposure closes gaps in overall news exposure, we should expect to observe (1) higher incidental exposure in the low- and medium-involvement groups than in the high-involvement group *and* (2) roughly equal amounts of overall exposure among the groups. In the second phase of the analysis, we test these criteria using multi-level modeling (MLM). This approach allows us to estimate differences between the involvement groups while controlling for measurement invariance introduced by the data structure—that is, the data were collected in 17 sampling frames, and therefore the analysis accounts for this structure by including random intercepts for each sampling frame. Weighted linear models are used for the trait-like variables, reflecting their interval-like properties, while quasibinomial (i.e., Poisson) models are used for the state-like variables, which are appropriate for weighted binomial outcomes. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 1.

The first model in the table tests the trait-like incidental exposure outcome variable. Results show that respondents in the low- and medium-involvement groups report roughly equal amounts of incidental exposure, and both of these groups report more than high-involvement group. This pattern is visualized in Figure 2, and evidence comes from the regression coefficients related to the contrasts between the groups. The contrast coefficient for the high-involvement group is statistically significant (β = -1.07, *SE* = 0.09, *p* < .001), indicating that the adjusted mean of incidental exposure in this group is significantly lower than in the low-involvement group. Meanwhile, the contrast coefficient for the medium-involvement group is not statistically significant (β = -0.09, *SE* = 0.06, *p* = .11).

The second model in the table tests the state-like indicator of incidental exposure, and results show that the medium-involvement group reports the highest levels of incidental exposure. The low- and high-involvement groups are roughly equal. Once again, this pattern can be observed in Figure 2, and key evidence comes from the contrast effects. The coefficient for the medium-involvement group is statistically significant (β = 0.34, 0.12, *p* < .01), while the coefficient for the high-involvement group is not (β = 0.22, *SE* = 0.21, *p* = .32).

The third model tests the trait-like indicator for overall exposure, and results show that the groups are arrayed in a roughly linear fashion, although the high- and medium-involvement groups are not statistically different from one another. The low-involvement group is less likely to have been exposed than either of the other groups (see Figure 2). For the medium-involvement group, contrast coefficient is β = 0.29 (*SE* = 0.06, *p* < .001), and for the high-involvement group it is β = 0.44 (*SE* = 0.09, *p* < .001).

The last model in the table tests the state-like variable for overall exposure, that is, exposure to the story shown in the stimulus. Results show essentially the same pattern as for the trait-like variable (see Figure 2). The high- and medium-involvement groups are statistically equivalent, while the low-involvement groups was less likely to report exposure than either. The contrast for the medium-involvement group is β = 0.52, *SE* = 0.10, *p* < .001), and for the high-involvement group it is β = 0.58, *SE* = 0.15, *p* < .001).

Putting these results together, we can draw two different conclusions for the low- and medium-involvement groups. For the former, results show some evidence that meets the first criterion (i.e., more incidental exposure), but not the second criterion (equality in total exposure). For the medium-involvement group, results show evidence that meets both criteria. In this group, we see both more incidental exposure than in the high-involvement group and equal amounts of total exposure as that group. Thus, evidence suggests that incidental exposure may close the exposure gap among people who are moderately involved with the news, but not among people who are largely uninvolved with the news.

**Regression Analyses: Engagement**

If incidental exposure closes gaps in *engagement* with the news, we be able to observe an interaction between incidental exposure and involvement, wherein the effect of incidental exposure is stronger among lower involvement groups and weaker in the high-involvement group. We test that interaction using MLM (weighted linear; random intercepts) to analyze two outcomes: overall engagement and high-effort engagement. Results are reported in Table 2.

For overall engagement, the smallest gap between those reporting incidental versus purposeful exposure are observed in the medium-involvement group, resulting in a statistically significant interaction coefficient for the medium group (β = -0.71, *SE* = 0.34, *p* < .05). The gap in the high- and low-involvement groups are broadly similar and not statistically different from one another (β = -0.39, *SE* = 0.41, *p* =.34). This patterns are visualized in Figure 3. Meanwhile, for high-effort engagement, there are no significant differences in gaps between those reporting incidental versus purposeful exposure (contrast for the medium-involvement group is β = 0.31, *SE* = 0.22, *p* = .17; contrast for the high-involvement group is β = -0.11, *SE* = 0.27, *p* = .67). This pattern is shown in Figure 4.

Taken together, these results provide limited evidence that incidental exposure closes engagement gaps, particularly for the low-involvement group. On the other hand, there is some evidence that it may close gaps for the medium-involvement group.