**Methods**

**Sample and Data**

text

**Measures**

***Exposure and Engagement***

Prior literature suggests that news exposure has both ‘trait-like’ and ‘state-like’ properties (Weeks & Lane, 2020), and we included both kinds of indicators in our study. On the trait-like side, *total exposure* to political information was measured with six questionnaire items asking respondents how often in the past week they have encountered the following types of information (0 = *Never* and 4 = *Several times a day*): information critical of a candidate they support; information critical of a candidate they oppose; information supportive of a candidate they support; information supportive of a candidate they oppose; information that disagrees with their political views; and information that agrees with their political views (c.f., LANE). These items were averaged for each respondent, and the resulting scale (Cronbach’s alpha = .XX) has a mean of 1.8 (*SD* = 1.3).

Prior literature suggests it is important to specifically clarify whether exposure was incidental (CITE). Therefore, immediately after answering this battery of questions, respondents were asked a follow up question: “On social media, some people intentionally search for news or political information, but others come across such information accidentally. What about you?” (0 = *Always intentionally* and 4 = *Always accidentally*). To create a measure of *incidental exposure*, this item was multiplied by the total exposure scale, and then the square root was calculated to maintain the original 5-point scale. The variable has a mean of 1.5 (*SD* = 1.1).

The state-like measures centered on the embedded story stimuli, and this measurement strategy was borrowed from prior literature (CITE). Respondents were shown a screenshot of a story headline and header image scrubbed of organizational logos that may have cued partisan information processing, and then told that the story “has been circulating on Facebook recently” (a true statement, see above for details). They were asked whether they had seen the story on Facebook. A follow-up question asked whether they had seen it on some other social media platform, and answers to these two items were recoded so that 1 = *Exposed* and 0 = *Not exposed*. Approximately 42% of the sample reported *story exposure*.

Those respondents who reported exposure were asked a series of additional follow-up questions, from which our measures of *incidental exposure* and *engagement* are created. First, this subset of respondents was asked: “When you say the story, were you purposefully seeking information on this topic?” (1 = *Yes* and 0 = *No*; 54% of subset and 23% of full sample said yes). Next, they were asked: “When you say the story, did you engage in any of the following activities?” (1 = *Yes* and 0 = *No*): click on the story; scan the headline of the story; read the entire story; seek out additional information about the topic; comment on the post; discuss the story; and share the story. Responses were summed for each respondent (Cronbach’s alpha = .XX; *Min*. = 0 and *Max*. = 7), and the variable has a mean of 3.5 (*SD* = 2.2). Additionally, a *high-effort engagement* variable was created to isolate those activities that relatively higher amounts of cognitive or behavioral effort, including information seeking, commenting, discussing, and sharing (Cronbach’s alpha = .XX; *Min*. = 0, *Max*. = 4, *M* = 1.5, *SD* = 1.5).

**Involvement**

a. Social media as news source: Which best describes reason for accessing social media accounts; follow news & public affairs information; reasons unrelated to following news & public affairs information; I don’t think very much about why; three-level recoded as binary, 35% yes

b. Interest: 3 items; how interested in news, politics, local comm; scale 1=not at all interested-5=very interested, M = 3.5, SD = 1.0

c. News follows: 3 items how often do you follow account because interested in what they post about news or current affairs, politics, community events, scale 1-5, M = 2.7, SD = 1.2

d. Algorithmic categorization: Navigate to ad interests, tell us whether politics, news or specific news orgs; three level recoded as binary; 41% yes

C. Covariates

1. Network size: How many people or accounts friends with or follow on social media; six items correspond to sites; summed items; logged scale 0-1.9, M = 0.7, SD = 0.5

2. Network diversity: occupations list, prior literature, 22 items scale 0 = no-1 = yes, averaged items; M = 0.3, SD = 0.3

3. Group activity: 8 items correspond to different types of groups, discuss news or related topics, past month on Facebook; binary measure summed; logged scale 0-2.1, M = 0.5, SD = 0.6

4. Social news curation: 5 items, how much of friends posts about topics: election, politics or current affairs, social or community issues, racial or social justice issues, COvID; scale 1 = none at all-5 = almost all, averaged items; M = 2.9, SD = 1.1

D. Controls

1. Age: scale 1=18-24-7=85 or older, M = 3.0, SD = 1.6

2. Gender: 51%

3. Race: 40%

4. education: scale 1=some high school-7=post-graduate degree, M = 4.5, SD = 1.8

5. Income: scale 1=Less than $15,000-8=more than $150,000, M = 4.7, SD = 2.3

6. Ideology: 11-point scale LR scale -5=very liberal-5=very conservative, M = 0.2, SD = 3.0

7. Party Id: 3 items ANES, id (generally speaking), strength (how strong), lean (closer to …), scale -3=strong dem-3=strong rep, M = -0.3, SD = 2.0

8. Frequency of social media use: single item, prior literature, average time per day actively using social media (list) scale 1 = less than 10 minutes-6 = more than three hours, M = 3.5, SD = 1.6

III. Analysis

A. LCA

B. MLM

C. MLM

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| Table 1  *Group Differences in Incidental Exposure and Total/Story Exposure among the Involvement Groups* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Incidental Exposure | | | | | | Total Exposure | | | Story Exposure | | |
|  | Trait-Like Variable | | | State-Like Variable | | | Trait-Like Variable | | | State-Like Variable | | |
| **Fixed Effects** | β | | *SE* | β | | *SE* | β | | *SE* | β | | *SE* |
| Intercept | -0.15 | | 0.11 | -2.44\*\*\* | | 0.26 | -0.34\*\* | | 0.12 | -2.06\*\*\* | | 0.21 |
| Involvement (Medium:Low) | -0.09 | | 0.06 | 0.34\*\* | | 0.12 | 0.29\*\*\* | | 0.06 | 0.52\*\*\* | | 0.10 |
| Involvement (High:Low) | -1.07\*\*\* | | 0.09 | 0.22 | | 0.21 | 0.44\*\*\* | | 0.09 | 0.58\*\*\* | | 0.15 |
| Age | -0.07\*\*\* | | 0.02 | 0.09 | | 0.04 | 0.08\*\*\* | | 0.02 | 0.00 | | 0.03 |
| Gender (1 = Female) | 0.03 | | 0.05 | -0.16 | | 0.10 | -0.07 | | 0.04 | -0.23\*\* | | 0.08 |
| Race (1 = Person of Color) | -0.13\*\* | | 0.05 | -0.08 | | 0.10 | -0.20\*\*\* | | 0.04 | -0.01 | | 0.02 |
| Education | 0.05\*\* | | 0.02 | 0.00 | | 0.03 | 0.04\*\* | | 0.01 | 0.02 | | 0.02 |
| Income | 0.00 | | 0.01 | -0.04 | | 0.03 | 0.00 | | 0.01 | -0.03 | | 0.02 |
| Ideology (+ Conservative) | -0.03\*\* | | 0.01 | -0.02 | | 0.02 | -0.02\*\* | | 0.01 | 0.01 | | 0.01 |
| Party Identity (+ Republican) | 0.05\*\*\* | | 0.01 | 0.01 | | 0.03 | 0.04\*\*\* | | 0.01 | -0.00 | | 0.01 |
| Frequency of Social Media Use | 0.06\*\*\* | | 0.01 | 0.06 | | 0.03 | 0.05\*\*\* | | 0.01 | -0.01 | | 0.02 |
| Network Size | -0.19\*\*\* | | 0.07 | -0.14 | | 0.15 | 0.22\*\*\* | | 0.07 | 0.16 | | 0.11 |
| Network Diversity | 0.19 | | 0.10 | -0.03 | | 0.22 | 0.22\* | | 0.10 | 0.33\* | | 0.15 |
| Group Activity | 0.22\*\*\* | | 0.05 | 0.07 | | 0.10 | 0.24\*\*\* | | 0.04 | 0.09 | | 0.07 |
| Social News Curation | 0.41\*\*\* | | 0.03 | 0.07 | | 0.06 | 0.48\*\*\* | | 0.03 | 0.22\*\*\* | | 0.05 |
| Incidental Exposure (Trait-Like) |  | |  | 0.25\*\*\* | | 0.05 |  | |  | 0.02 | | 0.04 |
| **Random Effects** | *Var.* | | *SD* | *Var.* | | *SD* | *Var.* | | *SD* | *Var.* | | *SD* |
| InterceptFrame | 0.01 | | 0.08 | 0.04 | | 0.20 | 0.01 | | 0.10 | 0.04 | | 0.20 |
| Residual | 0.95 | | 0.98 | 1.96 | | 1.40 | 0.86 | | 0.93 | 1.29 | | 1.14 |
| **Fit Statistics** |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |  |  | |
| ICC | .01 | | | .02 | | | .01 | | | .03 | | |
| LL | -3,076.72 | | | -1,045.05 | | | -2,975.84 | | | -1,340.59 | | |
| Pseudo-*R*2 | .21 | | | .12 | | | .51 | | | .12 | | |
| *Note*: Cell entries are parameter estimates from multilevel models with random intercepts. Linear models are used for trait-like variables, and quasi-binomial models are used for state-like variables. Data are weighted by education and income. *N* = 2,008. Groups = 17. | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| Table 2  *Conditional Effects of Incidental Exposure on Story Engagement* | | | |  |  | |
|  | Engagement | | High-Effort Engagement | | | | |
| **Fixed Effects** | β | *SE* | β | | | *SE* | |
| Intercept | 2.65\*\*\* | 0.42 | 1.21\*\*\* | | | 0.27 | |
| Incidental Exposure (Trait-Like) | -0.14\*\*\* | 0.06 | -0.10\*\* | | | 0.04 | |
| Incidental Exposure (State-Like) | -2.06\*\*\* | 0.31 | -1.16\*\*\* | | | 0.20 | |
| Involvement (Medium:Low) | 0.11\* | 0.72 | -0.10 | | | 0.20 | |
| Involvement (High:Low) | -0.50 | 0.35 | 0.31 | | | 0.23 | |
| Age | 0.01 | 0.05 | -0.03 | | | 0.03 | |
| Gender (1 = Female) | -0.28\* | 0.12 | -0.20\* | | | 0.08 | |
| Race (1 = Person of Color) | 0.25\*\*\* | 0.13 | 0.07 | | | 0.08 | |
| Education | -0.02 | 0.04 | -0.03 | | | 0.03 | |
| Income | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.01 | | | 0.02 | |
| Ideology (+ Conservative) | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.03\* | | | 0.01 | |
| Party Identity (+ Republican) | -0.06 | 0.03 | -0.04\* | | | 0.02 | |
| Frequency of Social Media Use | 0.00 | 0.04 | 0.01 | | | 0.03 | |
| Network Size | 0.19 | 0.17 | 0.27\* | | | 0.11 | |
| Network Diversity | 0.68\*\* | 0.24 | 0.38\* | | | 0.16 | |
| Group Activity | 0.24\* | 0.10 | 0.20\*\* | | | 0.07 | |
| Social News Curation | 0.36\*\*\* | 0.08 | 0.19\*\*\* | | | 0.06 | |
| **Interactions** |  |  |  | | |  | |
| Incidental Exposure (State-Like) x Involvement (Medium:Low) | -0.71\* | 0.34 | 0.30 | | | 0.22 | |
| Incidental Exposure (State-Like) x Involvement (High:Low) | -0.38 | 0.41 | -0.12 | | | 0.27 | |
| **Random Effects** | *Var*. | *SD* | *Var*. | | | *SD* | |
| InterceptFrame | 0.02 | 0.21 | 0.02 | | | 0.13 | |
| Residual | 2.67 | 1.51 | 1.15 | | | 1.07 | |
| **Fit Statistics** |  |  |  | | |  | |
| ICC | .01 | | .02 | | | | |
| LL | -1,613.46 | | -1285.40 | | | | |
| Pseudo-*R*2 | .46 | | 0.47 | | | | |
| *Note*: Cell entries are parameter estimates from a multilevel model with random intercepts. Data are weighted by education and income. Analysis uses subset of respondents who report exposure to story. *N* = 842. Groups = 17. | | | | |  | |

Figure 1

*Differences among involvement groups in news exposure.*

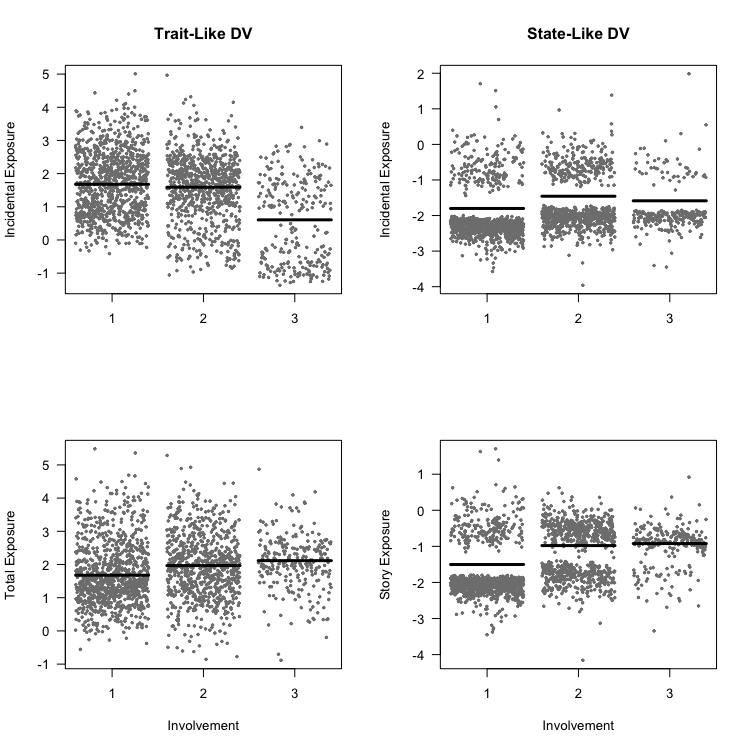
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Figure 2

*Differences between incidentally and purposefully exposed in news engagement by level of involvement.*

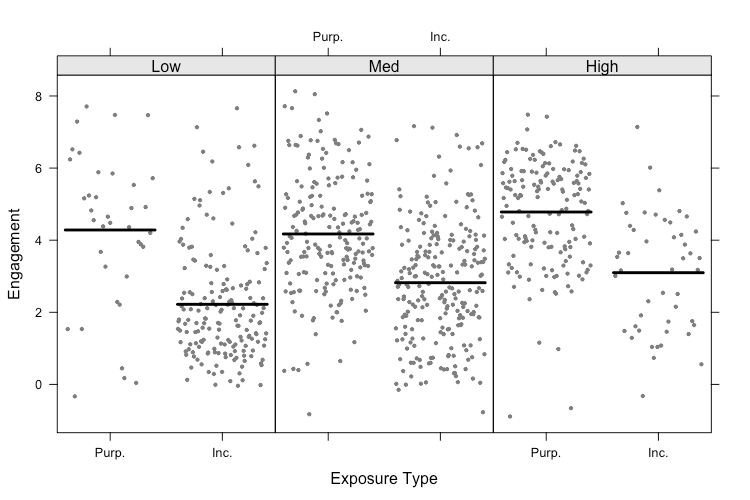
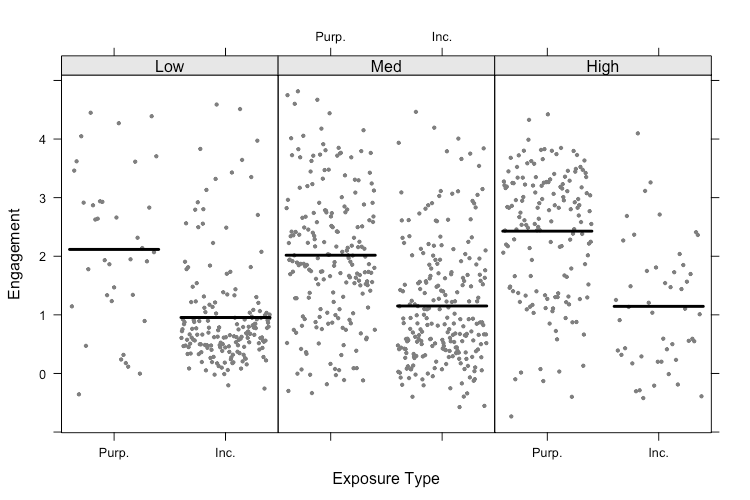


Figure 3

*Differences between incidentally and purposefully exposed in news engagement by level of involvement.*



Appendices

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table A1  *Correlations Among Variables Used in Latent Class Analysis* | | | | |
| Variable | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. |
| 1. Social Media as News Source (1 = Yes) | 1.00 |  |  |  |
| 2. Self-Reported Interest | .34 | 1.00 |  |  |
| 3. Follow Accounts for News | .52 | .50 | 1.00 |  |
| 4. Algorithmic Categorization (1 = Interested) | .36 | .34 | .46 | 1.00 |
| *Note*: Cell entries are Pearson’s correlation coefficients (*r*). *N* = 2,008 | | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table A2  *Model Fit Statistics for Models with Varying Number of Latent Classes* | | | | |
| Model | AIC | BIC | *G*2 | χ2 |
| 2 Classes | 16,036.27 | 16,153.98 | 398.90 | 409.10 |
| **3 Classes** | **15,810.00** | **15,989.35** | **150.63** | **149.52** |
| 4 Classes | 15,759.35 | 16,000.36 | 77.98 | 82.96 |
| 5 Classes | 15,758.16 | 16,060.83 | 54.79 | 53.95 |
| *Note*: BIC was the primary criterion for model selection. *N* = 2,008. | | | | |

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| Table A3  *Predicted and Observed Latent Class Membership* | | |
| Latent Class | Predicted | Observed | |
| 1: Low Involvement (*n* = 968) | .48 | .48 | |
| 2: Medium Involvement (*n* = 788) | .39 | .38 | |
| 3: High Involvement (*n* = 252) | .13 | .15 | |
| *Note*: Cell entries are predicted probabilities and observed proportions obtained from a latent class analysis (LCA) model. Column totals may not equal 1 due to rounding. *N* = 2,008. | | |

Figure A1

*Group Distributions on Manifest Variables from Latent Class Analysis*

