

Supplementary Appendix

Appendix 1. Verbal probes

The following verbal probes were used in all interviews, typically in the order presented below:

- You said you [talked/used media] for [the time respondent provided] yesterday. Since we obviously don't usually time ourselves when we do these activities, how did you come up with this particular number?
 - [When all responses were 0 hours, 0 minutes]. Can you remember the last time you [talked/used media] and how long was that? [Then ask above question]
 - Since it isn't usually possible to report an exact time you spent doing these things, I know you are probably unsure about the time you gave. If you could give me a range of times, where the lowest number is the definite minimum time you spent [talking/using media] and the highest number is the definite maximum time you spent [talking/using media], what would that be?
- You said you spoke with people who [support Republicans/support Democrats/do not support either party]. Can you explain how you determined that this person or these people fall into that category?
 - [If hadn't talked to one of the categories] Can you remember the last time you talked to someone who [supports Republicans/supports Democrats/does not support either party]? [If yes, ask question above]
- You said you saw/read/listened to media that [tend to support Republicans/support Democrats/do not support either party]. Can you explain how you determined that the sources fall into that category?

- [If hadn't used source from one of the categories] Can you remember the last time you saw/read/listened to a source that [supports Republicans/supports Democrats/does not support either party]? [If yes, ask question above]
- [If talked to anyone] When you talked to people about news or politics yesterday, was that in person, on the phone, online, or what?
- Do you use any social media sites or apps?
 - [For each] Do you ever see/talk about/hear about content about news and politics on there?
 - [For Facebook and Twitter, if used] If you see someone post about politics and it is not addressed directly to you, do you consider that talking for question 1 or more appropriate for question 2? And what if you respond, does that change the way you would categorize that time?
- You do not need to share any information you consider private, but can you tell me about what some of the subject matter was when you [talked/used media]?

Appendix 2. Initial item wordings

- 1) **Yesterday**, how much did you talk (online or offline) about politics or news with people who...
 - a) Are Republicans, support Republicans, or have a conservative point of view
 - b) Are Democrats, support Democrats, or have a liberal point of view
 - c) Do not support Republicans or Democrats and do not have a particularly conservative or liberal point of view

(Response choices: Open-ended numeric response in hours and minutes)

- 2) **Yesterday**, how much time did you spend reading/watching/listening to the news or politics content from the following types of sources, including articles and videos you've seen on social media:
- a) Sources that do not tend to favor one political party or ideology over another. Examples are *USA Today*, *Politico*, *Yahoo! News*.
 - b) Sources that tend to favor the Republican party or conservative viewpoints. Examples include *FOX News*, *Breitbart News*, *The Daily Wire/Ben Shapiro*.
 - c) Sources that tend to favor the Democratic party or liberal viewpoints. Examples include *MSNBC*, *Huffington Post*, *Mother Jones*.
- (Response choices: Open-ended numeric response in hours and minutes)

Appendix 3. Intensive longitudinal study details

This intensive longitudinal study was conducted primarily for another purpose but is discussed here for the purpose of providing validity evidence to the measurements under study. Participants were required to be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years old to ensure that they have sufficient stake in the U.S. political system and most institutional forms of participation available to them. At first, interested respondents took an introductory survey that is approximately 10 minutes long. After the first survey, participants filled out an approximately 2- to 3-minute survey that included the measures of political communication each day for 20 days. Participants received encouragement to complete surveys each day regardless of whether they responded on the previous day or any number of previous days. Participants were compensated with course credit through the department's research participation program; the amount of credit was based on the amount of participation.

Data collection began on January 30th, 2020 and the final responses were collected on April 17th, 2020. Participants could begin at any time during the ongoing semester as long as

there were enough days remaining to receive 20 daily surveys. The surveys were programmed and distributed via “formr,” a survey design and distribution framework created to accommodate complex designs like this one (Arslan et al., 2019). formr hosted the questionnaires on the web — with access restricted by personalized links that were sent via email and text message — and automated the process of re-sending questionnaires at pre-specified intervals. After taking the introductory survey, respondents were sent an email each day at 8:00 AM containing a link to that day’s daily survey along with an update on their current progress in the study (how many days they have participated, how many remain, and the number of credits earned). Demographic information collected includes age ($M = 21.34$, $SD = 3.55$), race and ethnicity (83% white, 12% Black, 5% Asian, 5% Hispanic, 1% Middle Eastern/North African in a measure that allowed for multiple selections), and gender (73% women). Respondents were also asked if they had ever voted in an election in the United States; 56% said they had. The sample consisted of 69% Democrats and 31% Republicans (including those who stated they “lean” towards one or the other party).

Besides the focal measures of communication described in the main document, on each of the daily surveys, partisan strength was measured by items adapted from the partisan identity scale developed by Huddy and colleagues (2015; Bankert et al., 2017) . Unlike the validation studies for this measure, I ensure that respondents receive measures for the same identity throughout the entirety of the study, a decision more justifiable given the short duration. To reduce memory effects as well as the length of the questionnaire, only a random subset of the items for the identity strength questionnaire was administered each day. This is a form of planned missingness, a procedure designed to reduce respondent burden and in my case increase validity in narrowly-spaced repeated measurements (Silvia et al., 2014). Because the individual

items vary significantly in their means and to reduce measurement error, the responses were combined into a single response score using a graded response model, a type of item response theory model. The use of IRT models is also recommended by the creators of the measurement for those reasons. The graded response model is also inherently able to deal with the planned missingness in the scale. The scale scores are approximately centered at 0 with unit variance ($M = -0.02$, $SD = 0.99$).

To get a more detailed sense of communication behaviors, the initial survey also asked about *typical* behaviors. Asked about how many different people they had talked about news or politics with in the past month, the typical respondent said about 5 of them ($M = 7.52$, $SD = 8.64$, $Median = 5.00$). Of those people, respondents estimated that 61% were supporters of the same party, 25% were supporters of the other major party, and 12% did not support a major party. Asked how many days in a typical week they talk about news or politics, respondents said on average just under 3 days ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.96$). This is relatively close to the observed proportion of days in which respondents recall having discussions in the daily measures (on average 48% of days, i.e. 3.36 days per week).

Appendix 4. Question wordings for variables used in validity checks

In the first questionnaire only:

1. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a...
 - a. Republican
 - b. Democrat
 - c. Independent
 - d. Something else
2. [If not a. or b. in Q1] Do you generally think of yourself as a little closer to the Republicans or Democrats?
 - a. Closer to Republicans
 - b. Closer to Democrats

On both the first and subsequent questionnaires:

3. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements. Response choices are Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Disagree Somewhat, Agree Somewhat, Agree, Strongly Agree
 - a. If I talk about [Republicans/Democrats] today, I would say “we” instead of “they.”
 - b. I am interested in what other people think about [Republicans/Democrats].
 - c. If someone criticizes [Republicans/Democrats], it would feel like a personal insult.
 - d. I have a lot in common with supporters of [Republicans/Democrats].
 - e. If [Republicans/Democrats] do badly in a new opinion poll, it will ruin my day.
 - f. If I meet someone who supports [Republicans/Democrats], I will feel connected with that person.
 - g. If I talk about [Republicans/Democrats] today, I will refer to them as “my party.”
 - h. If someone praises [Republicans/Democrats], it will make me feel good.

Note: The above items are based on the scale validation study by Bankert and colleagues (2017).

4. We’d like you to rate each of these parties/people using something called a “feeling thermometer”. You can choose any number between 0 and 100 by tapping or clicking on the line below. The higher the number, the warmer or more favorable you feel toward the person or group; the lower the number, the colder or less favorable. If you feel neither warm nor cold toward them, place the mark at 50.
 - a. Republicans
 - b. Democrats

Included only in the first survey:

1. How often do you pay attention to what’s going on in government and politics?
 - a. Always
 - b. Most of the time
 - c. About half the time
 - d. Some of the time
 - e. Never

2. In a typical week, how many days do you talk with someone about politics or news, either online or offline?
3. In the past month, about how many different people have you talked with about politics or news, online or offline?
4. Of those people, about what percentage do you think identify with or generally support...
 - a. Republicans
 - b. Democrats
 - c. Another party or no party

Appendix References

- Arslan, R. C., Walther, M. P., & Tata, C. S. (2019). formr: A study framework allowing for automated feedback generation and complex longitudinal experience-sampling studies using R. *Behavior Research Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-019-01236-y>
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