

“Yes, I saw it – but didn’t read it...” A cross-country study, exploring relationships between  
incidental news exposure and news use across platforms

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### Abstract

Today, people are increasingly exposed to news on various channels without actively seeking it. However, less is known about the link between the so-called incidental news exposure (INE) and actual news consumption. Using a two-wave panel data set from 18 countries around the world, we study the so-far under researched relation between INE and news consumption across various platforms over time. In doing so, we control for key micro-level variables such as news use, political interest and trust in media as well as macro-level variables, including internet connectivity, GDP, press freedom and literacy rate. The analyses yield an optimistic picture, showing that INE plays a bridging function across countries, leading to actual news consumption on traditional, online and social media platforms. However, trust in news and political interest do not seem to play key moderating roles. Instead, individual analyses per country imply that the link between INE and actual news use is more apparent for online and social media news platforms, and particularly in countries where general social media usage has been reported to be considerably high (e.g., Brazil, Philippines, Taiwan, UK and USA).

**Keywords:** incidental news exposure, news use, social media, trust in news, political interest

“Yes, I saw it – but didn’t read it...” A cross-country study, exploring relationships between incidental news exposure and news use across platforms in 19 countries

In today’s high-choice media environment (Aalberg, Blekesaune and Elvestad, 2013; Prior, 2007), people are constantly exposed to news—be it intentionally or not (Hermida, 2016). While checking one’s social media feeds, surfing on the net, watching TV or simply listening to the radio; news exposure has become ubiquitous in people’s digital lives (Hermida, 2016; Sheller, 2015). While in the past, consuming news has involved a conscious decision, such as buying the daily newspaper, tuning in to the radio or TV program, or subscribing to a news magazine; today, news is constantly available for us and is an accompanying phenomenon in our everyday activities, both online and offline.

More recently, data has shown that people around the world are increasingly exposed to news first through social media (Newman et al., 2019). In America, for example, social media has surpassed print news as people’s platform choice to get news for the first time (Shearer, 2018). In both the UK and the United States, the majority of people under the age of 35 use social media to pick up news first (Newman et al., 2019). Even stronger trends have been observed around the world. 66% of Brazilians use social media as a source of news and the same is true for 45% of people in the UK; in comparison, 31% of the respondents in Germany stated they seek news via social media (Newman et al., 2018). However, the question that remains is: Are people who get incidentally exposed to snippets of news (e.g., via social media) also more likely to actively read up on news? If so, to what extent does incidental news exposure lead to active news consumption on various platforms (either traditional, online, or social media)?

It can be argued that the plentitude of news snacking (Molyneux, 2018) and topics that people encounter in their everyday lives might lead people to consume more in-depth information by actively seeking traditional, online or social media news. However, it can also be contended that the sheer amount of news and information that is nowadays available across

various platforms might lead people to feel “overloaded” (Nordensen, 2008), even resulting in a lack of active news consumption (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga, Weeks and Ardèvol-Abreu, 2017).

Hence, whether serendipitous exposure actually motivates people to read up on the news snippets might very much depends on the extent to which people are interested in news about politics and public affairs and whether they trust the news media. More importantly, this link might also be contingent on various cultural, political, media and structural differences across countries.

Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify whether there is a relationship between incidental news exposure (INE) and news consumption across various platforms; and, furthermore, to what extent this relation depends on individuals’ interest in politics and trust in news. To find answers to these questions, we employ a cross-country approach to study whether the relationship between INE and active news consumption varies across societies. To do so, we use data from a two-wave survey among 18 countries, controlling for macro-variables such as GDP, press freedom, internet connectivity and literacy rate. Whereas previous research has focused on democratic outcomes variables as a result of INE (e.g., polarization: Heiss and Matthes, 2019; participation: Valeriani and Vaccari, 2016; attention/knowledge: Feezell, 2018; Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2018), our findings contribute to a better understanding of the effects of INE on active news use behavior—a decisive factor for overall democratic behavior (Habermas, 1989; Schudson, 1998).

### **Incidental News Exposure, Democratic Behavior and Its Missing Link**

Societal and academic interest in incidental news exposure (INE) has vigorously picked up since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the proliferation of the world wide web (Tewksbury, Weaver and Maddex, 2001) and social media around the world (e.g., Boczkowski, Mitchelstein and Matassi, 2018; Feezell, 2018; Fletcher and Nielsen, 2018; Karnowski et al., 2017). With their seminal study, Tewksbury et al. (2001) did not only define what scholars in communication science today broadly understand under INE, namely “that

people encounter current affairs information when they had not been actively seeking it” (p. 534), they have also shown that INE is positively related with awareness to current affairs information (see also Feezell, 2018). However, awareness to particular issues merely means “having heard/seen” the information that comes coming by through various channels. But the more pressing question is, ~~however~~, whether citizens are actively reading the news through due to INE, thereby becoming better equipped to actively participate in democracies.

A range of studies has shown in the past that INE is, in fact, positively related with political participation online and offline (Kim, Chen and Gil de Zúñiga, 2013; Valeriani and Vaccari, 2016). Although these studies are indicative in explaining how today’s fast-paced and pervasive news media environment might lead to better informed and more politically engaged citizens, the implications of the results are limited. First, some of the studies fail to account for causal effects (e.g., Valeriani and Vaccari, 2016; Kim et al., 2013), are only focused on the U.S. (Kim et al., 2013) or student samples (e.g., Feezell, 2018) and, more importantly, fail to consider the assumed timely mechanism between INE and political behavior outcomes and its crucial link, namely actual news use.

Despite the fact that some of the studies (Valeriani and Vaccari, 2016; Kim et al., 2013) control for news use in the regression analyses, the cross-sectional datasets as well as the experiments (e.g., Feezell, 2018) do not allow to follow the logical argumentations made by the authors of the studies. According to the scholars, INE leads to more information acquisition, and in turn, to increased levels of political participation or political knowledge gain. However, most of the studies only test the direct and indirect positive relationship between INE and diverse political outcomes (e.g., participation or knowledge), but information consumption as a result of INE has not been explicitly measured or tested so far (see for an exception: Fletcher and Nielsen, 2018). Hence, the purpose of this paper is to shed light on whether the assumed primary causal relationship between INE and news consumption exists.

### **Incidental News Exposure and Active News Use**

With the emergence of possibilities to consume news online and via social media, the way people perceive the availability of news and the need of staying informed has changed. While Oeldorf-Hirsch (2018) warns that “individuals may be moving to an increasingly passive exposure to information” (p. 226), Gil de Zúñiga and colleagues (2017) speak of the so-called “news-finds-me” (NFM) perception, leading people to believe that they do not have to actively seek the news anymore to stay informed. Based on a U.S. panel-survey, Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2017) conclude that people who score high on the NFM perception are less likely to use traditional news sources and become less knowledgeable about politics over time. Other researchers have identified a similar perception as “news fatigue” (e.g., Nordensen, 2008). It entails a negative attitude towards news that arises from a feeling of incapability to deal with the ubiquity of news, eventually resulting in news avoidance (Nordensen, 2008). Similarly, Oeldorf-Hirsch (2018) infers from a structural model based on an online survey in the U.S. that INE might lead to engagement and subsequently to elaboration about the content, but that elaboration does not lead to any further knowledge gains.

Another stream of research is more hopeful and considers the proliferation of options to retrieve information about current events through social media and online tools as beneficial, for example, by enhancing democratic behavior (e.g., Gil de Zúñiga, Puig-I-Abril and Rojas, 2009; Shah, Kwak and Holbert, 2001). Feezell (2018), for instance, found that people who are exposed to political information on Facebook evince an agenda-setting effect, meaning they report a higher perceived importance of policy issues that have been shared on Facebook compared to people who have not been shown political information on Facebook. More recently, a study provided evidence that mobile push notifications—a common way ~~manner~~ of how individuals nowadays get incidentally exposed to news—does not only increase the self-reported use of news apps, it can also lead to learning about the news in

some instances (Stroud, Peacock and Curry, 2019). Similarly, Lee and Kim (2017) have shown by means of an experiment that INE has a positive and significant effect on the recognition and short-term recall of information in news stories. In fact, research investigating “passive learning” proposes that learning can occur without being actually motivated to do so (Krugman and Hartley, 1970) and that people who are accidentally exposed to information might learn as a “side product.”

Hence, when converging these two streams of research it becomes clear that there is still not yet a clear scholarly agreement on whether INE leads to active news use and/or to knowledge gains. One theory that might better explain the seemingly causal link between INE and knowledge gain might be Eveland’s (2001) cognitive mediation model that also controls for actual information consumption (cf. news use). However, only recently, Oeldorf-Hirsch (2018) has tested the cognitive mediation model for INE on social media (Facebook and Twitter), showing that INE does neither lead to elaboration of news nor to knowledge gains, but mostly to engagement with news on the respective social media outlets (e.g., liking, commenting, sharing). By contrast, Lee and Kim (2017) have provided evidence that the effect of INE on information recall of news is mediated by exposure to information in the news (measured by the time spent for reading the news). Yet the study by Lee and Kim (2017) is merely based on US data and only examines online news.

Thus, we aim at closing this research gap by studying the direct relationships between INE and actual news consumption across various platforms and across 18 countries. By showing that the first causal relationship of the cognitive mediation model persists across platforms (traditional, online, social media), future studies will be in a better position to infer whether individuals actively engage with news due to INE, and whether cognitive processing and thus knowledge gain could potentially take place as a consequence. Accordingly, our first research question reads: (RQ1) *How is incidental news exposure related to a) traditional news media use, b) online news media use, and c) social media news use?*

### **The Moderating Role of Political Interest and Trust in News**

Previous research shows that news use is tremendously influenced by, at least, two key variables, namely political interest (Boulianne, 2011; Strömbäck and Shehata, 2010; Strömbäck, Djerf-Pierre and Shehata, 2013) and trust in news (Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga, 2017; Tsfatì and Cappella, 2005; Tsfatì, 2010, Williams, 2012). Particularly with the emergence of online and social media, political interest has become a decisive factor in explaining why people seek and learn from news (Prior, 2007). According to Prior (2007), the transition from a low-choice to a high-choice media environment offers an abundance of entertainment as well as information on politics and public affairs. While less politically interested people are said to be more likely to seek entertainment content in this environment, highly interested individuals might be more likely to make use of the ubiquity of political information, eventually leading to a political knowledge gap in society. A recent study by Heiss and Matthes (2019) has indeed found support that INE can lead to the reinforcement of the political participation gap between politically interested and those who are less interested in politics.

Besides political interest, Karnowski et al. (2017) point to content-dependent factors (e.g., topical interest) that explain how exposure to news on social media might lead to engagement (i.e. reading the news). As psychological research has shown, prior knowledge leads individuals to focus more on information that is relevant to their already obtained knowledge than information that seems to appear irrelevant (Kim and Rehder, 2011). Especially when it comes to incidental news encounters, recommendations through algorithms, as well as peer recommendations play a crucial role for news selection and exposure (Van Damme et al., 2019). In fact, Mummolo (2016) has demonstrated that interest in the news topic can even level off the negative effect of source reputation. In other words, even if a Democrat is shown an article that comes from a Republican source (e.g., Fox); if the topic is relevant to her, she will choose to read the article anyways.



Similarly, but focusing on INE on Facebook, Karnowski et al. (2017) employed a mobile forced experience sampling study and found topical interest leading to both, the intention to read the news article shown on Facebook and the intention to look up further information. More recently, using self-confrontation interviews, Kümpel (2019) reports that engagement decisions while being exposed to news on social media are mostly guided by interest in the issue covered in the respective article. Moreover, Bergström and Belfrage (2018) identified interest in news, next to habit of using online news services and age, as the main influencing factors that explain social media news use. Hence, given that we focus in this study on general news use defined as information on politics and public affairs, we want to replicate the already established direct relationship between political interest and news use, showing that it is also valid across 18 countries and for different platforms. Therefore, we presume: (H1) *There is a positive relationship between political interest and a) traditional news media use, b) online news media use, and c) social media news use.*

What is more, we know from previous research that political interest interacts with INE with regard to political participation and the agenda-setting effect. More specifically, the findings by Valeriani and Vaccari (2016) have shown that the correlation between INE on social media and political participation online is moderated by political interest: those scoring low in political interest elicited a stronger correlation than those being already highly interested in politics. The agenda-setting effect as reported by Feezell (2018) has shown similar differences depending on participants' level of political interest. For those participants with low political interest, the ranking of perceived importance of political issues shown during INE on Facebook was higher than for those that have reported a higher interest in politics. Hence, INE might actually level off the so-far reported differences regarding political behavior due to political interest. Following this logic, we predict the following moderation effect: (H2) *Political interest moderates the effect of INE on a) traditional news media use, b) online news media use, and c) social media news use so that people scoring high in political*

*interest evince a weaker correlation between INE and news use (traditional, online and social media) than people scoring low in political interest.*

Besides political interest, the level of trust people ascribe to media might strongly influences the extent to which they actively seek and consume news across various platforms. For example, based on 112 interview transcripts from news consumers in the US Midwestern region, Pentina and Tarafdar (2014) found that news users—independent of their political views, motivations or interests in news topics—rank the reliability and trustworthiness of the news sources as highly relevant in their news consumption processes on social media. Respondents narrated that they would carefully select the news sources they consume on social media based on the reputation of the source (e.g., brand). However, the reports by the news consumers interviewed by Pentina and Tarafdar (2014) might be affected by social desirability. Indeed, empirical support for the relationship between trust in news media and news exposure is limited (Tsfati and Cappella, 2005). Studying four large sample data sets, Tsfati and Cappella (2003) reported only moderate correlations between trust in mainstream news and mainstream news consumption. Furthermore, reviewing previous research, bivariate correlations between respondents' level of trust in news media institutions and the amount of news consumption lies below .20, according to Tsfati and Cappella (2005).

Despite these pessimistic findings, we argue that trust in news can still be viewed as an important factor in explaining news media consumption. In fact, Tsfati and Cappella (2005) have shown themselves that mainstream media skepticism is negatively related with news exposure, even after controlling for a range of demographic and political variables. Furthermore, Tsfati (2010) has replicated these findings showing that both overall news media skepticism and skepticism toward online news is negatively related with time spent surfing news websites. Similarly, Ardèvol-Abreu and Gil de Zúñiga (2017) have shown more recently that while trust in traditional media is related to traditional news use, trust in social and citizen media is positively connected with social media news use. Thus, following this

line of research, we want to test whether the positive relationship between trust in news and news use also holds across 18 countries and across different news media platforms: (H3)

*There is a positive relationship between trust in news and a) traditional news media use, b) online news media use, and c) social media news use.*

Next, we argue that trust in news is a moderating factor in explaining the relationship between INE and news use across platforms. Previous research has repeatedly theorized that trust is as an important factor to be related with INE (e.g., Pentina and Tarafdar, 2014; Tandoc and Johnson, 2016; Yadamsuren and Heinström, 2011). While Fletcher and Nielsen (2018) and Kümpel (2019) only controlled for trust/evaluation in/of news in their analyses, Goyanes (2019) has empirically shown that trust in social networking sites is positively related with INE. However, the interaction between the frequency of using social media for news and trust in social networking sites did not yield a positive effect on INE. Building up on these first empirical findings, it is assumed that the combination of trust in news and INE will lead to more active news consumption. Thus, we hypothesize: (H4) *Trust in news moderates the effect of INE on a) traditional news media use, b) online news media use, and c) social media news use so that people scoring high in trust in news evince a stronger correlation between INE and news use (traditional, online and social media) than people scoring low in trust in news.*

### **Structural, Economic, Media, and Educational Differences Across Countries**

Cross-country research on INE is generally scarce. We could identify only one study by Valeriani and Vaccari (2016) that studied INE and its effects on political participation online across Germany, Italy and the UK. However, comparative research is becoming increasingly important in an ever-more globalized world (Artz and Kamalipour, 2003). This study attempts to fill this research gap (cf. Yadamsuren and Erdelez, 2017) by analyzing the relationship between INE and news use across 18 countries, and controlling for cross-country differences, such as *internet connectivity, GDP, press freedom and literacy rate*. All four

macro-variables are of interest as they cover four different aspects by which the 18 countries differ in terms of digital infrastructure, economy, media landscape and education.

For example, according to the World Bank (2018), high internet access or internet connectivity is related with a higher rate of people using the internet. Hence, more internet use might also be related with more information and news consumption across the 18 countries. Furthermore, previous research in communication science has repeatedly argued that comparative studies across various countries should control for the specific media landscape in which the research is conducted (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Following previous research, we have chosen press freedom to account for political and economic differences across countries (Himmelboim and Limor, 2008). Regarding the economic strength, a study by the Pew Research Center has recently found that people in richer countries are more likely to consume news online (Mitchell et al. 2018). Following that, the level of GDP might also represent an important control variable to account for cross-country differences regarding news use across different platforms. Eventually, macro-level indicators such as research and development spending, literacy and secondary education have been found to be strongly and significantly related with the use of the internet as well as new and old media use (Norris, 1996). Consequently, the level of literacy rate might explain the different levels of news use across platforms and countries.

## **Method**

### **Sample and Data**

The current study is part of a larger international project “Digital Influence”, a collaboration between the University of Vienna and the University of New Zealand. It uses two-wave panel data from 18 countries worldwide. The countries were selected to represent a variety of political, economic and cultural contexts as well as different continents (Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa). Originally, 22 countries were surveyed, but only respondents from 18 countries gave valid answers to the questions of interest in this study. Data for Wave 1 was

collected in September 2015, and for Wave 2 in March/April 2016. To perform the translation of the items, scholars from each country were involved. Afterwards, the surveys were translated using either back-translation with a team approach (Thato, Hanna and Rodcumdee, 2005), or the committee approach (Brislin, 1980). The survey was distributed by *Nielsen* that used stratified quota sampling techniques in order to create samples in each country with demographics similar to those provided in reports of official census agencies. For more details on the survey and a demographic breakdown by country, see Gil de Zúñiga and Liu (2017); for more information on breakdowns for the variables of interest in this study, see Table 1.

[Table 1]

### Individual-Level Measures

**Incidental News Exposure.** We told respondents in the survey that people sometimes come across news and information on current events, public issues, or politics when they may have been using media for a purpose other than to get the news. Afterwards, we asked them to indicate (1 = never, 7 = always) how often that happens to them a) while watching TV, listening to the radio, or reading the newspaper, and b) while on social media or the internet (Spearman-Brown = .47,  $M = 4.54$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ).

**Traditional News Use.** Traditional news use was measured by asking respondents how often they get news (1 = never, 7 = always) from a) TV (cable or local network news), b) newspapers (printed version), and c) radio (W1  $\alpha = .59$ ,  $M = 4.56$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ; W2  $\alpha = .60$ ,  $M = 4.63$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ).

**Online News Use.** To measure online news use, individuals were asked to indicate how often (1 = never, 7 = always) they get news from a) online news websites, and b) citizen journalism sites (W1 Spearman-Brown = .30,  $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ; W2 Spearman-Brown = .40,  $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ).

**Social Media News Use.** Building on prior research (Valenzuela et al., 2012), social media news use was measured by asking respondents a) how frequently they get news from

social media (1 = never, 7 = always), and b) how frequently they use social media to get news about current events from mainstream media (1 = never, 7 = all the time; W1 Spearman-Brown = .49,  $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ; W2 Spearman-Brown = .58,  $M = 3.89$ ,  $SD = 1.70$ ).

**Political Interest.** To gauge political interest, respondents were asked a) how closely they pay attention to information about what is going on in politics and public affairs (1 = not at all, 7 = very closely), and b) how interested they are in information about what is going on in politics and public affairs (1 = not at all, 7 = a great deal; Spearman-Brown = .87,  $M = 4.54$ ,  $SD = 1.45$ ).

**Trust in News.** We asked individuals how much they trust news from various sources (1 = do no trust at all, 7 = trust completely): a) news from mainstream news media (e.g., newspapers, TV), b) news from alternative news media (e.g., blogs, citizen journalism), and c) news from social media ( $\alpha = .77$ ,  $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ).

**Controls.** To account for individual differences across countries, we controlled for *sociodemographic characteristics*. We included *age* ( $M = 41.46$ ,  $SD = 14.80$ ), *gender* (51.04% female), *education* (1 = none, 7 = graduate school or higher; *Median* = 4, some college), *income* (range of scale: 1 = 0-10 percentile; 5 = 91-100 percentile;  $M = 2.94$  (11-30 percentile),  $SD = 1.09$ ), and *race* (85.7% white) in our models.

### Macro-Level Measures

**Internet Connectivity.** To control for *internet connectivity* across the 18 countries investigated, we included the ~~two~~ measures *percentage of internet users* per country ( $M = 73.40$ ,  $SD = 19.14$ ) and *percentage of broadband access* per country ( $M = 76.47$ ,  $SD = 23.12$ ) and averaged the two items for our analyses (Spearman-Brown = .75,  $M = 73.77$ ,  $SD = 19.95$ ). Data about *internet connectivity* were retrieved from [www.webworldwide.io](http://www.webworldwide.io).

**Press freedom.** Press freedom was used from Freedom House where high levels of press freedom means less freedom ( $M = 38.91$ ,  $SD = 21.11$ ).

**GDP.** GPD per capita was retrieved from the *World Bank*, except for Taiwan which was only available from the *IMF* ( $M = 22.73$ ,  $SD = 15.38$ ).

**Literacy rate.** Data to measure literacy rate were collected from the website [www.ourworldindata.org](http://www.ourworldindata.org) ( $M = 97.83$ ,  $SD = 1.90$ ). However, given that the literacy rates in some countries are very high, some countries only have the most recent figures (e.g., Germany, New Zealand, Taiwan, UK, USA from 2003; South Korea from 2008; Japan from 2002).

### Analysis

First, we investigated the zero-order correlations to see whether there are reasonable associations between our key variables (see Table 2 and 3). To test the hypotheses, we pooled our data and applied multilevel modeling to account for country differences. Before we estimated the full multilevel model, we first took a look at the null models (no covariates included) to substantiate our decision to employ linear mixed models for our analyses. The results indicated that the null hypotheses of no country differences in the dependent variable (Traditional News Use<sub>W1/W2</sub>; Online News Use<sub>W1/W2</sub>; Social Media News Use<sub>W1/W2</sub>) were rejected. More specifically, the interclass correlation coefficient for *Traditional News Use* is .08 (W1) and .06 (W2), for *Online News Use* .15 (W1) and .20 (W2), for *Social Media News Use* .23 (W1) and .25 (W2) respectively. Hence, these results indicate that a critical proportion of the variance of news use (traditional, online, social media) in the population is explained by the grouping structure (cf. countries) which in turn substantiates our choice of using multilevel analyses (Hox, 2002).

[Table 2–3]

Given the two-wave panel data, we did not only calculate the multilevel models for the cross-sectional data, but also estimated the models with the lagged dependent variables and the autoregressive term, the so-called static-score model (Finkel, 1995). Firstly, we first estimated the cross-sectional model where the independent and dependent variables stem

from Wave 1. Secondly, for the lagged model, we again used the independent variables from Wave 1 but regressed those on the dependent variable from Wave 2. Thirdly, the autoregressive model is equal to the lagged model but includes another autoregressive term; meaning, we also included the dependent variable from Wave 1 as a control in our model. Following Finkel (1995), the latter model can be used to estimate the causal effect of  $X$  on  $Y$  if the time between the two waves is not too long and a “synchronous” or “cotemporal” effect is assumed (p. 13). This is clearly the case with our panel dataset in which only six months lie in between the two waves. Furthermore, the variables under investigation (e.g., news use, INE, political interest) are also rather static over time and thus justify the application of the static-score model to derive causal claims.

While the multi-level models account for country-level differences by included macro-level factors (e.g., GDP, literacy rate), we also estimated individual OLS models for each country, controlling for the same variables as in the overall multi-level models. In addition, to rule out reversed relationships (i.e. news media use affecting INE), we ran a separate multi-level model that treated INE as the dependent variable. However, given that INE was only measured in Wave 1, we could only run this model for the cross-sectional data.

## Results

The first research question inquired how INE is related with a) traditional news media use, b) online news media use, and c) social media news use. Table 4 shows that INE is significantly related with news use across all news media platforms (traditional, online, social media) as well as for the cross-sectional, lagged and autoregressive models. All direct effects from INE to the respective news platforms are highly significant and positive ( $p < .001$ ). Checking for reversed effects (Table 5), the results indicate that social media news is strongly correlated with INE ( $B = 0.34, p < 0.001$ ), whereas traditional news use ( $B = 0.13, p < 0.001$ ) and online news to a lesser extent ( $B = 0.06, p < 0.001$ ).

[Table 4 and 5]



Hypothesis 1 was formulated to replicate previous findings that showed a positive relationship between political interest and news use. In line with past studies, the direct positive effects are highly significant across all three news media use platforms (traditional, online, social media) and even persist over time (see Table 4). Thus, we find support for H1. Hypothesis 2 presumed that there is an interaction effect between INE and political interest on news use across platforms. The results reject H2, only showing significant effects for traditional news use in the cross-sectional ( $B = -0.02, p < 0.01$ ) and the lagged model ( $B = -0.04, p < 0.01$ ) and for social media news use in the cross-sectional model ( $B = 0.02, p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, in contrast to previous studies, the interaction graphs (see Figure 1–3) show that the higher INE, the higher the reported news use and that this relationship is stronger for individuals who score high on political interest.

[Figure 1 – 3]

Similar to H1, Hypothesis 3 was formulated to substantiate the assumed direct relationship between trust in news and news media use across platforms. The results show that the positive direct effects not only persist across all platforms (traditional, online, social media), but also remain highly significant for lagged and autoregressive models (see Table 4). Thus, H3 is largely supported. Furthermore, in Hypothesis 4 we wanted to test whether trust in news interacts with INE in explaining traditional, online and social media news use. However, we only find limited support for this hypothesis. The results merely point to a positive interaction effect in the cross-sectional models for online news use ( $B = 0.02, p < 0.001$ ) and social media news use ( $B = -0.03, p < 0.001$ ). Yet as hypothesized, we find the relationship between INE and social media news use to be stronger for those who trust the news more, compared to those who are rather skeptical towards news (see Figure 4 – 5).

[Figure 4 – 5]

Regarding the macro-level control variables, the analyses have shown that none of the indicators has a strong effect on the outcome variables. If at all, there are signs that a higher

GDP per capita leads to less online news use and higher internet connectivity to lower social media news use (see Table 4). When exploring the relationships between INE and news use across various platforms for each country individually, it appears that particularly social media news use is affected by INE and strongest in Brazil, Philippines, Taiwan, UK and the U.S.

[Table 6]

### **Discussion**

Although news use has become ubiquitous within peoples' daily lives (Purcell et al., 2010), and citizens have more ways today to stay abreast of news than ever before (e.g., smartphone, social media), it is still not clear whether incidental exposure to news is followed by a more active and meaningful news consumption. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate whether INE leads to actual news use across various platforms (traditional, online, social media) and whether this holds true across various societies around the world, controlling for individual factors such as news use, political interest and trust in news as well as macro-level indicators such as internet connectivity, GDP, press freedom and literacy rate.

Based on a two-wave panel survey among 18 countries, we employed multi-level analyses to control for individual and country-level influences. Contrary to pessimistic views (e.g., Prior, 2007), our findings suggest a positive outlook regarding the level of news consumption in today's pervasive, multi-media news environment. First of all, our results underpin previous findings that have shown that political interest is positively related with news consumption (Boulianne, 2011; Strömbäck and Shehata, 2010; Strömbäck, Djerf-Pierre and Shehata, 2013). Results suggest that political interest leads to more news use across all platforms (traditional, online, social media) and even over time. Moreover, our study also lends support to the notion that trust in news is overall a strong positive factor for news consumption. While previous research has casted doubt on this relationship (Tsfati and Cappella, 2005; Tsfati, 2010), this paper shows that the relationship between trust in news and

news use seems to hold for all platforms (traditional, online, social media) and, above all, that it seems to be causal for different countries around the world.

More crucially, the analyses have provided compelling evidence that INE leads to actual news consumption of traditional, online and social media. The significant findings for the autoregressive models across all media platforms suggest a strong temporal relationship. While previous research has mostly investigated the outcomes of INE on democratic variables (e.g., polarization: Heiss and Matthes, 2019; participation: Valeriani and Vaccari, 2016; attention/knowledge: Feezell, 2018; Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2018), we have demonstrated in this study that INE plays a decisive role in explaining active news use behavior in today's ubiquitous news environment. It is in this vein that our study showcases a first causal link within the cognitive mediation model regarding INE (Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2018; Eveland, 2001), meaning that INE can be considered a driver for further news use. It is now up to future studies to demonstrate how subsequent consumption of news, resulting from INE, leads to elaborative processing and, in turn, to more active democratic behavior (e.g., political knowledge, participation, voting). Based on our findings, follow-up research is thus advised to control for actual news use when investigating INE and any successive outcome, such as political behavioral variables.

However, contrary to the direct relationships, the interaction effects of political interest and trust in news with INE on news use across platforms were less clear. The interaction effects that we found for political interest stand in contrast to previous findings that showed that INE can offset the effect of political interest on political participation online or on the agenda-setting effect respectively (Valeriani and Vaccari, 2016; Feezell, 2018). Instead, our findings suggest that political interest is still a crucial factor for explaining news consumption. In other words, for individuals who score high on political interest the effect of INE on actual news consumption (e.g., traditional news) is stronger than for individuals who are less interested in politics. Thus, in a news and media environment that is highly

characterized by snippets of news (Molyneux, 2018), it becomes increasingly relevant that individuals have developed a certain level of political interest in order to actually seek news on traditional news media (cf. Prior, 2007). This finding also supports previous research that has shown that political interest has become a determining factor in explaining informational TV use in a high choice media environment (Hopmann et al., 2016; Prior, 2007) or political participation gaps (Heiss and Matthes, 2019)

Regarding the interaction effects for trust in news, the findings were also contrary to our expectations. Although we found that the relationship between INE and news consumption across all platforms (traditional, online, social media) is stronger for those who trust the news, the effects were not persistent and do not allow for any causal inferences. Hence, we reason that trust in news might still play a role when it comes to INE and subsequent news use, but that there might be further additional individual cognitive, habitual and content-dependent factors at stake, such as interest in the respective topics shown during INE (cf. Kümpel, 2019), that affect active news consumption.

In fact, although this study controlled for individual-level measures and macro-level measures, it has become apparent that the country-level factors were hardly influential in explaining news media consumption across the 18 countries investigated. Initially, we expected that higher internet connectivity, GDP, freedom of press and literacy rate would be related with higher news use. However, the results have shown that the reverse is true for GDP and internet connectivity: The higher the GDP of countries and the higher internet connectivity, the less people consume news online or on social media. Yet given that these results were not consistent across news platforms, we refrain from drawing any firm conclusions.

In contrast, the individual analyses for each country have shown that the strongest relationship between INE and news use persists for social media news use, and particularly for Brazil, Philippines, Taiwan, UK and the United States. Recent numbers of active social

media users per country show that all countries have a considerably high penetration (Brazil: 66%; Philippines: 71%; Taiwan: 89%; UK: 67%; USA: 70%), compared to the global average of 45% (Kemp, 2019). Considering these numbers and given that the autoregressive analyses only show limited evidence of significant relationships over time for INE and social media news use, it appears that the reported level of being incidentally exposed to news is strongly interrelated with reported social media use across the 18 countries investigated.

### **Limitations**

Having said this, this study does not come without limitations. First, the reliance on pure survey data regarding news use suggests the issue of social desirability in respondents' answers (Schwarz and Oyserman, 2001). Although news tracking data has shown that there can be major differences between the amount of time people indicate in surveys regarding news use and their actual news usage behavior, certain time references have been found to be as reliable as actual tracking data (Haenschen, 2019). However, a news tracking study for 18 countries around the globe would have been resource-intensive, let alone practically challenging in terms of privacy and data regulations. Second, we did not measure cognitive processing or elaboration of the information received from INE in this survey, but only ~~active~~ reported active news consumption. Future studies are thus invited to follow up on our study to test the cognitive mediation model to its full extent (Eveland, 2001).

Third, the distinction between our measurement of active news consumption and INE is suboptimal. It could have been the case that individuals' responses to active news consumption questions might have captured some variance of INE, and thus might have adversely affected our results. Future research should develop better measurements that allow a better prediction of INE on active news consumption. Related to this—and the findings for individual countries—the third issue arises with the respondents' ability to differentiate between INE and actual news consumption online and on social media (cf. Broersma, 2019). For some respondents it could have been the case that INE means the same as scrolling

through social media platforms and actually reading headlines of news posts. While we did our best with specific wordings in our questions (see *Method* section), future research is advised to find a better way to disentangle the sequence of cognitive, elaborative and behavioral processes when encountering INE, using a “user-centered perspective” (Hasebrink, 2016, p. 373) and studying “tactics to navigate the digital news and information ecology” (Broersma, 2019, p. 516). One example of such a study could be a non-intrusive observation, combined with think aloud protocols (cf. Kümpel, 2019). Yet studies of this kind will probably be limited to small samples and difficult to be conducted across countries.

## Conclusion

This is the first study in communication research to our knowledge that has investigated INE across 18 countries and across various news platforms, thereby allowing to make inferences about whether INE leads to active news consumption or not. The results support the assumption that information encountered serendipitously leads to actual news use in traditional, online and social news media. It is in this vein that we ascribe online media and the pervasive flow of information in today’s news media environment a bridging function for active news use across various platforms.

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Table 1

*Descriptives of Key Variables per Country*

Country	Cases		INE <sup>W1</sup>		Traditional News Use <sup>W1</sup>		Traditional News Use <sup>W2</sup>		Online News Use <sup>W1</sup>		Online News Use <sup>W2</sup>		Social Media News Use <sup>W1</sup>		Social Media News Use <sup>W2</sup>		Interest in Politics <sup>W1</sup>		Interest in Politics <sup>W2</sup>		Trust in News <sup>W1</sup>		Trust in News <sup>W2</sup>	
	N <sup>W1</sup>	N <sup>W2</sup>	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Argentina	1,146	360	4.78	1.33	4.70	1.25	4.66	1.26	4.43	1.47	4.33	1.48	4.93	1.44	4.66	1.50	4.52	1.45	4.84	1.40	3.63	0.97	3.61	0.94
Brazil	1,086	353	5.23	1.19	4.78	1.32	4.75	1.25	5.22	1.38	5.13	1.37	5.32	1.25	5.15	1.37	5.12	1.36	5.50	1.18	3.62	1.23	3.78	1.25
China	1,004	387	4.98	0.95	4.24	1.20	4.35	1.18	5.15	1.12	5.29	1.08	5.04	1.10	5.12	1.15	4.60	1.32	4.79	1.31	3.67	1.22	3.79	1.24
Estonia	1,168	733	4.38	1.19	4.99	1.33	5.10	1.28	4.24	1.28	4.31	1.21	3.98	1.52	3.92	1.53	4.46	1.26	4.56	1.29	3.61	0.87	3.68	0.85
Germany	1,054	645	4.44	1.29	4.97	1.32	5.07	1.37	3.81	1.42	3.70	1.40	3.56	1.72	3.11	1.73	5.23	1.47	5.29	1.53	3.45	1.12	3.44	1.11
Indonesia	1,080	305	5.05	1.13	5.31	1.12	4.73	1.19	4.14	1.31	5.25	1.05	5.36	1.07	5.31	1.04	4.35	1.32	4.41	1.36	3.84	0.98	3.93	0.97
Italy	1,041	579	4.36	1.39	4.27	1.05	4.89	1.15	4.13	1.20	4.59	1.44	4.17	1.32	4.38	1.55	4.81	1.45	4.98	1.41	3.68	1.09	3.74	1.13
Japan	975	574	4.19	1.22	4.11	1.36	4.25	1.48	4.03	1.35	4.12	1.36	3.23	1.54	3.16	1.56	4.63	1.29	4.67	1.21	3.33	0.95	3.34	0.92
Korea	944	573	4.48	1.24	3.95	1.34	4.05	1.36	4.40	1.26	4.32	1.27	3.98	1.48	3.77	1.51	4.21	1.27	4.31	1.28	3.58	1.09	3.62	1.03
New Zealand	1,157	605	4.04	1.21	4.63	1.27	4.65	1.32	3.52	1.25	3.41	1.19	3.69	1.62	3.31	1.63	4.07	1.53	4.15	1.53	3.21	1.01	3.10	0.92
Philippines	1,064	153	4.97	1.22	4.69	1.18	4.87	1.17	4.80	1.19	4.89	1.02	5.56	1.01	5.48	1.05	4.50	1.20	4.79	1.16	4.05	1.00	4.13	1.04
Poland	1,060	628	4.51	1.16	4.80	1.17	4.80	1.15	4.56	1.13	4.51	1.12	4.02	1.44	3.84	1.50	4.37	1.42	4.56	1.40	3.40	1.11	3.53	1.09
Russia	1,145	551	4.6	1.19	4.42	1.29	4.41	1.20	4.63	1.24	4.54	1.23	4.14	1.46	3.93	1.45	4.52	1.37	4.71	1.29	3.36	1.12	3.31	1.13
Spain	1,020	302	4.31	1.38	4.73	1.25	4.82	1.32	4.26	1.45	3.99	1.50	4.44	1.55	4.01	1.69	4.61	1.40	4.96	1.26	3.64	0.98	3.60	0.93
Taiwan	1,008	426	4.73	1.07	3.94	1.07	4.01	1.12	4.20	1.17	4.19	1.16	4.54	1.19	4.17	1.24	3.79	1.42	3.84	1.43	2.64	1.02	2.49	0.99
Turkey	961	331	4.99	1.23	4.44	1.15	4.80	1.12	4.45	1.16	4.65	1.19	5.19	1.27	5.06	1.22	5.19	1.38	5.38	1.22	3.25	1.16	3.30	1.14
UK	1,064	649	3.81	1.41	4.67	1.29	4.76	1.33	3.28	1.39	3.22	1.34	3.04	1.79	2.74	1.74	4.39	1.66	4.62	1.52	3.15	1.13	3.03	1.14
USA	1,161	489	4.04	1.31	4.25	1.38	4.25	1.39	3.37	1.36	3.08	1.32	3.39	1.77	2.82	1.67	4.40	1.62	4.70	1.64	3.04	1.09	2.89	1.08
ALL	19,138	8,643	4.55	1.29	4.56	1.30	4.63	1.32	4.25	1.39	4.20	1.42	4.30	1.63	3.89	1.70	4.54	1.45	4.69	1.44	3.45	1.11	3.42	1.11

Table 2

*Zero-Order Correlations Among All Key Variables Wave 1*

<i>Variables</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. INE <sup>W1</sup>	—					
2. Political Interest <sup>W1</sup>	.20***	—				
3. Trust in News <sup>W1</sup>	.27***	.18***	—			
4. Traditional News Use <sup>W1</sup>	.23***	.31***	.20***	—		
5. Online News Use <sup>W1</sup>	.37***	.28***	.24***	.28***	—	
6. Social Media News Use <sup>W1</sup>	.50***	.16***	.32***	.20***	.55***	—

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 3

*Zero-Order Correlations Among All Key Variables Wave 2 (except for INE)*

<i>Variables</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. INE <sup>W1</sup>	—					
2. Political Interest <sup>W2</sup>	.17***	—				
3. Trust in News <sup>W2</sup>	.24***	.19***	—			
4. Traditional News Use <sup>W2</sup>	.17***	.37***	.22***	—		
5. Online News Use <sup>W2</sup>	.37***	.29***	.30***	.29***	—	
6. Social Media News Use <sup>W2</sup>	.44***	.19***	.37***	.19***	.61***	—

*Note.* \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 4

*Multilevel Model Predicting News Use on Various Platforms across 18 Countries*

	Traditional News Use			Online News Use			Social Media News Use		
	Cross-sectional <sup>W1</sup>	Lagged <sup>W2</sup>	Auto-regressive <sup>W2</sup>	Cross-sectional <sup>W1</sup>	Lagged <sup>W2</sup>	Auto-regressive <sup>W2</sup>	Cross-sectional <sup>W1</sup>	Lagged <sup>W2</sup>	Auto-regressive <sup>W2</sup>
	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)	<i>B</i> (SE)
<b>Fixed Parts</b>									
Intercept	−.00 (.06)	−.07 (.05)	−.11 (.04)	.01 (.06)	.09 (.04)	.07 (.04)	.00 (.04)	.14** (.04)	.17*** (.02)
<i>Autoregressive Term</i>									
Trad. News Use <sup>W1</sup>	—	—	.69*** (.01)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Online News Use <sup>W1</sup>	—	—	—	—	—	.54*** (.01)	—	—	—
SM News Use <sup>W1</sup>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	.60*** (.01)
<i>Individual Controls</i>									
Age	.30*** (.01)	.30*** (.01)	.10*** (.01)	−.10*** (.01)	−.08*** (.01)	−.03** (.01)	−.13*** (.01)	−.11*** (.01)	−.05*** (.01)
Gender (0=m;1=f)	−.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	−.04*** (.01)	−.04*** (.01)	−.02 (.01)	.05*** (.01)	.06*** (.01)	.03*** (.01)
Education	.02** (.01)	.02 (.01)	.02 (.01)	.06*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	.04*** (.01)	−.03*** (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Income	.07*** (.01)	.12*** (.01)	.05*** (.01)	.03*** (.01)	.05*** (.01)	.04*** (.01)	−.02* (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Race (0=other;1=white)	.03*** (.01)	.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
<i>News Use Variables</i>									
Traditional News Use	—	—		.19*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.04*** (.01)	.03** (.01)	−.00 (.01)
Online News Use	.24*** (.01)	.11*** (.01)	−.02 (.01)				.37*** (.01)	.30*** (.01)	.06*** (.01)
Social Media News Use	.05*** (.01)	.06*** (.01)	.01 (.01)	.42*** (.01)	.32*** (.01)	.10*** (.01)			
<i>News Use Antecedents</i>									
Political Interest	.13*** (.01)	.18*** (.01)	.07*** (.01)	.12*** (.01)	.16*** (.01)	.09*** (.01)	.02** (.01)	.03** (.01)	.03** (.01)
Trust in News	.09*** (.01)	.11*** (.01)	.04*** (.01)	.00 (.01)	.04*** (.01)	.03*** (.01)	.13*** (.01)	.14*** (.01)	.06*** (.01)
INE	.13*** (.01)	.12*** (.01)	.03*** (.01)	.05*** (.01)	.09*** (.01)	.05*** (.01)	.23*** (.01)	.18*** (.01)	.05*** (.01)
<i>Macrolevel Controls</i>									
Internet Connectivity	−.13 (.10)	−.06 (.07)	−.00 (.06)	.16 (.09)	−.02 (.07)	−.06 (.06)	−.13 (.06)	−.14* (.06)	−.08* (.03)
Freedom of Press	−.15 (.09)	−.12 (.06)	−.02 (.05)	.08 (.08)	.01 (.06)	−.02 (.05)	−.03 (.06)	−.02 (.05)	−.02 (.02)
GDP	−.08 (.10)	−.07 (.07)	.00 (.06)	−.14 (.09)	−.17* (.07)	−.08 (.06)	−.04 (.07)	−.09 (.06)	−.05 (.03)
Literacy Rate	.05 (.08)	−.05 (.06)	.03 (.05)	−.01 (.08)	−.01 (.06)	−.01 (.05)	−.09 (.05)	−.08 (.05)	−.03 (.02)
<i>Moderating Effects</i>									
INE*Political Interest	−.02** (.01)	−.04*** (.01)	−.01 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.02*** (.01)	.02 (.01)	.00 (.01)
INE*Trust in News	.00 (.01)	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.02** (.01)	.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	−.03*** (.01)	−.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
<b>Random Parts</b>									
$\sigma^2$	.68	.71	.38	.54	.59	.43	.47	.56	.38
$\tau_{00, \text{country}}$	.07	.03	.03	.06	.03	.02	.03	.02	.00
$\text{ICC}_{\text{country}}$	.10	.05	.06	.10	.05	.05	.06	.04	.01
Observations	14,139	6,496	6,379	14,139	6,509	6,442	14,139	6,317	6,237
Marginal R <sup>2</sup>	.27	.24	.59	.41	.38	.54	.51	.43	.62
Conditional R <sup>2</sup>	.34	.28	.62	.47	.41	.57	.54	.45	.63

Notes. Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients for linear mixed models for 18 countries; standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$



Table 5

*Multilevel Model Predicting Incidental News Exposure<sup>W1</sup> across 18 Countries*

<b>Incidental News Exposure (INE)</b>	
	<i>B (SE)</i>
<b>Fixed Parts</b>	
Intercept	.01 (.03)
<i>Individual Controls</i>	
Age	-.10*** (.01)
Gender (0=m;1=f)	.06*** (.01)
Education	-.02 (.01)
Income	-.00 (.01)
Race (0=other;1=white)	-.01 (.01)
<i>News Use Antecedents</i>	
Political Interest	.10*** (0.01)
Trust in News	.10*** (0.01)
<i>News Use Variables</i>	
Traditional News Use	.13*** (0.01)
Online News Use	.06*** (0.01)
Social Media News Use	.34*** (0.01)
<i>Macrolevel Controls</i>	
Internet Connectivity	.07 (0.04)
Freedom of Press	.04 (0.03)
GDP	-.03 (0.04)
Literacy Rate	-.08* (0.03)
<b>Random Parts</b>	
$\sigma^2$	.68
$\tau_{00, \text{country}}$	.01
$\text{ICC}_{\text{country}}$	.02
Observations	14,139
Marginal R <sup>2</sup>	.32
Conditional R <sup>2</sup>	.33

*Note.* Cell entries are unstandardized coefficients for linear mixed models for 18 countries; standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 6

*Incidental News Exposure Influencing News Use Variables Across 18 Countries*

	Cross-Sectional			Lagged			Autoregressive		
	Traditional News Use <sup>W1</sup>	Online News Use <sup>W1</sup>	Social Media News Use <sup>W1</sup>	Traditional News Use <sup>W2</sup>	Online News Use <sup>W2</sup>	Social Media News Use <sup>W2</sup>	Traditional News Use <sup>W2</sup>	Online News Use <sup>W2</sup>	Social Media News Use <sup>W2</sup>
<i>Argentina</i>	.16*** (.04)	-.04 (.04)	.22*** (.03)	.12 (.07)	.13 (.08)	.24** (.07)	.10 (.06)	.18** (.07)	.09 (.06)
<i>Brazil</i>	.17*** (.04)	.06 (.04)	.26*** (.03)	.17* (.08)	.21** (.08)	.37*** (.07)	.07 (.07)	.22** (.07)	.22** (.07)
<i>China</i>	.16*** (.04)	.08** (.03)	.22*** (.03)	.03 (.08)	.11 (.06)	.20*** (.05)	-.05 (.06)	.02 (.06)	.12* (.05)
<i>Estonia</i>	.06 (.04)	.13*** (.04)	.16*** (.03)	.05 (.04)	.06 (.04)	.07 (.05)	-.00 (.03)	-.04 (.04)	.004 (.04)
<i>Germany</i>	.17*** (.04)	.06 (.04)	.18*** (.04)	.15** (.05)	.13** (.04)	.11* (.05)	.02 (.03)	.09* (.04)	.01 (.04)
<i>Indonesia</i>	.14*** (.03)	.05 (.04)	.27*** (.03)	.07 (.07)	-.03 (.06)	.17* (.05)	.03 (.07)	-.04 (.06)	.01 (.05)
<i>Italy</i>	.03 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.22*** (.03)	.07 (.04)	.12* (.04)	.21*** (.04)	.07 (.04)	.10* (.04)	.11* (.04)
<i>Japan</i>	.17*** (.04)	.09** (.03)	.23*** (.03)	.18*** (.06)	.14** (.05)	.14** (.04)	.04 (.04)	.08 (.04)	.01 (.04)
<i>Korea</i>	.04 (.04)	.10** (.03)	.13*** (.03)	.06 (.05)	.09* (.04)	.09* (.04)	.02 (.03)	.01 (.03)	.03 (.03)
<i>New Zealand</i>	.07* (.04)	.08* (.03)	.26*** (.03)	.11 (.05)	.02 (.05)	.26*** (.05)	.01 (.03)	-.01 (.04)	.04 (.04)
<i>Philippines</i>	.20*** (.04)	-.07 (.03)	.37*** (.02)	.14 (.12)	.17 (.09)	.48*** (.06)	.06 (.11)	.11 (.07)	.43*** (.07)
<i>Poland</i>	.11** (.04)	.07 (.03)	.17*** (.04)	.14** (.05)	.07 (.04)	.11* (.05)	.08* (.04)	.01 (.04)	.04 (.04)
<i>Russia</i>	.15*** (.03)	.04 (.03)	.15*** (.03)	.19*** (.05)	.08 (.04)	.11* (.04)	.04 (.03)	.02 (.04)	.07 (.04)
<i>Spain</i>	.17*** (.03)	-.01 (.03)	.27*** (.03)	.04 (.06)	.001 (.06)	.18** (.06)	-.06 (.05)	-.05 (.05)	.005 (.05)
<i>Taiwan</i>	.28*** (.05)	-.01 (.05)	.33*** (.04)	.32*** (.08)	.16* (.08)	.24** (.07)	.20** (.08)	.17* (.07)	.16* (.07)
<i>Turkey</i>	.15*** (.04)	.002 (.03)	.23*** (.03)	.29*** (.07)	.09 (.07)	.17* (.06)	.22** (.06)	.11 (.06)	.10 (.05)
<i>UK</i>	.07 (.04)	.08* (.03)	.36*** (.03)	.02 (.05)	.08 (.04)	.31*** (.04)	-.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.08* (.03)
<i>USA</i>	.12** (.04)	.08* (.03)	.34*** (.03)	.13* (.06)	.14* (.05)	.35*** (.05)	.03 (.03)	.13** (.04)	.07 (.04)

Notes. OLS Models controlling for all variables and interaction effects as shown in Table 4; standardized coefficients; standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; color code for coefficient size: >.40; >.30; >.20; >.10; >.01

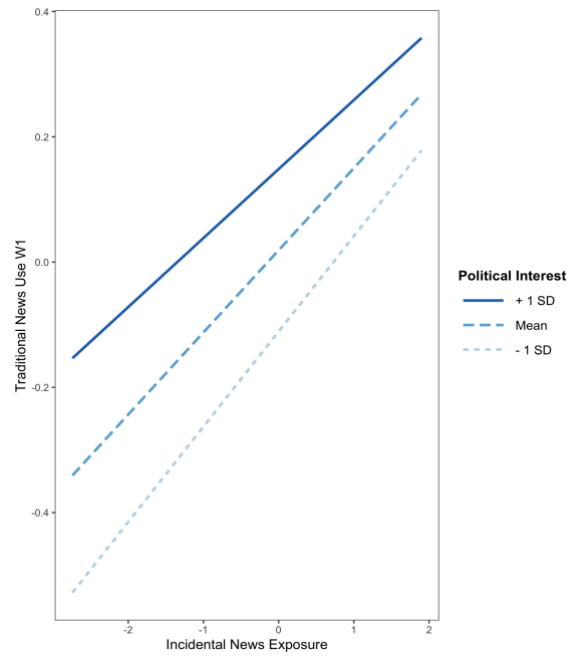


Figure 1. Interaction effect of  $INE \times Political\ interest$  on  $Traditional\ News\ Use^{W1}$ .

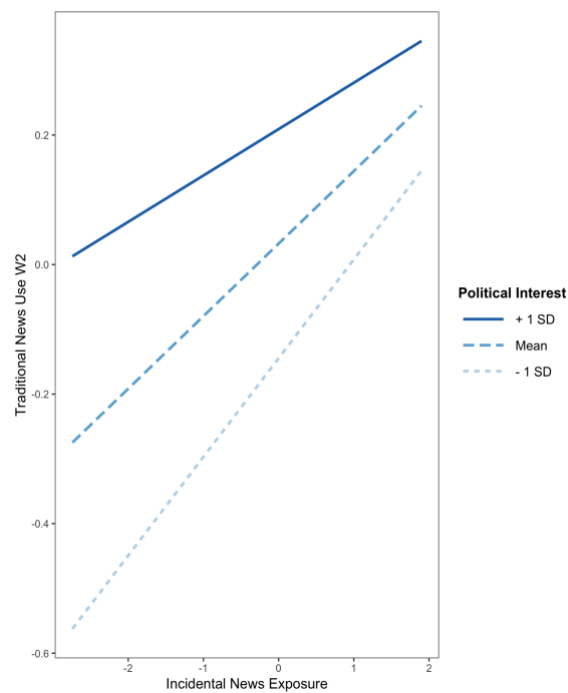


Figure 2. Interaction effect of  $INE \times Political\ interest$  on  $Traditional\ News\ Use^{W2}$ .

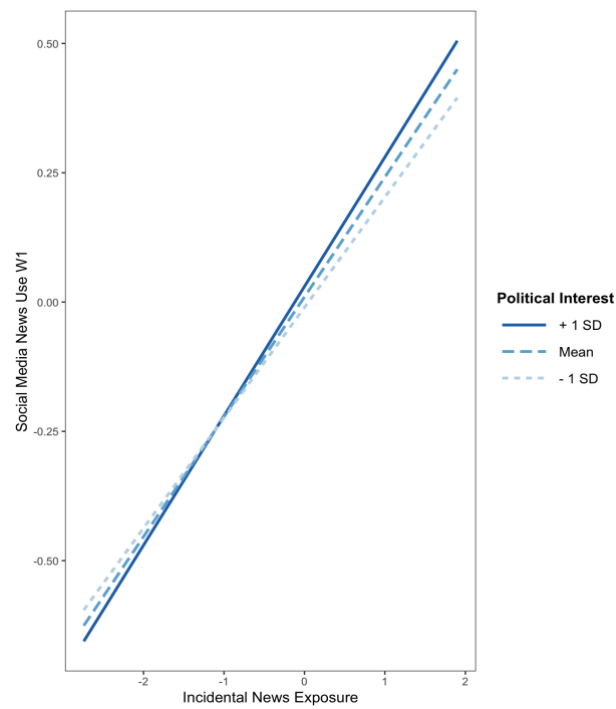


Figure 3. *Interaction effect of INE\*Political interest on SocialMediaNewsUse<sup>W1</sup>.*

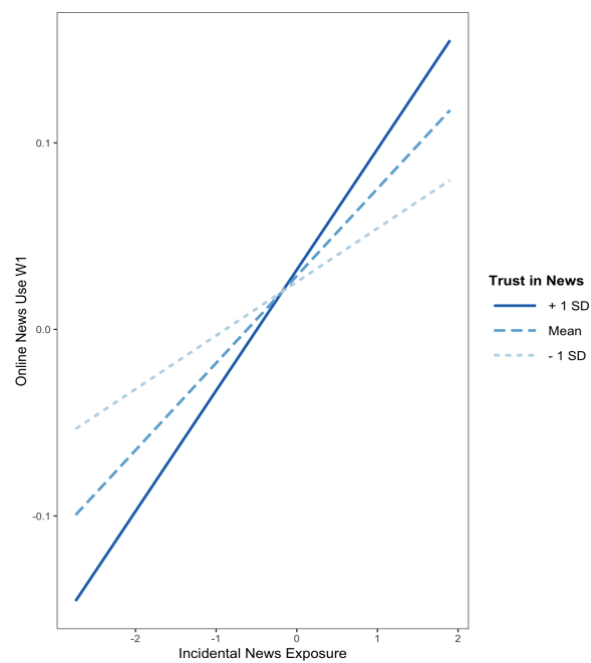


Figure 4. *Interaction effect of INE\*Trust in News on Online News Use<sup>W1</sup>.*

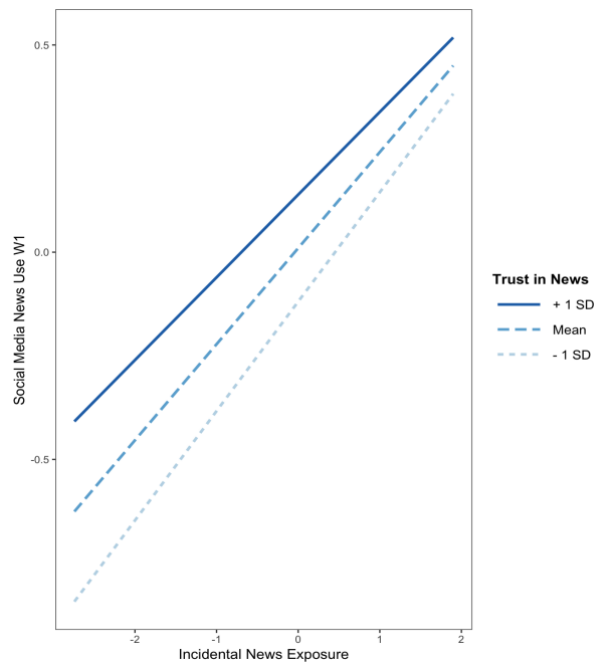


Figure 5. *Interaction effect of  $INE*Trust\ in\ News$  on Social Media News Use<sup>w2</sup>.*