Exposure to diverse views online

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why does it matter?

- increased choice – increased selectivity
  - interest-based - preference for entertainment versus news
    - decreased audience for news (2/3 of households in 1935, 1/5 in 2005)
    - 35% choose news when having other fun options (Prior, 2007)
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  - partisan - preference for pro-attitudinal versus neutral or oppositional content
    - 1/3rd of partisans use only like-minded sources (Stroud)
    - when possible, people tend to select like-minded content (Knobloch-Westerwick)
    - greater exposure to like-minded sites w/out avoiding dissimilar ones (Garrett)
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- echo chambers & filter bubbles - likely effects
  - attitude polarization & extremism
  - social divides and intergroup hostilities
Echo chambers?
Ideological Segregation by Medium and Type of Interaction

Internet data are from comScore. County, ZIP code and offline media data are from MRI. Voluntary associations, work, neighborhood, family, and “people you trust” data are from the GSS. Political discussants data are from the CNES. See Section III for details on the construction of the isolation index.
Figure 4: Density plot of aggregate site visits from the YouGov Pulse sample. Site ideological slant on the x-axis is measured as the average self-reported ideological placement of Facebook users who share hard news articles from a given domain. $N = 435,454$ visits, aggregated across respondents in sample with raking weights applied.

Figure 5: Density plot of mean alignment score for each individual in the Pulse data by party identification ($N = 1,228$).
Diversity of media repertoire: percentage of participants exposed to partisan and non-partisan websites.

Dvir-Gvirsman, Tsfati, & Menchen-Trevino, 2014

- 20% - no political exposure
- half – non-partisan and diverse partisan websites
- third - one-sided ideological content and non-partisan content
- 3% - exposed to one-sided partisan media
But
Biased information processing

increased extremity, hostility, or prejudice toward “the other side”
Ingroup Filtering system

Matt Lapierre
Yesterday at 10:30pm

Trump's foreign policy doctrine is similar to something you might hear from some drunk lady in Walmart who is faring unapologetically.

TALKINGPOINTSMEMO.COM

Trump's Foreign Policy Doctrine: 'We're America, Bitch'
Amid the international upheaval after the G-7 summit, an unnamed senior...
Fundamental puzzle

- When, for whom, and in which conditions does exposure to dissimilar media content amplify or attenuate hostilities?
- How to encourage people to process diverse and dissimilar views even-handedly?

“EXPO: Citizens exposed to dissimilar views in the media: investigating backfire effects”
RQ1: Under what conditions does exposure to dissimilar political views occur?
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RQ2: Under what conditions does exposure to dissimilar political views backfire?
RQ1: Under what conditions does exposure to dissimilar political views occur?

RQ2: Under what conditions does exposure to dissimilar political views backfire?

RQ3: How can we minimize the harms and maximize the benefits of dissimilar exposure?
How will this be accomplished?
SP1: Conditions in which dissimilar exposure occurs (RQ1)

- Survey
- Online Tracking using software plug-in – **BUT**
- Automated Content Analysis; online content tone
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SP2: Conditions in which dissimilar exposure backfires (RQ2)
- Longitudinal approach: over two years
- Online experiments
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• Survey
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SP2: Conditions in which dissimilar exposure backfires (RQ2)
• Longitudinal approach: over two years
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SP3: Minimizing backfire effects (RQ3)
• Literature integration
• Observational study
• Online experiments
Meantime:

- How to account for cross-device and cross-platform exposure?
- How to integrate online behavior data with offline interactions and media use?
- How to get online behavior data, comparative and overtime?
- Challenges: analyzing the vast amounts of data, low political exposure, ....
Thank you

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