

EXPLORING THE COMMUNICATIVE AND ATTITUDINAL COVARIATES OF
VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

This project is primarily concerned with the relationships between communication behaviors, including pro-attitudinal media use and political social media use, political attitudes, including in-group bias and political trust, and political behaviors, including both violent and non-violent political engagement. Political violence is defined broadly, including both communicative and verbal political violence factors, and a new measure of political violence is designed and validated using psychometric methods. A novel data collection and analysis plan is utilized to collect social media posts authored by participants in order to link indicators of social media content with data collected via a self-report survey. The results show that pro-attitudinal media use is related to higher levels of in-group bias and lower levels of political trust. Further, higher levels of bias are associated with non-violent political engagement and lower levels political trust are associated with violent political engagement. The collected data revealed indirect effects between pro-attitudinal media use and both non-violent and violent political engagement through in-group bias and political trust respectively. To conclude, I situate these results within the research literature and outline future research that can further elaborate on these relationships, establish further evidence of the validity of the political violence scale, and refine and improve the social data collection plan.