

A Report on the Social Network Battery in The 2006 ANES Pilot Study

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Social networks literature has long debated the role of social ties for the individual's political attitudes and behavior. Early studies of political behavior suggested that individuals learn and share political information within social networks to clarify their preferences and make citizenry decisions (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). Accordingly, research motivated by Huckfeldt and his colleagues (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1988, 1991, 1994; Huckfeldt, Beck, Dalton, and Levine 1995) has investigated the contextual and discussant influences on vote choice (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1991), on social communication (Huckfeldt 1995), on accessibility of perceived discussant preferences (Huckfeldt, Levine, Morgan, and Sprague 1998), on political expertise (Huckfeldt 2001), and on disagreement and social ties (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004). In addition, research has shown that the social context influences attitude formation on presidential policies (Mondak, Mutz, and Huckfeldt 1996). Based on its origins in Downs' (1957) rational voter, recent research has also shown that social networks affect the rationality in vote decision (Richey 2007).

The 2006 American National Election Study (ANES) Pilot Study includes a social network battery which solicited information regarding the respondents' self identified networks of political discussion. In this report, and in the accompanying appendix, we explore the battery's analytic potential for predicting voter turnout and presidential vote choice using the relevant variables in both the 2004 ANES Time Series Study and the 2006 ANES Pilot Study. In addition, we explore the predictive potential of several new item formats in the pilot study for voter turnout and presidential vote choice.

Hence, after reviewing the relevant research and summarizing the key hypotheses in the literature on social networks and vote behavior, we present the analyses of the social network battery items.¹ First, we present the descriptive statistics of the items and discuss the distribution of the key items across several sample characteristics. Second, we discuss the inter-item correlations both for the items in the social networks module of the pilot study and for the items in the module and other covariates we make use of in the bivariate and multivariate analyses. Third, we present bivariate regression analyses of voter turnout, presidential vote choice, and social networks. Fourth, we turn to multivariate analyses, regressing voter turnout and presidential vote choice on the social network battery items and on other confounding variables. Last, we conclude by reviewing the empirical evidence on the predictive potential of the networks battery for voter turnout and presidential vote choice.

¹ Unless otherwise noted all the tables and figures in this report take into account the ANES sampling units, strata and the sampling weight.

Social Networks and Political Behavior

Origins

Early studies have shown that individuals learn and share political information to clarify their preferences (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954); however, the average citizen knows very little about politics (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). Hence, whether political discussion improves the quality of citizens' choices, most notably the vote choice, has been a recurring theme in studies of deliberative democracy.² Based on Downs' (1957) rational voter paradigm, political discussion has been considered a means of minimizing the costs of information collection. More discussion means better democracy as rational citizens would be exposed to more and varied information about politics. Another strand of research, however, has shown that citizens have bounded rationality (Simon 1957). Coupled with the average citizen's largely documented lack of objective information on politics, evidence on citizen irrationality (Simon 1957; Kahneman and Tversky 1981; Lodge and Taber 2000; Taber and Lodge 2006) points to the paradox of mass democracy (Neuman 1986) -- mass democracy is successful despite inept citizens. By emphasizing social interaction rather than atomistic decision making processes, social networks research sheds light on the extent to which social interaction can induce rational vote choice; hence, filling an important gap in our understanding of the paradox of mass democracy.

Existing Research on Social Networks and Vote Choice

The existing literature cohere around two themes: the degree of political agreement or disagreement within the social network and the network quality. The former include the degree of similarity or dissimilarity in political opinions, partisanship and ideology, whereas the latter includes the level and nature of the relationship with the discussant as well as the quality of information the discussant can upload to the network. Studies on these broad constructs have shown direct and mediating effects of social networks on political attitudes and behavior.

The first theme of research, initiated by Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987), posits that individuals communicate with others in their social environments and exchange political information in a patterned way. Based on the rational voter paradigm, Huckfeldt and Sprague (1987) suggest that the pattern is geared towards minimizing the cost of additional information. Hence, they conclude that individuals form their network in line with their political preferences. Huckfeldt and Sprague (1988) also show that individuals are rational in the sense that they control the flow of information coming from their network by communicating with similar discussion partners. Accordingly, Huckfeldt and Sprague (1991) condition the vote choice on agreement within the network dyad, and find that the more the discussants and the main respondent agree on different political domains, the similar the vote choice is between the discussants and the main respondent. In contrast, if there is disagreement between the discussants and the main respondent, then the main respondent is more likely to resist and reject the opinions of the discussant. That said, the

² In fact, this line of research has expanded to studies on whether governments have a role in improving the social networks of their citizens through institutional design, and whether such a strategy can facilitate citizen participation in expanded markets of public goods, see Schneider, Teske, Roch, and Marschall (1997) for a detailed review and application.

level of discussion agreement or disagreement strongly predicts vote choice. Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (2004) confirm the earlier findings and show that the degree of agreement within the dyad (the Ego and the Alter) strongly depends on political coherence in terms of party identification. Huckfeldt, Ikeda, and Pappi (2005) present evidence that the same results are cross-culturally replicable.

On the other hand, Diana Mutz (2006) in *Hearing the Other Side* underlines the value of cross-cutting political communication. Similar to previous findings in the literature, Mutz (2006) supports the argument that the frequency of political discussion increases as the strength of the relationship increases. Different from previous research, examining the advantages of communicating with the other side, Mutz (2006) presents evidence supporting the view that non-like-minded political views would promote greater awareness of rationales for one's own viewpoints, greater awareness of rationales for oppositional viewpoints, and greater political tolerance. This said, Mutz (2006) elaborates the point on how and why political dialogue of hearing the other side is beneficial for encouraging democratic values and maintaining democratic harmony. Nonetheless, Huckfeldt and Mendez (*forthcoming*) explain that some people intentionally end up having political ties that are like themselves carrying similar preferences. Huckfeldt and Mendez (*forthcoming*) argue that political discussion motivates disagreement across incompatible political ideologies which would in turn hinder political agreement and cohesiveness. In contrast to Mutz (2006), authors argue that there is an unsolvable connection between frequency of political discussion and disagreement like "the moth and the flame."

In addition to having a direct effect on vote choice, social networks can also mediate the relationship between vote choice and other sources of political information. Beck, Dalton, Greene, and Huckfeldt (2002) investigate how messages given by the media are processed by individuals within the social networks they communicate. Beck et al. (2002) find that political communication within social networks is stronger than media effects --especially against television and newspaper reporting but not newspaper editorial pages-- in predicting vote choice during 1992 intermediaries. From a different standpoint, Mutz and Martin (2001) posit that media still plays a critical role in exposing citizens to information of the "other side" (or other political views) that would be otherwise not readily available in citizens' social networks.

The second theme of social networks literature elaborates on quality of the social network. Granovetter's (1973) classic work on the "strength of weak ties" has motivated a series of studies that investigate social network quality. Granovetter (1973) argues that having weak ties in the society makes it easier to have diffuse relationships and keep family and close friend relationships strong and separated. Moreover, relationship with the weak ties is a less costly way of reaching out to varied and new information otherwise absent in a closely-knit group. In a similar vein, Huckfeldt and Sprague (1991) suggest that these kinds of relationships are the ones that had influenced voters' decisions in South Bend, Indiana during the 1984 presidential election.

Huckfeldt, et al. (1995) examine the formation of micro-environment for main respondents and find that those with more social contacts tend to have more contacts with non-relatives, and these non-relative contacts tend to be discussants that are less than close friends. Their analyses show that younger, higher income, better educated people with more organizational ties are more likely to name more discussants; hence, they have a higher likelihood of having weak ties within their networks.

Similarly, one important point that Mutz (2006) raises is on the difference of the quality of relationships within social ties: She finds that most social contexts in which people talk about politics are through work or through relatives, friends, or associates. In contrast, relationships through place of worship, through voluntary associations, and even through neighborhood constitute a small portion (only 7%) of the contexts in which people talk about politics. The interesting part of this finding is that although relationships through place of worship generate far less political dyads, they generate the most coherent (where we see political agreement mostly) communication types as opposed to other routes of social interaction through work, relatives, friends, or associates.

Another important determinant of network quality is the level of information that network participants have. Huckfeldt (2001) argues that people tend to rely on political knowledge, education, and partisan extremity to decide if someone is a political expert. Huckfeldt (2001) shows that political partisans are more likely to engage in political discussion with political experts. He suggests that this is because these individuals are more politically knowledgeable. He also finds that the level of talk with political experts is independent of disagreement with experts.

Based on the two themes of research discussed above, we continue by presenting the hypotheses tested in this report.

Hypotheses

We structure our hypotheses based on two broad themes in the literature, i.e. the level of coherence in the network and the network quality, and the interaction of the two. Given the lack of objective information on the discussants and our theoretical interest in vote choice and voter turnout we will explore the following hypotheses using the 2006 ANES Pilot Study social networks battery:

- The level of agreement/disagreement in the network affects voter turnout and vote choice.
- The quality/strength of the social network affects voter turnout and vote choice.
- The effect of agreement/disagreement in the network on voter turnout and vote choice is conditional on the strength of the network tie.

In addition,

- Agreement prevails in political communication networks.
- Partisan similarity prevails in political communication networks.
- The degree of agreement within the dyad (the Ego and the Alter) depends on political coherence.
- Those with more social contacts tend to have more contacts with weak ties.
- Political partisans are more likely to engage in political discussion with political experts.
- Discussion networks are geographically dispersed.

Analyses of the 2006 ANES Pilot Study Social Network Battery

1. The Battery

The 2006 ANES Pilot Study social network battery has 42 items that measure whether the respondent talks with others on politics, the number of discussants in the respondent's social network, the total number of male/female network members, the gender of the network members, how close respondents feel toward network members, frequency of contact within the network, how different the political opinions of the discussants are from the respondent's political opinions, party identification and partisan strength of the discussants, the level of political interest of the discussants, and the geographical dispersion of the network members.

In addition, we use the 2004 ANES Time Series Study for respondent demographics as well as for information on voter turnout and presidential vote choice in 2004 elections, and the 2006 ANES party identification, vote, attention to politics, and media modules.

The frequency of contact within the network, and the geographical dispersion of the network members are measured on continuous scales. The number of discussants in the respondent's social network, and the total number of male and female respondents in the network are measured on 1-10 scales. The party identification of the discussants is measured on a 1-7 scale. Items on how close the respondents feel toward network members, how different the political opinions of the discussants are from the respondent's political opinions, and the level of political interest of the discussants are measured on 1-5 ordinal scales. The items on whether the respondent talks with others on politics, the gender of the network members, and the items on partisan strength are measured on binary scales.

2. Distribution of the social network items across several sample characteristics and their descriptive statistics

Before discussing the descriptive statistics of the module items, we investigate the demographic differences between the 2006 ANES Pilot Study and the 2004 ANES Time Series Study. The major distinctions between the 2006 ANES Pilot Study and the 2004 ANES sample are that the former contains a slightly higher proportion of higher education and higher income respondents, and more whites compared to the latter. In terms of regional distinctions, the pilot study has a higher proportion of respondents from the North Central region and a small proportion of respondents from the South compared to the 2004 ANES study. In the following analyses, however, the survey weights will account for the differences.

The appendices are as follows: Appendix 1 shows survey weighted sample characteristics of the 2006 ANES Pilot Study participants. Appendix 2 compares the sample characteristics of the 2006 ANES Pilot Study and the 2004 ANES Time Series Study samples. Appendix 3 shows the proportions of the response categories for the items measures on a dichotomous scale or an ordinal scale.

The descriptive statistics of the social network battery items as well as other items of interest are presented in Table 1. Based on the responses to the item below, almost 70% of the respondents declare that they have political discussants. From among those respondents with discussants, the mean discussant number on a 0-10 scale is approximately 3 (2.883), with a large standard deviation (2.759). The mean (and the median) number of discussants shows that collecting information on three discussants after generating up to 10 network discussants is a viable strategy.

“During the last six months, did you talk with anyone face-to-face, on the phone, by email, or in any other way about [things that were important to you / government and elections], or did you not do this with anyone during the last six months?”

<<< Table 1 about here >>>

The mean frequency of contact with the network members seems to hover between 50 to 60 days in “the past six month.” The mean frequency is 60 days for the first network member, decreasing to 56 days for the second member and to 50 days for the third member. The respondents’ guesses of the frequency with which the other network members talk to each other is much less ranging between 25 and 18 days in the past six month.

In order to qualify the importance of days of contact with the network members, we might use the items measuring how close the respondents feel toward the discussants. The average respondent seems to feel “very close” to the network members on a scale where 1 represents extremely close and 5 represents not close at all.

The items that measure the perceived difference of opinion between the respondent and the three discussants have scales that run from extremely different to not different at all. The mean response to these items is between “moderately different” and “slightly different”. Hence, this preliminary finding confirms the cohesiveness of most social networks from the perspective of the respondent. In the following we will further explore whether agreement/coherence prevails in the networks.

In order to measure the perceived partisan difference between the respondent and the three discussants, we make use of the discussant party identification items and the respondent party identification items that are measured on 1-7 scales. We subtract the discussant partisanship from that of the respondent. The positive values of the partisan difference measure indicate that the respondent is closer to being a strong Republican compared to the discussant, whereas negative values indicate that the respondent is closer to being a strong Democrat compared to the discussant (see Table 2). In the following analyses we will always use the absolute value of this measure. The mean partisan differences between the respondent and the network members is almost zero, which seems to confirm the expectation that partisan similarity prevails in political communication networks.

<<< Table 2 about here >>>

The items that measure the perceived interest of the discussants in politics have scales that run from “extremely interested” to “not interested at all”. The mean response to these items is between “very interested” and “moderately interested” for the three discussants. The difference between the respondent’s own interest in politics and the three discussants hover around zero on the same 1-5 scale, indicating similarities in the levels of discussant and respondent interest in politics. The negative signs in Table 3 show that the respondent is closer to being extremely interested in government and politics compared to the discussants. However, in absolute values, the mean is still close to zero which confirms that networks are similar in interest in politics (Huckfeld, et al. 1995; Mutz 2006).

<<< Table 3 about here >>>

In response to “How much time would it take to drive from your home to [network person 1’s] home?” question, almost 75% of the respondents give their answers in minutes or say that they live with the mentioned discussant. Among those respondents who reply to the item by minutes, the mean travel time is approximately 20 minutes for the three discussants. Another 16 % of the respondents gave the time in hours and only 4.2 % supplied an answer in days. The results from these new items still indicate that political discussants are geographically clustered. The majority of the political discussants seem to live in a 36 minute distance from the respondent. Because we do not know the exact relationship of the discussants to the respondent (family, work, neighborhood) we do not have further information on the qualitative origin of the network. This is particularly problematic for distinguishing weak network ties from the strong ones. Even if we assume that the respondents who say that their discussants live with them have in fact their spouse, child or parents in mind, we have no idea about the origin of the other network members who live within driving distance.

<<< Table 4 about here >>>

Last, the preliminary analyses of the gender of the respondents indicate a bias toward women in the respondents’ communication networks: both men and women seem to have more women as discussants in their networks. The proportions of the response categories for other items measured on a dichotomous or ordinal scale are given in Table 5.

<<< Table 5 about here >>>

3. Inter-Item Correlations

Having reviewed the information provided by the descriptive statistics and the proportions of the response categories of the module items, we found evidence on the prevalence of agreement in social networks of political communication (Mutz 2006). Moreover, we showed evidence suggesting that the networks are geographically clustered rather than dispersed.

We now turn to inter-item correlations that can shed light on a couple of other hypotheses mentioned above. First, we investigate whether the degree of agreement within the dyad (the Ego and the Alter) depends on political coherence. The spearman’s rho for the difference in opinion measure in the module and the absolute value of the partisan difference measure mentioned above is .28 indicating a significant positive relationship. As partisan difference decreases the difference in opinion also decreases. This finding once again confirms the findings in the literature on the coherence of social networks (Huckfeldt, et al. 2004).

Second, we look at whether political partisans are more likely to engage in political discussion with political experts (Huckfeldt 2001). Because the 2006 ANES Pilot Study does not have objective or subjective information on the level of the discussant’s political knowledge, we use interest in politics as a proxy. Interested discussants might seek out more information about government and politics. The correlation between the main respondent’s strength of partisanship and the discussant’s level of political interest is mild yet significant (Spearman’s rho = .08; p-value < .004).

Third, we examine the question of whether those with more social contacts tend to have contacts with weak ties. Because we do not have qualitative information on the relationship of the discussant to the main respondent, we will make use of the geographic dispersion items, assuming shorter driving time parallels close relationships. The correlations indicate that the driving time and the number of discussants is not significantly correlated. If we look at the correlation between the number of discussants and whether the distance is in minutes, hours, days, miles, or not in driving distance, the correlation becomes mild but significant ($r = .09$; $p\text{-value} < .001$).

Next, we start to investigate the relationship between voter turnout, presidential vote choice, and the social networks, using Module 26 (Vote) and the 2004 ANES Time Series Study presidential vote choice and voter turnout items. Given that the analyzed items are both dichotomous we use tetrachoric correlation. The tetrachoric correlations between whether the respondent talks about politics to others and her turnout in the 2004 and the 2006 studies are .687 and .288 respectively. In the multivariate analysis, we will attempt to parse out the effect of other confounding variables that may explain the large difference in these correlations.

The tetrachoric correlation between whether the respondent talks about politics with others and voting for Bush in a hypothetical presidential election in 2006 data is .689. The same correlation in the 2004 study for the actual presidential election is .334. Likewise, the tetrachoric correlations between talking about politics to others and voting for Clinton in a hypothetical presidential election in 2006 is .636, but the same figure for Kerry in the 2004 elections is .226. The difference between the 2006 pilot study and the 2004 study relationships may indicate that the vote module in the 2006 pilot has easy items for those respondents likely to talk to others on politics. The hypothetical nature of the items in the vote module may also cause this outcome.

The point biserial correlations (used between a continuous latent variable measured on an ordinal scale and a dichotomous variable) between the number of discussants and the turnout and vote choice, however, indicate a mild relationship. The only significant correlation in the 2006 pilot study is between the number of discussants and voting for Bush, whereas all the weak correlations in the 2004 study are significant (see Table 6). The point biserial correlations between the number of female discussants and the turnout item are .05 and .07 for the 2006 and the 2004 studies respectively. Whereas having more female discussants significantly predict voting for Democrat presidential candidates, the correlations are insignificant for Bush.

The relationships between feeling close to the discussant or the frequency of contact, and vote choice and turnout seem largely insignificant for both the 2006 and the 2004 studies. The exception is the turnout decision in the 2006 study. Similarly, we do not observe a significant correlation between the perceived political interest of the discussant or the difference in the dyad's political opinions and the voting behavior, with the exception of voting for Kerry and the perceived political interest of the respondent. The only significant correlation between the driving time to the discussant's home and the voting behavior items is found in the 2006 study turnout decision items.

<<< Table 6 about here >>>

In brief, inter-item correlations in Table 6 do not point to a strong relationship between the groups of items in the module and vote choice or voter turnout. We have found, however, some mild correlations for a couple of items that deserve further investigation in multivariate analyses. In our inter-item correlation analyses, we also examined the relationship between the same dependent variables (the vote choice and turnout) and partisan differences as well as the difference in interest in politics. We found no significant correlation between these two measures and the vote choice and turnout items. So far, the respondent's tendency to talk to others on politics, the number of people the respondent talks to, and the total number of female discussants in the respondent's network seem to have the strongest relationship with presidential vote choice and voter turnout.

4. Bivariate and Multivariate Analyses

The survey weighted bivariate logistic regressions in Table 7 show that talking to others on politics is a significant predictor of vote choice, except for the 2006 Pilot Study turnout item. We ran the same analyses with the number of discussants and the number of female discussants in the network, feeling close to the discussant, days talked to the discussant, perceived political interest of the respondent, perceived difference in political opinions, driving time to the discussant's home as independent variables in separate bivariate regressions.

<<< Table 7 about here >>>

We found telltale evidence showing possible relationships between these variables and the vote decision. Here, we present only the significant findings of the analyses. In addition, we regressed the 2006 and the 2004 vote choice and voter turnout items on the partisan difference and on the difference of interest in politics within the dyad. Once again, the measures were either insignificant in predicting the vote or the turnout or the odds ratios showed a substantively small magnitude. The reason might be the effect of confounding variables on the dependent variables. In order to look at the marginal effects holding other covariates of interest constant we turn to multivariate regressions below.

In the rest of the analyses we use survey weighted multivariate logistic regressions of vote choice and voter turnout on the key items in the social network module and on the other potentially confounding variables, i.e. we control for the respondent's party identification, partisan strength, ideology, news exposure, interest in politics, and the demographic control variables for race, gender, level of education, income and age. Except for the respondent ideology and the demographic variables, all the other right hand side variables are taken from the 2006 ANES Pilot Study modules. In order to avoid endogeneity at this stage of analysis, we run separate regressions for the key social network independent variables. Once again our dependent variables are the voter turnout, vote for Bush and vote for Clinton in the 2006 ANES Pilot Study, and the vote turnout, vote for Bush and vote for Kerry in the 2004 elections. The reported coefficients are exponentiated, hence directly interpretable as the odds of turning out to vote/voting for a candidate as opposed to not turning out to vote/not voting for a candidate. Each row in Table 8 reports only the coefficients of social network variables from separately run regressions. In all the models, the list of other right-hand side variables remains the same.

<<< Table 8 about here >>>

The results clearly show that, once the covariates are controlled for, social network effects on vote choice and voter turnout become more visible. Nonetheless, there are clear discrepancies in the predictions of these variables for the 2006 and 2004 dependent variables. For instance, talking with others on politics seems to reduce the odds of turning out to vote in the 2006 study but increases the odds in the 2004 study, and measures that significantly predict turnout in the 2006 pilot study, are not significant predictors in the 2004 study.

Our findings provide evidence that the level of agreement/disagreement in the network affects voter turnout and vote choice (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2001; Huckfeldt et al. 2004; Mutz 2006). Both the dyadic difference in political opinion and the partisan difference seem to reduce turnout in the 2006 study. However, the results show a difference across studies. Partisan difference in the dyad is a significant predictor of turnout in the 2006 study but only of vote choice in the 2004 study. As in the turnout regressions, we observe a difference in the predictive potential of these variables across the two studies.

The findings do not show a uniformly strong relationship between network quality as measured by the frequency of contact, or by the geographic dispersion of the network, but through feelings of closeness with the discussant in the 2006 pilot study. Another hypothesis we want to consider in relation to network coherence and quality is whether the effect of agreement/disagreement in the network on voter turnout and vote choice is conditional on the strength of the network tie. In order to measure the conditional effect we interact the measure of partisan differences in the dyad with network quality as measured by the feeling of closeness to the discussant and the frequency of contact. We include the lower level interactions in our models, which are also substantively interesting. The results are presented in Table 9.

<<< Table 9 about here >>>

The results predict that the three-way interaction and the two-way interactions are significant predictors of presidential vote choice and the turnout decision. However, the magnitude of the significant coefficients is too modest to have a substantive impact on the dependent variables. Moreover, after leaving out the respondents who do not talk to others on politics, our sample is further reduced to 307 respondents who in fact responded to all the items included in the model. Including several social network variables in the model increases the endogeneity problem in the model even further. As a result the models should be interpreted as robustness checks for social network effects on vote choice and voter turnout. Yet, as it stands, coherence in the network seems to depend, although weakly, on the frequency of contact with the discussants weighted by the main respondent's feeling toward the discussants. These effects are observed mainly for the turnout items and voting for Bush in the 2004 election. In order to better assess the nature of the relationship future studies should explicitly take into account endogeneity in models of social networks and voting behavior.

CONCLUSION

This report analyzes the Social Networks Module in the 2006 ANES Pilot Study. We employ items both from the pilot study and from the 2004 ANES Time Series Study to reach comparable conclusions and report if there is any meaningful findings for our variables of interest across samples. To this goal, in all of the analyses we use voter turnout and presidential vote decision items from both datasets. In both the correlational analyses and the regressions the predicted potential of social network items varies in magnitude and in direction across the 2006 and 2004 ANES studies. Research on other pilot modules may clarify why the social network items work differently in both datasets.

Because this is a pilot study module review we tried to provide evidence on whether items function as expected and in line with the findings in the literature at large. We believe that the social network modules in ANES studies are very important to our understanding of how citizens interact and communicate politics in social settings. Based on the literature's emphasis on the impact of political disagreement we draw three main conclusions from our analyses:

First, there is clear evidence that social networks are cohesive --network members tend to share the same party identification and similar political opinions. The correlational analyses show that network members who share similar political opinions also have discussants from similar party identifications. Second, we have found evidence to the depressing effect of partisan differences on turnout decision in 2006 and on voting for Bush in 2004 elections in Table 8. Likewise, as networks include individuals with different levels of interest in politics the odds of turning out to vote decreases. In brief, these preliminary analyses suggest that incoherent networks may reduce individuals' propensity to fulfill their civic duty of voting. Last, the group of items in the social network module on the geographic dispersion of the network members did not prove to be a significant predictor of voting behavior except for voting for Bush in the 2004 election. Future research should clarify why driving distance to discussants' homes would affect voting for a particular candidate. If these questions are combined with questions on the origin of the relationship between the main respondent and the discussant (spouse, neighbor, colleague, non-relative associate, etc.) we can have a better idea of the impact of the relationships within a network on turnout and vote choice.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for items in the Social Network Module

Item Name	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
Talking with Others on Politics	1211	.41	.49	0	1
Total Number of People that R talks to	662	2.88	2.76	0	10
Gender of the Discussant is Male	661	1.41	1.53	0	8
Gender of the Discussant is Female	661	1.47	1.65	0	8
Discussant #1 = Male	1211	.20	.40	0	1
Discussant #2 = Male	1211	.16	.37	0	1
Discussant #3 = Male	1211	.14	.35	0	1
Discussant #1 = Female	1211	.19	.39	0	1
Discussant #2 = Female	1211	.19	.39	0	1
Discussant #3 = Female	1211	.14	.35	0	1
Feeling Close to Discussant #1	476	1.80	1.01	1	5
Feeling Close to Discussant #2	425	1.96	1.06	1	5
Feeling Close to Discussant #3	343	2.12	1.09	1	5
Days Talking with Discussant #1	323	60.4	57.1	0	182
Days Talking with Discussant #2	339	56.5	52.6	0	182
Days Talking with Discussant #3	288	50.6	48.1	0	182
Days Discussants Talking with each other (only for two mentions)	78	25.4	44.9	0	182
Days Discussant # 1 Talking with Discussant #2	313	24.0	40.1	0	180
Days Discussant # 1 Talking with Discussant #3	323	18.9	35.2	0	180
Days Discussant # 2 Talking with Discussant #3	307	22.0	36.2	0	180
R's Different Political Opinions from	474	3.65	1.15	1	5

Discussant #1 R's Different Political Opinions from	423	3.65	1.12	1	5
Discussant #2 R's Different Political Opinions from	337	3.61	1.10	1	5
Discussant #3					
Party ID of Discussant #1	472	2.86	2.49	0	7
Party ID of Discussant #2	422	2.79	2.48	0	7
Party ID of Discussant #3	338	2.77	2.45	0	6
Discussant #1's Interest in Govt. and Politics	475	2.28	1.05	1	5
Discussant #2's Interest in Govt. and Politics	426	2.46	1.01	1	5
Discussant #3's Interest in Govt. and Politics	341	2.54	1.01	1	5
Minutes to Drive to Discussant #1's Home	274	19.89	16.97	1	150
Hours to Drive to Discussant #1's Home	91	5.60	6.06	1	24
Days to Drive to Discussant #1's Home	20	4.25	5.24	1	25
Miles to Drive to Discussant #1's Home	7	4000	3605.55	0	10,000
Minutes to Drive to Discussant #2's Home	279	20.17	16.24	0	115
Hours to Drive to Discussant #2's Home	86	6.33	5.65	1	24
Days to Drive to Discussant #2's Home	20	3.6	2.01	1	9
Miles to Drive to Discussant #2's Home	5	1400.2	1673.1	0	4,000
Minutes to Drive to Discussant #3's Home	236	20.31	14.43	1	90
Hours to Drive to Discussant #3's Home	73	5.62	5.36	1	20
Days to Drive to Discussant #3's Home	13	3.38	2.40	1	10
Miles to Drive to Discussant #3's Home	3	8295.7	3043.4	5,000	11,000

Table 2: Partisan Difference between the Main Respondent and the Discussants

	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	<i>Observation</i>
Discussant#1	-.074	2.44	-8	6	476
Discussant#2	-.007	2.5	-7	6	427
Discussant#3	.017	2.52	-6	6	343

Table 3: Interest in Politics Difference between the Main Respondent and the Discussants

	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Min	Max	<i>Observation</i>
Discussant#1	-.139	1.19	-4	3	236
Discussant#2	-.366	1.26	-6	2	216
Discussant#3	-.42	1.13	-4	2	169

Table 4: Distance in Time from Main Respondent's Home to the Discussants'

	Discussant #1	Discussant #2	Discussant #3
Lives with the [NAME]	20.17	10.77	8.75
Time given - in minutes only	54.41	62.53	65.01
Time given - in hours only	15.97	17.10	17.49
Time given - in days only	4.20	4.45	3.79
Time given - in minutes and hours	3.15	2.81	3.79
Time given - in hours and days	0	0.23	0
Can't drive there	1.89	1.41	0.87
Don't know	0.21	0.47	0.29
Refused	0	0.23	0
Total	100	100	100
N	476	427	343

Table 5: Distribution of Male and Female Respondents across the Gender of the Discussant

	Discussant # 1		Discussant # 2		Discussant # 3	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Respondent is Male	.39	.150	.41	.13	.42	.11
Respondent is Female	.28	.19	.31	.16	.34	.13
Design-based F	F(1, 16) = 9.43 P = .0049		F(1, 16) = 5.53 P = .027		F(1, 16) = 3.98 P = .057	
N	675		675		675	

Note: The cells include proportions.

Table 6: Inter-Item Correlations between Voting Behavior and Main Social Networks Module Items

		The Number of Discussants	The Total Number of Female Discussants	Feeling Close to the Discussant	Days Talked to the Discussant	Perceived Political Interest of the Respondent	Perceived Difference in Political Opinions	Driving Time to the Discussant's Home
The 2006 ANES Pilot Study	Turnout	0.024 0.28	0.049 0.03	-0.055 0.05	-0.0553 0.05	-0.0230 0.42	-0.0306 0.28	0.0534 0.04
	Vote for Bush	0.052 0.02	-0.0002 0.99	0.008 0.79	0.0343 0.23	0.0205 0.47	-0.0209 0.47	0.0243 0.36
	Vote for Clinton	-0.009 0.69	0.038 0.09	-0.014 0.62	-0.0356 0.21	-0.0396 .16	0.0297 0.29	-0.0224 0.39
The 2004 ANES Time Series Study	Turnout	0.108 0.0001	0.066 0.003	0.026 0.36	0.001 0.98	-0.017 0.56	0.011 0.71	-0.010 0.70
	Vote for Bush	0.074 0.001	0.003 0.90	0.036 0.21	0.008 0.78	0.027 0.34	-0.033 0.25	-0.007 0.79
	Vote for Kerry	0.067 0.003	0.126 0.00	-0.008 0.77	-0.025 0.37	-0.086 0.002	0.047 0.01	0.006 0.82
N		1986	1983	1244	1243	1242	1232	1428

Note: The first line in each row shows the coefficients. The second line in each row shows the p-value of the coefficients.

Table 7: Results from the Bivariate logistic regressions of Voting Behavior on the Main Social Networks Module Items

	2006 ANES Pilot Study			2004 ANES Times Series Study		
	Turnout	Vote for Bush	Vote for Clinton	Turnout	Vote for Bush	Vote for Kerry
Talking to Other on Politics (N=2025)	1.280 (0.176)	1.666** (0.226)	0.586** (0.077)	2.520** (0.336)	1.774** (0.228)	1.666** (0.230)
The Number of Discussants (N=1986)	1.016 (0.020)	1.047* (0.021)	0.976 (0.019)	1.104** (0.022)	1.069** (0.021)	1.059** (0.021)
The Total Number of Female Discussants (N=1983)	1.053 (0.034)	1.013 (0.033)	1.016 (0.033)	1.106** (0.037)	1.020 (0.033)	1.184** (0.040)
Days Talked to the Discussant (N=1243)	0.998* (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)	1.000 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)	1.000 (0.001)	0.999 (0.001)
Partisan Difference (N=1428)	1.046 (0.049)	0.966 (0.039)	0.911* (0.038)	0.924* (0.036)	0.969 (0.039)	1.044 (0.049)
Difference in Interest Politics (N=621)	1.045 (0.128)	1.111 (0.127)	0.952 (0.114)	0.905 (0.107)	0.907 (0.104)	1.096 (0.137)

**significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%*

Table 8: Results from the Multivariate logistic regressions of Voting Behavior on the Main Social Networks Module Items

	2006 ANES Pilot Study			2004 ANES Times Series Study		
	Turnout	Vote for Bush	Vote for Clinton	Turnout	Vote for Bush	Vote for Kerry
Talking to Others on Politics (N=465)	0.217** (0.078)	4.689** (1.913)	0.130** (0.059)	5.690** (2.412)	2.023 (0.916)	0.917 (0.448)
The Number of Discussants (N=450)	0.939 (0.045)	1.268** (0.080)	0.759 ** (0.050)	1.061 (0.048)	1.044 (0.076)	0.792** (0.052)
The Total Number of Female Discussants (N=450)	1.045 (0.075)	1.577** (0.183)	0.625** (0.074)	1.045 (0.079)	1.047 (0.119)	0.695** (0.093)
Feeling Close to the Discussant (N=307)	0.739* (0.102)	1.627* (0.354)	0.614* (0.145)	1.021 (0.131)	0.829 (0.234)	0.561** (0.121)
Days Talked to the Discussant (N=342)	0.999 (0.002)	0.997 (0.003)	0.998 (0.003)	0.998 (0.002)	1.002 (0.003)	1.004 (0.003)
Difference in Opinions (N=306)	1.116 (0.129)	1.121 (0.161)	1.005 (0.158)	0.939 (0.116)	1.869* (0.483)	0.872 (0.175)
Driving Time (N=342)	1.380 (0.233)	0.937 (0.156)	1.319 (0.199)	1.057 (0.143)	2.018** (0.456)	0.781 (0.215)
Partisan Difference (N=342)	0.834** 0.058)	0.876 (0.082)	1.111 (0.111)	0.926 (0.061)	0.567** (0.112)	1.752** (0.273)
Difference in Interest in Politics (N=309)	0.668* (0.120)	1.075 (0.214)	0.788 (0.163)	0.906 (0.138)	0.632* (0.124)	1.027 (0.280)

*significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Note: For ease of illustration here we report only the odds ratios of social network variables (Full tables are available upon request). In interpreting the findings please bear in mind that smaller values on “feeling close to the discussant” means feeling more close, whereas smaller values on “difference in political opinion” means less difference, hence similarity of opinions in the dyad.

Table 9: Multivariate Regression Analyses of Voting Behavior on the Main Social Networks Module Items

	Turnout	Vote for Bush	Vote for Clinton	Turnout	Vote for Bush	Vote for Kerry
Partisan Difference	1.641 (0.470)	1.154 (0.478)	1.752 (0.641)	0.384** (0.112)	20.255** (13.917)	1.099 (0.725)
Feeling Close to the Discussant	1.558 (0.440)	2.989* (1.339)	0.510 (0.227)	0.430** (0.123)	7.801** (5.348)	0.364 (0.197)
Days Talked to the Discussant	1.010 (0.006)	1.009 (0.007)	0.998 (0.008)	0.986* (0.006)	1.026** (0.009)	0.988 (0.009)
2 way interaction (Feeling Close*Days talked)	0.992** (0.003)	0.996 (0.003)	1.001 (0.003)	1.006* (0.003)	0.990* (0.005)	1.006 (0.004)
3 way interaction (Feeling Close*Days talked*Partisan Difference)	1.002 (0.001)	0.999 (0.001)	1.001 (0.002)	0.998* (0.001)	1.007** (0.002)	1.000 (0.002)
2 way interaction (Feeling Close*Partisan Difference)	0.745** (0.085)	0.889 (0.123)	0.922 (0.119)	1.436** (0.146)	0.252** (0.063)	1.044 (0.253)
2 way interaction (Days talked*Partisan Difference)	0.997 (0.003)	0.999 (0.003)	0.996 (0.003)	1.005* (0.002)	0.983** (0.004)	1.004 (0.004)
Party ID (2006)	1.212* (0.112)	1.937** (0.229)	0.528** (0.063)	0.974 (0.084)	6.355** (1.831)	0.230** (0.043)
Strength of Party ID	4.462** (1.395)	1.978 (0.854)	0.239** (0.112)	1.110 (0.339)	5.768** (3.621)	0.357* (0.175)
Ideology (2004)	0.982 (0.135)	3.039** (1.093)	0.279** (0.102)	1.075 (0.137)	1.911* (0.498)	0.425** (0.115)
Days Spent watching TV News in the past week	1.042 (0.080)	0.896 (0.111)	0.991 (0.122)	0.956 (0.067)	0.779 (0.123)	0.913 (0.108)
Respondent's Interest in Politics (2006)	0.578* (0.131)	1.619 (0.405)	0.388** (0.105)	1.412 (0.276)	2.356 (1.032)	0.316** (0.104)
White	0.904 (0.342)	3.249 (3.348)	0.241 (0.275)	2.403* (0.915)	0.589 (0.396)	3.071* (1.547)
Female	1.086 (0.318)	1.780 (0.762)	0.525 (0.237)	0.924 (0.260)	1.581 (0.939)	0.850 (0.405)
Level of Education	1.799** (0.198)	0.603** (0.098)	1.758** (0.266)	1.032 (0.104)	0.604* (0.119)	1.745** (0.330)

Income	0.972** (0.009)	1.025 (0.014)	0.966* (0.015)	1.003 (0.009)	0.920** (0.016)	1.003 (0.027)
Age	0.990 (0.011)	1.013 (0.016)	1.000 (0.018)	1.042** (0.011)	1.112** (0.027)	0.958* (0.020)
N	307	307	307	307	307	307

* significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Note: Please note that in interaction terms that include “feeling close to the discussant”, less than 1 odds ratios mean greater odds of achieving the outcome.

APPENDIX 1. Survey Weighted Sample Characteristics of the 2006 ANES Pilot Study

	Proportion	Std. Error
Race		
White	0.78	0.017
Black	0.123	0.017
Hispanic	0.046	0.012
Other	0.174	0.022
Gender		
Male	0.467	0.025
Female	0.533	0.025
Education		
Less than or equal to 8 th grade	0.021	0.009
9 th -11 th grade	0.123	0.029
High School	0.314	0.031
High School and Beyond	0.198	0.015
Junior College	0.086	0.013
College Degree	0.149	0.016
Advanced Degree	0.109	0.014
Family Income		
Less than 11K	0.092	0.015
11-20K	0.067	0.019
20-40K	0.178	0.019
40-60K	0.152	0.017
60-80K	0.164	0.018
80K and above	0.346	0.022
Employment Status		
Working now	0.618	0.035
Temporarily laid off	0.019	0.009
Unemployed	0.048	0.019
Retired	0.177	0.025
Disabled	0.033	0.01
Homemaker	0.081	0.014
Student	0.024	0.009
Age		
Less than 25	0.105	0.017
25-35	0.158	0.022
35-45	0.206	0.021
45-55	0.211	0.017
55-65	0.149	0.01
Greater than 65	0.171	0.029

Region		
North East	0.199	0.043
North Central	0.314	0.023
South	0.285	0.043
West	0.202	0.023
Party Identification		
Strong Democrat	0.171	0.019
Weak Democrat	0.141	0.024
Leaning Democrat	0.156	0.021
Independent	0.094	0.021
Leaning Republican	0.12	0.017
Weak Republican	0.145	0.016
Strong Republican	0.169	0.018

APPENDIX 2. A comparison of the 2006 ANES Pilot Study and the 2004 ANES Times Series Sample Characteristics

	2004		2006	
	Proportion	Std. Error	Proportion	Std. Error
Race				
White	0.723	0.013	0.801	0.015
Black	0.15	0.01	0.103	0.012
Hispanic	0.066	0.007	0.042	0.008
Other	0.211	0.012	0.157	0.014
Gender				
Male	0.47	0.014	0.461	0.019
Female	0.53	0.014	0.539	0.019
Education				
Less than or equal to 8 th grade	0.031	0.005	0.012	0.004
9 th -11 th grade	0.058	0.007	0.039	0.007
High School	0.293	0.013	0.252	0.017
High School and Beyond	0.219	0.012	0.227	0.016
Junior College	0.098	0.009	0.101	0.012
College Degree	0.185	0.011	0.209	0.016
Advanced Degree	0.116	0.009	0.16	0.014
Family Income				
Less than 11K	0.108	0.009	0.081	0.011
11-20K	0.082	0.008	0.063	0.009
20-40K	0.194	0.011	0.181	0.015
40-60K	0.163	0.011	0.17	0.015
60-80K	0.131	0.01	0.149	0.014
80K and above	0.323	0.014	0.357	0.019
Employment Status				
Working now	0.65	0.014	0.655	0.018
Temporarily laid off	0.013	0.003	0.01	0.004
Unemployed	0.029	0.005	0.021	0.006
Retired	0.178	0.011	0.199	0.015
Disabled	0.032	0.005	0.033	0.007
Homemaker	0.072	0.007	0.063	0.009
Student	0.65	0.014	0.655	0.018
Age				
Less than 25	0.104	0.009	0.078	0.01
25-35	0.168	0.011	0.122	0.013
35-45	0.178	0.011	0.172	0.015
45-55	0.196	0.011	0.234	0.016
55-65	0.182	0.011	0.209	0.016
Greater than 65	0.171	0.011	0.185	0.015

Region				
North East	0.18	0.011	0.181	0.015
North Central	0.258	0.013	0.29	0.018
South	0.344	0.014	0.306	0.018
West	0.218	0.012	0.224	0.016
Party Identification				
Strong Democrat	0.169	0.011	0.172	0.015
Weak Democrat	0.149	0.01	0.131	0.013
Leaning Democrat	0.175	0.011	0.166	0.014
Independent	0.098	0.009	0.076	0.01
Leaning Republican	0.115	0.009	0.116	0.012
Weak Republican	0.128	0.01	0.152	0.014
Strong Republican	0.161	0.011	0.184	0.015

APPENDIX 3. Proportions of the Response Categories for Items Measured on a Dichotomous or Ordinal Scale

Item Name	Proportion
Discussant #1 - Male (0)	.49
Discussant #1 - Male (1)	.51
Discussant #2 - Male (0)	.55
Discussant #2 - Male (1)	.45
Discussant #3 - Male (0)	.49
Discussant #3 - Male (1)	.51
Discussant #1 - Female (0)	.51
Discussant #1 - Female (1)	.49
Discussant #2 - Female (0)	.45
Discussant #2 - Female (1)	.55
Discussant #3 - Female (0)	.51
Discussant #3 - Female (1)	.49
Feeling Close to Discussant #1 (1)	.50
Feeling Close to Discussant #1 (2)	.28
Feeling Close to Discussant #1 (3)	.15
Feeling Close to Discussant #1 (4)	.04
Feeling Close to Discussant #1 (5)	.03
Feeling Close to Discussant #2 (1)	.48
Feeling Close to Discussant #2 (2)	.26
Feeling Close to Discussant #2 (3)	.16
Feeling Close to Discussant #2 (4)	.6
Feeling Close to Discussant #2 (5)	.4
Feeling Close to Discussant #3 (1)	.40
Feeling Close to Discussant #3 (2)	.26
Feeling Close to Discussant #3 (3)	.23
Feeling Close to Discussant #3 (4)	.09
Feeling Close to Discussant #3 (5)	.02
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #1 (1)	.075
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #1 (2)	.075
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #1 (3)	.25
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #1 (4)	.31
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #1 (5)	.29
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #2 (1)	.06
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #2 (2)	.08
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #2 (3)	.22
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #2 (4)	.36
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #2 (5)	.28
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #3 (1)	.05
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #3 (2)	.12
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #3 (3)	.25

R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #3 (4)	.33
R's Different Political Opinions from Discussant #3 (5)	.25
Party ID of Discussant #1 (0)	.29
Party ID of Discussant #1 (1)	.14
Party ID of Discussant #1 (2)	.11
Party ID of Discussant #1 (3)	.02
Party ID of Discussant #1 (4)	.06
Party ID of Discussant #1 (5)	.08
Party ID of Discussant #1 (6)	.29
Party ID of Discussant #1 (7)	.007
Party ID of Discussant #2 (0)	.32
Party ID of Discussant #2 (1)	.17
Party ID of Discussant #2 (2)	.07
Party ID of Discussant #2 (3)	.02
Party ID of Discussant #2 (4)	.06
Party ID of Discussant #2 (5)	.12
Party ID of Discussant #2 (6)	.23
Party ID of Discussant #2 (7)	.008
Party ID of Discussant #3 (0)	.28
Party ID of Discussant #3 (1)	.16
Party ID of Discussant #3 (2)	.13
Party ID of Discussant #3 (3)	.02
Party ID of Discussant #3 (4)	.05
Party ID of Discussant #3 (5)	.12
Party ID of Discussant #3 (6)	.25
Party ID of Discussant #3 (7)	.00
Discussant #1's Interest in Govt. and Politics (1)	.27
Discussant #1's Interest in Govt. and Politics (2)	.31
Discussant #1's Interest in Govt. and Politics (3)	.28
Discussant #1's Interest in Govt. and Politics (4)	.12
Discussant #1's Interest in Govt. and Politics (5)	.02
Discussant #2's Interest in Govt. and Politics (1)	.20
Discussant #2's Interest in Govt. and Politics (2)	.33
Discussant #2's Interest in Govt. and Politics (3)	.35
Discussant #2's Interest in Govt. and Politics (4)	.10
Discussant #2's Interest in Govt. and Politics (5)	.02
Discussant #3's Interest in Govt. and Politics (1)	.16
Discussant #3's Interest in Govt. and Politics (2)	.20
Discussant #3's Interest in Govt. and Politics (3)	.37
Discussant #3's Interest in Govt. and Politics (4)	.13
Discussant #3's Interest in Govt. and Politics (5)	.03

N = 328; Number of Strata = 26; Number of PSUs = 51