

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL FOR:
Why Do Practitioners Want to Connect with Researchers?
Evidence from a Field Experiment

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Other sample & data collection details

Based on information provided by my partner organization, I had measures of three pre-treatment variables: the sex of the group leader (coded 1 for female; 0 for male) and whether the congressional delegation where the group is located is Republican or not (coded as 0, 1, or 2 for Senate, and 0 or 1 for House).

The organization has chapters in most, but not all, congressional districts, and some districts have more than one chapter. That is why these numbers are close, but not exactly the same as, the overall partisan distribution in Congress.

Below are summaries of these three attributes across the entire sample (N=456 group leaders):

52.4% female, 47.6% male

211 group leaders (47.1%) live in states with 0 Republican Senators
 87 group leaders (19.4%) live in states with 1 Republican Senator
 150 group leaders (33.5%) live in states with 2 Republican Senators

239 group leaders (53.1%) live in a House district represented by a Democrat
 211 group leaders (46.9%) live in a House district represented by a Republican
[Note that these numbers do not add up to 456 because some chapters are located in US territories with limited/no congressional representation.]

The table below demonstrates that there was balance on all three of these variables. The table shows the mean value for each variable as well as the p-value from a one-way ANOVA test.

	Control	“More Details”	“Value Others”	“Efficient”	p-value
Female	0.52	0.55	0.50	0.53	0.87
# of Republican Senators	0.80	0.93	0.87	0.85	0.75
Republican House member	0.50	0.46	0.42	0.50	0.61

Further details regarding data collection:

--I randomly selected 39 respondents to receive emails first, just to test for any unexpected and/or unwelcome responses (none were observed). The other 417 respondents received their emails three days later.

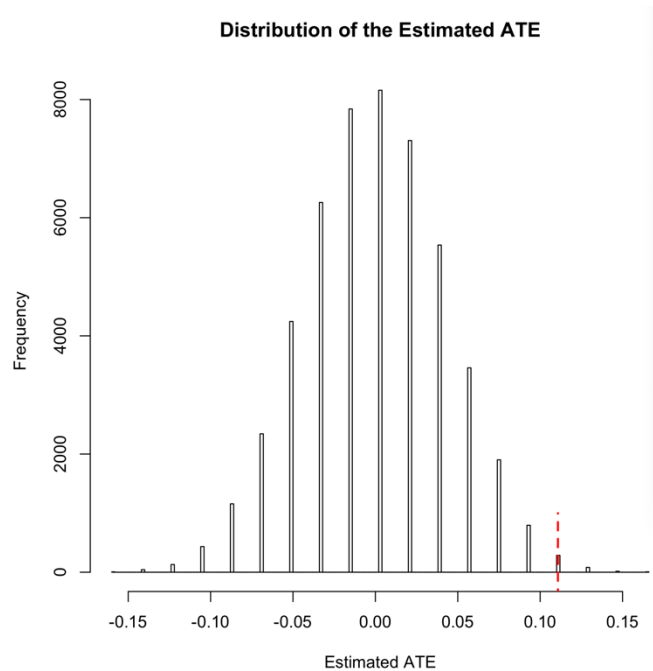
-- One person received the “efficiently share what they know” message and set up an appointment, but then did not answer the phone at the scheduled time. That person is not counted as choosing to connect in the main results.

Further details of randomization inference

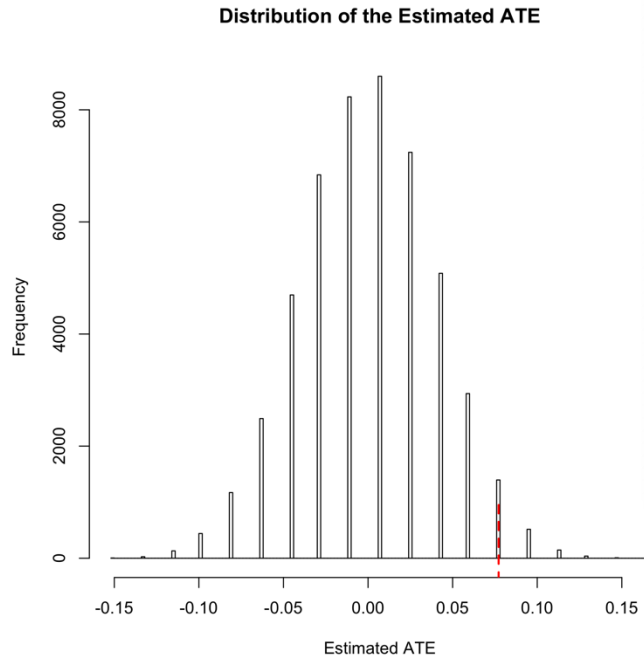
Each of the paper’s main results comparing treatment groups to the control are robust to randomization inference (Aronow and Samii 2012) as follows: $p=0.02$ for comparison between control and “researchers will efficiently share what they know”; $p=0.08$ for comparison between control and “value others’ expertise”; $p=0.93$ for comparison between control and “more details about information shared”.

Below are the null distributions of these randomization-based inference results, along with the estimated ATE marked as the dotted line.

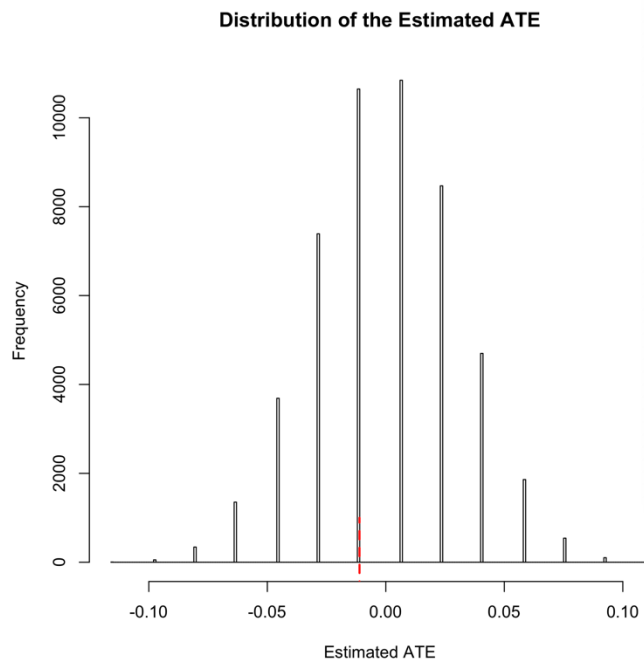
Comparing the control group and “efficiently sharing what you know”:



Comparing the control group and “value others’ knowledge”:



Comparing the control group and the “more details” group:



Citation:

Aronow, Peter and Cyrus Samii. 2012. “Ri: R Package for Performing Randomization-Based Inference for Experiments.”

Further details on the relevance of relational concerns and the motivation for the treatments in the field experiment

The paper's focus on relational concerns stems from existing published work as well as my own original research that is part of a forthcoming book. As part of that work, I interviewed 45 researchers and nonprofit practitioners between July and December 2017 who had joined an online platform devoted to building new connections. This included 28 practitioners and 17 researchers. In each of these cases, although they had joined the platform by building a profile, they had not initiated any new informal (or formal) collaborations on their own. The purpose of the interviews was to better understand why not.

My research design was thus an example of an "extreme" case selection methodology (Gerring 2017) because my interviewees had already demonstrated a high degree of capacity and motivation to connect. They had also voluntarily taken advantage of the opportunity afforded by the network to build a profile to (ostensibly) initiate new connections. Thus, there would be good reason to expect them to initiate new connections, yet they still did not.

I invited them to share their sources of hesitation. One of the most striking findings was that of the 28 practitioners I interviewed almost three quarters mentioned relational concerns that reflected uncertainty about what the experience of interacting with the researcher would be like. Some of these were about whether the researcher would value what they have to say, such as one person who said: "Are they really going to care about what I have to say?" In other cases practitioners mentioned being under severe time constraints and being concerned that it would take too much time to figure out how research could be helpful to them: "I'm really busy and I worry that I'll just learn about lots of details that aren't relevant to my work."

Overall, these interviews underscored the importance of relational concerns – the fact that people care about what the interaction will be like. More specifically, they helped motivate why it made sense to operationalize these concerns in the two ways that I did for this paper's field experiment.

Citation:

Gerring, John. 2017. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge.