Appendix: Political and Social Discussion Network Survey Items are Not Interchangeable

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A1 Predicting Individual Response Categories

To follow up on the difference in distribution test reported in the main paper, we also use a multinomial logistic regression to predict the marginal change in probability of observing particular response categories in the dependent variable (network size) by network generator condition (politics and social/important matters). Unlike a linear ordinary least squares model or an ordinal logistic regression model, a multinomial logistic regression model allows us to model nonlinear relationships across the space of our dependent variable. Critically, in our case, this includes allowing for the chance that being assigned to the politics condition may make a respondent marginally more likely to respond at either tail of the distribution in comparison to the center.

$$Network\ Size = \alpha + \beta * Condition \tag{1}$$

Figure A1 and Table A1 report the marginal difference in probability of response in each category.[1] Negative coefficients in the marginal coefficient effects plot indicate higher probability of response from the "social" condition, while positive coefficients in the plot indicate higher probability of response from the "politics" condition, relative to baseline probabilities in the combined response distribution.

Respondents in the "politics" condition are more likely to respond in cate-

[1]Our estimation sets the "social" treatment as the baseline category for the experimental condition and a network size of 2 (the modal category) as the base outcome category for the multinomial logit.

gories 0 and 10+ than are respondents in the "social" condition, whereas respondents in the "social" condition are more likely to respond in categories 3 and 4 than are respondents in the "politics" condition. All other categories have statistically indistinguishable probabilities of response between the conditions.

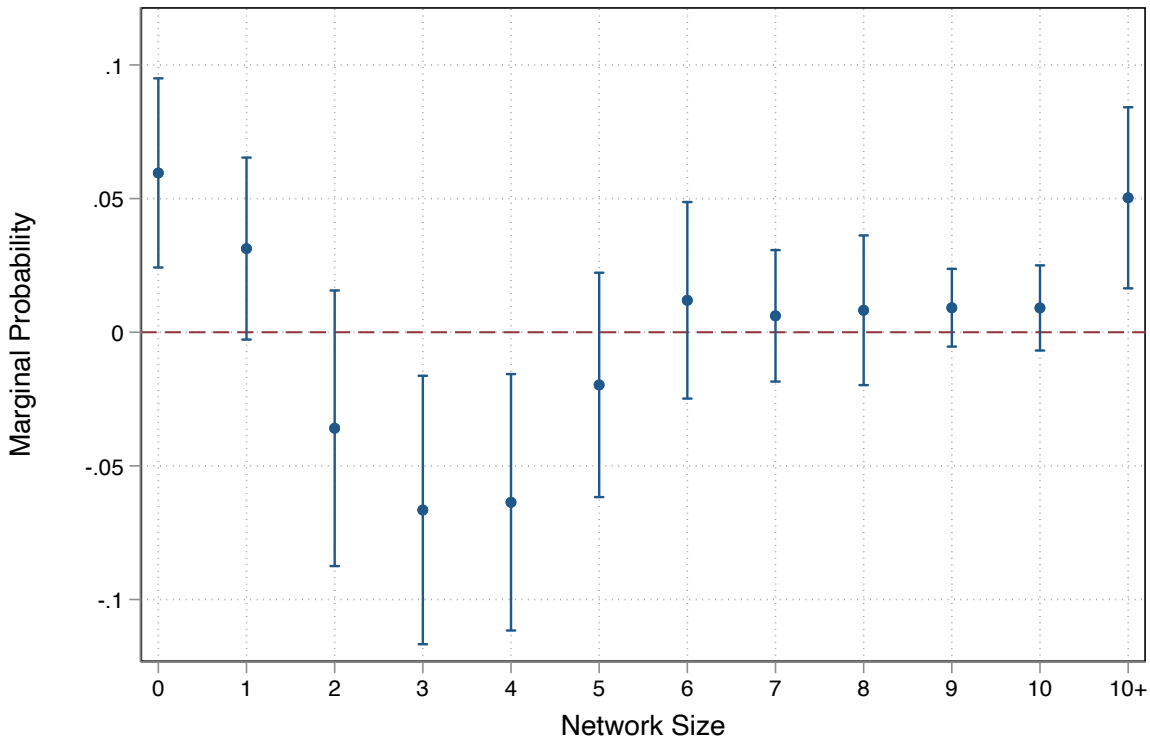

Figure A1: Marginal Probabilities of Response by Network Size

Table A1: Multinomial Logistic Regression: Network Size by Experimental Condition (Baseline: Social)

	Coefficient	SE
Outcome: Network Size of 0		
Politics	1.037**	(0.319)
Constant	−1.450***	(0.255)
Outcome: Network Size of 1		
Politics	0.667*	(0.317)
Constant	−1.303***	(0.240)
Outcome: Network Size of 2 (Base Outcome)		
Outcome: Network Size of 3		
Politics	−0.201	(0.238)
Constant	0.024	(0.156)
Outcome: Network Size of 4		
Politics	−0.231	(0.246)
Constant	−0.077	(0.160)
Outcome: Network Size of 5		
Politics	0.021	(0.267)
Constant	−0.503**	(0.181)
Outcome: Network Size of 6		
Politics	0.352	(0.294)
Constant	−0.960***	(0.211)
Outcome: Network Size of 7		
Politics	0.383	(0.408)
Constant	−1.830***	(0.299)
Outcome: Network Size of 8		
Politics	0.386	(0.365)
Constant	−1.561***	(0.267)
Outcome: Network Size of 9		
Politics	1.022	(0.709)
Constant	−3.296***	(0.588)
Outcome: Network Size of 10		
Politics	0.868	(0.634)
Constant	−3.008***	(0.512)
Outcome: Network Size of 10+		
Politics	0.973**	(0.328)
Constant	−1.504***	(0.261)
Log likelihood	−1887.997	
n=842		

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A2 Additional Censored Poisson Material

Table A2 reports the full regression table for Figure 2 from the main paper. The model treats political interest categorically, so as to not presume a linear relationship in the data, and uses survey weights to improve external validity.[2]

Table A2: Censored Poisson: Network Size by Treatment and Political Interest

	Network Size
Condition (Baseline: Social)	
Politics	-1.881^{***}
	(0.438)
Political Interest (Baseline: 1. Hardly at all)	
2. Only now and then	0.097
	(0.179)
3. Some of the time	0.092
	(0.141)
4. Most of the time	0.301^{*}
	(0.132)
Interaction	
Politics × 2. Only now and then	1.265^{**}
	(0.471)
Politics × 3. Some of the time	1.899^{***}
	(0.453)
Politics × 4. Most of the time	2.089^{***}
	(0.442)
Constant	1.186^{***}
	(0.125)
Wald χ^2	125.292
n=829	

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

[2]The survey weights do not substantively change the findings.

Figure A2 provides a marginal effects plot, rather than a predicted values plot, for the results shown in Table A2 and Figure 2 in the main paper. When assigned to the politics condition, respondents who paid attention to public affairs "Most of the Time" were more likely to respond in higher network size categories, while respondents who paid attention to public affairs "Hardly at All" or "Only Now and Then" would be more likely to respond in lower network size categories (relative to the baseline social network condition). Respondents who were interested in public affairs "Some of the Time" showed no meaningful difference in response between the politics and social conditions.[3]

[3]We note that, while our treatment condition ("politics" or "social" network) was experimentally assigned, our moderator (political interest) is a measured, not manipulated, variable and thus, should not be considered a causally identified treatment effect. Instead, it is more correctly described as a descriptive conditional average treatment effect (CATE), as suggested by Kam and Trussler (2017).

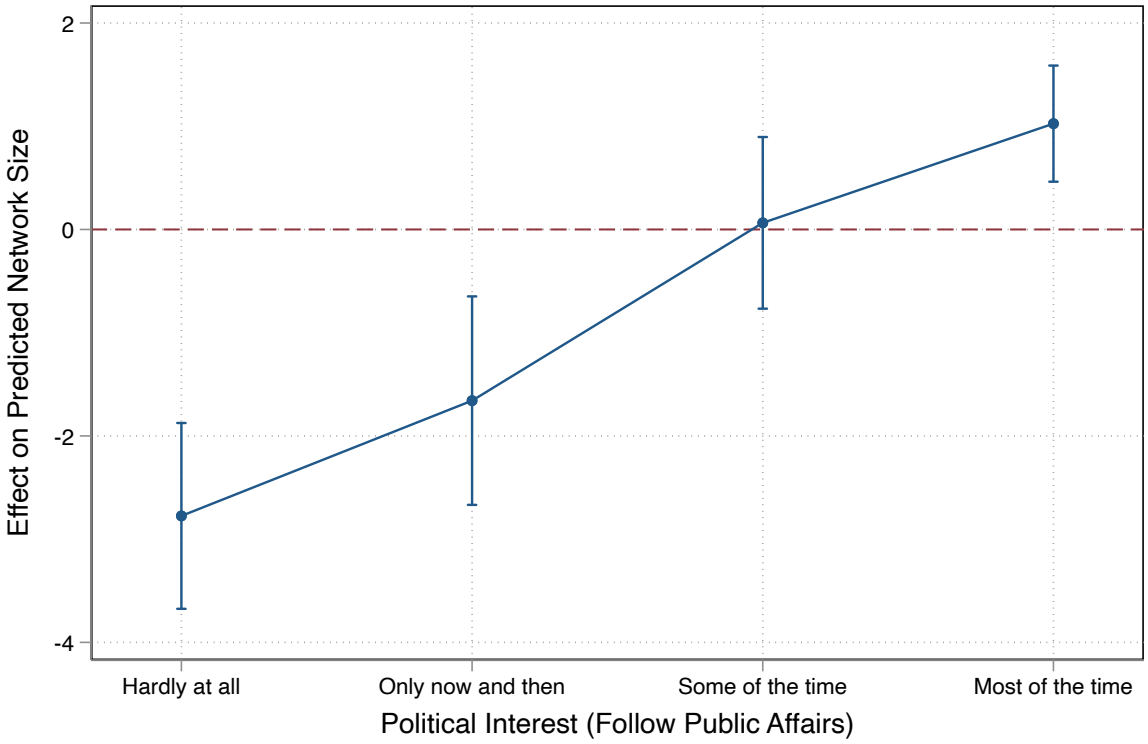

Figure A2: Marginal Effects: Politics Condition by Political Interest

A3 Experimental Reporting

This document follows the reporting standards recommended by the APSA Organized Section on Experimental Research[4] that were published as part of Issue 1(1) of the Journal of Experimental Political Science.[5]

A. **Hypotheses**: The experiment was designed to test whether an "important matters" personal discussion network generator was interchangeable with a "political" personal discussion network generator in a cross-national survey. Secondarily, we wished to examine if a subject's interest in politics was correlated with response in both experimental conditions.

B. **Subjects and Context** The subject pool was selected through the Cooperative Election Study (CES), run by YouGov America. The New College of Florida (NCF) module of the 2020 CES was specified to be a 1,000 person national sample of the United States. The survey was conducted online. Further details of the recruiting process and methodology of the survey can be found in the 2020 CES documentation located here:

   https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/E9N6PH

C. **Allocation Method**: Within the survey, random assignment to either of the two experimental conditions was conducted by YouGov America's online survey software. Randomization occurred on a rolling basis as subjects reached

[4] https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-experimental-political-science/information/reporting-standards

[5] https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-experimental-political-science/issue/9D2F426D4E40BCB62C7AF60F2A79F36C

the network size question in the post-election wave of the survey. To assess randomization, we perform a logistic regression predicting treatment using standard demographic covariates at our disposal: age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, marital status, rural/urban status, party identification, and level of interest in the news. Our results are given in figure A3 and appear sufficiently balanced to our eye.

D. **Treatments**: Assignment to one of two experimental conditions meant seeing different wording in one question of the survey provided by YouGov America's online survey software. Question wording for each condition is provided in the main paper.

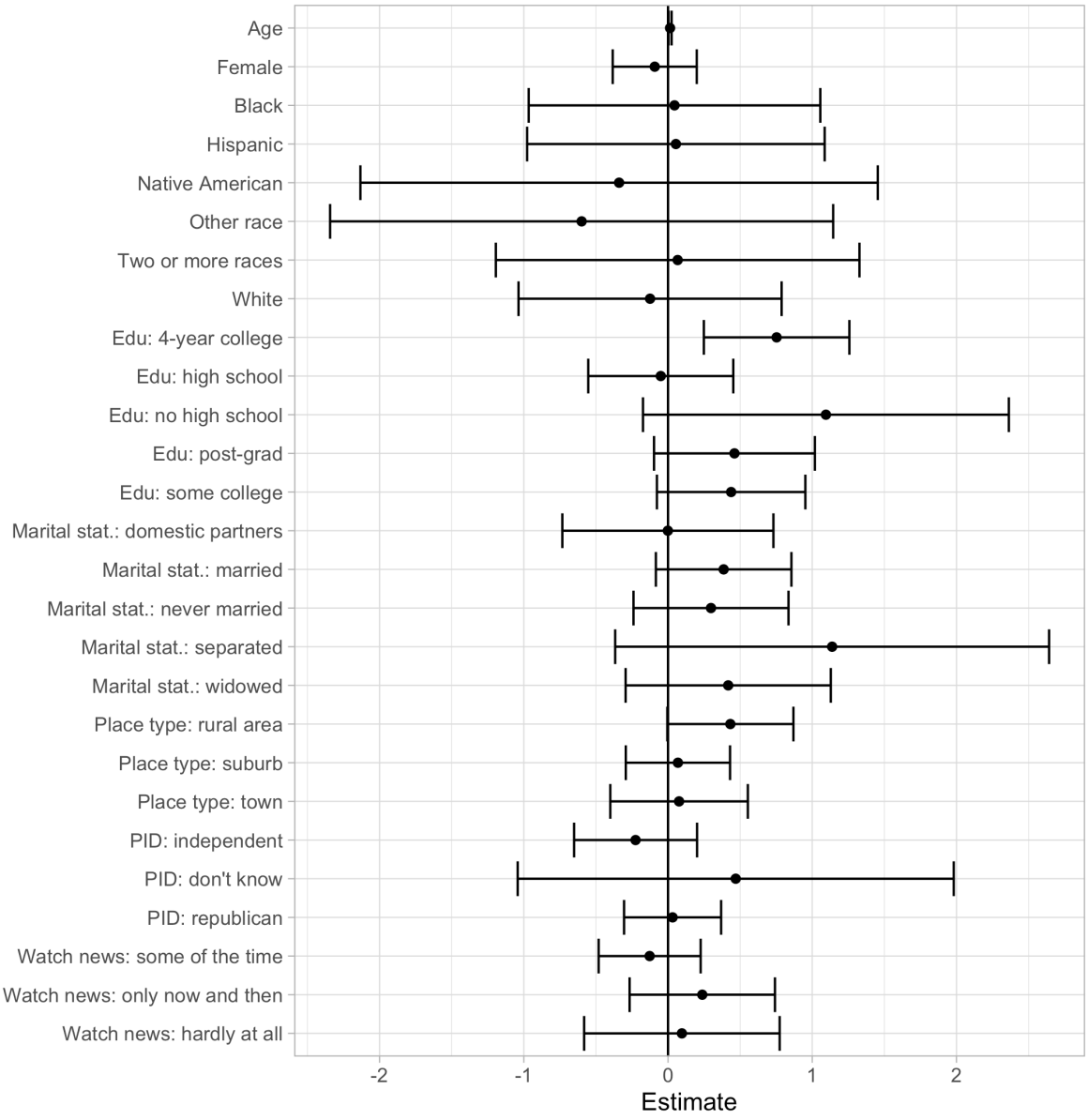

Figure A3: Balance Check (95% Confidence Intervals)

E. **Results**:

(a) **Outcome Measures and Covariates**

Question wording for each condition is provided in the main paper. The only other survey question used was for interest in political news (variable `newsint` in the 2020 CES). Phrasing for that question is given below.

- *Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs ...*
  - *Most of the time*
  - *Some of the time*
  - *Only now and then*
  - *Hardly at all*
  - *Don't know*

Complete wording and survey questionnaire maybe found at the repository for the CES and NCF CES Module:

- 2020 CES: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/E9N6PH
- 2020 NCF CES Module: https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/RWN2MC

(b) **CONSORT Participant Flow Diagram**

The survey experiment was embedded in the post-election phase of the

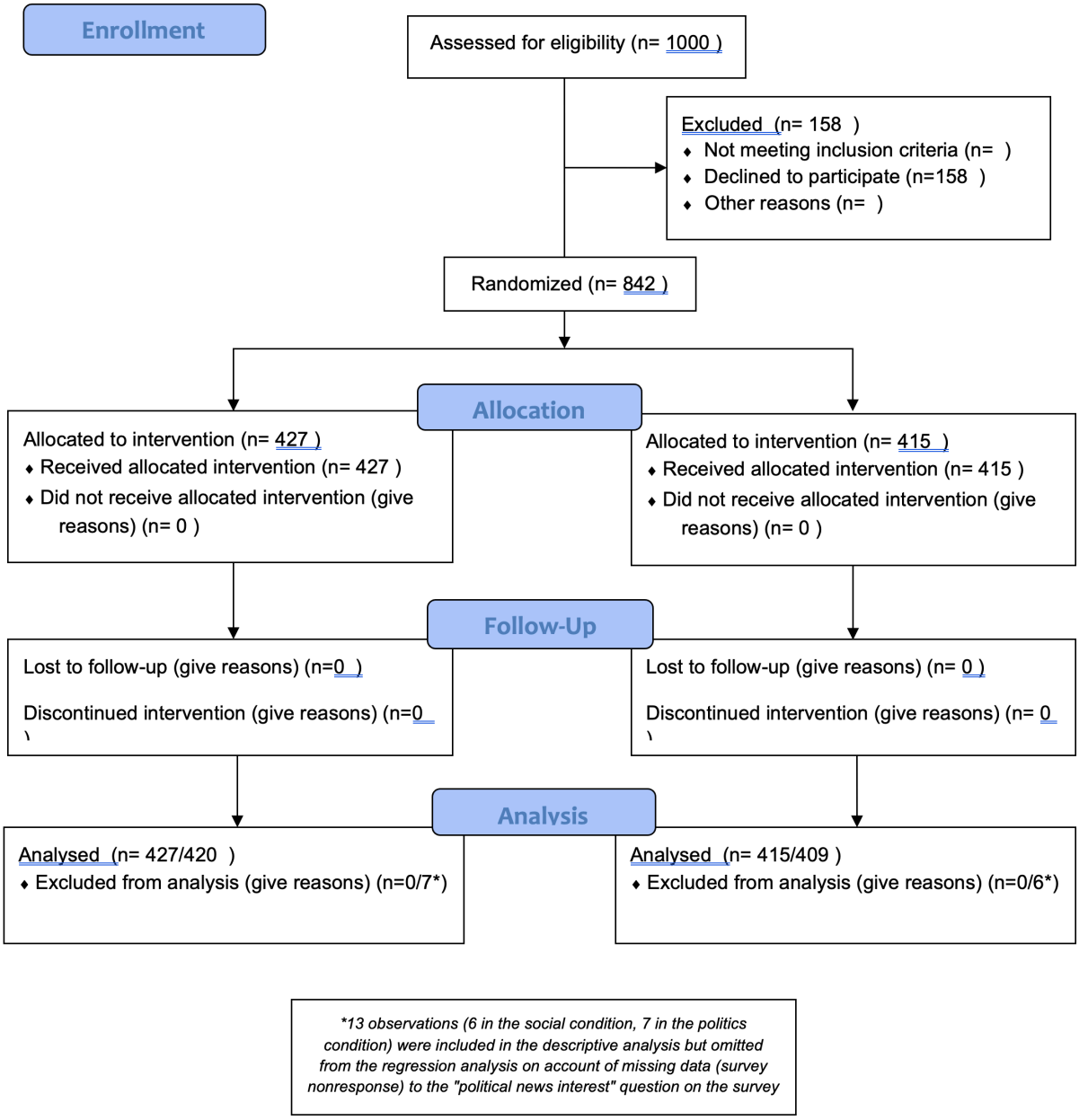

Figure A4: Consort Flow Diagram

survey. 158 individuals originally surveyed in the pre-election survey declined to fill out the post-election survey.

(c) **Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, may be found in the main paper. Descriptive analysis was unweighted. Regression analysis was weighted based upon survey weights provided by YouGov. 13 observations (6 in the social condition, 7 in the politics condition) were included in the descriptive analysis but omitted from the regression analysis on account of missing data (survey nonresponse) to the "political news interest" question on the survey.

F. **Other Information**

The experiment was reviewed as part of the NCF survey module of the CES by the New College of Florida Institutional Review Board (IRB) and certified as exempt. The CES was funded in part by the National Science Foundation, Award #1948863. The NCF module was funded by New College of Florida. Replication information for this study may be found at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/O96MDX.

References

Kam, C. D. and M. J. Trussler (2017). At the nexus of observational and experimental research: Theory, specification, and analysis of experiments with heterogeneous treatment effects. *Political Behavior 39*(4), 789–815.