Revisiting Social Networks and Correct Voting*

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Abstract

While the literature on political discussion networks and turning out to vote is extensive, there is far less attention paid to understanding the relationship between networks and vote choice. Fewer still have delved into the link between discussion networks and the quality of an individual's vote choice. In this work, we extend our understanding relationship between political discussion and vote quality. In particular, we revisit the examination conducted by Sokhey and McClurg (2012) on the relationship between disagreement in political networks and Lau and Redlawsk's 1997 approach to measuring correct voting. We examine whether the negative relationship they uncover persists in more recent electoral contexts and is robust to different ways of thinking about interpersonal disagreement. Using nationally-representative surveys containing social network batteries covering all presidential elections since 2000, we find extremely consistent results that support the original conclusions: exposure to interpersonal disagreement predicts lower rates of correct voting. In addition, this relationship is invariant to different conceptualizations of interpersonal disagreement. We close by noting that such questions are of prime importance in an era of affective polarization and rampant misinformation.

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1 Introduction

One of the most basic tasks for citizens in a representative democracy to undertake is choosing a candidate who best represents their preferences and interests. An enduring question in the political science literature is the extent to which political behaviors, such as voting, are explained by individual or social characteristics. One way that citizens determine which candidate best represents their interests is the proximity model of voting (Downs, 1957). This model holds that candidates' positions can be placed on a common policy space and that voters select candidates who shares policy positions that are closest to their own policy preferences. At the same time, citizens are largely thought of as politically unsophisticated and uninterested (e.g., Converse, 1964; Delli-Carpini and Keeter, 1996). This problem suggests citizens may be unable to match their policy preferences to the policy positions of candidates asking for individual votes. Indeed, people who are asked to make reasoned choices may be incapable of doing so (Lupia and McCubbins, 1998).

So, given an uninformed electorate that must perform basic functions in a representative democracy, how do individuals come to a reasoned conclusion regarding their vote choice? One possible solution is that our friends, family, and acquaintances help us make "good" decisions. In some ways, this is the solution which many social network scholars have long hinted at, but not addressed directly. The well-established literature on social influence—with roots in the Columbia School research of the 1940s and 50s (e.g. Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954; Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955)—has often focused on interpersonal communication, examining it in relation to outcomes like partisanship (Kenny, 1994; Sinclair, 2012), participation (Klofstad, 2011; Mutz, 2006), awareness Pietryka et al. (2018), attitude strength (Levitan and Visser, 2008, 2009; Visser and Mirabile, 2004), and of course, vote choice (Beck et al., 2002; Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1991; Huckfeldt et al., 1995). Indeed, scholars suggest that close social networks are places where informal conversation with social intimates occurs and where "everyday political disagreement" may take place (Klofstad, Sokhey and Mcclurg, 2013). That said, while many scholars have discussed interpersonal influence through a frame of deliberative democracy (e.g., Mutz, 2006),

few have given explicit attention to the idea of the quality of individuals' decision-making, and to how it may track with interpersonal disagreement within communication networks.

There are, however, several important exceptions in the literature that do examine the relationship between disagreement within close social networks and decision-making quality in both experimental (Ryan, 2011) and observational settings (Richey, 2008; Sokhey and McClurg, 2012). In this work, we revisit the examination of this relationship conducted by Sokhey and McClurg (2012). Their work has provided insights, and used several well-known - though somewhat dated - studies to evaluate the relationship between close social networks and "correct" voting, following Lau and Redlawsk's 1997 approach to operationalizing such activity. They found a link between disagreeable networks and lower rates of correct voting in nationally-representative surveys from 1992 and 2000. Building on previous efforts, we examine whether this relationship persists in more recent electoral contexts and is robust to different ways of thinking about interpersonal disagreement. Using nationally-representative surveys containing social network batteries covering all presidential elections since 2000, we find extremely consistent results that support the original conclusions: exposure to interpersonal disagreement predicts lower rates of correct voting. In addition, this relationship is invariant to different conceptualizations of interpersonal disagreement. we close by noting that such questions are of prime importance in an era of affective polarization and rampant misinformation.

2 Political Participation and Discussion Networks

For decades, political scientists have sought to understand how and why people vote. Many scholars have examined these questions through the lens of rational choice, where individuals weigh the costs and benefits of their own participation in politics. In the end, individuals are cost-adverse, choosing the course that best maximizes their utility while minimizing their costs (Downs, 1957; Riker and Ordeshook, 1968). Though the American voter has been described as a "political fool" (Erickson, MacKuen and Stimson, 2002), this characterization leaves out large parts of the story. Voters are not fools because they are poorly informed, instead, they are ill-informed because they are efficient and do not want to incur costs associated with becoming informed. Information is

not cheap and individuals have found ways to effectively inform themselves about the political world (Downs, 1957). One way to obtain information, which scholars have long recognized, is to lean on one's social contacts to help them make better decisions Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954). Thus, it is important to understand the incentives drawing individuals to reduce costs and the consequences of relying on these shortcuts in terms of good democratic decision making.

Research on voting behavior frequently revolves around the idea that voters want to make the best decisions that they can with the least effort possible. Voters are busy people and may not have the mental bandwidth to devote enough time to politics in order to cast a reasoned vote. Indeed, Downs 1957 suggests that voters can obtain the necessary information to vote at a low cost if they talk to their more interested, better informed peers. These political experts were thought to be able to disseminate information or simply offer insight on how members in their network should vote. To be an effective shortcut, Downs also argues that individuals must choose like-minded discussion partners (see also, Lupia and McCubbins, 1998). If Downs was correct, then ill-informed individuals could vote as if they are an informed voter without paying the cost of becoming informed. It is important to note that Downs does not suggest individuals need to learn political facts in order to behave as if they are informed. Individuals may learn political facts during discussion with their network, but Downs is only concerned with when an individual can use discussion as an effective short cut.

Downsian logic assumes several things which recent research suggests may not be true. First, individuals purposefully seek out political discussants. To the contrary, individuals often speak with others and develop relationships for reasons other than politics. For example, discussants may come from a sports league or preferred bar (Huckfeldt, Ikeda and Pappi, 2005; Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague, 2005; Minozzi et al., 2020). Second, to the extent that individuals can exercise choice, they have access to the ideal discussants. Again, this may not be the case. Individuals speak with people on the other side of the issues, in part, because the choice of discussion partner is constrained by the discussion partners available in a given area (Huckfeldt,

1983; Huckfeldt et al., 1995). Indeed, as shown elsewhere in this dissertation, even in today's era of deep polarization, a Democrat in Little Rock has little choice but to speak with Republicans. Given that individuals are constrained in their choice of discussion partners, it is unclear whether interpersonal communication leads to rational decision making as suggested by Downs.

Though Downs heavily emphasizes the importance of expert discussion partners who agree with an individual, those individuals may not necessarily choose discussants in the manner he suggests. Instead, they are restricted by the availability of discussion partners and must occasionally converse with others with whom they do not agree (Butters and Hare, 2020, Huckfeldt, 1983; Ahn et al., 2013). At the same time, it is also the case that individuals do prefer to discuss politics with members of their own party Finifter (1974), but they typically place a higher value on political experts Huckfeldt (2001). A willingness to discuss politics with the other side and constraints on the types of discussants available to an individual are contributing factors to why many individuals see at least some disagreement in their close social networks (see e.g., Butters and Hare, 2020, Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague, 2004).

Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954) argued that having disagreeable discussion partners could have some negative behavioral consequences. Subsequent authors suggested that when an individual's personal preferences conflicted with the preferences of others in one's own social network, the individual may be pulled in different directions. Their own preferences may lead them to lean toward one candidate or policy, while discussions with those composing their close social network may suggest individuals take an alternative path. This juxtaposition has been shown to be related to greater ambivalence, a lower likelihood of participation, and a higher likelihood of making decisions closer to elections (Mutz, 2006, e.g.,). Others, of course, have argued that exposure to some level of disagreement within discussion networks has positive consequences, such as better understanding the other side and increased tolerance (Mutz, 2002; Pattie and Johnston, 2008). In the following section, we further discuss the importance of discussion networks to the story of voting correctly.

3 The Role of Discussion Networks in "Correct" Voting

Political discussion networks shape opinion formation. Thus, the composition of these networks has clear normative consequences. Discussions generally take one of two forms. First, Brady and Sniderman (1985) showed us that partisans perceive the other side as more extreme generally. This relationship is then intensified if individuals are in homogeneous political discussion networks (Buttice, Huckfeldt and Ryan, 2009, Butters and Hare 2020). Thus, if an individual discusses politics with members of their own party, they are more likely to have polarized perceptions. In this scenario, individuals have biases which match their discussion partners. As a result, individuals who discuss politics with like-minded individuals have a less realistic view of the differences between the two parties. One potential consequence is that partisans who have agreeable discussion partners have an easier time making judgements, including on vote choice. Given that these individuals see the other party as extreme, they may find candidates from the opposing party to be unacceptable and under no circumstances would they vote for the other party's candidate.

Second, if an individual discusses politics with members of the other party, then they are less likely to have polarized perceptions of members and candidates of the other party. In this scenario, individuals have their own biases while at least some of their discussion partners have the opposite bias. As a result, individuals who discuss politics with those on the other side of the aisle have a more realistic view of the differences between the two parties. However, this is not necessarily a positive outcome because it enters uncertainty and difficulty into an individual's political decision making calculus. A candidate who would otherwise be unpalatable might be a viable option and under certain circumstances, an individual might choose to vote for that candidate. Thus individuals who discuss politics with others whom they disagree with are more likely to vote for the other party's candidate (Sokhey and McClurg, 2012; Beck et al., 2002) and less likely to participate (Mutz, 2006).

Given the importance of the relationship between social communication and correct voting, the lack of research on the topic is surprising. However, there have been some works which explore

the possible inputs and consequences of the relationship. For example, Richey (2008) examines Lau and Redlawk's (1997; 2006)measure of "correct" voting. This measure essentially predicts which candidate an individual *should* support given their partisanship and views on issues, group endorsements, and candidate characteristics. The author finds that citizens who discuss politics with perceived political experts vote correctly more often. In an experimental examination, Ryan (2011) found that participants who are uninformed and politically independent vote correctly at higher rates due to political discussion, but partisans do not vote correctly more often. Ahn and Ryan (2015) find mixed results for the benefits of social communication: ill-informed individuals are helped by communication but informed subjects are harmed. Sokhey and McClurg (2012) model Lau and Redlawsk's correct voting in both the 1992 and 2000 presidential elections. Sokhey and McClurg find a consistent, negative relationship between network disagreement and correct voting. They discuss the democratic implications of this result, noting that while the effect cuts against that idea of exposure to difference producing reasoned, thoughtful outcomes (see e.g., Gutman and Thompson, 2004) it may not be a bad thing since many individuals are embedded in social networks that are largely (though not exclusively) supportive.

Collectively, we know that individuals who are exposed to political disagreement in their close social networks may have a more difficult time making voting decisions. Disagreement is far from rare in the American electorate, though it is not the norm, and is becoming increasingly rare (Butters and Hare, 2020). What we don't know is whether the relationship between political disagreement in close social networks and correct voting persists in a time of increased polarization in the electorate. Thus scholars should revisit this relationship for several reasons.

First, although informative, the data sets Sokhey and McClurg (2012) used to estimate the relationship between network disagreement and correct voting—i.e., the 1992 Comparative National Elections Project (CNEP) and 2000 American National Election Survey (ANES) Time Series Study —are now fairly dated. Partisan identities have grown more salient and fostered greater negative affect towards members of the out-group since the 1990s (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes, 2012). Partisans not only report higher levels of distrust and dislike, but they are also

more likely to discriminate on the basis of party in making economic choices, selecting romantic partners, and awarding scholarships (Iyengar, Sood and Lelkes, 2012; Iyengar and Westwood, 2015; Huber and Malhotra, 2017; Mcconnell et al., 2018; though see Klar, Krupnikov and Ryan, 2018). Thus in the present effort we consider whether the relationship between disagreement and the quality of decision-making in the mass public persists in more recent electoral contexts. If networks provide us with cues as to whom we *should* vote for, do these cues continue to operate in the same way while views of opposing partisans have become increasingly extreme?

The second factor requiring reassessment of the relationship between disagreement and correct voting identified by Sokhey and McClurg (2012) is whether this relationship is robust to different ways of measuring disagreement. In looking at the constellation of (sometimes contradictory) findings in the networks literature, Klofstad, Sokhey and Mcclurg (2013) note that many network studies contain multiple measures of network disagreement, and that there is ambiguity over its basic conceptualization. The authors examine the 2008-09 ANES Panel Study which contained two different measures of disagreement in its name generator battery. They find that these measures operate differently when predicting a variety of behavioral outcomes, they they operate similarly when it comes to vote certainty. The authors do not, however, directly address correct voting. Thus, scholars must still adress whether type of disgreement matters concerning the quality of decision making.

There are two prominent ways that interpersonal disagreement has been measured in the literature on social networks. First, "partisan" disagreement is measured as a difference in the vote choice of an individual and their discussant. In this conceptualization, an individual who prefers one presidential candidate is exposed to disagreement if their discussant prefers anything other than the same presidential candidate (e.g. Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague, 2004). In their examinations of the 1992 and 2000 elections, Sokhey and McClurg (2012) utilize this type of disagreement. Second, "general" disagreement is measured as an individuals' perception of how much they disagree with their named discussants (more akin to Mutz, 2006).[1] Klofstad, Sokhey

[1]See Klofstad, Sokhey and Mcclurg (2013) and Lupton and Thornton (2017) for thorough reviews of how the literature disagrees about disagreement.

and Mcclurg (2013) find that both types of measures operate similarly when predicting vote certainty, in that they report a negative relationship between disagreement and vote certainty. Thus, we expect that both partisan and general disagreement will be negatively related to "good" decision-making.

As Kinder (1998) shows, one of the necessary ingredients to participating in public life is the quality and quantity of information that citizens' opinions and judgements are based on. However, cost-conscious citizens do not possess all the necessary political information nor do they possess the motivation to acquire it directly (Downs, 1957; Delli-Carpini and Keeter, 1996). A large volume of research suggests that the acquisition of political information comes from an individual's social network (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague, 2004; Ryan, 2011; Sinclair, 2012).[2] Indeed, the less-informed often times turn to the better informed to understand the politically unfamiliar (Downs, 1957; Huckfeldt, 2001; Ryan, 2011). Thus high levels of political sophistication in close social networks should provide clearer signals to individuals about who they should vote for in a presidential election. Similarly, larger networks provide more opportunities to acquire information which should help the individual to vote correctly.

The following analyses address several key questions. First, do individuals who experience disagreement in their discussion networks cast the correct vote less often? This idea is at the core of the Downsian model. Individuals may be able to use their discussion partners as advisors and vote as if they themselves were informed. When individuals do not have agreeable partners available, they may not receive a strong enough signal from their core political discussion network to function as Downs would suggest. Second, if those exposed to disagreeable discussion partners cast correct votes less often, does the way scholars measure disagreement matter? The partisan composition of a network should determine what political messages an individual receives and, more importantly, which messages the individual accepts and which they reject. Third, do larger and more sophisticated discussion networks provide more opportunities to acquire information and clearer signals which should help the individual to vote correctly?

[2]Individuals also acquire information from the media and that information is typically filtered through their network (Barabas, 2008)

3.1 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: *Voters in disagreeable discussion networks are less likely to cast a "correct" vote.*

Hypothesis 2: *As discussion network political sophistication increases, rates of "correct" voting should increase. This should also be the case for individuals in larger discussion networks.*

Hypothesis 3: *The relationship between disagreement and "correct" voting is negative for both "partisan" and "general" disagreement.*

4 Data and Methods

Examining the relationship between networks and the quality of vote-choice requires not only information on individuals' core discussion networks (i.e., a name generating network battery), but sufficient questions to operationalize a correct vote. In effect, this means data used must possess measures of candidate preference as linked to partisanship, groups/group endorsements, personality characteristics, and issue positions. Lau and Redlawsk's (1997) measure of correct voting is complicated; it involves creating a tally of which candidate is favored by respondents on the dimensions above.[3] An individual is considered to have voted "correctly" if she votes for the candidate that is rated highest, per this procedure.

Lau and collaborators (1997; 2006; 2008) designed and constructed their measure around the ANES time series, which typically do not contain network question batteries. Sokhey and McClurg (2012) used the 1992 CNEP and 2000 ANES, as both contained network batteries and the ANES contained the appropriate questions to construct a correct vote measure. In addition, the CNEP contains enough items to construct a reasonable version of the correct voting measure. Since the goal of this work is to examine the relationship between close social networks and vote choice in the American public—in presidential elections post 2000—we turn to the 2004 CNEP, 2008-09 ANES Panel Study, 2012 CNEP, and team modules placed on the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES).

[3]The formulation by Lau and Redlawsk (1997, 2006) is discussed in more detail below.

All four studies included a "compound" name generator, which identifies the partisanship of respondents' political communication networks (Laumann, 1973; Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995). These standard political name generators gather information on interactions, a particular topic, and attributes of discussion partners.[4] Batteries such as those implemented in this work are generally accepted as the industry-standard for capturing ego-centric close social network attitudes and behaviors. In a variety of recent studies, name generators have been shown to capture political communication networks "quite well" (Sokhey and Djupe, 2013). The studies also possess at least enough other items to construct reasonable approximations of the correct voting measure. Due to differences in content (from study to study, and from the regular ANES time series), Lau and Redlawsk's method cannot be followed precisely. Necessary adjustments are discussed in greater detail below.

4.1 Discussion Network Data 2004-2016

The 2004 and 2012 CNEP studies were conducted as part of the larger Comparative National Election Project. We use the American components of the project that was conducted around each of those contests.[5] Both years' studies contained a compound name generator that followed a "spouse plus two" format. This type of name generation differs from more typical name solicitation techniques, though they would still be considered.[6] That is, respondents were first asked about political discussion with a spouse/partner, and then were asked about discussion with up to two additional individuals. For each person named, respondents were asked to report on several characteristics, including frequency of discussion and political expertise. Most important for the purposes of this work, for each network member the respondents reported on both partisan (did the discussant vote for the same person as the main respondent) and general disagreement ("When you talk to [person] about politics, how often do you agree?").

[4] A "multiplex" name generator is an alternative approach which uses more than one name generator for the same respondents. See Sokhey and Djupe (2013) for a more detailed discussion.

[5] More information is available at: https://u.osu.edu/cnep/

[6] For a more detailed discussion, see Sokhey and Djupe (2013). To summarize, respondents were first asked about frequency of political discussion with their spouse. After a set of follow-up questions concerning this person, respondents were prompted with: "Now I would like you to think of someone with whom you most frequently talk about matters that are important to you."

The 2008-09 ANES Panel Study consisted of repeated interviews with individuals. These interviews were conducted online, spanning the 2008 primaries, ran through the general election, and continued with follow-ups into the next year.[7] In the September 2008 wave, respondents were presented with a political name generator: "During the last six months, did you talk with anyone face-to-face, on the phone, by email, or in any other way about government or elections, or did you not talk with anyone during the last six months?" Individuals were then asked to provide the names of up to eight people, but were only asked detailed questions about the first three named provided. As such, only the data related to the first three named respondents were used in the analyses below. Similarly the CNEP studies, respondents were asked to report on several characteristics, including the political interest and education of named discussants. Of course, of most interest here is the fact that individuals were asked to report on (multiple measures of) disagreement—that is, both general and partisan disagreement.

For the 2016 election, we draw on several team modules collected as part of the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study.[8] The CCES prompts respondents to report characteristics related to their discussants by asking respondents for the first name of others with whom they, "discuss government, elections, and politics" (2016 CCES Codebook). Respondents were allowed to name up to three discussants, then were asked to provide information about those discussants. Importantly, respondents were asked about vote choice of discussants, but not anything to approximate a measure of general disagreement. As with the CNEP studies, differences in the common content of the CCES vs. the ANES time series necessitate that a handful of adjustments in calculating the measure of correct voting.

Before discussing how a correct vote is constructed, it is important to note the similarties and differences in network items across the studies. For example, though all studies asked individuals to report details on up to three names, the CNEP surveys solicited the information on a spouse/partner first. The idea of collecting information on a strong tie first requires additional

[7] Details are available at: electionstudies.org

[8] The modules were collected by UC-Davis, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and the University of Georgia, and each consists of 1,000 observations. The questionnaires contain nearly identical network batteries, allowing responses to be pooled together. See Appendix for full list of question wording

examination in future work. The ANES panel and CCES battery, on the other hand, followed a more typical name generator format. Likewise, while all four studies included items that jell with a partisan measure of disagreement, in the CNEP studies (2004; 2012) and CCES data (2016) this is derived from matching the vote choices of egos and alters. This practice is quite common in the social communication literature Klofstad, Sokhey and Mcclurg (2013). The 2008-09 ANES measure of partisan disagreement, however, comes from looking at the difference in partisanship between egos and alters.[9] The general disagreement item is also slightly different between the ANES panel and the CNEP surveys. In the 2008-09 ANES study respondents were asked "[i]n general, how different are (NAME's) opinions about government and politics from your own views?" In the 2004 and 2012 CNEP instruments, individuals were asked how often they agree with the named person (response options ranged from 'always' to 'never'). The CCES questionnaire used prompts matching the ANES Time Series in 2000[10].

4.2 Data Sets and Network Measures

The 2004 and 2012 CNEP studies were conducted as part of the larger Comparative National Election Project; we use the American component/study that was conducted around each of those contests.[11] Both years' studies contained a name generator that followed a "spouse plus two" format — this differs a bit from more typical name solicitation techniques (for a discussion, see Sokhey and Djupe 2014).[12] That is, respondents were first asked about political discussion with a spouse/partner, and then were asked about discussion with up to two additional individuals. For each person named, respondents were asked to report on several characteristics, including frequency of discussion and political expertise. Most important for our purposes, for each network member the respondents reported on both general ("When you talk to [person] about politics, how often do you agree?") and partisan disagreement (did the discussant vote for the same

[9] The measure of partisanship is a 7-point scale for both the respondent and discussant

[10] See Appendix for question wording

[11] More information is available at: https://u.osu.edu/cnep/

[12] Respondents were first asked about frequency of political discussion with their spouse. After a set of follow-up questions concerning this person, respondents were prompted with: "Now I would like you to think of someone with whom you most frequently talk about matters that are important to you."

person as the main respondent).

The 2008-09 ANES Panel Study consisted of repeated (online) interviews with individuals; these spanned the 2008 primaries, ran through the general election, and continued with follow-ups into the next year.[13] In the September 2008 wave, respondents were presented with a political name generator: "During the last six months, did you talk with anyone face-to-face, on the phone, by email, or in any other way about government or elections, or did you not talk with anyone during the last six months?" Individuals were then asked to provide the names of up to eight people, but were only asked detailed questions about the first three named provided. As in the CNEP studies, respondents were asked to report on several characteristics, including the political interest and education of named discussants. Of course, of most interest to us is the fact that individuals were asked to report on (multiple measures of) disagreement—that is, both general and partisan disagreement.

For the 2016 election, we draw on several team modules collected as part of the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES).[14] The authors were involved in the design of these questionnaires—they contain nearly identical network batteries, allowing us to pool them together. As with the CNEP studies, differences in the common content of the CCES vs. the ANES time series necessitate that we make a handful of adjustments in calculating the measure of correct voting.

In looking across the studies, it is important to note similarities and differences in the network items. For example, though all asked individuals to report on up to three names, the CNEP surveys solicited the strong tie of the spouse/partner first, while the ANES panel followed a more typical name generator format (as did the CCES battery). Likewise, while all three studies included items that jell with a partisan measure of disagreement, in the CNEP studies (2004; 2012) and CCES data (2016) this is derived from matching the vote choices of egos and alters (a frequent practice in the social influence literature); the 2008-09 ANES, measure comes from

[13] Details are available at: electionstudies.org

[14] The modules were collected by UC-Davis, the University of Colorado at Boulder, and the University of Georgia, and each consists of 1,000 observations.

looking at the difference in (a 7 pt. measure of) partisanship between egos and alters. The general disagreement item is also slightly different between the ANES panel and the CNEP surveys. In the 2008-09 ANES study respondents were asked "[i]n general, how different are (NAME's) opinions about government and politics from your own views?" In the 2004 and 2012 CNEP instruments, individuals were asked how often they agree with the named person (response options ranged from 'always' to 'never').

4.3 Measuring a "Correct" Vote

Scholars have long debated how different individual and social-level factors are related to vote choice. More recently, a subset of voting research has moved away from *why* people vote the way they do to *if* people are making the right vote choice and why. This concept, known as "correct" voting, was developed by Lau and Redlawsk (1997). The authors developed a means for determining whether or not individuals chose the candidate whose preferences most closely matched their own. To begin, they assume that individuals will not have complete information when making vote choices. Given this assumption, Lau and Redlawsk sought to understand how well individuals selected the correct candidate for themselves with the limited information at their disposal. If voters selected the candidate that they *should* have based on the information provided to prompts on a given questionnaire, the individuals were counted as voting correctly. In both survey and experimental studies, Lau and collaborators identified a variety of factors from which to calculate voting correctly and how well people typically did. A correct vote included measures of candidate preference as linked to partisanship, groups/group endorsements, personality characteristics, and issue positions[15] Using this measure, they suggest that voters chose the correct candidate between 70 and 80 percent of the time in the presidential elections during the 1970s and 80s.[16]

To construct the measure of a correct vote in the datasets described above, we follow Lau and

[15]Lau and Redlawsk (1997) gauge candidate issue positions by first determining which respondents are more politically knowledgeable (i.e., above the median); they then use the average placement of candidates by these respondents.

[16]For a full description of how Lau and collaborators create their measure of "correct" voting, see Lau and Redlawsk, 1997, 2006; Lau, Andersen and Redlawsk, 2008.

collaborators' (1997; 2008; 2013) methodology as closely as possible. However, in constructing the measures from the various data sets, we make a number of necessary adjustments. In some cases a survey did not include question batteries that would typically be incorporated into the measure of correct voting (i.e., when the measure is constructed using the ANES time series studies). For example, the 2004 CNEP did not contain questions for candidate placements on issues, candidate-group linkages, and candidate personality traits. The 2012 CNEP largely mirrored the design of the 2004 CNEP, and as such also did not contain a number of measures that are typically included. The 2016 CCES was also missing these measures. The 2008/09 ANES Panel Study contained far more questions that matched what Lau and Redlawsk (1997) use to construct their tally. This was expected given that the original measure by Lau et al. was based on the ANES Time Series questionnaire. For the 08/09 study, the correct voting measure is only missing values for candidate electability.[17] Given that none of the surveys examined here included all the necessary questions to construct an exact measure of correct voting per Lau and Redlawsk (1997), we calculate close approximations.

Lau and collaborators calculate and report the rates of correct voting across the ANES Time Series in a variety of works (Lau and Redlawsk, 1997; Lau, Andersen and Redlawsk, 2008; Lau, 2013). The most recent estimates from Lau and collaborators indicate that correct voting rates hover around 80% when based on the ANES Time Series. Table 1 indicates that while some sets of questions were unavailable in the surveys examined in this work, the measure of correct voting used in subsequent analyses is quite close to the canonical numbers reported by Lau et al.[18]. The correct voting values presented here are also roughly in line with observational and experimental work (Ryan, 2011; Sokhey and McClurg, 2012). Thus we can be confident that the measures of correct voting, drawn from a variety of surveys which also implement network name generators, are appropriate for the analyses conducted here.

[17] This may partially account for differences between rates of correct voting in 2008 compared to that reported by Lau and collaborators on their websites.

[18] The 2004-2008 values were reported by Lau (2013). The 2012 value was recovered from Richard Lau's website http://fas-polisci.rutgers.edu/lau/data/ANES.zip, where correct voting rates are available for 1972-2012. Estimates of correct voting in each year are based on the mean of four closely related "normative naive" measures Lau (2013)

Table 1: Estimated Correct Voting Rates in 2004 CNEP, 2008/09 ANES Panel Study, and 2012 CNEP, 2016 CCES

Year	CNEP	ANES Panel Study	CCES	ANES Time Series
2004	83%	.	.	81%
2008/09	.	80%	.	85%
2012	86%	.	.	83%
2016	.	.	84%	.

ANES Time Series values can be found on Richard Lau's website

5 Disagreement and "Correct" Voting

For each election between 2004 and 2016, I present several models for partisan disagreement, followed by several models for general disagreement. It is important to note that for 2016, there is only a measure of partisan disagreement, and so only one set of models is presented. I begin by predicting correct voting as a function of just network characteristics which can be gleaned from the compound name generators in each survey. These variables include network size, type of disagreement, and sophistication. Network size is a simple count of the number of discussants a respondent reports speaking to about politics.[19] This first model is denoted as the "Naive" model. The a group of standard individual-level controls which should be related to a correct vote are introduced in what is denoted as the "Full" model. These variables include age, education, income, gender, strength of partisanship, and political interest. Voting correctly is coded as a dichotomous outcome, thus logistic regression estimates are presented in the figures that follow. The analyses are limited to individuals who name at least 1 political discussant. Full model outputs as well as descriptive statistics on the variables used across datasets and models appear in the appendix.

[19] To maximize consistency across surveys, this measure is capped at three discussants, even if a survey allowed for more (e.g., the ANES Panel Study).

5.1 Partisan Disagreement in Discussion Networks

Through a series of logistic regressions, the results largely suggest a robust relationship between interpersonal partisan disagreement in social networks and the quality of democratic decision-making. Recall that partisan disagreement is defined here as the difference in vote choice of an individual and their discussant (e.g. Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague, 2004). Figure 1 provides a coefficient plot displaying the logistic regression estimates between each of the network variables and correct voting across all years and model specifications for partisan disagreement.[20] In line with expectations, the figure shows a negative relationship between partisan disagreement and a respondent's ability to vote correctly across datasets. Increased partisan disagreement in one's core social network has a statistically discernible, negative relationship with a correct vote in both naive and full models. The one exception to this pattern is in the 2008-09 ANES data, where the relationship only approaches statistical significance in both model specifications. Across the different datasets, there is some variation in coefficient estimates, suggesting that differences in data generation and measurement are likely meaningful. I return to this point in the discussion.

Across models and elections, coefficients for network sophistication and network size also generally behave as expected, though not at statistically discernible levels. Sophisticated networks should provide clearer signals to individuals about who they should vote for in a presidential election. Similarly, larger networks provide more opportunities to acquire information from discussants which should help the individual to vote correctly. Network sophistication—here operationalized by discussants' formal education—shows positive coefficients across most years and specifications in Figure 1. While this positive coefficients are consistent with what was observed in previous elections, the coefficients are generally not statistically discernible from zero. Further, in all models, the size of an individual's network does not emerge as a significant predictor. In fact, in the three most recent elections, the fully-specified models have coefficient signs in the opposite direction from what we would expect.

[20] Full model outputs are available in the Appendix, but coefficients for all variables are not displayed in the main text.

Figure 1 shows a remarkably consistent negative relationship between partisan disagreement in core political discussion networks and the ability to vote correctly. Even as scholars coalesce around the idea that affective polarization has increased during our period of study, this relationship persists. Individuals in a variety of presidential election contexts were less likely to vote correctly if they had more exposure to partisan disagreement in their core social networks.[21] At the same time, other expected relationships with correct voting are not consistent when considering partisan disagreement in the models. Sophisticated networks do not appear to provide clear signals to respondents about who they should vote for in the presidential elections we examine. Likewise, having larger networks from which to draw information does not appear to be related to an individual's ability to make the correct voting decision. Indeed, neither network measure presents a relationship different than zero.

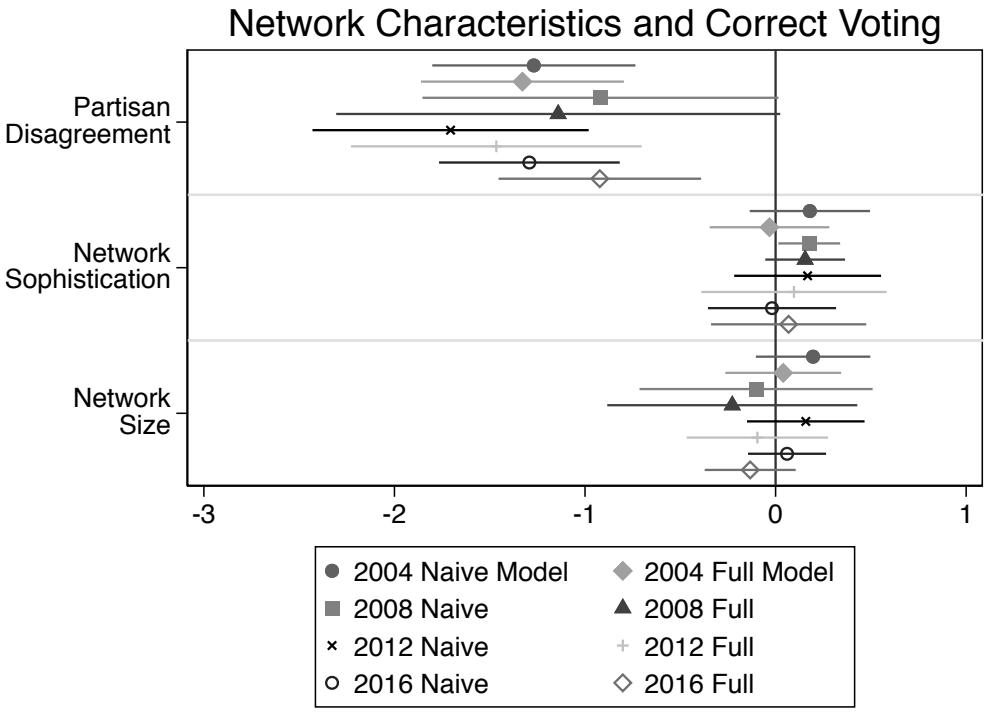

Figure 1: Relationship Between Partisan Disagreement, Network Sophistication, Network Size, and Correct Voting, 2004-2016.

[21] Though see Butters and Hare (2020) for discussion of how exposure to partisan disagreement may have changed in recent years.

Since logistic regression models are implemented in this section, the effect of an individual coefficient is best understood in the context of all other coefficients in the model. Thus, Figure 2 is used to evaluate the magnitude of partisan disagreement's effect in each dataset by setting the values of all other explanatory variables at their mean value and varying the level of partisan disagreement. In this case, values of partisan disagreement can take on values between zero and one, where lower values indicate lower levels of disagreement. While Figure 1 provides a clear negative relationship between partisan disagreement and correct voting, this result masks interesting nuance. Evidence from Figure 2 suggests that the experience of partisan disagreement is not uniform across levels of disagreement nor is it uniform across years.

Figure 2 shows that individuals fail to vote correctly, even if they have a clear and agreeable partisan signal coming from their network. This is the case across all years, indicated on the left side of the figure. As more disagreement creeps into their core social networks, individuals in all political contexts have more difficulty voting correctly. Though most individuals only experience small amounts of disagreement, this simple signal is related to a decrease in their democratic decision-making. It is also evident that partisan disagreement has a weaker relationship with correct voting during 2008 and 2016, two of the most divisive elections in recent memory. Evidence from these years suggests that when tensions are high, individuals are more sure of their vote choice, regardless of their network composition. Taken together, Figure 1 and Figure 2 paint a clear picture about the relationship between partisan disagreement and correct voting: experiencing partisan disagreement is negatively related to the ability to vote correctly.

5.2 General Disagreement in Discussion Networks

Another series of logistic regressions are run with the same explanatory variables as above, but with general disagreement as the main independent variable of interest rather than partisan disagreement. Recall that general disagreement is defined as an individuals' perception of how much they disagree with their named discussants (similar to Mutz, 2006). Figure 3 displays a coefficient plot for the logistic regression estimates between each of the network variables and

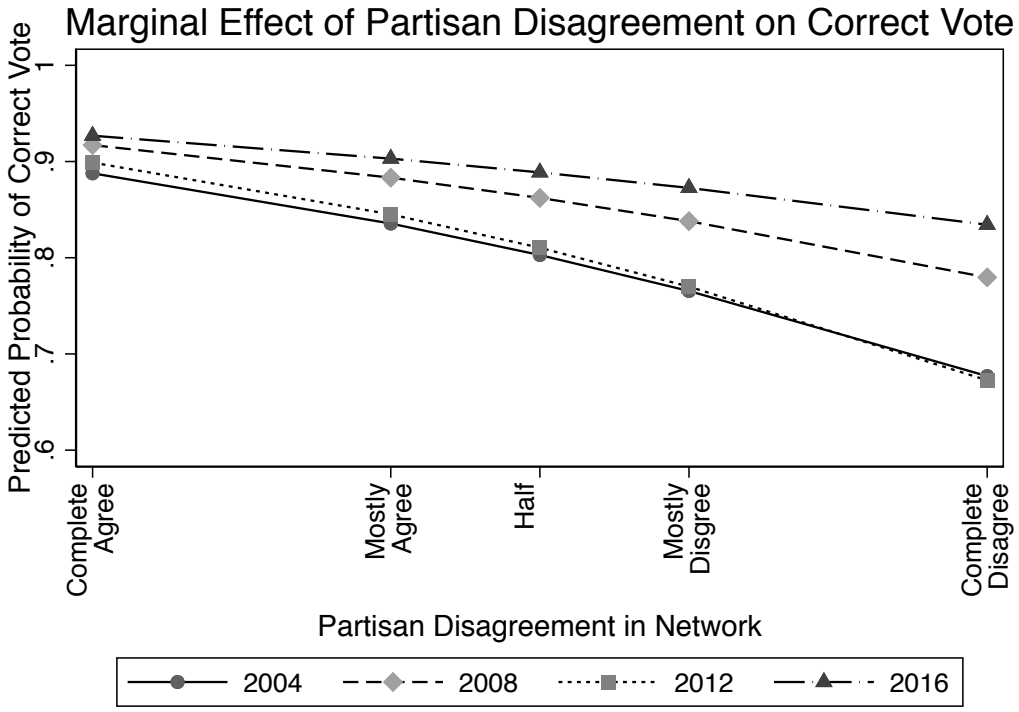

Figure 2: Predicted Probability of Voting Correctly by Partisan Political Disagreement.

correct voting across all years and model specifications for general disagreement.[22] This figure indicates that general interpersonal disagreement has a similar negative relationship to correct voting as partisan interpersonal disagreement. That is, increased general disagreement in core social networks has a statistically discernible, negative relationship with correct voting across years and model specifications. As was the case with the partisan disagreement regression above, network sophistication and size generally have the expected coefficient sign, but are not discernible from zero. The 2008-09 ANES data is once again an exception to the general pattern. In both the naive and full models, network sophistication is positively associated with the ability to vote correctly.

What is most notable about Figure 3 is that the negative relationship between general disagreement in core social networks and correct voting is the consistency. During three distinct presidential elections, the relationship endures. The robustness of this result suggests that there

[22]It is important to note that the 2016 CCES did not ask respondents the necessary questions to determine the level of general disagreement in their networks.

may be a relationship which is invariable to electoral context and conceptualization of interpersonal disagreement. The other network variables do not support the hypothesis above nor do they behave consistently. In short, contrary to expectations, the ability to vote correctly does not appear to be driven by the sophistication or size of an individual's core network in these electoral contexts.

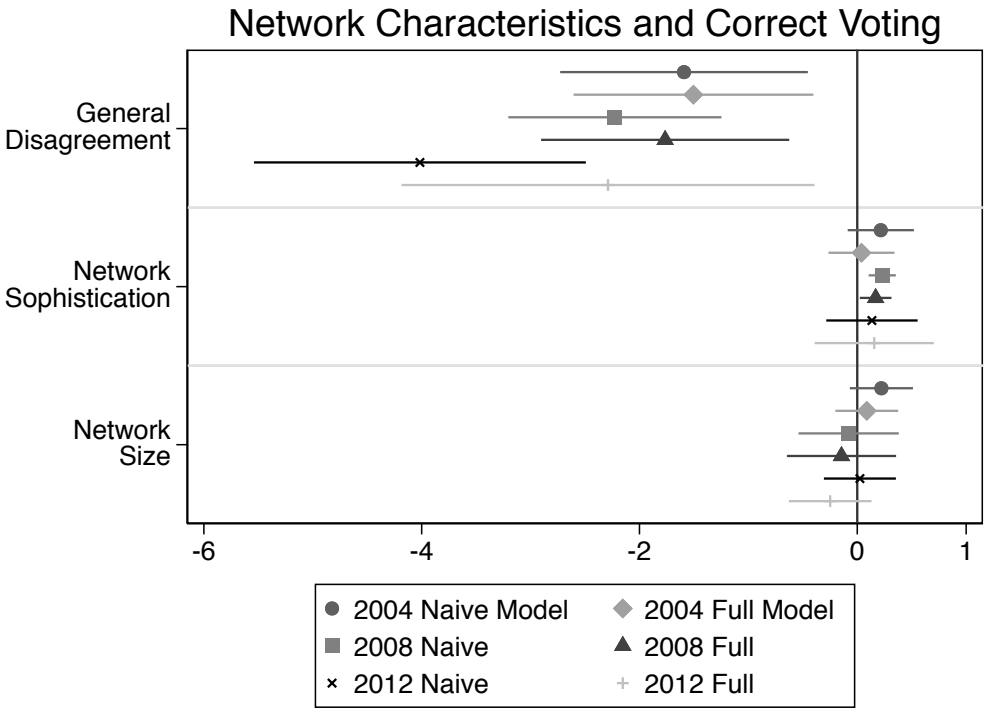

Figure 3: Relationship Between General Disagreement, Network Sophistication, Network Size, and Correct Voting, 2004-2012.

To better understand the relationship between general disagreement and correct voting, I once again turn to the predicted probability that an individual will vote correctly at different levels of general disagreement. In this case, values of general disagreement can take on values between zero and one, where lower values indicate lower levels of disagreement. Figure 4 provides evidence that as the level of general disagreement in an individual's core social network increases, that individual is less likely to vote correctly. However, even when one's social network is providing a clear, agreeable signal, individuals are still not perfect in casting the correct vote. Interestingly, while

partisan disagreement appeared to have the weakest relationship with correct voting in 2008 and 2016, Figure 4 shows a gradual weakening of the relationship over time when considering general disagreement. Put differently, an individual whose core social network was mostly agreeable was more likely to vote correctly in 2012 than a similar individual in 2004. This is the case across the range of general disagreement experienced by individuals in these electoral contexts.

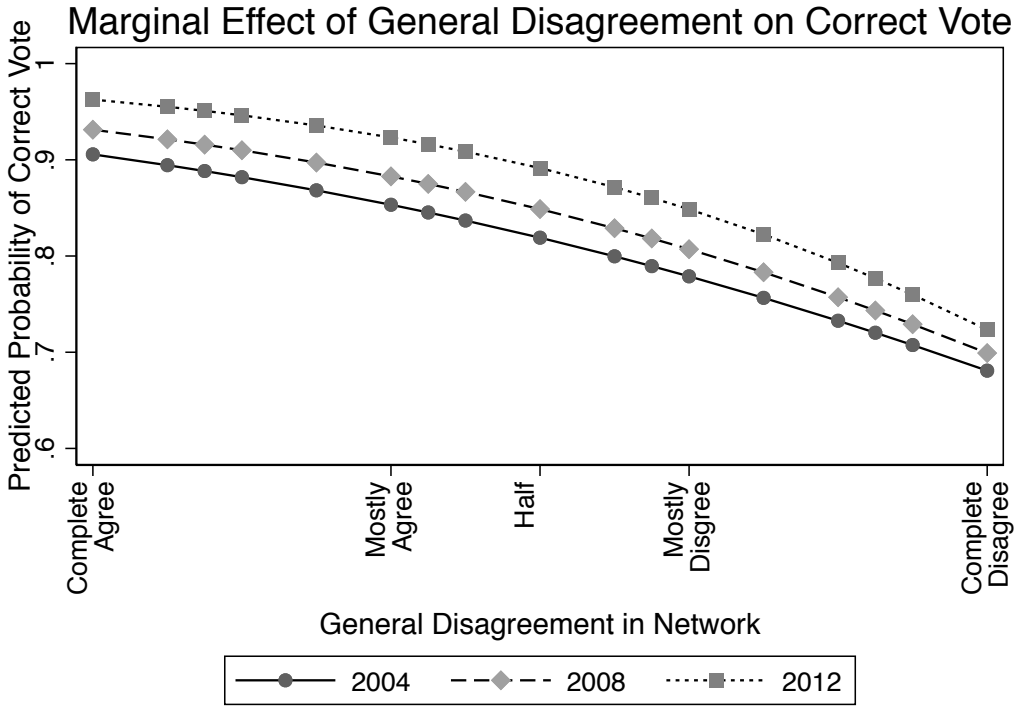

Figure 4: Predicted Probability of Voting Correctly by General Political Disagreement.

Taken together, the figures in this section show a clear negative relationship between disagreement and correct voting. Whether network disagreement is conceptualized in partisan or general terms, the negative relationship between network disagreement and rates of correct voting persists. The invariability of these results across electoral contexts and conceptual approaches suggests that there is an underlying dynamic between disagreement and correct voting. This section shows that both conceptualizations of disagreement are not only negatively related to vote certainty (Klofstad, Sokhey and Mcclurg, 2013), but are also negatively related to "good" decision-making.

5.3 Mechanisms and Threshold Effects

Analyses thus far do not address the mechanisms potentially driving the relationship between disagreement and correct voting. In an initial consideration, Sokhey and McClurg (2012) speculated that the role of networks in correct voting may be either more about learning via information provision, or something closer to networks serving as "clarifying cues," with people checking their position in relation to others (i.e., a story of social pressure). They found little evidence supporting the learning story, but called for more research into potential mechanisms of influence, noting the limitations of their survey data.

In attempting to distinguish such stories, similar limitations are present in the data used for this examination. Nevertheless, a series of models were estimated with additional covariates to at least look for findings consistent or inconsistent with these two mechanisms. Specifically, both disagreement measures were interacted with respondent education, with respondent political knowledge, and with respondent political interest. Finding that any of these variables consistently conditions the effect of disagreement would be evidence in support of a learning story. To examine such a story, models interact each variable with the two forms of disagreement were estimated for 2004, 2008, and 2012 while only partisan disagreement was examined in 2016. Across these 21 model specifications, only three interactions, scattered across different years and variables, were statistically discernible from zero.[23] Given that there is little to no support for the learning story, I do not report the analyses here. As for the social pressure story, unfortunately, there are too few items available to uncover evidence to effectively evaluate this path to influence (i.e., batteries on self-monitoring are not included in the data used here). Thus, while the evidence does not seem to point towards the learning mechanism, it is impossible to say for certain that the evidence actually points towards social pressure.

While there is little evidence for either of the mechanism stories above, it is also worth

[23]In the 2004 CNEP, a marginally significant interaction was registered between general disagreement and political interest. In the 2012 CNEP, a significant interaction was shown between general disagreement and formal education. In the 2016 CCES, a marginally significant interaction was shown between partisan disagreement and formal education. In the 2008/09 ANES Panel Study, no interactions were statistically discernible from zero.

examining whether the effect of disagreement on decision-quality may be driven more by specific types of networks. That is, while Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague (2004) characterized most Americans' social settings as places where many individuals are able to vote correctly in the face of *some* disagreement, perhaps they run into trouble when they are surrounded by wholly disagreeable viewpoints. Such a dynamic would be consistent with Bello's 2012 re-examinations of Mutz's 2006 story linking disagreement and participation. Bello advances an argument for "threshold" effects, finding many of the disagreement effects she posits are driven by the particular case of wholly disagreeable networks (Bello, 2012).

This argument is commonly referred to in the social communication literature but seldom tested head on. To examine whether similar network dynamics to those which Bello (2012) reports, i.e., that there are threshold effects for the relationship between disagreement and correct voting, I re-estimate the models from the main analysis above. Following Bello (2012), the disagreement measurements were re-coded to a series of indicator variables. For both partisan and general disagreement, the variables were broken up into "complete disagreement," "mostly disagreement," "mostly agreement," and "complete agreement" categories. These indicators were then used in place of the network measures themselves in the models reported in Figure 1 Figure 3 above.[24] If a similar threshold effect is responsible for the negative relationship between interpersonal disagreement and correct voting, we should see a significant coefficient for the "complete" disagreement indicator, and insignificant (and substantially diminished) coefficients for the other indicators (the results appear in section A.2 of the appendix).

Table 2 summarizes whether there is support for a threshold effect on the relationship between disagreement and correct voting in any of the datasets. In the table, a plus sign indicates support for a threshold effect. The main takeaway is that there is no consistent pattern that emerges across years and models. The analyses conducted here simply do no jell with a story consistent with one Bello might suggest. Only in the 2004 CNEP do we see some support for a threshold story. Indeed, the only indicator variable that is statistically discernible from zero is the indicator for "complete"

[24] In most cases, the "complete agreement" indicator was omitted as a baseline.

general disagreement. This is not the case for partisan disagreement, where all the indicators appear to be related to the ability to vote correctly. Put differently, the relationship shown in Figure 3 for 2004 may be driven by individuals who are exposed to completely disagreeable close social networks. In all other cases, however, we see negative, statistically significant effects at various levels of disagreement. In short, it does not appear that the relationship between disagreement and correct voting is driven by individuals who are in completely disagreeable core networks.

Table 2: Support for Threshold Effects on the Relationship Between Political Disagreement and Correct Voting

	Partisan Disagreement		**General Disagreement**	
Predictors	Naive Model	Full Model	Naive Model	Full Model
2004	.	.	+	+
2008/09	.	.	.	.
2012	.	.	.	.
2016	.	.	.	.

6 Discussion

Recent trends in polarization and sorting in the American public may have altered our understanding of political discussion networks as they relate to voting. In addition, since individuals are constrained in their choice of discussion partners, it is possible that interpersonal communication may not lead to reasoned voting decisions as Downs would suggest. Indeed, lacking updated information on the relationship between disagreement and "correct" voting, we can only speculate on the consequences of structural changes in how politics is organized. This work provides several key insights to this story during a time of deep polarization in the American public.

Previous work has documented a negative relationship between network disagreement and correct voting, including in observational studies (Sokhey and McClurg, 2012) and in experimental settings (Ryan, 2011). I re-examine these findings to determine whether they hold in more contemporary electoral contexts. The analyses presented here suggest that the original findings do still hold. Indeed, I find an extremely consistent negative relationship between network

disagreement and rates of correct voting, regardless of whether said disagreement is gauged in "partisan" or "general" terms. In fact, this relationship is uniform in all analyses. Across elections and years, both measures of disagreement exhibit a statistically discernible negative relationship with the "quality" of an individual's vote choice. The robustness of this relationship across time and approaches to measure the core concept of interpersonal disagreement provides confidence that there is a dynamic present which is invariant to electoral context. Even against a backdrop of increasing affective polarization (particularly in the post-2000 period), this relationship is unmistakable. Individuals in 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 were less likely to vote correctly if they were exposed to increased disagreement (either partisan or general) in their core discussion networks.

While these results are intriguing, they are but one step in the effort to extend studies of correct voting in social networks. The relationship between disagreement and the quality of decision-making appears to be robust. Thus future work should continue the pursuit of mechanisms and the search for qualifications to the apparent relationship. The evidence presented in this work suggests a story driven by networks acting as "clarifying cues" rather than in-depth learning opportunities. The relationship described here is one that would appear to manifest regardless of exactly how scholars might think about disagreement, and regardless of how much disagreement is present in the network.

Accordingly, studies taking a more group-oriented approach to social influence (e.g. Klar, 2014; Druckman, Levendusky and McLain, 2018) and drawing on social identity theory (in-group and out-group dynamics) (e.g. Tajfel and Turner, 1979) would seem to hold promise. Additional work could also be done looking at who is in individuals' networks, and whether different roles or tie-strengths condition the effects of disagreement. For example, the methods of network generation in 2004 and 2012 may be exploited to explore these possibilities, as spouses were solicited separately from other discussants. Another fruitful research path would separate individuals by levels of political sophistication. Cues may be more influential for political sophisticates than other survey respondents. In recent electoral contexts, political sophistication has been shown to

strengthen the relationship between network composition and ideological bias (Butters and Hare, 2020). This could be normatively troubling since at least some of the ill-informed often turn to better informed individuals to better understand politics (Downs, 1957; Huckfeldt, 2001; Ryan, 2011).

Other research has found that exposure to disagreement is related to a variety of negative normative outcomes. Disagreement causes ambivalence Mutz (2006), increases the probability that individuals will defect Beck et al. (2002), and in a previous political era, reduced the ability to vote correctly Sokhey and McClurg (2012). With the addition of the findings presented here, that exposure to various forms of disagreement in a time of deep affective polarization, might lead one to conclude that it is best for individuals to seek out only agreeable political discussants. Indeed, perhaps it is best that individuals are talking to those on the other side of the aisle less often (Butters and Hare, 2020). As Downs (1957) suggested more than 60 years ago, individuals should choose agreeable discussion partners because it increased the likelihood that an individual would vote as if they were informed. In this way, individuals could avoid the costs of becoming informed.

Downs' advice was correct in that individuals can use their networks to reduce costs in order to vote as if they were informed. However, politics is about much more than casting a vote. There are a variety of positive political outcomes which come from discussion of politics with individuals who hold divergent views. Without exposure to disagreement, individuals are not motivated to seek out more information to better understand their own position or the position of those with whom they disagree Taber and Lodge (2006). We also know that exposure to divergent views can increase tolerance and reduce distortions in perceived extremity of those on the other side of the aisle. The dearth of cross-cutting discussion network in the American electorate has unfortunately removed one of the potential impediments to polarization (Butters and Hare, 2020, (Settle, 2018)). Measures of "correct" voting have always been at least somewhat controversial — that is, "What does it really mean to say someone has voted *in*correctly?" However, in a time of heightened affective polarization, such questions have taken on new meaning. Indeed,

understanding the social underpinnings of decision-making has perhaps never been more important than it is at the present time.

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A Appendices

A.1 Network Predictors of Correct Voting

Table 3: Partisan Disagreement and Predictors of Correct Voting 2000-2016

	2004 CNEP		2008/09 ANES		2012 CNEP		2016 CCES	
	Naive	Full	Naive	Full	Naive	Full	Naive	Full
Predictors	**Model**	**Model**	**Model**	**Model**	**Model**	**Model**	**Model**	**Model**
Network	-1.27	-1.33	-0.92	-1.14	-1.71	-1.47	-1.29	-0.92
Disagreement	(-4.66)	(-4.89)	(-1.93)	(-1.92)	(-4.61)	(-3.77)	(-5.34)	(-3.40)
Network	0.18	-0.03	0.18	0.16	0.17	0.10	-0.02	0.07
Sophistication	(1.12)	(-0.20)	(2.14)	(1.45)	(0.85)	(0.39)	(-0.11)	(0.33)
Network	0.20	0.04	-0.10	-0.23	0.16	-0.10	0.06	-0.13
Size	(1.28)	(0.26)	(-0.33)	(-0.68)	(1.01)	(-0.50)	(0.58)	(-1.09)
Political		0.36		0.04		0.02		0.32
Interest		(2.59)		(0.25)		(0.11)		(2.94)
Partisan		0.27		0.60		1.14		0.60
Strength		(2.43)		(5.10)		(8.62)		(6.58)
Age		-0.01		0.01		0.00		0.02
		(-2.36)		(1.15)		(0.63)		(3.13)
Female		0.19		-0.13		0.18		0.27
		(1.03)		(-0.56)		(0.75)		(1.32)
Income		0.01		0.05		0.00		0.01
		(0.59)		(1.87)		(0.13)		(0.34)
Education		0.15		-0.09		0.09		-0.12
		(2.56)		(-0.78)		(0.76)		(-1.43)
Constant	0.94	0.68	0.61	-0.74	0.98	-0.46	2.26	-0.14
	(1.53)	(0.97)	(0.66)	(-0.66)	(1.59)	(-0.53)	(5.57)	(-0.22)
N	1260	1256	1549	1545	910	901	1909	1716
pseudo R^2	0.04	0.07	0.01	0.07	0.04	0.24	0.03	0.13

Z scores in parentheses. Models are limited to respondents with at least one named discussant

Table 4: General Disagreement and Predictors of Correct Voting, 2000-2012

	2004 CNEP		2008/09 ANES		2012 CNEP	
Predictors	**Naive Model**	**Full Model**	**Naive Model**	**Full Model**	**Naive Model**	**Full Model**
Network Disagreement	-1.59	-1.50	-2.23	-1.76	-4.02	-2.29
	(-2.74)	(-2.68)	(-4.46)	(-3.04)	(-5.17)	(-2.37)
Network Sophistication	0.22	0.04	0.23	0.17	0.13	0.16
	(1.39)	(0.25)	(3.59)	(2.28)	(0.63)	(0.56)
Network Size	0.22	0.09	-0.08	-0.14	0.02	-0.25
	(1.50)	(0.60)	(-0.34)	(-0.57)	(0.14)	(-1.29)
Political Interest		0.29		-0.03		0.04
		(2.23)		(-0.21)		(0.18)
Partisan Strength		0.28		0.62		1.05
		(2.48)		(5.60)		(7.36)
Age		-0.01		0.01		0.01
		(-1.91)		(1.61)		(0.86)
Female		0.14		0.01		0.13
		(0.74)		(0.06)		(0.54)
Income		0.01		0.05		0.01
		(0.49)		(1.84)		(0.16)
Education		0.16		0.01		0.08
		(2.79)		(0.06)		(0.71)
Constant	1.01	0.57	0.41	-1.12	3.41	0.84
	(1.60)	(0.79)	(0.54)	(-1.19)	(3.92)	(0.68)
N	1252	1248	1701	1697	860	851
pseudo R^2	0.02	0.05	0.05	0.11	0.06	0.23

Z scores in parentheses. Models are limited to respondents with at least one named discussant

A.2 Threshold Effects

Table 5: Network Predictors of Correct Voting, 2004 CNEP

	Partisan Disagreement		General Disagreement	
Predictors	Naive Model	Full Model	Naive Model	Full Model
Complete Disagreement	-1.30	-1.31	-2.90	-2.66
	(-4.30)	(-4.26)	(-2.35)	(-2.34)
Mostly Disagreement	-0.82	-0.94	0.08	0.00
	(-1.82)	(-2.24)	(0.16)	(0.00)
Mostly Agreement	-0.49	-0.55	0.14	0.07
	(-2.31)	(-2.63)	(0.34)	(0.19)
Complete Agreement	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)
Network Sophistication	0.18	-0.03	0.32	0.14
	(1.13)	(-0.19)	(2.06)	(0.90)
Network Size	0.21	0.08	0.18	0.05
	(1.13)	(0.46)	(1.14)	(0.32)
Partisan Strength		0.27		0.29
		(2.44)		(2.51)
Political Interest		0.36		0.30
		(2.59)		(2.31)
Age		-0.01		-0.01
		(-2.36)		(-1.92)
Education		0.15		0.14
		(2.53)		(-0.29)
Female		0.19		0.16
		(1.01)		(0.85)
Income		0.16		0.01
		(0.65)		(0.49)
Constant	0.88	0.59	0.11	-0.21
	(1.45)	(0.84)	(0.17)	(-0.29)
N	1260	1256	1252	1248
Psuedo R^2	0.04	0.07	0.02	0.05

Z scores in parentheses. Coefficients for respondents with at least one discussant.

Table 6: Network Predictors of Correct Voting, 2008/09 ANES Panel Study

	Partisan Disagreement		General Disagreement	
Predictors	Naive Model	Full Model	Naive Model	Full Model
Complete Disagreement	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	-2.53	-2.56
			(-1.95)	(-2.24)
Mostly Disagreement	-0.81	-0.83	-1.63	-1.18
	(-2.05)	(-1.94)	(-2.81)	(-2.07)
Mostly Agreement	-0.39	-0.00	-1.06	-0.76
	(-1.30)	(-0.01)	(-2.04)	(-1.64)
Complete Agreement	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)
Network Sophistication	0.16	0.14	0.22	0.16
	(2.03)	(1.38)	(3.52)	(2.17)
Network Size	-0.00	-0.14	-0.02	-0.13
	(-0.01)	(-0.47)	(-0.08)	(-0.47)
Partisan Strength		0.62		0.65
		(5.32)		(5.73)
Political Interest		0.03		-0.04
		(0.22)		(-0.25)
Age		0.01		0.01
		(1.07)		(1.71)
Education		-0.08		-0.00
		(-0.72)		(-0.00)
Female		-0.14		0.01
		(-0.63)		(0.06)
Income		0.05		0.05
		(1.85)		(1.83)
Constant	0.60	-1.03	0.61	-0.98
	(0.62)	(-0.91)	(0.76)	(-0.98)
N	1539	1535	1701	1697
Psuedo R^2	0.02	0.07	0.04	0.10

Z scores in parentheses. Coefficients for respondents with at least one discussant.

Table 7: Network Predictors of Correct Voting, 2012 CNEP

	Partisan Disagreement		General Disagreement	
Predictors	Naive Model	Full Model	Naive Model	Full Model
Complete Disagreement	-2.24	-2.15	(Omitted)	(Omitted)
	(-5.02)	(-5.08)		
Mostly Disagreement	-1.88	-1.60	-2.19	-1.58
	(-3.87)	(-2.85)	(-3.22)	(-1.96)
Mostly Agreement	-1.19	-0.93	-1.24	-0.62
	(-3.69)	(-2.71)	(-2.30)	(-1.13)
Complete Agreement	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)	(Omitted)
Network Sophistication	-0.16	-0.22	-0.03	-0.11
	(-0.69)	(-0.83)	(-0.11)	(-0.39)
Network Size	0.23	-0.06	-0.01	-0.33
	(1.19)	(-0.28)	(-0.08)	(-1.55)
Partisan Strength		0.69		0.67
		(5.08)		(4.81)
Political Interest		0.19		0.23
		(0.84)		(1.01)
Age		0.01		0.01
		(1.48)		(1.51)
Education		-0.07		-0.06
		(-0.59)		(-0.44)
Female		0.56		0.53
		(1.99)		(1.88)
Income		0.01		0.00
		(0.23)		(1.03)
Constant	2.24	0.83	3.16	1.33
	(3.36)	(0.87)	(3.52)	(1.08)
N	903	894	852	843
Psuedo R^2	0.08	0.17	0.02	0.12

Z scores in parentheses. Coefficients for respondents with at least one discussant.

Table 8: Network Predictors of Correct Voting, 2016 CCES

	Partisan Disagreement	
Predictors	Naive Model	Full Model
Complete Disagreement	-1.19	-0.83
	(-4.73)	(-2.91)
Mostly Disagreement	-1.11	-0.79
	(-3.80)	(-2.17)
Mostly Agreement	-0.27	-0.04
	(-1.08)	(-0.15)
Complete Agreement	(Omitted)	(Omitted)
Network Sophistication	-0.02	0.07
	(-0.11)	(0.34)
Network Size	0.10	-0.12
	(0.86)	(-0.86)
Partisan Strength		0.60
		(6.69)
Political Interest		0.31
		(2.79)
Age		0.02
		(3.06)
Education		-0.12
		(-1.40)
Female		0.28
		(1.36)
Income		0.01
		(0.36)
Constant	2.12	-0.23
	(5.41)	(-0.39)
N	1909	1716
Psuedo R^2	0.04	0.13

A.3 Summary Statistics

Table 9: Summary Statistics, 2004 CNEP

	Observations	Mean	St. Dev	Min	Max
Correct Vote	1360	0.83	0.37	0	1
Partisan Disagreement	1716	0.16	0.28	0	1
• Complete Disagreement	1716	0.05	0.23	0	1
• Mostly Disagreement	1716	0.03	0.17	0	1
• Mostly Agreement	1716	0.20	0.40	0	1
• Complete Agreement	1716	0.71	0.45	0	1
General Disagreement	1792	1.33	0.81	0	4
• Complete Disagreement	1792	0.02	0.12	0	1
• Mostly Disagreement	1792	0.07	0.26	0	1
• Mostly Agreement	1792	0.79	0.40	0	1
• Complete Agreement	1792	0.11	0.32	0	1
Network Sophistication	1685	3.04	0.94	0	4
Network Size	1816	2.03	0.83	0	3
Partisan Strength	1807	0.84	0.93	0	3
Political Interest	1809	2.03	0.83	0	3
Age	1816	44.31	16.12	18	91
Education	1816	4.11	1.70	1	9
Female	1816	0.52	0.50	0	1
Income	1816	9.74	4.18	1	19

Table 10: Summary Statistics, 2008/09 ANES Panel Study

	Observations	Mean	St. Dev	Min	Max
Correct Vote	2428	0.80	0.40	0	1
Partisan Disagreement	2388	0.98	1.26	0	6
• Complete Disagreement	2388	0.00	0.06	0	1
• Mostly Disagreement	2388	0.07	0.26	0	1
• Mostly Agreement	2388	0.51	0.26	0	1
• Complete Agreement	2388	0.42	0.49	0	1
General Disagreement	2633	1.00	0.86	0	4
• Complete Disagreement	2388	0.00	0.06	0	1
• Mostly Disagreement	2388	0.09	0.28	0	1
• Mostly Agreement	2388	0.62	0.49	0	1
• Complete Agreement	2388	0.29	0.45	0	1
Network Sophistication	2584	8.61	4.58	0	14
Network Size	2656	2.28	1.21	0	3
Partisan Strength	2733	1.95	1.04	0	3
Political Interest	2739	3.69	0.99	1	5
Age	2611	50.81	15.45	17	90
Education	3222	3.36	1.09	1	5
Female	4240	0.58	0.49	0	1
Income	3187	12.23	4.13	1	19

Table 11: Summary Statistics, 2012 CNEP

	Observations	Mean	St. Dev	Min	Max
Correct Vote	998	0.86	0.34	0	1
Partisan Disagreement	1219	0.13	0.26	0	1
• Complete Disagreement	1219	0.04	0.19	0	1
• Mostly Disagreement	1219	0.04	0.19	0	1
• Mostly Agreement	1219	0.16	0.37	0	1
• Complete Agreement	1219	0.76	0.43	0	1
General Disagreement	1158	1.16	0.72	0	4
• Complete Disagreement	1158	0.00	0.04	0	1
• Mostly Disagreement	1158	0.05	0.22	0	1
• Mostly Agreement	1158	0.80	0.40	0	1
• Complete Agreement	1158	0.14	0.35	0	1
Network Sophistication	1112	2.24	0.60	0	3
Network Size	1289	2.15	0.89	0	3
Partisan Strength	1265	1.45	1.17	0	3
Political Interest	1284	2.34	0.87	0	3
Age	1289	49.86	16.82	18	91
Education	1283	2.89	1.14	1	5
Female	1289	0.50	0.50	0	1
Income	1289	11.95	4.41	1	19

Table 12: Summary Statistics, 2016 CCES

	Observations	Mean	St. Dev	Min	Max
Correct Vote	2041	0.84	0.37	0	1
Partisan Disagreement	2552	0.23	0.34	0	1
• Complete Disagreement	2552	0.11	0.31	0	1
• Mostly Disagreement	2552	0.08	0.27	0	1
• Mostly Agreement	2552	0.17	0.38	0	1
• Complete Agreement	2552	0.64	0.48	0	1
Network Sophistication	2898	1.52	0.84	0	3
Network Size	3000	2.10	1.14	0	3
Partisan Strength	3000	1.74	1.17	0	3
Political Interest	2998	2.11	1.00	0	3
Age	3000	47.53	16.96	18	93
Education	3000	3.64	1.47	1	6
Female	3000	0.55	0.50	0	1
Income	2697	6.28	3.29	1	17