SCM
Studies in Communication and Media

EXTENDED PAPER

Prerequisites of deliberative democracy: Inclusivity, publicity, and heterogeneity of German citizens' everyday political talk

Voraussetzungen deliberativer Demokratie: Inklusivität, Öffentlichkeit und Heterogenität politischer Alltagsgespräche in Deutschland

Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck

Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck (Prof. Dr.), University of Mannheim, 68131 Mannheim, Germany. Contact: schmitt-beck(at)uni-mannheim.de. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1673-6672

EXTENDED PAPER

Prerequisites of deliberative democracy: Inclusivity, publicity, and heterogeneity of German citizens' everyday political talk[1]

Voraussetzungen deliberativer Demokratie: Inklusivität, Öffentlichkeit und Heterogenität politischer Alltagsgespräche in Deutschland

Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck

Abstract: Departing from a systemic perspective, the paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of ordinary citizens' everyday political talk from a deliberative democratic point of view. Drawing on unique survey data collected in Germany it examines three prerequisites of deliberative democracy as a model of democracy that is rooted in political discussions among the citizenry at large: (1) The prerequisite of inclusivity expects citizens' engagement in everyday conversations to be widespread and egalitarian. (2) The prerequisite of publicity demands citizens to be mutually aware of each other's political perspectives. (3) The prerequisite of heterogeneity necessitates that the standpoints to which citizens are exposed when communicating about politics reflect society's political pluralism. Analyses of citizens' communicative engagement in their overall and core networks suggest basically positive diagnoses for all three prerequisites, but with severe limitations on closer inspection. The paper furthermore shows that with regard to everyday political talk social inequality gives rise to political inequality, and demonstrates how these effects are mediated by variations in citizens' endowment with cultural and social capital.

Keywords: Deliberative democracy; deliberative system; everyday political talk; interpersonal communication; political discussion.

Zusammenfassung: Der Beitrag möchte zu einem besseren Verständnis der Bedeutung der lebensweltlichen Alltagskommunikation der Bürger für die deliberative Demokratie beitragen. Aus systemischer Perspektive wird die normative Sicht der deliberativen Demokratietheorie auf dieses Phänomen rekonstruiert. Dabei werden drei Voraussetzungen der deliberativen Demokratie identifiziert, die sich auf deren Verwurzelung in der politischen Alltagskommunikation der Bürger beziehen: (1) Die Voraussetzung der Inklusivität postuliert, dass die Beteiligung an politischen Alltagsgesprächen weit verbreitet und egalitär sein soll. (2) Die Voraussetzung der Öffentlichkeit verlangt wechselseitige Information der Bürger über ihre politischen Standpunkte. (3) Die Voraussetzung der Heterogenität beinhaltet, dass die politischen Positionen, denen die Bürger in ihrer lebensweltlichen Kommunikation

1 The author is indebted to Simon Ellerbrock, Manuel Neumann and Christian Schnaudt as well as two anonymous reviewers for helpful feedback on previous versions of this paper, and to Christiane Grill for her invaluable contribution to collecting the data and compiling the data set.

begegnen, den Pluralismus der Gesellschaft repräsentieren. Detaillierte Analysen der kommunikativen Erfahrungen der Bürger mit den Mitgliedern ihrer Gesamt- und Kernnetzwerke auf Basis einer eigens in Deutschland erhobenen repräsentativen Bevölkerungsumfrage legen für alle drei Voraussetzungen grundsätzlich positive Diagnosen nahe, die jedoch bei näherer Betrachtung stark relativiert werden müssen. Der Beitrag zeigt darüber hinaus, dass im Hinblick auf alltägliche politische Diskussionen soziale Ungleichheit zu politischer Ungleichheit führt, und demonstriert, wie diese Effekte durch Variationen in der Ausstattung der Bürger mit kulturellem und sozialem Kapital vermittelt werden.

Schlagwörter: Deliberative Demokratie; deliberatives System; politisches Alltagsgespräch; interpersonale Kommunikation; politische Diskussion.

> *"If there is something you want to know and cannot discover by meditation, then, my dear, ingenious friend, I advise you to discuss it with the first acquaintance whom you happen to meet." (von Kleist 1951 [1805], 42)*

1. Introduction

Deliberative democracy is one of the currently most widely discussed normative visions of ideal democratic governance. It is a "communicative" (Young, 2000, p. 40), "talk-centered" (Steiner, 2012, p. 37) notion of democracy that places special emphasis on political discussion. Recent systemic theorizing conceives the politics of deliberative democracy in terms of a multitude of interlocking processes of political talk taking place within a wide variety of arenas (Parkinson, 2018; Parkinson & Mansbridge, 2012). They encompass the communication of traditional and new digital media, as well as the communication within and between organizations like political parties, interest groups or social movements, and in governmental bodies, such as parliaments, cabinets or courts. Importantly, they also include the conversations about public affairs that ordinary citizens engage in with one another in the course of their day-to-day lives (Mansbridge, 1999; Tanasoca, 2020).

Citizens' everyday political talk[2] – the informal discussions about political themes, casually occurring more or less regularly in people's homes, at workplaces, over garden fences or via online platforms (Conover & Miller, 2018) – must assume a prominent role within a deliberative system[3] if it is to qualify as democratic. People's quotidian political conversations are the mainspring of deliberative politics and the touchstone of its democratic character – nothing less than its "centerpiece" (Mansbridge, 1999, p. 228) and "fundamental underpinning" (Kim & Kim, 2008, p. 51). They are expected to connect citizens' lifeworld with the public sphere and

2 No consistent terminology is used in the literature to denote this subject (Schäfer, 2019, pp. 21–29; Schmitt-Beck & Lup, 2013, p. 515); in this paper the terms "everyday political talk", "political conversations" and "political discussions" will be used interchangeably.

3 My understanding of this concept does not imply the claim that the requirements of deliberative democracy are fulfilled. Following Dryzek, "it is best to think of a particular system as being potentially deliberative", because this opens up perspectives for analyses by rendering it "possible to look at the actual performance of the parts – and the whole – in light of some deliberative standards about what they ought to be doing" (Dryzek, 2016, p. 211). This is exactly what I attempt to do in this paper.

ultimately the institutions of governance (Chambers, 2012; Kim & Kim, 2008). Deliberative democracy thus entails a notion of "rhetorical citizenship" (Kock & Villadsen, 2017) at whose heart is the normative conception of non-elite members of the polity as free and equal contributors to an inclusive and encompassing process of multi-layered, interconnected discussions about public affairs that permeate society in its entirety and feed into the institutional arenas of formal will-formation and decision-making (Habermas, 1996; Tanasoca, 2020). Consequently, "the deliberative model ... wants ordinary citizens, or at least as many as possible of them, to deliberate issues on a regular basis" (Steiner, 2012, pp. 37–38).

Despite its elevated status as normative core of deliberative democracy, the casual communication between citizens in their lifeworld has received surprisingly little attention in both theory and empirical research on this model of democracy (Conover & Miller, 2018; Schmitt-Beck & Lup, 2013). Many more studies have examined how citizens discuss politics as invited participants of formalized deliberative forums (Landwehr, 2020) than informally and spontaneously in living rooms, pubs, clubs or companies' breakfast rooms. Recent criticism has therefore accused deliberative democratic scholarship of deemphasizing citizens' everyday talk in favor of elite-initiated organized public discussion events, such as deliberative polls (Fishkin 1991, 2009) and other types of minipublics, in which only very few citizens ever have a chance to take part. Yet, as Lafont insists, "[d]eliberative democrats cannot be agnostic about mass participation" (Lafont, 2020, p. 136). Accordingly, theory and research on deliberative democracy need to rebuild the "broken link with mass politics" (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, p. 56).

The present paper takes up this impulse. It aims to contribute to a better understanding of ordinary citizens' role in the deliberative system by exploring three basic characteristics of their political talk and the everyday experiences connected to it. Conceptually, each of these features refers to a condition that is necessary but not sufficient for deliberative democracy (Goertz, 2006). In this specific sense they are *prerequisites* of this talk-based model of democratic governance and constitute conditions of its possibility. None of them is in itself deliberative, and even if they are all fulfilled one cannot yet speak of a deliberative democracy. A genuine deliberative democracy requires the fulfilment of additional conditions that pertain to the deliberative quality of political discourse (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, pp. 21–28; Fuchs, 2014). But qualitative criteria of this kind are only meaningful when the following three fundamental presuppositions are met: First, as a specific mode of political discussion, deliberation presupposes that people talk about politics to begin with. Hence, according to the prerequisite of *inclusivity* most if not all citizens should engage in political discussions among themselves, and they ought to do so on equal terms. Second, by definition deliberation revolves around participants' political standpoints, positions and preferences. The prerequisite of *publicity* therefore demands that when discussing politics, citizens' political views should be clearly visible so that interlocutors are mutually aware of each other's perspectives. The prerequisite of *heterogeneity*, finally, relates to deliberative democracy's function to deal with societal disagreements over political goals in constructive and legitimate ways. It necessitates that the political

standpoints to which citizens are exposed in their lifeworld reflect society's political pluralism, rather than only echoing their own views.

The paper's primary aim is diagnostic: to ascertain in how far the empirical reality of citizens' everyday political talk matches these requirements. Ideally, the politics of deliberative democracy should emerge from an ongoing, broad and encompassing discussion within the citizenry at large (Habermas, 1996; Tanasoca, 2020). Its prospects would be seriously impaired if the three prerequisites of inclusivity, publicity and heterogeneity were not met in people's everyday communication. Accordingly, the paper examines the pervasiveness and equality of citizens' engagement in political conversations, the visibility of their political views to each other, and the amount and character of their exposure to political disagreement. The paper thereby aims at a better understanding of the prospects of deliberative democracy as a type of democracy whose "main platform" (Tanasoca, 2020, p. 232) is citizens' political communication with one another. Beyond this diagnostic objective the paper furthermore aims for a thorough analysis of the conditions that give these observed realities their shape.

Focusing on the case of Germany, the paper also breaks new ground by studying citizens' everyday talk about politics in a country where in general very little is as of yet known about this, arguably most basic, form of political communication (Schmitt-Beck & Schäfer, 2020). The analyses draw on the *Conversations of Democracy* study, a unique face-to-face survey specially designed to examine German citizens' everyday political talk.[4] Conducted during the run-up to a national election (the 2017 federal election), it features citizens' engagement in political discussions in a situational context where it is considered particularly important by some theorists of deliberative democracy (Goodin, 2008, pp. 108–124; Rawls, 1993, pp. 212–220). Citizens' lifeworld is conceptualized in terms of networks of fellow citizens in which they are embedded and with whose members they may engage in conversations about politics (Huckfeldt, 2017; Tanasoca, 2020, pp. 102–130). To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the everyday political talk taking place in citizens' social networks the paper jointly analyses overall networks and core networks (Eveland et al., 2012; McClurg et al., 2018).

The paper begins with a reconstruction of deliberative democrats' theoretical reasoning about the role of ordinary citizens' everyday political talk in deliberative democracy. This sets the stage for a more detailed elaboration of the research questions that will then be addressed in the subsequent sections. Following an outline of the data and network-analytical measurement strategy the paper zooms in on the three prerequisites of deliberative democracy. After explicating its theoretical rationale each section offers a wide array of descriptive data that allow to assess whether and how the empirical reality of the political talk taking place in citizens' lifeworld meets the normative criteria of inclusivity, publicity and hetero-

4 See Conover & Searing (2005) for a discussion of the methodological merits of survey research for studying citizens' political talk.

geneity, respectively. In addition, each section presents a series of multivariate analyses to examine these phenomena's conditions.[5]

2. Deliberative democracy and citizens' everyday political talk

Deliberative democracy is set apart from representative liberal democracy by its prioritization of talking over counting. At the heart of the latter is the aggregation of citizens' preferences by means of elections and other forms of poll-taking. How these preferences have come about is not a matter of concern within this model of decision-making; they are taken as a given. Deliberative democrats question the legitimacy of this logic and criticize the quality of its outcomes. They propose a new mode of politics that is to supplement or even replace purely "aggregative" democracy (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004, pp. 13–21; Held, 2006, pp. 231–255; Talisse, 2012; Young, 2000, pp. 18–26). Instead of appreciating preferences as they come, deliberative democracy is concerned about the process through which they are formed, and lauds discussion as the high road for developing and validating them. It aims to capitalize on the power of communication to generate a more refined understanding of matters of conflict and stimulate an ensuing adaptation of political views in the light of well-reasoned arguments that take the perspectives of all affected groups into account. Decisions emerging from deliberative processes are expected to generate public policies that are of higher substantive quality, fairer and more just, more conducive to the common good, and thus ultimately more legitimate (Cohen, 1989; Dryzek, 2000; Fishkin, 1991; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, 2004; Habermas, 1996).

Deliberative democracy's vision of politics is in several respects very ambitious. In order to fulfil these high expectations, its political process must ensure two qualities: it must be *deliberative*, and at the same time also *democratic* (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, pp. 5–15). Neither of these two imperatives is trivial, and they are not intrinsically connected (Moscrop & Warren, 2016). Genuine deliberation is not just any kind of political talk, but a very demanding one. In a nutshell, for discussions to qualify as deliberative it is necessary that communicators "carefully examine a problem, and arrive at a well-reasoned solution, after a period of inclusive, respectful consideration of diverse points of view" (Gastil, 2008, p. 8). Deliberation as such is not inherently democratic (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004, pp. 8–10). Even before representative government came to be endowed with the attribute "democratic" (Dunn, 2018) its early advocates envisaged parliaments as bodies where society's best, most farsighted and public-spirited minds would assemble to identify the best courses of policy by means of careful and thorough deliberation (Bessette, 1994; Mill, 1991 [1861], pp. 97–119). Parlia-

5 Note that I use the language of causality with caution. Since the data are cross-sectional, I mostly cannot claim to demonstrate causal relationships. Some of the conditions that I examine could plausibly also be seen as consequences of the respective dependent variables (Morrell, 2005; Torcal & Maldonado, 2014). It seems quite conceivable that the associations are indeed to some extent reciprocal. Since the phenomena of interest are all of high intra-individual consistency over time, panel data spanning a very long time period would be needed to disentangle these causal relationships.

mentarians were seen as akin to "aristocrats of capability and virtue" that worked toward what they learned through their deliberations as being in the best interest of their community (Manin, 1997).

For today's deliberative democrats, this kind of deliberative elitism is anathema. They want "'deliberation by the people', not 'deliberation for the people'" (Fishkin, 2009, p. 73). To qualify as democratic on its own terms, deliberative democracy requires substantial and effective involvement of the citizenry at large (Moscrop & Warren, 2016). A political division of labor where the effort of discussing policies is the exclusive remit of elected office-holders, is completely at odds with deliberative democratic ideals (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, p. 358). "If one is interested in deliberative democracy as a broad model of legitimacy and a full theory of democracy, the mass public needs to be included in the picture." (Chambers, 2009, p. 333) Deliberative democracy must be broadly participatory in order to fulfil the requirement of genuine self-government (Barber, 1984; Lafont, 2020; Tanasoca, 2020). It demands careful deliberation of public policies on the part of office-holders, but citizens' active engagement in political talk in their everyday lives is at least as important. The politics of deliberative democracy needs to be "plugged into the experiences, narratives, deliberations, claims, even the symbols and language, of the relevant *demoi*" (Parkinson, 2018, p. 436).

What is the precise role of citizens' everyday political talk in deliberative democracy? Early theorizing let it appear self-evident that deliberative democratic decision-making would involve all citizens, but did not spell out how that might work in a mass democracy (Cohen, 1989; Manin, 1987). The recent "systemic turn" (Owen & Smith, 2015) of deliberative democratic theory opened the door for a better understanding of the necessarily complex communicative architecture of deliberative democratic politics (Parkinson, 2018; Parkinson & Mansbridge, 2012). To appreciate the pivotal status of citizens' everyday political talk in more precise terms was an important motive behind the emergence of systemic thinking in deliberative democratic theory (Dryzek, 2016, p. 210). Following Mansbridge, it must be understood as a "crucial part of the full deliberative system that democracies need if citizens are, in any sense, to rule themselves" (Mansbridge, 1999, p. 211; see also Hendriks, 2006, pp. 488–490; Neblo, 2015, pp. 17–25).

Recent scholarship no longer implicates that political decisions could somehow directly emanate from deliberations of the citizenry at large. Instead, deliberative democratic politics is envisaged in terms of a multiplicity of interlocking sites for discussing public affairs that can be seen as "a continuum, where everyday talk lies at one end of the spectrum and decision making in public assemblies and in parliament lie at the other" (Maia, 2012, pp. 69–70). The principle of democratic legitimation demands that within this continuum communicative influence travels bottom-up, from citizens' informal exchanges among one another to formal debates in the institutional arenas that prepare political decisions (Habermas, 1996, p. 356). In deliberative democracy, authoritative decision-making enjoys legitimacy only when it is preceded and nurtured by processes of discussion within civil society. According to Lafont, without roots in everyday communications that reflect people s' experiences in their lifeworld, political decisions would be mere

impositions that require "blind obedience", thus alienating citizens from policies, decision-makers and the polity at large (Lafont, 2020, pp. 17–33).

Habermas' "two-track model" attempts to spell out this perspective in more detail (Habermas, 1996, pp. 298–308, 354–387, 486–488). It conceives of deliberative democratic politics as an "interplay between democratically institutionalized will-formation and informal opinion-formation" (Habermas, 1996, p. 308). Everyday political talk in citizens' social networks is the realm of the latter (Tanasoca, 2020). Within the deliberative democratic political process it is assigned the function of a "context of discovery" with regard to problems encountered in citizens' lifeworld. Due to their informality and openness political conversations may serve as a forum where citizens' authentic views, interests and preferences initially surface and can be explored, defined, refined and weighed. According to Habermas, they establish a "system of opinion-formation" that allows to recognize societal problems and raises consciousness about them, forms identities, and enables persons to interpret and understand their own needs and desires. Everyday political talk thus generates "informal public opinions" which then can be detected by the "sensors" of the formal institutions of governance that are endowed with the authority to generate binding decisions (Habermas, 1996, pp. 298–308). In Easton's (1965) language one might say that everyday political talk serves as medium to identify problems and associated needs and transform them into demands to the political system. In deliberative democracy the casual exchanges between citizens in their lifeworld are thus the main source of the political substance that is processed by the institutionalized "system of will-formation". Formalized discussions in the "empowered space" (Dryzek, 2010, p. 11) of institutional settings serve as "context of justification" where demands are ultimately dealt with through the constitutionally prescribed procedures of authoritative decision-making.

"Everyday political talk educates, constructs, filters, adopts, applies, and discards political ideas." (Conover & Searing, 2005, p. 270) To inform political decision-making the cognitive revenues yielded from this activity must pass the "sluices of democratic and constitutional procedures situated at the entrance to the parliamentary complex or the courts" (Habermas, 1996, p. 356). Voting is the most important lever for opening these interfaces between the sphere of opinion-formation on the part of citizens and the sphere of will-formation within governmental institutions. "Informal public opinion-formation generates 'influence'; influence is transformed into 'communicative power' through the channels of political elections; and communicative power is again transformed into 'administrative power' through legislation." (Habermas, 1994, p. 8) In deliberative democracy, it is thus critically important that electoral choices are thoroughly prepared by political discussions on the part of voters. "First talk, then vote," should be citizens' maxim when elections are coming up (Gastil, 2000; Goodin, 2008, pp. 108–124). Other forms of political participation can achieve similar benefits, as long as they likewise emanate from political discussions among citizens (Chambers, 2012).

One form of political participation that is particularly highly esteemed by many deliberative democrats is engagement in minipublics, that is, formalized discussion forums which are organized in increasing numbers in democracies

around the globe to render deliberative theory practical (Felicetti, 2014; Neblo, 2015, pp. 24–25).[6] Institutional innovations like deliberative polls, citizen juries, consensus conferences or participatory budgeting attempt to engage samples of ordinary citizens, ideally selected through random procedures, in public discussions of pertinent policy issues that are designed to achieve high deliberative quality. Usually such forums are tasked with working out recommendations for institutional processes of policy-making. Numerous studies have examined how ordinary people discuss controversial issues in such highly structured formal contexts (Bächtiger, 2016; Landwehr, 2020).

In stark contrast, the informal communication between citizens in their lifeworld has thus far received only fleeting attention in research on deliberative democracy (Schmitt-Beck & Lup, 2013; Conover & Miller, 2018). In recent years a sizable body of research evolved around citizens' everyday political talk, to be sure. But only very few of these studies relied on a genuine deliberative democratic perspective (Conover et al., 2002; Gärtner et al., 2021; Jacobs et al., 2009; Jennstål et al., 2021; Mutz, 2006). Scholarly interest has indeed been so scant that some theorists of deliberative democracy went so far as to diagnose a "broken link with mass politics" in need of "rebuilding" (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, pp. 56–57, 76–79). Critics even accused deliberative democratic scholarship of downplaying the democratic element in a shift toward "participatory elitism where citizens who participate in face-to-face deliberative initiatives (and only a small fraction do) have more democratic legitimacy than the mass electorate" (Chambers, 2009, p. 344; see also Lafont, 2020, pp. 138–160; Urbinati, 2010, pp. 72–76). Clearly, empirical understanding of the role of citizens' everyday political talk in deliberative democracy is deficient (Tanasoca, 2020), and more attention needs to be paid to the anchoring of the deliberative system in the citizenry at large.

3. Three prerequisites of deliberative democracy

The following analyses aim to contribute to filling this gap in research by exploring three crucial prerequisites of deliberative democracy as a model of democracy that is rooted in citizens' everyday political talk. Each of these prerequisites has the status of a necessary but not sufficient condition for governance in accordance to the normative ideal of deliberative democracy (Goertz, 2006). This ideal presupposes that citizens discuss political matters in their everyday lifeworld, and that they do so in large numbers and an egalitarian way; that, while discussing politics, they are cognizant of each other's political views; and that they are exposed to the political pluralism of society. In short, citizens' everyday communication experiences must meet the prerequisites of inclusivity, publicity, and heterogeneity. This does not guarantee a deliberating mass public, to be sure. But it establishes indispensable conditions of its possibility. Without people talking about public affairs, being conscious of interlocutors' perspectives, and encoun-

6 For the German case alone, 67 such deliberative events are documented on the Participedia platform (cf. https://participedia.net; filters: Country = Germany + General types of methods = Deliberative and dialogical process; accessed on 16 April, 2021).

tering deviating or conflicting views on the part of fellow citizens it would have no basis from the outset.[7]

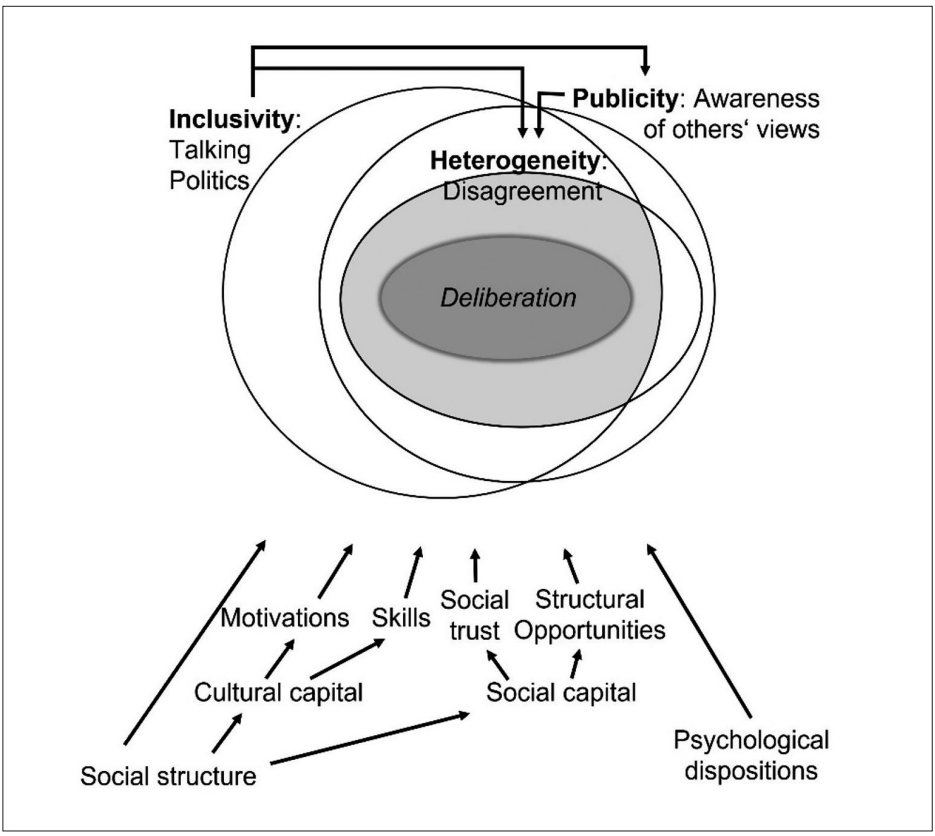
Prerequisite of inclusivity: As a specific form of political discussion, deliberation is premised on people's actual engagement in political talk (Schmitt-Beck & Lup, 2013, p. 515). Such conversations are not per se deliberative (Mansbridge, 1999), but if citizens refrained from communicating about politics, deliberation would be logically excluded from the start. In addition, to qualify as democratic these discussions should not only be as widespread, but also as egalitarian as possible (Goodin, 2008, pp. 38–40). Inclusivity as conceived here thus implies equality. The promises of deliberative democracy would be undermined if large numbers of citizens, especially when systematically drawn from disadvantaged groups, discussed public affairs only sparingly, or refrained from it altogether.

Prerequisite of publicity: Deliberative democratic politics, like all politics, is to result in binding political decisions. Deliberative communication therefore necessarily must revolve around political standpoints, preferences and positions. Its deliberative quality emerges from how such matters are discussed – deliberative legitimacy hinges on the process of political communication (Cohen, 1989; Manin, 1987). However, if political views are not clearly expressed and thus not discernible for interlocutors, there is from the start no meaningful substance to discuss. Accordingly, citizens' political views should be visible and discussion partners should be mutually aware of each other's perspectives (Bohman, 1996, pp. 34–37). This does not guarantee discussions' deliberative quality, but without it there is nothing they could process, deliberative or otherwise.

Prerequisite of heterogeneity: Mutual recognizability of political positions and preferences enables persons to discern where their fellow citizens stand, but the nature of the views to which they are thereby exposed is also important. Deliberative democracy aims to deal with disagreements over political goals in constructive and legitimate ways. "[I]n the absence of disagreement, … deliberative democracy ... would be unnecessary." (Martí, 2017, p. 559) It therefore presupposes that exposure to society's political diversity is not the sole remit of decision-makers, but part and parcel of citizens' encounters with one another. Under conditions of ineluctable societal disagreement about political goals that must be addressed through processes of legitimate authoritative decision-making, citizens should in their everyday lives not only be exposed to perspectives that mirror their own, but also deviating and opposing views (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Tanasoca, 2020, pp. 149–184).

7 It deserves noting that within the systemic strand of normative theorizing about deliberative democracy these three prerequisites are sometimes seen as both necessary *and sufficient* conditions of deliberative democracy. Some theorists argue that from a systemic perspective deliberativeness should be seen as an emergent quality that characterizes the deliberate system overall but must not be consistently met by the specific arenas of political talk of which it is composed (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, pp. 104–131). Especially with regard to everyday political talk the requirements of high-quality deliberation are often relaxed within this strand of the literature (Mansbridge, 1999). Arguably, this perspective has a tautological flavor and leaves open how the deliberative character of the deliberative system might then be assessed. I share Owen & Smith's (2015) view that it is important for the viability of deliberative democracy to insist that everyday communication should also display a "deliberative stance".

Figure 1. Prerequisites of deliberative democracy and their conditions



In a stylized fashion Figure 1 visualizes how these prerequisites relate to one another. They are depicted as overlapping and partly nested ovals of differing size. The first of them pertains to the prerequisite of inclusivity and represents those citizens that talk about politics. The second, partly overlapping element pertains to the prerequisite of publicity. It symbolizes the extent to which citizens are aware of their fellow citizens' political views. Experiences of disagreement presuppose awareness of others' standpoints. Since the prerequisite of heterogeneity is in this sense logically dependent on the prerequisite of publicity it is depicted in Figure 1 as a complete subset of the latter. From the normative viewpoint of deliberative democracy these three prerequisites should be simultaneously met for as many citizens as possible – ideally, all of them (indicated by the area shaded grey). Genuine deliberative communication is a subset of the three prerequisites' joint overlap area that might but must not materialize in the real world (shaded dark grey). This depends on whether additional criteria are met that pertain to the quality of discussions in terms of deliberative core values like reason-giving, listening, common good orientation, authenticity, and mutual respect (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, pp. 21–28; Goodin, 2008, pp. 186–189).

In the following, each of the three prerequisites of inclusivity, publicity, and heterogeneity will be explored in two steps. The first step will explore the extent to which these prerequisites are met in citizens' lifeworld. For each of them this involves a comparison of observational evidence about people's everyday communication experiences "in the wild" (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, p. 84) to a standard derived from deliberative democratic theory that is conceived as an "ideal type of a normative ideal" (Weber, 1988 [1922], p. 205). In doing so, the analyses will utilize a more nuanced approach than the necessarily simplified one depicted in Figure 1. Instead of the simple binary distinction between whether a prerequisite is met or not they will apply a gradual perspective that conceives each of them as varying in intensity: political talk by its frequency, awareness of others' viewpoints by its certainty, and heterogeneity by its amount. The outcomes of these analyses have important implications for the two core imperatives of deliberative democracy. They pertain directly to the *democratic* imperative which demands all three preconditions to be met as universally as possible in the citizenry at large. Regarding the criterion of *deliberativeness* these implications are less direct because they concern its preconditions, but not any of its standards themselves (Fishkin, 2018, pp. 20–22).

Beyond this diagnostic contribution, the paper examines in a second step what gives these observed realities their shape. This pertains to empirical associations between the three prerequisites themselves as well as the relevance of exogeneous factors for each of them. It appears theoretically plausible, for instance, to expect political talk to improve citizens' mutual consciousness of the respective other's political views (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, 68–97). The prerequisite of heterogeneity, in turn, presupposes discernible political standpoints on the part of fellow citizens; views that are not recognisable cannot give rise to experiences of disagreement. Yet, perceptions of other people's politics can still vary by their certainty, and it seems plausible to expect clearly discernible positions to spur experiences of diversity more easily than less clear-cut, ambiguous views. Apart from that, they should also be directly influenced by the intensity of political talk itself (Huckfeldt & Morehouse Mendez, 2008). These expectations are indicated by causal arrows in Figure 1. They will be elaborated below in more detail, and subjected to empirical tests. In addition, it will be more broadly examined how the prerequisites of inclusivity, publicity and heterogeneity are affected by exogenous social structures as well as individual psychological dispositions whose impact may come about either directly or mediated through facets of cultural capital (motivations, skills) and social capital (social trust, structural opportunities).

4. Data and methodological approach

The main data source is the *Conversations of Democracy (CoDem)* study: a high-quality computer-assisted face-to-face survey specially designed to examine everyday political talk in citizens' lifeworld. Based on a register-based one-stage random sample, 1,600 interviews with voting age citizens were completed between 15 May and the German federal election on 24 September, 2017 (average dura-

tion 65 minutes; AAPOR standard response rate 20.1 percent).[8] Following the model of major studies of political talk in citizens' lifeworld (Conover et al., 2002; Huckfeldt et al., 2004; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; Lazarsfeld et al., 1968 [1944]) the study was conducted locally. Its site was Mannheim, a city in the South of Germany characterized by the variegated social structure, economy, culture and political life of a typical mid-sized German city. Where possible, data from the 2018 round of the German General Social Survey ALLBUS (GESIS, 2019) are used as benchmarks to validate findings against a national sample outside the temporal context of an election.

My methodological approach echoes Habermas' understanding of the lifeworld as "a network of communicative actions" (Habermas, 1996, p. 354). Yet, it differs from this conception insofar as its basic units of analysis are not acts of communication, but the individual subjects of communicative action. Drawing on social networks research I conceive an individual citizen's lifeworld as a network of fellow citizens to whom she is connected by means of social interactions of some regularity (Tanasoca, 2020, p. 103). Of focal interest are interactions that take the form of conversations about political topics (Huckfeldt, 2017). Following the ego-centric approach to survey-based social network analysis, survey respondents (denoted as *Ego*) serve as informants about the members of their social networks (the *Alteri*) and their political discussions with these individuals as well as other features of their relationships. To obtain a complete and detailed picture of citizens' political communication within their social networks I combine two approaches of network measurement that are complementary, but nonetheless rarely used together (Lup, 2011).

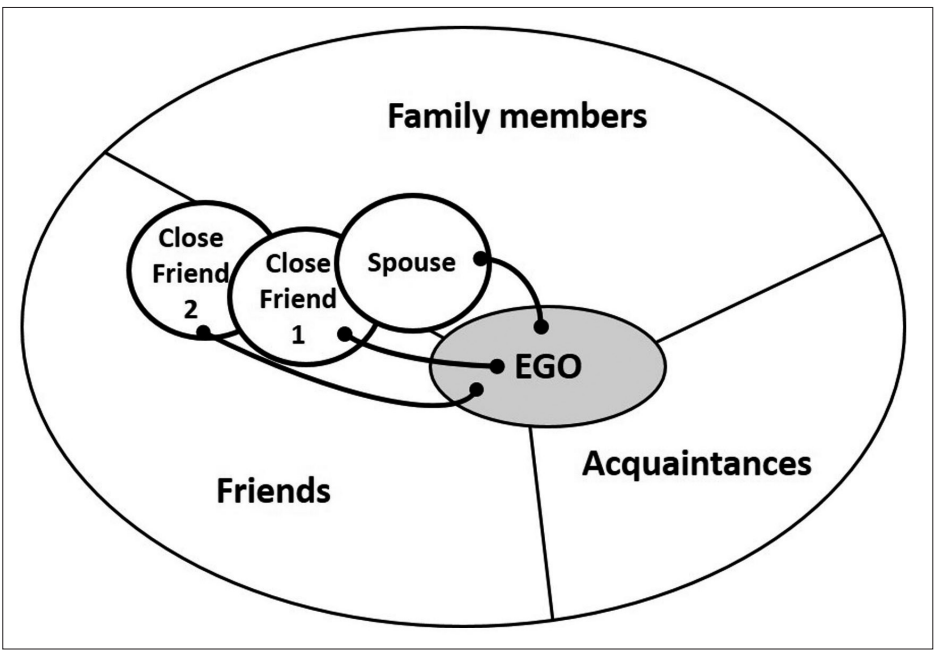
The first approach relies on summary assessments of *overall networks* (Eveland et al., 2012, pp. 240–243). Respondents were invited to provide aggregate information about their networks by means of averaging or summarizing across all *Alteri*. Since types of relationships are crucial contexts for interactions within social networks (Huckfeldt et al., 1995; Morey et al., 2012), the CoDem instrument targets three subnetworks separately. Its questions refer to family members, friends and "acquaintances, such as neighbors or workmates". Family members and friends constitute different kinds of "strong ties", characterized by closeness and positive affect (Straits, 1991), but distinguished by the degree to which they are imposed or chosen (Fischer, 2011). Acquaintances are "weak ties" of a functional nature (Granovetter, 1973).

The second measurement approach parallels the first one in terms of the elicited attributes, but with a pointed focus on individual members of *core networks* (McClurg et al., 2018). It is based on an ego-centric network instrument in the precise technical sense of the term, consisting of name generator and name interpreter questions about respondents' up to three closest political associates (Klofstad et al., 2009; Perry et al., 2018; pp. 37–127). As a safeguard against respondent fatigue a distinction was made between *Alteri* that lived together with respondents in the same household and *Alteri* from outside their households. Af-

8 The study was conducted under a grant of the German National Science Foundation DFG. Fieldwork was carried out by a professional survey firm (Förster & Thelen, Bochum). For further methodological details of design and fieldwork cf . Grill et al. (2018).

ter establishing whether respondents resided in a single or multi-person household, those living with others were asked whether they talked about politics with anyone from their household, and, if appropriate, with which household members they talked most often. Subsequently, all respondents were queried about the two most important discussion partners outside their households. In total, this ego-centric network instrument yielded data on 3,428 *Alteri* (1,107 within households, 2,321 outside households). More than 80 percent of the most important household members were spouses or life partners. Of the other two *Alteri*, more than 50 percent were friends. Another third were family members, and about 15 percent acquaintances of different sorts. For the sake of readability, I henceforth refer to the dominant types of relationships to address these core network members. Accordingly, those residing in respondents' households will be addressed as "spouses", the others as "close friends". The core networks are nested subsets of the overall networks (Figure 2). While the summary measures provide a general picture of respondents' overall networks, the core network measures generate more fine-grained individualized information by zooming in on those networks members with whom respondents talked about politics most often.

Figure 2. Overall and core networks



5. Inclusivity

Inclusivity and equality are core tenets of modern democracy. Democratic systems of government have at all times been conceived as regimes where every member of the *demos* has equal status in the process of political will-formation. In addi-

tion, since the early 20th century the norm has become generally accepted that the *demos* should encompass all adult members of society, regardless of wealth, class, ethnicity or gender. At this most basic level, deliberative democrats' insistence on the values of inclusivity and equality (Dryzek, 2010, pp. 85–99; Young, 2000) is not at odds with traditional conceptions of what democracy is about. Where it is clearly set apart, however, is with regard to its prioritized mode of citizen activity. Where representative democracy emphasizes voting, deliberative democracy assigns centrality to political deliberation. Its basic claim is that "a legitimate decision ... is one that results from the *deliberation of all* ..., and in this sense the decision made can reasonably be considered as emanating from the people (democratic principle)" (Manin, 1987, p. 352). Consequently, in deliberative democracy deliberative practices are expected to transcend their quasi-aristocratic origins in the deliberative elitism of Mill or the Federalists who saw the place of deliberation in representative bodies, rather than the citizenry at large (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004, pp. 9–10; Manin, 1997, pp. 132–192). Deliberation should turn into a pervasive phenomenon.

For theorists of deliberative democracy, the ideal of inclusivity typically entails not only broad, but also equal deliberative engagement (Mansbridge, 2015, p. 30). "When coupled with norms of political equality, inclusion allows for maximum expression of interests, opinions, and perspectives relevant to the problems or issues for which a public seeks solutions." (Young, 2000, p. 23) It thereby entails "the emancipatory promise of an equal voice in a process of free reasoning" for all citizens, regardless of their social backgrounds (Knops, 2006, p. 596). Otherwise, deliberative politics could hardly qualify as democratic. Deliberations could not reflect the full range of perspectives that exist in a society if their inclusiveness and equality were curtailed (Parkinson, 2018, p. 436). The aspirations of deliberative democracy, especially those pertaining to greater fairness and justice in policy-making, can only be expected to materialize when no perspectives are excluded from deliberative processes. Equal deliberative engagement on the part of citizens that are disadvantaged in society and traditional politics is assumed to give rise to fairer policies than what representative liberal democracy might deliver. Ultimately, by considering and giving "proper force to arguments that are advanced by all groups, no matter how marginalised, or how small their relative power" (Knops, 2006, p. 595), deliberative democracy is anticipated to promote nothing less than an overall more just society (Young, 2000).

By definition, without discussion there can be no deliberation. Discussions are not per se deliberative, but if no one discussed about politics, deliberation would be logically impossible from the outset. Hence, a crucial prerequisite of deliberative democracy is that a great many citizens, ideally all of them, engage in everyday talk about political problems and issues. It presupposes "widespread and ongoing participation in talk by the entire citizenry" (Barber, 1984, p. 197). Just as the normative underpinning of representative democracy would be voided if no one voted, and violated if only small minorities did so, deliberative democracy could not even begin to fulfil its high aspirations if large numbers of citizens discussed public affairs only sparingly, or refrained from it altogether. For a deliberative system it therefore appears vitally important that at its foundation, where

ordinary citizens voice their concerns and develop their views through conversations with one another, the dual conditions of inclusivity and equality are met. As a necessary but not sufficient condition this fundamental prerequisite must be met before questions about the deliberative quality of such talk could be meaningfully raised (Mansbridge, 1999).

Does everyday political talk live up to the requirement of inclusivity? Is it sufficiently broad, and is it egalitarian? To address these questions, I begin with a broad descriptive stock-take of citizens' political conversations with members of their social networks. The more people partake in such activities, the more inclusive they are. The equality of everyday political talk becomes apparent in its correlates. If it were fully egalitarian, it would be unrelated to social structural backgrounds. The analyses show that this is not the case, and examine how the translation of structural inequalities into inequalities of engagement in everyday political talk is mediated by variations in citizens' equipment with cultural and social capital.

5.1 How widespread is everyday political talk?

From the deliberative democratic point of view, "all citizens should be involved in political deliberation," which presupposes that "[i]n their everyday life, they should discuss political matters in their families, with friends and neighbors, in the workplace, and in their clubs and associations" (Steiner, 2012, p. 32). So how widespread is political talk in citizen's lifeworld? The CoDem data suggest that during people's casual conversations political matters come up quite frequently. When asked in general terms (in an open-ended question) what the three things were they had recently talked about most often, more than 70 percent[9] of the respondents spontaneously mentioned at least one political topic.[10] The findings displayed in Table 1 refer specifically to conversations that touch upon political themes. They are based on a set of questions that queried the frequency of everyday political talk within overall and core networks during the past half year. To accommodate diverse communication modalities the questions expressly referred not only to face-to-face, but also to telephone and online conversations.[11] Instru-

9 All descriptive analyses presented in the following are based on weighted data (by gender, age, and city district), whereas the multivariate models are based on unweighted data.

10 The question was open-ended. For coding the political content of everyday talk an adaptation of the coding scheme of the German Longitudinal Election Study for analyzing the thematic agendas of the mass media and the electorate was used. It sorts political themes into the familiar textbook categories of policy, politics and polity, that is, by whether they concern public policies, the political process, such as elections or political actors, or institutional aspects of the political system (cf. https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/download.asp?id=63047). Other frequently mentioned conversation topics concerned family affairs, leisure, work and health issues.

11 In view of the increasing scholarly interest in the political role of social media platforms and other modes of online communication, both generally (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020) and with specific regard to deliberation (Strandberg & Grönlund, 2018), it deserves mention that in 2017 German citizens' everyday political talk still predominantly took the form of oral face-to-face communication. 76 percent claimed that all their political conversations occurred in unmediated personal contact. Less than six percent discussed politics at least in similar proportions offline and online, and almost no one relied exclusively on digital communication.

ments of this type (Morey & Eveland, 2016) draw on respondents' own understanding of the term "politics". This raises the question what they actually have in mind when they claim to have talked about politics (Eveland et al., 2011, pp. 1086–1088; Fitzgerald, 2013; Podschuweit & Jakobs, 2017). Deliberative communication should revolve around political problems and issues of public policy (Burkhalter et al., 2002, p. 401; Chambers, 2012; Freelon, 2010). A content analysis of the specific topics mentioned by respondents when asked what they had addressed in their political conversations reveals that policy-related themes indeed make up the lion's share, amounting to about 60 percent of the 4,396 topics coded in total, and almost four out of five topics when international politics is left aside.[12] At least one policy issue was mentioned by about 80 percent of those respondents that reported to have talked about politics.

Table 1. Frequency of everyday political talk (%)

	Overall networks			Core networks		
	Family	Friends	Acquaintances	Spouse	Close friend 1	Close friend 2
Never	5.7	8.3	17.7	30.0	12.7	30.3
Once a month or less	22.2	24.4	32.4	5.3	24.7	28.3
Several times a month	26.9	38.3	27.4	17.9	40.5	30.3
Several times a week	25.9	23.0	16.8	24.8	16.6	9.2
Daily or almost daily	19.3	6.0	5.7	22.0	5.6	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(N)	(1,567)	(1,566)	(1,567)	(1,499)	(1,431)	(1,366)
ALLBUS 2018						
Never	9.1	8.4	18.5			
Rarely	19.5	20.4	27.4			
Sometimes	34.2	39.9	37.1			
Often	26.6	25.9	14.6			
Very often	10.6	5.4	2.5			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0			
(N)	(3,477)	(3,476)	(3,473)			

Table 1 indicates high inclusivity in the sense of broad engagement in everyday political talk. At least occasionally, nearly everyone takes part in a conversation about

12 The content analysis was again based on an adaptation of the coding scheme used by the German Longitudinal Election Study (cf. https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/download.asp?id=63047). International relations and other countries' domestic politics (most notably the United States and its then President Donald Trump) was the second-most important thematic area (22 percent), followed by topics relating to the political process, such as the upcoming federal election (12 percent). Only less than four percent of all mentioned topics could not be classified as political in the sense of relating to policies, politics or the polity.

politics. During the six months preceding the survey very few people (1.2 percent of the sample) never talked about politics to any network member. That political conversations were so widespread is no peculiarity of the local sample in the situational context of an election campaign. Roughly comparable data from the 2018 ALLBUS[13] that are displayed in the lower panel of Table 1 indicate only slightly higher shares of discussion abstention for a national sample.[14] However, although almost everyone talks about politics, not all people do so with great regularity. A sizable minority engages almost constantly in political discussions, to be sure. But many more do so only rarely, and most citizens are located somewhere in between.

Moreover, the closeness of social bonds is obviously an important moderator of political talk. Normatively, deliberative democracy puts a premium on discussions that transcend the narrow enclosures of people's intimate relationships. "Bridging" talks between persons connected by weak ties are valued higher than "bonding" conversations within strong ties, since the latter have a higher potential to expose individuals to the diversity and pluralism of society (Huckfeldt et al., 2004; Tanasoca, 2020). Yet, in their everyday communication about politics citizens seem to prefer settings characterized by the features of "community" rather than "society" (Tönnies, 1963 [1887]). Echoing findings from previous research (Bennett et al., 2000; Conover et al. 2002; Johnston & Pattie, 2006, pp. 120–121; Schmitt-Beck, 2000, 163-169), Table 1 clearly shows that discussion intensity varies as a function of the intimacy of relationships. Kinship more generally, and spousal relationships in particular, appear to provide especially fertile ground for political conversations, and friendship is still more conducive to political talk than weak ties to acquaintances.[15] Arguably, this pattern is a consequence of people shying away from the challenges, demands and interpersonal stress that may arise when discussing political issues without the emotional safeguard of mutual affection and trust (Conover et al., 2002; Eliasoph, 1998; Schudson, 1997).

5.2 How egalitarian is everyday political talk?

Deliberative democrats understand inclusivity as entailing not only the breadth of engagement, but also its equality (Young, 2000, p. 24). "[D]eliberative inequalities" (Bohman, 1996, pp. 107–149) weaken the democratic imperative of deliberative democracy. To assess to what extent engagement in everyday political talk is not only broad but also egalitarian, especially with regard to its intensity, I turn to an analysis of its backgrounds. Social structural inequalities might entail disad-

13 The ALLBUS used a somewhat different response scale and question wording ("How often do you in general talk about politics within your family? ... with friends? ... with acquaintances, such as neighbors or workmates?").

14 Share of "non-discussants" (Robinson, 1976) that talked to neither family, nor friends or acquaintances: four percent.

15 Methodologically, the category "never" is not fully comparable between overall and core networks. For spouses it consists of about 25 percent living in single households, and another five percent who never discuss politics with anyone from their (multi-person) household. For close friends it consists of respondents that did not respond to the name generator questions for *Alteri* outside their households.

vantages that seriously impair people's prospects to engage in political discussions (Bohman, 1996, pp. 107–149; Knight & Johnson, 1997; Knops, 2006; Young, 2000). Even under universal liberties and participation rights, such as most notably free speech, such "inequalities can produce asymmetries in social group members' abilities to *use* these universal empowerments" (Beauvais, 2018, p. 147; Fishkin, 2009, p. 37). To put this assumption to an empirical test I concentrate on basic dimensions of social structural inequality that have repeatedly been shown to be associated with variations in citizens' political activity (Dalton, 2017; Verba & Nie, 1972). The more egalitarian engagement in everyday political talk, the less it should be associated with these attributes. Hence, from a normative point of view, a confirmation of the null hypothesis with regard to social structural predictors of communicative activity would be the most desirable result.

Using linear regression analysis, I examine the effects of socio-economic status (indicated by education, occupational status and economic well-being), migration background, gender and age on the frequency of political talk.[16] The dependent variables are derived from a dimensional analysis of the questions documented in Table 1. For both overall and core networks principal component analyses suggest the co-existence of two worlds of political talk in citizens' lifeworld – one that gravitates toward spousal relationships and the family, and one that encompasses all other relationships, regardless of their intimacy.[17] If people talk a lot about politics with friends, they are at the same time also more (although not equally) likely to discuss political affairs with workmates or neighbors. Accordingly, the measures of the frequency of political talk with family members and spouses are used as dependent variables in the following models. To indicate the frequency of political talk outside the confines of families additive scales are constructed, one pertaining to political conversations with friends and acquaintances, the other to the two close friends.

Social structure is indeed reflected in citizens' everyday political talk, although in quite specific ways (Table 2). Socio-economic differences affect particularly strongly and consistently how often people discuss political matters. Education appears irrelevant, but occupational status shows strong and highly significant

16 Education is a dummy variable contrasting respondents with completed secondary education (coded 1) from those with lower levels of formal schooling (0). Occupational status is measured by means of a scale that indicates the autonomy associated with respondents' (present, for retirees previous) occupations and has been shown to be highly correlated with occupational prestige. The lowest of its five categories consists of unskilled manual workers, the highest category includes employees and civil servants with advanced training occupying high-level supervisory positions as well as self-employed professionals and owners of larger companies (Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, 2003). To proxy for a direct measure of income the models include respondents' assessments of their current economic situation (five-point-scale from "very bad" to "very good"). Parents' places of birth are used as measure of migration background (1 = one or both parents born outside Germany, 0 = others). Gender is a dummy variable (1 = male, 0 = female), age is measured in years.

17 For overall networks, a varimax rotated principle component analysis generates a factor for talks with friends and acquaintances (Eigenvalue 1.81, explained variance: 60.5 %, N = 1,596) and a second factor for talks with family members (Eigenvalue 0.76, explained variance: 25.3 %). For core networks, a similar analysis generates a factor for talks with the two close friends (Eigenvalue 1.55, explained variance: 51.6 %, N = 1,395) and a separate factor for talks with spouses (Eigenvalue 1.00, explained variance: 33.1 %).

effects in three of the four models. The more elevated people's occupational status, the more often they discuss public affairs. Only close friendship ties seem to override this regularity. Apparently, they offer a protective space that shields lower-status individuals from the exclusionary mechanisms associated with low-status occupations. Personal economic circumstances also leave their mark, in addition to occupational status, but only within families and especially among spouses. Struggling to get by economically appears to depress political talk in exactly those settings where these woes are most vividly felt as a part of everyday life, that is, in peoples' kinship circles and homes. Besides these particularly pronounced patterns, we also see statistically meaningful age and gender effects. Family conversations appear unaffected by age differences, but all other manifestations of everyday political talk are more frequent among younger persons. This might reflect a change of interaction habits over the life course, where people withdraw from wider friendship and acquaintance circles and literally retreat into their family homes (Völker, 2016). In addition, a gender gap emerges in overall networks, but only for political discussions outside families in which men engage somewhat more often than women.

Table 2. Social structural inequality and everyday political talk (beta coefficients)

	Overall networks		Core networks	
	Family	Friends and acquaintances	Spouse	Close friends
Education	.053	.059	.011	.045
Occupational status	.155***	.125***	.162***	.026
Economic situation	.118***	.040	.208***	.057
Immigration background	-.001	-.018	-.001	-.056
Sex (m)	-.008	.087**	.003	.044
Age	.020	-.161***	-.093**	-.129***
Adj. R2	.058	.073	.098	.028
(N)	(1,402)	(1,402)	(1,359)	(1,253)

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

5.3 Conditions of everyday political talk

Social structurally induced variations in individuals' endowment with cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) might explain this translation of social inequality into communicative inequality. With regard to everyday political talk, potentially relevant cultural capital can assume two forms: motivations that render engagement in political discussions desirable and gratifying, and skills that strengthen persons' capability to perform this kind of activities (Verba et al.,

1995). Social capital can be expected to ease the way into political conversations attitudinally, by way of social trust, and structurally, through contextual opportunities that make potential communication partners accessible (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995; Putnam, 1993). Cultural capital can be expected to affect individuals' propensity to discuss politics rather similarly across all its dimensions, whereas the effects of social capital should be rather specific. Together, these factors can be expected to mediate the effects of social structural inequality on people's everyday conversations about politics. For the sake of parsimony the models displayed in Table 3 include only those social structural predictors that appeared relevant in at least one of the models shown in Table 2. The extent to which these factors' effects on the frequency of political talk are diminished indicates their mediation by cultural and social capital.

Motivations are individual dispositions that render certain behaviors attractive. People's eagerness to discuss political matters with fellow citizens could be spurred by generalized motivations like interest in politics, as well as directional motivations like partisanship and ideology (Anderson & Paskeviciute, 2005; Gärtner et al., 2021; Ikeda & Richey, 2012, pp. 46–50; Jacobs et al., 2009, pp. 55–59).[18] Several kinds of skills might facilitate people's engagement in political discussions. Internal political efficacy, that is, citizens' confidence in their ability to make a difference in politics (Craig & Maggiotto, 1982), can be expected to increase' their self-assurance with regard to discussions about political matters.[19] Usage of media, especially those offering a rich information diet, such as newspapers and public TV news, should also be associated with more frequent political discussions.[20] Beginning with classics like Tarde (1969 [1898]) and Lazarsfeld et al. (1968 [1944]), the news media have often been ascribed an important role as stimulant and facilitator of everyday political talk (Podschuweit, 2017). They provide material to talk about and are an important source of political knowledge (Aalberg & Curran, 2012), which may also serve as a useful resource in political discussions. Finally, it should also matter how versatile people are with regard to the specific activity of engaging in verbal exchanges about politics itself. This, in turn, might be a skill acquired during adolescence by way of parental socialization, for instance through model learning from parents' engagement in political discussions (Verba et al., 2005; Nolas et al., 2017).[21]

As activities that cannot be performed in isolation, political conversations presuppose social capital that renders potential partners accessible. It can take the

18 Interest in politics is measured by means of self-reports on a five-point scale from "not at all" to "very strongly interested", ideological extremity by means of an 11-point left-right scale folded at the midpoint, and the strength of partisanship by way of a five-point-scale ranging from non-partisans to very strong party identifiers.

19 Additive scale based on the following two items (five-point Likert scales):"I am perfectly able to understand and assess important political questions"; "Politics is so complicated that someone like me does not understand what is going on."

20 The models include indicators of usage of newspapers, news on public and on private television, and online news sites, registered in days per week.

21 Socialization experiences are elicited by means of the following question: "If you think back to your youth, how often did your parents talk about political topics: very often, often, sometimes, seldom or never?"

form of attitudinal dispositions and structural contexts (Putnam, 1993, p. 167). The most important attitudinal disposition is social trust. If people view their fellow citizens with suspicion, they might remain on guard and avoid interactions that involve revealing personal ideas and opinions, such as views on politics, whereas trusting persons may find it easy to enter such conversations (Sullivan & Transue, 1999). An important conceptual differentiation concerns the distinction between particularistic trust that concentrates on intimate relationships, and generalized trust that refers to people one knows less well or not at all (Newton & Zmerli, 2011). Presumably, particularized trust facilitates political talk within families, whereas generalized trust should ease political conversations outside families.[22]

Social trust may render it easier for individuals to engage in political interactions. But by circumscribing "variations in connectedness" (Conover et al., 2002, p. 45) spatial and functional contexts are decisive for whether interactions can occur at all (Straits, 1991). Households and workplaces, for instance, may serve as "foci" (Feld, 1981) where people come together and engage in interactions that then among other matters also may touch upon politics. Persons living alone or not in gainful employment are missing out on these structural opportunities for discussing politics. Similarly disadvantaged might be persons spending little or no leisure time with workmates, neighbors, in voluntary associations or at informal private gatherings. Because it creates opportunities for conversations with other people embeddedness in these focal contexts should be associated with an increased intensity of political talk, in specific ways for its different dimensions (Glover, 2018).[23] Within the supply of potentially accessible communication partners defined by these opportunities individuals have some discretion with regard to who they eventually talk to about politics. They should be particularly attracted to associates seen as highly knowledgeable in political matters, because these persons can serve as sources of valuable political advice (Ahn et al., 2010; Song & Boomgaarden, 2019). It is therefore to be expected that everyday political talk occurs more frequently with politically adept *Alteri* than less competent ones. Due to its dyadic nature this facet of structural opportunities for political

22 An analysis including measures of respondents' trust in family members, friends, acquaintances and strangers (11-point scales ranging from "no trust" to "a great deal of trust") confirmed the two-dimensional structure of social trust (principal component analysis with varimax rotation; forced extraction of two factors, with Eigenvalues of 2.00 [50.0 % of variance explained] and .973 [24.3 %]; N = 1,519). Since friendship has an ambiguous status (with equally sized cross-loadings on both factors), I refer to trust in family members to measure particularized trust, and an additive scale of trust in acquaintances and strangers to register generalized trust.

23 The measures of structural opportunities for interactions include dummy variables for household size (1 = 2 or more persons in household, 0 = single household) and gainful employment (1 = respondent is full-time or part-time employed, 0 = no gainful employment). Other instruments elicit the time respondents have spent during the last six months "with people from your work away from work itself", while "talking in the street with neighbors or visiting/receiving visits from neighbors", "with people in an association, club or voluntary organization", and "with people in a group that meets regularly, but is not organized as an association or club" (five-point scales from "never" to "daily or almost every day").

talk can only be examined for core networks. *Alteri*'s political expertise is proxied in this analysis by their perceived interest in politics.[24]

To provide a more complete account of the conditions of everyday political talk the following models will also take account of psychological dispositions as a second distinct type of exogenous backgrounds, besides social structure (and its mediation through cultural and social capital). Recent research in political psychology suggests that people's political attitudes and behavior are often influenced by basic psychological needs of a heritable nature that dispose individuals positively or negatively with regard to certain behaviors (Caprara & Vecchione, 2013). Gerber et al. (2018, p. 1114) recently issued a strong plea to take such traits into account when analyzing citizens' political communication. Concerning everyday political talk, for instance need for cognition – individuals' tendency to engage in and enjoy effortful cognitive tasks (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982) – and need to evaluate – persons' tendency to think in evaluative terms and develop strong opinions on objects they encounter (Jarvis & Petty, 1996) – might be relevant. Both can be expected to increase the willingness to engage in political discussions (Mendelberg, 2002, pp. 166–67; Neblo, 2015, pp. 129–142). Likewise, need to belong, a basic motivation "to form and maintain social relationships" (Baumeister, 2011, p. 121), should motivate people to take part in political conversations, even if only because they may help to nurture precious personal relationships, not because of their specific content.[25]

Table 3. Conditions of everyday political talk (beta coefficients)

	Overall networks		Core networks	
	Family	Friends and acquaintances	Spouse	Close friends
Social structure				
Occupational status	.026	-.004	.050	-.100**
Economic situation	-.024	-.035	.048	-.004
Sex (m)	-.099**	.026	-.051	.034
Age	.028	-.126**	.070	-.161***

24 Respondents were asked to assess, for each of the members of their core networks, the statement: "[*Alter*] is very interested in politics" (on five-point Likert scales). The models include two variables derived from these measures, one for the spouses, and one for the two close friends (additive scale).

25 Need to evaluate and need for cognition are measured by the following items which originate from larger batteries (five-point Likert scales): "I form opinions about everything"; "I find little satisfaction in thinking deeply about things for hours" (reversely coded). Need to belong is measured by means of an additive scale based on two items (five-point Likert scales): "One of the worst things that can happen to me is to be excluded by people I know", and "It would bother me if no one wanted to be around me".

Cultural capital				
– Motivations				
Political interest	.303***	.279***	.252***	.149***
Ideological extremity	.034	.034	.055	-.001
Partisanship	-.021	.022	.048	.028
– Skills and resources				
Internal efficacy	.083**	.018	.079*	.016
News: newspapers	.003	.045	.017	.073*
News: public TV	.116***	.061*	.028	.081*
News: private TV	.019	.050	.049	.084**
News: online news sites	.107***	.089**	.094**	.076*
Parents political discussions	.103***	.084**	.039	-.031
Social capital				
– Social trust				
Particularized trust	.104***	-.053*	-.001	-.019
Generalized trust	.004	.072**	-.059*	.003
– Structural opportunities				
Multi-person household	.283***	-.090**	-	-.133***
Employed	.012	.122***	-.074*	.017
Time spent: with workmates	-.039	.122***	.011	.090**
Time spent: with neighbors	.017	.082**	.019	.081**
Time spent: in associations	.037	.040	-.016	.034
Time spent: in informal groups	.052*	.122***	.051	.054
Alteri's political interest	-	-	.339***	.385***
Psychological dispositions				
Need to evaluate	-.004	-.007	.020	.002
Need for cognition	.029	.029	.006	-.011
Need to belong	.003	.007	-.005	-.048
Adj. R2	.326	.283	.348	.295
(N)	(1,122)	(1,123)	(825)	(936)

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

When taking account of cultural and social capital, all effects of socio-economic status documented in Table 2 evaporate, suggesting complete mediation by the predictors additionally included in the models displayed in Table 3. Closer inspection (data not shown here) reveals that all forms of cultural and social capital

contribute to mediating the effects of occupational status, although not in exactly the same way for all dimensions of political talk. Unexpectedly, with cultural and social capital held constant, close friends now appear more important as political conversation partners for lower status individuals than for those of higher occupational status, reversing the pattern of Table 2. Outside families the frequency of political talk is still negatively associated with age. Net of all explanatory factors included in the models, circles of friends (including close friends) and acquaintances are more conducive to political conversations for younger people.

Cultural and social capital go a long way as mediators of social structural antecedent factors, but by no means does this exhaust their importance for everyday political talk, as evidenced by the much stronger explanatory power of the models in Table 3 compared to those in Table 2. For motivations the picture is especially clear-cut. Political interest is the only motivation that counts. Across the board, it boosts the intensity of political conversations massively. More complex patterns emerge for skills. As expected, highly efficacious individuals talk more often about politics – but only with family members and spouses. Media consumption is also relevant in the expected way, but likewise not universally. Findings are clearest for online news sites; their usage is in all models associated with more frequent political discussions. Following the news on public TV appears to stimulate political talk as well, except between spouses. Conversations with close friends stand out because their frequency is increased by all types of news media, including newspapers and commercial TV news. In addition, Table 3 also indicates socialization effects. If parents talked a lot about politics their offspring tends to do the same in adulthood. But these experiences appear only relevant within the wider scope of overall networks.

These findings are mostly in line with expectations, although the assumption of cultural capital's unequivocal relevance for all kinds of everyday political talk is only partly sustained. For social capital, by contrast, the expectation was one of differentiated findings and it is mostly borne out by the data. Social trust tends to function as expected, but only within overall networks and between spouses. Remarkably, particularized trust not only facilitates political talk within the family, it also depresses it outside the family. Generalized trust, by contrast, is beneficial for the latter, but detrimental for political conversations with spouses. For most structural opportunities we see clear-cut patterns in line with expectations. Individuals residing in multi-person households discuss politics much more often with family members, but less often with persons from outside the family, both in overall and core networks. Gainful employment leads to more talk with friends and acquaintances, but less talk with spouses. Spending time with workmates, but also neighbors leads to more frequent conversations with close friends as well as the wider circles of friends and acquaintances. Informal socializing is generally conducive to discussing politics in overall networks, but not in core networks. The *Alteri*'s perceived political interest stands out as a particularly powerful predictor of the frequency of political talk within core networks. This suggests that within the scope of choice circumscribed by contextual opportunity structures citizens tend to talk more often to network partners whom they attribute high political expertise.

Remarkable about Table 3 is, on the other hand, the complete absence of statistically relevant findings for three groups of factors. First off, everyday political talk is not sensitive to directional motivations. Second, among the structural opportunities, voluntary associations stand out by their complete irrelevance as facilitators of everyday political talk – a surprising finding in view of their prominent role in the social capital literature (Putnam, 1993). Similarly striking is, finally, that with regard to people's inclination to discuss politics with one another none of the psychological dispositions that in recent years have begun to fascinate political and communication researchers seems to make a difference.

5.4 Discussion

For deliberative democracy these findings have mixed implications. A great many casual everyday conversations touch upon political themes, and very few people never talk about politics. In this most basic sense, German citizens' everyday political talk fulfills the prerequisite of high inclusivity. That issues of public policy figure prominently as topics of political conversations is also to be welcomed from a deliberative democratic point of view. However, it cannot be overlooked that not everyone talks about politics equally frequently. A minority does so almost constantly, to be sure, but a larger proportion only rarely. Most people discuss political matters with some regularity, though far from every day. This may be hard to reconcile with Barber's claim that "[t]here is simply no day in the life of a democracy when citizens can afford either to stop talking themselves or to stop others from talking to them" (Barber, 1984, p. 193). Yet, if deliberative democracy is conceived in a more realistic way that does not presuppose a citizenry in permanent discursive mobilization but is content with most citizens discussing politics some of the time, this can still be considered a rather beneficial state of affairs.

The picture becomes much less sanguine, however, when taking into account that these differences reflect social-structural inequalities, in particular disparities of socio-economic status. Everyday political talk is an arena where socio-economically disadvantaged persons raise their voices much less often than those of higher status. This echoes the classic diagnosis of the so-called "socio-economic standard model" of political engagement (Verba & Nie, 1972, pp. 125–137). In addition, there are also disparities with regard to gender and age. By diminishing the egalitarian character of everyday political talk, these regularities seriously impair its inclusivity. The good news is further watered down by the fact that most of the political talk in citizens' lifeworld takes place in intimate relationships characterized by affection and closeness, whereas rather little transcends into the more functional, sober and dispassionate world of people not connected by the close bonds of kinship and friendship. Whereas the adverse effects of socio-economic inequality pervade even families and households, everyday talk is egalitarian in these settings with regard to gender and age. But outside of them younger citizens as well as men are more talkative than older persons and women. Conversations are also more frequent between friends compared to acquaintances, but talks with friends might serve as stepping stones for expanding the scope of conversation partners to weak ties. Overall, however, the dominance of strong

ties amounts to another serious constraint on the inclusivity of everyday political talk (Conover et al., 2002). Deliberative democracy is advocated as a remedy for the challenges of integrating highly differentiated pluralist societies (Habermas, 1996, pp. 318–321), but in their political communication citizens seem to shy away from weak ties, although, or perhaps rather because they open up their space of experience to the anonymous, functional – and, as will become obvious further down, diverse – world of society at large.

Citizens' differential endowment with cultural and social capital is of crucial importance especially for mediating the effects of social-economic inequality. General interest in politics above all, but to a lesser extent also following the news, especially on online news sites, are unequivocally conducive to political discussions. Internal efficacy and parental socialization are also relevant, though less universally. Contextual opportunities that circumscribe individuals' access to certain kinds of interaction partners (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995) exert strong channeling effects with regard to whether they discuss politics rather in the homely realm of kinship and intimate partnership, or in the more open sphere of friends and acquaintances. Within the scope offered by these opportunity structures, people seem to prefer communication partners of high political expertise, presumably because they are attractive sources of political advice (Ahn et al., 2010). Strikingly, of the psychological dispositions that recently have gained increasing scholarly attention (Caprara & Vecchione, 2013), none appears relevant for citizens' political conversations.

6. Publicity

Within deliberative democratic theory the notion of publicity marks a complex concept. In the following, I draw on Bohman's (1996) conception of publicity as a multi-layered phenomenon. Its first layer of meaning, denoted as "weak publicity" (Bohman, 1996, p. 37), pertains to the values of transparency and clarity in political discussions. Interlocutors should know of each other where they stand politically, what preferences they hold and which positions they support. To generate mutual awareness of fellow citizens' political views, they should be visibly expressed, and presented in ways that are clear and comprehensible. Publicity thus conceived ensures that the full range of relevant perspectives, positions, preferences and viewpoints is available for consideration. It creates a "social space for deliberation" (Bohman, 1996, p. 37).

"Strong publicity" is more demanding and refers to the justification of these preferences. Reason-giving is at the heart of deliberative communication. It is "the primary conceptual criterion for legitimacy, and the most important distinguishing characteristic of deliberation" (Thompson, 2008, p. 504). Conceived in this way, the principle of publicity refers to accountability. By expressing not only their positions, as is required by weak publicity, but also explicating reasons to justify them, interlocutors render themselves answerable to one another (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, pp. 97–127). On a meta-communicative level they thereby acknowledge each other as free and equal members of a political community. In an even more demanding understanding, strong publicity concerns not

only reason-giving as such, but the quality of the reasons put forward. It is inspired by Rawls' (1993, pp. 212–254) notion of "public reason" and implies that communicative exchanges should be concerned about the common good and a generalizable understanding of justice. Justifications put forward in discussions should therefore only appeal to reasons that are "mutually acceptable" for all participants (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, p. 55). Obviously, strong publicity presupposes weak publicity. Reason-giving necessitates that interlocutors' views are clearly identifiable as objects for justification. Without these reference points the notion of justification is meaningless. Deliberations then simply lack the material to work with.

Weak publicity is thus a prerequisite of deliberation, whereas strong publicity is a crucial element of deliberative communication itself (Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019, pp. 21–26). Formalized discussions in institutional arenas of the deliberative system should definitely meet the criteria of both weak and strong publicity. Normative theorists' opinions are split about whether the requirements associated with strong publicity should also apply to non-purposive and casual everyday conversations (Gutmann & Thompson, 1999, pp. 273–275; Mansbridge, 1999). But the criterion of weak publicity doubtless appears relevant for the communication taking place in citizens' lifeworld. If ordinary people's political discussions are the foundation of the deliberative system, then expressing political views effectively (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, pp. 68–97; Moy & Gastil, 2006), and thereby rendering them visible to fellow citizens (Scheuch, 1965), appears crucial with regard to the functioning of deliberative democracy. Just as it necessitates that people talk about politics in the first place, it also presupposes that they are cognizant of each other's political views.

How conscious are citizens of their network partners' political positions and preferences? Does awareness of associates' standpoints vary, depending on attitude objects? Is it affected by social inequality? Is it enhanced by political conversations? Which other factors are relevant for whether it is higher or lower? Normatively, citizens' familiarity with each other's political views should be generally high, and political conversations should contribute to its improvement. The following analyses examine in how far this is the case, again beginning with a descriptive stock-take and then proceeding to an analysis of the conditions that improve or impair citizens' awareness of fellow-citizens' political views.

6.1 How aware are citizens of their network partners' political views?

To obtain a comprehensive picture of the extent to which citizens are cognizant of their associates' political orientations I explore their mutual perceptions from multiple perspectives. For both overall and core networks I examine individuals' awareness of network partners' political views both generally, and with regard to two specific sets of attitudes: party preferences and positions on the – at the time of the CoDem survey – highly topical and controversial issue of immigration (Kratz, 2019). Normatively, awareness should be generally high for all attitude objects. In reality, however, it probably varies across these dimensions. General feelings of knowing network members' political views might be rather wide-

spread, since they do not hinge on any specific attitude object and can be derived from manifold cues. Due to the chosen issue's high salience, *Alteri*'s issue positions can also be expected to be rather well known (Cowan & Baldassari, 2018). Consciousness of party preferences is probably more limited. Following Mill's musing about the socializing effect of electoral practices (Mill, 1991 [1861], p. 205) it appears plausible to assume that the adoption of the secret ballot since the 19th century (that he criticized with arguments resembling the principle of strong publicity discussed above; cf. Mill, 1991 [1861], pp. 205–219) has led to a crystallization of the view that party preferences are a private matter, and no one else's business, into a widely shared cultural standard. The visibility of party preferences might therefore be rather low (Scheuch, 1965). In addition, it can, again, be expected that awareness across all these dimensions varies by the closeness of relationships (Scheuch, 1965; Huckfeldt et al., 2004, pp. 68–97; Cowan & Baldassari, 2018).

Table 4. Awareness of network members' political views (%)

Overall networks	Family	Friends	Acquaintances
General: How many network members' political views are known			
Of many	60.5	40.1	12.3
Of several	27.7	40.0	39.6
Of few	8.3	15.4	35.8
Of none / don't know	3.5	4.5	12.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(*N*)	(1,542)	(1,549)	(1,555)
Specific: party support			
Party support not known (%)	11.0	20.3	39.0
(*N*)	(1,474)	(1,494)	(1,497)
Specific: issue positions			
Average position not known (%)	3.1	5.0	3.1
(*N*)	(1,528)	(1,543)	(1,386)
Divergence of positions not known (%)	2.3	5.0	10.1
(*N*)	(1,539)	(1,551)	(1,553)

Core networks	Spouse	Close friend 1	Close friend 2
General: "I know the political views of [Alter] well"			
Completely disagree	0.7	1.2	2.0
Rather disagree	3.6	8.3	11.6
Neither agree nor disagree	12.2	24.0	27.0
Rather agree	41.3	39.4	39.0
Completely agree	42.1	27.1	20.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(*N*)	(1,045)	(1,261)	(959)
Specific: party support			
Does not know	15.8	22.6	22.7
Knowledge not certain at all	2.3	1.3	2.5
Knowledge not so certain	12.9	17.6	24.7
Knowledge rather certain	33.8	33.2	30.9
Knowledge very certain	35.2	25.3	19.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(*N*)	(905)	(1,140)	(883)
Specific: issue positions			
Does not know	2.4	4.5	4.4
Knowledge not certain at all	0.2	0.6	1.2
Knowledge not so certain	8.3	16.8	19.2
Knowledge rather certain	53.5	48.7	52.7
Knowledge very certain	35.6	29.4	22.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(*N*)	(1,031)	(1,252)	(952)

Respondents were asked of how many members of their overall networks they knew the political views. In total, awareness of *Alteri*'s general political views is quite high, as expected. Only one percent is completely ignorant of all network members' political views, 2.5 percent know only few persons' views across all subnetworks. However, as expected awareness differs considerably between subnetworks (Table 4). Kinship, but to a lesser extent also friendship are conducive to better awareness; six out of ten respondents claim to know the political views of many family members, and 40 percent of many friends, but only twelve percent of many acquaintances. In contrast, more than a third are only aware of a few acquaintances' political views, and about twelve percent of none at all.

Likewise as expected, many more people are completely unaware which parties are supported in their overall networks.[26] About seven percent admit ignorance of the party preferences of any network member. Again, social bonds make a big difference. Ignorance of party preferences ranges from eleven percent for family members to almost 40 percent for acquaintances. Awareness of policy preferences is considerably higher, again in line with expectations. For the issue of immigration two questions were asked, one pertaining to the average positions, the other to the diversity of positions among the members of each subnetwork. Only very few respondents – between three and five percent – confess not to know their *Alteri*'s positions, regardless of relationship. Ignorance is similarly rare with regard to the diversity of opinions, except for acquaintances where it amounts to ten percent.

To elicit general knowledge of core network members' political views respondents were asked to rate for each of them the following statement (on a five-point Likert scale): "I know the political views of [*Alter*] very well." For spouses, 83 percent agree with this statement more or less strongly, whereas less than five percent disagree. For the close friends agreement is somewhat lower, and disagreement somewhat higher, but the differences are not dramatic. Awareness of party preferences was registered by queries of core network members' perceived vote intentions for the upcoming federal election and follow-up questions registering meta-attitudes (Bassili, 1996) about these judgments. The data displayed in Table 4 combine "don't know" answers on the perceived vote choice questions and, in case parties were indicated as being supported by *Alteri*, the reflective confidence in these perceptions (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, pp. 85–86). Again, awareness of party preferences appears lower than unspecific awareness of general political views. Between 16 percent (spouses) and 23 percent (second close friend) admit ignorance concerning the respective network partner's party preference. Of the rest, sizable shares express some degree of uncertainty, ranging from 15 percent for spouses to 27 percent for the second close friend. More or less certain knowledge amounts to 69 percent for spouses, 58 percent for the first, and 50 percent for the second close friend. The measure of awareness of *Alteri*'s issue attitudes is constructed in the same way and generates a very similar pattern, except that, in line with expectations, the overall levels of both ignorance and uncertainty are considerably lower than for party support.

6.2 Conditions of citizens' awareness of network partners' political views

To examine the conditions of citizens' awareness of their associates' political views I again begin with a social structural perspective. As in the previous section, this analysis concentrates on the role of socio-economic inequality, indicated by differences in education, occupational status and economic well-being,

26 These shares include those responding "none" to the general "political views" question, since to avoid respondent resistance these individuals were not once again specifically queried for perceived party preferences.

as well as immigration background, gender and age. The dependent variables are constructed in accordance to dimensional analyses to simplify the analysis. To take account of the large differences in item nonresponse between the measures for overall networks, spouses and close friends these analyses are conducted separately. Whereas the overall network measures encompass all respondents, those pertaining to core networks include only respondents for whom the name generator questions identified *Alteri*. Since the latter type of instrumentation is more demanding for respondents it typically generates noticeably higher refusal rates than instruments that elicit aggregate information about overall networks (Perry et al., 2018, pp. 43–45). For spouses, nonresponse additionally implies a structural component, due to the exclusion of respondents living in single households. Accordingly differentiated principal component analyses yield unidimensional solutions for each of the three sets of indicators of awareness.[27] Due to the scaling differences between these measures factor scores derived from the principal component analyses are used as dependent variables. They serve as composite measures of respondents' familiarity with the political views of their overall networks, spouses and close friends. High values always indicate higher and more certain awareness concerning *Alteri*'s political views in general as well as party preferences and issue positions in particular.

Table 5. Conditions of awareness of network members' political views (beta coefficients)

	Overall networks	Core networks	
		Spouse	Close friends
Education	.080*	.016	.031
Occupational status	.144***	.016	.141***
Economic situation	.051	.119***	.037
Immigration background	-.053	.052	-.016
Sex (m)	.050	-.052	.049
Age	-.118***	.144***	.002
Adj. R^2	.071	.034	.031
(*N*)	(1,263)	(983)	(1,153)

27 Overall networks: Eigenvalue 2.66, explained variance 53.3 %, N = 1,427; spouses: Eigenvalue 1.66, explained variance 55.3%, *N* = 941; close friends: Eigenvalue 2.15, explained variance 71.6%, *N* = 1,217.

Social structure			
Education	.013	-.038	-.030
Occupational status	.009	.032	.064*
Economic situation	-.065*	.037	-.030
Age	-.138***	.002	-.021
Political talk			
Family	.021	-	-
Friends and acquaintances	.231***	-	-
Spouse	-	.199***	.008
Close friends	-	-.034	.217***
Cultural capital			
- Motivations			
Political interest	.111**	.034	.003
Ideological extremity	.062**	.018	.055*
Partisanship	-.028	.012	.012
- Skills and resources			
Internal efficacy	.151***	.159***	.035
News: newspapers	.050	-.010	.028
News: public TV	.064*	.012	.006
News: private TV	-.044	.000	.031
News: online news sites	-.007	.009	.018
Parents political discussions	.091***	.001	-.004
Social capital			
- Social trust			
Particularized trust	.072**	.029	-.008
Generalized trust	.160***	-.035	.035
- Structural opportunities			
Alteri's political interest	-	.178***	.500***
Psychological dispositions			
Need to evaluate	.014	.023	.079**
Need for cognition	.036	.092**	.017
Need to belong	.061*	.036	.022
Need for cognitive closure	.026	.056	.020
Adj. R^2	.282	.190	.459
(*N*)	(1,103)	(826)	(962)

Note: *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

As evidenced by the upper panel of Table 5, social inequality does affect citizens' consciousness of their *Alteri*'s political views, although not strongly. Again, socioeconomic status appears most relevant. More elevated occupational status positions are conducive to better awareness of all network members' political views, excepting only spouses. Consciousness of the latter's preferences and positions is more pronounced under favorable economic circumstances. In addition, Table 5 shows inverse effects of age. Younger individuals are better oriented about political views in their overall networks whereas for spouses the association is reversed.

Again, citizens' endowment with cultural capital as well as certain facets of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) can be assumed to play a significant part in mediating these effects, and probably also beyond this intervening role. Knowledge presupposes learning, and "people learn about a subject if they have the ability, motivation and opportunity to do so" (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996, p. 179). Conversations about politics above all else should be crucially important as opportunities for getting to know other people's political standpoints. Numerous studies have shown that discussing politics increases citizens' political knowledge (Amsalem & Nir, 2019). Obviously, this beneficial function of political talk should be particularly pronounced when it comes to interlocutors' mutual awareness of each other's views. According to Huckfeldt et al., effective communication is crucial for "the extent to which the receivers of political messages are readily able to make ... unambiguous, and confident judgments regarding the politics of the sender," and it depends, in turn, on how often such acts of communication are performed (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, p. 69). Correspondingly, the indices of the frequency of everyday political conversations that in the previous section served as dependent variables are accorded a prominent role as independent variables in the following models.

As generalized "curiosity" to engage with political matters, political interest can be expected to play an important motivational role (van Deth, 1990). The directional motivations of ideological extremity and strength of partisanship may also increase citizens' eagerness to find out where their *Alteri* stand politically (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, pp. 86–88). Internal political efficacy, media use and parental socialization might be helpful resources for acquiring and processing cues about network members' political views. Unlike cultural capital, social capital plays a reduced role in the following models, since measures of structural opportunities appear dispensable. Social trust is included in its two variants because it can be expected to facilitate interaction partners' self-expression. *Alteri*'s political interest needs to be taken into account (in models for core networks) because highly interested, and thus motivated discussion partners should be particularly effective in clearly expressing their political positions (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, pp. 86–88). Lastly, the models again include psychological dispositions as additional exogenous factors. Besides the set of needs introduced above, need for cognitive closure – "a desire for a definite answer to a question, as opposed to uncertainty, confusion or ambiguity" (Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009, p. 343) – might also

stimulate attentiveness to where one's associates stand politically (De Grada et al., 1999).[28] Findings are displayed in the lower panel of Table 5.

As expected, and to be welcomed from deliberative democrats' normative point of view, frequent political discussions are strongly associated with higher awareness of network partners' political perspectives. Discussing politics with spouses and close friends goes along with considerably better awareness of these *Alteri*'s political views. Within overall networks, conversations with friends and acquaintances likewise make a huge difference, but talking to family members appears inconsequential. Motivations are also important, although to a lesser extent and not in a uniform fashion. At least for overall networks, the role of political interest does not exhaust itself in its strong association with political talk; it also exerts an independent direct effect on political awareness. Moreover, persons at the margins of the ideological spectrum also appear more conscious of the political views of overall network members as well as close friends.

Skills appear not very important for impressions of network partners' political views. In overall networks and among spouses, internal political efficacy is highly conducive to better knowledge. For overall networks we see also statistically significant favorable effects of watching the news on public TV and, more pronounced, parental socialization. The more often respondents witnessed their parents discussing political questions during adolescence, the more conscious they are of their associates' political views during adulthood. For social capital associations are also as expected. Within overall networks, both particularized and generalized trust are important, but the latter considerably more strongly. Moreover, and in a very pronounced way, spouses' and close friends' standpoints are better known if they are strongly interested in politics, presumably because they express their views less ambiguously. Finally, unlike political talk, awareness of network partners' political views appears also responsive to some psychological dispositions, although none of these effects is strong. Individuals characterized by a high need to evaluate are better oriented about their close friends' political views, whereas persons with a high need for cognition are somewhat more conscious of their spouses' standpoints. Need to belong seems to improve awareness of overall network members' political views. Other than expected, need for cognitive closure appears irrelevant.

6.3 Discussion

Most citizens appear oriented, and very few people are completely in the dark about their associates' political views. The diagnosis is thus rather favorable with regard to weak publicity on the part of citizens as a prerequisite of deliberative democracy (Bohman, 1996, pp. 37–47). However, this global appraisal must be qualified in three ways. First, not all kinds of political standpoints are equally visible. A sense of being generally cognizant of others' political views is quite widespread. It is borne out by broad awareness of network partners' positions on the

28 Measured by the item (five-point Likert scale): "I usually make important decisions quickly and confidently."

salient issue of immigration, but figuring out network members' party preferences appears more difficult. Perhaps the institution of the secret ballot has fostered a culture of pronounced confidentiality around electoral choices (Scheuch, 1965). Second, to a non-negligible extent consciousness of associates' political views is not equivalent to assured knowledge, but characterized by considerable uncertainty. Third, the nature of relationships yet again makes a big difference. Awareness of network members' political views is the higher the more intimate the relationship. It is very pronounced for spouses and family members – except for party preferences –, but lower for friends and rather limited for acquaintances. Passing the threshold from strong to weak ties leads to a marked drop in citizens' mutual awareness of network partners' political perspectives, except for highly salient objects like positions on immigration.

Importantly, everyday political talk is a very effective facilitator of learning about network members' political views. The more frequently people discuss politics, the higher their consciousness of interlocutors' standpoints. This is good news from the deliberative democratic point of view. Everyday political talk thus ensures the prerequisites of deliberative democracy in a dual sense: first, because without discussions there can be no deliberation, as outlined above; but, second, also because it increases the visibility of people's political views to one another. This implies that under circumstances where not everyone is equally cogent of other people's standpoints, awareness is most pronounced among those that particularly strongly shape the overall character of the everyday political talk occurring in citizens' lifeworld. In addition, high interest in politics on the part of *Ego* herself (for overall networks), but even more strongly also on the part of the *Alteri* (for core networks) is associated with better consciousness of the latter's political views. Extreme ideological positions also appear to increase persons' sensitivity to others' political views, except for spouses. Also relevant, although in rather specific ways, are internal efficacy and socialization experiences as well as social trust and certain psychological dispositions.

7. Heterogeneity

Deliberative democracy presupposes people discussing political questions in their lifeworld, and weak publicity in the sense of mutual awareness of interlocutors' positions and preferences on these matters. The third prerequisite of deliberative democracy follows from the premise that "people can only deliberate if they previously disagree" (Martí, 2017, p. 563). Citizens' lifeworld experiences should reflect society's political pluralism, and they should encounter standpoints dissimilar to their own when interacting with fellow citizens. In the literature a variable vocabulary has been used to denote this phenomenon (Nir, 2017, p. 715; Schäfer, 2019, pp. 38–60). I will in the following interchangeably refer to the terms "heterogeneity" and "disagreement", broadly "defined in terms of interaction among citizens who hold divergent viewpoints and perspectives regarding politics" (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, pp. 3–4).

The criterion of exposure to heterogeneity touches upon the very essence of politics itself, as a human practice that exists to deal with the fact that the mem-

bers of a society want different things. They hold divergent views on "who [should] get what, when, and how" (Laswell, 1936). This variability of preferences is a necessary outcome of core characteristics of the human condition: the scarcity of resources that gives rise to controversies about who should get how much of a cake whose size is finite; humans' tendency to act in parochially self-interested ways in order to maximize their own benefit, even at the expense of others; conflicts between potentially incompatible moral values; and finally also the possibility of incomplete understanding between people (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, pp. 41–43). Democracy attempts to solve the conflicts arising from the pluralism of interests and value orientations in ways that are peaceful and legitimate. Deliberative democrats see deliberative processes that involve all affected groups and aim at solutions that are suitable to the common good as superior source of democratic legitimacy. Some conceptions even emphasize consensus as ultimate benchmark of deliberatively achieved decisions' legitimacy (Cohen, 1989).

Deliberative democracy thus presupposes political heterogeneity (Thompson, 2008, p. 502). Without it, there would be no need to deliberate. "Deliberation matters only because there is difference." (Phillips, 1995, p. 151, quoted in Dryzek, 2000, p. 72) Importantly, the political diversity of societies should not only become manifest in the institutional sphere of political will-formation and decision-making. It should also be integral to citizens' lifeworld experiences (Mutz, 2006, p. 3). When communicating with members of their social networks they should encounter not only perspectives that mirror their own, but also discrepant ones that may challenge their views. Deliberative democracy is rooted in a fundamental "agreement to disagree" not only on the part of decision-makers, but also the citizenry at large (Klofstad et al., 2013). As Talisse notes, "deliberative democracy holds that proper democracy requires citizens to engage in collective deliberation with those with whom they disagreek" (Talisse, 2012, p. 214). It therefore presupposes not only that citizens engage in political discussions and are cognizant of each other's standpoints, but also that their encounters with these views encompass perspectives that deviate, and thus may question their own positions (Freelon, 2010).

At issue is not only that "[d]eliberation is crippled if only the advocates of one side or one point of view are in the room" (Fishkin, 2009, p. 37) because talks that consist only of mutual confirmations of one and the same point of view cannot be expected to generate the beneficial outcomes deliberation is supposed to procure: "[I]f people communicate only with those with whom they already agree, then deliberation and persuasion cannot occur. Neither can information flow freely across informal discussion networks under those circumstances." (Tanasoca, 2020, p. 168) They are even potentially damaging because they may spur self-radicalizing dynamics that give rise to societal polarization (Sunstein, 2002). To realize their value to the fullest extent, discussions should moreover not only fulfil the minimum requirement of including some diversity. Ideally, they should represent the full range of viewpoints on the respective matters of controversy (Bohman, 2006; Fishkin, 2009, p. 37; Tanasoca, 2020, p. 111), and not only truncated segments of limited scope.

Yet, people have a tendency to self-select interaction partners by homophilious criteria (McPherson et al., 2001). They seek to construct their social networks in accordance to the rule that "like talks to like". This suggests that citizens avoid politically disagreeable conversations (Settle & Carlson, 2019), so that political talk typically occurs between like-minded souls and consists in exchanges of mutually shared viewpoints. Deliberative democracy's prerequisite of heterogeneous encounters in citizens' lifeworld thus seems to go against the grain of how ordinary people structure their social life. Recent trends of ideological and affective polarization have raised additional concern that citizens nowadays might be more and more prone to retreat into homogeneous "echo chambers" of politically congenial associates (Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2011). On the other hand, people often appear to choose their interaction partners for other than political reasons (Lazer et al., 2010). Moreover, as discussed above, contextual opportunity structures constrain the scope of social selectivity, and choices of conversation partners are circumscribed by availability (Völker, 2016). Thus, even if citizens prefer to interact with politically congenial partners many of them might find themselves nonetheless confronted with views unlike their own (Huckfeldt et al., 2004; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995). These considerations suggest contradictory expectations with regard to the political heterogeneity actually experienced by citizens in their lifeworld.

How many people are actually exposed to views that differ from their own when interacting with network partners? How large are the deviations from people's own standpoints? Does everyday political talk increase people's chances to encounter disagreeable views? Are experiences of political heterogeneity associated with social inequality? Which other factors increase or decrease the likelihood of encountering political diversity? In the following these questions are addressed yet again in two steps, beginning with a comprehensive diagnostic stock-take and then analysing the backgrounds of the emerging patterns.

7.1 How heterogeneous are citizens' social networks?

Scholarship about political heterogeneity in social networks is riddled with terminological and conceptual ambiguities (Schäfer, 2019, pp. 38–60). They concern, for instance, the objects of disagreement. Dissimilarities of opinions can arise over a wide range of topics. According to an exhaustive taxonomy proposed by Martí (2017, pp. 564–566), they can concern substantive or procedural aspects of constitutional, legislative, regulatory and adjudicative issues of domestic politics as well as international affairs. In addition, differences of perspectives can also arise over the nature of facts and the validity of knowledge, the meaning of political concepts, as well as norms, values and metaphysical worldviews. Empirical research has thus far contented itself with much narrower, and more eclectic approaches (Nir, 2017). Most studies have focused on either general disagreement, which requires respondents to aggregate all their experiences into a summary score, or partisan disagreement in the simple sense of whether *Ego* and *Alteri* support the same or different parties (Klofstad et al., 2013). The following

analyses will apply a broader and more complex perspective to study social networks' political heterogeneity.

Another weakness is the binary "us-versus-them" logic that dominates extant research. Most studies have been conducted in the United States whose bipolar two-party politics lets the conceptual equation of political disagreement with conflict and sharp opposition appear to some extent self-evident. Yet, opinion differences in social networks should rather be seen as gradual phenomena that may range from "soft disagreement" where views are moderately divergent but common ground exists, to "bold disagreement" that signals fundamental, perhaps even intractable controversies (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996, p. 16; Maia et al., 2021, p. 111). It therefore appears inappropriate to conceive the heterogeneity of political views in dualistic terms. Consequently, rather than following the common practice of dichotomously sorting social networks and their members into unanimous "safe" and disagreeing "dangerous" ones, political heterogeneity in all its manifestations is in the following conceptualized and measured as a matter of degrees (Hutchens, 2017). My measurement strategy applies a generalized distance logic (Downs, 1957) to all examined facets of political heterogeneity. If network members' views are identical to those of respondents, they are assigned a score of 0. Differences of standpoints are assigned positive scores that indicate absolute distances on metrics that are specific to the various types of disagreement. Larger distances imply more intense disagreement. I assume that heterogeneity experiences are cumulative from *Ego*'s point of view, so that, for instance, two *Alteri* that are equally distant from *Ego* regarding the same type of disagreement add up to *Ego* being exposed to twice this amount during political conversations. Accordingly, measures are constructed additively wherever suitable. All resulting scales are continuous and unipolar, ranging from unanimity over small opinion differences to intense disagreement.

Table 6 provides comprehensive data on the political heterogeneity of social networks. It encompasses global measures of general disagreement, and specific measures of partisan, issue and ideological disagreement. The indicators of general disagreement are subjective; they rely on respondents' impressions of the amount of political consent or dissent with sets of *Alteri* (for overall networks) or individual *Alteri* (for core networks). The specific measures rely on perceptional data with regard to associates' political positions, but are objective in the sense of being derived from analytical comparisons between respondents' own views and the corresponding (perceived) views of their interaction partners. Thus, they do not presuppose that detected disagreements are cognitively salient to respondents (Klofstadt et al., 2013, p. 124). This distinction is important because it gives rise to partly contradictory expectations with regard to the role of types of relationships between respondents and network partners for political heterogeneity. Weak ties are generally seen as "bridges" that open social networks for innovations (Granovetter, 1973). Political heterogeneity should therefore increase with decreasing closeness and intimacy of relationships (Huckfeldt et al., 2004; Mutz, 2006, pp. 25–29; Tanasoca, 2020, pp. 156–166). However, this regularity might manifest itself more clearly in the objective measures than the subjective ones that require respondents to reflect on their social interactions. According to Morey et

al. (2012), the mutual affection inherent to strong ties might lower the threshold to express opinion differences. For the subjective measures of general disagreement this might result in a seemingly paradox pattern of more homogeneity, but at the same time also stronger heterogeneity within close social bonds compared to less intimate relationships.

Table 6. Political heterogeneity in social networks

Overall networks	Family		Friends		Acquaintances	
General disagreement[#]						
Opinion differences during political talks (%):						
- Never	4.6	4.9	5.7	2.9	7.9	3.6
- Rarely	31.6	29.8	33.9	28.9	28.9	25.7
- Sometimes	39.4	41.9	42.1	51.7	44.6	54.3
- Often	18.1	19.1	14.7	14.7	15.8	15.1
- Very often	6.3	4.2	3.6	1.8	2.8	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(*N*)	(1,475)	(3,147)	(1,430)	(3,157)	(1,262)	(2,803)
Partisan disagreement						
Mean number of parties supported (*SD*)	1.91 (1.16)		1.95 (1.45)		1.77 (1.86)	
(*N*)	(1,474)		(1,494)		(1,497)	
Patterns of party support (%):						
- Only same party	16.3		12.5		8.2	
- Same and other parties	54.5		55.0		56.9	
- Only other parties	29.2		32.5		35.0	
Total	100.0		100.0		100.0	
Mean left-right distance (*SD*)	1.53 (1.37)		1.87 (1.62)		2.54 (1.95)	
(*N*)	(1,063)		(957)		(751)	
Issue disagreement						
Same position (%)	46.0		35.7		30.6	
Mean distance (*SD*)	1.07 (1.42)		1.42 (1.56)		1.69 (1.68)	
(*N*)	(1,424)		(1,419)		(1,320)	

Core networks	Spouse	Close friend 1	Close friend 2
General disagreement			
"[*Alter*] and I often have different opinions on politics" (%):			
- Completely disagree	12.9	10.9	10.9
- Rather disagree	38.4	33.7	35.3
- Neither agree nor disagree	27.7	29.3	29.8
- Rather agree	13.3	15.2	15.1
- Completely agree	7.7	10.9	8.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(*N*)	(1,045)	(1,257)	(949)
Partisan disagreement			
Patterns of party support (%):			
- Same party	54.3	40.7	34.7
- Other party	45.7	59.3	65.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean left-right distance (*SD*)	0.45 (0.67)	0.65 (0.76)	0.70 (0.78)
(*N*)	(648)	(749)	(582)
Issue disagreement			
Same position (%)	44.4	35.2	29.1
Mean distance (*SD*)	1.16 (1.50)	1.54 (1.73)	1.67 (1.72)
(*N*)	(969)	(1,162)	(886)
Ideologial disagreement			
Same position (%)	45.7	34.5	33.2
Mean distance (*SD*)	0.99 (1.21)	1.35 (1.48)	1.40 (1.52)
(*N*)	(988)	(1,174)	(903)

Note: # Data in right columns from ALLBUS 2018.

The measure of general disagreement within overall networks follows common practice (Klofstad et al., 2013) by asking respondents how often differences of opinion arose within each of the three subnetworks in political conversations during the six months preceding the survey. Comparable findings from the ALLBUS 2018 are remarkably similar. All in all, the conversational climate in all subnetworks appears dominated by mild divergences of opinion; "rarely" or "sometimes" are the modal categories in both data sets. A complete absence of general disagreement across all subnetworks is registered for only two percent, and very frequent disagreement for

less than one percent. Considerably more respondents report opinion differences occurring "never" or at most "rarely" than "frequently" or "very frequently". The expected broadening of unanimity with growing strength of relationships emerges in the ALLBUS data, but not the CoDem data, and it is not very marked. By contrast, more unequivocally in line with expectations both data sets reveal more pronounced general disagreement in intimate relationships. The pattern suggests a special role for families where opinion differences are perceived more often than between friends and acquaintances which for their part do not differ in this regard.

To register the partisan heterogeneity experienced in overall networks, respondents were invited to name all parties that they thought were preferred by anyone from their kin, friends, and acquaintances. Family members and friends support about two parties on average (of six possible parties), acquaintances about 1.8. Occasionally, acquaintances display a sizable amount of partisan diversity (*SD* = 1.86), whereas family members' preferences are more restricted (*SD* = 1.16). Comparing perceived network party preferences to respondents' vote intentions (second votes at the 2017 federal election) reveals that exclusive adherence to *Ego*' own party is remarkably rare, especially outside intimate relationships. Among acquaintances it amounts to only eight percent. Strikingly, it is much more common that all *Alteri* support other parties than *Ego*, even within families. Across all three subnetworks, only four percent are exclusively exposed to adherents of their own party, whereas 14 percent report only support of other parties. Regardless of relationships, however, the modal situation is support for several parties, with respondents' own party included.

In previous studies, partisan disagreement has been typically measured by discrete binary indicators classifying *Alteri* by whether they support either the respondent's party or any other party (Klofstad et al., 2013). In a complex multiparty system like Germany's this strategy would entail a massive loss of information (Schmitt-Beck & Partheymüller, 2016). A convenient way to locate parties in relation to each other and common tool of research on party systems is parties' placement on the ideological left-right dimension (Spies & Franzmann, 2019). In the following I rely on the distances between the left-right positions of the parties supported by *Ego* and her *Alteri* to develop more sensitive measures of partisan heterogeneity that take the spatial structure of the party system into account. To place parties on the left-right scale I rely on their respective voters' average left-right positions.[29] Calculating the distances between all pairs of parties strikingly reveals what would be missed by relying on the simple "same vs. different party" criterion. CDU and FDP are the two most proximate parties; with a left-right distance of only 0.03 points they are located almost identically. The gap between the Left and the AfD, the two polar parties, is a hundred times larger. Interpreting partisan disagreement in terms of sharp antagonism is surely correct in the latter case, but hardly the former.

Based on this preparatory work, an additive scale is created for each subnetwork by summing the left-right distances between the parties voted for by the respondents

29 Party positions on 11-point left-right scale (range 0–10): Left: 2.97, Greens: 3.85, SPD: 4.03, other parties: 4.49, CDU: 5.37, FDP: 5.40, AfD: 6.12).

and all parties named as being supported by members of their respective subnetworks.[30] A score of 0 indicates network partners' exclusive support for the respondent's own party, that is, perfect partisan homogeneity. Scores increase as a function of the number of parties supported by *Alteri* and the left-right distances between these parties and *Ego*'s own party. According to Table 6, the average partisan heterogeneity is not all that large, but grows with decreasing closeness of relationships (from 1.53 in families to 2.54 among acquaintances). The variability of partisan exposure increases in parallel. As expected, within families, exposure to partisan disagreement is limited, whereas it can become quite intense among acquaintances.

The measure of issue disagreement pertains to the highly salient position issue of immigration and is derived from an eleven-point issue scale whose poles indicate preferences for more open respectively more restrictive immigration policies. Prior to placing themselves on this scale respondents were asked to provide their perceptions of the average positions of family members, friends, and acquaintances. The data displayed in Table 6 are derived from a calculation of the absolute differences between these measures. The proportion of complete accord is very high for kin; it amounts to 46 percent. Among friends and acquaintances there is much less unanimity. Across all three subnetworks together its proportion drops to 17 percent. The mean distance as well as the diversity of perceptions increase with decreasing closeness of relationships. Family members are on average just one scale point away from respondents' own positions, whereas acquaintances are considerably more distant. Overall, issue disagreement is much less intense than partisan heterogeneity, but it is similarly sensitive to the closeness of social bonds.

For core networks general disagreement is measured by means of the following statement (assessed on a five-point Likert scale): "[*Alter*] and I often have different opinions on politics." Overall rejection of the statement ranges between 51 percent (spouses) and 45 percent (close friends), whereas 21 percent (spouses) respectively about 25 percent (close friends) find it more or less accurate. Perfect unanimity between *Ego* and *Alteri* is slightly more prevalent in core networks than in overall networks. Yet, at somewhat more than ten percent its proportion is still not large in absolute terms. While thus again overall indicating moderate heterogeneity, the core networks, and within them spouses even more than close friends, appear more skewed toward homogeneity than even families overall.

The data on partisan disagreement in core networks are derived from comparisons of the respondents' own and each of their *Alteri*'s perceived vote intentions.[31] Remarkably, even within core networks partisan homogeneity is not very pronounced. Only 17 percent of the respondents are embedded in core networks that unanimously, across all members, mirror their own party preferences. Even between spouses, agreement amounts to only 54 percent. Among the other core network members partisan accord is even less widespread, amounting to just 41 percent for the first, and 35 percent for the second close friend. A sizable majority

30 The scales include only cases were a respondent indicated a vote intention for a party and named at least one party as being supported by members of the respective subnetwork.

31 These measures exclude nonvoters and undecided voters as well as *Alteri* who were perceived as nonvoters or undecided voters or whose vote intention was unknown.

of close friends thus votes for other parties than the respondents. This is reflected in larger partisan left-right distances for close friends than spouses. At the same time, however, these distances are rather small in absolute terms, suggesting that those *Alteri* whose choices do not match respondents' own preferences tend to opt for an ideologically proximate party.

The measures of issue disagreement and left-right disagreement are calculated in the same way as issue disagreement for overall networks. The findings for these two facets of network heterogeneity are very similar, with left-right patterns slightly more skewed toward homogeneity. Compared to partisan heterogeneity, issue disagreement yet again shows similar patterns, but is overall characterized by a larger proportion of complete unanimity. Identical positions on the immigration issue are detected for 44 percent of the spouses and 29 percent of the close friends. At 46 and 33 percent, ideological unanimity is slightly higher. Correspondingly, average distances are somewhat higher for the immigration issue than for ideology, and for each of them somewhat larger among close friends than spouses. Once again, however, the total shares of unanimity across all three core network members are rather small, amounting to less than 20 percent.

7.2 Conditions of heterogeneity in citizens' social networks

The analysis starts out with an exploration of the relevance of social inequality for encounters with political heterogeneity in citizens' social networks. The dependent variables are once more constructed on the basis of dimensional analyses, again conducted separately for overall networks, spouses and close friends, in order to maximize the number of cases for each of the resulting measures. For overall networks a principal component analysis reveals a latent structure that corresponds to the different types of heterogeneity.[32] On this basis additive scales are constructed for general disagreement, partisan disagreement and issue disagreement, each summed up across family members, friends and acquaintances. For core networks the situation is somewhat more complicated since for the measures of partisan disagreement case numbers are always considerably lower than for general, issue and ideological disagreement, due to more item nonresponse for *Alteri*'s perceived party preferences. I therefore exclude partisan disagreement from the dimensional analysis. For the other measures this analysis suggests a separation by types of relationships across the various manifestations of disagreement.[33] Due to the scaling differences between the included variables factor scores are derived from this analysis for use as dependent variables. This leads to four dependent variables for core networks: general disagreement combined with issue and left-right disagreement, on the one hand, and partisan disagree-

32 The first factor is defined by partisan disagreement (Eigenvalue 1.73, explained variance 28.8 %), the second by issue disagreement (Eigenvalue 1.28, explained variance 21.3 %), and the third by general disagreement (Eigenvalue 1.06, explained variance 17.6 %), each across all subnetworks (N = 978 – 1,508 under pairwise deletion of missing values).

33 It generates a two-dimensional solution where the first factor (Eigenvalue 2.12, explained variance 35.4 %) pertains to close friends, and the second to spouses (Eigenvalue 1.15, explained variance 19.1 %; N = 829).

ment, on the other, each for spouses and close friends[34]. On all dependent variables, high values indicate more intense heterogeneity.

The upper panel of Table 7 points to a limited relevance of social structural differences, as we see many insignificant effects, and the statistically meaningful associations that do emerge are rather weak.[35] Consistent patterns emerge for gender, age and immigration background. According to Klofstad et al. (2013, p. 127) men can be expected to be exposed to more intense network heterogeneity than women. Findings are partly in line with this assumption, at least for general disagreement, and excepting spousal relationships. In addition, younger individuals appear across the board exposed to more partisan disagreement. In a partly similar vein, descending from immigrants is associated with somewhat lower partisan disagreement, yet again excepting spouses. Scattered findings from American research suggest that exposure to political diversity might cumulate among persons of lower socio-economic status (Mutz, 2006, pp. 29–31). This expectation receives no strong, and certainly no unequivocal support from the findings displayed in Table 7. In overall networks, better educated persons actually experience more rather than less partisan heterogeneity compared to those with lower levels of education. Similarly, individuals of higher occupational status tend to experience more general disagreement in overall networks. Only in spousal relationships this association is reversed and thus in line with the expectation, and the same applies to the effect of economic well-being on partisan disagreement among spouses.

Table 7. Conditions of political heterogeneity in social networks (beta coefficients)

	Overall networks			Core networks			
	General	Partisan	Issue	General#		Partisan	
				Spouse	Close friends	Spouse	Close friends
Education	.026	.103**	.036	-.004	.019	-.070	-.079+
Occupational status	.085*	.049	-.030	-.089*	-.076+	-.022	-.030
Economic situation	.032	-.001	-.014	-.042	.073+	-.089*	.033
Immigration background	-.020	-.096**	-.025	.031	-.067+	.029	-.078*
Sex (m)	.099**	.016	-.044	-.029	.117**	.007	.033
Age	-.033	-.233***	.008	.001	.043	-.117**	-.085*
Adj. R^2	.025	.080	-.001	.009	.020	.020	.009
(*N*)	(1,263)	(831)	(1,247)	(740)	(740)	(611)	(748)

34 Additive scale across first and second close friend for partisan disagreement.

35 Since case numbers are overall rather low, Table 7 additionally reports significance levels of $p < .10$.

Social structure							
Education	-.002	.020	-.029	.028	-.075	-.111+	-.137**
Occupational status	.028	.040	-.045	-.120*	-.053	-.013	-.068
Economic situation	.002	.003	-.006	-.033	.039	-.034	.040
Immigration background	.060+	-.119**	.009	.030	-.065	.035	-.083+
Sex (m)	.052	.009	-.046	-.007	.122**	.044	.009
Age	-.023	-.144**	-.008	-.001	-.022	-.017	-.038
Political talk							
Family	.021	.050	-.004	-	-	-	-
Friends and acquaintances	.258***	.081+	.068	-	-	-	-
Spouse	-	-	-	.090	.011	.050	.040
Close friends	-	-	-	.022	-.063	.062	-.098*
Awareness of political views	.048	.056	.024	-.032	0.99+	-.066	.164**
Cultural capital							
- Motivations							
Political interest	-.023	.043	.013	-.086	-.039	-.136*	-.008
Ideological extremity	-.105**	.139***	.163***	.036	.149***	-.005	.091*
Partisanship	.066*	-.137***	.092*	-.091+	.039	-.115*	-.095*
- Skills and resources							
Internal efficacy	-.039	.025	-.013	-.085	-.024	-.032	-.009
News: newspapers	.046	-.038	.006	.019	.007	-.061	.093*
News: public TV	.020	-.016	.012	.029	.036	.043	-.052
News: private TV	.010	-.026	.001	.073	.007	-.042	.059
News: online	-.002	.052	.041	-.036	.063	.060	.098+
Parents political disagreement	.183***	.018	.053	.023	-.010	.027	-.019
Social capital							
- Structural trust							
Particularized trust	.017	-.081*	.006	-.029	-.048	-.013	-.041
Generalized trust	-.022	.015	-.051	-.043	-.044	.009	-.042
- Structural opportunities							
Alteri's pol. interest	-	-	-	-.028	-.006	.037	-.027
Network size	.095*	.060	.002	-	.323***	-	.080

Psychological dispositions							
Need to evaluate	.032	-.005	.009	.032	-.015	.042	.003
Need for cognition	.006	.027	.079*	.050	.029	-.024	.017
Need to belong	.026	-.016	.018	-.033	-.098*	.063	-.028
Need for cognitive closure	.051	-.048	-.038	-.033	-.133**	.014	-.070
Conflict orientation: positive	.086*	-.008	.082+	.114*	.095+	.059	.057
Conflict orientation: negative	.018	-.087*	-.006	-.050	.060	.063	-.049
Adj. R^2	.204	.157	.049	.020	.179	.031	.072
(*N*)	(860)	(654)	(993)	(516)	(547)	(470)	(579)

Notes. # Incl. issue and ideological disagreement. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; + $p < .10$.

The lower panel of Table 7 expands the scope of analysis by complementing the social structural predictors with a range of manifestations of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), as well as psychological dispositions as additional exogenous variables. Above all, the array of predictors now also includes the frequency of political talk and the measures of citizens' awareness of *Alteri*'s political views. Political heterogeneity has been found to be positive affected by political conversations (Huckfeldt & Morehouse Mendez, 2008), but negatively by the certainty of perceptions of *Alteri*'s views (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, pp. 68–87). Persons that discuss politics more often, but also individuals that are less conscious of their interaction partners' political standpoints might thus be disposed to experience more intense political heterogeneity. From deliberative democratic theory's normative point of view, the former would be highly desirable, but not the latter.

Concerning cultural capital, motivations in particular, but to a lesser extent perhaps also skills might be related to experiences of political diversity. Directional motivations should be particularly influential. Ideologically extreme positions and strong partisanship can be expected to invigorate individuals' tendency to seek out like-minded associates, thus diminishing their likelihood to interact with persons that do not share their political convictions (Gärtner et al., 2021; Huckfeldt et al., 2005; Ikeda & Richey, 2012, pp. 50–51; Klofstad et al., 2013, pp. 127–128; Mutz, 2006, pp. 33–35). Political interest, but also skills like internal efficacy, media use and political knowledge might serve as resources that enhance individuals' capacity to avoid disagreeable encounters (Zaller, 1992). Findings of extant research are mixed and only partly in line with this expectation, however (Klofstad et al. 2013, pp. 127–128; Mutz, 2006, pp. 31–33). Finally, socialization experiences might prepare individuals for dealing with political heterogeneity in their social networks. Witnessing opinion differences between one's

parents during adolescence[36] may give rise, via model learning, to a more open stance toward political heterogeneity in adult life.

Social trust as attitudinal dimension of social capital might soften people's tendency to shun encounters with politically dissimilar others. In addition, core network members' perceived political interest is taken into account in the models upon the assumption that by actively drawing respondents into political conversations highly interested *Alteri* could expose them to political heterogeneity that they might otherwise avoid. Since the odds of encountering disagreement increase with the number of people one talks to, the size of the social networks needs to be taken into account as well (Huckfeldt et al., 2004, 2005).[37] Persons embedded in larger networks should be exposed to more political heterogeneity.

Lastly, psychological dispositions can also be expected to affect citizens' experiences of political disagreement in their lifeworld. Need for cognition, for instance, has been found to increase people's tolerance for disagreement (Linvill et al., 2016; Mendelberg, 2002, pp. 166–167) which in turn might lead to more heterogeneous political experiences. Individuals with a high need to belong also might encounter more disagreement in social networks, since they tend to give the maintenance of social ties priority over their political content. Need for cognitive closure, by contrast, should diminish exposure to divergent opinions (De Grada et al., 1999; Kruglanski & Fishman, 2009). Extant research has furthermore found orientations toward conflict to be relevant for experiences of heterogeneity in social interactions (Testa et al., 2014). Conflict-seeking orientations should be associated with more political disagreement whereas conflict-averse orientations should give rise to more homogeneity.[38]

The findings displayed in Table 7 are quite complex. They suggest that some, but by no means all effects of social structure are mediated by the predictors additionally included in the models. The associations between immigration background and partisan disagreement in both overall and core networks remain

36 To test for this possibility a recall question is used; as a follow-up question to the question on parents' discussion frequency used in the previous sections it asked: "And how often did differences of opinion occur in these conversations? Very often, often, sometimes, seldom or never?" The question excluded respondents who claimed that their parents never talked about politics.

37 Following Eveland et al. (2013), different measures are used for overall and core networks. For the former the following general question is used: "Overall, with how many different persons did you talk about political topics in the last six months?" The answer categories range from "1–3 persons" (coded 1) to "More than 25 persons" (coded 6). For core networks the number of Alteri outside respondents' households elicted by the name generator is referred to.

38 Six items are used to measure orientations toward conflict (assessed on five-point Likert scales). A varimax-rotated principal component analysis separated negative conflict orientations (Eigenvalue 2.43, explained variance 40.5 %) from positive conflict orientations (Eigenvalue 1.11, explained variance 18.6 %). Additive indices were constructed accordingly. The index of negative orientations toward conflict is based on four items: "My political views are private and no other people's business"; "It is indiscrete to ask other people about their political views"; "Political conversations can be dangerous because they can destroy friendships"; "I hesitate to talk about politics with others because such conversations can lead to personal conflicts" (all coded in such a way that high index values indicate high conflict aversion). The index of positive conflict orientations combines the following two items: "I find it easy to express my opinion on political issues even if I expect that others contradict me"; "I enjoy defending my political positions against criticism" (with high index values indicating positive orientations toward conflict).

largely unchanged, although some of them are now no longer statistically significant. The gender effect on general disagreement evaporates in overall networks, but not for close friends. The negative association of partisan disagreement with age, by contrast, disappears in core networks, but not in overall networks. The role of socio-economic status, on the other hand, appears mostly mediated by cultural and social capital. Only the negative effect of occupational status on general disagreement with spouses remains, and education appears now even more strongly related to partisan disagreement with close friends. Its impact is negative, suggesting that encounters with dissimilar party preferences on the part of close friends are more common among less educated individuals.

Conversations with family members and spouses are unrelated to experiences of political heterogeneity. But in overall networks frequent political conversations with friends and acquaintances very substantially increase the intensity of experiences of general disagreement. We also see a positive association with partisan disagreement (although only significant with $p < .10$). These observations are in line with expectations. Yet, among close friends the association is reversed. Conversations with close friends appear to reduce rather than increase exposure to partisan homogeneity. Partisan disagreement with close friends is also affected by awareness of *Alteri*'s political views. The more certain persons are of their close friends' political preferences the more these views are likely to deviate from their own standpoints. A weaker effect in the same direction appears also for general disagreement with close friends, but it narrowly misses the five-percent threshold of statistical significance. This pattern is contrary to expectations, but welcome from a normative point of view. But otherwise experiences of political heterogeneity are not affected by the certainty of perceptions of *Alteri*'s political views.

The one effect of political interest visible in Table 7 is in line with expectations, but restricted to partisan disagreement with spouses. When persons are strongly interested in politics, spouses' party preferences appear more similar. As assumed, directional political motivations are more important for encounters with political dissimilarity, but the effect patterns are quite complex and not always in line with expectations. In overall networks, ideologically more extreme individuals experience less general disagreement than more centrist ones, as expected. But in every other respect they are exposed to stronger opinion differences by network members, with the sole exception of spouses. The strength of partisanship is similarly relevant, but effect patterns are different. Its primary effect consists in depressing partisan heterogeneity, both in overall and core networks. This is in line with expectations. However, at the same time it appears that intense partisanship leads to somewhat stronger opinion differences when discussing politics in general with family members, friends or acquaintances. Moreover, strong partisans' positions on immigration policy also deviate more widely from overall network members' average preferences.

Skills play almost no role for citizens' exposure to political heterogeneity. Unexpectedly, we see a positive effect of internal efficacy, but it is restricted to partisan disagreement among close friends. Otherwise, this predictor is irrelevant. Socialization experiences likewise appear to play a limited role, this time in line with expectations. Individuals that witnessed during adolescence how their parents

disagreed about political matters are in adult life exposed to more intense general disagreement in their overall networks. Social capital is also of limited importance. Social trust is largely unrelated to disagreement in social networks, with the sole exception of particularized trust and partisan disagreement. Contrary to expectations, this effect is negative, however. It suggests that partisan disagreement in overall networks is stronger for persons with lower trust in their kinship. By contrast, in line with expectations larger networks render experiences of general disagreement more intense in both overall and core networks. Yet, other than assumed it does not make any difference for encounters with political heterogeneity in core networks whether the *Alteri* are politically interested or not.

Finally, some psychological dispositions also appear relevant, but the picture is again inconsistent. Findings suggest that need to evaluate and need for cognition do not affect experiences of political heterogeneity. But need to belong as well as need for cognitive closure are negatively related to general disagreement with close friends. This is in line with expectations for the latter, but not the former. Again, as assumed, feeling attracted to conflict goes along with more intense general disagreement with all network members (with statistical significance narrowly missing the five-percent threshold for close friends), whereas conflict-averse individuals experience less partisan disagreement in overall networks.

7.3 Discussion

Deliberative democracy expects citizens to experience society's political pluralism in their lifeworld, ideally to the fullest extent (Tanasoca, 2020, pp. 149–184). This presupposes awareness of network members' political views. The previous section has shown that most citizens are indeed conscious of their *Alteri*'s standpoints, although often not with certainty. Of these individuals, surprisingly few are enclosed in homogeneous social environments that only reflect their own views. In particular, unanimous support for people's own parties is rare; most citizens are embedded in mixed networks whose members' party preferences include their own party, but typically in combination with one other party, and sometimes even more. Perfect general agreement is also by no means common. With regard to ideology and issue attitudes unanimous positions are more frequent. Overall, the analyses presented above clearly show that most citizens are exposed to political heterogeneity in their lifeworld. In terms of its simple "presence" (Klofstad et al., 2013, p. 123), political disagreement in citizens' social networks is widespread. This is good news for deliberative democracy.

However, yet again a more nuanced perspective leads to a less benevolent diagnosis. When taking account that network disagreement is a not a binary, but a gradual phenomenon, things look less favorable. Overall, the amount of political heterogeneity that citizens experience in their lifeworld is best characterized as moderate. It is true that most social networks do not serve as cocoons that reliably isolate citizens from any political standpoints different to their own. But their scope is restricted. Far from representing the entire spectrum of alternative views, the political pluralism encountered by citizens in their everyday lives is in most cases constrained to a narrow range of perspectives not identical, but proximate

to their own. This suggests that – contrary to the prevailing understanding of political disagreement in extant research (Hutchens, 2017; Mutz, 2006) – at least in the German case exposure to heterogeneity does not typically entail confrontations with adversary and oppositional views. Occasionally this may be the case, to be sure. But much more often it takes the form of mild opinion differences – neighborhood bickers rather than profoundly challenging controversies.

It is probably no coincidence that this pattern is particularly pronounced with regard to partisan disagreement. It is what can be expected from homophilious choices of discussion partners (McPherson et al., 2001) under the constraints of an increasingly fragmenting multi-party system (Ellerbrock, 2022). In terms of contextual supply, an individual's prospects to encounter congenial partisans is a function of the size of the party she supports. The more numerous this party's adherents, the higher her prospects to get in touch with fellow supporters of the same party. The smaller her party, by contrast, they lower her likelihood to meet someone sharing her preference (Huckfeldt et al., 2005). Due to this mechanism the intensifying fragmentation of the German party system (Schmitt-Beck et al., 2022) renders it less and less likely for voters to be able to construct social networks that are unanimous in partisan terms, even if they aim for political homogeneity in their choices of interaction partners. What they can still do, however, is trying to engage only with supporters of ideologically more proximate parties, while avoiding discussions with supporters of parties that are truly "on the other side" and represent fundamentally opposed perspectives. In multi-party systems, both parties and their voters need to accept limited diversity – parties when they enter government coalitions with ideologically neighboring parties, and voters when they discuss politics with such parties' followers. For citizens, this entails very different, presumably more amicable lifeworld experiences than under the zero-sum logic of a two-party system like the United States. But for deliberative democracy it is of limited value, since fundamentally divergent views rarely enter people's lifeworld.

Yet again, the closeness of relationships is an important moderator of these experiences. Regarding specific objects like ideology, issue attitudes and party preferences the amount of heterogeneity is lowest between spouses, followed by other kin. Among friends and especially acquaintances it is considerably more pronounced. Subjective feelings of general disagreement do not exactly replicate this pattern, however. Differences across relationships are less marked, and the data suggest that the intimacy of family bonds might even allow individuals to express dissenting views more easily than more distant relationships where one has to remain on guard (Morey et al., 2012). Relationships also moderate the effects of virtually all relevant predictors of experiences of social network heterogeneity. In overall networks, discussing politics more often with friends and acquaintances gives rise to generally more pluralistic experiences. Encounters with politically dissimilar close friends are more intense among those that are more confident about their perceptions of these associates' political views. Thus, at least to a limited extent all three prerequisites of deliberative democracy converge in citizens' conversational experiences. Otherwise, directional motivations stand

out as predictors of political disagreement, mitigating certain forms of political disagreement, but buttressing others.

8. Conclusion

The vision of deliberative democracy is built on the collectively enlightening power of political discussion – its deliberative imperative – while involving the citizenry at large – its democratic imperative. For deliberative democrats, authoritative decision-making can only enjoy legitimacy when it is ultimately rooted in everyday communication that reflects and processes citizens' experiences in their lifeworld (Habermas, 1996). Although at the heart of the idea of deliberative democracy and nothing less than the foundation of the deliberative system that renders it truly democratic (Chambers, 2009, 2012; Hendriks, 2006; Mansbridge, 1999; Tanasoca, 2020), citizens' everyday political talk has not attracted matching attention in scholarship on this model of democratic governance (Conover & Miller, 2018). Building on a theoretical reconstruction of the normative role of citizens' political communication in deliberative democracy, the analyses presented in this paper sought to shed light on some of the blank spaces in this line of research. Drawing on unique survey data collected in Germany they explored three prerequisites of deliberative democracy as a model of democracy that is rooted in citizens' everyday political talk.

Without discussion there can be no deliberation, and to qualify as democratic engagement in political talk should be widespread and equal. The prerequisite of inclusivity accordingly demands that ordinary citizens discuss politics in large numbers and an egalitarian way. Deliberation moreover revolves around political positions and preferences, but that is only possible when such standpoints are discernible on the part of interlocutors. The corresponding prerequisite of publicity expects citizens to be broadly aware of each other's political views. As a mode of politics designed to address political disagreements in constructive and legitimate ways, deliberative democracy furthermore requires citizens' lifeworld experiences to represent society's diversity and concomitant conflict potential. The prerequisite of heterogeneity therefore demands the views encountered by citizens when communicating with one another to reflect the political pluralism of society. Analysing citizens' communicative engagement in their overall and core networks suggests a basically positive diagnosis for each of the three prerequisites, but with severe limitations on closer inspection.

As Chambers noted, "deliberative democracy does assume that ... each individual citizen ought to deliberate about at least some public issues (even if it is just over the garden fence)" (Chambers, 2009, p. 331). The analyses show that indeed almost everyone talks about politics, and that most of these conversations touch upon issues of public policy. However, not all citizens partaking in political conversations do so equally frequently. Some do it all the time, others at best rarely. Most are situated somewhere between these extremes. To some extent, these differences reflect social structural inequalities, in particular disparities of socio-economic status, but also gender and age. Hence, with regard to the "rhetorical citizenship" (Kock & Villadsen, 2017) that deliberative democrats deem

essential for the democratic nature of politics, striking disadvantages cannot be overlooked. In the everyday talk casually taking place in citizens' lifeworld social inequality translates into "communicative inequality" (Bohman, 1996, p. 114). Informal conversations in homes, bars and clubs are by no means immune to the mechanisms of exclusion described by the "socio-economic standard model" of political engagement (Verba & Nie, 1972, pp. 125–137). Thus, while the prerequisite of inclusivity is met in the basic sense of very few people completely abstaining from discussing politics in their everyday lives, its egalitarian character is seriously impaired.

The analyses furthermore suggest that most citizens are conscious of their associates' political positions and preferences. But a sizable minority is embedded in networks whose members' standpoints they find generally harder to discern or even completely opaque. Moreover, awareness of associates' views does not pertain to all attitude objects equally. People's sense of being in general more or less conscious of their associates' political views is most widespread concerning positions on the issue of immigration, selected for this study due to its high salience. But party preferences appear considerably less clearly visible. Regarding the second prerequisite of deliberative democracy, the diagnosis is thus also rather, but far from completely, favorable. Good news from a deliberative democratic point of view is that everyday political talk stands out as a major force among the factors that improve citizens' mutual awareness of political views. Lacking or uncertain knowledge of fellow citizens' positions and preferences is least pronounced among those that particularly strongly shape the overall character of everyday political talk in citizens' lifeworld.

"Ideally, a well-ordered deliberation is based on full information and the representation of all points of view." (Chambers, 2003, p. 319) This requirement inevitably entails experiences of, partly massive, disagreement. The analysis of social networks' political heterogeneity suggests that – to the extent *Alteri*'s political views are discernible – the amount of unanimity is overall remarkably low. Complete general and in particular partisan agreement are especially rare. Yet, intense, "bold" disagreement (Maia et al., 2021, p. 111) is overall even rarer. Citizens are typically embedded in social networks of moderate heterogeneity. This even applies to party preferences, as becomes clear when moving beyond the "same party-vs.-different party" dualism dominant in extant research (Klofstad et al., 2013) by examining parties' distances on the ideological left-right dimension. For deliberative democracy these findings again entail good, but far from perfect news. It is certainly welcome that in their lifeworld most citizens are not insulated from any political standpoints other than their own. But contrary to the prevailing dualistic interpretation in extant research (Hutchens, 2017; Klofstad et al., 2013; Mutz, 2006), under the complex conditions of the German multi-party system these experiences are mostly not equivalent to confrontations with adversary and oppositional views (Schmitt-Beck & Partheymüller, 2016). Despite widespread exposure to political heterogeneity, most citizens do not live up to "[t]he first and perhaps only universalizable principle of democratic deliberation ..., 'always listen to the other side', for there is always something to be learned from the other side" (Tully, 2002, p. 218). Few citizens reside in homogeneous social "cabinets of mirrors"

where they are only exposed to reflections of their own views, to be sure. But most others are not located in enclosures whose walls are clear enough to see "the other side". They resemble frosted glass, allowing glimpses of the outside world, but only nearby, not in the distance where the true challenges loom. This is a far cry from experiencing the full range of society's pluralism in one's daily life, and of limited value as a basis for deliberative democracy.

Several of the analyses point to the coexistence of two complementary spheres of everyday political talk, one defined by kinship, the other by friendship and acquaintanceship. To a considerable extent this bifurcation moderates how often and with whom people discuss politics, how aware they are of one another's standpoints, and how strongly society's pluralism is reflected in their conversation experiences. Partly problematic implications follow from this "division of communicative labor". Deliberative democracy is advocated as a remedy for the challenges of integrating highly differentiated societies. But two of the three prerequisites examined in this paper are more clearly met in families and spousal relationships, a realm strongly characterized by the affective features of "community", than among friends and in particular acquaintances encountered in the functional contexts of "society" (Tönnies, 1963 [1887]). Considerably more political conversations take place in the former realm than the latter. Likewise, consciousness of network members' political views is better regarding spouses and family members than friends and acquaintances. To some extent this constellation further foils the prerequisites of deliberative democracy (Conover et al., 2002). By contrast, at least regarding specific objects like ideology, issue attitudes and party preferences the amount of political heterogeneity is higher among friends and especially acquaintances than between spouses and family members, confirming that the outreach of networks beyond the confines of kinship is a productive force for deliberative democracy (Huckfeldt et al., 2004).

Numerous facets of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) affect citizens' communicative experiences, to a considerable extent mediating the effects of social inequality. Whether and how strongly individuals engage in each of the two spheres of communication depends strongly on their endowment with social capital (Putnam, 1993). Particularized and generalized social trust (Newton & Zmerli, 2011), but in particular also structural opportunities channel individuals' access to certain conversation partners (Feld, 1981; Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995). They not only facilitate political talk with particular kinds of interlocutors; sometimes they also depress the frequency of conversations with others. Skills and especially motivations as manifestations of cultural capital are important in less specific ways. As directional motivations, strong partisanship and ideological extremity affect people's sensitivity to others' views and experiences of political heterogeneity. Political interest is crucial for the frequency of engagement in everyday political talk. Remarkably, this pertains not only to citizens' own, but also their *Alteri*'s interest in politics. Within the scope offered by contextual opportunity structures, people seem to prefer communication partners of high political expertise, presumably because they see them as attractive sources of political advice (Ahn et al., 2010). To obtain a more complete picture the analyses also included a range of psychological dispositions that in recent years have gained in-

creasing scholarly attention in research on political communication (Caprara & Vecchione, 2013). The findings suggest an overall rather limited relevance for citizens' communicative experiences.

In sum, with regard to the three prerequisites examined in this paper prospects appear promising, though far from optimal for deliberative democracy in Germany. For one, almost all citizens do discuss politics in their lifeworld, although in less egalitarian ways and with a stronger preponderance of strong social bonds than desirable from a deliberative democratic point of view. Second, consciousness of associates' political views is quite widespread, even though systematic awareness gaps cannot be overlooked and people's confidence in the accuracy of their perceptions is often limited. Finally, to the extent political views are discernible, most people's social networks entail political heterogeneity, although they clearly fail to represent the full range of alternative political views. While reasonably good news for deliberative democrats, these findings should not lightly be generalized to other countries. As of yet, there has been very little internationally comparative research on everyday political talk. Rudimentary and scattered as they are, its findings suggest huge cross-national variations in levels of political discussion (Schmitt-Beck & Lup, 2013, p. 518), awareness of associates' political standpoints (Schmitt-Beck, 2000, pp. 216–218), and encounters with heterogeneity (Mutz, 2006, pp. 49–54; Richardson & Beck, 2007). This implies that, at least with regard to the three prerequisites examined here, not all countries are equally well equipped for deliberative democracy. How social, cultural and institutional characteristics of countries moderate the conditions for this demanding mode of governance calls for more research.

While attempting to cover a lot of ground, the research presented above is clearly not without limitations. Most importantly, it has stopped short of addressing the crucially important issue of the deliberative quality of everyday political talk itself. As outlined above (and visualized in Figure 1) each of the three phenomena investigated in this study constitutes a necessary but not sufficient condition of deliberative democracy. But deliberative democracy's ultimate measure of legitimacy is the "discursive level of opinion-formation" that precedes formal discussions in the arenas of will-formation (Habermas, 1996, p. 362). Does the way people discuss politics meet the demanding quality criteria emphasized by theorists of deliberative democracy (Goodin, 2008, pp. 186–189)? A sizable body of research examined the deliberativeness of communication in institutional arenas like the mass media (Wessler, 2018, pp. 82–108), or parliaments (Steiner et al., 2004). But how about ordinary people's everyday political talk: "[C]an the demos deliberate?" (Chambers, 2012, p. 68) This has been quite intensively investigated by studies of citizens' discussions in minipublics, both face-to-face (Gerber et al., 2018) and online (Friess & Eilders, 2015), organized groups (Stromer-Galley, 2007), or on social media (Quinlan et al., 2015). But very little research has yet addressed such questions with regard to citizens' casual everyday talk about politics in their lifeworld (Conover et al., 2002). Citizens' willingness and competence to engage in truly deliberative communication (Mendelberg, 2002; Rosenberg, 2014) likewise requires further attention (Jennstål et al., 2021). This study has shown that most people discuss politics, are aware of each others' political per-

spectives, and are exposed to at least a moderate amount of heterogeneity. Yet, as Steiner emphasized, "[t]hese discussions should have a deliberative character in the sense that participants should be open to the force of the better argument. As a consequence, opinion formation at the grass-roots level would take place in a reflective way." (Steiner, 2012, p. 32) Whether, in how far, and under which circumstances this is the case, is still largely unknown. It requires further inquiry. Future studies should also devote more attention to the relationship between traditional face-to-face conversations, and the new, increasingly relevant realm of social media and other modes of online communication. For the respondents of the survey analyzed in this paper online media were of marginal relevance at best. But it remains to be seen whether these media have the potential to develop over time into a functional equivalent of unmediated personal communication or whether they work so differently that they can never replace it (Conover & Miller, 2018).

References

Aalberg, T., & Curran, J. (Eds.) (2012). *How media inform democracy. A comparative approach*. Routledge.

Ahn, T. K., Huckfeldt, R., Mayer, A. K., & Ryan, J. B. (2010). Politics, expertise, and interdependence within electorates. In J. E. Leighley (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of American Elections and Political Behavior* (pp. 278–299). Oxford University Press.

Amsalem, E., & Nir, L. (2019). Does interpersonal discussion increase political knowledge? A meta-analysis. *Communication Research*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650219866357

Anderson, C. J., & Paskeviciute, A. (2005). Macro-politics and micro-behavior. Mainstream politics and the frequency of political discussion in contemporary democracies. In A. Zuckerman (Ed.), *The Social Logic of Politics. Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior* (pp. 228–248). Temple University Press.

Bächtiger, A. (2016). Empirische Deliberationsforschung [Empirical deliberation research]. In W. O. Lembcke, C. Ritzi, & S. G. Schaal (Eds.), *Zeitgenössische Demokratietheorie, Band 2: Empirische Demokratietheorien* (pp. 251–278). Springer.

Bächtiger, A., & Parkinson, J. (2019). *Mapping and measuring deliberation. Towards a new deliberative quality*. Oxford University Press.

Barber, B. R. (1984). *Strong democracy. Participatory politics for a new age*. University of California Press.

Bassili, J. N. (1996). Meta-judgmental versus operative indexes of psychological attributes: The case of measures of attitude strength. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*(4), 637–653. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.4.637

Baumeister, R. F. (2011). Need-to-belong theory. In P. A. M. van Lange, A. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 121–140). SAGE.

Beauvais, E. (2018). Deliberation and equality. In A. Bächtiger, J. S. Dryzek, J. Mansbridge, & M. Warren (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy* (pp. 144–155). Oxford University Press.

Bennett, S. E., Lickinger, R. S., & Rhine, S. L. (2000). Political talk over here, over there, over time. *British Journal of Political Science, 30*, 99–119.

Bessette, J. M. (1994). *The mild voice of reason: Deliberative democracy and american national government*. University of Chicago Press.

Bohman, J. (1996). *Public deliberation: Pluralism, complexity and democracy*. MIT Press.

Bohman, J. (2006). Deliberative democracy and the epistemic benefits of diversity. *Episteme, 3*, 175–191.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.

Burkhalter, S., Gastil, J., & Kelshaw, T. (2002). A conceptual definition and theoretical model of public deliberation in small face-to-face groups. *Communication Theory, 12*(4), 398-422. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00276.x

Cacioppo, J. T., & Petty, R. E. (1982). The need for cognition. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42*(1), 116–131. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.42.1.116

Caprara, G. V., & Vecchione, M. (2013). Personality approaches to political behavior. In L. Huddy, D. O. Sears, & J. S. Levy (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 23–58). Oxford University Press.

Chambers, S. (2003). Deliberative democratic theory. *Annual Review of Political Science, 6*(1), 307–326.

Chambers, S. (2009). Rhetoric and the public sphere: Has deliberative Democracy abandoned mass democracy? *Political Theory, 37*(3), 323–350. https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591709332336

Chambers, S. (2012). Deliberation and mass democracy. In J. Parkinson & J. Mansbridge (Eds.), *Deliberative Systems. Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale* (pp. 52–71). Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, J. (1989). Deliberation and democratic legitimacy. In A. P. Hamlin & P. N. Pettit (Eds.), *The Good Polity. Normative Analysis of the State* (pp. 18–34). Blackwell.

Conover, P. J., & Miller, P. R. (2018). Taking everyday political talk seriously. In A. Bächtiger, J. S. Dryzek, J. Mansbridge, & M. Warren (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy* (pp. 378–391). Oxford University Press.

Conover, P. J., & Searing, D. D. (2005). Studying ‚Everyday political talk' in the deliberative system. *Acta Politica, 40*(3), 269-283. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500113

Conover, P. J., Searing, D. D., & Crewe, I. M. (2002). The deliberative potential of political discussion. *British Journal of Political Science, 32*, 21–62.

Cowan, S. K., & Baldassarri, D. (2018). "It could turn ugly": Selective disclosure of attitudes in political discussion networks. *Social Networks, 52*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socnet.2017.04.002

Craig, S. C., & Maggiotto, M. A. (1982). Measuring political efficacy. *Political Methodology, 8*(3), 85–109.

Dalton, R. J. (2017). *The participation gap: Social status and political inequality.* Oxford University Press.

De Grada, E., Kruglanski, A. W., Mannetti, L., & Pierro, A. (1999). Motivated cognition and group interaction: Need for closure affects the contents and pocesses of collective negotiations. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 35*(4), 346–365. https://doi.org/10.1006/jesp.1999.1376

Delli Carpini, M. X., & Keeter, S. (1996). *What americans know about politics and why it matters*. Yale University Press.

Downs, A. (1957). *An economic theory of democracy*. Harper.

Dryzek, J. S. (2000). *Deliberative democracy and beyond: Liberals, critics, contestations*. Oxford University Press.

Dryzek, J. S. (2010). *Foundations and frontiers of deliberative governance*. Oxford University Press.

Dryzek, J. S. (2016). Symposium commentary: Reflections on the theory of deliberative systems. *Critical Policy Studies, 10*(2), 209–215. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2016.1170620

Dunn, J. (2018). *Setting the people free: The story of democracy* (2nd ed.). Princeton University Press.

Easton, D. (1965). *A systems analysis of political life*. Wiley.

Eliasoph, N. (1998). *Avoiding politics: How americans produce apathy in everyday life*. Cambridge University Press.

Ellerbrock, S. (2022). Partisan agreement and disagreement in voters' discussant networks: Contextual constraints and partisan selectivity in a changing electorate. In R. Schmitt-Beck, S. Roßteutscher, H. Schoen, B. Weßels, & C. Wolf (Eds.), *The Changing German Voter*. Oxford University Press (forthcoming).

Eveland, W. P., Hutchens, M. J., & Morey, A. (2012). Social networks and political knowledge. In H. A. Semetko & M. Scammell (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Political Communication* (pp. 240–252). SAGE.

Eveland, W. P., Hutchens, M. J., & Morey, A. C. (2013). Political network size and its antecedents and consequences. *Political Communication, 30*(3), 371–394. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2012.737433

Eveland, W. P., Morey, A. C., & Hutchens, M. J. (2011). Beyond deliberation: New directions for the study of informal political conversation from a communication perspective. *Journal of Communication, 61*(6), 1082–1103. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2011.01598.x

Feld, S. L. (1981). The focused organization of social ties. *American Journal of Sociology, 86*(5), 1015–1035. https://doi.org/10.2307/2778746

Felicetti, A. (2014). Citizen forums in the deliberative system. *Democratic Theory, 1*(2), 95–103. https://doi.org/10.3167/dt.2014.010210

Fischer, C. S. (2011). *Still connected. Family and friends in America since 1970*. Russell Sage Foundation.

Fishkin, J. S. (1991). *Democracy and deliberation. New directions for democratic reform*. Yale University Press.

Fishkin, J. S. (2009). *When the people speak. Deliberative democracy and public consultation*. Oxford University Press.

Fishkin, J. (2018). *Democracy when the people are thinking. Revitalizing our politics through public deliberation*. Oxford University Press.

Fitzgerald, J. (2013). What does "political" mean to you? *Political Behavior, 35*(3), 453–479. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-012-9212-2

Freelon, D. G. (2010). Analyzing online political discussion using three models of democratic communication. *New Media & Society, 12*(7), 1172–1190. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809357927

Friess, D., & Eilders, C. (2015). A systematic review of online deliberation research. *Policy & Internet, 7*(3), 319–339. https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.95

Fuchs, D. (2014). Empirische Deliberationsforschung – eine kritische Diskussion [Empirical deliberation research – A critical discussion]. In C. Landwehr & R. Schmalz-Bruns (Eds.), *Deliberative Demokratie in der Diskussion. Herausforderungen, Bewährungsprobleme, Kritik* (pp. 169–201). Nomos.

Gärtner, L., Wuttke, A., & Schoen, H. (2021). Who talks and who listens? How political involvement influences the potential for democratic deliberation in everyday political talk. *Journal of Deliberative Democracy, 17*(2), 13–30. https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.983

Gastil, J. (2000). *By popular demand. Revitalizing representative democracy through deliberative elections*. University of California Press.

Gastil, J. (2008). *Political communication and deliberation*. Sage.

Gentzkow, M., & Shapiro, J. M. (2011). Ideological segregation online and offline. *Quarterly Journal of Economics, 126*(4), 1799–1839. https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjr044

Gerber, M., Bächtiger, A., Shikano, S., Reber, S., & Rohr, S. (2018). Deliberative abilities and influence in a transnational deliberative poll (EuroPolis). *British Journal of Political Science, 48*(4), 1093–1118. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123416000144

GESIS (2019). Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften [General social survey] ALLBUS 2018 (ZA5270), data file version 2.0.0 (https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13250). GESIS.

Glover, T. D. (2018). Ordinary political conversation in seemingly nonpolitical leisure: All talk and no action? *Leisure Sciences, 40*(7), 723–734. https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2018.1534626

Goertz, G. (2006). *Social science concepts. A user's guide*. Princeton University Press.

Goodin, R. E. (2008). *Innovating democracy: Democratic theory and practice after the deliberative turn*. Oxford University Press.

Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology, 78*(3), 1360–1380.

Grill, C., Schmitt-Beck, R., & Metz, M. (2018). *S'udying the 'Conversations 'f Democracy': Research design and data collection*. Working Paper 173. MZES. https://www.mzes.unimannheim.de/publications/wp/wp-173.pdf

Gutmann, A., & Thompson, D. (1996). *Democracy and disagreement*. Harvard University Press.

Gutmann, A., & Thompson, D. (1999). Democratic disagreement. In S. Macedo (Ed.), *Deliberative Politics* (pp. 243–279). Oxford University Press.

Gutmann, A., & Thompson, D. (2004). *Why deliberative democracy?* Princeton University Press.

Habermas, J. (1994). Three normative models of democracy. *Constellations, 1*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8675.1994.tb00001.x

Habermas, J. (1996). *Between facts and norms. Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*. MIT Press.

Held, D. (2006). *Models of democracy (3rd edition)*. Stanford University Press.

Hendriks, C. M. (2006). Integrated deliberation: Reconciling civil society's dual role in deliberative democracy. *Political Studies, 54*(3), 486–508. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2006.00612.x

Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik, J. H. P. (2003). Stellung im Beruf als Ersatz für eine Berufsklassifikation zur Ermittlung von sozialem Prestige [Occupational position as proxy for a classification of occupational prestige]. *ZUMA-Nachrichten, 27*(53), 114–127. doi:https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-207760

Huckfeldt, R. (2017). Taking interdependence seriously: Platforms for understanding political communication. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication* (pp. 695–712). Oxford University Press.

Huckfeldt, R., Beck, P. A., Dalton, R. J., & Levine, J. (1995). Political environments, cohesive social groups, and the communication of public opinion. *American Journal of Political Science, 39*(4), 1025–1054.

Huckfeldt, R., Ikeda, K. i., & Pappi, F. U. (2005). Patterns of disagreement in democratic politics: Comparing Germany, Japan, and the United States. *American Journal of Political Science, 49*(3), 497–514.

Huckfeldt, R., Johnson, P., & Sprague, J. (2004). *Political disagreement. The survival of diverse opinions within communication networks*. Cambridge University Press.

Huckfeldt, R., & Morehouse Mendez, J. (2008). Moths, flames, and political engagement. Managing disagreement within communication networks. *The Journal of Politics, 70*(1), 83–96.

Huckfeldt, R., & Sprague, J. (1995). *Citizens, politics, and social communication. Information and influence in an election campaign*. Cambridge University Press.

Hutchens, M. J. (2017). How we talk and why it matters. In A. Dudo & L. Kahlor (Eds.), *Strategic Communication: New Agendas in Communication* (pp. 96–114). Routledge.

Ikeda, K.I., & Richey, S. (2012). *Social networks and Japanese democracy: The beneficial impact of interpersonal communication in East Asia*. Routledge.

Jacobs, L. R., Cook, F. L., & Delli Carpini, M. X. (2009). *Talking together. Public deliberation and political participation in America*. University of Chicago Press.

Jarvis, W. B. G., & Petty, R. E. (1996). The need to evaluate. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*(1), 172–194. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.70.1.172

Jennstål, J., Uba, K., & Öberg, P. (2021). Deliberative civic culture: Assessing the prevalence of deliberative conversational norms. *Political Studies, 69*(2), 366–389. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321719899036

Johnston, R., & Pattie, C. (2006). *Putting voters in their place. Geography and elections in Great Britain*. Oxford University Press.

Kim, J., & Kim, E. J. (2008). Theorizing dialogic deliberation: Everyday political talk as communicative action and dialogue. *Communication Theory, 18*(1), 51–70. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2007.00313.x

Klofstad, C. A., McClurg, S. D., & Rolfe, M. (2009). Measurement of political discussion networks. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 73*(3), 462–483. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfp032

Klofstad, C. A., Sokhey, A., & McClurg, S. D. (2013). Disagreeing about disagreement: How conflict in social networks affects political behavior. *American Journal of Political Science, 57*(1), 120–134.

Knight, J., & Johnson, J. (1997). What sort of equality does deliberative democracy require? In J. Bohman & W. Rehg (Eds.), *Deliberative democracy. Essays on reason and politics* (pp. 279-319). MIT Press.

Knops, A. (2006). Delivering deliberation's emancipatory potential. *Political Theory, 34*(5), 594–623.

Kock, C., & Villadsen, L. S. (2017). Rhetorical citizenship: Studying the discursive crafting and enactment of citizenship. *Citizenship Studies, 21*(5), 570–586. https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2017.1316360

Kratz, A. (2019). Politische Sachfragen [Political issues]. In S. Roßteutscher, R. Schmitt-Beck, H. Schoen, B. Weßels, & C. Wolf (Eds.), *Zwischen Polarisierung und Beharrung: Die Bundestagswahl 2017* (pp. 229–245). Nomos.

Kruglanski, A. W., & Fishman, S. (2009). The need for cognitive closure. In M. R. Leary & R. H. Hoyle (Eds.), *Handbook of Individual Differences in Social Behavior* (pp. 343–353). Guilford Press.

Lafont, C. (2020). *Democracy without shortcuts. A participatory conception of deliberative democracy*. Oxford University Press.

Landwehr, C. (2020). Deliberative Beteiligungsverfahren [Deliberative participation methods]. In T. Faas, O. W. Gabriel, & J. Maier (Eds.), *Politikwissenschaftliche Einstellungs- und Verhaltensforschung: Handbuch für Wissenschaft und Studium* (pp. 413–434). Nomos.

Lasswell, H. D. (1936). *Politics: Who gets what, when, how*. Whittlesey House.

Lazarsfeld, P. F., Berelson, B., & Gaudet, H. (1968 [1944]). *The people's choice. How the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign* (3rd ed.). Columbia University Press.

Lazer, D., Rubineau, B., Chetkovich, C., Katz, N., & Neblo, M. (2010). The coevolution of networks and political attitudes. *Political Communication, 27*, 248–274.

Linvill, D., Mazer, J. P., & Boatwright, B. C. (2016). Need for cognition as a mediating variable between aggressive communication traits and tolerance for disagreement. *Communication Research Reports, 33*(4), 363–369. https://doi.org/10.1080/08824096.2016.1224160

Lup, O. (2011). *The relevance of micro social contexts for individual political engagement: A comparative analysis*. PhD thesis. Budapest: Central European University.

Maia, R. C. (2012). *Deliberation, the media and political talk*. Hampton Press.

Maia, R. C., Hauber, G., Choucair, T., & Crepalde, N. J. (2021). What kind of disagreement favors reason-giving? Analyzing online political discussions across the broader public sphere. *Political Studies, 69*(1), 108–128. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321719894708

Manin, B. (1987). On legitimacy and political deliberation. *Political Theory, 15*(3), 338–368.

Manin, B. (1997). *The principles of representative government*. Cambridge University Press.

Mansbridge, J. (1999). Everyday talk in the deliberative system. In S. Macedo (Ed.), *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement* (pp. 211–242). Oxford University Press.

Mansbridge, J. (2015). A minimalist definition of deliberation. In P. Heller & V. Rao (Eds.), *Deliberation and Development* (pp. 27–50). World Bank Group.

Martí, J. L. (2017). Pluralism and consensus in deliberative democracy. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, 20*(5), 556–579. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2017.1328089

McClurg, S., Klofstad, C., & Sokhey, A. (2018). Discussion networks. In J. N. Victor, A. H. Montgomery, & M. Lubell (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Networks* (pp. 515–533). Oxford University Press.

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual Review of Sociology, 27*, 415–444. https://doi.org/10.2307/2678628

Mendelberg, T. (2002). The deliberative citizen: Theory and evidence. In M. Delli Carpini, L. Huddy, & R. Shapiro (Eds.), *Research in Micropolitics: Political Decisionmaking, Deliberation and Participation* (pp. 151–193). JAI Press.

Mill, J. S. (1991 [1861]). *Considerations on representative government*. Prometheus Books.

Morey, A. C., & Eveland, W. P. (2016). Measures of political talk frequency: Assessing reliability and meaning. *Communication Methods and Measures, 10*(1), 51–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2015.1118448

Morey, A. C., Eveland, W. P., & Hutchens, M. J. (2012). The "Who" matters: Types of interpersonal relationships and avoidance of political disagreement. *Political Communication, 29*(1), 86–103. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2011.641070

Morrell, M. E. (2005). Deliberation, democratic decision-making and internal political efficacy. *Political Behavior, 27*, 49–69.

Moscrop, D. R., & Warren, M. E. (2016). When is deliberation democratic? *Journal of Public Deliberation, 12*(2), Article 4. https://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol12/iss2/art4

Moy, P., & Gastil, J. (2006). Predicting deliberative conversation: The impact of discussion networks, media use, and political cognitions. *Political Communication, 23*(4), 443–460.

Mutz, D. C. (2006). *Hearing the other side. Deliberative versus participatory democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

Neblo, M. A. (2015). *Deliberative democracy between theory and practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Newton, K., & Zmerli, S. (2011). Three forms of trust and their association. *European Political Science Review, 3*(02), 169–200. https://doi.org/110.1017/S1755773910000330

Nir, L. (2017). Disagreement in political discussion. In K. Kenski & K. H. Jamieson (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*. Oxford University Press.

Nolas, S.-M., Varvantakis, C., & Aruldoss, V. (2017). Talking politics in everyday family lives. *Contemporary Social Science, 12*(1-2), 68–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2017.1330965

Owen, D., & Smith, G. (2015). Survey article: Deliberation, democracy, and the dystemic turn. *Journal of Political Philosophy, 23*(2), 213–234. https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12054

Parkinson, J. (2018). Deliberative systems. In A. Bächtiger, J. S. Dryzek, J. Mansbridge, & M. Warren (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy* (pp. 432–446). Oxford University Press.

Parkinson, J., & Mansbridge, J. (Eds.) (2012). *Deliberative systems: Deliberative democracy at the large scale*. Cambridge University Press.

Perry, B. L., Pescosolido, B. A., & Borgatti, S. P. (2018). *Egocentric network analysis. Foundations, methods, and models*. Cambridge University Press.

Phillips, A. (1995). *The politics of presence*. Oxford University Press.

Podschuweit, N. (2017). Interpersonal communication: Media influence on. In P. Rössler, C. A. Hoffner, & L. van Zoonen (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*. Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118783764.wbieme0137

Podschuweit, N., & Jakobs, I. (2017). "It's about politics, stupid!": Common understandings of interpersonal political communication. *Communications, 42*(4), 391–414. https://doi.org/10.1515/commun-2017-0021

Putnam, R. D. (1993). *Making democracy work. Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton University Press.

Quinlan, S., Shephard, M., & Paterson, L. (2015). Online discussion and the 2014 Scottish independence referendum: Flaming keyboards or forums for deliberation? *Electoral Studies, 38*, 192–205. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2015.02.009

Rawls, J. (1993). *Political liberalism*. Columbia University Press.

Richardson, B., & Beck, P. A. (2007). The flow of political information: Personal discussants, the media, and partisans. In R. Gunther, J. R. Montero, & H.-J. Puhle (Eds.), *Democracy, Intermediation, and Voting on Four Continents* (pp. 183–207). Oxford University Press.

Robinson, J. P. (1976). Interpersonal influence in election campaigns: Two-step-flow hypotheses. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 40*, 304–319.

Rosenberg, S. W. (2014). Citizen competence and the psychology of deliberation. In S. Elstub & P. McLaverty (Eds.), *Deliberative Democracy. Issues and Cases* (pp. 98–117). Edinburgh University Press.

Schäfer, A. (2019). *Dissimilarity in interpersonal communication and political change*. PhD Thesis. Mannheim: University of Mannheim.

Scheuch, E. K. (1965). Die Sichtbarkeit politischer Einstellungen im alltäglichen Verhalten [The visibility of political attitudes in everyday behavior]. In E. K. Scheuch & R. Wildenmann (Eds.), *Zur Soziologie der Wahl* (pp. 169–214). Westdeutscher Verlag.

Schmitt-Beck, R. (2000). *Politische Kommunikation und Wählerverhalten. Ein internationaler Vergleich* [Political communication and electoral behavior. An international comparison]. VS Verlag.

Schmitt-Beck, R., & Lup, O. (2013). Seeking the soul of democracy: A review of recent research into citizens' political talk culture. *Swiss Political Science Review, 19*(4), 513–538. https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12051

Schmitt-Beck, R., & Partheymüller, J. (2016). A two-stage theory of discussant influence on vote choice in multi-party systems. *British Journal of Political Science, 46*(2), 321–348. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007123414000301

Schmitt-Beck, R., Roßteutscher, S., Schoen, H., Weßels, B., & Wolf, C. (2022). A New Era of Electoral Instability, in: R. Schmitt-Beck, S. Roßteutscher, H. Schoen, B. Weßels & C. Wolf (Eds.), *The Changing German Voter* (pp. 3-24). Oxford University Press.

Schmitt-Beck, R., & Schäfer, A. (2020). Interpersonale Kommunikation [Interpersonal communication]. In T. Faas, O. W. Gabriel, & J. Maier (Eds.), *Politikwissenschaftliche Einstellungs- und Verhaltensforschung* (pp. 121–140). Nomos.

Schudson, M. (1997). Why conversation is not the soul of democracy. *Critical Studies of Mass Communication, 14*, 297-309.

Settle, J. E., & Carlson, T. N. (2019). Opting Out of Political Discussions. *Political Communication, 36*(3), 476–496. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2018.1561563

Song, H., & Boomgaarden, H. (2019). Personalities discussing politics: The effects of agreement and expertise on discussion frequency and the moderating role of personality traits. *International Journal of Communication, 12*, 92–115. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/8469

Spies, D. C., & Franzmann, S. T. (2019). Party competition and vote choice. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, 71*(1), 313–342. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11577-019-00611-z

Steiner, J., Bächtiger, A., Spörndli, M., & Steenbergen, M. R. (2004). *Deliberative politics in action*. Cambridge University Press.

Steiner, J. (2012). *The foundations of deliberative demoncracy*. Cambridge University Press.

Straits, B. C. (1991). Bringing strong ties back in. Interpersonal gateways to political information and influence. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 55*, 432–448.

Strandberg, K., & Grönlund, K. (2018). Online deliberation. In A. Bächtiger, J. S. Dryzek, J. Mansbridge, & M. Warren (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Deliberative Democracy* (pp. 365–377). Oxford University Press.

Stromer-Galley, J. (2007). Measuring deliberation's content: A coding scheme. *Journal of Public Deliberation, 3*(1), Article 12. http:/services.bepress.com/jpd/vol3/iss1/art12

Sullivan, J. L., & Transue, J. E. (1999). The psychological underpinnings of democracy: A selective review of research on political tolerance, interpersonal trust, and social capital. *Annual Review of Psychology, 50*(1), 625–650.

Sunstein, C. R. (2002). The law of group polarization. *Journal of Political Philosophy, 10*(2), 175–195. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9760.00148

Talisse, R. B. (2012). Deliberation. In D. Estlund (Ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Philosophy* (pp. 204–222). Oxford University Press.

Tanasoca, A (2020). *Deliberation naturalized: Improving real existing deliberative democracy*. Oxford University Press.

Tarde, G. (1969 [1989]). Opinion and conversation. In T. N. Clark (Ed.), *Gabriel Tarde – On Communication and Social Influence: Selected Papers* (pp. 297–318). University of Chicago Press.

Testa, P. F., Hibbing, M. V., & Ritchie, M. (2014). Orientations toward conflict and the conditional effects of political disagreement. *The Journal of Politics, 76*(03), 770–785.

Thompson, D. F. (2008). Deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science. *Annual Review of Political Science, 11*, 497–520. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.081306.070555

Tönnies, F. (1963 [1887]). *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* [Community and society]. Kohlhammer.

Torcal, M., & Maldonado, G. (2014). Revisiting the dark side of political deliberation: The effects of media and political discussion on political interest. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 78*(3), 679–706. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfu035

Tully, J. (2002). The unfreedom of the Moderns in comparison to their Ideals of constitutional democracy. *Modern Law Review, 65*(2), 204–228. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2230.00375

Urbinati, N. (2010). Unpolitical democracy. *Political Theory, 38*(1), 65–92. https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591709348188

Van Deth, J. W. (1990). Interest in politics. In M. K. Jennings & J. W. van Deth (Eds.), *Continuities in Political Action* (pp. 275–312). de Gruyter.

Verba, S., & Nie, N. H. (1972). *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality*. Harper Row.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., Brady, H. E., Sidney, V., Kay Lehman, S., & Henry, E. B. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Harvard University Press.

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Burns, N. (2005). Family ties: Understanding the intergenerational transmission of political participation. In A. S. Zuckerman (Ed.), *The Social Logic of Politics: Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior* (pp. 95–114). Temple University Press.

Völker, B. (2016). Convivium (Who is friends with whom?). In G. Ritzer (Ed.) *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology.* https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosc134.pub2

Von Kleist, H. (1951 [1805]). On the gradual construction of thoughts during speech. *German Life and Letters, 5*(1), 42–46. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0483.1951.tb01029.x

Weber, M. (1988 [1922]). *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* [Collected papers on the philosophy of science]. Mohr.

Wessler, H. (2018). *Habermas and the media*. Polity.

Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. Oxford University Press.

Zaller, J. (1992). *The nature and origins of mass opinion*. Cambridge University Press.

Zhuravskaya, E., Petrova, M., & Enikolopov, R. (2020). Political effects of the internet and social media. *Annual Review of Economics, 12*(1), 415–438. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-081919-050239