More likely among students with higher political knowledge. This work investigates the interplay of social structures and individual political knowledge. We find that it's more likely not political discussion partners, but close friends that have an impact on young Americans' familiarity with the political system. The study further examines the formation of political discussion ties across ideological groups and levels of political knowledge. Results suggest that interpersonal relations play a role in the selection of conversation partners. We find no evidence that discussion ties are driven by a preference for ideological homogeneity.

Meaningful participation in the political process is premised upon conversations among informed citizens. Political knowledge at the end of the semester is predicted by the knowledge of one's friends, and not by the knowledge of political discussion ties. Selection or influence? The political knowledge of incoming new students in the beginning of the term is not predicted by the knowledge of their friends or discussion partners.

## Contact Information

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