The Deliberative Potential of Social Media:

Face Threat and Face Support in Online Political Expression

Anjelica Marie Smith

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

In

Communication

Michael A. Horning, Chair

John C. Tedesco

Andrea L. Kavanaugh

May 26, 2016

Blacksburg, VA

The Deliberative Potential of Social Media:

Face Threat and Face Support in Online Political Expression

Anjelica Marie Smith

ABSTRACT

Engaging in productive political discussion has long been a valued aspect of American democratic life. Due to ease of access and the potential for exposure to diverse views, the Internet and social media may support mediated political talk. Literature on the concept of face and politeness theory provides a framework for understanding interpersonal interactions, both online and offline. To understand if social media has the potential to host political discussion among millennials, a survey ($N = 352$) of undergraduate students examined social media use and political interaction experiences. Facebook was the most popular platform for exposure to others' political opinions and political self-expression. Facebook users with more diverse networks engaged in more political expression. Across numerous platforms, participants reported frequently being exposed to others' political opinions but infrequently sharing their own views. Negative and positive political interactions on Facebook and Twitter were explored for their threat to and support of negative face (need for autonomy) and positive face (need for validation). Findings indicate that engaging in negative interactions leads to more face threat while observing negative interactions solicits more face support. Engaging in positive interactions results in more face support and observing positive interactions leads to more face threat. Across interaction type and platform, participants who actively engaged in political interactions as opposed to merely observing them reported significantly more subsequent online political engagement. Future research on political interactions across various social media

platforms and the application of interpersonal communication theory to the study of mediated

political talk is warranted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To young American voters who fight stereotypes of apathy and disengagement at the ballot box.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

In season 5 of *The West Wing*, a popular NBC drama about the daily lives and challenges faced by a fictionalized Democratic president and his senior staff, President Josiah Bartlet is given the rare opportunity to appoint a Supreme Court justice with the unexpected death of relatively young conservative jurist Owen Brady. The administration is grappling with whom to pick; a Republican Senate would not confirm anyone they truly want, but they do not want to compromise with their political opponents.

After meeting with numerous potential candidates, deputy chief of staff Josh Lyman is impressed by one candidate, Evelyn Baker Lang. She is the liberal stalwart that the administration would like to nominate, but cannot feasibly do so because she is too liberal to be confirmed. In order to warm the Republicans up for agreeing to a centrist candidate, he proposes her to Republicans who respond that nominating her would make the administrations' life a "living hell" (Cahn, 2004). They come back with their own equivalently bold conservative option, Christopher Mulready. These two potential nominees are far from centrist and could not be further apart on the political spectrum.

Given the stymie, Josh comes up with a radical idea. Chief Justice Roy Ashland is 82 years old, and only remaining on the court because he knows President Bartlet will be unsuccessful in securing a liberal jurist if he vacated his seat with the current Senate. Josh wonders what would happen if they could secure a liberal in the Chief Justice seat by offering the Republicans the opportunity to fill the other seat with their own choice. Certainly everyone could be happy with such a fair solution. Josh pitched the idea as "two voices articulating the debate at either end of the spectrum" (Cahn, 2004).

Amid interviews with potential nominees, Baker and Mulready end up in the same room and everyone expects a violent explosion of conflicting ideologies. However, just the opposite happens. When the two jurists with seemingly no opinions in common see each other, they banter like dear old friends. Skeptical of Josh's idea, President Bartlet begrudgingly pulls Mulready into the Oval Office. "I heard you and Judge Lang had a bit of a knock down drag out," he says. "I haven't had that much fun in months. Use her if you can," Mulready replies, thinking there is no way he is a potential nominee and is only there to put on a show for the press. As they continue their conversation, Mulready shares that if the choice were his to make, his pick would be a staunch conservative just as the President's would be a staunch liberal. "The Court was at its best when Ashland was fighting Brady," he adds, bringing up the two most ideologically opposed justices. "Plenty of good law written by the voices of moderation," the president adds. The president briefly thinks it over, but everyone is convinced, and so is he after this conversation.

"The two of them together are fighting like cats and dogs, but it works," communications director Toby Ziegler said characterizing the match up. With all stakeholders in agreement, President Bartlet walks to the White House Press Briefing Room, announcing the two candidates and seemingly impossible arrangement to a room full of cheer.

This episode of *The West Wing* illustrates some of the benefits of exposure to opposing views and engaging in deliberation. The characters learn to see value in what can come from individuals with greatly differing perspectives providing insight on major decisions. Deliberation is not only something that can be done amongst Supreme Court justices as was featured in this episode, but it is a form of democracy that involves citizens discussing policy options in order to

come to a consensus. Deliberation is "a process where citizens voluntarily and freely participate in discussion of public issues" (J. Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999, p. 361).

Theorists and social scientists alike have considered deliberation and its various forms and potential benefits. Discussions of issues and policy choices by legislative bodies are often considered deliberative in nature, as is the process that juries engage in to decide if a defendant is innocent or guilty (Gastil & Keith, 2005). In an appeal to tradition, the use of deliberation throughout American history has been pointed to as defense enough for integrating it into our modern day decision-making processes. However, the democratic value of historic deliberation has been questioned; in colonial America, only white, property owning men could participate, and even their participation was often ceremonial in that many decisions were already made (Schudson, 1998). Even so, in recognition in deliberation's benefits to communities, organizations have formed around encouraging, facilitating, and supporting deliberation.

Founded in 1981, the National Issues Forum is a network of organizations and individuals that sponsor public forums and provide training for moderators and issue guides for participants (Melville, Willingham, & Dedrick, 2005). Another example of deliberation in practice is deliberative polling. Deliberative polls bring together a random sample of individuals that have a stake in an issue and then poll them on their opinions of that issue before and after they participate in deliberation (Fishkin & Farrar, 2005). Participants in deliberative polls often change their opinions substantially after participating, are significantly more informed, and report an increased sense of efficacy and engagement (Fishkin & Farrar, 2005).

While it is evident that organized deliberation may lead to positive outcomes that enhance democracy, there are logistical challenges in organizing and executing these events. They take time and resources that are unlikely to be largely available to many communities.

However, the Internet makes opportunities for political discussion and deliberation more accessible. A number of online forums and websites have been established to host and facilitate deliberation. Information Renaissance hosted an online dialogue in 1996 that brought together 500 stakeholders to discuss a Federal Communications Commission proposal (Bonner, Carlitz, Gunn, Maak, & Ratliff, 2005). Additional Information Renaissance dialogues have included even more participants becoming informed about and discussing issues online (Bonner et al., 2005). However, participant demographic information has indicated that it is challenging to garner participation from minorities, low-income populations, and young people, which are similarly more challenging populations to engage offline (Bonner et al., 2005).

E-thePeople was launched in 1999 to host online discussion forums on issues that were open to anyone with an email address (Weiksner, 2005). As of 2005, E-thePeople had 30,000 regular visitors, 130,000 light users, and 1 million readers (Weiksner, 2005). Today, E-thePeople does not host discussions but instead partners with news media and civic groups to develop online voter information guides (E.thePeople, 2015). Does this indicate that online forums are not sustainable, long-term interventions for promoting democratic discussion? While that may be case, it also may be that the evolving nature of where people spend their time online means that online political talk is not gone, but instead has relocated.

Seventy-three percent of American adults go online on a daily basis, including forty-two percent that go on several times a day and twenty-one percent who do so 'almost constantly' (Perrin, 2015a). As of 2015, sixty-five percent of American adults use social media sites, a significant increase from the seven percent that did so in 2005 (Perrin, 2015c). Ninety percent of young adults ages 18-29 are social media site users (Perrin, 2015c). Additionally, over sixty percent of millennials, defined as ages 18-33, indicate getting political news on Facebook in a

given week (Mitchell, Gottfried, & Masta, 2015a). Given the infrastructure of social networking sites and the fact that young people spend time on these sites and seek out news from them, it may be possible that these platforms host political talk and discussion in some form. Considering that spending time on social media is a daily activity for many young Americans, the use of social networking sites for political discussion could be significant. It could help address concerns about the loss of sense of community due to the decline of service, community, and civic organizations (Putnam, 2000). It could serve as a space where people can access information and other individuals to communicate with, all without having to break their daily routine to do so (Himelboim, McCreery, & Smith, 2013). Social networking sites may have potential to host deliberation, which may be particularly beneficial to the civic livelihood of young people.

A key component of the millennial experience is life lived online. Currently defined as those born between 1981 and 1997, an official generational end point has yet to be set for millennials (Fry, 2015). Although some social media platforms may have the necessary infrastructure for deliberation to occur, that does not mean that it successfully will. A number of challenges exist to online deliberation and discussion. Social media users are more likely to share their views when they perceive their friends share the same point of view (Hampton et al., 2014). This is not conducive to deliberation, which is achieved when a diversity of opinions are heard. Further, social media users may choose to participate in political discussion or ignore it. Social media users are more likely to ignore political posts they disagree with than to comment on them (Rainie & Smith, 2012). Ignoring posts is one way users may choose to interact with posts and/or people they disagree with, but engaging in a dialogue, perhaps of an inflammatory nature, may also occur. The phenomenon of trolling online is well studied (Hardaker, 2010). Online political

discussions have a tendency to be relatively more inflammatory than other interactions online (Hangwoo, 2005). Therefore, it is critical to consider the potential effects of negative and positive political interactions on social media. These interactions may encourage or discourage constructive, deliberative online political discussion.

Self-presentation research tells us impoliteness threatens authenticity, self-worth, and self-efficacy (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2013). Literature on the concept of face (Goffman, 1959, 1967) and politeness theory (Brown & Levison, 1987) laid a framework for understanding negative and positive experiences in interpersonal interactions, both online and offline. Face is "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). Threats to face are synonymous with threats to identity (Brett et al., 2007; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2013). If young people experience face threats while discussing politics, they may be less inclined to engage in political discussion online in the future. They may not utilize social media as a place to learn about issues and share their opinions. Social media may not be considered a realistic resource for achieving democratic outcomes.

Alternatively, if young people perceive face support during political interactions online, they may continue to utilize social media as a space for political discussion. They may also learn more about and become more accepting of views that do not align with their own.

In order to better understand how millennials engage about politics on social media and explore some potential effects of both negative and positive mediated political interactions, a survey of undergraduate students ($N = 352$) examined social media use, political interaction experiences, and assessments of those interactions. Specifically, the survey gauged participants' political identity and interest, political information efficacy, overall social media use, exposure to

political expression, political self-expression, network composition, platform-specific political behaviors, and identification and assessment of negative and positive political interactions. Negative and positive political interactions on social media were conceptualized and understood through the concepts of threat to face and support of face.

The literature review begins by describing components and qualities of deliberation. The benefits and limitations of online deliberation and political discussion are discussed. The case for social media's potential to host deliberation is made given empirical research on social media use and the infrastructure of social media platforms. Additionally, the concept of lurking is discussed as a potentially influential factor on online political talk. Self-presentation literature on face and politeness theory provide a theoretical framework for the present study. Six research questions are addressed by the survey data. Sampling and measurement procedures are outlined. Finally, results along with a discussion of the implications, limitations, and future research conclude this thesis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand the potential outcomes of utilizing social media as a deliberative space, the processes, values, and outcomes associated with deliberation need to be understood. Both theoretical and empirical perspectives on deliberation are reviewed. With the rise of the Internet, online political discussion has been increasingly studied. Benefits, including accessibility (Krueger, 2002), reach (Wojcieszak & Mutz, 2009), and convenience (Baek, Wojcieszak, & Delli Carpini, 2011), in addition to limitations, such as quality of discussion (Conroy, Feezell, & Guerrero, 2012; Monnoyer-Smith & Wojcik, 2012) and the perpetuation of existing inequalities associated with political participation (Albrecht, 2006), are outlined. Social media is presented as an undervalued space for political discussion and deliberation (Halpern &

Gibbs, 2013; Hayes, Smock, & Carr, 2015; Himelboim et al., 2013; Y. Kim, 2011; Y. Kim & Chen, 2015; Rainie & Smith, 2012). To know if barriers associated with online political talk may be overcome, an inquiry of the largest contingency of social media users, millennials, must consider their social media habits related to exposure others' political preferences and the sharing of their own political opinions and preferences. Further, learning more about the nuances of specific interactions millennials have related to politics on social media will provide insight into which behaviors lead to failed discussion and support productive discussion. Goffman's (1959, 1967) concept of face and Brown and Levison's (1987) politeness theory explain how communicative actions impact interpersonal interactions. Using this framework to understand online political interaction will build on existing knowledge of political discussion on social media, and expand the applicability of interpersonal scholarship in the mediated domain.

Deliberative Democratic Theory

Deliberation is "a process of discussion in which people weigh competing arguments on their merits" (Fishkin & Farrar, 2005, p. 71). According to Floridia (2014), the deliberative democracy theoretical paradigm was first introduced in the essay "Deliberative Democracy: The Majority Principle in Republican Government" published by Joseph Bessette in 1980. Bessette discusses deliberative intentions of America's framers. The idea behind having some political positions appointed by legislators, for example, indicated a preference for deliberation in decision-making processes that may not be available or emphasized when selections are reduced to a popular election (Bessette, 1980). Importantly, Bessette questions the reach and potential of simply voting as a means of participating in government. "Why would—or should—citizens restrict their considerations to the identification of the virtuous when, in any diverse and dynamic political community, the virtuous themselves will disagree about many of the most important

matters facing the nation?" (Bessette, 1980, p. 113). In this understanding, deliberation is seen as a more involved form of decision-making compared to casting a ballot for a representative. It permits a variety of opinions to actively be part of decision-making. Even so, aspects of deliberation have been valued and studied far before 1980. Although earlier scholars may not have used the term "deliberation," the importance of everyday political conversation to a strong democracy has long been a consideration (Min, 2007).

Deliberation involves collective decision making by individuals who will be affected by a decision in a manner that reflects a commitment to rationality and impartiality (Elster, 1998). Gastil (2008) outlines five steps necessary for deliberation to occur (p. 9).

1. Create a solid information base so the nature of the problem is understood.

2. Identify and prioritize key values at stake in an issue.

3. Identify a broad range of solutions.

4. Weigh the pros, cons, and trade-offs.

5. Process ends when a group makes a decision or an individual arrives at an independent judgment on the matter.

A widely agreed upon definition of deliberation is not available, with much of the discrepancies surrounding the conclusion of the process (Floridia, 2013). Carson and Hartz-Karp (2005), for example, consider the ability to influence an issue a criterion for deliberation, making casual conversation leading to opinion formation or revision ineligible. However, qualities and expectations of deliberation tend to involve knowledge of a topic, a genuine interest in participating (i.e. not mandated), and some level of reasoned discussion. Min (2007) identified equality, rationality, reflexivity, and civility as necessary conditions for deliberation to occur. Further, successful deliberation requires rational communicative behavior and a willingness and

interest to participate in public affairs from its participants (Min, 2007). Expression of respect, interactivity, and orientation towards the common good are also considered important to deliberation (Monnoyer-Smith & Wojcik, 2012). Collectively, these qualities reflect an attitude of selflessness and an interest in committing time and energy through discussion to solve problems and arrive at solutions for pressing public issues. A certain level of friendship or camaraderie may be assumed as participants share common interests that bring them together to build consensus (Mansbridge, 1980). In contrast, discussion without deliberation may mean that there is no mutual respect among participants which makes it difficult to work together (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). Common interest and mutual respect are important qualities given that participants are often attempting to come to a consensus.

Although true deliberation is a high bar to achieve, aspects of it are seen in many forms of democracy and participation (Floridia, 2014). Deliberation is a "useful ideal type, even if it is never realized" (Mutz, 2008, p. 528). However, the continued empirical testing of deliberation and components of deliberation are of interest to scholars due to perceived benefits to citizens and society (Mutz, 2008). In administering surveys before and after individuals participated in a National Issues Forum, Gastil and Dillard (1999) found participants had reduced attitudinal uncertainty on a number of controversial issues after the forum. A survey of deliberators indicated citizens are motivated to deliberate when issues emerge that effect others and their communities (Baek et al., 2011), demonstrating a commitment to the common good. Deliberation may lead to development of more refined views. In a study comparing individuals who participated in deliberation in online or face-to-face settings with individuals who did not participate in any deliberation, Min (2007) found that deliberators had greater issue knowledge

and political efficacy and were more willing to participate in politics. Regardless of whether they are mediated or not, deliberative activities provide opportunities for citizen engagement.

While many scholars have considered deliberation to be a positive activity for democracy, it may prompt some negative effects, too. Mutz (2002) found that exposure to differing views, something likely to occur during deliberation, encourages voters to make up their minds later in campaigning season. This may lead to less involvement in an election and its activities, long considered an indicator of political participation. Further, having friends of differing political views makes it less likely that an individual will vote at all (Mutz, 2002). Thus, deliberation and participation may not exist in harmony, but instead one may be sacrificed for the benefit of the other at times.

Online Deliberation and Political Discussion

Although some have questioned the potential of online discussion to mirror deliberation, there are similarities between online and offline deliberation. Many researchers have compared face-to-face and online deliberation (Baek et al., 2011; McDevitt, Kiousis, & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2003; Min, 2007; Monnoyer-Smith & Wojcik, 2012; Stromer-Galley, Bryant, & Bimber, 2015). McDevitt et al. (2003) found that individuals with the less popular opinion were willing to speak out about the issue of abortion in both face-to-face and online deliberative settings. Further, online forum participants appeared more moderate than face-to-face participants, regardless of if they were part of the minority or majority opinion group (McDevitt et al., 2003). Online settings may encourage more tact and respect from participants. Baek et al. (2011) found that individuals who deliberated by participating in a online discussion group organized to discuss a local, national, or international issue were less knowledgeable, trusting, efficacious, tolerant, and interested in politics than those who attended a formal or informal face-to-face meeting to

discuss a local, national, or international issue. While online deliberation may not provide as many positive benefits as face-to-face deliberation, the benefits it does provide should not go unvalued.

Benefits of online deliberation and discussion. As of 2009, Wojcieszak and Mutz (2009) estimated that 5.1 million U.S. adults talk about politics online. Scholars have called for more research on online political discussion (Gastil, 2008). There are many perceived benefits to engaging in online deliberation. Shah, Kwak, and Holbert (2001) found a relationship between information exchange online, a component of deliberation, and social capital. Due to the large size of the citizenry and the complexity of modern public issues, it may not be realistic to rely on face-to-face deliberation as an effective means of decision-making (Page, 1993). The Internet significantly expands the number of opportunities for deliberation.

Online deliberation may allow for greater exposure to diverse views. Individuals who have experience deliberating both online and offline reported perceiving exposure to more diverse views online compared to offline (Baek et al., 2011). Online deliberation has been found to elicit less anxiety than face-to-face deliberation (Baek et al., 2011), meaning it may encourage those who are less knowledgeable of issues to participate and become more engaged. Krueger (2002) found that increased family income decreased likelihood of online political participation. Thus, barriers to participation offline may be less limiting online. Although those who deliberate online are less likely to participate in traditional political and civic activities compared to face-to-face deliberators, they do use their purchasing power to voice their opinions through political consumerism (Baek et al., 2011). Online deliberators may maintain unique engagement and participation preferences, which set them apart from others who choose to become involved through what are considered more traditional forms of participation.

Political talk and decision-making online may involve enough aspects of deliberation to be considered a positive political and civic experience. Upon analyzing results from a survey of deliberators, Baek et al. (2011) claimed that online deliberative settings involve two critical components of deliberation: diverse citizens and exposure to dissimilar views. Although deliberation involves multiple conditions, incomplete or "bad" deliberation may provide more societal benefit than no deliberation at all (Mutz, 2008). In a case study of a national deliberative debate in France with online and face-to-face components, Monnoyer-Smith and Wojcik (2012) found that women were more likely to intervene in the discussion online than in person. Further, online deliberators were more likely to express an orientation to the common good, defined as the overcoming of individual interests for the benefit of the community (Monnoyer-Smith & Wojcik, 2012). Online deliberation may not be lacking what face-to-face deliberation provides, but may lead to different outcomes.

Limitations of online deliberation and discussion. Quality of conversation is an important component of deliberation. Monnoyer-Smith and Wojcik (2012) found that sixty percent of arguments posted to an online deliberative forum lacked a justification to support their views. Thus, arguments made in online deliberations may lack the depth of their face-to-face counterparts. Further, using online platforms to deliberate may not rid society of previously existing inequalities. Albrecht (2006) studied an online debate forum in Hamburg, Germany and found that the digital divide was reinforced as young people were overrepresented and older people were underrepresented. Higher socioeconomic status has been one of the most consistent indicators of political participation (Jensen, Danziger, & Venkatesh, 2007), so the Internet may not be able to overcome that barrier and may only replicate inequalities that persist offline. Although an online setting may encourage some people to speak up who normally would not,

Albrecht (2006) found that twenty percent of the active users participating in an online debate posted over seventy-five percent of the comments, demonstrating that the opportunity to speak may also be limited in an online setting.

Both benefits and limitations to computer-mediated deliberation are evident. The use of social media for deliberation will be considered, with a focus on the previously noted advantages and concerns of online deliberative spaces.

Social Media and Social Networking

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define social media as, "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content," and consider social networking sites a category of social media. Much of online time is spent on social networking sites, or "web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). The first online community considered to be a social networking site, SixDegrees.com, launched in 1997 (boyd & Ellison, 2008). Although "social networking site" and "social media site" are often used interchangeably (Obar, Zube, & Lampe, 2012), the critical component they share that is providing a platform for interpersonal exchange is important for the purposes of understanding mediated political talk.

In terms of personality traits, individuals who are more extraverted, innovative, and creative are more likely to be social media users (Correa, Hinsley, & De Zuniga, 2010). However, social media use is fairly widespread across demographic groups. Although the vast majority of young people use social media, older Americans are adopting social media at the

fastest rate (Perrin, 2015b). Thirty-five percent of Americans age 65 or older use social media (Perrin, 2015b). Further, there are not significant differences in social media use among gender and racial groups (Perrin, 2015b).

In the present study, exposure to political opinions and self-expression of political views on four popular social networking sites are considered. Investigated platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tumblr, with a primary focus on Facebook and Twitter. Further, participants will also be able to address an "other" platform if that is where they most frequently engage in political expression.

Facebook started in 2004 as an online-network based platform for college students (Facebook, 2016b). Its services became open to the public in 2006 (Facebook, 2016b). Today, Facebook maintains 1.09 billion daily active users (Facebook, 2016a). Nearly eighty-five percent of those daily active users come from outside of the United States and Canada (Facebook, 2016a).

Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages including photos, videos, and links (Twitter, 2016b). Twitter, launched in 2007, maintains 310 million monthly active users (Twitter, 2016a).

Instagram is a mobile based, photo-sharing platform. The platform maintains over 400 million monthly active users, with over seventy-five percent of those users from outside of the United States (Instagram, 2016).

Tumblr is a social networking and blog website founded in 2007. Today, there are over 295 million blogs on the site (Tumblr, 2016). Tumblr users may post a range of content including text, photos, music, and videos, and may also use HTML to customize their blogs (Tumblr, 2016).

Lurking and Online Communities

Although popular social media platforms may boast high user numbers, the number of individuals who actively participate on those networks is not always equally as high. Those who join networks but do not participate are considered lurkers. Definitions of lurkers vary, but lurking is often considered abstaining from posting in an online community one is part of (Preece, Nonnecke, & Andrews, 2004). Soroka and Radaeli (2006) define lurking as reading posts persistently but never posting.

Lurkers may not be apathetic to the community and its goals. In a survey of posters and lurkers from MSN bulletin board communities, Preece et al. (2004) found that lurkers chose not to post primarily because they do not feel a need to post or because they want to know more about the group before participating. However, posters have been found to feel a greater sense of membership, feel their needs are better met, and perceive more benefit from their online communities (Nonnecke, Preece, & Andrews, 2004). Schlosser (2005) conducted a set of experiments in which participants watched a short film and reviewed it either privately or on an online forum. While perceptions of the film were similar across conditions, the posters (who had to publicly reveal their opinions) were more likely to present multiple sides when explaining their attitudes (Schlosser, 2005). Thus, self-presentational concerns meant that posters were more concerned with the perceptions of others than lurkers.

Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that perceived authority is what distinguishes core members, participants, and newcomers in communities of practice. Communities of practice refer to groups of people who organize around a common concern, set of problems, or passion to deepen their understanding and become more knowledgeable through interaction over time (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). In online spaces, lurkers may be considered legitimate

peripheral participants who begin by observing and learning but increase their participation over time and ultimately become core members. Thus, lurking may be an important phase in the lifecycle of online communities.

Lurking on social networking sites is an understudied area, with much of the existing lurking literature focusing on online forums, discussion boards, and email lists (Rau, Gao, & Ding, 2008). Interestingly, posters consider lurkers to be community members more than the lurkers do themselves (Nonnecke et al., 2004), which may be relevant to lurking on social networking sites. Rau et al. (2008) identified three major differences between social networking sites and other online communities. First, social networks serve primarily emotional needs while other communities are more centered on information exchange. Second, many traditional online communities are hierarchically organized while social networking sites are structured around a network, an organization more likely to represent real-life relationships. Third, on social networking sites, connections are person-centric. Compared to traditional online communities, the design of social networking sites is more likely to operate on the assumption that people portray their identities authentically (boyd, 2004).

What makes lurkers begin to participate may vary by user and platform. Sánchez-Franco, Buitrago-Esquinas, and Yñiguez (2012) studied users of Tuenti, which was at one time a popular social networking site in Spain, and found that community satisfaction led to community participation, feelings of belonging, and identification with others. Soroka and Radaeli (2006) posed that one's cultural capital, or the extent to which a person has reading based knowledge about a community's culture and commonality with other participants, is related to one's decision to de-lurk, or begin active participation in an online community. Pagani, Hofacker, and Goldsmith (2011) identified traits that may be associated with active use of social networking

sites; self-identity expressiveness, or to what extent users utilize social networking sites to display their identity and values to themselves and others, and social expressiveness, or the ability to communicate verbally and skillfully when engaging others in social interaction, positively influenced active use of social networking sites. Therefore, some individuals may be more or less predisposed to be lurkers than others.

The presence of lurking in online political spaces is critical to consider due to desires to avoid the creation of online echo chambers (Sunstein, 2007) and encourage civility that persists through a diversity of opinions (Min, 2007). Unsurprisingly, partisan-branded online communities may not be the most fruitful locations for hearing dissenting opinions. Meraz (2005) analyzed Howard Dean's presidential candidate blog and found that dissenting opinions were more respected coming from supporters than nonsupporters, a condition that may encourage lurking.

On a non-partisan political blog, Sankaram and Schober (2015) found that lurkers exhibited habits similar to noninteractive readers, or individuals who do not have permission to post on a blog. However, interactive readers who had the ability to post on the blog spent the most time reading and navigating on the site, suggesting that lurkers may not derive as much from online content compared to those who interact with it (Sankaram & Schober, 2015). Lurkers and posters may have distinct perceptions of the same online content, in addition to deriving different outcomes from online interactions. Rau et al. (2008) surveyed users of a Microsoft social networking site called Wallop and found that posters felt significantly more affective and verbal intimacy than lurkers. Alternatively, there may be situations where lurking is more beneficial than participating. McKendree, Stenning, Mayes, Lee, and Cox (1998) observed that unique learning outcomes may derive from vicarious learning through observation.

There are important distinctions between lurkers and those who choose to participate and engage online. Additionally, there are gaps in the literature regarding lurking on social networking sites and experiences and outcomes of lurking in political interactions. The present study will compare participants' experiences interacting about politics on social media based on if they merely observed a political interaction (i.e. lurkers) or if they participated in the interaction (i.e. engagers) in some way (e.g. like, comment, post, share, hide, delete).

The Deliberative Potential of Social Media

Although deliberation as conceptualized normatively may not be possible in an online context, there is merit in understanding how components of deliberation exist and function. Further, middle range deliberative approaches isolate one or a few components of deliberation to make empirical evidence easier to hone in on (Mutz, 2008). Some components of deliberation may exist in practice online. Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (2004) explain that the success of face-to-face deliberative forums is likely contingent upon "the vitality of political communication closer to home—within naturally occurring communication networks" (p. 5). These networks encompass the people that an individual already interacts with in work and life. Online deliberative platforms involve individuals that may have no previous relationship and no expectation for a relationship post-deliberation, therefore lacking the "naturally occurring" feature. While studies of online deliberation have often focused on websites, applications, and platforms designed for deliberation (Albrecht, 2006; Baek et al., 2011; McDevitt et al., 2003; Min, 2007; Monnoyer-Smith & Wojcik, 2012), scholars have called for additional examinations of patterns of disagreement on social media (Stromer-Galley et al., 2015).

Thus, social media platforms should be considered for their potential to serve as a space for deliberation to occur. College Facebook users report using the platform to connect with

existing friends as opposed to using it to meet new people (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007).

Even so, depending on a Facebook user's privacy settings, Facebook features may permit

individuals who may not know each other but share a mutual friend to join in on a conversation.

Therefore, when users posts to their profiles, they may end up engaging more people than their

own friends, including friends of their friends. As a Facebook Help resource outlines, "You see

stories in your News Feed about your friends' activity on Facebook, including when your friends

like or comment on posts from people you're not friends with" (Facebook, 2015). What people

see on their Facebook News Feed is regularly evolving and is contingent on thousands of factors

ranging from how long a user spends reading a post to how close of friends one user is with

another (Luckerson, 2015). Facebook's engineers make up to 2-3 changes to the feed algorithm a

week depending on ongoing research and feedback from users (Luckerson, 2015). While difficult

to anticipate exactly how and why content appears on a user's Facebook Newsfeed, as long as

users deem political topics worthy of sharing on their profiles, Facebook's infrastructure has the

potential to be conducive to online deliberation. Talking about politics on Facebook has been

deemed a socially appropriate use of the platform. Forty-two percent of participants to a survey

on Facebook management behaviors indicated moderate or greater agreement with the statement,

"Facebook is an appropriate place for people to express their politics" (Hayes et al., 2015). The

present investigation is grounded on those findings and will examine how negative and positive

political interactions on social media impact one's likelihood of engaging politically online in the

future as a result of those interactions.

Social media has limitations to deliberation beyond the fact that it removes individuals

from a face-to-face context. Complete and accurate information is a prerequisite for deliberation

(Gastil, 2008; Page, 1993). It may be unclear when social media users are sharing factual

information and when they are sharing a personal opinion. In a content analysis of comments on Facebook political group pages, Conroy et al. (2012) found that over forty percent of comments offered information that was not very informative, over fifty percent of posts were considered to have low opinion strength, and only four percent were identified as having excellent quality discussion. In a review of the online public forum Minnesota E-Democracy, Dahlberg (2001) found that reflexivity, defined as the critical examination of cultural values, assumptions, and interests, rarely occurs online. These findings may reflect a lack of richness of discussion that would be preferential in deliberative settings. McDevitt et al. (2003) identified decreased social cues, absence of non-verbal communication, and a low obligation for involvement as limits of computer-mediated communication in opinion assessment. The online environment lacks many of the nonverbal indicators communicators are inclined to rely on in discussion with others. Issues may be easier to leave unsettled when deliberating online. Face-to-face deliberation more often leads to consensual outcome (Baek et al., 2011). Further, social media users are significantly more likely to ignore political posts that they disagree with than to comment on them (Rainie & Smith, 2012). While exposure to diverse views may increase, more discussion may not necessarily occur on social media.

Perhaps one of the greatest downfalls of online deliberation is the lack of action offline. Only nine percent of participants who deliberated online reported following up with concrete action (Baek et al., 2011). In a survey of European Facebook users, forty-four percent of respondents indicated they became a "fan" of a political or politician's page in order to read their opinion on a certain topic, while only thirteen percent indicated their reason was to discuss different issues (Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012). While Facebook may have the potential to bring users with diverse viewpoints together, users can also choose to only engage with those who they

perceive have similar views as them, which may limit the ability for deliberation to occur. Vesnic-Alujevic (2012) found a strong positive correlation between online political participation and political interest. Thus, social media may allow for more deliberative opportunities, but it may not encourage individuals who are uninterested in politics to become interested in politics.

Additionally, not all social media platforms are created equal and some may be better suited for deliberation than others. Facebook groups organized around political discussion are likely to encourage offline political participation (Conroy et al., 2012). Himelboim et al. (2013) identified Twitter as an online space with great potential for political discussion occurring as a part of one's routine social media use. Halpern and Gibbs (2013) found that comments on the White House's YouTube account were more frequently impolite than comments on the White House's Facebook page. This may have to do with the varying expectations of anonymity on each platform. In fact, focus group participants in South Africa reported that they generally do not express their political affiliation online, even when they are very confident in their views, because of the perception their friends may have of them (Bosch, 2013). Platform features and user norms should be taken into consideration when considering deliberative potential.

The first two research questions address the intersection between millennials' political lives and their social media use.

RQ$_1$: How are millennials exposed to politics on social media?

RQ$_2$: How do millennials express their politics on social media?

Social media may be promising because of its potential to bring individuals with dissimilar views to the same conversation. In a survey on the use of chat rooms and message boards, Wojcieszak and Mutz (2009) found that fifty-three percent of participants who visited hobby-based groups encountered some type of political discussion in that setting. Groups

organized around "leisure" topics, including socializing, sports, trivia, movies, television shows, and hobbies, showed the weakest tendency towards agreement, meaning they are ripe locations to encounter diverse and/or opposing viewpoints (Wojcieszak & Mutz, 2009). In a survey of youth in South Africa, sixty-one percent of respondents reported using social media as a source of news (Bosch, 2013). Similarly, sixty-one percent of American millennials on social media report getting news from Facebook in an average week (Mitchell, Gottfried, & Masta, 2015b). If social media users follow news organizations on social media or have friends that share news, conversations about politics and issues may be more likely to occur. As Mutz and Young (2011, pp. 1023-1024) have explained, the origin of information, and subsequently the basis for political discussion is evolving:

> Indeed, asking the average citizen whether he or she watches, reads, or listens to "news" these days is the classic example of a bad survey question because the very definition of what constitutes "news" is in flux. Because scholars have yet to come to grips with all of these recent changes, we know little about where people are getting their exposure to political information and argument, and whether the source makes any difference.

Social media and online networks may be a good place to look for that answer. Y. Kim (2011) found a positive relationship between social network use and an individual's exposure to dissimilar political views. Y. Kim and Chen (2015) found that network heterogeneity on social media mediates a relationship between using social media for news and civic engagement. Therefore, having a more diverse network and utilizing social media for news may lead to increased civic engagement. Valenzuela, Kim, and Gil de Zúñiga (2012) found that survey respondents with larger online discussion networks tended to be more engaged in online political

activities. Larger networks likely expose individuals to more diverse perspectives. To that end, the following research question is posed to understand how network size and diversity are related to political expression on social media.

RQ₃: What is the relationship between network composition and political expression on social media?

Face and Politeness

The concept of face was described and popularized by Goffman (1959, 1967). Brown and Levison (1987) extended and revised the concept of face with the development of politeness theory. Both are concerned with self-presentation. As defined by Metts and Grohskopf (2003, p. 360), self-presentation is "the process by which individuals, more or less intentionally, construct a public self that is likely to elicit certain types of attributions from others, attributions that would facilitate the achievements of some goal, usually to acquire social rewards or advantages, or to prevent loss of self-esteem when future failure seems probable." Self-presentation is acted out throughout an individual's life, and includes how one presents oneself online. Subsequently, both the concept of face and politeness theory are utilized as frameworks to explain and understand interactions and behavior online (Brett et al., 2007; Chen, 2015; Chen & Abedin, 2014; Hayes et al., 2015; Lim, Vardrevu, Chan, & Basnyat, 2012; Marone, 2015; Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011).

In order to determine if social media is conducive to hosting deliberation, the qualities and tendencies of individuals who engage in political talk online need to be determined. Given the numerous criteria required for deliberation to occur (Gastil, 2008; Mutz, 2008), evaluating how individuals interact on social media in the context of political interactions is a first step towards understanding the quality of conversation. If individuals engaging in online political talk

perceive face threats, conversation quality may suffer. Low quality conversation would limit opportunities for discussions to be civically productive. Alternatively, feelings of face support may affirm individuals and increase their online political engagement. Assuming that productive discussion must derive to some extent from quality of conversation, understanding perceptions of face threat and face support experienced by social media users who discuss politics online will provide evidence for or against the deliberative potential of social media.

Face and facework (Goffman, 1959, 1967) and politeness theory (Brown & Levison, 1987) are reviewed. Due to the close association of face and politeness with social identity (Metts & Grohskopf, 2003), their applicability to better understanding online political talk is discussed.

Face. Goffman (1959) described social interaction and impression management with a performance metaphor. The act of living and interacting with others can compare, in many ways, to an actor performing on a stage in front of an audience (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1967) built on this understanding with his later introduction of the concepts of face and facework. Interactions with others are dependent on one's use of line and their face. Line is defined as "a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which [one] expresses [one's] view of the situation and through this [one's] evaluation of the participants, especially [oneself]" (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). Simply put, a line may be considered any communicative act.

Face refers to "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). The congruity between line and face influences an individual's impression management. Face is not communicator-controlled in that it involves established expectations and social norms. Goffman explicates that face is "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes"

(Goffman, 1967, p. 5). Therefore, how others perceive someone may largely be dependent on context. This is relevant to online political discussion because norms and expectations related to quality of discussion and respect for others may or may not exist. If someone associates another person with a political party or specific issue stance, others may look to that person to communicate or act a certain way. In social interaction, individuals cannot separate themselves from these existing social expectations.

Both situational context and an individual's position in society are relevant to interactions and their outcomes. Group rules influence the amount of feeling one has for their face, and subsequently how much energy they will exert to manage it (Goffman, 1967). Although context is important when considering face, one's "place in the social world" influences the outcome of any activity (Goffman, 1967, p. 7). Identity and status relative to others involved in a given interaction has a role. This may be due to socioeconomic, educational, gender, or cultural differences, among others. Specific relationships may also influence perceptions of face (e.g. mother and child, boss and employee, candidate and voter).

Goffman (1967) outlines three different processes by which an individual acts out face. To lose face is to demonstrate misalignment with the line an individual delivers (Goffman, 1967). To save face is to actively manage one's impression to demonstrate to others that face has not been lost (Goffman, 1967). Third, to give face is to arrange for another person to "take a better line." The idea that as social actors we strive to maintain face for ourselves and for others is an assumption of this theory. Goffman (1967) identifies self-respect and considerateness as attributes that prompt actions such as saving one's own face and giving face to others. Through facework, we constantly act out these processes in social interactions.

Facework. Facework refers to the actions an individual takes to be consistent with face and to address incidents that cause threats to face (Goffman, 1967). An individual can take a defensive orientation toward saving their own face or a protective orientation toward saving others' faces (Goffman, 1967). However, one must consider the tension at play between a defensive orientation and a protective orientation. Often saving another's face involves some amount of loss of one's own face (Goffman, 1967). Goffman (1967) identifies poise, social skill, and perceptiveness as attributes that allow individuals to understand when face is threatened and how to respond. Therefore, some individuals may be better equipped relative to others at maintaining their own face and giving face to others due to social abilities.

Goffman (1967) identifies three levels of responsibility that someone may have for threatening another's face. An individual may appear to act innocently, perhaps by making an unintended gaffe (Goffman, 1967). Alternatively, an individual may appear to have acted maliciously (Goffman, 1967). Further, incidental offenses to face may occur. These are not planned but are often anticipated due to the nature of interactions (Goffman, 1967). They are understood to be a byproduct of interaction. These threats to face cannot only be acts committed by one individual to another, but can be taken against oneself as well (Goffman, 1967).

Facework plays out in two basic processes. First, individuals may choose avoidance. This includes avoiding contact with others altogether, but also employing defensive measures during interactions that one may perceive as threatening to face (Goffman, 1967). Examples of defensive measures include using ambiguous language, leaving facts unstated that may contradict another person, avoiding a topic, and withdrawing from an interaction (Goffman, 1967). Further, those who choose to not to acknowledge a threat to face has occurred execute a defensive measure (Goffman, 1967). Secondly, individuals may use a corrective process if they

are unable to avoid or ignore a threat to face by enacting an interchange (Goffman, 1967). An interchange is the "sequence of acts set in motion by an acknowledged threat to face" (Goffman, 1967, p. 19). The four standard steps that comprise an interchange are challenge, offering, acceptance, and thanks (Goffman, 1967). Participants in an interchange must first take on the challenge that is calling attention to a face threat (Goffman, 1967). Then, the offender is given a chance to correct the offense through an offer such as downplaying the seriousness of a comment, acknowledging errors, or offering up some sort of compensation for harm done (Goffman, 1967). To wrap up the interchange, an offer must be accepted and gratitude expressed for it (Goffman, 1967). This is a basic structure for understanding how a threat to face may be corrected but all interactions do not occur in this rigid, linear manner (Goffman, 1967). It is evident that there are a plethora of opportunities for this process to be interrupted or corrupted.

Politeness theory. Through face and facework, Goffman (1959, 1967) outlined the basic processes at play in social interactions. Expanding on the concept of face, Brown and Levison (1987) penned politeness theory. It seeks to understand how politeness interplays with facework in interactions (Hallsten, 2004). The theory assumes that all actors involved in an interaction are model persons, meaning that they are rational agents, and possess negative and positive face (Brown & Levison, 1987). The idea of rational agent is similar to Goffman's assumption that participants are "expected to sustain a standard of considerateness" (1967, p. 10). Politeness theory stipulates that model persons possess negative and positive face. Negative face is the desire of an individual to be able to take action that is unimpeded by others (Brown & Levison, 1987). It reflects an avoidance of being constrained by or intruded on by others (Hallsten, 2004). Positive face involves the desire to have others value what one values and to be desirable to others (Brown & Levison, 1987). This includes appearing competent to others (Hallsten, 2004).

Simply put, negative face may be considered to be concerned with maintaining autonomy and positive face with being validated (Metts & Grohskopf, 2003).

Brown and Levison (1987) note that in any given situation there are often particular individuals or a group of individuals we have in mind as relevant to our goal. A staunch conservative, for example, may be speaking with a group of people but be particularly interested in convincing his most openly liberal friend to value his opinion. Brown and Levison (1987) use the terms "speaker" and "addressee" to refer to the sender and receiver in a communicative act. Those terms will be employed below to explain the tenets of politeness theory.

A key component to politeness theory is the existence of face-threatening acts. This is similar to what Goffman referred to as "incidents" (1967, p. 12). In any interaction, there is the potential for the speaker to threaten the negative and positive face of the addressee, and vice versa (Brown & Levison, 1987). Threats to face are a naturally occurring, and often routine aspects of personal, social, and professional life (Metts & Grohskopf, 2003).

Negative face. An addressee's negative face may be threatened if a speaker indicates he does not intend to avoid the addressee's ability to act freely (Brown & Levison, 1987). In an interaction, this may play out by the speaker expressing that the addressee do or not do something through a order, request, suggestion, reminder, threat, or dare (Brown & Levison, 1987). Honest but hurtful messages from romantic partners have been found to threaten negative face (Zhang & Stafford, 2008). While discussing politics, a speaker may request an addressee vote in a certain way, thus pressuring that addressee to take that action or to respond otherwise. An addressee's negative face may be threatened if the speaker expresses a positive future act such as an offer or promise and puts pressure on the addressee to accept or reject the speaker (Brown & Levison, 1987). If an individual offers something to someone else, he may feel

compelled to accept that offer. The final way an addressee's negative face can be threatened is through a speaker's expression of desire towards the addressee or something in the addressee's possession (Brown & Levison, 1987). Positive communication, such as a compliment, or negative communication, such as the expression of anger or hatred, can cause an addressee's negative face to be threatened. On social media, this could play out in a number of scenarios. For example, if a woman reads a post by a member of her network that demeans women, she may feel that her face is threatened even if the post was not addressed to her specifically.

Positive face. An addressee's positive face may also be threatened by a speaker if the speaker demonstrates a lack of care for the addressee's feelings, wants or values (Brown & Levison, 1987). An expression or disapproval or a critical comment may prompt this (Brown & Levison, 1987). Additionally, if the speaker indicates indifference towards the addressee's positive face, it may cause tension in the interaction (Brown & Levison, 1987). This face-threatening act may be most relevant to negative experiences discussing politics online, including trolling. A speaker may raise emotional or divisive topics (Brown & Levison, 1987). Discussion of politics in itself may be perceived as a divisive topic, as may many specific issues. Misidentifying someone in an embarrassing or offensive way may also threaten face (Brown & Levison, 1987). Use of political labels or derogatory terms in a discussion is likely to remove attention from the matter at hand and instead become face-threatening. Chen (2015) studied threats to positive face by designing an experiment that tested how participants reacted to rejection and criticism on a mock social networking site. Face threats lead to direct effects on negative affect and an indirect affect on retaliatory aggression through negative affect (Chen, 2015). Thus, threats to face received in an online context do solicit a reaction. Little is known about politeness in computer-mediated communication (Burke & Kraut, 2008). The following

research question explores how participants perceive negative and positive face threats in negative and positive political interactions on social media.

RQ$_4$: How do negative and positive political interactions on social media threaten negative face and positive face?

Because politeness theory assumes that rational actors are involved in an interaction, it stipulates that individuals will do what they can to avoid face-threatening acts and when unavoidable, they will employ threat minimizing strategies (Brown & Levison, 1987). An individual will consider their desire to communicate the content that is part of a face-threatening act and their interest in communicating efficiently (Brown & Levison, 1987). They will also consider the damage potential to another's face (Brown & Levison, 1987). However, if their desire to be efficient is greater than their consideration of maintaining another's face, they will move forward in carrying out a face-threatening act (Brown & Levison, 1987).

Online interactions, especially those in a social media setting, permit individuals more time to make a communicative decision compared to face-to-face interactions. This may lead to a lower likelihood of an individual engaging in a face-threatening act because they are given more time to think about and craft a response. Alternatively, there may be pressure to formulate a response quickly, especially if an online discussion has many participants. As Stromer-Galley et al. (2015) found in an online deliberative forum, it was challenging at times to determine to whom and what participants were responding to because of the synchronous chat functionality and quick pace of the conversation. Taking too long may mean that someone else provides commentary you were hoping to provide or that your response becomes a moot point as the discussion moves forward.

Regardless of the particular strategy employed, perceiving face threat or face support while discussing politics on social media may influence how one perceives others who do not think like they do or value what they value. In a study of face threats experienced on Facebook, Litt et al. (2014) found that participants who reported having more diverse Facebook audiences were more likely to report more severe face threats. It is evident that face threats online are able to be recognized and prompt reactions from those involved in interpersonal exchanges. What is less clear is if negative face support, or demonstrating respect for one's autonomy, and positive face support, or demonstrating affirmation for one's opinions, are perceived in online political interactions. Thus, the fifth research question seeks to shed light on how support of negative and positive face are perceived in negative and positive political interactions.

RQ$_5$: How do negative and positive political interactions on social media support negative face and positive face?

Face and Online Political Engagement

The concepts of face and facework are applicable to analyzing online political discussion on social media for a few key reasons. First, Goffman (1967) explicitly identified that many of the ideas and structures are applicable in both face-to-face and mediated contexts. Secondly, face is considered important not just for interactions as events occurring in vacuum, but as integral to social relationships. As Goffman (1967, p. 41) states, "much of the activity occurring during an encounter can be understood as an effort on everyone's part to get through the occasion and all the unanticipated and unintentional events that can cast participants in an undesirable light, without disrupting the relationships of the participants." The desire to not disrupt relationships should not be underestimated when attempting to understand how people talk about politics

within their online networks, which may be comprised of individuals with varying relationships ranging from romantic partner, family member, friend, acquaintance, coworker, and stranger.

Additionally, when an individual is interacting with someone that they do not expect to interact with in the future, they may be more inclined to not save their own or others' faces (Goffman, 1967). The potential negative impacts of anonymity online are well studied [for a review of the effects of anonymity in computer-mediated communication, see Christopherson (2007)]. Social media, and its potential to bring together people with a range of relationships, many of which involve others whom an individual has a reasonable if not definite expectation of future interaction, presents an interesting forum for political discussion to occur. Finally, Goffman (1967) identifies that offences perceived to be immense may prompt individuals to withdraw from encounters and abstain from participating in future, similar interactions. A negative experience talking about politics online may discourage future participation in discussions that are political in nature or avoidance of a specific individual during online political talk. This sort of reaction may be even more probable following negative experiences with people who express opposing viewpoints. Alternatively, a positive experience may lead to increased online political engagement. It may lead to more consensus and respect among participants who maintain differing viewpoints.

Given the identified impact that interpersonal interactions and perceived face threat and support may have on future behaviors, the final research question considers how negative and positive political interactions on social media influence future political engagement on social media.

RQ$_6$: How do negative and positive political interactions on social media effect future online political engagement?

The management of face is an "underlying subtext to most social interactions" (Brett et al., 2007, p. 86). Thus, examining perceptions of face threat and face support will shed light on how and why online political discussion breaks down, leads to conflict over compromise, results in agreement, or solicits positive connotations associated with divergent political perspectives. Understanding more about self-presentation in these interactions is an ideal place to start when considering if social media has the potential to host fruitful political discussion. To address these questions, recruited survey participants elaborated on their online political interaction experiences. Specifically, participants were asked about their social media use habits, and asked to identify and assess their perceptions of both a negative and positive experience they had on social media related to politics. Results provide insight on millennials' mediated political interaction experiences.

METHOD

The design of this study sheds light on how millennials engage in online political expression and how they perceive those experiences. Analyses illustrate how millennials are exposed to others' political preferences (RQ_1) and express their own political opinions (RQ_2). Further, relationships between network composition and political expression are explored (RQ_3). Understanding what may influence millennials' perceptions of political interactions they observe or engage in is a worthwhile endeavor; negative and positive face threat (RQ_4) and negative and positive face support (RQ_5) perceived in political interactions are examined for such effects. Finally, the influence that observing and engaging in negative and positive political interactions has on future political engagement is investigated (RQ_6). Sampling and recruitment procedures are outlined and each survey item is discussed in detail.

Sample

A convenience sample of 352 undergraduate students at a large, public university in the southeast United States participated in the survey. Students enrolled in a research participation system received an email inviting them to participate in study about online political expression. In order to participate, participants had to be 18 years or older and identify as a current social media user. Participants accessed the survey online via the Qualtrics platform and were required to consent to participating before beginning the questionnaire. Students received course credit for their participation.

Utilizing a college student sample is appropriate given the intended population for this study is individuals who may be considered part of the millennial generation. A millennial is defined as someone born between 1981 and 1997 (Fry, 2015), making current traditional college students likely to fall within that age range.

Measures

Participants reported their demographic characteristics, political identity, political interest, and political information efficacy. Participants indicated their social media behaviors including overall social media use, exposure to political expression on social media, political self-expression on social media, and network composition. Participants were then asked to describe a negative experience they had involving political expression on social media and to assess their perceptions of the person with whom the interaction occurred. Additionally, participants identified online political expression behavior modifications they made as a result of that interaction. Finally, participants described a positive experience they had involving political expression on social media and were asked to assess their perceptions of the person with whom

the interaction occurred. Similar to the negative experience, participants then identified online

political expression behavior modifications they made as a result of that interaction.

Demographic measures and descriptive statistics. Participants reported demographic

information and responded to items measuring political identity, political interest, political

information efficacy, and overall social media use. Participants also reported their exposure to

political expression and political self-expression on social media.

Demographic information. Participants reported their gender, race/ethnicity, age, and

major or intended major.

Political identity and interest. Participants were asked a number of questions adapted

from the American National Election Studies to gauge ideology, party identification, and

political interest ("The ANES 2012 Time Series Study [dataset]," 2012). Participants reported

their ideology on a seven-point scale as "extremely liberal," "liberal," "slightly liberal,"

"moderate; middle of the road," "slightly conservative," "conservative," or "extremely

conservative." Participants reported if they generally consider themselves to be a Democrat,

Republican, or Independent. Additionally, participants ranked their interest in politics on a

seven-point scale (1 = "not interested;" 7 = "absolutely interested").

Political information efficacy. The four-item political information efficacy scale captures

participants' confidence in their knowledge of and ability to participate in the political process.

Information efficacy may be related to individuals' sources of political information (e.g. social

media) and subsequent political behaviors (e.g. voting) (Kaid, McKinney, & Tedesco, 2007). On

a five point Likert-type scale (1 = "strongly disagree;" 5 = "strongly agree"), participants

indicated their agreement with the following statements: "I consider myself well qualified to

participate in politics," "I think that I am better informed about politics and government than

most people," "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country," and "If a friend asked me about the presidential election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for." A political information efficacy scale was constructed from the mean of these four items ($\alpha = .90$, $M = 4.42$, $SD = 1.65$).

Overall social media use. On a seven-point scale (1 = "never;" 7 = several times a day"), participants reported how frequently they use Facebook ($M = 6.22$, $SD = 1.50$), Twitter ($M = 4.27$, $SD = .14$), Instagram ($M = 5.65$, $SD = 2.13$), and Tumblr ($M = 1.77$, $SD = .08$).

Exposure to political expression. Participants were asked to indicate on which social media platforms they see other people's political opinions or preferences. Answer choices included "Facebook," "Twitter," "Instagram," "Tumblr," and an "other" option with a text box to specify that platform. Participants were asked to select at least one platform and to check all that apply.

Thinking about the social media platforms on which participants see other people's political opinions or preferences, participants indicated which of those platforms they use most often. Answer options included "Facebook," "Twitter," "Instagram," "Tumblr," or the "other" platform they specified. Then, participants were asked to specify how frequently they see other people's political opinions or preferences on that platform (1 = "never;" 7 = "several times a day").

Political self-expression. Because it is possible to observe political expression in one medium and engage with others in political expression more often in another, participants indicated on which social media platforms they express their own political opinions or preferences. Answer choices included "Facebook," "Twitter," "Instagram," "Tumblr," and an

"other" option with a text box to specify that platform. Participants were asked to select at least one platform and to check all that apply.

Thinking about the social media platforms on which participants express their political opinions or preferences, participants indicated on which of those platforms they do so most often. Answer options included "Facebook," "Twitter," "Instagram," "Tumblr," or the "other" platform they specified. Then, participants were asked to specify how frequently they express their political opinions or preferences on that platform (1 = "never;" 7 = "several times a day").

From this point in the survey forward, participants were asked questions based on the platform they indicated is where they most frequently engage in political expression. Therefore, based on participant response, five question tracks were available: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, or "other." As discussed in the results section, some research questions will focus on data from participants in the Facebook and Twitter tracks due to overall low participant indication of using Instagram, Tumblr, and "other" platforms for political self-expression.

Independent variables. Participants' network composition and the identification of negative and positive political interactions served as independent variables.

Network composition. In order to gauge network composition, participants indicated the size and diversity of their network in items from Litt et al. (2014). First, participants reported their total number of friends/followers/connections they had in an open-ended item. On average, participants reported larger Facebook networks ($M = 727.67$, $SD = 403.66$) than Twitter networks ($M = 492.61$, $SD = 974.09$). Second, participants indicated which of the following groups were in their network: "boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse," "friends," "acquaintances," "family members," "classmates (current or former)," "teachers/professors (current or former)," "co-workers/colleagues/clients (current or former)," "boss/manager (current or former)," "potential

employers/recruiters," "people I don't know," and "other." Items were added to create a network

diversity index on Facebook ($M = 6.81$, $SD = 1.63$) and on Twitter ($M = 5.64$, $SD = 1.61$), with a

higher score indicating a more diverse network.

Identification of negative and positive political interactions. The next set of questions

asked participants to report both a negative and positive experience they had involving political

expression on social media. Participants described the experience in an open-ended item: "Think

about a recent negative or unpleasant (positive or pleasant) interaction you had on [platform] that

had to do with politics or political opinions. Describe what happened."

The fourth, fifth, and sixth research questions sought to assess perceived face threat,

perceived face support, and future political engagement behaviors stemming from negative and

positive political interactions on social media. Given the extant literature on differences between

lurkers and posters in how they interact with online content (Sankaram & Schober, 2015), what

they derive from online communities (Nonnecke et al., 2004), and how they construct their

opinions (Schlosser, 2005), participant responses to open-ended interactions were coded by

interaction type for additional analyses.

Four categories of negative and positive interactions were created (Appendix A).

Responses were coded as observing a political interaction, engaging in a political interaction, no

observation or engagement, or unclear response. Responses coded as observing a political

interaction indicated seeing a political interaction on Facebook or Twitter without being involved

in the interaction. Engaging in a political interaction responses included an explicit statement that

the participant was in some way expressive in a political interaction (e.g. comment, like, favorite,

reply, retweet, unfollow, hide, delete). Responses that explicitly indicated that the participant did

not observe or engage in political expression on Facebook or Twitter were coded as no

observation or engagement. Finally, participant responses that were blank, shared only general opinions without mention of a specific experience, or discussed an experience that was not on Facebook or Twitter were coded as unclear/other.

Dependent variables. Platform-specific political behaviors, assessments of negative and positive political interactions, and subsequent behavior modifications served as dependent variables.

Platform-specific political behaviors. Miller, Bobkowski, Malianiak, and Rapoport (2015) identified a number of political expression behaviors adopted by young people on Facebook, which were adapted for this study and the numerous platforms investigated. On a seven-point scale (1 = "never;" 7 = "several times a day") participants indicated the frequency with which they engage in the following behaviors on Facebook: "post links to political stories or articles for others to read," "post your own opinions or comments on political issues," "encourage other people to take action on a political issue that is important to you," "share content related to political issues that was originally posted by someone else," "'like' material related to political issues that others have posted," "belong to a group that is involved in political issues, or that is working to advance a political cause," and "follow elected officials or candidates for office." A political expression on Facebook scale was constructed by averaging the scores of the seven items (α = .80, M = 2.26, SD = 1.13).

For Twitter, behaviors included "post links to political stories or articles for others to read," "post your own opinions or comments on political issues," "encourage other people to take action on a political issue that is important to you," "retweet content related to political issues that was originally posted by someone else," "'favorite' material related to political issues that others have posted," "follow a group that is involved in political issues, or that is working to

advance a political cause," and "follow elected officials or candidates for office." A political

expression on Twitter scale was constructed by averaging the scores of the seven items (α = .81,

M = 2.92, SD = 1.29).

Assessment of negative and positive political interactions. After participants described

both a negative and positive experience they had involving political expression on social media

in an open-ended item, they were asked to assess those experiences.

Face threat. Participants were asked to think about the individual with whom they had

the negative (positive) interaction they wrote about (Table 1). Using a scale developed by

Cupach and Carson (2002), participants indicated their agreement with ten statements on a

Likert-type scale that assesses threat to negative face and threat to positive face (1 = "strongly

disagree;" 7 = "strongly agree").

Negative face threat. To measure threat to negative face, participants were asked four

questions which indicated to what extent the individual's actions: "constrained my choices,"

"took away some of my independence," "made me look bad in the eyes of others," and "invaded

my privacy." As participants were asked these questions for both a negative and positive

experience, two scales were created. A threat to negative face in negative political interactions

scale (α = .76, M = 2.87, SD = 1.23) is comprised of the average three items that assessed a

negative experience. The item "constrained my choices" was ultimately dropped from this scale

as reliability assessment suggested that reliability would be improved from .69 to .76 if this item

was removed. A threat to negative face in positive political interactions scale (α = .92, M = 2.48,

SD = 1.26) is comprised of the average these four items that assessed a positive experience.

Positive face threat. To measure threat to positive face, participants were asked eight

questions which indicated to what extent the individual's actions: "were polite," "were rude,"

"were insensitive," "showed disrespect towards me," "were justified," "were hostile,"

"strengthened the relationship between us," and "were tactful." Some items (i.e. "were polite,"

"were justified," "strengthened the relationship between us," and "were tactful") were reverse

coded. As participants were asked these questions for both a negative and positive experience,

two scales were created. A threat to positive face in negative political interactions scale (α = .86,

M = 4.43, SD = 1.07) is comprised of the average of these eight items that assessed a negative

experience. A threat to positive face in positive political interactions scale (α = .92, M = 2.80, SD

= 1.09) is comprised of the average these eight items that assessed a positive experience.

 Face support. Similarly, participants were asked to think about the individual with whom

they had the negative (positive) interaction they wrote about (Table 1). Using a scale developed

by Kressen-Griep, Trees, and Hess (2008), participants indicated their agreement with eight

statements on a seven-point Likert-type scale that assesses support of negative face and support

of positive face (1 = "strongly disagree;" 7 = "strongly agree").

 Negative face support. To measure support of negative face, participants indicated to

what extent the individual: "left me free to choose how to respond," "made me feel like I could

choose how to respond," "made me feel pushed into agreeing with him/her," and "made it hard

for me to propose my own ideas in light of her/his action. Some items (i.e. "made me feel pushed

into agreeing with him/her;" "made it hard for me to propose my own ideas in light of her/his

action") were reverse coded. As participants were asked these questions for both a negative and

positive experience, two scales were created. A negative face support in negative political

interactions scale (α = .56, M = 4.15, SD = 1.00) is comprised of the average of these eight items

that assessed a negative experience. Due to low reliability that would not improve even if items

were dropped, further analyses do not utilize this scale. A negative face support in positive

political interactions scale (α = .79, *M* = 5.07, *SD* = 1.11) is comprised of the average of these eight items that assessed a positive experience.

      Positive face support. To measure support of positive face, participants indicated to what extent the individual: "made sure that he or she didn't cast me in a bad light," "worked to avoid making me look bad," "showed understanding," and "seemed attentive to me as an individual." As participants were asked these questions for both a negative and positive experience, two scales were created. A positive face support in negative political interactions scale (α = .88, *M* = 3.29, *SD* = 1.22) is comprised of the average of these eight items that assessed a negative experience. A positive face support in positive political interactions scale (α = .87, *M* = 4.83, *SD* = 1.19) is comprised of the average of these eight items that assessed a positive experience.

Table 1

Face threat and face support descriptions from survey items

This person/this person's actions…	
Negative face threat	**Positive face threat**
Constrained my choices** Took away some of my independence Made me look bad Invaded my privacy	Were not tactful* Were not polite* Damaged the relationship between us Were rude Showed contempt toward me Were insensitive Did not strengthen the relationship between us* Showed disrespect towards me Were not justified* Were hostile
Negative face support*	**Positive face support**
Left me free to choose how to respond Made me feel like I could choose how to respond Did not make me feel pushed to agree with him/her* Did not make it hard for me to propose my own ideas in light of his/her actions*	Made sure that he or she didn't cast me in a bad light Worked to avoid making me look bad Showed understanding Seemed attentive to me as an individual

*Reverse coded items rewritten for clarity
**Only for positive interactions; item dropped for negative interactions
***Only for positive interactions; scale dropped for negative interactions

__Online political expression behavior modifications.__ In the final set of questions,

participants were asked to think specifically about actions taken as a result of the negative or

unpleasant (positive or pleasant) experience they shared. On a four-point frequency scale (0 =

"never;" 3 = "frequently"), participants indicated how frequently they engaged in specific online

behaviors related to political expression in reaction to the negative or unpleasant (positive or

pleasant) experiences they had. Specific behaviors varied across platforms, with each platform

including items that addressed engagement, or an increase in online political expression, and

disengagement, signaling a decrease in online political expression. Although language was appropriately modified for each platform, eleven items addressed engagement behaviors across platforms. Given differences in the structures and functionality of each platform, the number of disengagement items varied across platforms. Facebook had eight disengagement items, while Twitter had six. These items were derived from previous research on political discussion practices on social media (Miller et al., 2015). They were revised and modified for each platform addressed in this study. Additionally, the researcher confirmed clarity and accuracy of the measures by consulting self-identified users of each platform.

Engagement on Facebook. Facebook engagement items included, "spend some of my time on Facebook reading political posts," "visit the Facebook page of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw a friend had liked or shared it," "'like' or become a fan of Facebook pages for political candidates, parties, or issues," "'like' a status update about politics," "comment on a political post by a Facebook friend to express agreement," "comment on a political post by a Facebook friend to express disagreement," "share a political post by a Facebook friend," "share a political post by a page I like or follow," "post links to a political website or news story," "post a status asking my friends what they think about a candidate or issue," and "post a status encouraging my friends to vote for a specific candidate." Items were averaged to construct a political engagement on Facebook in reaction to negative experiences scale ($\alpha = .92$, $M = .78$, $SD = .62$) and a political engagement on Facebook in reaction to positive experiences scale ($\alpha = .93$, $M = .76$, $SD = .65$).

Disengagement on Facebook. Facebook disengagement items included, "ignore political posts from a Facebook friend without reading them," "ignore links to a political website or news story from a Facebook friend without reading them," "hide a Facebook friend's status updates

because they post too much about politics," "hide a Facebook friend's status updates because I disagree with the political views they post," "unfriend a Facebook friend because they post about politics too much," "unfriend a Facebook friend because I disagree with the political views they post," "block a Facebook friend from seeing part of my profile so they do not know my political opinions or preferences," "block a Facebook friend from seeing my status updates so they do not know my political opinions or preferences." Items were averaged to construct a political disengagement on Facebook in reaction to negative experiences scale ($\alpha = .82$, $M = .92$, $SD = .60$) and a political disengagement on Facebook in reaction to positive experiences scale ($\alpha = .87$, $M = .76$, $SD = .67$).

Engagement on Twitter. Twitter engagement items included, "spend some of my time on Twitter reading political tweets," "visit the Twitter profile of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw someone I follow mentioned or tweeted at the account," "follow accounts associated with political candidates, parties, or issues," "'favorite' a tweet about politics," "reply to a tweet about politics to express agreement," "reply to a tweet about politics to express disagreement," "retweet a political tweet posted by an individual I follow," "retweet a political tweet posted by a group or organization I follow," "post links to a political website or news story," "post a tweet asking my followers what they think about a candidate or issue," and "post a tweet encouraging my followers to vote for a specific candidate." Items were averaged to construct a political engagement on Twitter in reaction to negative experiences scale ($\alpha = .93$, $M = .98$, $SD = .65$) and a political engagement on Twitter in reaction to positive experiences scale ($\alpha = .94$, $M = .95$, $SD = .67$).

Disengagement on Twitter. Twitter disengagement items included "ignore tweets about politics without reading them," "ignore links to a political website or news story without reading

them," "mute an account I follow because they tweet about politics too much," "mute an account I follow because I disagree with the political views they tweet," "unfollow an account because they tweet about politics too much," and "unfollow an account because I disagree with the political views they tweet." Items were averaged to construct a political disengagement on Twitter in reaction to negative experiences scale ($\alpha = .78$, $M = 1.18$, $SD = .72$) and a political disengagement on Twitter in reaction to positive experiences scale ($\alpha = .92$, $M = 1.03$, $SD = .84$).

Analysis of Results

To answer the first research question, participants were asked to report their exposure to political expression on social media. To answer the second research question, participants were asked to report their political self-expression on social media. Measures on network composition served as independent variables for the third research question. Political expression behaviors on the platform participants indicated is where they most frequently engage in political expression served as the dependent variable for third research question. Types of negative and positive political interactions (i.e. observing and engaging) were independent variables for the fourth, fifth, and sixth research questions. Participants' assessments of the negative and positive political interactions they shared were dependent variables for the forth, fifth, and sixth research questions.

RESULTS

A total of 352 participants (215 females, 135 males, 2 other) completed the survey. The majority of students identified as White/Caucasian (78.7%), followed by Asian American/Pacific Islander (8.2%), Black/African American (5.4%), and Hispanic/Latino/Latina (3.1%). Fewer than two percent of participants identified as multiracial, biracial, or an "other" race/ethnicity, respectively. The age of participants ranged from 18-34 ($M = 19.68$, $SD = .08$), with a majority

of participants (89%) being 21 years of age or younger. The most popular major among participants was communication (37.8%), followed by business (23.9%), life sciences (11.1%), social sciences (9.1%), and computer science (8.2%). Fewer than five percent of participants indicated majoring in natural resources, art, engineering, liberal arts, and undecided, respectively.

In terms of political ideology, 38.6% identified as liberal, 36.1% identified as conservative, and 25.3% identified as moderate. Regarding partisanship, 40.1% identified as Republican, 34.9% identified as Democrat, and 25.0% identified as Independent. On average, participants indicated a moderate interest in politics ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.71$).

In terms of overall social media use, most participants (83.2%) indicated they use Facebook about once a day or several times a day. Nearly half (45.5%) of participants reported that they use Twitter about once a day or several times a day, while 29% of participants report they never use Twitter. Most participants (73.8%) report using Instagram about once a day or several times a day. The majority of participants (72.4%) do not use Tumblr.

Exposure to Political Expression

The first research question asked how millennials are exposed to politics on social media. To answer this question, participants reported the platforms on which they see others' political opinions or preferences. The majority of participants reported exposure to political expression on Facebook (88.4%), followed by Twitter (58.5%), Instagram (19.0%), and Tumblr (9.7%). Twenty-five participants indicated an "other" platform. Open-ended responses included reddit and Snapchat, among others.

In regards to the platform that participants' most frequently see other people's political opinions, Facebook (68.6%) was the most popular, followed by Twitter (23.6%), "other" (3.4%),

Instagram (3.1%), and Tumblr (1.1%). Among participants who indicated they most frequently see others' political preferences on Facebook, 81.0% do so several times a week or more frequently. On Twitter, 83.1% of participants indicated seeing others' political preferences several times a week or more frequently. Among participants who indicated they are most frequently exposed to others' political preferences on Instagram, 72.8% indicated they see others' politics about once a month or about once a week. On Tumblr, half of participants see others' political opinions several times a day. Finally, among those who indicated they most frequently see others' political opinions on an "other" platform, 58.4% said they do so about once a day or several times a day.

Political Self-Expression

The second research question asked how millennials express their politics on social media. To answer this question, participants indicated which platforms they use to express their own political opinions or preferences. The majority of participants indicated engaging in political self-expression on Facebook (61.9%), followed by Twitter (36.9%), Instagram (8.8%), and Tumblr (4.8%). Sixty-three participants indicated an "other" platform. Among the participants who selected "other," some indicated they do not express their politics on social media in the open-ended response item.

In regards to the platform on which participants most frequently engage in political self-expression, Facebook (51.7%) was the most popular, followed by Twitter (26.4%), "other" (17.9%), Tumblr (2.3%), and Instagram (1.7%). Among participants who indicated they most frequently engage in political expression on Facebook, just over half (51.1%) indicate doing so between once a week and less than once a month. On Twitter, 69.8% indicate doing so between once a week and less than once a month. Of those who most frequently express their politics on

Instagram, one participant each does so less than once a month, about once a month, and about once a week, respectively. On Tumblr, 62.5% indicate doing so between once a week and less than once a month. Finally, most of the participants on the "other" question track (90.5%) indicated they never express their politics on social media.

Given the high variability of platforms associated with the "other" ($n = 63$) platform option and the low number of participants who indicated that Tumblr ($n = 8$) and Instagram ($n = 6$) are where they most frequently engage in political expression, the remainder of the research questions will be addressed based on data from participants who indicated Facebook ($n = 182$) and Twitter ($n = 93$) are where they most frequently engage in political self-expression.

Network Composition and Political Expression

The third research question focused on the relationship between network composition and political expression. Correlations were run in order to determine if network size and diversity were related to expression. There was not a significant correlation between participants' Facebook network size and political expression on Facebook, $r = .11$, $p = .18$. There was a significant positive correlation between participants' Facebook network diversity and political expression on Facebook, $r = .28$, $p < .001$. Participants with more diverse Facebook networks reported engaging in more political expression on Facebook.

There was not a significant correlation between participants' Twitter network size and political expression on Twitter, $r = .02$, $p = .84$. There was not a significant correlation between participants' Twitter network diversity and political expression on Twitter, $r = .06$, $p = .60$.

Observing and Engaging

To answer the fourth, fifth, and sixth research questions, responses to open-ended items on negative and positive political interactions were coded by interaction type (Appendix A).

These three research questions sought to assess perceived face threat, perceived face support, and future political engagement behaviors stemming from negative and positive political interactions on social media. Responses were coded as observing a political interaction, engaging in a political interaction, no observation or engagement, or unclear response.

Intercoder reliability. Cohen's kappa was used to assess intercoder reliability. The researcher and another coder independently coded 112 open-ended responses (20% of the sample). Intercoder reliability was high ($\kappa = .85$). Additionally, percent agreement (89.3%), Scott's pi ($\pi = .85$), and Krippendorff's alpha ($\alpha = .85$) confirm high reliability between coders. The remaining cases in the sample were coded by the researcher.

Number of responses coded as each of the four categories is reported here, but only those interactions considered to be observing and engaging are considered in further analyses to address the fourth, fifth, and sixth research questions. The comparison allows the data to shed light on differences that may exist between those who merely observe negative and positive political interactions and those who participate in negative and positive political interactions. Comparing other categories, such as those who observe and those who indicate they do not observe or engage, does not make intuitive sense and lacks face-validity considering the subsequent survey questions asked participants to evaluate the experience they wrote about in the open-ended item.

Facebook. On Facebook, 182 negative interactions were coded. Observing a negative political interaction on Facebook was present in 61.0% of the responses and 18.7% of responses referred to engaging in a negative political interaction. No observation or engagement was present in 8.2% of responses and 12.1% of responses were unclear/other. Additionally, 182 positive interactions on Facebook were coded. Observing a positive political interaction was

discussed in 31.3% of responses and 39.6% of participants indicated engaging in a positive political interaction on Facebook. No observation or engagement was indicated in 8.2% of responses and 20.9% of responses were classified as unclear/other.

Twitter. On Twitter, 93 negative interactions were coded. Observing a negative political interaction on Twitter was present in 39.8% of the responses and 18.3% of responses referred to engaging in a negative political interaction. No observation or engagement was present in 12.9% of responses and 29.0% of responses were unclear/other. Additionally, 93 positive interactions on Twitter were coded. Observing a positive political interaction was discussed in 25.8% of responses and 33.3% of participants indicated engaging in a positive political interaction on Twitter. No observation or engagement was indicated in 16.1% of responses and 24.7% of responses were classified as unclear/other.

Face Threat and Political Interaction

The fourth research question sought to understand how political interactions on social media threaten face. Independent samples t-tests were run to determine if observing or engaging in negative (Table 2) and positive political interactions (Table 3) on social media is related to significant differences of perceived negative face threat and positive face threat.

Facebook. Among those who recalled a negative political interaction, there was not a significant difference between perceived negative face threat of those who lurked ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.25$) on and those who engaged ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.24$), $t(142) = .55$, $p = .59$ in the interaction.

There was a significant difference between perceived positive face threat felt by those who lurked on and those who engaged in a negative political interaction, $t(142) = -2.62$, $p < .01$. Lurkers of negative political interaction ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.06$) reported significantly less positive face threat than those who engaged in a negative political interaction ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.24$). In

other words, those who engaged in negative political interactions with others were more likely to see that interaction as hostile, rude, and disrespectful than those who merely reported observing a negative political interaction.

Participants were also asked to recall a positive political interaction on Facebook. There was a significant difference in perceived negative face threat between those who lurked on a positive political experience and those who engaged in one, $t(127) = 2.12$, $p < 0.05$. Lurkers of a positive political interaction ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 1.03$) reported significantly more negative face threat than those who engaged in a positive political interaction ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 1.00$). This result demonstrates that people who engaged in positive political interactions on Facebook were less likely to report that experience as one that took away their independence, invaded their privacy, made them look bad, or constrained their choices compared to those who merely lurked on a positive political interaction.

There was a significant difference between perceived positive face threat by those who lurked on a positive political interaction and those who engaged in one, $t(127) = 2.91$, $p < .01$. Lurkers of a positive political interaction ($M = 2.71$, $SD = .89$) reported significantly more positive face threat than those who engaged in a positive political interaction ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.02$). Compared to those who only lurked on a positive political interaction on Facebook, engaging in the interaction solicited less strong feelings of contempt, disrespect, insensitivity, and impoliteness toward the person with whom they had the interaction.

Twitter. Among participants who recalled a negative political interaction they had on Twitter, there was a significant difference between perceived negative face threat felt by those who lurked ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.04$) and those who engaged ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.01$) in the interaction, $t(52) = -3.48$, $p < .01$. Actively participating in a negative interaction prompted

stronger feelings related to infringement on autonomy such as invasion of privacy and taking away independence compared to solely observing a negative interaction.

There was a significant difference between perceived positive face threat by those who lurked (*M* = 4.19, *SD* = .97) and those who engaged (*M* = 4.94, *SD* = 1.35) in a negative political interaction, *t*(52) = -2.33, *p* < .05. Those who engaged in a negative political interaction on Twitter reported feeling that the interaction led them to feel more disrespect, rudeness, hostility, and relationship damage compared to those who only observed a negative political interaction on Twitter.

There was not a significant difference between perceived negative face threat of those who lurked (*M* = 2.17, *SD* = .91) and those who engaged (*M* = 1.90, *SD* = 1.06) in positive political interactions on Twitter, *t*(53) = 1.04, *p* = .30.

There was not a significant difference between perceived positive face threat of those who lurked (*M* = 2.44, *SD* = .82) on and those who engaged (*M* = 2.27, *SD* = .88) in a positive political interaction on Twitter, *t*(53) = .72, *p* = .48.

Face Support and Political Interaction

The fifth research question sought to understand how political interactions on social media support face. Independent samples t-tests were run to determine if observing or engaging in negative (Table 2) and positive political interactions (Table 3) on social media is related to significant differences of perceived negative face support and positive face support.

Facebook. Due to low reliability for the construct measuring negative face support in negative political interactions, further analyses were not conducted utilizing that construct.

Among participants who assessed a negative political interaction they had on Facebook, there was a significant difference between perceived positive face support felt by those who

lurked (*M* = 3.27, *SD* = 1.10) and those who engaged (*M* = 2.51, *SD* = 1.27) in negative interactions, *t*(142) = 3.35, *p* < .01. Positive face support, or affirming one's views by being attentive, avoiding making one look bad, and demonstrating understanding, was felt less by participants who engaged in negative political interactions on Facebook compared to those who merely observed negative interactions.

There was not a significant difference between perceived negative face support reported by those who lurked (*M* = 5.40, *SD* = .99) on a positive political interaction on Facebook and those who engaged (*M* = 5.60, *SD* = 1.09) in one, *t*(127) = -1.07, *p* = .29.

There was a significant difference between perceived positive face support felt by those who lurked on a positive political interaction on Facebook and those who engaged in one, *t*(127) = -2.70, *p* < .01. Engaging in a positive political interaction (*M* = 5.35, *SD* = 1.08) led to significantly more positive face support than observing a positive political interaction (*M* = 4.79, *SD* = 1.23). In other words, actively engaging in a positive political interaction led to participants feeling as if more attention was paid to them and they were more understood by others compared to those who lurked on a positive political interaction without participating in it.

Twitter. Among participants who addressed a negative political interaction on Twitter, there was a significant difference between perceived positive face support reported by those who lurked and those who engaged in a negative interaction, *t*(52) = 2.13, *p* < .05. Lurkers of a negative political interaction (*M* = 3.55, *SD* = 1.21) reported significantly more positive face support than those who engaged in a negative political interaction (*M* = 2.75, *SD* = 1.45). Those who merely lurked on a negative interaction were more likely to believe the interaction did not make them look bad compared to those who engaged in a negative political interaction.

There was not a significant difference between perceived negative face support by those who lurked ($M = 5.20$, $SD = .94$) on and those who engaged ($M = 5.31$, $SD = .93$) in a positive political interaction on Twitter, $t(53) = -.46$, $p = .65$.

There was not a significant difference between perceived positive face support by those who lurked ($M = 5.06$, $SD = 1.03$) on and those who engaged ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.27$) in a positive political interaction on Twitter, $t(53) = .20$, $p = .85$.

Table 2

Perceived face threat and face support in negative political interactions

		Lurkers	Engagers	t
Negative face threat				
	Facebook	2.71 (1.25)	2.58 (1.24)	.55
	Twitter	2.32 (1.04)	3.37 (1.01)	-3.48**
Positive face threat				
	Facebook	4.43 (1.06)	5.00 (1.24)	-2.62**
	Twitter	4.19 (.97)	4.94 (1.35)	-2.33*
Negative face support[1]				
		N/A	N/A	N/A
Positive face support				
	Facebook	3.27 (1.10)	2.51 (1.27)	3.35**
	Twitter	3.55 (1.21)	2.75 (1.45)	2.13*

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

[1]Items measuring negative face support in negative political interactions did not yield sufficient reliability and were not utilized for further analyses.

Table 3

Perceived face threat and face support in positive political interactions

		Lurkers	Engagers	*t*
Negative face threat				
	Facebook	2.22 (1.03)	1.84 (1.00)	2.12*
	Twitter	2.17 (.91)	1.90 (1.06)	1.04
Positive face threat				
	Facebook	2.71 (.89)	2.21 (1.02)	2.91**
	Twitter	2.24 (.82)	2.27 (.88)	.72
Negative face support				
	Facebook	5.40 (.99)	5.60 (1.09)	-1.07
	Twitter	5.20 (.94)	5.31 (.93)	-.46
Positive face support				
	Facebook	4.79 (1.23)	5.35 (1.08)	-2.70**
	Twitter	5.06 (1.03)	5.00 (1.27)	.20

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Negative Experiences and Future Political Expression

The sixth research question sought to understand how negative political interactions on social media influence future political expression on social media. Independent samples t-tests were run to determine if observing or engaging in negative political interactions on social media is related to significantly different levels of future political engagement and disengagement on social media.

Facebook. There was a significant difference related to political engagement behaviors between those who lurked on and those who engaged in negative political interactions on Facebook, $t(143) = -4.48$, $p < .001$. Engaging in a negative political interaction ($M = 1.18$, $SD = .59$) led to significantly more future political engagement on Facebook compared to observing a negative political interaction ($M = .68$, $SD = .57$). Those who engaged in a negative political interaction reported more frequently behaving in such a way that prompts or encourages political expression compared to those who merely lurked on a negative political interaction.

There was not a significant difference related to future disengagement behaviors between those who lurked ($M = .93$, $SD = .58$) on and those who engaged ($M = .84$, $SD = .49$) in a negative political interaction on Facebook, $t(143) = .78$, $p = .43$.

Twitter. There was a significant difference related to future engagement behaviors between those who lurked on and those who engaged in a negative political interaction on Twitter, $t(52) = -2.13$, $p < .05$. Engaging in a negative political interaction ($M = 1.35$, $SD = .75$) led to significantly more future political engagement on Twitter than observing a negative political interaction ($M = .95$, $SD = .60$). Similar to findings among Facebook users, those who engaged in a negative political interaction on Twitter indicated more frequently behaving in a manner that reflects an interest sustaining online political expression in their network.

There was not a significant difference related to future political disengagement between those who lurked ($M = 1.20$, $SD = .76$) on and those who engaged ($M = 1.19$, $SD = .76$) in a negative political interaction on Twitter, $t(52) = .02$, $p = .98$.

Positive Experiences and Future Political Expression

The sixth research question also sought to understand how positive political interactions on social media influence future political expression on social media. Independent samples t-

tests were run to determine if observing or engaging in positive political interactions on social media is related to significantly different levels of future political engagement and disengagement on social media.

Facebook. There was a significant difference related to future political engagement behaviors between those who lurked on and those who engaged in positive interactions on Facebook, $t(127) = -5.58$, $p < .001$. Engaging in a positive political interaction ($M = 1.12$, $SD = .61$) led to significantly more future political engagement on Facebook than observing a positive political interaction ($M = .57$, $SD = .48$). Similar to the effects of engaging in negative political interactions on Facebook, positive interactions also led to a greater tendency to be politically engaged on social media in the future.

There was not a significant difference related to future political disengagement between those who lurked ($M = .81$, $SD = .62$) on and those who engaged ($M = .67$, $SD = .54$) in a positive political interaction, $t(127) = 1.39$, $p = .17$.

Twitter. There was a significant difference related to future political engagement between those who lurked on and those who engaged in a positive political interaction on Twitter, $t(53) = -2.84$, $p < .01$. Engaging in a positive political interaction ($M = 1.32$, $SD = .58$) led to significantly more future political engagement on Twitter than observing a positive political interaction ($M = .84$, $SD = .69$). In line with findings on Facebook, engaging in a positive political interaction was associated with more political engagement activities on social media compared to merely observing a positive interaction.

There was not a significant difference related to future political disengagement between those who lurked ($M = .85$, $SD = .83$) on and those who engaged ($M = 1.03$, $SD = .79$) in a positive political interaction on Twitter, $t(53) = -.81$, $p = .42$.

Table 4

Political engagement and disengagement in reaction to negative and positive political interactions

		Lurkers	Engagers	*t*
Engagement after negative interactions				
	Facebook	.68 (.57)	1.18 (.59)	-4.48***
	Twitter	.95 (.60)	1.35 (.75)	-2.13*
Disengagement after negative interactions				
	Facebook	.93 (.58)	.84 (.49)	.78
	Twitter	1.20 (.76)	1.19 (.76)	.02
Engagement after positive interactions				
	Facebook	.57 (.48)	1.12 (.61)	-5.58***
	Twitter	.84 (.69)	1.32 (.58)	-2.84**
Disengagement after positive interactions				
	Facebook	.81 (.62)	.67 (.54)	1.39
	Twitter	.85 (.83)	1.03 (.79)	-.81

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to investigate how millennials are exposed to and express political opinions on social media and to identify how perceived face threat and perceived face support is experienced during observing or engaging in political interactions. Further, relationships between network composition and political expression on social media were examined, as well as the impact of negative and positive mediated political interactions on future political expression behaviors.

To address these ideas, a convenience sample of 352 undergraduate student participants from a large university in the southeast United States completed a survey on their social media use, exposure to political expression, political self-expression, and negative and positive political interactions on social media. Overall, results indicate that political interactions on social media solicit nuanced and varied effects.

The first research question asked how millennials are exposed to political expression on social media. To answer this question, participants were asked to identify, from a list of platforms, all of the social media sites on which they see other people's political opinions and preferences. Then, they identified the platform on which they most frequently see other people's political opinions and preferences. Finally, they reported how frequently they see political expression on that platform.

Facebook was the platform on which participants are mostly likely to be exposed to other people's political opinions and preferences. Nearly ninety percent of participants indicated being exposed to politics on Facebook, and when asked for the platform they most frequently are exposed to politics, nearly seventy percent answered Facebook. This is unsurprising given that over eighty percent of participants indicated they use Facebook about once a day or several times a day. It also may imply that people in participants' Facebook networks are somewhat regularly sharing political content.

Nearly sixty percent of participants indicated being exposed to politics on Twitter, but fewer than twenty-five percent identified Twitter as the platform on which they most frequently see others' political opinions. Importantly, nearly thirty percent of participants indicated they never use Twitter. Although the subsample of Twitter users was relatively smaller than that of

Facebook users, that so many indicated that Twitter is where they are most frequently exposed to politics is intriguing.

The largest gap between platform use and exposure to politics on the platform is among Instagram users. Over seventy percent of participants indicated using Instagram about once a day or several times a day, while only nineteen percent reported exposure to politics on the platform and only three percent said that is where they are most frequently exposed to politics. This supports the notion that some platforms may be better equipped for political expression than others. However, future research should address political expression on Instagram specifically, as it has experienced larger growth rates than Facebook and Twitter in recent years (Duggan, Ellison, Lampe, Lenhart, & Madden, 2015).

Over seventy percent of participants indicated they do not use Tumblr, fewer than ten percent indicated exposure to politics on Tumblr, and a mere one percent of participants identified Tumblr as the place where they most frequently are exposed to others' political opinions. Findings related to Tumblr are not surprising; Pew Research Center has found that only approximately ten percent of Internet users are on Tumblr, which is hardly comparable to more popular platforms such as Facebook which sustains use by seventy percent of Internet users (Duggan, 2015). Findings related to frequency of exposure to political expression on both Instagram and Tumblr should be interpreted with caution given the overall low prevalence of exposure to political expression on those platforms.

The purpose of the second research question was to understand how millennials express their own political opinions and preferences on social media. To answer this question, participants were asked to identify, from a list of platforms, all of the social media sites on which they express their own political opinions and preferences. Then, they identified the platform on

which they most frequently express their own political opinions and preferences. Finally, they reported how frequently they engage in political expression on that platform.

Findings related to political expression align closely with those on exposure to others' political opinions and preferences; Facebook and Twitter are the most popular platforms for political self-expression. It is unsurprising that participants are both exposed to and express their own political opinions and preferences most frequently on the same platforms. Over sixty percent of participants indicated engaging in political expression on Facebook, with over fifty percent identifying Facebook as the platform they most frequently use for political expression. Among those users who most frequently express their politics on Facebook, very few participants indicated doing so on a weekly or daily basis. It was more likely that participants did so once a month or more infrequently.

It is evident that participants are much more frequently exposed to others political opinions and preferences on Facebook than they choose to express their own views. Among participants who identified Facebook is where they are most frequently exposed to others' politics, eighty-one percent indicate exposure several times a week or more frequently. When it comes to expressing one's own political opinions on Facebook, fewer than six percent of participants indicate doing so equally as frequently.

On Twitter, a similar trend held; more participants reported engaging in political self-expression once a month or more infrequently compared to weekly or daily. While twenty-five percent of participants indicated that Twitter is where they most often engage in political self-expression, fewer than six percent of those participants report doing so several times a week or more frequently. This may be compared to exposure to political expression on Twitter; among

the over twenty percent of participants who most frequently see others' political opinions on Twitter, over eighty percent do so several times a week or more frequently.

One important consideration related to this comparison is the fact that these are separate subsamples being compared. For example, one participant may have indicated that he or she is most frequently exposed to others' politics on Facebook, but they most frequently engage in political expression on Twitter. The present analysis does not consider those differences. However, a clear trend is evident; while millennials are very frequently exposed to the political opinions, preferences, and viewpoints of others on Facebook and Twitter, they engage in political self-expression significantly less frequently.

The objective of the third research question was to identify what, if any, relationships existed between network composition and political expression on Facebook and Twitter. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate both the size and diversity of their networks. Additionally, participants indicated with what frequency they engage in specific political expression behaviors on the social media platform that they identified is where they most frequently engage in political self-expression.

A significant positive correlation between network diversity and political expression was found. Therefore, among participants who most frequently engage in political expression on Facebook, the more diverse people reported their network to be, the more political expression they engaged in. This finding is promising given that exposure to diverse views has been found to lead to more participation in civic activities that do not require individuals to take a position on a specific matter (Lee, 2012). Further, use of social network sites has been found to lead to exposure to more cross-cutting or opposing views (Y. Kim, 2011). Baek et al. (2011) identified diverse citizens and exposure to opposing views as necessary conditions for online deliberation.

That Facebook users in this study were more politically expressive as their network diversity increased may infer that exposure to more diverse views leads to interactions among individuals with differing political views. Trends indicate that people are increasingly looking at news that is aligned with their ideology (Mitchell, Gottfried, Kiley, & Masta, 2014). This could mean that they also self-select news within their social media feeds. Network diversity may serve as a means to counteract those trends.

The network diversity measure used in this study was derived from previous research on face threats experienced on Facebook (Litt et al., 2014). It sought to identify various groups that individuals include in their Facebook network (e.g., family members, friends, teachers, bosses, potential employers, people unknown to the participant, etc.). This finding demonstrates that those who express their politics more frequently tend to have Facebook networks that include people with whom the participant has a variety of relationships with (e.g. family, friend, colleague, stranger). It does not provide evidence of diversity of views present in one's network. The workplace, for example, has been identified as a place where one is likely to encounter diverse views (Mutz & Mondak, 2006), so it may be that maintaining Facebook connections with employers and co-workers does provide varying perspectives on issues. However, the measure was not one of network heterogeneity, which tends to consider exposure to opposing views, such as supporters of different presidential candidates, but also interactions with others from different groups (e.g. racial, gender, socioeconomic, religious) that tend to maintain different perspectives (Scheufele, Hardy, Brossard, Waismel-Manor, & Nisbet, 2006). This measure did not target network heterogeneity and should not be interpreted as such.

The final three research questions sought to better understand nuances of negative and positive political interactions on Facebook and Twitter. In order to identify how participants

perceived face threat, perceived face support, and engaged in political expression in the future, responses to negative and positive political interaction open-ended response items were coded by interaction type. Literature on lurking dictates that those who participate actively in online communities and those who only read content without sharing content have different experiences (Nonnecke et al., 2004; Sankaram & Schober, 2015; Schlosser, 2005). Further, research focusing on lurking in a social networking context is limited (Rau et al., 2008). When it comes specifically to online political environments, lurkers may derive outcomes that influence intentions to deliberate, political participation, and civic engagement differently from those who are participating in mediated political interactions. Because it is unclear how lurkers and engagers differ in their perceptions of negative and positive political interactions on Facebook and Twitter, this research makes novel contributions in that area.

On Facebook, sixty-one percent of negative interactions were observations and nineteen percent were classified as engaging. Interestingly, positive interactions on Facebook were split more evenly; thirty-one percent were observations and forty-percent were engaging. On Twitter, forty percent of negative interactions were identified as observations and eighteen percent were classified as engaging. Similar to Facebook, more positive interactions were coded as engaging than observing. Thirty-three percent of positive interactions on Twitter were considered engaging and twenty-six percent were identified as observations.

A number of significant differences related to face threat and face support were found between lurkers of negative political interactions on Facebook and Twitter compared to those who engaged in interactions. In negative interactions on Facebook, perceived positive face threat was greater for engagers. A more severe threat to positive face implies individuals felt that others did not validate their opinions. Participating in negative political interactions on Facebook may

lead those involved to feel disrespected. Given conditions for successful deliberation include civility (Min, 2007) and an orientation towards the common good (Monnoyer-Smith & Wojcik, 2012), experiencing contempt and impoliteness through positive face threat may be detrimental to deliberative outcomes.

Results related to perceived positive face support in negative political interactions on Facebook confirmed this finding; lurkers felt more positive face support compared to those who engaged. Those who were not directly involved in negative political interactions agreed more that they were not cast in a bad light and did not look bad because of the interaction, whereas those who engaged in negative political interactions experienced significantly less positive face support. When it comes to negative political interactions on Facebook, lurkers may derive more positive benefits such as vicarious learning (McKendree et al., 1998). They may feel fewer negative effects related to infringement on positive face than may be expected when participating fully in a negative interaction.

In terms of negative political interactions on Twitter, engagers felt significantly more negative face threat than lurkers. Unsurprisingly, those directly participating in negative interactions felt they were made to look bad and that some of their independence was taken away significantly more than individuals who only observed negative interactions. This finding may imply that participating in negative political interactions on Twitter leads to feelings of less freedom of choice. Deliberation requires the opportunity to weigh competing options and consider their pros and cons (Gastil, 2008). If one's autonomy is infringed on, successful deliberation may be unlikely.

Further, those who engaged in negative political interactions on Twitter also felt more positive face threat than those who only lurked. This finding aligns with results from Facebook

in that participation in negative interactions led to an impression of insensitivity and relationship damage. It implies that the actions of the other person involved were hostile and not justified. Prior research has indicated that political discussion on social media often involves arguments that lack depth (Conroy et al., 2012). Additionally, in online spaces those who are advocating for a minority opinion tend to provide less substantive arguments (Meraz, 2005). Negative interactions may tend to be less substantive and include points that lack justification.

Results related to perceived positive face support in negative political interactions on Twitter confirmed this finding; lurkers felt more positive face support than those who engaged. Individuals who merely lurked on negative political interactions on Twitter were less likely to feel that they were cast in a bad light. Considering they were not directly part of the interaction, this makes sense. However, for engagers, they feel less positive face support. They were less likely to agree that the individual they interacted with showed understanding and seemed attentive to them. This finding aligns with results related to positive face support in negative political interactions on Facebook.

A number of significant differences related to face threat and face support were found between lurkers in positive political interactions on Facebook compared to those who engaged in interactions. No significant findings were found related to positive interactions on Twitter.

Those who lurked on positive interactions on Facebook felt significantly more positive face threat compared to those who participated in them. While it may seem counterintuitive that participants who merely observed felt more positive face threat, this finding also indicates that actually participating in the positive interaction solicits relatively less threat. Because lurkers are not involved directly in the interaction it may impact them less overall and they may base their assessment of face threat on what they presume the interactants themselves think and feel. This

data does not provide evidence regarding thought processes of lurkers and engagers, but that participating in positive interactions is not as face threatening in this context is promising.

Results related to perceived positive face support in positive political interactions on Facebook confirmed this finding; those who engaged in a positive political interaction reported significantly more positive face support. Feeling more face support means that engagers felt as if they were paid more attention to, were not made to look bad, and were showed understanding by others. Considering that it is important for deliberation participants to maintain a sense of community and work together to reach the best outcome (Mansbridge, 1980), that participating in positive political interactions on Facebook leaves participants feeling that their positive face is well supported lends support for the use of social media as a deliberative space.

Additionally, lurkers in positive political interactions on Facebook felt significantly more negative face threat than those who engaged in positive political interactions. This, to an extent, implies that participating in positive political interactions does not tend to lead to severe negative face threat. Engagers felt less like their privacy was invaded or that their choices were constrained due to this positive interaction compared to participants who lurked on a political interaction on Facebook that they assessed as positive.

Significant findings related to the fourth and fifth research questions align along the same trend. Participating in a negative interaction leads to perceptions of more face threat, while lurking in a negative interaction leads to more face support. Alternatively, engaging in a positive interaction leads to perceptions of more face support and lurking in a positive interaction leads to more face threat. The relatively lower level of involvement that lurkers have in these interactions may explain this pattern. Lurkers take relatively less offense to negative interactions as they are not personally involved. Similarly, lurkers derive relatively less benefit from observing positive

interactions compared to participants in the interaction. Level of attachment to and involvement with interactions is telling regarding how participants evaluated those interactions.

The sixth research question asked how negative and positive political interactions influenced future behaviors related to political expression on social media. Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they acted out a number of behaviors as a result of the negative and positive interactions they had. Behaviors referred to actions that may be considered engagement, or demonstrating an interest in engaging in political expression, and disengagement, or minimizing political expression. Across platform and interaction type, the finding that engagers indicated more future engagement in the future held; that is, among negative and positive political interactions on Facebook and Twitter, those interactions coded as engaging were associated with more online political engagement in the future.

This finding may be well situated in the existing body of literature on lurking. That it did not matter which platform the interaction was on or if the interaction was negative or positive implies that those who engage about politics on social media may be more likely to continue to express their politics in the future regardless of other criteria. Tendency to lurk may be related to individual traits (Pagani et al., 2011) or one's knowledge of the content discussed and other participants in an online community (Soroka & Radaeli, 2006). These results indicate that those who engage in political expression tend to maintain those habits and do so in the future.

This finding provides some interesting considerations for political talk on social media. It provides evidence to indicate that while individuals that are engagers may have both negative and positive political interactions, they will continue to engage regardless of their emotional assessment of the interaction. Because political interactions may become negative regardless of how tactful or well-informed an individual is, it is promising that that does not turn engagers off

from participating in the future. However, that these findings show a clear trend for engagers also means that lurkers tend to observe. The delineation of mechanisms that may encourage lurkers to engage is beyond the scope of this study, but this finding indicates a need for scholarship that serves that purpose.

In summation, a few key findings should be reiterated. First, although Facebook is the most frequently utilized platform for both exposure to politics and political self-expression, an imbalance between exposure and expression held across all platforms investigated. In general, participants were very frequently exposed to the political opinions and preferences of others on social media, but they much less frequently chose to express their own political views. Second, threat to and support of positive face was found to be relevant across platform and interaction type. Those who engaged in negative interactions on Facebook and Twitter felt more positive face threat than lurkers, while lurkers felt more positive face support. This finding held for positive interactions on Facebook, as well. Positive face refers to a concern with being validated by others. Productive deliberative sessions would likely involve some validation but participants may also be subject to criticism of their perspective. Third, across interaction type and platform, those whose experiences were considered engaging reported that they reacted to those experiences by engaging more; that is, those who engage tend to engage in the future and those who observe tend to observe in the future. Taken together, these findings provide compelling evidence on perceptions of mediated political interactions and how interactions influence future political self-expression.

Limitations

This study provides novel insight on millennials and online political self-expression, but a number of limitations should be noted. Importantly, this is not a study of deliberation. Data

collected does not shed light on quality and outcomes associated with deliberation. Instead, its focus is political interaction, which in some cases revealed itself as talk. However, the numerous components of deliberation may be examined individually without studying the process completely (Mutz, 2008). Understanding political interaction on social media, and specifically how it impacts those who observe it and those who participate in it, may inform future research on mediated deliberation.

Second, the sample is not representative of young people in the United States. Participants were recruited from one research participation system at one university, making the sample lack diversity necessary to generalize findings to millennials or the general population.

Third, some constructs proved problematic. One item from the construct on negative face threat in positive interactions had to be dropped to improve reliability of that scale. The construct measuring negative face support in negative political interactions yielded an unacceptable reliability that could not be improved. Thus, analyses comparing perceived negative face support in negative political interactions between lurkers and engagers are not available. Items that assessed negative face support referred to the participant's response to the other person in the interaction. Because some participants reported interactions they merely observed (i.e. lurkers), these items may not have made sense to them. Future research should attempt to refine face threat and face support measures to consider observation.

Fourth, some components of the design of the study led to significant reduction of the sample size. Participants were directed to a series of questions based on the platform they indicated is where they most frequently engage in political self-expression. They were asked to identify and assess a negative and positive political interaction on that platform specifically. While it may be assumed that they would have a negative and positive experience to share on the

platform on which they most frequently express their politics, it limited participants from sharing experiences on other platforms. Additionally, a substantial number of participant responses were not included in analyses on face threat, face support, and future political engagement due to the coding categories. Although the literature on lurking provides justification for the comparison between lurkers and engagers, alternative groupings may better capture findings related to political expression. For example, Brandtzaeg and Heim (2011) identifies five different types of social media users (i.e. sporadics, lurkers, socializers, debaters, and actives). Conceptualizing interaction type differently may lead to different results.

Finally, data collection was conducted in the midst of presidential campaigning season. While this may mean that participants were more likely to discuss politics online, the frequency, quality, and topics of discussion may not be representative of non-election years. The interactions that participants identified and assessed, in addition to other variables such as political efficacy, partisanship, and political interest, may vary from when there is no upcoming national election.

Future Research

These results provide a plethora of opportunities for future research. First, the application of interpersonal theories and concepts to mediated environments and social media in particular is an underutilized approach. This study provides additional evidence that face threats are perceived online (Chen & Abedin, 2014). That relationships related to positive face threat and support held stronger than those on negative face threat and support is surprising. Negative face refers to a concern of maintaining autonomy. One may assume that political interactions, especially negative interactions, may solicit strong feelings of infringement on autonomy.

However, if individuals respond by ignoring content that leads to these feelings, the outcome of negative face threat may be mitigated.

This work may be expanded through other methods. Content analysis of political interactions on social media may be insightful. Additionally, focus groups or in-depth interviews on people's perceptions of their online political interactions may reveal more nuanced findings that cannot be captured in survey responses.

Considering individual differences more directly may be insightful. Political interest or political efficacy may predict who lurks and who engages. Additionally, meaningful negative or positive political interactions on social media may motivate people to become more informed. This in turn may make them more efficacious or engaged politically. To understand if social media may serve as a deliberative space, it is critical to understand the numerous components that may influence an individual's tendency to participate in political talk online.

Differences among platforms deserve more attention. This study showed a preference toward the more popular platforms for political expression as indicated by participants. Just because there are relatively fewer people who report engaging in political expression on less popular platforms does not mean that those experiences are not worth understanding. Other platforms could prove to be more civil and studying them may provide insight on structures and features that may facilitate more positive and productive discourse. In this investigation, political interaction experiences on Instagram and Tumblr were not probed in depth. Additionally, many participants indicated an "other" platform is where they most frequently express their politics. Among many open-ended responses to the "other" question, Snapchat and reddit were named relatively frequently. Given the increasing popularity of Snapchat among young people (Seetharaman, 2015), gauging political expression on the platform is a worthwhile endeavor.

Although estimates indicate only seven percent of Internet users are on reddit, nearly eighty

percent of them turn to the online discussion board website for news (Barthel, Stocking,

Holcomb, & Mitchell, 2016). Additionally, reddit also hosts 'AMAs' or Ask Me Anything, in

which politically relevant individuals, including President Barack Obama, log onto reddit for a

Q&A session (Barthel et al., 2016). In a similar vein, explicating similarities and differences

among platforms in regards to political expression experiences could shed light on which

platforms may be better suited for productive political talk.

Finally, it would be fruitful to connect political expression to online and offline political

and civic engagement. Expression is important, but understanding how lurkers and engagers

participate in other actions and do or do not maintain similar trends in other spaces would likely

only justify the study of mediated political expression further.

CONCLUSION

As millennials grow older and become a more politically engaged subset of the American

electorate, their political expression habits will increasingly inform the climate for political

expression in the United States. In our networked society, understanding mediated interactions is

instrumental for gauging political views and opinions. The purpose of this study was to explore

how millennials are exposed to others' political preferences and how they choose to express their

own political views. Additionally, relationships on network size and diversity with political

expression on social media were explored. Face (Goffman, 1967) and politeness theory (Brown

& Levison, 1987) provided a framework for understanding political interactions on social media.

Specifically, negative and positive political interactions on social media were assessed for their

perceived threat to face, perceived support of face, and impact on future political expression

behaviors.

Results from this study indicate that Facebook is the platform where millennials most frequently are exposed to others' political preferences and express their own political opinions. Importantly, there is a clear imbalance of exposure to and expression of politics across platforms. Millennials see others' political opinions significantly more frequently than they elect to share their own political stances. Second, the more diverse one's Facebook network, the more political expression on Facebook they engaged in. Third, in negative interactions on Facebook and Twitter, more positive face threat was experienced by engagers, while more positive face support was experienced by lurkers. In positive interactions on Facebook, the inverse was true; lurkers experienced more positive face threat and engagers experienced more face support. This finding explicates benefits from engaging in positive interactions and drawbacks from participating in negative interactions. Additionally, engagers in negative interactions on Facebook experienced more negative face threat and lurkers in positive interactions on Facebook felt more negative face threat. These findings align with the general observation that engaging in negative interactions leads to more face threat while lurkers on negative interactions perceive more face support. In terms of positive interactions, engagers gain more benefit; engagers feel more face support and lurkers feel more face threat suggesting that they receive less benefit from those experiences. Finally, across interaction type and platform, participants who shared interactions coded as engaging tended to indicate they react to those experiences by engaging more, and significantly more so than lurkers.

Political interaction, mediated or not, is more likely to be peaceful and productive if participants feel that their negative and positive face are supported. Breaking down components of mediated political interactions, especially among young people as they are in the process of developing their own political opinions and identities, has proven to be an informative means of

understanding the potential of social media to serve as a deliberative space. Even so, all of this is contingent on young people sharing political content and starting and participating in political discussions online. Social media may be a powerful tool for democracy, but only insofar as people choose to make it so.

REFERENCES

Albrecht, S. (2006). Whose voice is heard in online deliberation?: A study of participation and representation in political debates on the Internet. *Information, Communication & Society, 9*(1), 62-82.

The ANES 2012 Time Series Study [dataset]. (2012). *The American National Election Studies*.

Baek, Y. M., Wojcieszak, M., & Delli Carpini, M. X. (2011). Online versus face-to-face deliberation: Who? Why? What? With what effects? *New Media & Society, 14*(3), 363-383.

Barthel, M., Stocking, G., Holcomb, J., & Mitchell, A. (2016). *Nearly eight-in-ten reddit users get news on the site*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center: http://www.journalism.org/files/2016/02/PJ_2016.02.25_Reddit_FINAL.pdf

Bessette, J. M. (1980). Deliberative democracy: A majority principle in republican government. In R. A. Goldwin & W. A. Schambra (Eds.), *How Democratic is the Constitution?* Washington and London: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Bonner, P. A., Carlitz, R., Gunn, R., Maak, L. E., & Ratliff, C. A. (2005). Bringing the public and government together through on-line dialogues. In J. Gastil & P. Levine (Eds.), *The deliberative democracy handbook: Strategies for effective civic engagement in the 21st century*. San Fransisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

Bosch, T. (2013). Youth, Facebook, and politics in South Africa. *Journal of African Media Studies, 5*(2), 119-130.

boyd, d. m. (2004). *Friendster and publicly articulated social networking*. Paper presented at the CHI '04, Vienna, Austria.

boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13*, 210-230.

Brandtzaeg, P. B., & Heim, J. (2011). A typology of social networking sites users. *International Journal of Web Based Communities, 7*(1), 28-51.

Brett, J. M., Olekalns, M., Friedman, R., Goates, N., Anderson, C., & Lisco, C. C. (2007). Sticks and stones: Language, face, and online dispute resolution. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*(1), 85-99. doi:10.5465/AMJ.2007.24161853

Brown, P., & Levison, S. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Burke, M., & Kraut, R. (2008). *Mind your Ps and Qs: the impact of politeness and rudeness in online communities*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the 2008 ACM conference on Computer supported cooperative work, San Diego, CA, USA.

Cahn, D. (Writer) & J. Yu (Director). (2004). The Supremes [Television series episode], *The West Wing*. Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Television.

Carson, L., & Hartz-Karp, J. (2005). Adapting and combining deliberative designs: Juries, polls, and forums. In J. Gastil & P. Levine (Eds.), *The deliberative democracy handbook: Strategies for effective civic engagement in the 21st century*. San Fransisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

Chen, G. M. (2015). Losing face on social media: Threats to positive face lead to an indirect effect on retaliatory aggression through negative affect. *Communication Research, 42*(6), 819-838.

Chen, G. M., & Abedin, Z. (2014). Exploring differences in how men and women respond to threats to positive face on social media. *Computers in Human Behavior, 38*, 118-126.

Christopherson, K. M. (2007). The positive and negative implications of anonymity in Internet

    social interactions: "On the Internet, Nobody Knows You're a Dog". *Computers in*

    Human Behavior, 23(6), 3038-3056. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2006.09.001

Conroy, M., Feezell, J. T., & Guerrero, M. (2012). Facebook and political engagement: A study

    of online political group membership and offline political engagement. *Computers in*

    Human Behavior, 28(5), 1535-1546.

Correa, T., Hinsley, A. W., & De Zuniga, H. G. (2010). Who interacts on the Web?: The

    intersection of users' personality and social media use. *Computers in Human Behavior,*

    26(2), 247-253.

Cupach, W. R., & Carson, C. L. (2002). Characteristics and consequences of interpersonal

    complaints associated with perceived face threat. *Journal of Social and Personal*

    Relationships, 19(4), 443-462.

Dahlberg, L. (2001). The Internet and democratic discourse: Exploring the prospects of online

    deliberative forums extending the public sphere. *Information, Communication & Society,*

    4(4), 615-633.

Duggan, M. (2015). *Mobile Messaging and Social Media 2015*. Retrieved from Pew Research

    Center: http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/08/Social-Media-Update-2015-

    FINAL2.pdf

Duggan, M., Ellison, N. B., Lampe, C., Lenhart, A., & Madden, M. (2015). *Social Media Update*

    2014. Retrieved from Pew Research Center:

    http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/01/PI_SocialMediaUpdate20144.pdf

E.thePeople. (2015). E.thePeople awarded $200,000 to create new comprehensive voter

    experience as part of the Knight News Challenge on Elections.   Retrieved from

    http://ethepeople.org/in-the-news/

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook "friends:" Social

    capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-*

    Mediated Communication, 12, 1143-1168.

Elster, J. (1998). Introduction. In J. Elster (Ed.), *Deliberative democracy*. Cambridge, United

    Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Facebook. (2015). How News Feed Works.   Retrieved from

    https://www.facebook.com/help/327131014036297/

Facebook. (2016a). Company Info.   Retrieved from http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/

Facebook. (2016b). Milestones.   Retrieved from

    https://www.facebook.com/facebook/info?tab=milestone

Fishkin, J., & Farrar, C. (2005). Deliberative polling: From experiment to community resource.

    In J. Gastil & P. Levine (Eds.), *The deliberative democracy handbook: Strategies for*

    effective civic engagement in the 21st century. San Fransisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

Floridia, A. (2013). *Participatory democracy versus deliberative democracy: Elements for a*

    possible theoretical genealogy. Two histories, some intersections. Paper presented at the

    7th ECPR General Conference, Bordeaux, France.

Floridia, A. (2014). Beyond participatory democracy, towards deliberative democracy: Elements

    of a possible theoretical genealogy. *Rivista Italiana Di Scienza Politica, 44*(3), 299-326.

Fry, R. (2015). *Millennials surpass Gen Xers as the largest generation in the U.S. labor force*.

    Retrieved from Pew Research Center: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-

tank/2015/05/11/millennials-surpass-gen-xers-as-the-largest-generation-in-u-s-labor-force/

Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, P. (2013). Introduction: Face, identity and im/politeness. Looking backward, moving forward: From Goffman to practice theory. *Journal of Politeness Research, 9*(1), 1-33.

Gastil, J. (2008). *Political communication and deliberation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Gastil, J., & Dillard, J. P. (1999). Increasing political sophistication through public deliberation. *Political Communication, 16*, 3-23.

Gastil, J., & Keith, W. M. (2005). A nation that (sometimes) likes to talk: A brief history of public deliberation in the United States. In J. Gastil & P. Levine (Eds.), *The deliberative democracy handbook: Strategies for effective civic engagement in the 21st century*. San Fransisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior*. Chicago: Aldine.

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

Hallsten, J. (2004). Theories of interpersonal communication. In J. R. Baldwin, S. D. Perry, & M. A. Moffitt (Eds.), *Communication theories for everyday life* (pp. 106-121). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Halpern, D., & Gibbs, J. (2013). Social media as a catalyst for online deliberation? Exploring the affordances of Facebook and YouTube for political expression. *Computers in Human Behavior, 29*, 1159-1168.

Hampton, K., Rainie, L., Lu, W., Dwyer, M., Shin, I., & Purcell, K. (2014). *Social Media and the 'Spiral of Silence'*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center:

http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2014/08/PI_Social-networks-and-debate_082614.pdf.

Hangwoo, L. (2005). Behavioral strategies for dealing with flaming in an online forum. *The Sociological Quarterly, 46*(2), 385-403.

Hardaker, C. (2010). Trolling in asynchronous computer-mediated communication: From user discussions to academic definitions. *Journal of Politeness Research. Language, Behaviour, Culture, 6*(2), 215-242. doi:10.1515/jplr.2010.011

Hayes, R. A., Smock, A., & Carr, C. T. (2015). Face[book] management: Self-presentation of political views on social media. *Communication Studies, 66*(5), 549-568.

Himelboim, I., McCreery, S., & Smith, M. (2013). Birds of a feather tweet together: Integrating network and content analyses to examine cross-ideology exposure on Twitter. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 18*, 154-174.

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

Instagram. (2016). Press News.   Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/press/

Jensen, M. J., Danziger, J. N., & Venkatesh, A. (2007). Civil society and cyber society: The role of the Interent in community associations and democratic politics. *The Information Society, 23*, 39-50.

Kaid, L. L., McKinney, M. S., & Tedesco, J. C. (2007). Political information efficacy and young voters. *American Behavioral Scientist, 50*(9), 1093-1111. doi:10.1177/0002764207300040

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons, 53*(1), 59-68.

Kim, J., Wyatt, R. O., & Katz, E. (1999). News, talk, opinion, participation: The part played by conversation in deliberative democracy. *Political Communication, 16*(4), 361-385. doi:10.1080/105846099198541

Kim, Y. (2011). The contribution of social network sites to exposure to political difference: The relationships among SNSs, online political messaging, and exposure to cross-cutting perspectives. *Computers in Human Behavior, 27*(2), 971-977.

Kim, Y., & Chen, H.-T. (2015). Discussion network heterogeniety matters: Examining a moderated mediation model of social media use and civic engagement. *International Journal of Communication, 9*, 2344-2365.

Kressen-Griep, J., Trees, A. R., & Hess, J. A. (2008). Attentive facework during instructional feedback: Key to perceiving mentorship and an optimal learning environment. *Communication Education, 57*(3), 312-332. doi:10.1080/03634520802027347

Krueger, B. S. (2002). Assessing the potential of internet political participation in the United States: A research approach. *American Politics Research, 30*(5), 476-498.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, F. L. F. (2012). Does discussion with disagreement discourage all types of political participation? Survey evidence from Hong Kong. *Communication Research, 39*(4), 543-562.

Lim, S. S., Vardrevu, S., Chan, Y. H., & Basnyat, I. (2012). Facework on Facebook: The online publicness of juvenile delinquents and youths-at-risk. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 56*(4), 346-361.

Litt, E., Spottswood, E., Birnholtz, J., Hancock, J. T., Smith, M. E., & Reynolds, L. (2014). *Awkward encounters of an "other" kind: Collective self-presentation and face threat on Facebook.* Paper presented at the 17th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work, Baltimore, MD.

Luckerson, V. (2015). Here's How Facebook's News Feed Actually Works. Retrieved from http://time.com/3950525/facebook-news-feed-algorithm/

Mansbridge, J. J. (1980). *Beyond adversary democracy*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.

Marone, V. (2015). "Keep in mind that I will be improving": The opening post as a request for absolution. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies, 5*(1), 136-158.

McDevitt, M., Kiousis, S., & Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2003). Spiral of moderation: Opinion expressing in computer-mediated discussion. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 15*(4), 454-470.

McKendree, J., Stenning, K., Mayes, T., Lee, J., & Cox, R. (1998). Why observing a dialogue may benefit learning. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning, 14*(2), 110-119.

Melville, K., Willingham, T. L., & Dedrick, J. R. (2005). A network of communities promoting public deliberation. In J. Gastil & P. Levine (Eds.), *The deliberative democracy handbook: Strategies for effective civic engagement in the 21st century*. San Fransisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

Meraz, S. (2005). *Lurking in partisan space: Analyzig political conversation on the Howard Dean Candidate Blog*. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY.

Metts, S., & Grohskopf, E. (2003). Impression management: Goals, strategies, and skills. In J. O. Greene & B. R. Burleson (Eds.), *Handbook of communication and social interaction skills* (pp. 357-399). Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Miller, P. R., Bobkowski, P. S., Malianiak, D., & Rapoport, R. B. (2015). Talking politics on Facebook: Network centrality and political discussion practices in social media. *Political Research Quarterly, 68*(2), 377-391. doi:10.1177/1065912915580135

Min, S.-J. (2007). Online vs. face-to-face deliberation: Effects on civic engagement. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 12*, 1369-1387.

Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., Kiley, J., & Masta, K. E. (2014). *Political polarization and media habits*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center: http://www.journalism.org/files/2014/10/Political-Polarization-and-Media-Habits-FINAL-REPORT-7-27-15.pdf

Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., & Masta, K. E. (2015a). *Millennials & political news: Social media - the local TV for the next generation?* Retrieved from Pew Research Center: http://www.journalism.org/files/2015/06/Millennials-and-News-FINAL-7-27-15.pdf

Mitchell, A., Gottfried, J., & Masta, K. E. (2015b). *Millennials and political news*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center: http://www.journalism.org/2015/06/01/millennials-political-news/

Monnoyer-Smith, L., & Wojcik, S. (2012). Technology and the quality of public deliberation: A comparison between on and offline participation. *International Journal of Electronic Governance, 5*(1), 24-44.

Mutz, D. C. (2002). The consequences of cross-cutting networks for political participation. *American Journal of Political Science, 46*(4), 838-855.

Mutz, D. C. (2008). Is deliberative democracy a falsifiable theory? *Annual Review of Political Science, 11*, 521-538.

Mutz, D. C., & Mondak, J. J. (2006). The workplace as a context for cross-cutting political discourse. *The Journal of Politics, 68*(1), 140-155.

Mutz, D. C., & Young, L. (2011). Communication and public opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 75*(5), 1018-1044.

Nonnecke, B., Preece, J., & Andrews, D. (2004). *What lurkers and posters think of each other.* Paper presented at the 37th Hawaii International Conference on Systems Science, Big Island, HI.

Obar, J. A., Zube, P., & Lampe, C. (2012). Advocacy 2.0: An analysis of how advocacy groups in the United States perceive and use social media as tools for facilitating civic engagement and collective action. *Journal of Information Policy, 2*, 1-25.

Pagani, M., Hofacker, C. F., & Goldsmith, R. E. (2011). The influence of personality on active and passive use of social networking sites. *Psychology & Marketing, 28*(5), 441-456.

Page, B. (1993). *Who deliberates? Mass media in modern democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Perrin, A. (2015a). *One-fifth of Americans report going online 'almost constantly'*. Retrieved

    from Pew Research Center: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/12/08/one-fifth-

    of-americans-report-going-online-almost-constantly/

Perrin, A. (2015b). *Social Media Usage: 2000-2015*. Retrieved from Pew Reserach Center:

    http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/.

Perrin, A. (2015c). *Social networking usage: 2005-2015*. Retrieved from Pew Research Center:

    http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/2015/Social-Networking-Usage-2005-2015/

Preece, J., Nonnecke, B., & Andrews, D. (2004). The top five reasons for lurking: improving

    community experiences for everyone. *Computers in Human Behavior, 20*(2), 201-223.

Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York,

    NY: Simon & Schuster.

Rainie, L., & Smith, A. (2012). *Social Networking Sites and Politics*. Retrieved from Pew

    Research Center:

    http://www.pewinternet.org/~/media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_SNS_and_politics.pdf

Rau, P.-L. P., Gao, Q., & Ding, Y. (2008). Relationship between the level of intimacy and

    lurking in online social network services. *Computers in Human Behavior, 24*(6), 2757-

    2770.

Rosenberg, J., & Egbert, N. (2011). Online impression management: Personality traits and

    concerns for secondary goals as predictors of self-presentation tactics on Facebook.

    Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 17, 1-18.

Sánchez-Franco, M. J., Buitrago-Esquinas, E. M., & Yñiguez, R. (2012). How to intensify the

    individual's feelings of belonging to a social networking site? Contributions from

community drivers and post-adoption behaviours. *Management Decision, 50*(6), 1137-1154.

Sankaram, K., & Schober, M. F. (2015). Reading a blog when empowered to comment: Posting, lurking, and non-interactive reading. *Discourse Processes, 52*(5/6), 406-433.

Scheufele, D. A., Hardy, B. W., Brossard, D., Waismel‑Manor, I. S., & Nisbet, E. (2006). Democracy based on difference: Examining the links between structural heterogeneity, heterogeneity of discussion networks, and democratic citizenship. *Journal of Communication, 56*(4), 728-753.

Schlosser, A. E. (2005). Posting versus lurking: Communicating in a multiple audience context. *Journal of Consumer Research, 32*(2), 260-265.

Schudson, M. (1998). *The good citizen: A history of American civic life*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Seetharaman, D. (2015). Survey finds teens prefer Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat for social networks. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2015/10/16/survey-finds-teens-prefer-instagram-snapchat-among-social-networks/

Shah, D. V., Kwak, N., & Holbert, R. L. (2001). "Connecting" and "disconnecting" with civic life: Patterns of Internet use and the production of social capital. *Political Communication, 18*, 141-162.

Soroka, V., & Radaeli, S. (2006). *Invisible participants: How cultural capital relates to lurking behavior.* Paper presented at the International World Wide Web Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Stromer-Galley, J., Bryant, L., & Bimber, B. (2015). Context and medium matter: Expressing

disagreements online and face-to-face in political deliberations. *Journal of Public*

Deliberation, 11(1), 1-22.

Sunstein, C. R. (2007). *Republic.com 2.0*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tumblr. (2016). About.   Retrieved from https://www.tumblr.com/about

Twitter. (2016a). Company.   Retrieved from https://about.twitter.com/company

Twitter. (2016b). The Twitter glossary.   Retrieved from

https://support.twitter.com/articles/166337

Valenzuela, S., Kim, Y., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2012). Social networks that matter: Exploring the

role of political discussion for online political participation. *International Journal of*

Public Opinion Research, 24(2), 163-184.

Vesnic-Alujevic, L. (2012). Political participation and web 2.0 in Europe: A case study of

Facebook. *Public Relations Review, 38*(3), 466-470.

Weiksner, G. M. (2005). E-thePeople.org: Large-scale, ongoing deliberation. In J. Gastil & P.

Levine (Eds.), *The deliberative democracy handbook: Strategies for effective civic*

engagement in the 21st century. San Fransisco, CA: Josey-Bass.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A*

guide to managing knowledge. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Wojcieszak, M. E., & Mutz, D. C. (2009). Online groups and political discourse: Do online

discussion spaces facilitate exposure to political disagreement? *Journal of*

Communication, 59, 40-56.

Zhang, S., & Stafford, L. (2008). Perceived face threat of honest but hurtful evaluative messages

in romantic relationships. *Western Journal of Communication, 72*(1), 19-39.

APPENDIX A

Coded variables for open-ended items

Variable	Description	Examples
No observation or expression	Explicit statement that the participant does not observe or engage in political expression on Facebook or Twitter	"I personally haven't had any unpleasant interactions on facebook to speak of" "I don't interact with politics or political opinions on Twitter very much."
Observing political expression	Seeing a political interaction on Facebook or Twitter without being involved in the interaction The response may include details about a communicative action (e.g. post, comment, share, like, favorite, reply) by someone who is not the participant OR it may only say that they see other people talk about politics on Facebook or Twitter without getting involved.	"My friend posts daily about each of the presidential candidates and how none of them are viable and that none of them should be running. They said that they thought our country is going downhill and how people should consider moving." "Seeing tweets that expressed opinions or points of view that were not substantiated by facts"
Engaging in political expression	Explicit statement that the participant took a communicative action (e.g. wrote, said, expressed, posted, commented, shared, liked, favorited, retweeted, replied, unfollowed, hid, deleted) in a political interaction on Facebook or Twitter they started or got involved with Just "agreeing" or "thinking" in reaction to something is observing (code as 1). To be engaging, it must be clear the participant was involved and did something beyond reading or thinking.	"I "shared" a video that goes against one of the political candidates and one of my friends on Facebook commented on the video saying how the video was incorrect." "A friend shared an article that I did agree with and I appreciated that we had similar views. I favorited the post"
Unclear or other	"BLANK," "N/A," "none," or a miscellaneous answer Discussion of observation or engagement that is not on Facebook or Twitter General opinions or reflection seemingly unrelated to any specific interaction.	"There are a lot of posts that says "Tag a person who looks like a celery" which is pretty mean but some people don't take it as offensively." "It allows everyone to think their opinions have equal value (everyone has a right to voice their opinion but not all opinions are equal) so you really get to see the worst of humanity."

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?
   Female
   Male
   Other (please specify): _____

2. Please indicate your ethnicity.
   White/Caucasian
   Black/African American
   Asian American/Pacific Islander
   Hispanic/Latino/Latina
   Biracial
   Multiracial
   Other (please specify): _____

3. How old are you?
   _____

4. What is your major or intended major?
   _____

5. Which of the following most closely describes you?
   Extremely liberal
   Liberal
   Slightly liberal
   Moderate; middle of the road
   Slightly conservative
   Conservative
   Extremely conservative

6. Generally speaking, which do you consider yourself to be?
   Democrat
   Republican
   Independent

7. *If Democrat:* Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?
   Strong Democrat
   Not very strong Democrat

   If Republican: Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?
   Strong Republican
   Not very strong Republican

If Independent: Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic Party?
Republican Party
Democratic Party

8. In general, how interested are you in politics?

Not interested						Very interested
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. Rate your agreement with the following statements about public life.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I consider myself well qualified to participate in politics.	○	○	○	○	○
I think that I am better informed about politics and government than most people.	○	○	○	○	○
I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our county.	○	○	○	○	○
If a friend asked me about the presidential election, I feel I would have enough information to help my friend figure out who to vote for.	○	○	○	○	○

10. Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly than the other.

	Disagree strongly	Disagree moderately	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree moderately	Agree strongly
Extraverted, enthusiastic	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Critical, quarrelsome	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Dependable, self-disciplined	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Anxious, easily upset	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Open to new experiences, complex	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Reserved, quiet	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Sympathetic, warm	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Disorganized, careless	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Calm, emotionally stable	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Conventional, uncreative	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

11. How often do you use the following social media?

	Never	Less than once a month	About once a month	About once a week	Several times a week	About once a day	Several times a day
Facebook	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Twitter	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Instagram	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Tumblr	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

12. On which of the social media that you use do you see other people's political opinions or preferences? Check all that apply. Select at least one platform.
Facebook
Twitter
Instagram
Tumblr
Other (please specify): _____

13. Of the social media you use that include other people's political opinions or preferences, which do you use most often?
Facebook
Twitter
Instagram
Tumblr
Other (please specify): _____

14. How often do you see other people's political opinions or preferences on [Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Tumblr/the platform you specified in the last question]?
Never
Less than once a month
About once a month
About once a week
Several times a week
About once a day
Several times a day

15. On which of the social media that you use do you express your own political opinions or preferences? (Examples of expression may include posting your own political opinions, sharing your political party identification, "liking," "favoriting," commenting on, or sharing political content posted by others, etc.) Check all that apply. Select at least one platform.
Facebook
Twitter
Instagram
Tumblr

Other (please specify): _____

16. Of the social media you use to express your political opinions or preferences, on which do you do so most often?
Facebook
Twitter
Instagram
Tumblr
Other (please specify): _____

17. How frequently do your express your political opinions on [Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Tumblr/the platform you specified in the last question]?
Never
Less than once a month
About once a month
About once a week
Several times a week
About once a day
Several times a day

18. About how many total [Facebook friends/Twitter followers/Instagram followers/Tumblr followers/people are in your network on the social media platform you specified] do you have? If you're not sure, take your best guess.
_____

19. Do your [Facebook friends/Twitter followers/Instagram followers/Tumblr followers/people in your network on the social media platform you specified] include any of the following groups? Check all that apply.
Boyfriend/Girlfriend/Spouse
Friends
Acquaintances
Family members
Classmates (Current or former)
Teachers/Professors (Current or former)
Co-workers/Colleagues/Clients (Current or former)
Boss/Manager (Current or former)
Potential employers/Recruiters
People I don't know
Other

20. How often do you use [platform] do to any of the following?

If Facebook:

	Never	Less than once a month	About once a month	About once a week	Several times a week	About once a day	Several times a day
Post links to political stories or articles for others to read	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Post your own opinions or comments on political issues	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Encourage other people to take action on a political issue that is important to you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Share content related to political issues that was originally posted by someone else	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"Like" material related to political issues that others have posted	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Belong to a group that is involved in political issues, or that is working to advance a political cause	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Follow elected officials or candidates for office	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

If Twitter:

	Never	Less than once a month	About once a month	About once a week	Several times a week	About once a day	Several times a day
Post links to political stories or articles for others to read	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Post your own opinions or comments on political issues	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Encourage other people to take action on a political issue that is important to you	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Retweet content related to political issues that was originally posted by someone else	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
"Favorite" material related to political issues that others have tweeted	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Follow a group that is involved in political issues, or that is working to advance a political cause	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Follow elected officials or candidates for office	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If Instagram:

	Never	Less than once a month	About once a month	About once a week	Several times a week	About once a day	Several times a day
Post political content for others to see	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Write comments about political issues	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Encourage other people to take action on a political issue that is important to you	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Repost content related to political issues that was originally posted by someone else	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
"Like" material related to political issues that others have posted	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Follow a group that is involved in political issues, or that is working to advance a political cause	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Follow elected officials or candidates for office	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If Tumblr:

	Never	Less than once a month	About once a month	About once a week	Several times a week	About once a day	Several times a day
Post links to political stories or articles for others to read	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Post your own opinions or comments on political issues	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Encourage other people to take action on a political issue that is important to you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reblog content related to political issues that was originally posted by someone else	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"Like" material related to political issues that others have posted	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Follow a group that is involved in political issues, or that is working to advance a political cause	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Follow elected officials or candidates for office	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

If "other":

	Never	Less than once a month	About once a month	About once a week	Several times a week	About once a day	Several times a day
Post political content (e.g. links to political stories or articles for others to read, political images)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Post your own opinions or comments on political issues	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Encourage other people to take action on a political issue that is important to you	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Repost content related to political issues that was originally posted by someone else	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"Like," "upvote," or promote material related to political issues that others have posted	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Belong to a group that is involved in political issues, or that is working to advance a political cause	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Follow elected officials or candidates for office	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

21. Think about a recent negative or unpleasant interaction you had on [Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Tumblr/the platform you specified] that had to do with politics or political opinions. Describe what happened.
    _____

22. Consider the individual with whom you had this interaction. This person's actions:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Were tactful	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Were polite	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Constrained my choices	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Damaged the relationship between us	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Were rude	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Took away some of my independence	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Showed contempt toward me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Were insensitive	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made me look bad	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Strengthened the relationship between us	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Showed disrespect towards me	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Invaded my privacy	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Were justified	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Were hostile	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

23. Consider the individual with who you had this interaction. This person:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Left me free to choose how to respond	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made sure that he or she didn't cast me in a bad light	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made me feel like I could choose how to respond	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Worked to avoid making me look bad	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made me feel pushed to agree with him/her	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Showed understanding	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made it hard for me to propose my own ideas in light of his/her actions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Seemed attentive to me as an individual	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

24. How close were you to this person prior to this interaction?
    No relationship at all
    Not close
    Somewhat close
    Close
    Very close

25. Compared with this person, would you say your political views are much the same, somewhat different, or very different?
    Much the same
    Somewhat different
    Very different

26. Do you think this person normally favors Republicans, Democrats, or neither?
    Republicans
    Democrats
    Neither

27. Overall, do you feel this person shares most of your views on political issues or opposes them?
    Shares most of your views
    Opposes most of your views

28. Think specifically about actions you have taken as a result of the negative or unpleasant experience you wrote about. Has that experience motivated you to do any of the following?

If Facebook:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on Facebook reading political posts	○	○	○	○
Visit the Facebook page of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw a friend had liked or shared it	○	○	○	○
Like or become a fan of Facebook pages for political candidates, parties, or issues	○	○	○	○
"Like" a status update about politics	○	○	○	○
Comment on a political post by a Facebook friend to express agreement	○	○	○	○
Comment on a political post by a Facebook friend to express disagreement	○	○	○	○
Share a political post by a Facebook friend	○	○	○	○
Share a political post by a page I like or follow	○	○	○	○
Post links to a political website or news story	○	○	○	○
Post a status asking my friends what they think about a candidate or issue	○	○	○	○
Post a status encouraging my friends to vote for a specific candidate	○	○	○	○
Ignore political posts from a Facebook friend without reading them	○	○	○	○
Ignore links to a political website or news story from a Facebook friend without reading them	○	○	○	○
Hide a Facebook friend's status updates because they post too much about politics	○	○	○	○
Hide a Facebook friend's status updates because I disagree with the political views they post	○	○	○	○
Unfriend a Facebook friend because they post about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Unfriend a Facebook friend because I disagree with the political views they post	○	○	○	○
Block a Facebook friend from seeing part of my profile so they do not know my political opinions or preferences	○	○	○	○
Block a Facebook friend from seeing my status updates so they do not know my political opinions or preferences	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you did on Facebook as a result of the negative or unpleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above?
_____

If Twitter:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on Twitter reading political tweets	○	○	○	○
Visit the Twitter profile of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because someone I follow mentioned or tweeted at the account	○	○	○	○
Follow accounts associated with political candidates, parties, or issues	○	○	○	○
"Favorite" a tweet about politics	○	○	○	○
Reply to a tweet about politics to express agreement	○	○	○	○
Reply to a tweet about politics to express disagreement	○	○	○	○
Retweet a political tweet by an individual I follow	○	○	○	○
Retweet a political tweet by a group or organization I follow	○	○	○	○
Post links to a political website or news story	○	○	○	○
Post a tweet asking my followers what they think about a candidate or issue	○	○	○	○
Post a tweet encouraging my followers to vote for a specific candidate	○	○	○	○
Ignore tweets about politics without reading them	○	○	○	○
Ignore links to a political website or news story without reading them	○	○	○	○
Mute an account I follow because they tweet about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Mute an account I follow because I disagree with the political views they tweet	○	○	○	○
Unfollow an account because they tweet about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Unfollow an account because I disagree with the political views they tweet	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you did on Twitter as a result of the negative or unpleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above?
_____

If Instagram:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on Instagram looking at political posts	○	○	○	○
Visit the Instagram profile of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw someone I follow liked or commented on their post or followed them	○	○	○	○
Follow an Instagram account associated with political candidates, parties, or issues	○	○	○	○
"Like" an Instagram post about politics	○	○	○	○
Comment on an Instagram post about politics to express agreement	○	○	○	○
Comment on an Instagram post about politics to express disagreement	○	○	○	○
Regram an Instagram post about politics from an individual I follow	○	○	○	○
Regram an Instagram post about politics from a group or organization I follow	○	○	○	○
Post on Instagram to share political news or information	○	○	○	○
Post on Instagram to ask my followers what they think about a candidate or issue	○	○	○	○
Post on Instagram to encourage my followers to vote for a specific candidate	○	○	○	○
Ignore posts about politics without looking at them or reading them	○	○	○	○
Ignore links to a political website or news story included in the captions of posts	○	○	○	○
Unfollow an account because they post about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Unfollow an account because I disagree with the political views they post	○	○	○	○
Block an account because they post about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Block an account because I disagree with the	○	○	○	○

political views they post				

Is there anything else you did on Instagram as a result of the negative or unpleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above?
_____

If Tumblr:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on Tumblr reading political posts	○	○	○	○
Visit the blog of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw a friend had liked or shared it	○	○	○	○
Follow blogs for political candidates, parties, or issues	○	○	○	○
"Like" a blog post about politics	○	○	○	○
Reblog and add commentary to a blog post about politics to express agreement	○	○	○	○
Reblog and add commentary to a blog post about politics to express disagreement	○	○	○	○
Reblog a blog post about politics from an individual I follow	○	○	○	○
Reblog a blog post about politics from a group or organization I follow	○	○	○	○
Post links to a political website or news story	○	○	○	○
Post a blog asking my followers what they think about a candidate or issue	○	○	○	○
Post a blog encouraging my followers to vote for a specific candidate	○	○	○	○
Skip over political posts from a blog I follow without reading them	○	○	○	○
Skip over links to a political website or news story from a blog I follow without reading them	○	○	○	○
Block a blog I follow because they post about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Block a blog I follow because I disagree with the political views they post	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you did on Tumblr as a result of the negative or unpleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above?

_____

If "other":

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on that site reading political posts	○	○	○	○
Visit the page or profile of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw another user had liked, upvoted, or promoted it in some way	○	○	○	○
Follow pages or subscribe to updates from profiles associated with political candidates, parties, or issues	○	○	○	○
"Like," "upvote," or equivalently endorse a post about politics	○	○	○	○
Comment on or reply to a post about politics by another user to express agreement	○	○	○	○
Comment on or reply to a post about politics by another user to express disagreement	○	○	○	○
Share a post about politics by another individual user in your network	○	○	○	○
Share a post about politics by a group or organization in your network	○	○	○	○
Post links to a political website or news story	○	○	○	○
Ask other users on that platform what they think about a candidate or issue	○	○	○	○
Encourage other users on that platform to vote for a specific candidate	○	○	○	○
Ignore political posts from another user without reading them	○	○	○	○
Ignore links to a political website or news story from another user without reading them	○	○	○	○
Delete or block another user because they post about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Delete or block another user because I disagree with the political views they post	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you did on the platform you specified as a result of the negative or unpleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above?

_____

29. Think about a recent positive or pleasant interaction you had on [Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Tumblr/the platform you specified] that had to do with politics or political opinions. Describe what happened.
_____

30. Consider the individual with whom you had this interaction. This person's actions:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Were tactful	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Were polite	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Constrained my choices	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Damaged the relationship between us	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Were rude	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Took away some of my independence	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Showed contempt toward me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Were insensitive	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Made me look bad	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Strengthened the relationship between us	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Showed disrespect towards me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Invaded my privacy	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Were justified	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Were hostile	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

31. Consider the individual with who you had this interaction. This person:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Left me free to choose how to respond	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made sure that he or she didn't cast me in a bad light	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made me feel like I could choose how to respond	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Worked to avoid making me look bad	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made me feel pushed to agree with him/her	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Showed understanding	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Made it hard for me to propose my own ideas in light of his/her actions	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Seemed attentive to me as an individual	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

32. How close were you to this person prior to this interaction?
    No relationship at all
    Not close
    Somewhat close
    Close
    Very close

33. Compared with this person, would you say your political views are much the same, somewhat different, or very different?
    Much the same
    Somewhat different
    Very different

34. Do you think this person normally favors Republicans, Democrats, or neither?
    Republicans
    Democrats
    Neither

35. Overall, do you feel this person shares most of your views on political issues or opposes them?
    Shares most of your views
    Opposes most of your views

36. Think specifically about actions you have taken as a result of the positive or pleasant experience you wrote about. Has that experience motivated you to do any of the following?

If Facebook:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on Facebook reading political posts	○	○	○	○
Visit the Facebook page of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw a friend had liked or shared it	○	○	○	○
Like or become a fan of Facebook pages for political candidates, parties, or issues	○	○	○	○
"Like" a status update about politics	○	○	○	○
Comment on a political post by a Facebook friend to express agreement	○	○	○	○
Comment on a political post by a Facebook friend to express disagreement	○	○	○	○
Share a political post by a Facebook friend	○	○	○	○
Share a political post by a page I like or follow	○	○	○	○
Post links to a political website or news story	○	○	○	○
Post a status asking my friends what they think about a candidate or issue	○	○	○	○
Post a status encouraging my friends to vote for a specific candidate	○	○	○	○
Ignore political posts from a Facebook friend without reading them	○	○	○	○
Ignore links to a political website or news story from a Facebook friend without reading them	○	○	○	○
Hide a Facebook friend's status updates because they post too much about politics	○	○	○	○
Hide a Facebook friend's status updates because I disagree with the political views they post	○	○	○	○
Unfriend a Facebook friend because they post about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Unfriend a Facebook friend because I disagree with the political views they post	○	○	○	○
Block a Facebook friend from seeing part of my profile so they do not know my political opinions or preferences	○	○	○	○
Block a Facebook friend from seeing my status updates so they do not know my political opinions or preferences	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you did on Facebook as a result of the positive or pleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above?
_____

If Twitter:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on Twitter reading political tweets	○	○	○	○
Visit the Twitter profile of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because someone I follow mentioned or tweeted at the account	○	○	○	○
Follow accounts associated with political candidates, parties, or issues	○	○	○	○
"Favorite" a tweet about politics	○	○	○	○
Reply to a tweet about politics to express agreement	○	○	○	○
Reply to a tweet about politics to express disagreement	○	○	○	○
Retweet a political tweet by an individual I follow	○	○	○	○
Retweet a political tweet by a group or organization I follow	○	○	○	○
Post links to a political website or news story	○	○	○	○
Post a tweet asking my followers what they think about a candidate or issue	○	○	○	○
Post a tweet encouraging my followers to vote for a specific candidate	○	○	○	○
Ignore tweets about politics without reading them	○	○	○	○
Ignore links to a political website or news story without reading them	○	○	○	○
Mute an account I follow because they tweet about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Mute an account I follow because I disagree with the political views they tweet	○	○	○	○
Unfollow an account because they tweet about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Unfollow an account because I disagree with the political views they tweet	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you did on Twitter as a result of the positive or pleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above?
_____

If Instagram:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on Instagram looking at political posts	❍	❍	❍	❍
Visit the Instagram profile of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw someone I follow liked or commented on their post or followed them	❍	❍	❍	❍
Follow an Instagram account associated with political candidates, parties, or issues	❍	❍	❍	❍
"Like" an Instagram post about politics	❍	❍	❍	❍
Comment on an Instagram post about politics to express agreement	❍	❍	❍	❍
Comment on an Instagram post about politics to express disagreement	❍	❍	❍	❍
Regram an Instagram post about politics from an individual I follow	❍	❍	❍	❍
Regram an Instagram post about politics from a group or organization I follow	❍	❍	❍	❍
Post on Instagram to share political news or information	❍	❍	❍	❍
Post on Instagram to ask my followers what they think about a candidate or issue	❍	❍	❍	❍
Post on Instagram to encourage my followers to vote for a specific candidate	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ignore posts about politics without looking at them or reading them	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ignore links to a political website or news story included in the captions of posts	❍	❍	❍	❍
Unfollow an account because they post about politics too much	❍	❍	❍	❍
Unfollow an account because I disagree with the political views they post	❍	❍	❍	❍
Block an account because they post about politics too much	❍	❍	❍	❍
Block an account because I disagree with the	❍	❍	❍	❍

political views they post				

Is there anything else you did on Instagram as a result of the positive or pleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above? _____

If Tumblr:

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on Tumblr reading political posts	○	○	○	○
Visit the blog of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw a friend had liked or shared it	○	○	○	○
Follow blogs for political candidates, parties, or issues	○	○	○	○
"Like" a blog post about politics	○	○	○	○
Reblog and add commentary to a blog post about politics to express agreement	○	○	○	○
Reblog and add commentary to a blog post about politics to express disagreement	○	○	○	○
Reblog a blog post about politics from an individual I follow	○	○	○	○
Reblog a blog post about politics from a group or organization I follow	○	○	○	○
Post links to a political website or news story	○	○	○	○
Post a blog asking my followers what they think about a candidate or issue	○	○	○	○
Post a blog encouraging my followers to vote for a specific candidate	○	○	○	○
Skip over political posts from a blog I follow without reading them	○	○	○	○
Skip over links to a political website or news story from a blog I follow without reading them	○	○	○	○
Block a blog I follow because they post about politics too much	○	○	○	○
Block a blog I follow because I disagree with the political views they post	○	○	○	○

Is there anything else you did on Tumblr as a result of the positive or pleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above?

If "other":

_____

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently
Spend some of my time on that site reading political posts	❍	❍	❍	❍
Visit the page or profile of a candidate, group, cause, or something else political because I saw another user had liked, upvoted, or promoted it in some way	❍	❍	❍	❍
Follow pages or subscribe to updates from profiles associated with political candidates, parties, or issues	❍	❍	❍	❍
"Like," "upvote," or equivalently endorse a post about politics	❍	❍	❍	❍
Comment on or reply to a post about politics by another user to express agreement	❍	❍	❍	❍
Comment on or reply to a post about politics by another user to express disagreement	❍	❍	❍	❍
Share a post about politics by another individual user in your network	❍	❍	❍	❍
Share a post about politics by a group or organization in your network	❍	❍	❍	❍
Post links to a political website or news story	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ask other users on that platform what they think about a candidate or issue	❍	❍	❍	❍
Encourage other users on that platform to vote for a specific candidate	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ignore political posts from another user without reading them	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ignore links to a political website or news story from another user without reading them	❍	❍	❍	❍
Delete or block another user because they post about politics too much	❍	❍	❍	❍
Delete or block another user because I disagree with the political views they post	❍	❍	❍	❍

Is there anything else you did on the platform you specified as a result of the positive or pleasant experience you wrote about that was not mentioned in the questions above?

_____