Reclaiming Stigmatized Narratives: The Networked Disclosure Landscape of #MeToo

Ryan J. Gallagher
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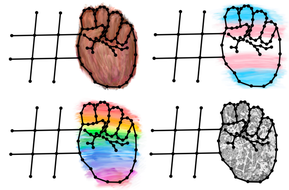
osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/qsmce

Northeastern University
Network Science Institute



CoMM Lab

Collaborators

Elizabeth Stowell

PhD Candidate

Wellness Technology Lab
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netsi | Northeastern University
Network Science Institute

CoMM Lab

wellness

Content warning:

This talk heavily discusses issues of sexual violence against women

In the United States...

1 in every **3** women has experienced an act of sexual violence

1 in every **6** women has experienced rape or attempted rape

1 in every **6** women has experienced stalking

1 in every **3** women has experienced intimate partner violence

1 in every **3** women has experienced sexual harassment in the workplace

In the United States...

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Yet, due to stigmatization...

The majority of experiences of sexual violence are never formally reported

Of survivors who do disclose, most disclose informally to a close friend

Online Disclosures and #MeToo

Social media has been instrumental for allowing individuals to **anonymously** disclose to **audiences of strangers** with shared stigmatized experiences

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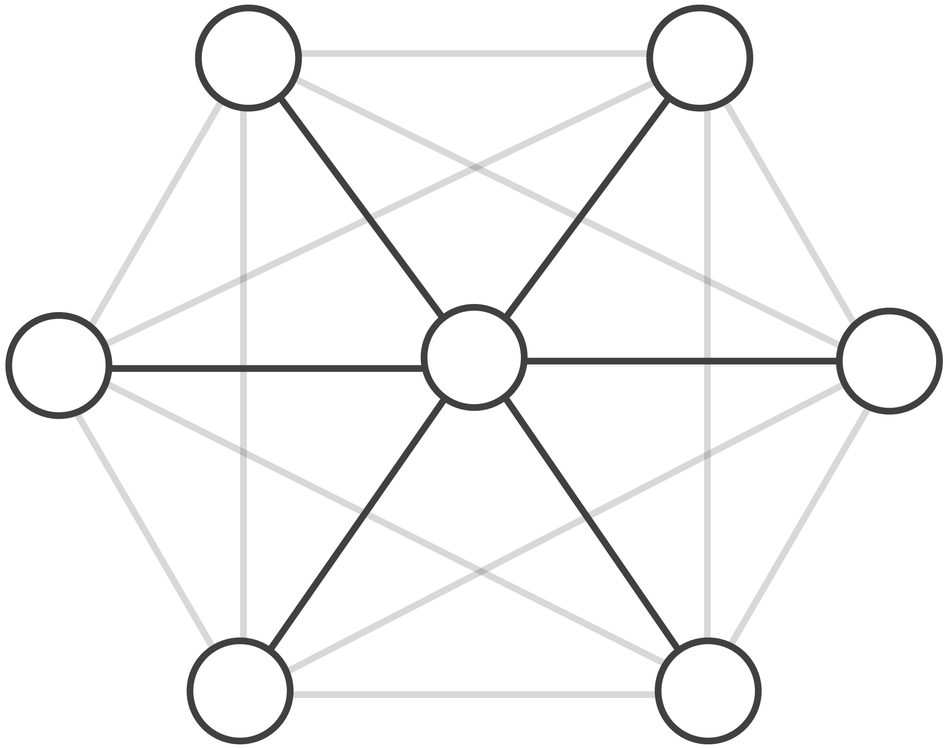
In 48 hours though...

- #MeToo and “metoo” was used **12 million** times on Facebook
- #MeToo was used **1 million** times on Twitter
- **45%** of Facebook users had a friend disclose “me too”

Network-Level Reciprocal Disclosures

In interviews with women who have experienced pregnancy loss, Andalibi and Forte found that some women **publicly** and **directly** disclosed their experiences to their entire Facebook networks



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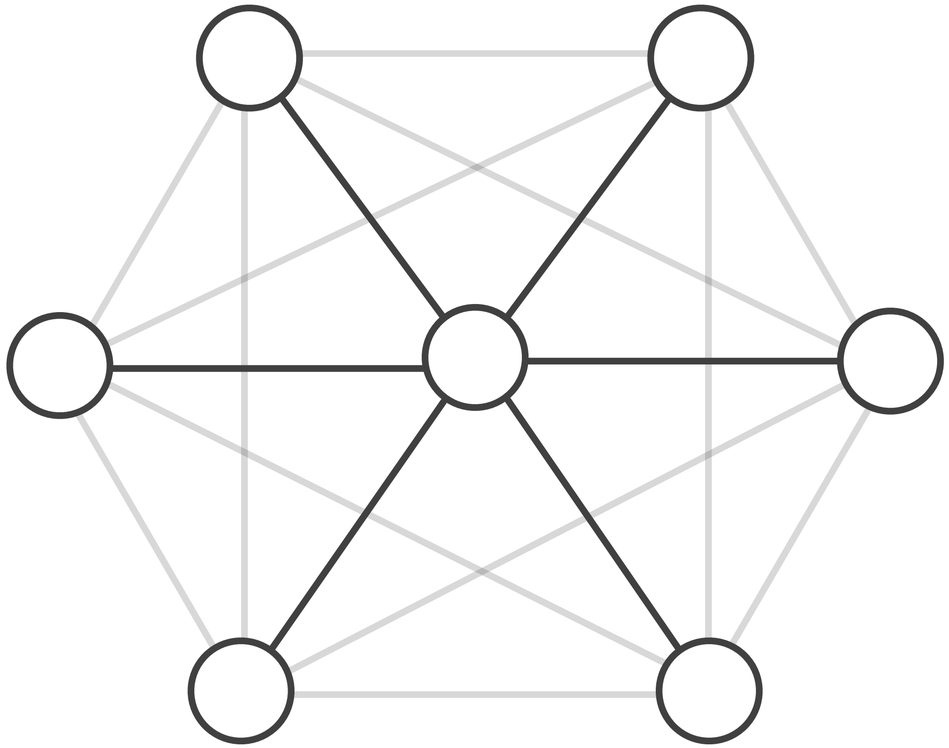

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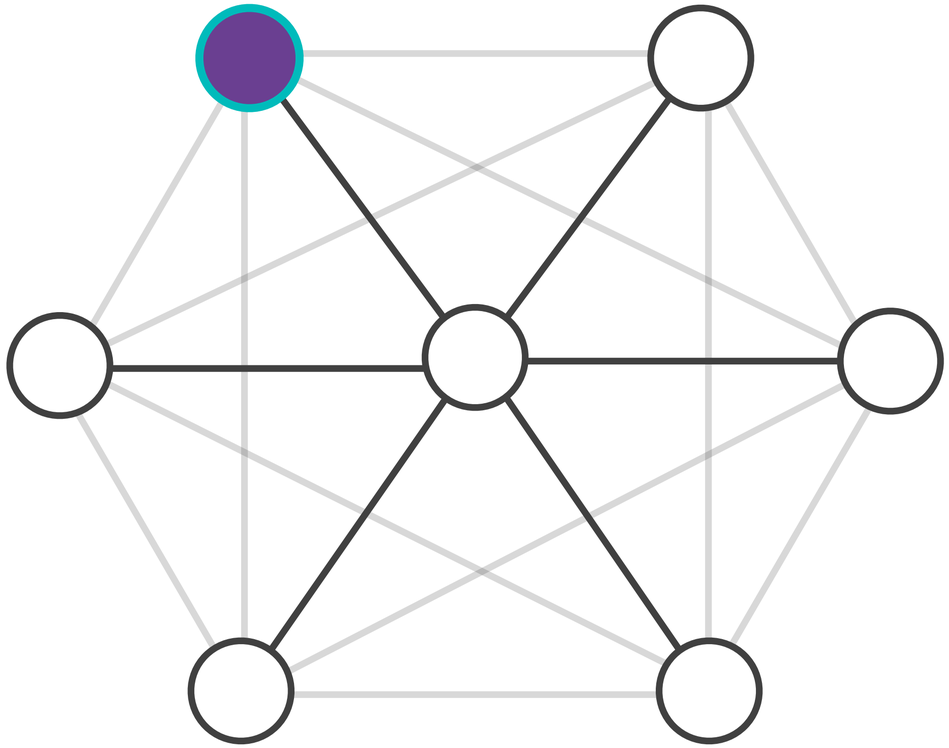
Disclosure by another in the network



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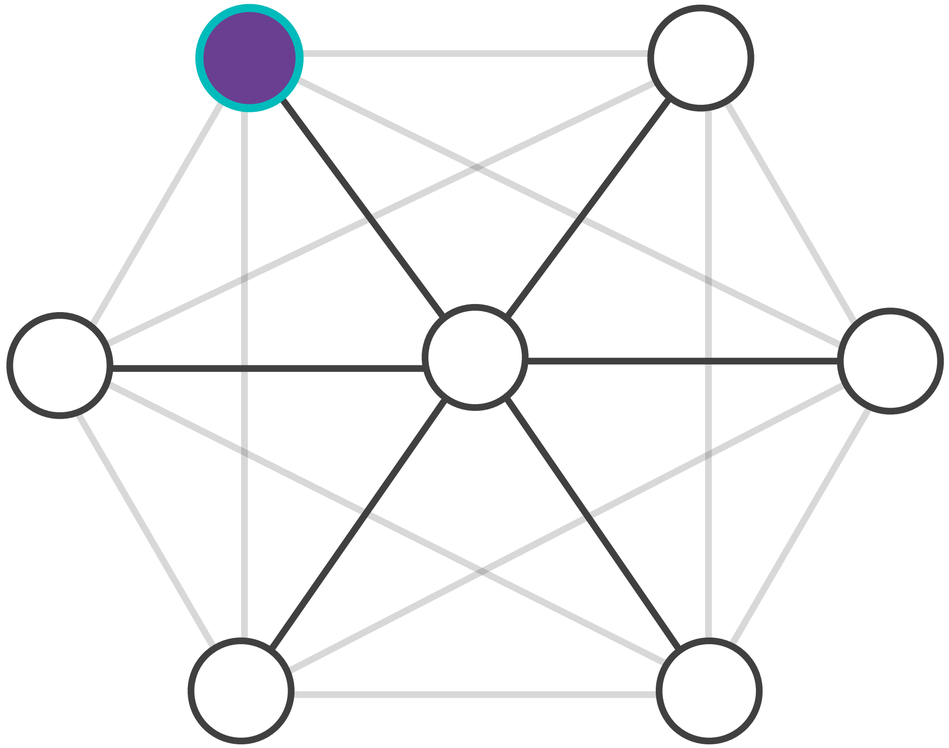
Reduction in stigma



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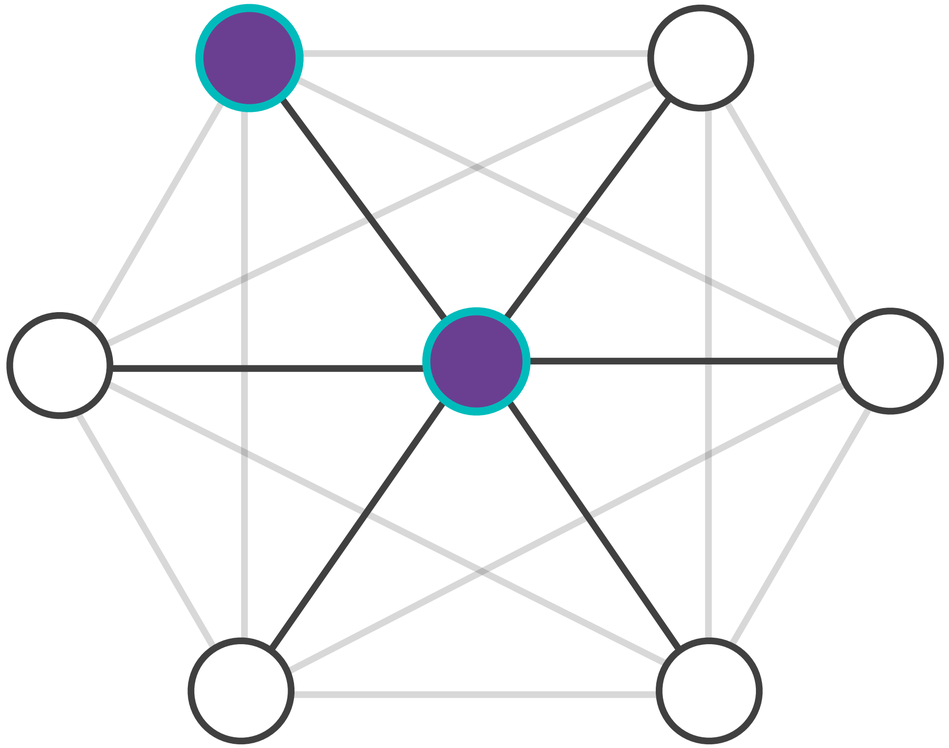

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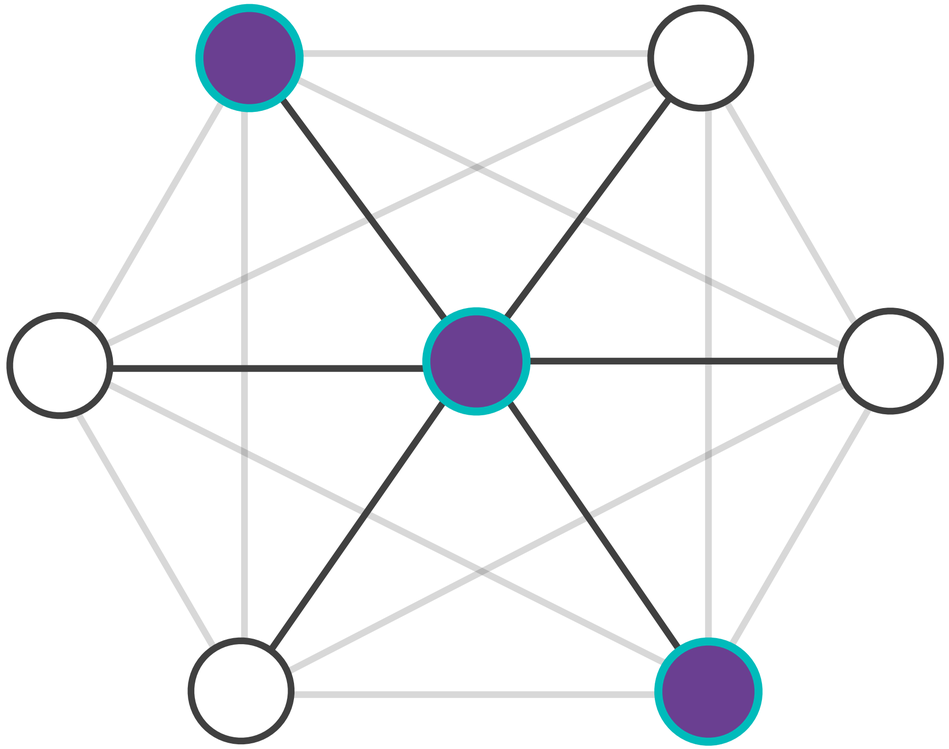

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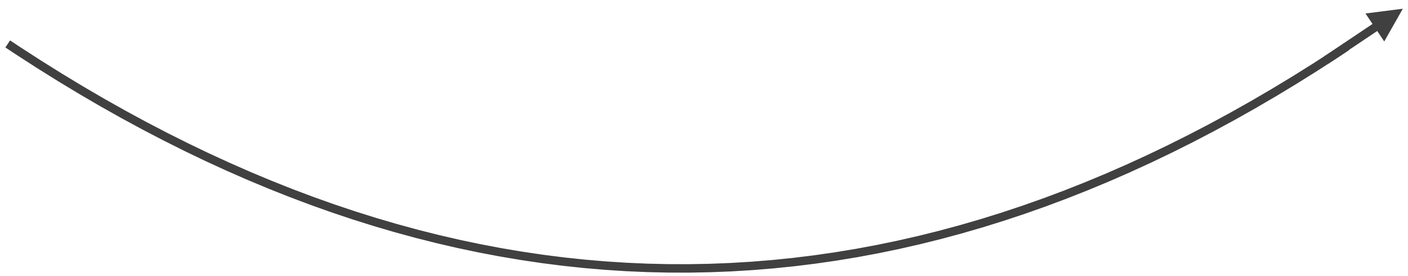
#MeToo hashtag campaign



Network-level reciprocal disclosures

Facilitated…?

#MeToo Data

1,245,196 #MeToo tweets from the 2 weeks following its widespread use in Oct. 2017

Follower-following ego networks of those who tweeted #MeToo (one-step snowball)

244,229 replies to those #MeToo tweets

Mixed Methods Approach

Qualitative content analysis (N = 2,500 tweets)

Automated classification of disclosures (N = 450,000 authored tweets)

Quantitative and network analysis (N = 1.5 million tweets)

Content Analysis of #MeToo Tweets

We subsampled 2,500 #MeToo tweets from the first 2 weeks for an inductive qualitative content analysis

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Disclosures

Non-Disclosures

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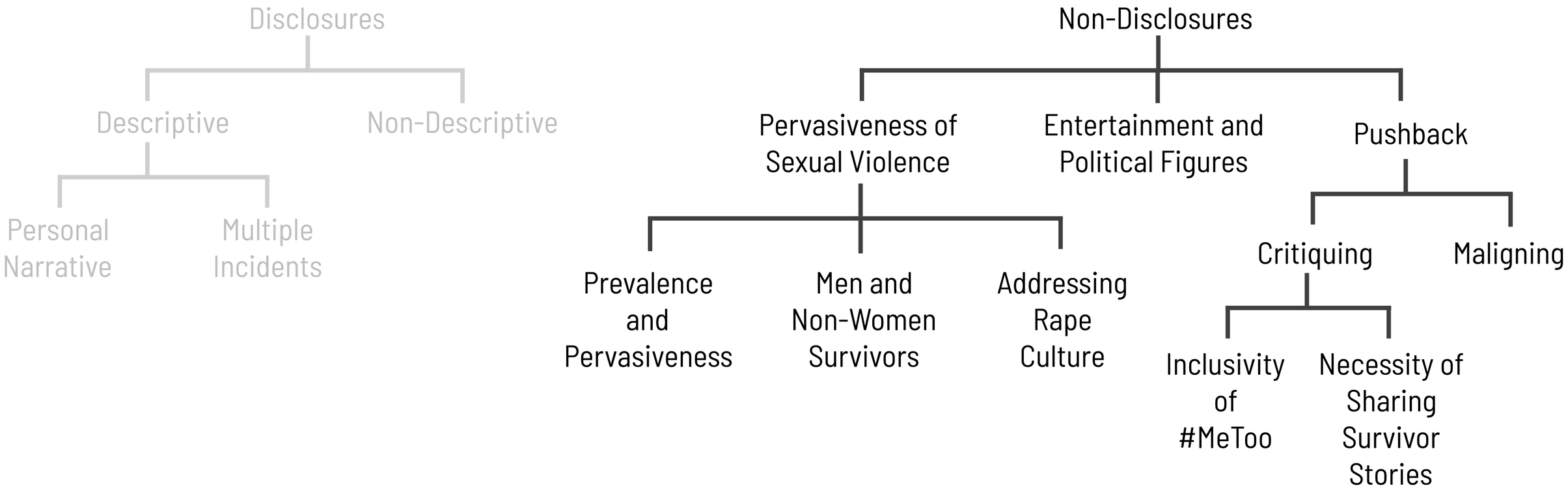

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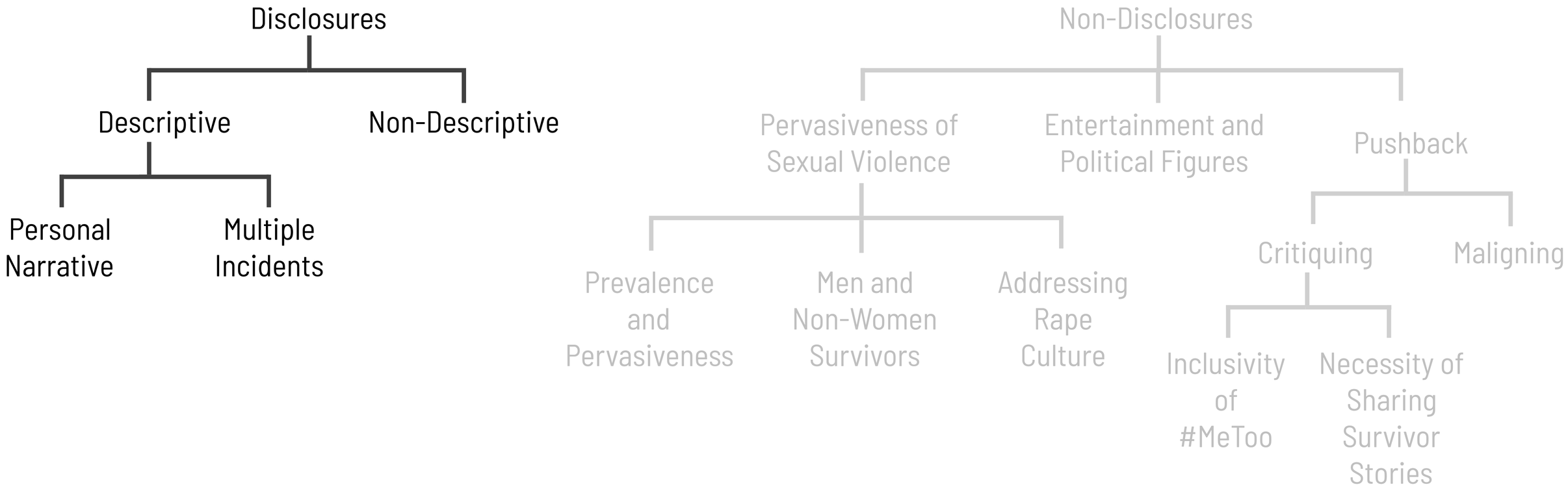

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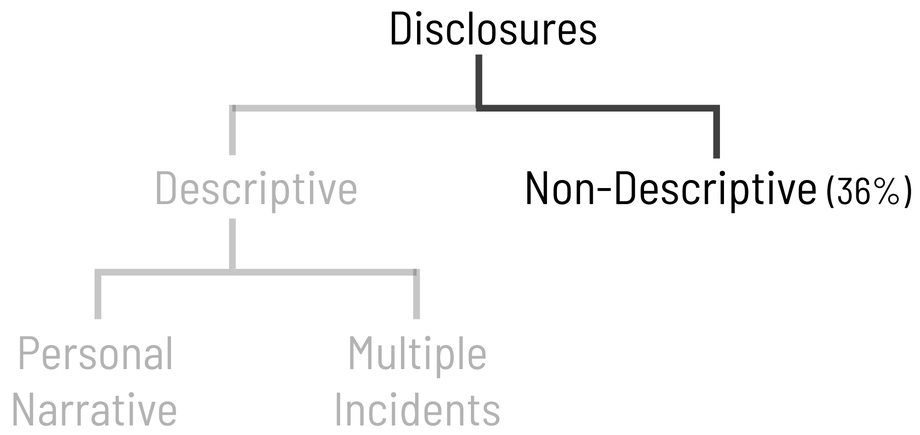

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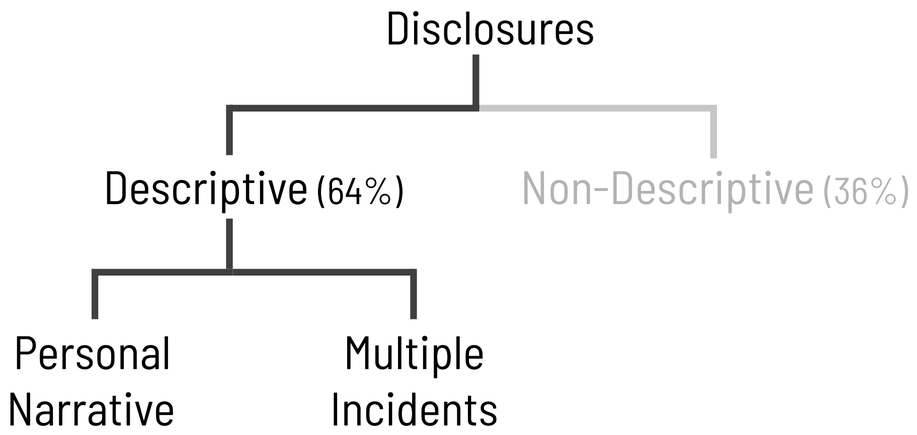

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Automated Classification of #MeToo Disclosures

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Structural
Non-descriptive #MeToo
In reply to Alyssa Milano
Number of commas
Number of colons

Content
Number of photos
Number of hashtags
number of disclosure hashtags
Number of external links

Lexical
Personal pronouns
"Male" pronouns
Collective pronouns
Second-person pronouns
assaulting, assaulted
pain, painful
hell
harass, harassed, harassing
catcalled, battling
leave me alone
masturbate, masturbated
stared, staring
stalk, stalked, stalking
followed
grab, grabbing, grabbed
touch, touched,
grope, groped groping
said no
yelled, yelling
shouted, shouting
called, calling
afraid
fear
scary, scared
screamed
fault
guilt, guilty
shame
embarrassed
ashamed
dehumanizing
bring myself
colleague
workplace
job, jobs
coworker, coworkers
boss
drink, drinking, drunk
drug, drugs, drugged
car
truck
skirt
jeans
pants
shirt, shirts
shorts,
bra
powerless
helpless
trusted
men
women
boy, boyfriend, bf
dad
uncle
girls, boys, children
mom, moms
mother, mothers
sister, sisters
daughter, daughters
non-binary, nb, genderqueer
trans
experience, experiences
happened
can't remember
can count
can remember
not ready
did not report, didn't report
have not told, haven't told
had not told
came forward
spoke up
freshman, freshmen
sophomore
junior
senior
college, university
campus
dorm
trigger warning, tw:
content warning, cw:
gender
problem
world
society
culture
community
ally, allies
consent, consensual
triggered
snowflake
liberal
accusation
accusing, accused
accuser
false, fake
disbelieve, disbelief
powerful
strong, strength
brave
courage, courageous
love
believe you
i'm sorry, sharing
thank you
stand with
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called, calling
afraid
fear
scary, scared
screamed
fault
guilt, guilty
shame
embarrassed
ashamed
dehumanizing
bring myself
colleague
workplace
job, jobs
coworker, coworkers
boss
drink, drinking, drunk
drug, drugs, drugged
car
truck
skirt
jeans
pants
shirt, shirts
shorts,
bra
powerless
helpless
trusted
men
women
boy, boyfriend, bf
dad
uncle
girls, boys, children
mom, moms
mother, mothers
sister, sisters
daughter, daughters
non-binary, nb, genderqueer
trans
experience, experiences
happened
can't remember
can count
can remember
not ready
did not report, didn't report
have not told, haven't told
had not told
came forward
spoke up
freshman, freshmen
sophomore
junior
senior
college, university
campus
dorm
trigger warning, tw:
content warning, cw:
gender
problem
world
society
culture
community
ally, allies
consent, consensual
triggered
snowflake
liberal
accusation
accusing, accused
accuser
false, fake
disbelieve, disbelief
powerful
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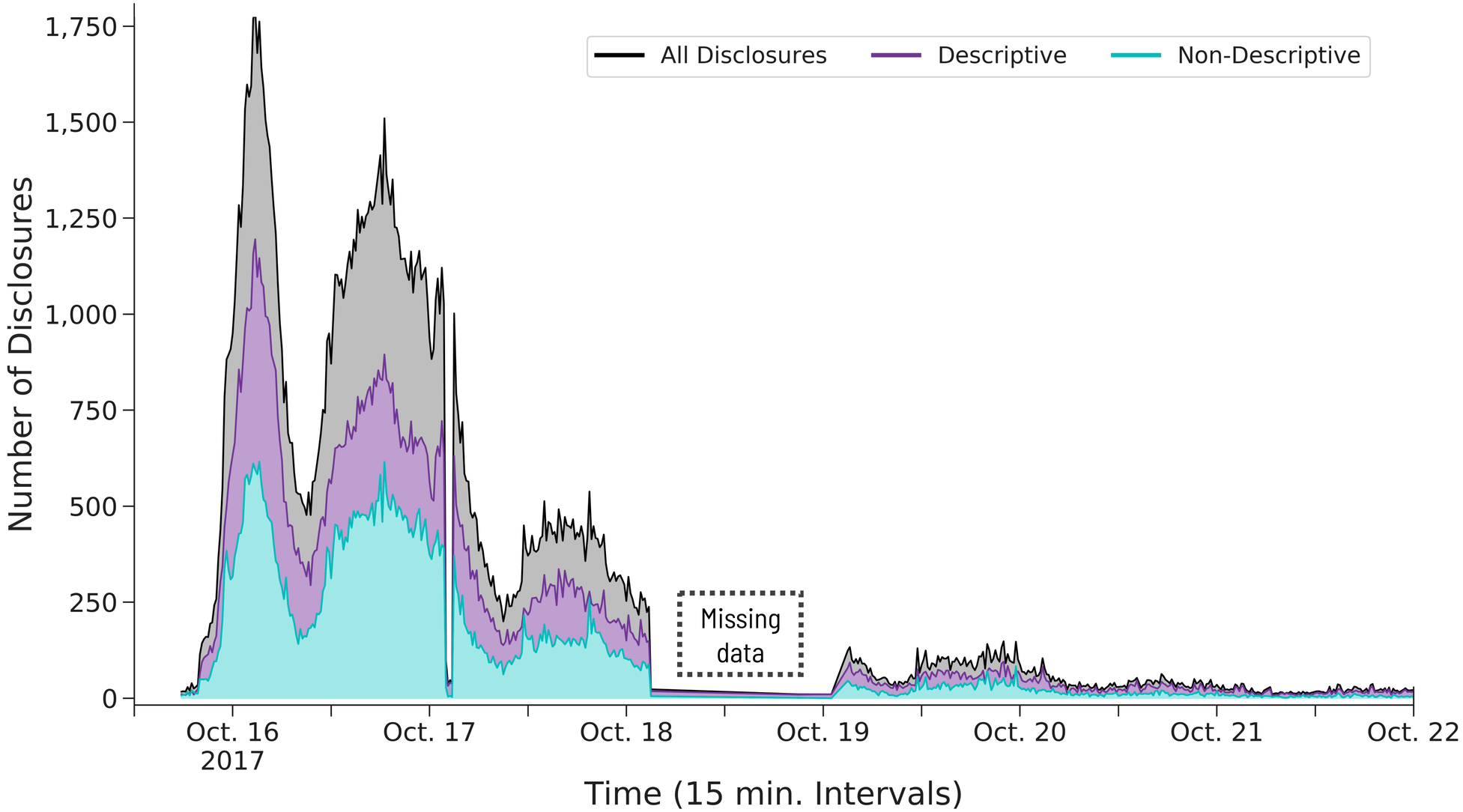
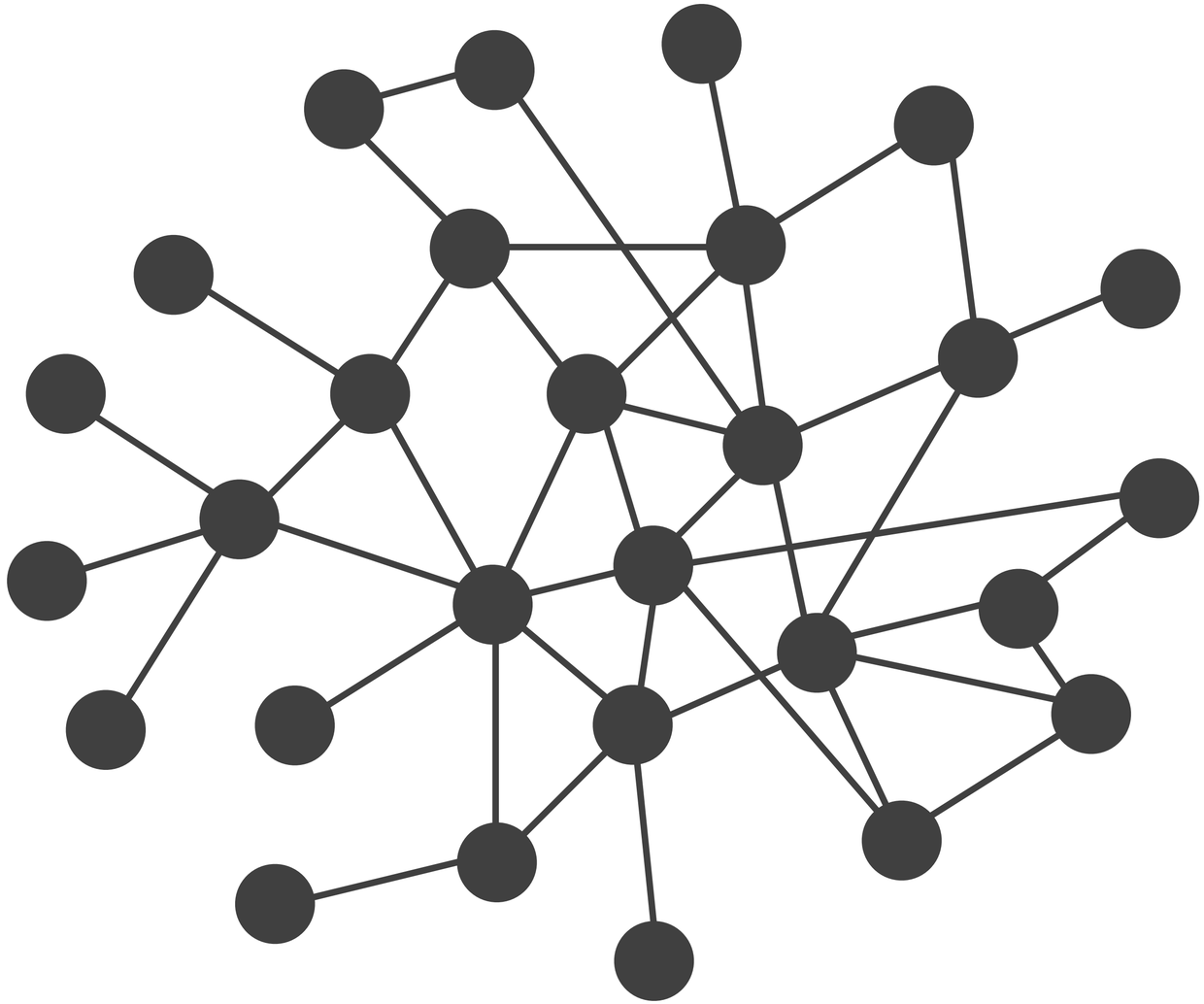
F1 = 0.84 (**precision** = 0.87, **recall** = 0.84), **AUC** = 0.94 over 5-fold cross validation (logistic regression)

Timeline of #MeToo Disclosures



Exposures to #MeToo Disclosures



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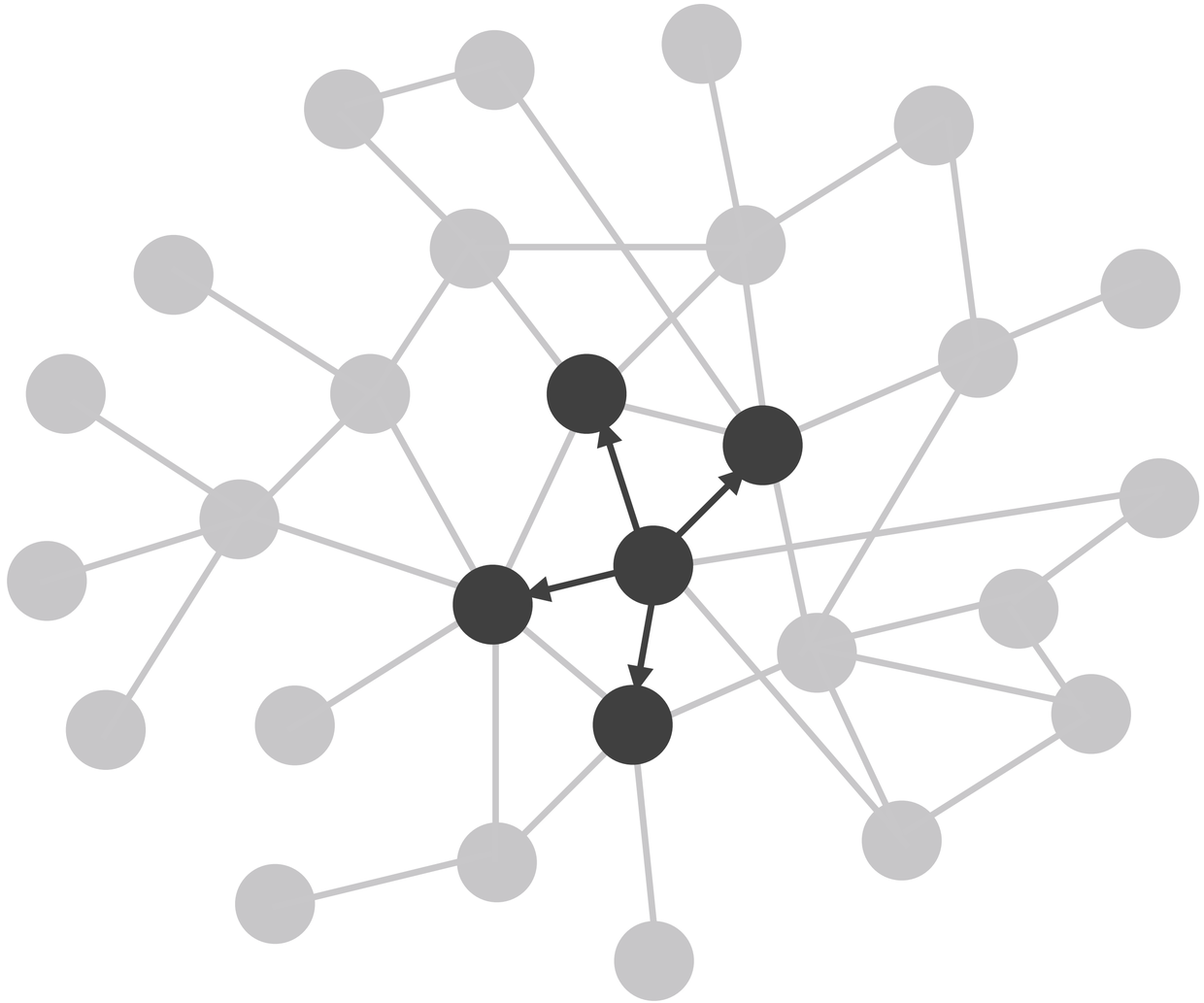

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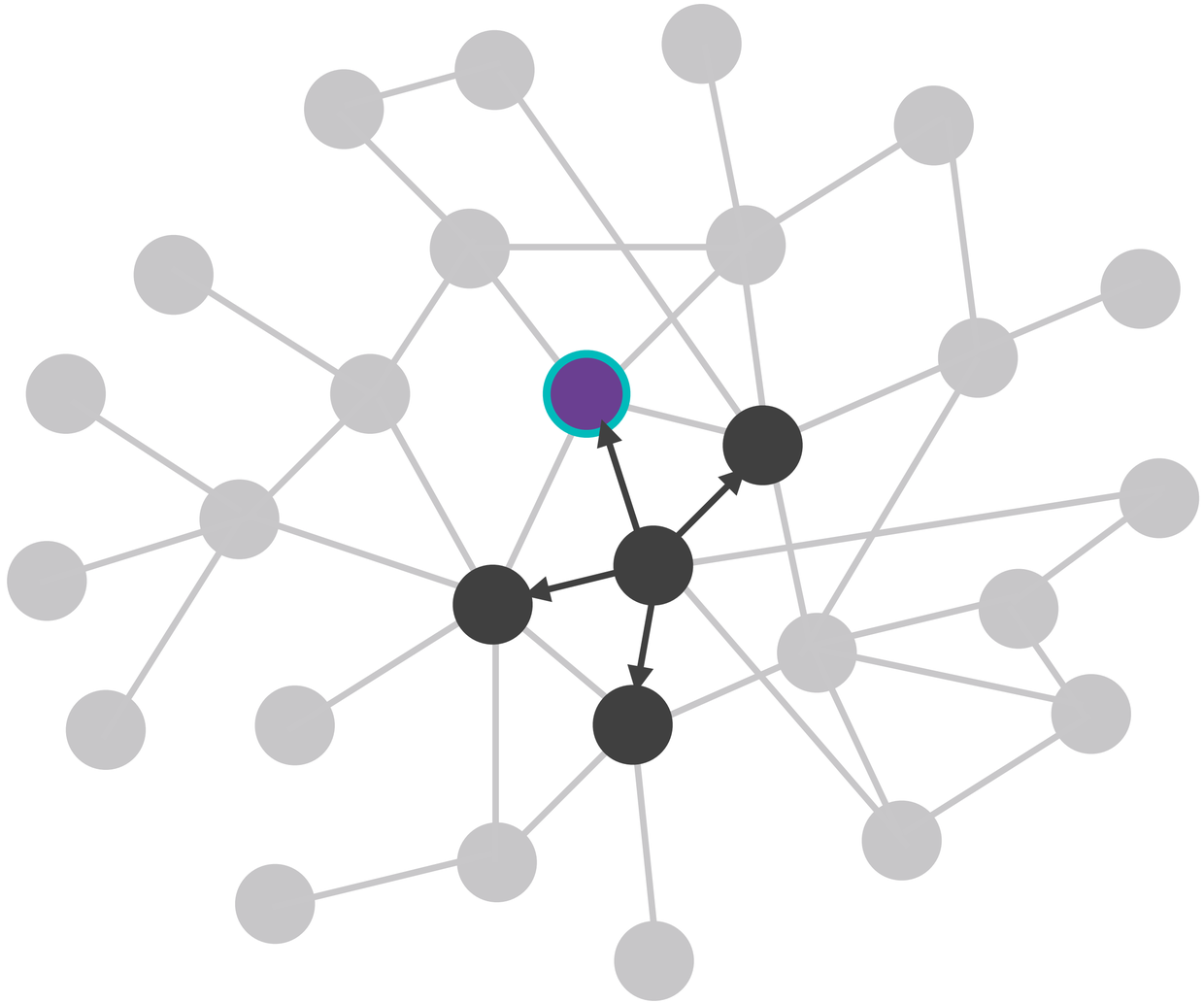
Descriptive disclosure



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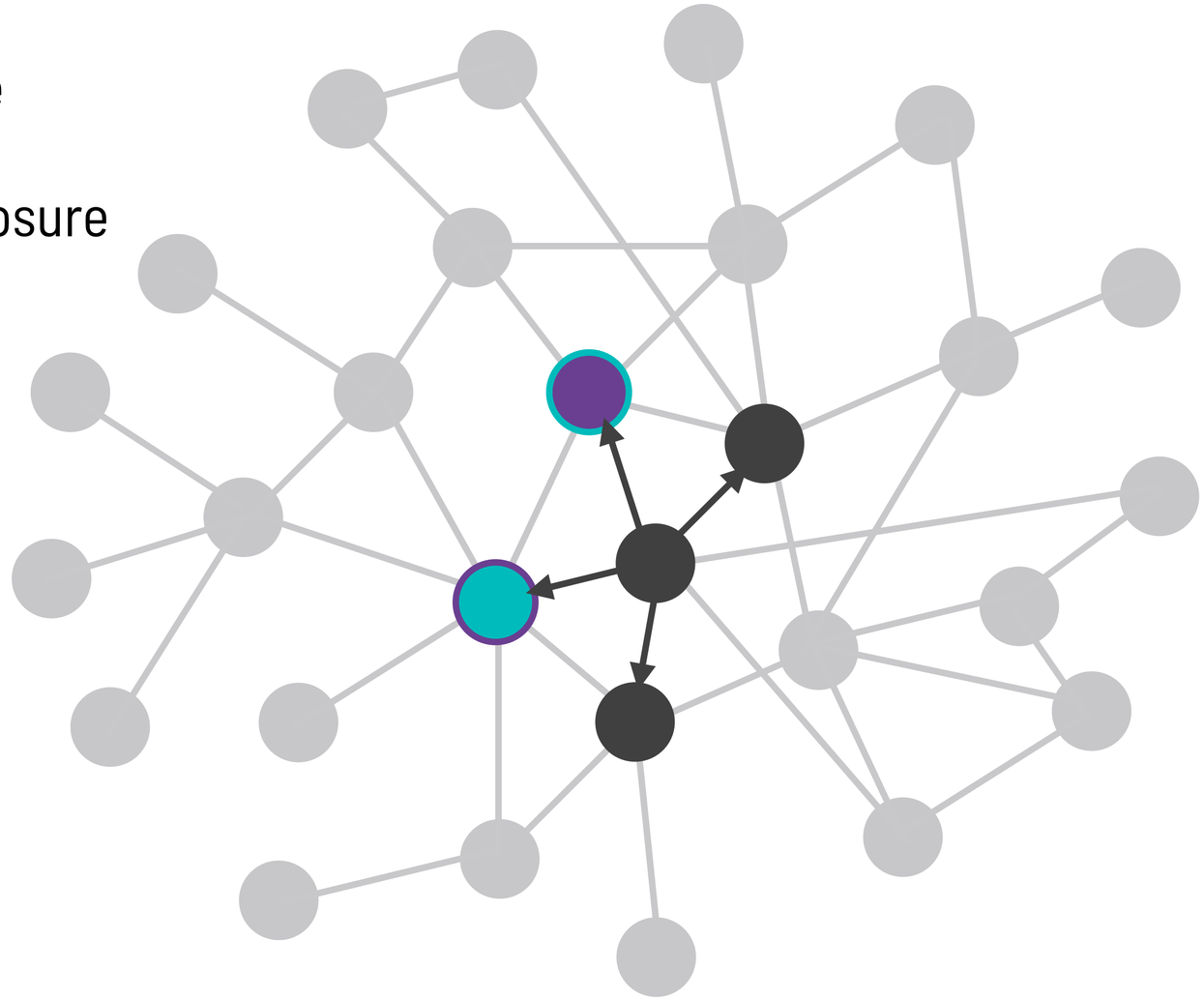
Descriptive disclosure

Non-descriptive disclosure



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Descriptive disclosure

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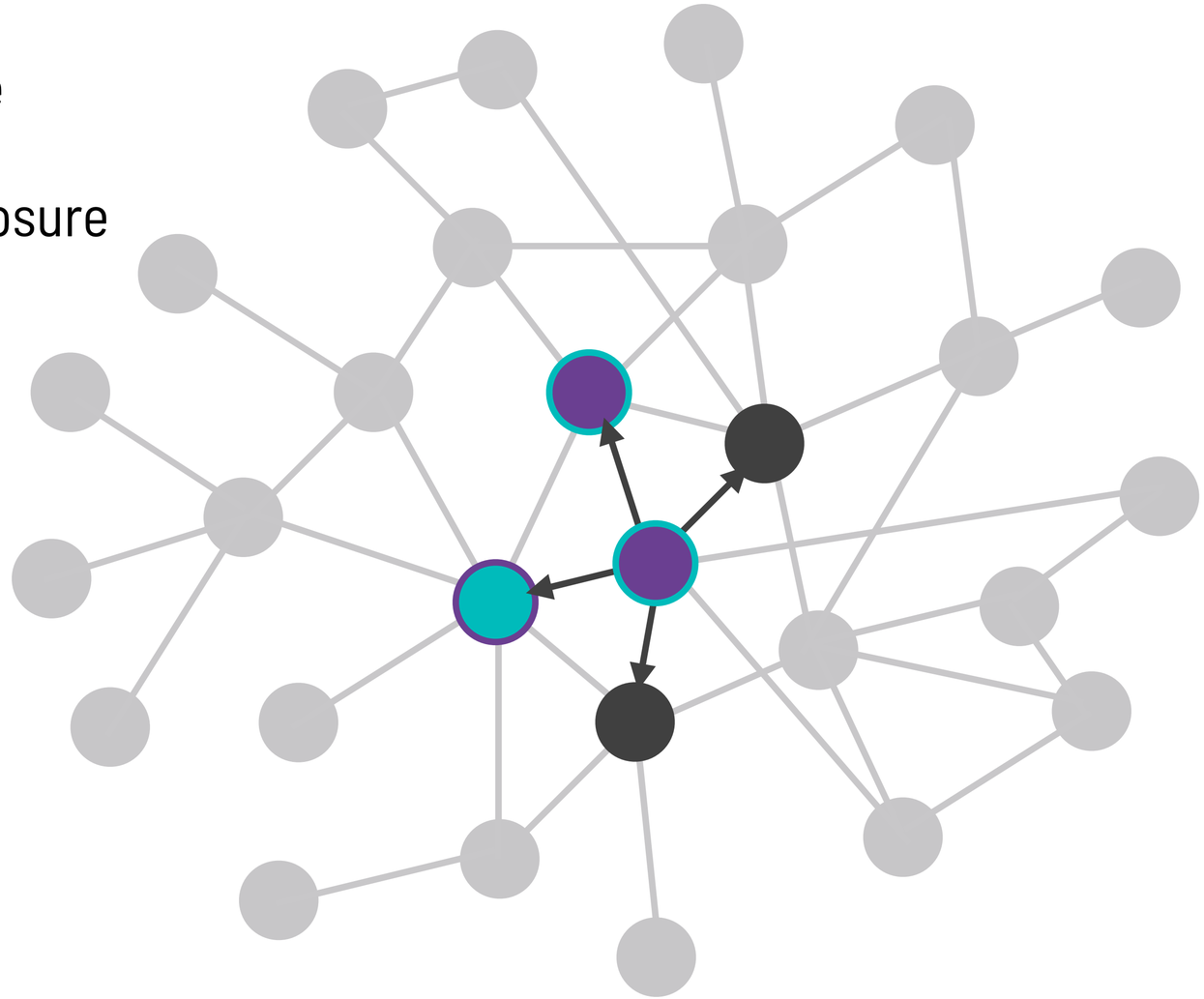

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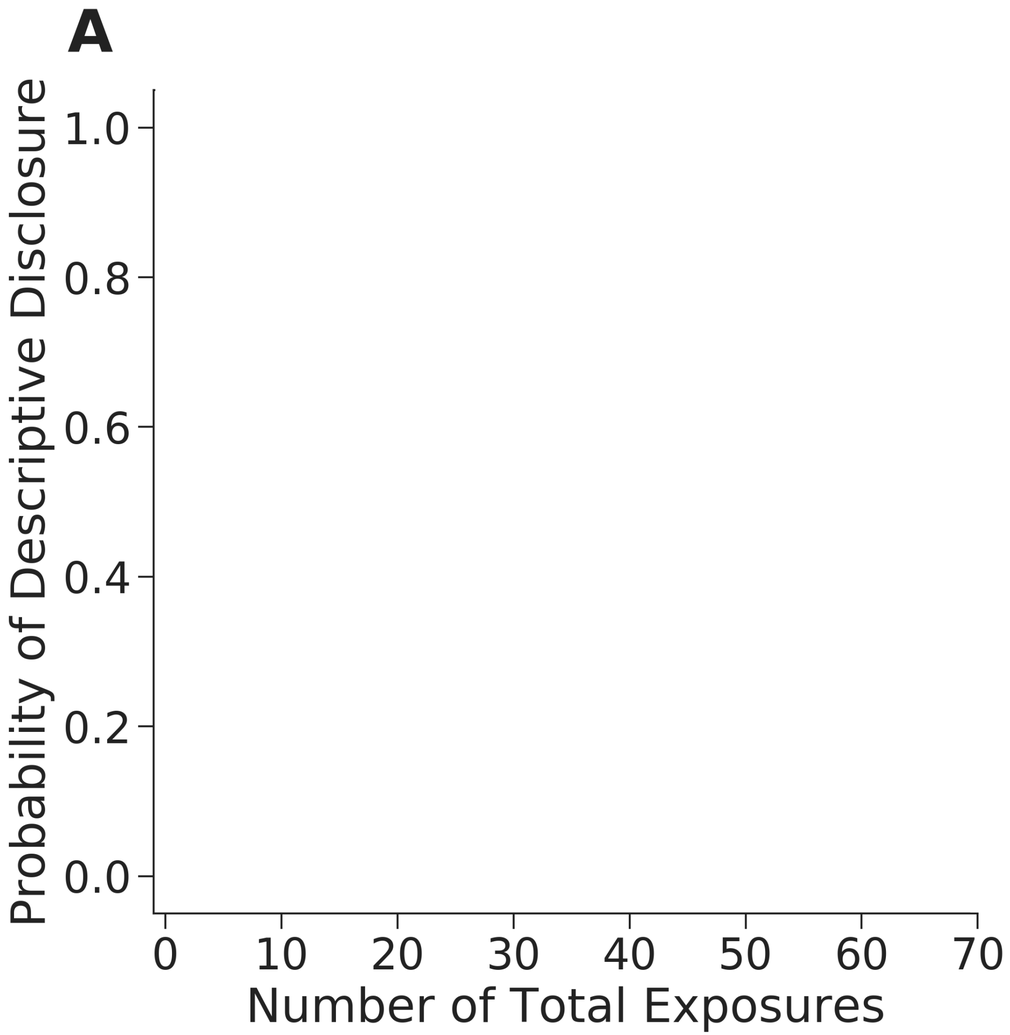

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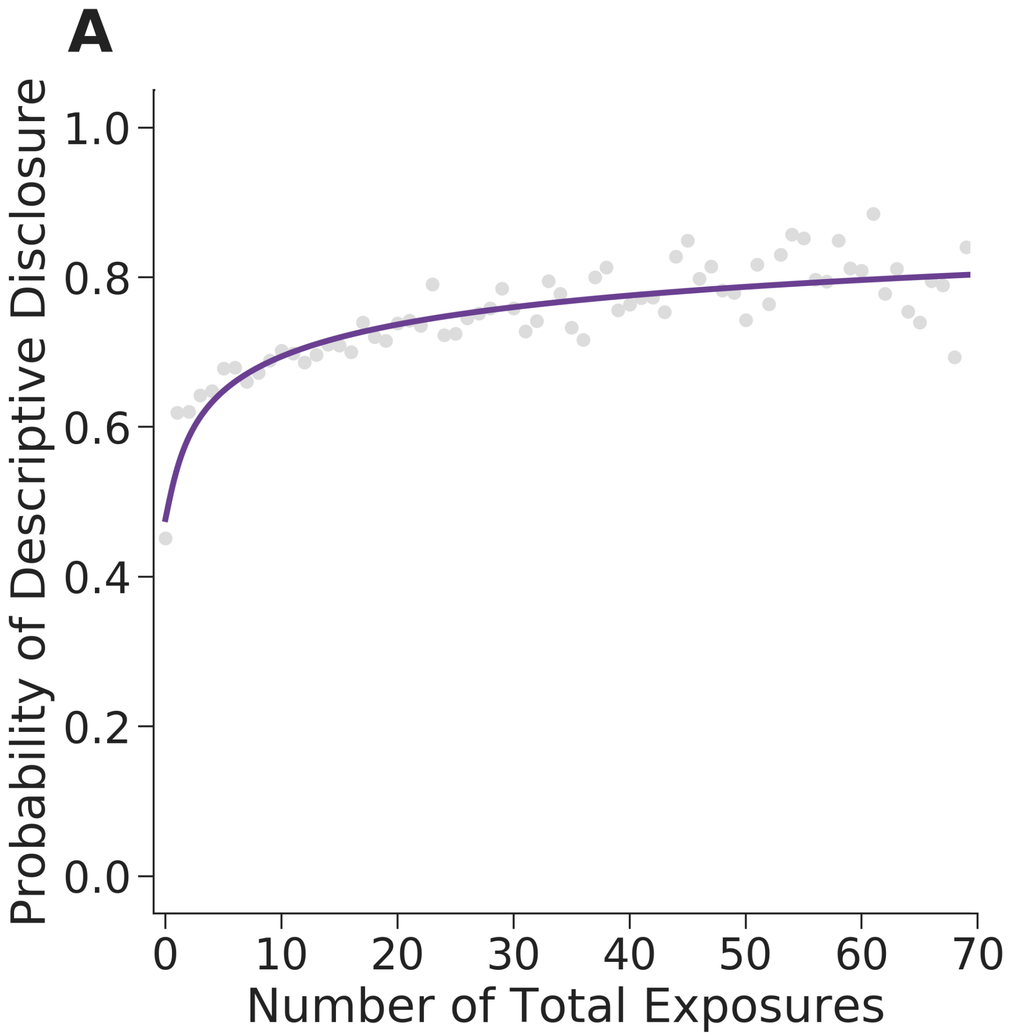

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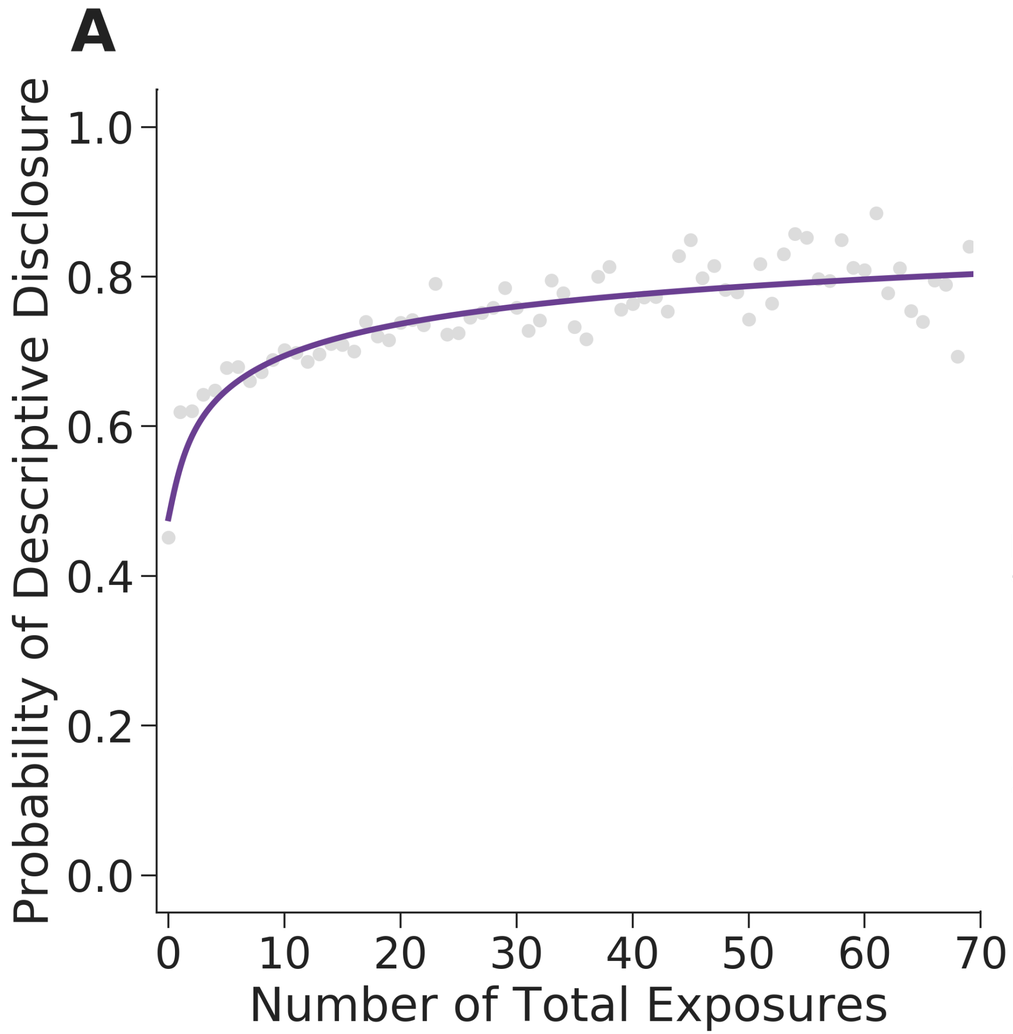

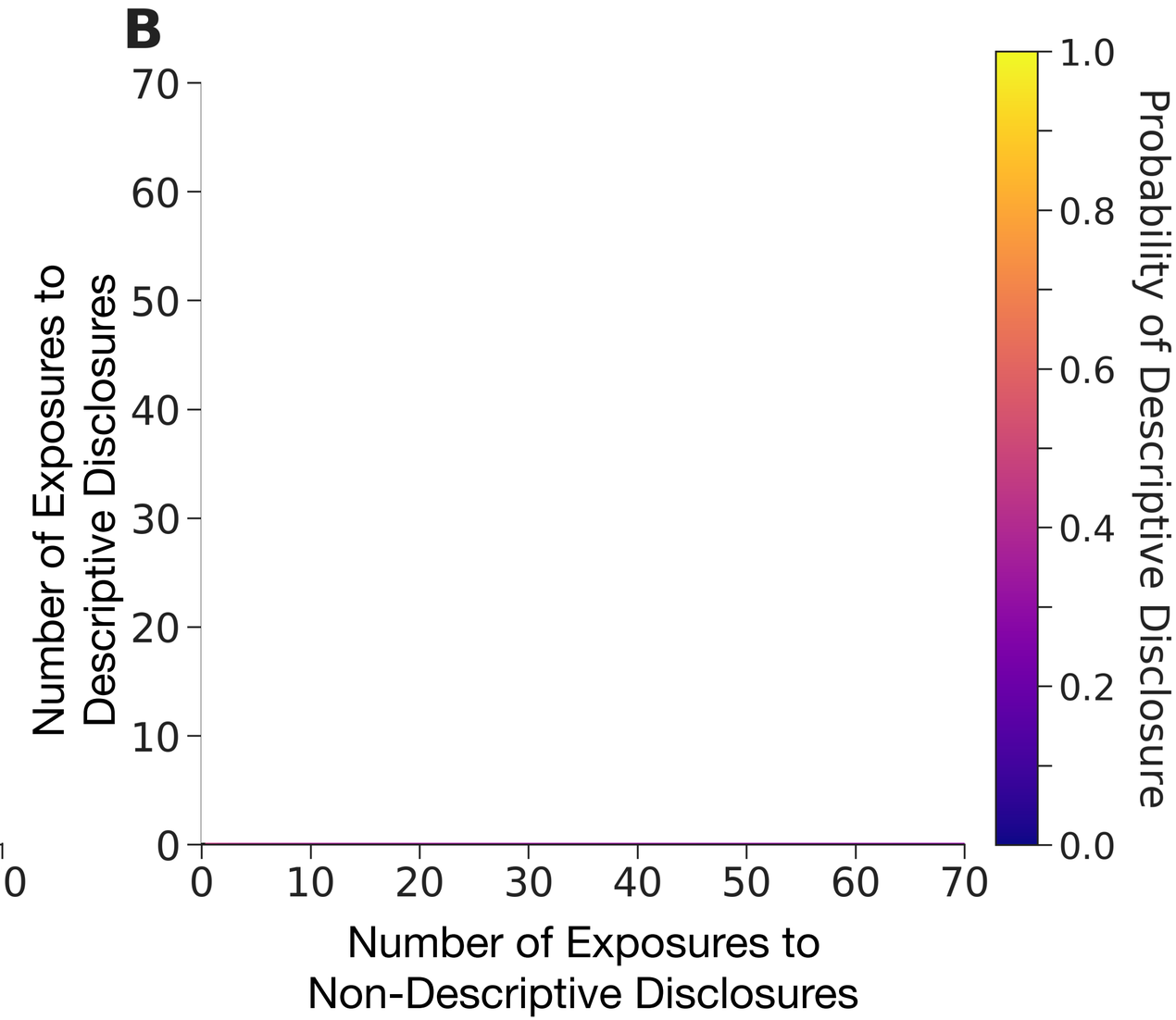

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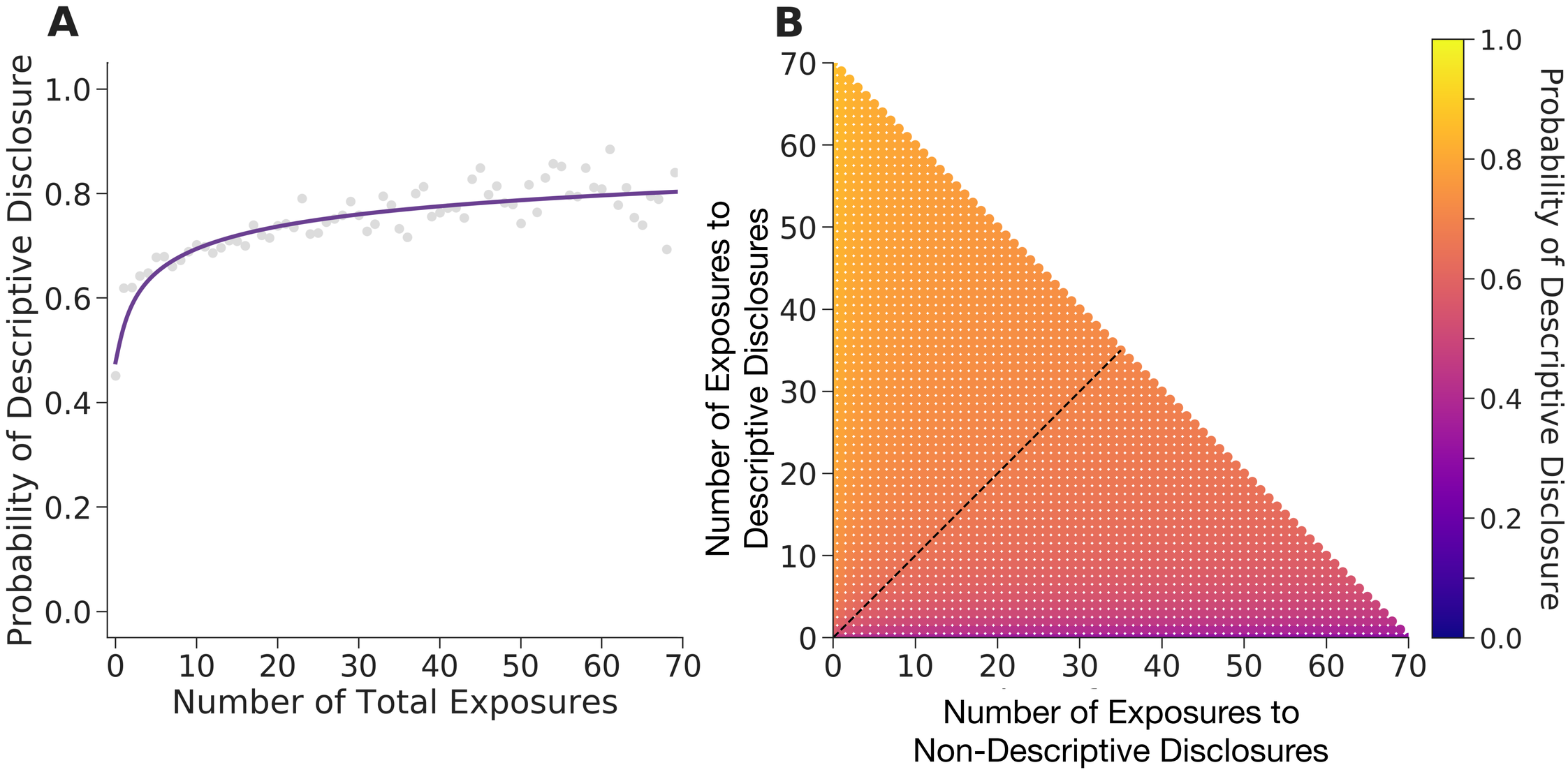
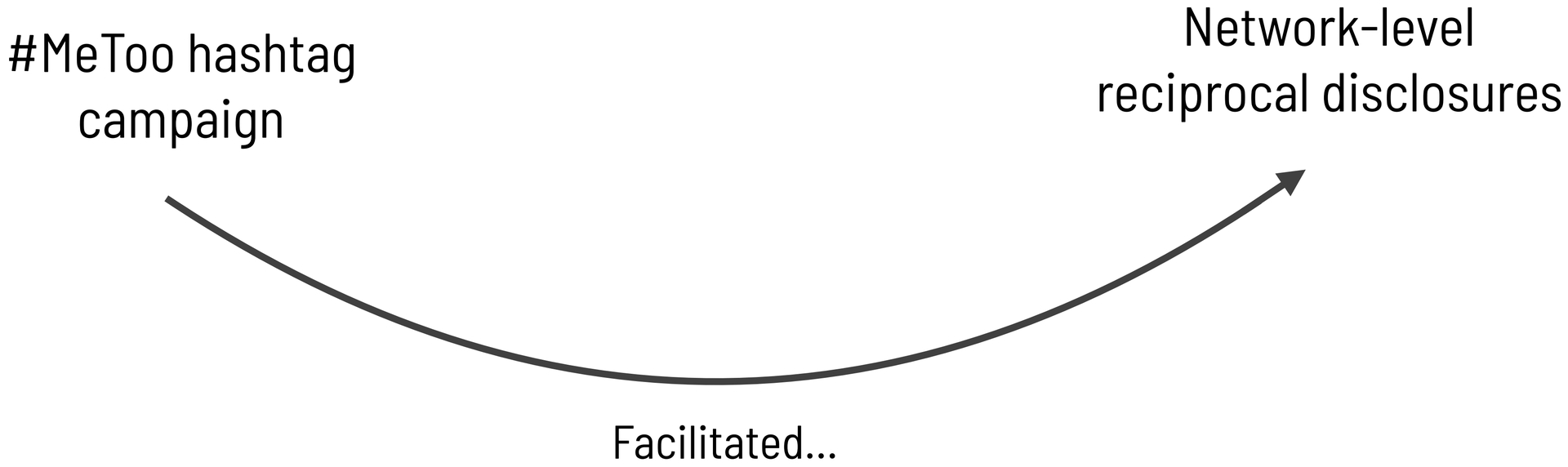
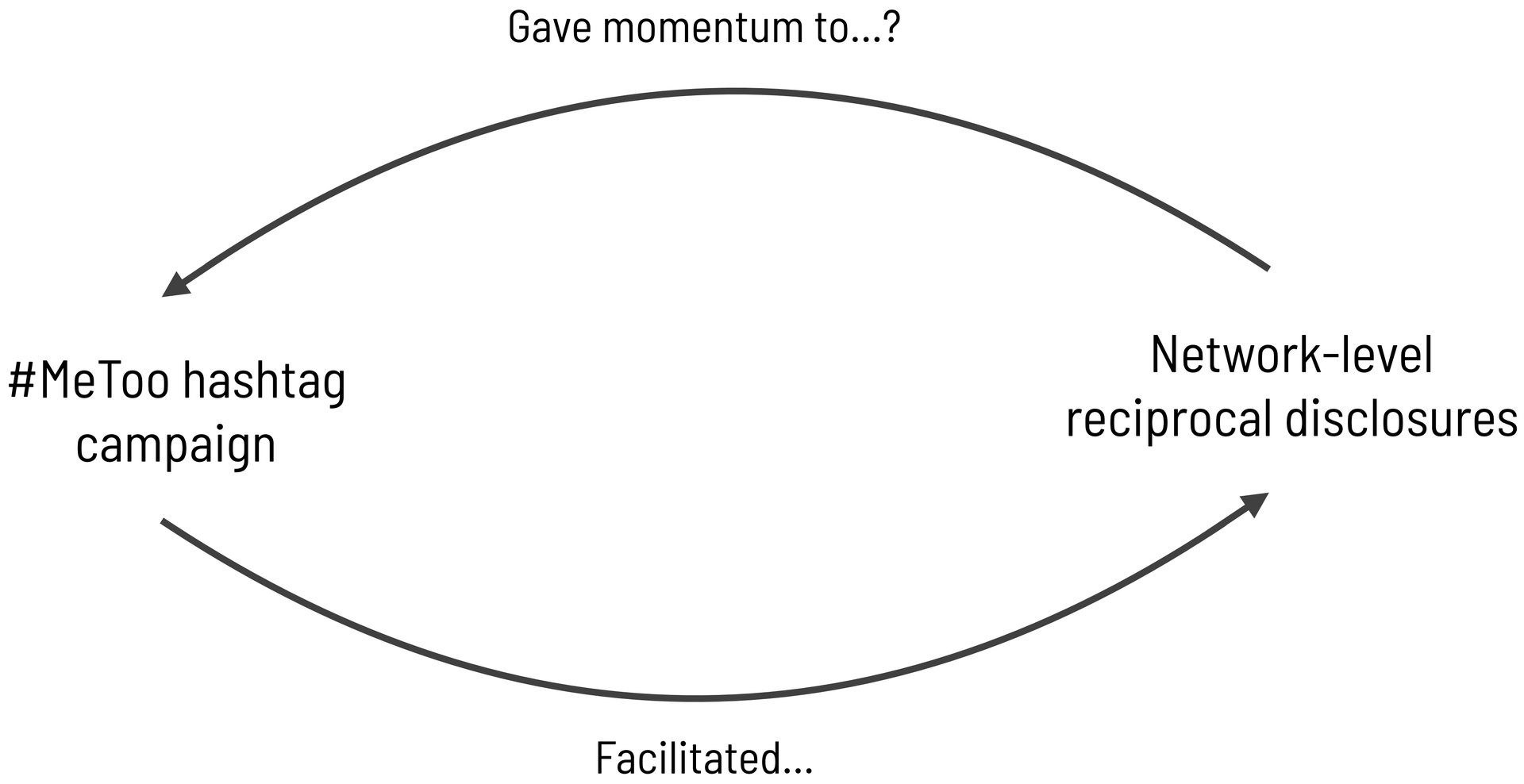
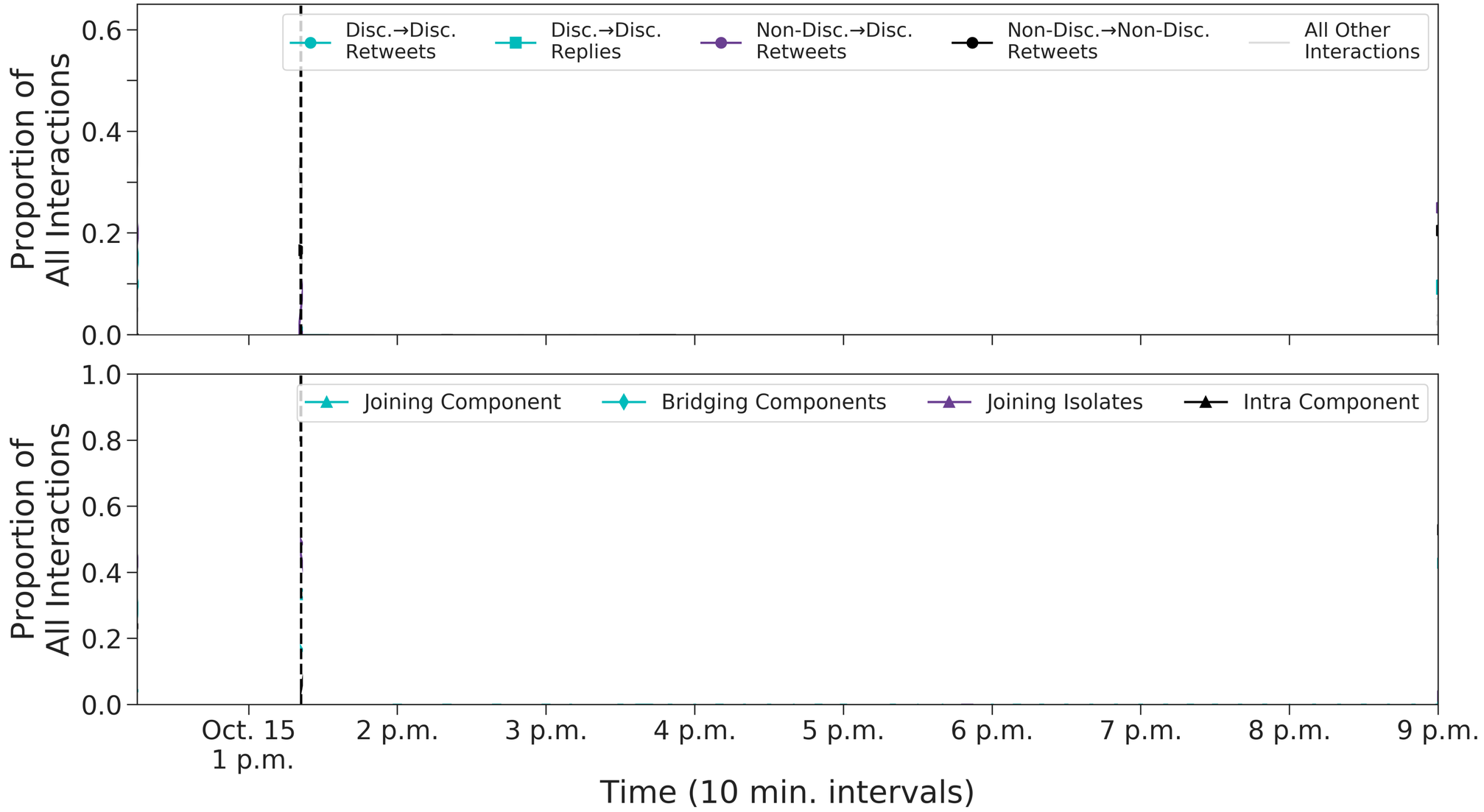



#MeToo hashtag campaign
Network-level reciprocal disclosures
Facilitated...


Gave momentum to...?
#MeToo hashtag campaign
Network-level reciprocal disclosures
Facilitated...

Emergence of the #MeToo Network



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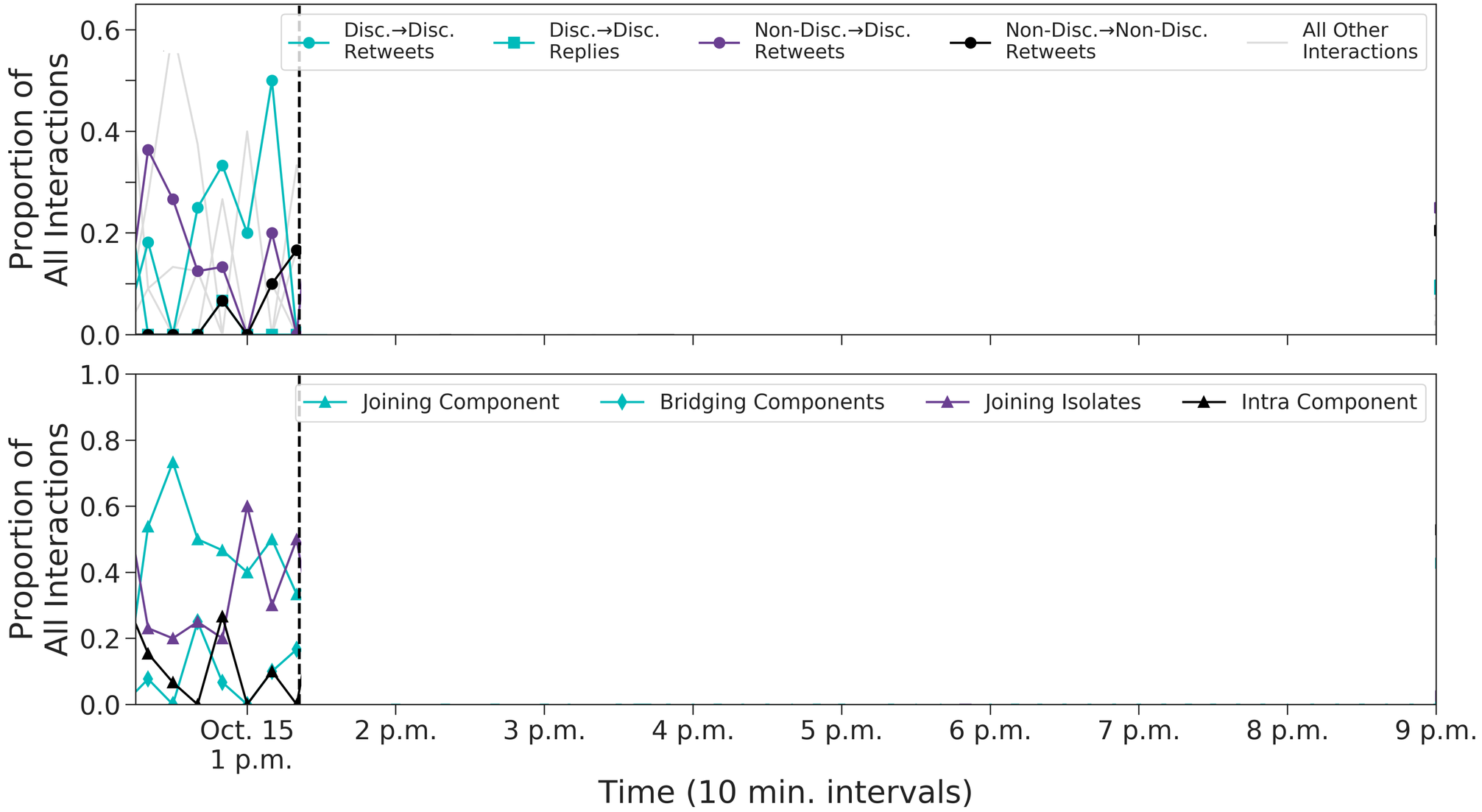

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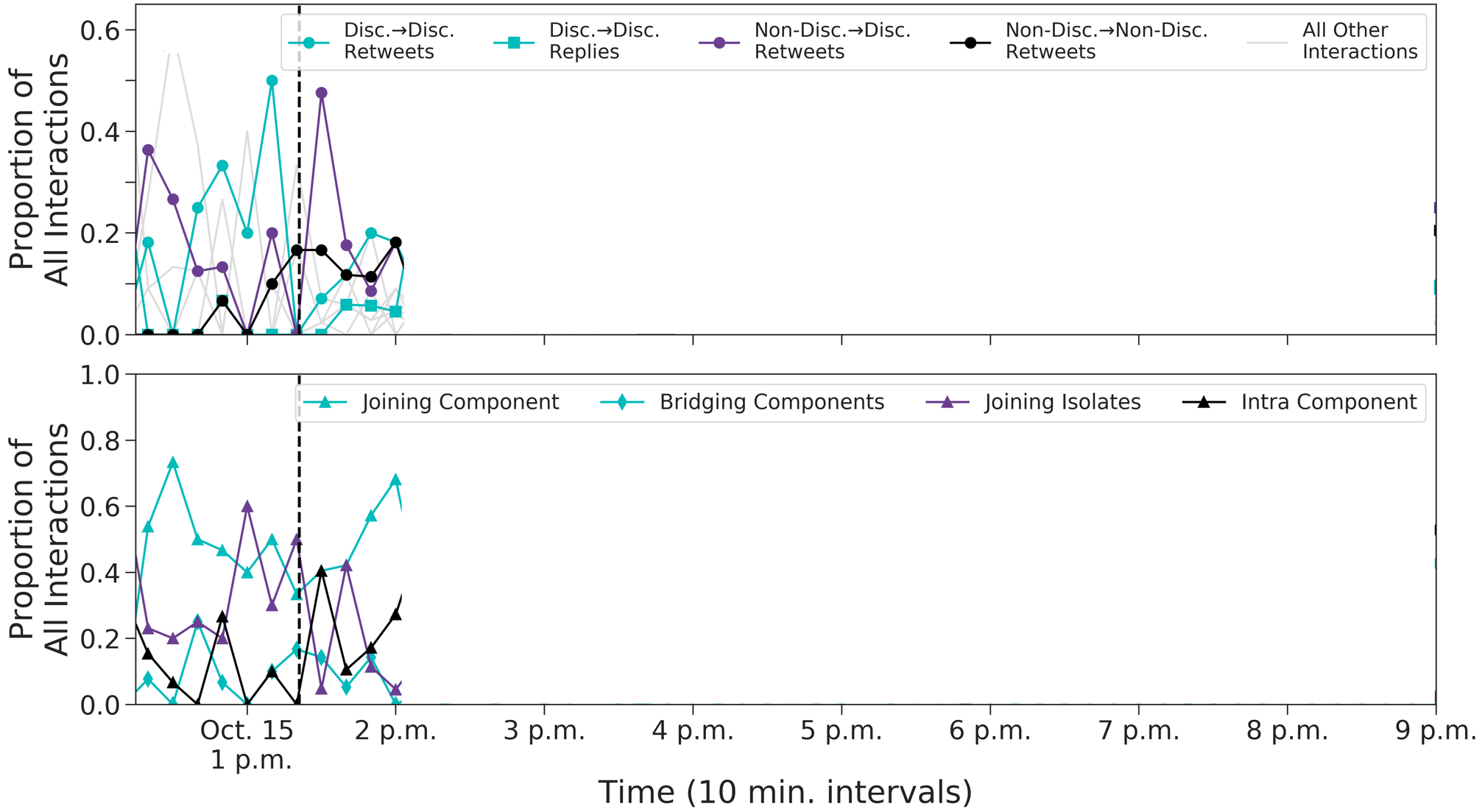

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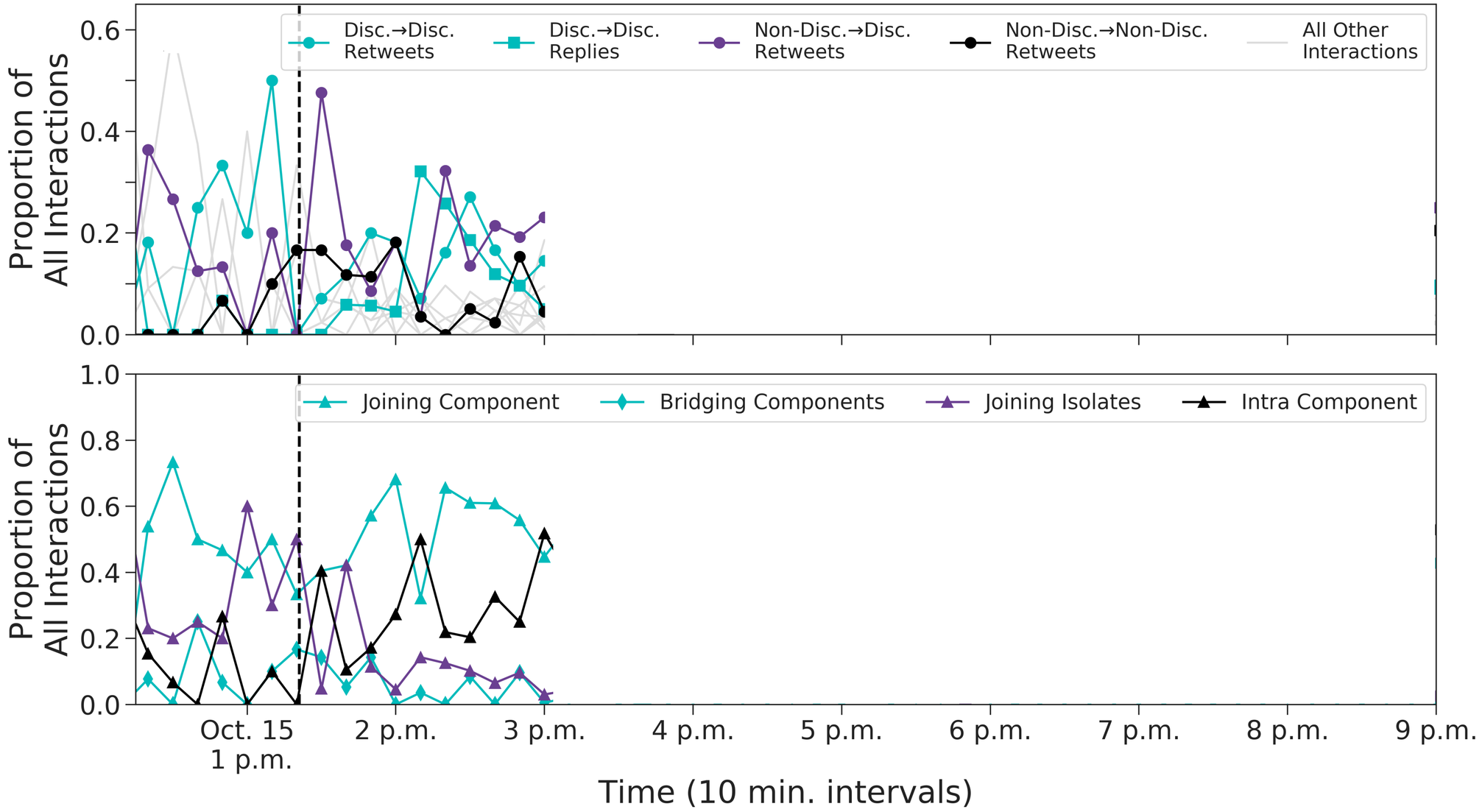

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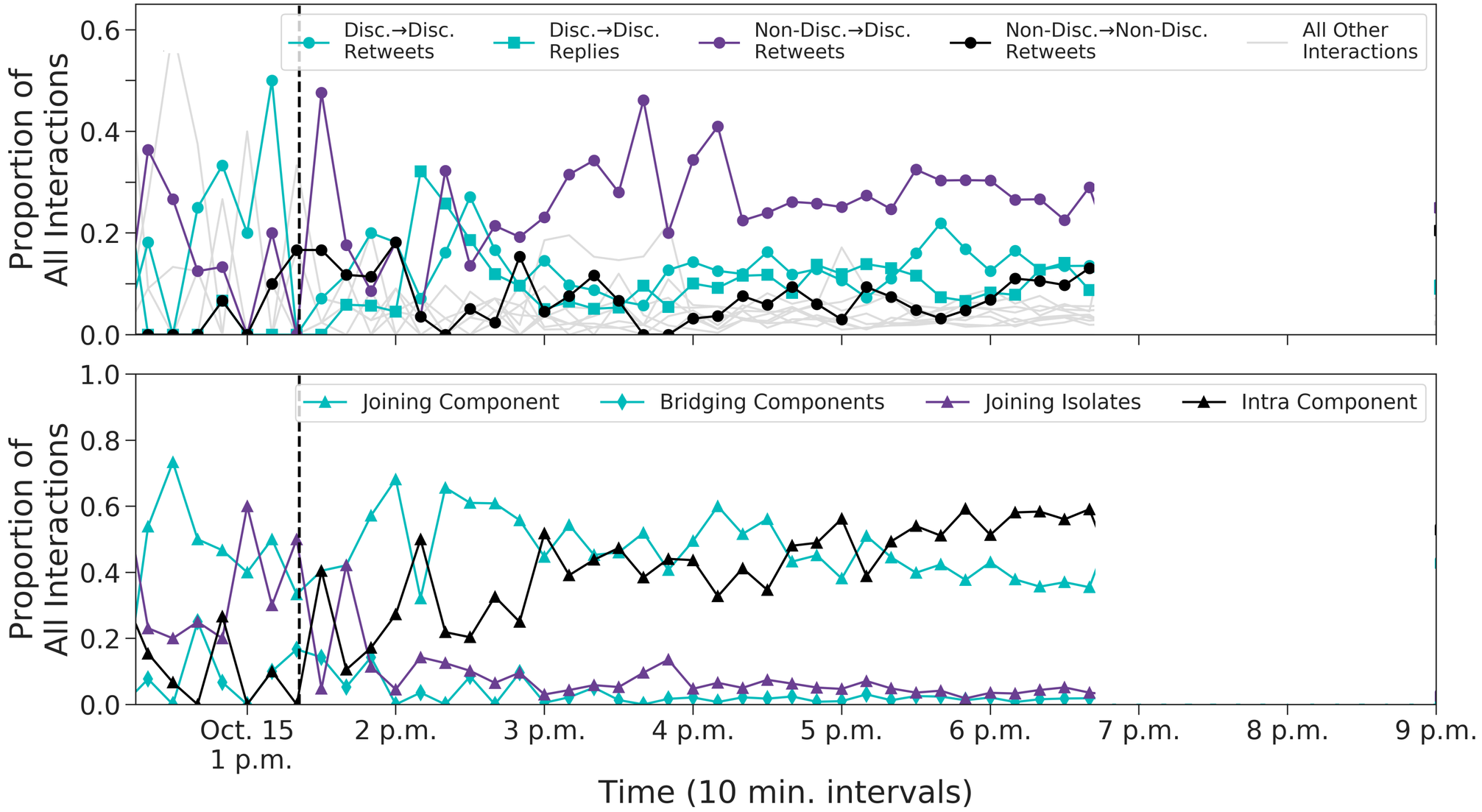

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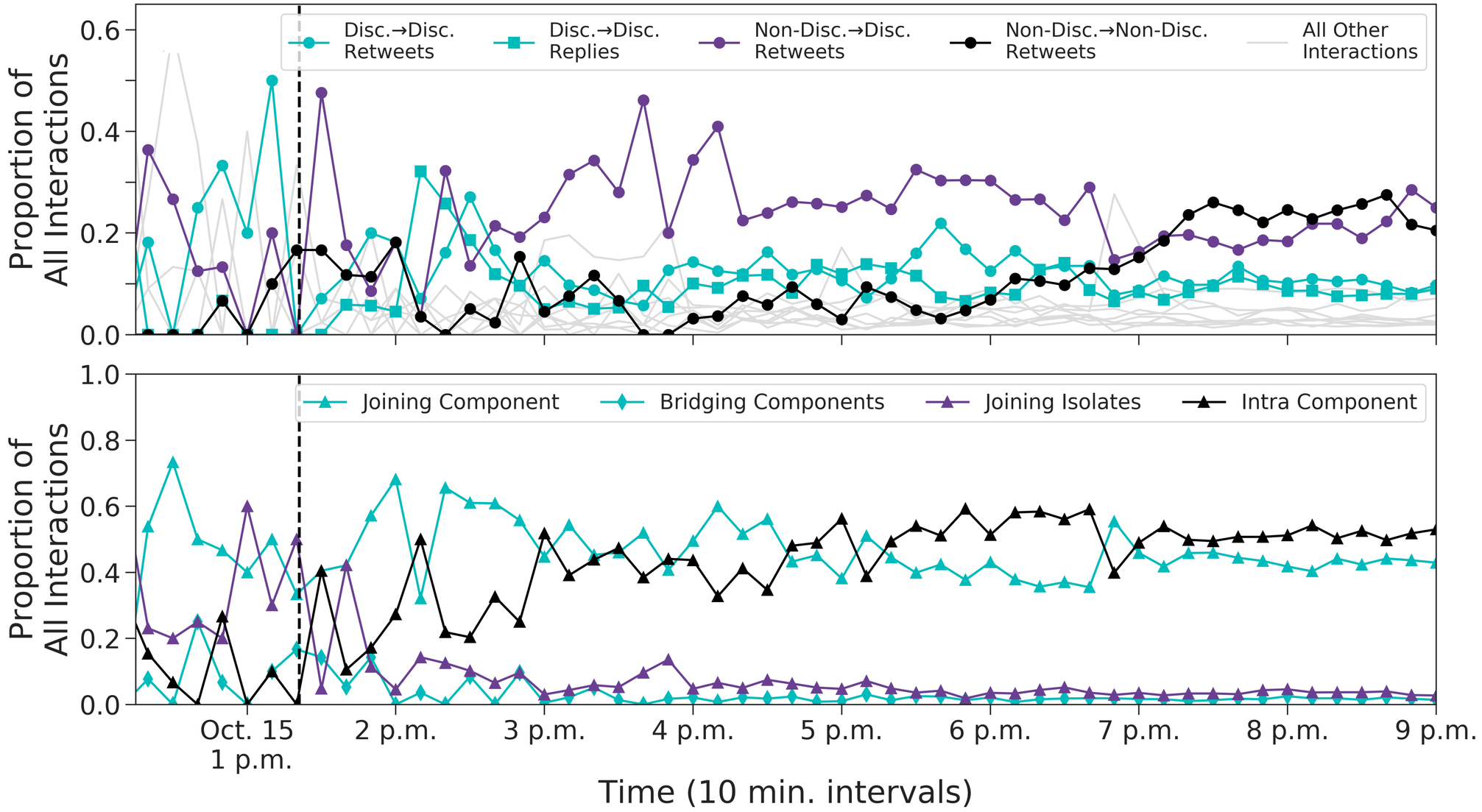
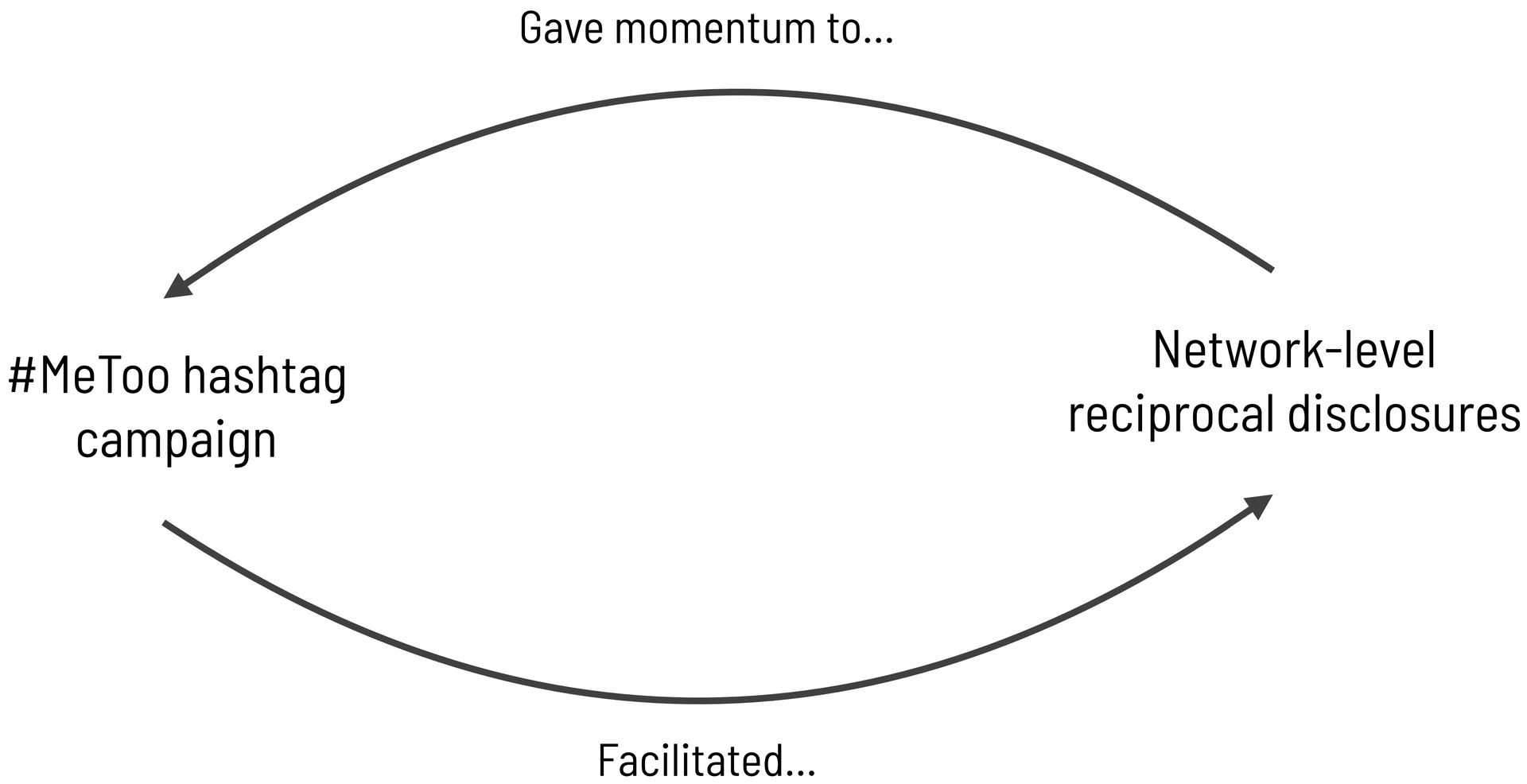


Network-Level Reciprocal Disclosures of #MeToo



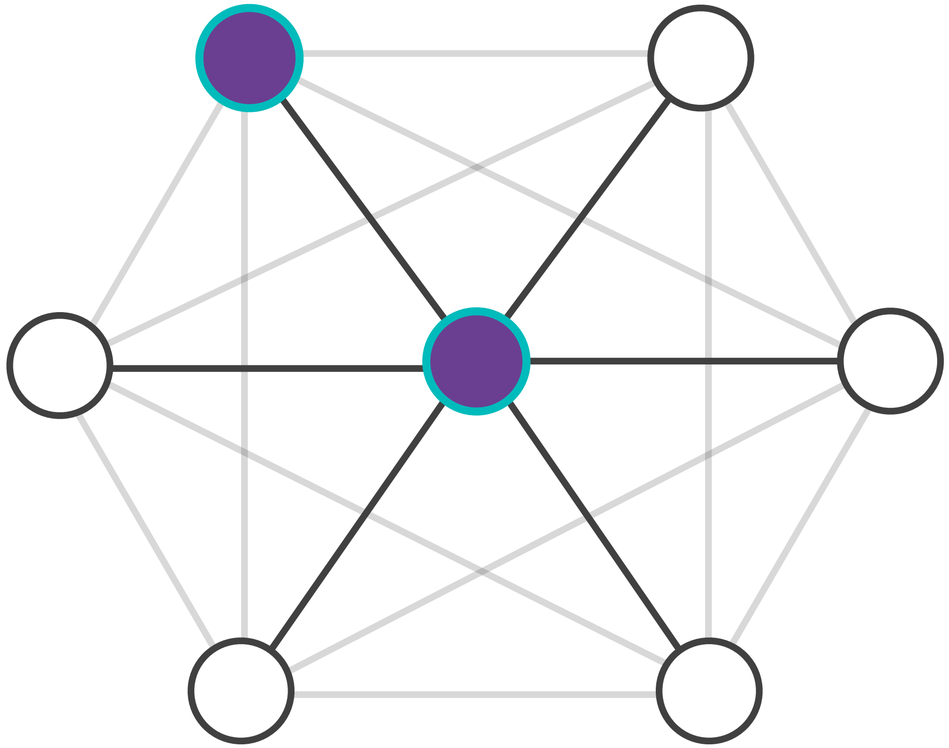
Summary

#MeToo gave a space for women to disclose, and encouraged network-level reciprocal disclosures

Network-level reciprocal disclosures helped give momentum to #MeToo as a hashtag activism campaign

Limitation: we only see network-level reciprocal disclosures among those who disclosed, *we can't know who could have disclosed but chose not to*

Potential: in further studies of #MeToo and other hashtag activism campaigns, network science and qualitative methods can work together to yield deeper insights



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Assistant Professor

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Thank you for your time!

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osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/qsmce

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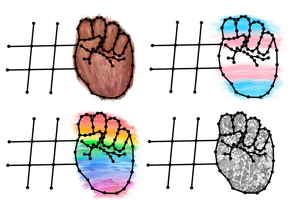

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