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Fully Considered Healthcare Policy Preferences and Deliberation Effects on Opinion Change
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Abstract:

Informed consideration of conflicting arguments regarding public issues is assumed to be central to citizens’ democratic decision making. In this regard, two aspects of political reasoning are crucial: knowledge of relevant facts and the consideration of opposing views and arguments. Drawing on The Healthcare Dialogue Project, a multi-wave study involving several online deliberations and surveys, I examine the relationship between these two requisites of political decision making, finding that well informed citizens tend to take a slanted set of arguments into consideration. I then estimate “fully informed” preferences, and “fully considered” preferences, which respectively correct for political ignorance and for narrow and imbalanced considerations, finding that fully informed and fully considered opinions diverge in important ways. Finally, I present evidence that actual deliberation moves policy opinions towards the statistically imputed fully considered preferences, but not towards fully informed preferences.