The Limits of Deliberative Discussion:
A Model of Everyday Political Arguments
On-Line Appendix

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Appendix: Measurement

Here we briefly describe the construction of the dependent variable (aid to the unemployed) ideological self-placement measure and the political sophistication scale used in the text, and provide the respective survey items and response formats in French.

- **Aid to the Unemployed:** First, everyone is asked their position on aid to the unemployed:

    Certains disent qu'il faudrait augmenter le montant des indemnités de chômage. Vous même êtes-vous plutôt d'accord ou plutôt pas d'accord avec cette opinion?

    [Some people say that it is necessary to increase unemployment benefits. Do you on balance agree or disagree with this view?]

  Then, those who favor increasing unemployment benefits are randomly assigned either the content counter-argument

    Ceci dit, si les indemnités de chômage sont trop confortables, les chômeurs ne sont pas encouragés à chercher du travail

    [However, if the unemployments benefits are too high, the unemployed will not be encouraged to look for a job.]

  or the content-free counter-argument:

    Ceci dit, si on pense à tous les problèmes que ça va poser

    [However, if one thinks of all the problems this will create]

  Then, their position is reassessed:

    Pensez-vous malgré tout qu'il faut augmenter les indemnités de chômage ou qu'il vaut mieux ne pas les augmenter?

    [In spite of all that, do you think it necessary to increase unemployment benefits or that it is better not to increase them?]

  In parallel fashion, those who oppose increasing unemployment benefits are randomly assigned either the content counter-argument:

    Ceci dit, avec les indemnités actuelles, il y a trop de familles qui n'arrivent pas à s'en sortir

    [However, with today's benefits, there are many families who cannot get by.]

Or the content-free counter-argument:

> *Ceci dit, si on pense à tous les problèmes que ça va poser*
> [However, if one thinks of all the problems this is going to create.]

Then, as in the other sequence, their position is reassessed:

> *Pensez-vous malgré tout qu'il ne faut pas augmenter les indemnités de chômage ou qu'il vaut mieux les augmenter?*
> [In spite of all that, do you think it unnecessary to raise unemployment benefits, or do you think it is better to raise them?]

- **Ideological Self-Identification:** *plutôt de gauche, plutôt de droite, ni de gauche ni de droite [somewhat left, somewhat right, neither left not right]*

- **Political Sophistication:** equi-weighted additive scale, re-normalized to range from zero to one, using

    1. correct/incorrect associations of the following policy positions with either the left or the right:
        (a) *Réduire les inégalities sociales [reduce inequality in society]*
        (b) *Développer l'armement nucléaire français [develop French nuclear weapons]*
        (c) *Rétablir la peine de mort [re-introduce the death penalty]*
        (d) *Intervenir militairement dans les pays ou la démocratie est menacée [intervene militarily in countries where democracy is threatened]*
        (e) *Privatiser les entreprises publiques [privatize public enterprises]*
        (f) *Autoriser la consommation de hachisch [permit the consumption of hashish]*
        (g) *Régulariser les sans papiers [regularization of illegal immigrants]*
        (h) *Défendre la nation française contre l'Europe [defend the French nation against Europe]*
        (i) *Défendre les droits des homosexuels [defend the rights of homosexuals]*

    2. 10 true/false political knowledge items, analyzed in Jackman (2000):
        (a) *Il y a des ministres communistes dans le gouvernement de Lionel Jospin [There are communist ministers in the government of Lionel Jospin]*

(b) *La Finlande fait partie de l'Union européene [Finland is a member of the European Union]*

(c) *Alain Madelin appartient au RPR [Alain Madelin belongs to the RPR]*

(d) *Le premier ministre a le droit de dissoudre l'Assemblée nationale [The prime minister has the right to dissolve the National Assembly]*

(e) *Al Gore est le vice-président des Etats-Unis [Al Gore is the Vice-President of the United States]*

(f) *Le Président de la République est élu pour un mandat de 5 ans [The President of the Republic is elected to a 5 year term]*

(g) *Le Sénat a le pouvoir de renverser le gouvernement [The Senate has the power to reverse the government]*

(h) *Les députés sont élus au scrutin proportionnel [Deputies (to the National Assembly) are elected by proportional representation]*

(i) *Les étrangers qui résident en France depuis 5 ans ont le droit de voter à l'élection présidentielle [Foreigners living in France for more than five years have the right to vote in presidential elections]*

(j) *L'Etat aide financièrement les partis politique [The state gives financial aid to the political parties]*

3. self-assessed political interest: *Est-ce que vous vous intéressez à la politique beaucoup, assez, peu ou pas du tout? [Are you interested in politics very much, somewhat, a little, or not at all?]*

The resulting scale has a reliability coefficient of .75.

References

Jackman, Simon. 2000. "Estimation and Inference Are Missing Data Problems: Unifying Social Science Statistics via Bayesian Simulation." *Political Analysis* 8:307–332.