Climate Change Assemblies as dialogic spaces for the correction of climate misperceptions: An Experimental Survey

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Global responses to climate change

- Global response needed to tackle climate change (e.g. IPCC 2022)
- But efforts hampered by **delay** and deny tactics from various stakeholders (e.g. political elites, business interests)

➔ Climate disinformation increasingly a partisan issue:
  - Climate change scientists vs "the little guy"(Kaiser 2019)
  - Framing strategies (i.e. AfD support for environment but reject climate mitigation policies) (Schaller and Carius 2019)

The black box of deliberative minipublics

- Recent move towards communicating climate science by empowering as well as disseminating facts (Dryzek and Niemeyer 2019; Morton et al. 2011; Cooke 2015)

- Citizen Climate Assemblies apt instruments to impact participants

- **But does communicating about CCAs impact the wider public too? If so, what is the causal mechanism?**

Mechanisms

1. Competence (Warren and Gastil 2015)
   - Potential backfire effect, depending on perceived credibility
   - Blows air into the populist's sail
   - But high efficacy for correcting misperceptions + scrutiny

2. Representation (e.g. Warren 2021)
   - Promotes social mandate to decision-making
   - Normative benefits from participation (e.g. Efficacy, engagement)

3. Voice
   - Emphasis on broader participatory avenue
   - Empower those affected by climate change

EuComMeet

This survey is part of the larger Horizon 2020 - EUComMeet project, consisting of the following activities:

A nationwide opinion survey in five countries (France, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Poland) in April 2023;

A second opinion survey in 5 countries for recruitment purposes in two cities/regions for each country in May 2023; and then at EU level

Recruitment and management of participants in online deliberative sessions during May/June 2023;

A repeat questionnaire deployed following each deliberative event

Factorial experiment setup

- **Pre-registered analysis plan**
- **Data**: Quota sampling, total sample size: N=5556
- **Randomization** at level of country, well-balanced data
- **Five countries**: France (N=1076), Ireland (N=1250), Poland (N=1055), Italy (N=1074), and Germany (N=1101)

- **Three conditions** and a **control** group:
  - **Representation**
  - **Voice**
  - **Competence**

Climate Change
National Citizens' Assembly

The prime minister convened a national Citizens' Assembly to discuss how best to tackle climate change.

Who participated?

Members were randomly chosen to represent the make-up and diverse viewpoints of Irish society.

What did they conclude?

They concluded that money and profit motives were behind many of the bad faith narratives to delay taking climate action.

What was the process?

Members heard from a broad range of scientific experts and discussed the issue in small groups.

Competence vignette
(N=1714)

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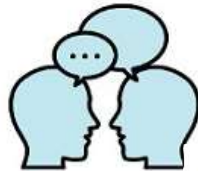
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What was the process?

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Representation vignette
(N=1436)

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You can participate. You can watch the proceedings, read the evidence and submit your suggestions and/or questions online.

Voice vignette (N=1406)

+ Control (N=1000). No vignette displayed

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Variables of interest

- **Two contrarian statements (0-10 agreement scale):**
  - Climate change policies are **counterproductive** and even harmful to the economy, environment, and society more generally
  - Climate change policies are **ineffective**, technological solutions will fix the problem in the future.

- **Climate scepticism (0-10 agreement scale):**
  - Recent global warming is caused by the sun.
  - The climate has changed many times in the past, there is no reason to believe humans are causing warming today.
  - The existence and causes of global climate change have scientifically been proved.

Main effect (t-test)

Coef= 0.13   p= 0.0177
n= 2404

Coef= 0.06   p= 0.2636
n= 2434

Coef= 0.06   p= 0.2196
n= 2712
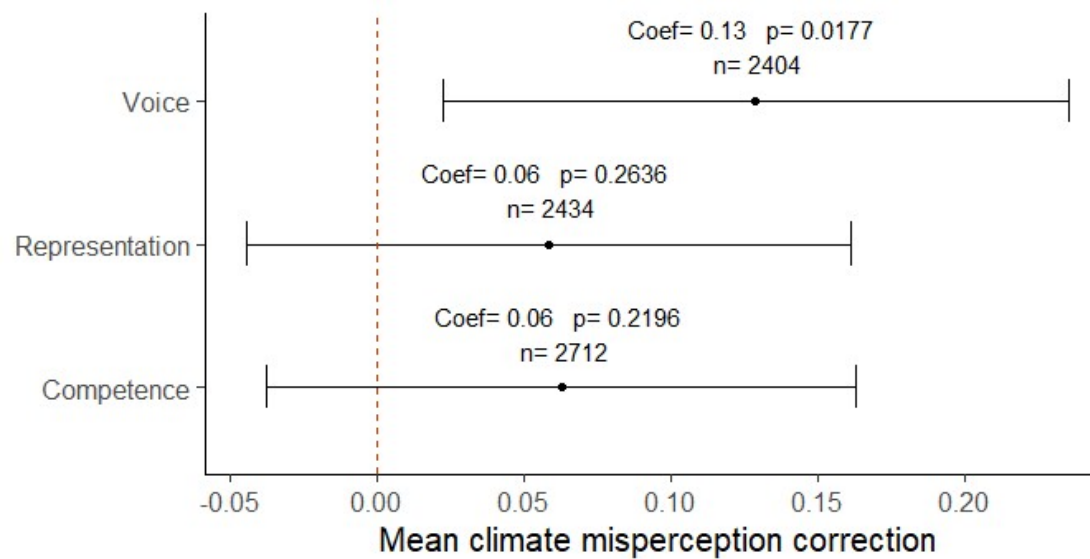
Main effect (OLS)
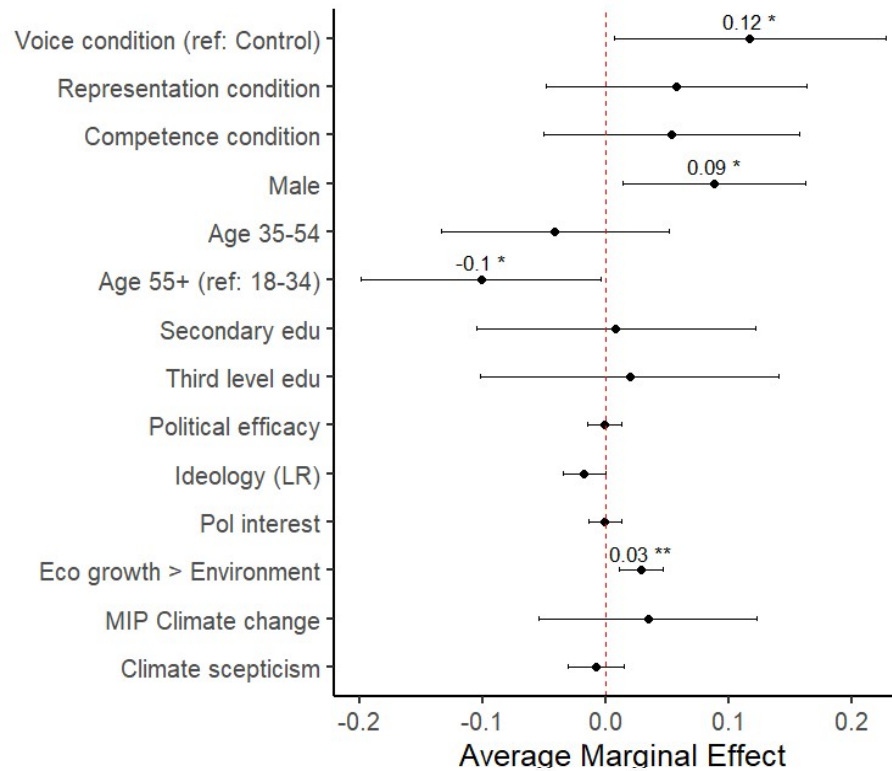
A cohort of interest: Climate sceptics
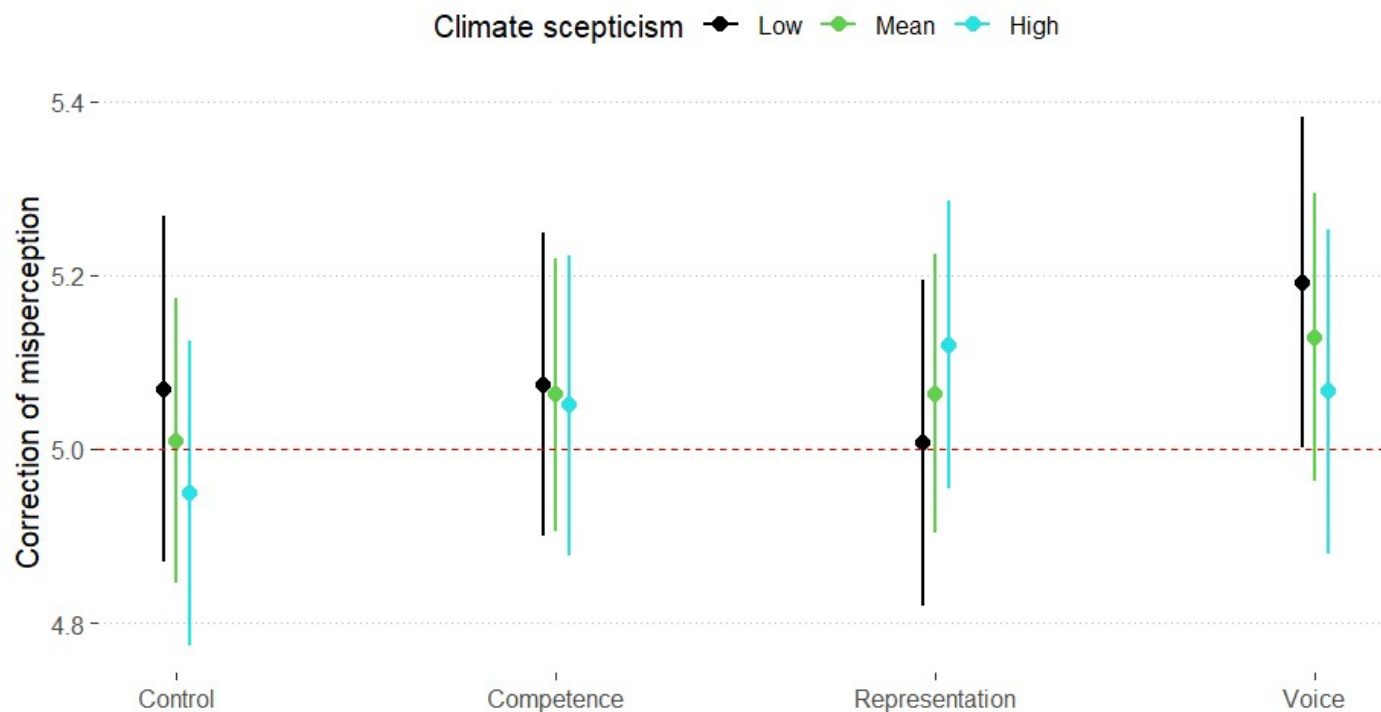
Compliance

		N	Pct.
Speeders	Non-speeder	5200	93.6%
	Speeder	356	6.4%
Attention check	Failed	1077	19.4%
	Succeeded	4479	80.6%
Manipulation Check	Non-complier	2773	49.9%
	Complier	2783	50.1%

Conclusion

- Communication of climate science most persuasive when inclusive of views from wider public (Voice condition)
- Climate sceptics more likely to challenge their opinion when representative function is highlighted (Representation condition)

- But could not formally establish a causal mechanism (no ATT)
- Issue of low compliance (61%)
- Need better measurement