Who Wants to Discuss Vote Choices with Others?: Polarization in Preferences for Deliberation

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Abstract
Should people discuss their vote choices with others? On one hand, many people argue that openly deliberating with others can lead to better decision-making. On the other hand, institutions like the secret ballot imply keeping these choices secret has value, perhaps as a means of insulating people from unwanted social pressures. In this paper we examine public attitudes about whether it is best to discuss one's choices with others or treat them as personal matters. We find that the American public is evenly divided on this issue. We also find that those who are least confident in their political capabilities—those who arguably could benefit most from deliberating their vote choices—are most likely to say that choices should be treated as personal matters. Our findings have implications for understanding the role of political deliberation in the United States.

Tocqueville argued that one of the strengths of American democracy was that Americans "find neither peril nor advantage in the free interchange of their thoughts" (2007, 448). Many contemporary scholars concur with Tocqueville and argue that political deliberation is essential to a properly functioning democracy (e.g., Fishkin 1995; Fishkin and Luskin 2005; Mansbridge 1980; Page 1996). At the same time, open discussions of one's Election Day choices may also expose people to formal and informal pressures that may unduly influence these decisions (Karpowitz, Monson, Nielson, Patterson, and Snell 2011). Thus, it is not clear how people view the prospect of discussing their vote choices with others. On the one hand, people may view discussion of vote choices as an opportunity to articulate and refine their preferences or acquire new information. On the other hand, people may feel that these discussions are likely to generate unwanted social pressure or uncomfortable disagreement. How many, and which, citizens view discussion of vote choices as an opportunity or as a hardship has direct implications for understanding the likely consequences of efforts to encourage people to discuss and debate their political preferences.

In this paper, we use data from a national survey to examine whether members of the mass public believe it is desirable to discuss their vote choices with others or if, instead, they believe it is best to treat their vote choices as private.[1] We report three main findings. First, we find that many individuals do not believe discussing vote choices is good for democracy. Approximately half of our sample said that democracy works best "when people treat their vote choices as personal matters," rather than "when people discuss their vote choices with others." This suggests that the public is roughly evenly divided over whether discussing one's vote choices is a "good" thing, and that, for many people, the costs of discussing vote choices with others outweigh the benefits.

[1] No work that we are aware of asks the survey items we present below that focus on the discussion of vote choices. Similar, but distinct, work focuses on the decision of whether to participate in a deliberation session about "important issues" or "immigration policy" (Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, and Sokhey 2010, and also see Esterling, Neblo, and Lazer 2011), on the policy-making process (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002), and on rates of participation in deliberative activities, such as talking with others, but again with a focus on policy issues (Cook, Delli Carpini, and Jacobs 2007).

Second, we provide evidence that the perceived costs of discussing vote choices are higher, and the benefits are lower, for those people who prefer to treat vote choices as personal matters. In particular, we find 47 percent of those individuals who prefer to keep vote choices private agreed that discussing one's vote choices with others is a good way to learn. In contrast, 85 percent of those who said democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others agreed that discussing one's vote choices with others is a good way to learn.[2] In addition, those individuals who say it is best to treat one's vote choices as personal matters are more likely than individuals who say it is best to discuss these choices to agree that discussing vote choices with others can expose one to unwanted social pressure (50 percent vs. 28 percent).[3]

Third, we find that those who *a priori* may be expected to benefit most from discussing their choices—people who are least engaged with and knowledgeable about political matters (i.e., have fewer political resources)—are least likely to support open discussion of political choices. For example, among those with low levels of internal political efficacy (i.e., those who do not feel well qualified to participate in politics), 64 percent say it is best to treat one's vote choices as personal matters. Among those with high levels of internal political efficacy, however, over 65 percent instead say it is best for people to discuss their vote choices with others. We also find that those with strong political preferences (i.e., strong partisans or ideologues) and those who report high levels of agreement about politics with others in their social network (i.e., with their family, friends, and neighbors) are more likely to say that discussing one's vote choices is desirable.

Our findings regarding the relationship between individual-level political resources and attitudes about discussing one's vote choices call into question the claim that increasing democratic engagement can serve an equalizing force, better enabling all individuals to participate effectively in the political

[2] The specific statement was, "Discussing your vote choices with others is a great way to learn about political issues and think through your positions." Complete question wording is discussed in more detail below and included in the Appendix.

[3] The specific statement was, "Discussing your vote choices with others can cause problems because people might try to pressure you to change your choices." Complete question wording is discussed in more detail below and included in the Appendix.

process (also see, from a theoretical perspective, Sanders 1997). Rather than viewing political discussions as opportunities to learn more about political matters, the prospect of encountering pressure in the course of discussing one's political preferences seems to be particularly distressing to individuals who have doubts about their political competence or have low levels of political knowledge. Furthermore, the apparent relationships between these attitudes and both strength of preferences and agreement within one's social network stand in contrast to the notion that people find the idea of vigorous debate of competing viewpoints to be an appealing opportunity to reconsider or refine preferences. Instead, people for whom discussion of political choices is likely to be an outlet for expressing preferences to sympathetic discussants are particularly likely to see political discussion as valuable. In summary, our findings suggest that political discussion may be best thought of as a consumption good, where those who find politics to be an engaging and enjoyable topic of conversation are most likely to see deliberation of their vote choices as valuable.

The remainder of the paper proceeds as follows. We first discuss previous research on the causes and consequences of political debate and outline our theoretical expectations regarding which individual-level factors are most likely to be associated with views about the costs and benefits of discussing one's vote choices with others. We then describe our data and present our analysis. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for our understanding of the role of political deliberation in the United States.

1. Public Attitudes about the Discussion of Vote Choices

Our work extends two related, but distinct, fields of research. The first line of research examines how frequently people discuss politics (e.g., Cook, Delli Carpini, and Jacobs 2007; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, and Dowling 2012). However, to our knowledge no research has measured whether people think these political discussions, and discussions of one's candidate or party preferences in particular, are desirable components of democratic decision-making. We take a first step at examining these views in this paper. Our focus on attitudes about the discussion of vote choices is distinct from this previous work

because whether an individual has discussed her vote choices with others does not describe her attitudes about the value of those discussions. How frequently an individual discusses their vote choices may be a function both of their preferences and their social environment—for example, whether they commonly find themselves in situations where they are expected to divulge their choices.[4]

The second line of related research examines the extent to which people say they would like to have more direct opportunities to participate in the policy-making process (e.g., Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002) or engage in structured deliberative democracy sessions where individuals discuss policy issues with other citizens or elected officials (e.g., Neblo et al. 2010). For example, recent work suggests that, if given the opportunity a "large majority of people (83 percent)" report being interested in participating in events where they would have an opportunity to deliberate policy matters with other citizens and provide "input into the policy process" (Neblo et al. 2010, 573). Attitudes about whether discussing one's vote choices is a good idea may, however, differ from attitudes about structured discussion of policy matters in two important ways.

First, attitudes about policy matters are often multidimensional and individuals can support non-exclusive solutions.[5] In contrast, vote choices are largely dichotomous (and zero-sum) in the United States. Individuals may therefore see discussions of vote choices as particularly likely to lead to conflict. Second, very few citizens have experience engaging in formal and structured deliberation while the vast majority of Americans have experience being asked about their vote choices (over 90 percent in a 2008 survey [authors' analysis; available upon request]). Thus, whereas attitudes about participating in formally

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[4] This distinction is highlighted by the fact that well over half of respondents in our survey who said that it is best to treat vote choices as personal matters nonetheless said that some or most of their friends and family members know who they voted for in the last election. Keeping vote choices, or other matters that an individual considers "personal," private may prove a difficult task in social situations where lying or keeping secrets, especially from individuals one is close to, is unpleasant (DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, and Epstein 1996; DePaulo and Kashy 1998; Lane and Wegner 1995), socially costly (Rycyna, Champion, and Kelly 2009), and believed to be detectable (Gilovich, Medvec, and Savitsky 1998).

[5] For example, although people may attach different value to specific components of an immigration policy, there is likely to be room to find common ground. For instance, individuals may disagree about the merits of building a fence on the border with Mexico, but agree that a guest worker program is a good idea.

structured deliberative sessions may be shaped by the appeal of civilized discourse, attitudes about discussing vote choices are likely to be informed by direct, concrete experience with such discussions. Given these differences, people may view discussing policy matters in a structured environment attractive while still finding discussing vote choices problematic. For this reason, understanding how citizens view discussion of their vote choices is important for understanding the dynamics surrounding the more common deliberation around candidate choices.[6]

1.1. Public Deliberation and Attitudes about the Discussion of Vote Choices

Advocates of encouraging democratic deliberation argue that this approach to political decision-making is not only likely to lead to better policy outcomes, but also is personally rewarding to participants (for a review, see Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004). Although the public deliberation literature largely focuses on the deliberation and discussion of policy issues, a wide range of studies focus on the effects of political discussion (more broadly construed) on individuals. For example, research finds that engaging in political debate and discussion is associated with higher levels of political knowledge and tolerance (Esterling, Neblo, and Lazer 2011; Fishkin and Luskin 1999; Gastil and Dillard 1999; Huckfeldt, Mendez, and Osborn 2004; Jang 2009; Mutz 2002b; Mutz and Mondak 2006). Additionally, these political discussions can increase the likelihood that an individual chooses to participate in the political process (Jang 2009; Lake and Huckfeldt 1998; Leighley 1990; McClurg 2003; 2006; Nickerson 2008; Pattie and Johnston 2009; Scheufele, Nisbet, Brossard, and Nisbet 2004) and can affect individuals' political preferences (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1991; Beck 2002; Sinclair 2009).

Despite evidence that those who discuss politics or deliberate with greater frequency tend to be more politically engaged,[7] this work has not considered the possibility that people vary in how they view

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[6] Of note, even many voters who lack consistent ideological worldviews or clearly defined policy opinions nonetheless choose among candidates on election day (see, e.g., see Converse 1964), which implies that discussion of vote choices has an important independent effect on democratic outcomes.

[7] We use the phrase "tend to be" because very few of the studies cited above are experimental (Esterling, Neblo, and Lazer 2011 and Neblo et al. 2010 are notable recent exceptions); that is, most do not

the costs and benefits of political deliberation. For example, the notion that discussion of vote choices provides people with an opportunity to engage with new information, clarify one's own thinking about political matters, and update one's attitudes when presented with new information is at the heart of what advocates of deliberative democracy see as its key benefits for participants.[8] For others, however, public discussion may be more uncomfortable than valuable. For example, some argue that the emotional dynamics that accompany political deliberation can have adverse consequence (e.g., Thompson and Hoggett 2001). In addition, people may believe that the information they are exposed to through political discussions may be biased or be accompanied by unwanted social pressure. Previous research finds that social pressure can strongly affect behavior and attitudes (e.g., Asch 1955; Cialdini and Goldstein 2004; Gerber, Green, and Larimer 2008; Schultz 1999). Because political discussions can entail asymmetries in political knowledge, the discussant with less information may be particularly susceptible to social pressures. People may sense that in many situations better-informed discussants will expect others to expertly defend their choices or that they will use their knowledge to sway others from their true preferences.

Concerns about these pressures contributed to the widespread adoption of the secret ballot—an institution that is now believed to be essential to free and fair elections (Franck 1992). Despite formal protections, however, recent work finds that even in the United States—where the secret ballot has been a longstanding institution—many people have doubts about whether their vote choices are kept secret

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randomize participation in political discussion or deliberative sessions to estimate its direct *causal* effect on the outcomes of interest to scholars. As a result, it is difficult to disentangle the effect of deliberation on, for example, tolerance, from the possibility that people who are more tolerant may simply be more willing to discuss political matters in the first place. Neblo and his colleagues' innovative research design solves some of these problems of causal inference when it comes to the effects of deliberative sessions on political knowledge, but their work focuses on the discussion of policy issues, such as immigration, not the act of discussing vote choices.

[8] Summarizing the claims of the proponents of deliberative democracy, Mendelberg writes, "deliberation is expected to lead to empathy with the other and a broadened sense of people's own interests through an egalitarian, open-minded and reciprocal process of reasoned argumentation. Following from this result are other benefits: citizens are more enlightened about their own and others' needs and experiences, can better resolve deep conflict, are more engaged in politics, place their faith in the basic tenets of democracy, perceive their political system as legitimate, and lead a healthier civic life" (2002, 154).

(Karpowitz et al. 2011). Voicing doubts about the secret ballot, however, is not equivalent to expressing preferences regarding whether one's vote choices should more generally treated as private. Ballot secrecy rules protect individuals from involuntary disclosure of their vote choices. Private deliberation among adults, however, is a means by which individuals may choose to voluntarily reveal their political beliefs and feelings to others, and the focus of our research.

2. Hypotheses: Individual-Level Factors and Attitudes about the Discussion of Vote Choices

As this is the first analysis of preferences over the desirability of discussing vote choices with others, we focus our attention on standard predictors of political participation. Specifically, we focus on the relationship between an individual's attitude about whether the costs of discussing one's vote choices outweigh the benefits and (1) political resources, (2) strength of political preferences, and (3) social network agreement.[9]

Previous work finds a strong association between socio-economic status and political participation (e.g., Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). This relationship is often explained with the argument that those with greater economic and educational resources are better prepared to engage in the political realm. Most notably for our purposes, those who are better educated and wealthier tend to be more knowledgeable about the political process and contemporary political issues, more interested in politics, and more confident in their ability to form, defend, and act on their political preferences (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995).

Attitudes about whether discussing vote choices is a good idea in the first place are likely to be closely connected to individuals' assessments of whether they see these discussions as personally beneficial to them, which may vary by an individual's level of engagement with politics and political resources. Here we focus on three closely related political resources: 1) how qualified individuals feel to

[9] We recognize that a variety of other factors, from conflict avoidance tendencies (Mutz 2002a; Mutz 2006; Neblo et al. 2010) to personality traits (Gerber et al. 2012; Hibbing, Ritchie, and Anderson 2011; Mondak 2010) to partisanship (e.g., Cook, Delli Carpini, and Jacobs 2007), may also be associated with attitudes and behaviors related to political discussion.

participate in politics (i.e., internal political efficacy), 2) how knowledgeable they are about political matters, and 3) how interested they say they are in politics. Variation in these political resources may be associated with attitudes about whether choices should be kept secret.

Of course, one possibility is that those who know little, and therefore arguably have the most to gain from political discussion, will be particularly likely to view discussion as desirable. From the standpoint of proponents of democratic deliberation, this would be especially welcome, as part of their argument for more deliberation is that deliberation results in a more engaged citizenry. However, those who are less informed and confident in their political capabilities, in addition to being disengaged from politics, are likely to be particularly vulnerable to persuasion (Zaller 1992). Thus, these individuals may be particularly concerned that selective use of information by more informed discussants may lead less informed individuals to improperly abandon their choices and cast votes for candidates that do not best represent their true preferences.

Consistent with this line of argument, Neblo et al. (2010) find some evidence that higher levels of political efficacy and political interest are associated with greater willingness to participate in deliberative democracy sessions to discuss policy matters. Here, we focus on *internal* political efficacy as a measure of political resources, rather than a broad measure that encompasses both internal and external political efficacy. We do so because internal political efficacy more directly measures whether a person believes he or she can effectively participate in politics, whereas external political efficacy taps a person's belief about whether the government and political actors are responsive to his or her demands (see Craig, Niemi, and Silver 1990; Morrell 2003; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei 1991).[10]

The second individual level factor we examine is strength of political preferences. We expect those with strong political preferences to obtain greater expressive benefits from discussing their choices with others. Relative to those with weak or moderate preferences, individuals with strong preferences are likely to enjoy sharing their choices with others and relish opportunities to persuade others to adopt their

[10] Indeed, as we show below, internal and external political efficacy exhibit opposing patterns of association with attitudes toward discussion of vote choices.

preferences. Additionally, because their own preferences are strongly held, they may be less inclined to see them as susceptible to the social influences that may arise in the context of political discussions. Thus, individuals with strong political preferences may assign less weight to concerns about social pressure when forming attitudes about whether vote choices should be kept secret.

Prior evidence is mixed on this possibility. Neblo et al. (2010) do not find any statistically significant association between strength of partisanship and willingness to participate in deliberative sessions. Cook, Delli Carpini, and Jacobs (2007), however, do find a positive association between partisan affiliation and certain types of political discussion.

Finally, we assess whether homogeneity of preferences within one's social network is associated with attitudes about whether vote choices should be discussed or treated as personal matters. One of the most often cited benefits of democratic deliberation is that it provides participants with opportunities to engage with people who have different preferences and perspectives (e.g., Fishkin 1995; Guttman and Thompson 1996; Fishkin and Luskin 2005; Mansbridge 1980). From this perspective, we might assume that those who find themselves in diverse social networks where many of their potential political discussants hold opinions that differ from their own would be particularly likely to see discussion of vote choices as desirable. However, engaging in political debates with people of divergent preferences may also involve conflict. This conflict may have several negative repercussions. For example, a question included on the survey we use in our main analysis presented below revealed that about 12 percent of people have lost friends due to political disagreements.[11] Ultimately, rather than viewing access to friends and family with differing political opinions as an opportunity to engage with opposing viewpoints, individuals in social networks where many potential discussants disagree with them may conclude that keeping one's opinions to oneself is the best approach (see Gerber et al. 2012). When thinking about the

[11] Respondents were asked "Has a disagreement over [topic] ever resulted in you losing a friend?" where one of three topics—politics, religion, or sports—was randomly inserted into the question. About 12 percent of respondents assigned to the politics condition indicated that a disagreement about politics had resulted in losing a friend. This percentage is comparable to the percentage who reported losing a friend over a disagreement about religion (12.5 percent) and substantially larger than the proportion who reported having lost a friend over a disagreement about sports (2.6 percent).

costs and benefits of discussing one's vote choices, these individuals may be particularly attuned to potential social costs such as unpleasant or combative interactions or even the dissolution of a relationship, rather than the possibility that these interactions will be informative.

3. Data and Analysis

Our data are from an internet-based survey conducted in December of 2010. The survey was fielded by YouGov/Polimetrix. YouGov/Polimetrix uses a combination of sampling and matching techniques to approximate a random digit dialing sample.[12] The final weighted sample (N = 3,000) is nationally representative of the U.S. adult population (age 25 and over). All the descriptive statistics and analyses presented below use the sampling weights provided by YouGov/Polimetrix. The minimum response rate was 40.8 percent (AAPOR RR1) and the estimated response rate was 41.1 percent (AAPOR RR3). There are a variety of concerns about using opt-in surveys, especially those fielded on the internet (AAPOR Task Force 2010). One concern is that, because of the choice to opt in, participants are more interested or informed than an average citizen. For example, ninety-four percent of respondents (2821 of 3000) indicated that they were registered to vote. However, many of the basic findings we report come from comparisons across groups recruited and interviewed in this common format. The pattern of differences would have to differ in a large fashion between our respondents and other members of the population before the substantive conclusions of our results would be threatened.

[12] YouGov interviewed 3,263 respondents who had taken both waves of the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES). These interviews were then matched on gender, age, race, education, party identification, ideology, and political interest down to a sample of 3,000 to produce the final dataset. YouGov then weighted the matched set of survey respondents to known marginals for the citizen population of the United States age 25+ from the 2006 American Community Survey (ACS). The original CCES sample was constructed by first drawing a target population sample. This sample is based on the 2006 ACS, November 2008 Current Population Survey Supplement, and the 2007 Pew Religious Life Survey. Thus, this target sample is representative of the general population on a broad range of characteristics including a variety of geographic (state, region, metropolitan statistical area), demographic (age, race, income, education, gender), and other measures (born-again status, employment, interest in news, party identification, ideology, and turnout). A stratified sample of individuals from Polimetrix's opt-in panel was invited to participate in the study. Those who completed the survey were then matched to the target sample based on the variables listed in parentheses above. For more detailed information on this type of survey and sampling technique see Vavreck and Rivers (2008).

3.1. Attitudes about the Discussion of Vote Choices

Our analysis focuses on three items designed to measure respondents' feelings about the costs and benefits of discussing their vote choices with others that were asked of 40 percent of our total sample (i.e., 1,200 of the 3,000 total respondents). The first item asked respondents which of two statements they most agreed with: "Democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others" or "Democracy works best when people treat their vote choices as personal matters." The other two items, the order of which was randomly assigned, measured respondents beliefs about specific potential costs and benefits associated with discussing one's vote choices. One item asked respondents how much they agreed (on a 5 point scale) with the statement, "Discussing your vote choices with others is a great way to learn about political issues and think through your positions." The other item measured respondents' assessments of the risks associated with divulging their choices. We asked respondents how much they agreed (on a 5 point scale) with the statement, "Discussing your vote choices with others can cause problems because people might try to pressure you to change your choices." We present the distribution of responses for each of these three items in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Respondents were evenly divided in their assessments of whether democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others (49 percent) or when people treat their vote choices as personal matters (51 percent). Responses to this question suggest that increasing opportunities for deliberation about vote choices is not universally viewed as desirable. Indeed, a slight majority of respondents actually views keeping vote choices private as better for democracy than discussing those choices with others. Nevertheless, responses to the item that asked respondents whether discussing vote choices "is a great way to learn about political issues and think through your positions" suggest that most individuals recognize the potential informational benefits associated with discussing vote choices. Approximately two-thirds of respondents either somewhat or strongly agreed with this statement, while less than 10 percent of respondents disagreed (somewhat or strongly). Finally, responses to the item that asked respondents whether discussing vote choices "can cause problems because people might try to

pressure you to change your choices" suggest that many people are concerned about unwanted social pressure. Almost 40 percent of respondents agreed (somewhat or strongly) with this statement, and only 26 percent disagreed (somewhat or strongly).

In Figure 2, we partition responses to the first item by responses to the second and third items. Each bar represents the percentage of respondents that said democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others within a given response category. For example, the top bar indicates that of those who strongly agreed that discussing vote choices is a great way to learn about political issues, nearly 80 percent said that democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others. The figure shows that people who think you can learn something from discussing vote choices with others are more likely to say that democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others. Indeed, less than 5 percent of those who strongly disagreed that you can learn something from discussing vote choices thought discussing vote choices is a superior way for democracy to operate. In short, those who see an informational benefit to discussing vote choices are more likely to believe discussing vote choices is desirable.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

Similarly, those who thought discussing vote choices was unlikely to causes problems were more likely to agree that democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others. Over 60 percent of those who disagreed strongly and over 70 percent of those who disagreed somewhat that discussing vote choices can cause problems agreed that democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others. In contrast, less than 20 (40) percent of those who agreed strongly (somewhat) felt that democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others. In other words, individuals who viewed discussing vote choices with others as less likely to be costly are more likely to think discussing vote choices is desirable.

Taken together, responses to these three questions suggest that many people see political discussion of their vote choices as a double-edged sword. On one hand, most people (almost two-thirds) believe that these discussions can be informative; on the other hand, many people fear that divulging

one's choices may expose them to social pressures. Those who think social pressure is unlikely to occur as a result of discussions, but that learning is likely to occur, are more likely to think that democracy works best when people discuss their vote choice with others. Said the other way, some individuals appear to have concerns that deliberation is costly (might lead to social pressure) and not that beneficial (informational benefits are unlikely), and these individuals are more likely to think vote choices should be kept private.[13] We next turn to an exploration of the factors that correlate with beliefs about the costs, benefits, and desirability of discussing vote choices with others.

3.2. The Correlates of Attitudes about the Discussion of Vote Choices

We posited that three factors would be particularly relevant in shaping a person's preferences about the desirability of discussing vote choices: 1) their level of political resources, 2) the strength of their political preferences, and 3) the extent to which there is agreement in their social network. To measure these three factors, we rely on six characteristics of the individual. Complete question wording and coding details are included in the Appendix.

First, we construct three measures of an individual's level of political resources: measures of their 1) internal political efficacy (measured using a single item standardized to have a mean of zero and standard deviation of one), 2) political knowledge (measured using an index standardized to have a mean of zero and standard deviation of one of four items that asked respondents which party controlled 1] the U.S. House of Representatives, 2] the U.S. Senate, 3] their state house, 4] their state Senate), and 3) interest in political affairs (measured using a single item standardized to have a mean of zero and standard deviation of one). Each of these items is scored so that higher values represent greater political resources. Therefore, these three items should each be positively associated with a preference for discussing vote choices with others if those with greater resources assign greater value to discussing vote choices and

[13] To examine this relationship statistically, we estimated a simple weighted regression model predicting the probability that an individual thinks that democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others (1 = yes, 0 = no) with the two scales (information and pressure). Confirming the graphical presentation above, individuals who believe either that discussing vote choices provides information or is unlikely to yield social pressure are more supportive of discussing vote choices. Including an interaction between these two scales does not alter this interpretation. Results available upon request.

view the potential costs of doing so as more modest than those with fewer resources. The measures would be negatively associated with a preference for discussing vote choices with others if those who lack resources view discussion as desirable/beneficial to them because they lack important information.

Second, we measure the strength of an individual's political preferences with a single variable that is an index of standardized measures of strength of party identification and strength of political ideology. This item is scored so that higher values indicate holding stronger political preferences. Therefore, this item should be positively associated with a preference for discussing vote choices with others if our hypothesis that individuals with strong political preferences assign less weight to concerns about social pressure is correct.

Third, we measure social network agreement with two items—one measuring an individual's reported level of political agreement with her family members and the other measuring an individual's reported level of political agreement with her friends and neighbors. Both of these items are standardized to have a mean of zero and standard deviation of one, and scored so that higher values represent greater agreement between a respondent and her social network. Therefore, if individuals embedded in social networks where many potential discussants disagree with them conclude that keeping one's opinions to oneself is the best approach, then these items should be positively associated with a preference for discussing vote choices (as greater agreement would be associated with a greater willingness to discuss one's vote choices).

We begin by simply presenting bivariate relationships between each of these six measures and attitudes about discussing vote choices. Specifically, in Table 1 we present the distribution of responses to the question about whether democracy works best when people discuss their choices or treat them as personal matters broken down by groups with varying political resources (top half of Table 1) and by strength of political preferences and political agreement within respondents' social networks (bottom half of Table 1). For each characteristic, we present the percentage of respondents who thought that "democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others" for those scoring low, high,

and in between ("middle") on each characteristic. (The cutoffs and sample size for each category are noted in the table.)

[Insert Table 1 about here]

The distribution of responses in the top half of Table 1 is preliminary evidence that those with greater political resources are more supportive of the idea that discussing one's vote choices with others is desirable, while those with lower levels of resources are more likely to believe that vote choices should be treated as personal matters. Just over 34 percent of those who reported low levels of internal political efficacy (1 SD or more below the mean) agreed that democracy works best when people discuss their choices with others. In contrast, over 65 percent of those who report high levels of internal political efficacy (1 SD or more above the mean) supported this statement—a statistically significant difference of over 30 percentage points ($p < .001$, two-tailed; all hypothesis tests are two-tailed). We find a similar pattern when we compare those with high and low levels of political knowledge and interest in politics. Among those with the lowest levels of political knowledge (1 SD or more below the mean), 30 percent said democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others; 57 percent of those with the highest level of political knowledge (1 SD or more above the mean) said the same. Similarly, among those who reported low levels of political interest (those who reported paying attention to news and public affairs either "hardly at all" or "only now and then") 31 percent said it is best to discuss vote choices with others; 56 percent of respondents who reported paying attention to politics "most of the time" gave this response. Each of these differences is statistically significant at $p < .001$.

In the bottom half of Table 1 we present these distributions broken down by strength of preferences and political agreement within respondents' social networks. In each case, the pattern of responses is in the expected direction, but the magnitude of the differences is smaller than for the three political resource items in the top half of Table 1. Those with strong political preferences (at least 1 SD above the mean) were 14 percentage points more likely to say democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others than those with weak preferences (at least 1 SD below the mean) were ($p < .01$). Respondents who indicated high levels of agreement with their family members and high levels of

agreement with their friends and neighbors (agreeing with "all or almost all" of them about political matters) were approximately 3 and 10 percentage points more likely, respectively, to say it is best to discuss vote choices with others than those who reported low levels of agreement (agreeing with "less than half" or "almost none or none" of them about political matters). The small 3 percentage point difference between those high and low on agreement with friends and neighbors is also not statistically significant (p = .555).

3.3. Multiple Regression Analysis of Attitudes about the Discussion of Vote Choices

Because the individual-level factors we discussed in the previous section are correlated with one another, as well as with a variety of other demographic characteristics, we also examine the relationships between these individual-level characteristics and attitudes about whether vote choices should be discussed with others or treated as personal matters in a multiple regression framework.[14] For our multiple regression analysis we employ the following general model specification, which we estimate using ordinary least squares:

(1) $Y = B_0$ + Demographics + Political Resources + Strength of Preferences + Social Network Agreement + State Fixed Effects + e.

For brevity and clarity, we specify as the dependent variable (Y) an index of the three items that measure respondents' feelings about whether vote choices should be discussed with others as our outcome of interest, which we call the "Discussion is Good Index." We create the *Discussion is Good Index* by scaling responses to each question so that higher values indicate greater support for discussing vote choices with others (e.g., agreement with the statement that discussing one's choices with others can be informative). We rescaled each of the three items to range from zero to one and combined the rescaled

[14] See Appendix Table A1 for the correlations between these items.

responses into a mean index with mean zero and standard deviation one (Cronbach's alpha = .59); higher values of the index indicate a greater interest in discussing vote choices.[15]

In Table 2, we present results from a variety of model specifications, which we discuss in a stepwise manner. In the first column of Table 2, we regress the *Discussion is Good Index* on a series of demographic variables (and state-level fixed effects). The only statistically significant relationships we find are between the *Discussion is Good Index* and measures of socio-economic status (SES: education and income). Specifically, those with higher levels of income and education score more highly on the *Discussion is Good Index*.[16] These relationships are consistent with the argument that those with greater resources are more attracted to the idea of deliberation than with the argument that those with lower resources are more attracted to the idea of deliberation.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

In columns (2)-(4) we add standardized measures of political resources separately. In each case, the measure of political resources is positive and statistically significant ($p < .01$, two-tailed; those with greater resources are more supportive of publicly discussing vote choices). In column (2) we find that a two standard deviation increase in internal political efficacy is associated with a .38 standard deviation increase in the *Discussion is Good Index*. The comparable effects associated with political knowledge (column [3]) and political interest (column [4]) are .36 and .42 standard deviations, respectively. In column (5) we enter the three political resource measures simultaneously. Although the coefficients are somewhat attenuated, each of the three political resource measures remains statistically significant in this model ($p < .05$). In column (6) we replace the three separate measures of individuals' political resources with a standardized index of these three items (Cronbach's alpha = .69; mean zero, standard deviation

[15] Models identical to those presented in Table 2, column (9) replacing the index outcome measure with each of the component items are presented in Appendix Table A2 and yield substantively similar results.
[16] Education and income are also jointly statistically significant predictors of the *Discussion is Good Index*. In the bottom row of Table 2, we report the *p*-value from an F-test for the joint significance of Education, Income, and Income Missing.

one). A two standard deviation increase in this measure of political resources is associated with a .55 standard deviation increase in the *Discussion is Good Index* ($p < .01$).[17]

In column (7) we exclude the measure of political resources and instead include our measure of a respondent's strength of political preferences. We find that those with stronger political preferences (ideology and partisanship) score higher on the *Discussion is Good Index.* Specifically, a two standard deviation increase in strength of political preferences is associated with a .22 standard deviation increase in the index ($p < .001$).

In column (8) we assess whether levels of agreement with one's social network is associated with attitudes about whether vote choices should be discussed with others. To do so, we include measures of responses to the two questions asking respondents about their levels of agreement with 1) their family members and 2) their friends and neighbors.[18] We find that people who agree more with members of their social network score higher on the *Discussion is Good Index*. A two standard deviation increase in agreement with one's family members is associated with a .17 standard deviation increase in the *Discussion is Good Index* ($p < .05$). The coefficient on the agreement with friends and family measure is also positive, and indicates that a two standard deviation increase in agreement with one's friends and neighbors is associated with a .10 standard deviation increase in the *Discussion is Good Index*, but falls short of conventional levels of statistical significance ($p = .145$).[19]

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[17] Despite the statistical insignificance of their individual coefficients in columns (5) and (6), education and income remain jointly statistically significant predictors ($p < .05$).

[18] We code respondents who indicated that they did not know at the mean point of the scale and include indicators for these respondents in the model.

[19] We also note that the coefficients on each of the "Don't Know" indicators are negative and substantial—particularly the indicator for respondents who said they did not know whether their friends and neighbors agreed with them about political matters. This suggests those who are uncertain about potential discussants' political preferences are especially skeptical of the idea that discussing one's vote choices is wise. These individuals may be particularly concerned about the potential pressures people may face when engaging in political conversations with individuals whose political beliefs are unknown ahead of time. If we exclude individuals who don't know whether their preferences are in agreement with either their family or friends and neighbors, the statistical and substantive conclusions about the social network agreement variables remain the same. Results available upon request.

The model presented in column (9) follows equation (1) and enters the index of political resources, the measure of strength of political preferences, and the measures of social network agreement simultaneously. The coefficient on the political resources index is somewhat attenuated (from column 6) but remains statistically significant ($p < .01$) and large. In contrast, the magnitude of the coefficient on strength of political preferences drops by over 50 percent from the estimate in column (7) and is no longer statistically significant ($p = .148$). The coefficients on the agreement measures are also somewhat smaller than in the column (8) specification, though the positive coefficient on agreement with family members remains statistically significant ($p < .05$).[20]

Finally, in column (10) we add three additional measures of individual-level attitudes that may confound the relationship between political resources and the *Discussion is Good Index*. In particular, we add measures of 1) interpersonal trust, 2) trust in government, and 3) external political efficacy.[21] For example, those with low levels of interpersonal trust may score lower on the *Discussion is Good Index* and also report lower levels of political resources. The inclusion of these potentially confounding measures slightly attenuates the coefficient on political resources but largely leaves the other measures of interest unchanged. Nonetheless, the coefficient on the political resources index remains statistically significant ($p < .01$) and large—a two standard deviation increase in political resources is associated with a .37 standard deviation increase in the *Discussion is Good Index* based on the column (10) specification.

We also find some evidence that those who report being more trusting of others are more likely to view discussing vote choices with others as desirable ($p < .05$)—a two standard deviation increase in interpersonal trust is associated with a .15 standard deviation increase in the *Discussion is Good Index*. The coefficients on trust in government and external political efficacy are not statistically significant ($p = .244$ and .605, respectively), implying that the *Discussion is Good Index* is not simply a function of

[20] We also note that education and income are no longer jointly statistically significant, $p = .137$.
[21] Each of these variables is measured using a single item standardized to have a mean of zero and standard deviation of one. See the Appendix for question wording and coding details.

skepticism about the trustworthiness of government officials or doubts about their responsiveness.[22] And, importantly, their inclusion in the model does not remove the effect of political resources on preferences for discussing vote choices with others.

4. Discussion

In this paper we examine public preferences regarding whether it is best to discuss one's vote choices with others or if these choices should, instead, be treated as personal matters. We find that many citizens believe that the costs associated with discussing vote choices outweigh the benefits. When asked, just over 50 percent of the public said democracy works best when vote choices are kept private, rather than discussed with others. These differences are also apparent in responses to specific questions asking about whether or not discussions of voting choices is likely to be informative or generate unwanted pressure to change your vote: About 30 percent of the population is at best ambivalent about the information benefits of discussing vote choices, and almost 40 percent agree that discussing vote choices can cause problems by exposing one to undesirable social influence.

To be sure, many people do state a preference for discussing vote choices with others (though our proportions fall far short of the 83 percent who say they would be interested in participating in structured deliberation about policy issues in Neblo et al. 2010, 573). Those who see discussion of vote choices tend to think these discussions can be informative and that social pressure is unlikely to cause problems.

The results of our multiple regression analysis suggest that feelings about the potential costs and benefits of discussing vote choices vary along with several individual-level characteristics. Specifically, individuals who lack political knowledge, interest, and confidence in their ability to make political judgments are more likely to say that vote choices should be treated as personal matters rather than topics

[22] This is true even in the bivariate case. In Appendix Table A3 we present an analysis similar to the analysis presented in Table 1, but for interpersonal trust, trust in government, and external political efficacy. The differences between those low (one standard deviation below the mean) and high (one standard deviation above the mean) on these measures in terms of whether people think democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others or treat them as personal matters are much smaller than the differences by our three measures of political resources (see the top half of Table 1).

for social discussion. This result seems inconsistent with the notion that encouraging public deliberation of vote choices can serve an equalizing force, better enabling all individuals to participate effectively in the political process. Instead, our findings are more consistent with Sanders' (1997) argument that public deliberation may exacerbate such differences by exposing more vulnerable and malleable individuals to the influence of others. Additionally, these results imply that merely giving individuals who are concerned about the negative consequences of discussing their vote choices the opportunity to do so is unlikely to increase rates of deliberation about these matters because those who do not already deliberate are not looking for opportunities to do so.[23]

Similarly, we find that individuals with stronger political preferences and more political agreement in their social network are more likely to believe that discussing vote choices is desirable. This finding runs counter to the idea one attraction of deliberation lies in exposure to competing viewpoints. Rather, individuals who already hold strong attitudes or who would be expressing their preferences to likeminded discussants—those for whom the possibility of social pressure to change one's own views are least likely—see political discussion as valuable.

Our analysis, however, is not without its limitations. First, it should be replicated in other contexts—both in terms of the topic of discussion (specific issues instead of vote choices) and timing (our survey was fielded just after a midterm election). It may be the case that preferences regarding whether vote choices should be discussed vary across contexts. At the same time, given that the stakes of political discussion increase as elections come closer, it seems unlikely that those who feel most vulnerable would become more eager to publicly discuss their voting choices as the potential for heated disagreement and likelihood of vigorous social pressure increases.

Second, as with any cross-sectional analysis, we must be concerned about making strong causal claims on the basis of correlations between measures. For example, we find that those who are less politically interested are less likely to prefer public discussion of vote choices. Our analysis cannot

[23] Of note, those who prefer discussing their vote choices with others can already do so without any additional policy intervention.

establish that these individuals prefer privacy *because* they are less interested. Such a concern is, in some ways however, beside the point. Rather, these data are most useful because they establish that the individuals who democratic theory would suggest have the most to gain from public deliberation are least likely to embrace it. Further, while our statistical analysis is suggestive, we take steps to control for important omitted variables (e.g., we account for likely potential confounds such as external political efficacy when examining the effect of internal political efficacy).

Noting these limitations, our primary conclusion is that many people do not think discussing vote choices is desirable—they feel that democracy works best when vote choices are treated as a personal matter, not a topic of social discussion. Among those who support the idea of discussing vote choices, this preference appears to reflect a situation where political discussion can be thought of as a consumption good, rather than an opportunity to rethink one's positions. Those who are most likely to see democratic deliberation of their vote choices as valuable find politics to be an interesting topic of conversation and are likely to both feel prepared to defend their positions and enjoy doing so.

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Appendix

Question Wording and Coding Rules

Attitudes about the Discussion of Vote Choices

Item 1
Which statement comes closest to your view:
0 Democracy works best when people treat their vote choices as personal matters
1 Democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others

Item 2
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Discussing your vote choices with others is a great way to learn about political issues and think through your positions.
4 Strongly agree
3 Somewhat agree
2 Neither agree nor disagree
1 Somewhat disagree
0 Strongly disagree

Item 3
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Discussing your vote choices with others can cause problems because people might try to pressure you to change your choices.
0 Strongly agree
1 Somewhat agree
2 Neither agree nor disagree
3 Somewhat disagree
4 Strongly disagree

Discussion is Good Index (Mean = 0; SD = 1)
We scaled responses to each of the three items listed above so that higher values indicate greater support for discussing vote choices with others. We then rescaled each item to range from zero to one and combined the rescaled responses into a mean index with mean zero and standard deviation one, where higher values of the index indicate a greater interest in discussing vote choices

Political Resources

Internal Political Efficacy (Mean = 0; SD = 1)
Generally speaking, do you think that you are well qualified to participate in politics or not well qualified? (Slider: I am not well qualified – I am well qualified)

Political Knowledge Index (Mean = 0; SD = 1)
Index of four items asking respondents which party controlled 1) the U.S. House of Representatives, 2) the U.S. Senate, 3) their state house, and 4) their state Senate.

Political Interest (Mean = 0; SD = 1)
Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs ... (4=Most of the time; 3=Some of the time; 2=Only now and then; 1=Hardly at all; 1=Don't know)

Political Resources Index (Mean = 0; SD = 1)
Standardized index of the three items above.

Strength of Political Preferences

Strength of Partisan Identification

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a... ? [Followup: Would you call yourself.../Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic or the Republican Party?] (3=Strong Democrat; 2=Weak Democrat; 1=Lean Democrat; 0=Independent; 1=Lean Republican; 2=Weak Republican; 3=Strong Republican; 0=Not sure)

Strength of Ideology

Thinking about politics these days, how would you describe your own political viewpoint? (2=Very liberal; 1=Liberal; 0=Moderate; 1=Conservative; 2=Very conservative; 0=Not sure)

Strength of Preferences (Mean = 0; SD = 1)

Standardized index of the two items above.

Social Network Agreement

About how many members of the following groups generally agree with you about politics – that is, when it comes to the candidates, parties, and issues of the day? (5=All or almost all; 4=More than half; 3=About half; 2=Less than half; 1=Almost none or none; 3=Don't Know)

Groups:

Your family members

Your friends and neighbors

This question was used to create four variables.

Agree with Family (Mean = 0; SD = 1)

Agree with Friends and Neighbors (Mean = 0; SD = 1)

Don't Know If Agree with Family (DK = 1; else = 0)

Don't Know If Agree with Friends and Neighbors (DK = 1; else = 0)

Other

Interpersonal Trust (Mean = 0; SD = 1)

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? (Slider: You can't be too careful – Most people can be trusted)

Government Trust (Mean = 0; SD = 1)

Thinking about the federal government in Washington, how much of the time do you think you can trust the federal government to do what is right? (Slider: Never – Always)

External Political Efficacy (Mean = 0; SD = 1)

Generally speaking, do you think that public officials don't care at all what people like you think or do they care a great deal what people like you think? (Slider: Don't care at all – Care a great deal)

Table A1. Correlations between Independent Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Race: Black (1=yes)	1.000																
2. Race: Hispanic (1=yes)	-0.090	1.000															
3. Race: Other Race (1=yes)	-0.092	-0.069	1.000														
4. Education (1=No HS; 6=Post-grad)	-0.065	-0.015	0.090	1.000													
5. Income (1=<10k; 14=>150k; 15=RF/Skipped)	-0.106	-0.048	0.103	0.366	1.000												
6. Income Missing	0.003	-0.068	0.104	0.110	0.526	1.000											
7. Female (1=yes)	0.065	-0.018	-0.075	-0.015	-0.108	0.022	1.000										
8. Age (Years)	-0.059	-0.078	-0.059	-0.101	0.013	0.064	-0.030	1.000									
9. Age-squared/100	-0.072	-0.077	-0.059	-0.095	-0.002	0.066	-0.020	0.989	1.000								
10. Internal Efficacy (M=0, SD=1)	-0.055	-0.046	0.080	0.276	0.213	0.082	-0.250	0.055	0.057	1.000							
11. Political Knowledge (M=0, SD=1)	-0.098	-0.013	0.081	0.225	0.253	0.075	-0.263	0.112	0.114	0.386	1.000						
12. Political Interest (M=0, SD=1)	-0.140	-0.093	0.051	0.141	0.216	0.092	-0.230	0.253	0.244	0.452	0.461	1.000					
13. Strength of Prefs. (Ideol and PID, M=0, SD=1)	-0.007	0.009	-0.085	0.054	0.072	0.012	-0.044	0.021	0.023	0.182	0.156	0.255	1.000				
14. Agree with Family (M=0, SD=1)	0.091	-0.015	-0.007	0.002	0.026	0.037	-0.024	0.081	0.078	0.071	0.095	0.102	0.147	1.000			
15. Agree with Friends and Neighbors (M=0, SD=1)	0.061	-0.059	-0.008	0.033	0.082	0.083	-0.020	0.020	0.019	0.136	0.106	0.118	0.137	0.415	1.000		
16. Agree with Family (DK=1)	0.012	-0.024	-0.002	-0.134	-0.172	-0.025	0.037	-0.023	-0.022	-0.220	-0.255	-0.280	-0.091	-0.016	-0.006	1.000	
17. Agree with Friends and Neighbors (DK=1)	0.033	-0.021	-0.017	-0.171	-0.156	0.012	0.076	0.058	0.058	-0.245	-0.239	-0.206	-0.068	0.015	-0.026	0.604	1.000

Table A2. Correlates of Preferences for Discussing Vote Choices with Others for Each Item in Discussing Vote Choices is Good Index

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Best to discuss vote choices with others = 1	Discuss for information? (0=strongly disagree; 1=strongly agree)	Discuss bad because of pressure? (0=strongly agree; 1=strongly disagree)
Race: Black (1=yes)	-0.049	-0.011	0.034
	[0.056]	[0.028]	[0.031]
Race: Hispanic (1=yes)	-0.041	-0.001	0.029
	[0.065]	[0.027]	[0.037]
Race: Other Race (1=yes)	-0.013	-0.022	0.007
	[0.061]	[0.031]	[0.039]
Education (1=No HS; 6=Post-grad)	0.013	0.011	0.004
	[0.011]	[0.006]*	[0.007]
Income (1=<10k; 14=>150k; 15=RF/Skipped)	0.003	0.000	0.004
	[0.005]	[0.002]	[0.003]
Income Missing	-0.053	-0.058	-0.030
	[0.064]	[0.032]*	[0.036]
Female (1=yes)	0.019	0.011	0.037
	[0.032]	[0.016]	[0.018]**
Age (Years)	-0.005	0.001	-0.002
	[0.007]	[0.004]	[0.004]
Age-squared/100	0.004	-0.003	0.003
	[0.007]	[0.004]	[0.004]
Political Resources Index (Mean=0, SD=1)	0.086	0.034	0.030
	[0.019]***	[0.010]***	[0.011]***
Strength of Preferences (Ideology and PID, Mean=0, SD=1)	0.018	0.008	0.011
	[0.016]	[0.008]	[0.009]
Agree with Family (Mean=0, SD=1)	0.005	0.020	0.019
	[0.017]	[0.009]**	[0.010]*
Agree with Friends and Neighbors (Mean=0, SD=1)	0.017	0.012	-0.009
	[0.016]	[0.008]	[0.010]
Don't Know if Agree with Family (DK=1, esle==0)	0.018	-0.029	-0.001
	[0.068]	[0.041]	[0.042]
Don't Know if Agree with Friends and Neighbors (DK=1, else=0)	-0.160	-0.108	-0.050
	[0.052]***	[0.032]***	[0.029]*
Interpersonal Trust (Mean=0, SD=1)	0.001	0.031	0.012
	[0.018]	[0.009]***	[0.010]
Trust in Government (Mean=0, SD=1)	-0.020	-0.015	-0.005
	[0.021]	[0.011]	[0.013]
External Efficacy (Mean=0, SD=1)	0.004	-0.009	-0.005
	[0.020]	[0.011]	[0.012]
Constant	0.659	0.744	0.476
	[0.195]***	[0.100]***	[0.106]***
Observations	1124	1124	1124
R-squared	0.139	0.175	0.083
P -value for joint significance of SES (Education and Income)	0.491	0.079	0.477

Note : OLS regressions with robust standard errors in brackets. State fixed effects included, but not reported. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%, two-tailed. Complete question wording and coding details included in the Appendix.

Source : December 2010 YouGov/Polimetrix Survey. Weighted analysis.

Table A3. Percentage Agreeing with the Statement "Democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others" by Trust and External Efficacy

	Low	Middle	High	*P*-value of Difference (High - Low)
Interpersonal Trust (Low=1 SD<Mean, N=257; High=1 SD>Mean, N=208)	47.1%	48.0%	54.0%	0.140
Trust in Government (Low=1 SD<Mean, N=216; High=1 SD>Mean, N=158)	49.7%	49.9%	43.1%	0.204
External Efficacy (Low=1 SD<Mean, N=252; High=1 SD>Mean, N=181)	47.6%	49.3%	49.3%	0.734

Note : For each characteristic, cell entries represent the percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement that "Democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others." Total number of observations is 1,124. *P* -values are two-tailed. Complete question wording included in the Appendix.

Source : December 2010 YouGov/Polimetrix Survey. Weighted analysis.

Table 1. Percentage Agreeing with the Statement "Democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others" by Selected Individual Characteristics

	Low	Middle	High	*P*-value of Difference (High - Low)
Internal Efficacy (Low=1 SD<Mean, N=194; High=1 SD>Mean, N=233)	34.4%	47.4%	65.4%	< .001
Political Knowledge (Low=1 SD<Mean, N=208; High=1 SD>Mean, N=478)	33.2%	47.7%	56.9%	< .001
Political Interest (Low ="Hardly at all" or "Only now and then", N=146; High="Most of the time", N=708)	30.8%	40.4%	55.9%	< .001
Strength of Preferences (Low=1 SD<Mean, N=206; High=1 SD>Mean, N=180)	46.6%	46.8%	60.3%	0.007
Agreement with Family (Low ="Less than half" or "almost none or none", N=139; High="All or almost all", N=370)	51.6%	45.0%	54.5%	0.555
Agreement with Friends/Neighbors (Low="Less than half" or "almost none or none", N=151; High="All or almost all", N=132)	50.8%	46.7%	61.0%	0.086

Note : For each characteristic, cell entries represent the percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement that "Democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others." Total number of observations is 1,124. *P*-values are two-tailed. Complete question wording included in the Appendix.

Source : December 2010 YouGov/Polimetrix Survey. Weighted analysis.

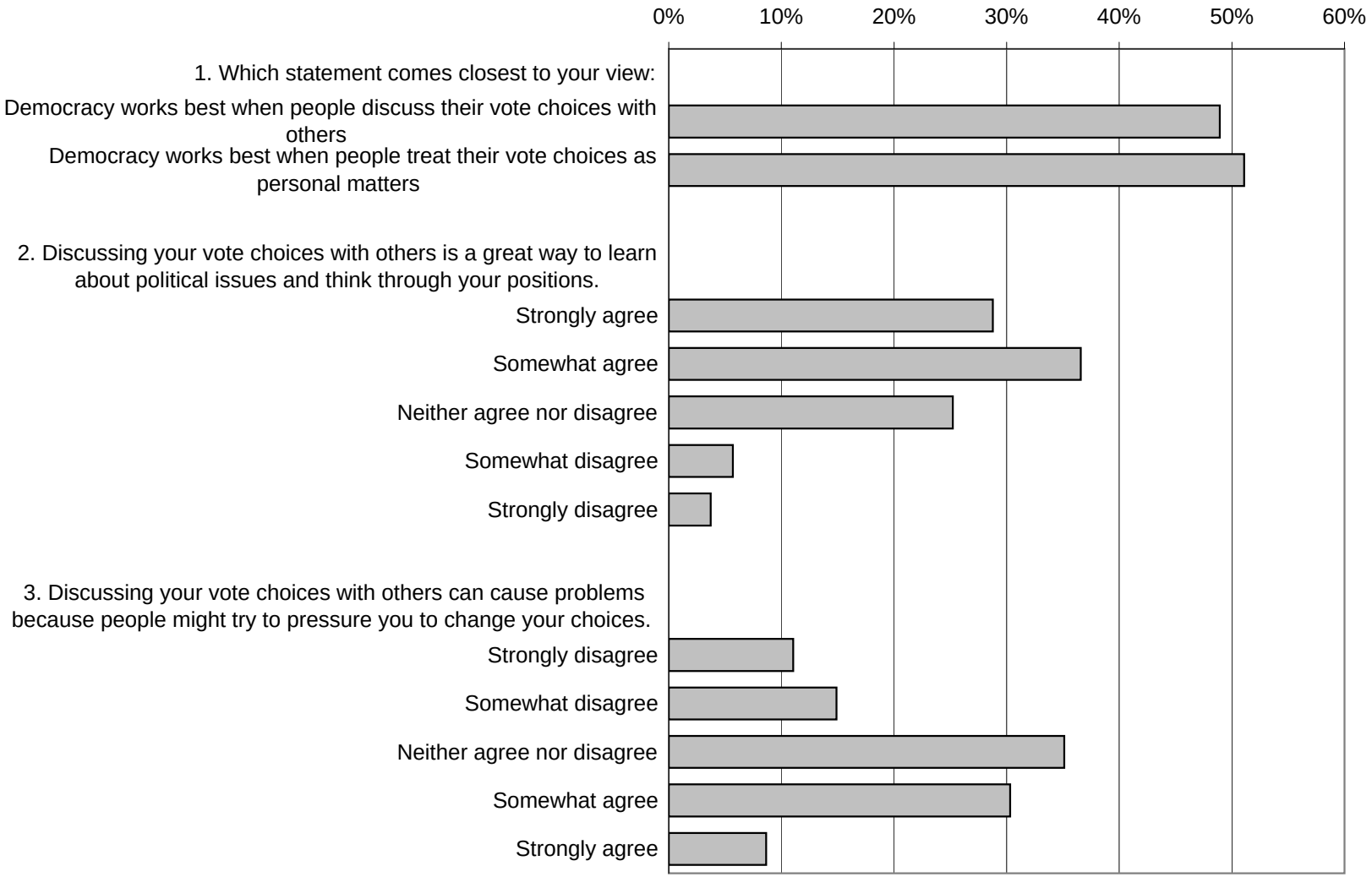
Table 2. Correlates of Preferences for Discussing Vote Choices with Others

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	Discussion is Good Index (Mean=0, SD=1)									
Race: Black (1=yes)	-0.058	-0.056	-0.048	0.004	-0.011	-0.016	-0.064	-0.093	-0.052	-0.008
	[0.100]	[0.101]	[0.100]	[0.100]	[0.100]	[0.101]	[0.099]	[0.102]	[0.103]	[0.107]
Race: Hispanic (1=yes)	-0.054	-0.019	-0.046	0.021	0.019	0.013	-0.060	-0.056	-0.006	0.010
	[0.120]	[0.119]	[0.115]	[0.116]	[0.114]	[0.113]	[0.120]	[0.116]	[0.111]	[0.110]
Race: Other Race (1=yes)	-0.047	-0.075	-0.066	-0.055	-0.079	-0.080	-0.007	-0.028	-0.041	-0.039
	[0.133]	[0.130]	[0.132]	[0.127]	[0.128]	[0.127]	[0.133]	[0.130]	[0.128]	[0.127]
Education (1=No HS; 6=Post-grad)	0.079	0.047	0.059	0.062	0.039	0.038	0.075	0.062	0.035	0.036
	[0.023]***	[0.024]**	[0.024]**	[0.023]***	[0.024]	[0.024]	[0.023]***	[0.023]***	[0.023]	[0.024]
Income (1=<10k; 14=>150k; 15=RF/Skipped)	0.027	0.022	0.019	0.019	0.015	0.015	0.025	0.016	0.010	0.009
	[0.010]***	[0.010]**	[0.010]*	[0.010]**	[0.010]	[0.010]	[0.010]**	[0.010]*	[0.010]	[0.010]
Income Missing	-0.250	-0.248	-0.228	-0.246	-0.235	-0.233	-0.239	-0.192	-0.190	-0.198
	[0.125]**	[0.124]**	[0.125]*	[0.124]**	[0.124]*	[0.124]*	[0.124]*	[0.121]	[0.122]	[0.122]
Female (1=yes)	-0.042	0.044	0.041	0.041	0.107	0.110	-0.031	-0.016	0.097	0.095
	[0.062]	[0.062]	[0.064]	[0.062]	[0.063]*	[0.063]*	[0.061]	[0.060]	[0.063]	[0.063]
Age (Years)	-0.003	-0.001	-0.001	-0.010	-0.005	-0.004	-0.003	-0.003	-0.003	-0.006
	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.013]	[0.013]
Age-squared/100	0.004	0.001	0.000	0.007	0.002	0.001	0.004	0.004	0.001	0.003
	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.014]	[0.013]	[0.013]	[0.014]	[0.013]	[0.013]	[0.013]
Internal Efficacy (Mean=0, SD=1)		0.190			0.113					
		[0.033]***			[0.036]***					
Political Knowledge (Mean=0, SD=1)			0.179		0.097					
			[0.035]***		[0.039]**					
Political Interest (Mean=0, SD=1)				0.212	0.135					
				[0.030]***	[0.035]***					
Political Resources Index (Mean=0, SD=1)						0.274			0.203	0.186
						[0.033]***			[0.037]***	[0.037]***
Strength of Preferences (Ideology and PID, Mean=0, SD=1)							0.108		0.043	0.048
							[0.030]***		[0.030]	[0.030]
Agree with Family (Mean=0, SD=1)								0.086	0.071	0.071
								[0.034]**	[0.034]**	[0.034]**
Agree with Friends and Neighbors (Mean=0, SD=1)								0.048	0.023	0.020
								[0.033]	[0.033]	[0.033]
Don't Know if Agree with Family (DK=1, else==0)								-0.190	-0.033	-0.036
								[0.138]	[0.142]	[0.143]
Don't Know if Agree with Friends and Neighbors (DK=1, else=0)								-0.470	-0.414	-0.412
								[0.111]***	[0.112]***	[0.113]***
Interpersonal Trust (Mean=0, SD=1)										0.075
										[0.036]**
Trust in Government (Mean=0, SD=1)										-0.052
										[0.045]
External Efficacy (Mean=0, SD=1)										-0.021
										[0.040]
Constant	-0.196	-0.107	-0.144	0.112	0.082	0.060	-0.162	0.013	0.146	0.214
	[0.370]	[0.362]	[0.367]	[0.363]	[0.361]	[0.359]	[0.366]	[0.357]	[0.350]	[0.351]
Observations	1124	1124	1124	1124	1124	1124	1124	1124	1124	1124
R-squared	0.090	0.120	0.114	0.126	0.144	0.144	0.101	0.142	0.173	0.178
P-value for joint significance of SES (Education and Income)	0.000	0.003	0.003	0.001	0.044	0.048	0.000	0.002	0.137	0.125

Note: OLS regressions with robust standard errors in brackets. State fixed effects included, but not reported. * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%, two-tailed. Complete question wording and coding details included in the Appendix. We refer to the index in the text as the *Discussion is Good Index.*

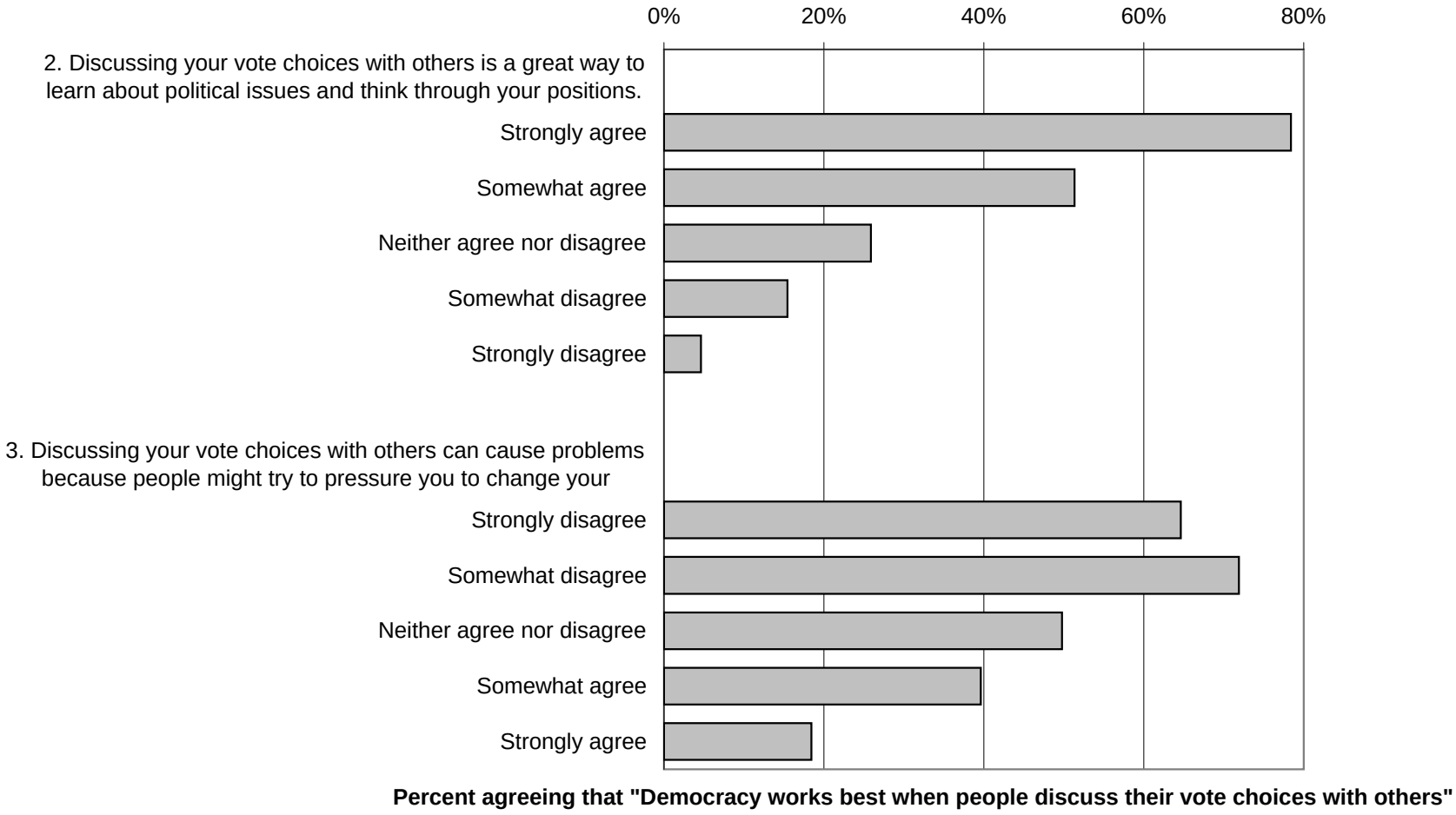
Source: December 2010 YouGov/Polimetrix Survey. Weighted analysis.

Figure 1. Preferences for Deliberation of Vote Choices



Note : N = 1,124. Complete question wording included in the Appendix.
Source : December 2010 YouGov/Polimetrix Survey. Weighted analysis.

Figure 2. Percentage Agreeing with the Statement "Democracy works best when people discuss their vote choices with others" by Perceptions of Costs and Benefits of Discussion



Note : N = 1,124. Complete question wording included in the Appendix.

Source : December 2010 YouGov/Polimetrix Survey. Weighted analysis.