

TechCrunch – Immigration Deliberative Poll

Comparing Participants and Control Group – Difference of Differences

This online deliberative experiment randomly assigned respondents to the treatment and control group. As such, in comparing the pre and post opinion changes between the participants in the deliberative sessions and the control group, the results reveal that participants in the deliberative sessions experienced more opinion changes.

Of the 28 questions, 12 questions changed significantly for the participants; where 4 questions had a p-value below .000 (the most significant change), 5 questions had a p-value below .05, and 3 questions had a p-value below .10. In comparison, 7 questions changed significantly for the control group; where only 1 question had a p-value below .000, 2 questions had a p-value below .05, and 4 questions had a p-value below .10.

There were 4 questions for which both the participants and control group changed significantly. In these cases, the opinions of the participants and control group were not too far apart, but the participants had stronger views. For example, when asked how desirable it was to 'increase salaries for H1B visas to be tied to local median wage for a given occupation', participants' opinions changed from 5.625 to 7.014 (p-value = .000), whereas the control group opinions' changed from 5.102 to 5.586 (p-value = .032). After deliberation, participants much more strongly about this proposal. The question was on a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is completely undesirable and 10 is completely desirable.

Further, the analyses compared the participants' opinion changes and the control group's opinion changes and found that 12 of the 28 questions to were significantly different. That is, the amount of change for a particular question was significantly different between the participants and the control group. For example, when asked how serious a problem immigration is, participants increased from 5.714 to 6.095 and the control group decreased from 6.005 to 5.812. Both changes were not statistically significant, but, in comparing the difference between the participants and the control group, the difference is statistically significant, with p-value 0.30. This significance is due to the increase from the participants and decrease from the control group. Similarly, when asked about how serious a problem legal immigration was, participants increased from 4.048 to 4.602 and the control group decreased from 4.074 to 3.942. This difference was statistically significant with p-value 0.060. Here, participants and the control group remain on the same side of the scale, but differ slightly.

The demographics of the participants and control group are also available for reference. There are some differences between the two groups. But, as noted, the experiment randomly assigned respondents to treatment or control group and therefore, carries internal validity.