



MOTIVATED MISPERCEPTIONS AND PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT ABORTION

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Research on the political implications of misinformation and disinformation has tended to overlook its role in the abortion debate. Abortion attitudes in the United States have taken on new electoral significance following the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* which eliminated a constitutional standard for abortion rights. As issue salience has increased, so too has the complexity of the information environment surrounding abortion rights. Not only has the policy space become more complex and variable as policy making authority was reverted to the states, but misinformation about abortion seems to be increasingly prevalent in political discourse. In this paper, we use data from the 2023 Congressional Election Study (CES) to establish a baseline for belief in misinformation related to abortion. We also evaluate the correlation between these beliefs and abortion attitudes, testing the expectation that misinformation is linked to more polarized views on abortion policy. Understanding the prevalence of abortion misperceptions and their link to abortion attitudes will help us to better account for the role this crucial issue might play in the continued polarization of the American electorate.

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