Supplemental Appendix for: “We Need to Talk: How Cross-Party Dialogue Reduces Affective Polarization”

This Version: January 2021

**Instructions Read to Participants**

**FOR THOSE RUNNING THE STUDY:**

**For each session, AIM to have FOUR people in a group. If that’s not possible, form groups between 3 and 7 subjects. If it is a heterogeneous group, it NEEDS to be 4 or 6 people, evenly balanced between Democrats and Republicans. Other groups can be odd numbers, but heterogeneous groups MUST be evenly balanced.**

**We aim to have multiple discussions per session. No need to monitor each discussion – just keep time and make sure they seem to be working.**

**INSTRUCTIONS IN RED HIGHLIGHT KEY FLAGS FOR THE SESSION LEADERS.**

**----- Instructions to read begin below ------**

If you have a bag, please leave it at the front of the room. Please sit at one of the desks. **(If there are desks.)**

**[Distribute consent forms.]**

Please read the consent form, which is the first one or two pages, and if you would like to participate in today’s study, please sign and date the form. Please *do* *not look at the pages following the consent form.*

As mentioned, today’s study will take no more and likely less than 60 minutes. Also, note that, if you are willing, we **will e-mail** you in a week or two for a brief follow-up (of about three minutes). This is *not* required and you can certainly decline to provide your e-mail when we ask for it. If you do provide your email, and then complete the follow-up study we send you, we will enter you into a lottery to win an Amazon gift card. We will ask you to put your name on surveys simply so we can match two different surveys you complete, but it is entirely confidential and we will discard all names once data are entered.

For participation today, you will receive $20 at the end of today’s session. Today’s date is **YYY XX**.

**[Hand out and then collect the consent forms.]**

Today’s study is on how people learn about political issues. It has five parts beyond the consent form you filled out.

First, you will be asked to fill out a brief preliminary questionnaire. Second, you be asked to complete an unrelated activity that takes only a few minutes. Third, we will ask you to read a brief newspaper article, and then ask you to discuss it in a small group. We will describe how this works specifically at the time. Fourth, you will be asked to fill out another brief questionnaire. Finally, we will pay you, and you can leave.

Unless instructed otherwise, please do not communicate with any other participant during the study. If you have any questions, please raise your hand, and we will assist you.

Let us begin. We will now hand out the first survey to complete. [**HAND OUT.]** Please answer every question you can, but if you’d rather not you may leave it blank. Please take your time. When you are complete please raise your hand so we know you are finished and we will collect your survey. **[WAIT UNTIL EVERYONE APPEARS DONE AND THEN COLLECT.]**

We are now taking a small break to do a very brief unrelated task that we will now pass out. This is completely unrelated to this study and there is no need to write your name on it. **[PASS OUT FILLER TASK. [WAIT UNTIL EVERYONE APPEARS DONE THEN COLLECT AND MOVE ON AND MAKE SURE GROUPS READING TO GO IN THOSE CONDITIONS.]**

**DURING THE FILLER, ASSIGN SUBJECTS TO CONDITIONS.**

**RANDOMLY ASSIGN SUBJECTS TO CONTROL, HOMOGENEOUS OR HETEROGENEOUS DISCUSSION. THIS IS SUBJECT TO THE CONSTRAINT THAT WE NEED TO FORM HOMOGENEOUS AND HETEROGROUS GROUPS BASED ON PARTISANSHIP. SO IF ONLY 3 REPUBLICANS COME TO A SESSION AND ARE ASSIGNED ONE PER CONDITION, THEN THEY NEED TO BE RE-RANDOMIZED (EITHER ALL 3 IN CONTROL, ALL 3 IN ONE HOMOGENEOUS GROUP, OR 2 IN A HETEROGENEOUS GROUP, AND 1 IN THE CONTROL CONDITION).**

**USING PARTY ID, ASSIGN PEOPLE TO HOMOGENEOUS OR HETEROGENEOUS GROUPS. USE LEANERS AS PARTISANS AND ANY PURE INDEPENDENTS CAN BE AN ODD PERSON IN A HOMOGENEOUS GROUP, BUT THEN NOTE THIS.**

**IN HETEROGENEOUS GROUPS, THERE MUST BE AN EQUAL NUMBER OF DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS (EITHER 4 OR 6 PEOPLE, SO 2 OR 3 DEMOCRATS/REPULBLICANS EACH).**

**DO THIS AS QUICKLY AND CAREFULLY AS POSSIBLE AND BE READY TO GO. MAKE SURE YOU LABEL THE SURVEYS WITH THE CONDITION! ALSO MAKE SURE TO DISTRIBUTE THE CORRECT ARTICLE BASED ON CONDITION.**

Now we will continue with the next part of the study. We will ask you to read a brief newspaper article and then discuss it with several other participants in a small group.

In a moment, we will call out people’s names and discussion groups. When we call out your name, please come forward and get your article, and then go sit with your group at the table we indicate to you.

**[PUT IN GROUPS AND MAKE SURE IN CIRCLES – 3 TO 7 PEOPLE WITH IDEAL OF FOUR AND RECORD SUBJECTS’ GROUPS. ONCE IN GROUPS:]**

Please read the article carefully. Once everyone had read the article, you may begin the discussion. For the discussion, we ask that each of you begin by stating in up to a minute what you thought about the article you just read and giving the group your opinion. Did you agree with it? Is it consistent with your experiences? You can opt to say nothing but everyone gets a turn. Then after everyone has a turn, please spend the remaining time in open discussion about the article and your opinions. We will bring it to an end after about 15 minutes. Let’s have the person on the far left of the group begin the discussion.

**[MAKE SURE EVERYONE GETS A CHANCE – MONITOR GROUPS AND THEN END AFTER TWELVE MINUTES IF NOT DONE; ONCE EVERYONE HAS A CHANCE, MAKE SURE SOME OPEN DISCUSSION; TIME AND GIVE ONE MINUTE WARNING.]**

Finally, we ask you complete a brief questionnaire. Please take your time and do not rush. Please also write your name on your survey. [**DISTRIBUTE SURVEY: MAKE SURE TO GIVE OUT THE CORERCT FORM BASED ON PARTY ID.]**

**[WHEN PEOPLE ARE FINISHED:]**

Thank you for your participation; I will now pay you for your participation. As promised, we will pay you $20, but also ask you to please sign a receipt.

**[Pay each subject $20. Give each subject a receipt SIGNED AND KEEP IT – if they want a copy give them another copy. WE NEED ALL RECEIPTS BACK.]**

Recall at the end of the survey we asked if we can re-contact you in a few weeks for a very brief follow-up – if you did say okay, we will e-mail you then. If not, thanks for your participation now!

**(MATCH PRE- AND POST-SURVEYS BY NAME – IF MISSING NAME, DO BEST BASED ON GROUP; PAPER CLIP AND LABEL THE CONDITION, AND ASSIGN A GROUP NUMBER TO GO WITH THE DATE, LOCATION. THEN WE CAN KNOW WHO WAS IN WHAT GROUP.**

**Pre-Test Questionnaire Given to Subjects**

***We are now going to ask you some questions about your general attitudes and expectations. Feel free to not answer any question if you prefer not to do so.***

Generally speaking, which of the options on the scale below best describes your party identification?

*strong weak lean Independent lean weak strong*

*Democrat Democrat Democrat Republican Republican Republican*

Which point on this scale best describes your political views?

*very mostly somewhat moderate somewhat mostly very*

*liberal liberal liberal conservative conservative conservative*

How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?

*never only some most of just about*

*of the time the time always*

Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?

*for the benefit of all few big interests*

In general, how interested are you in politics?

*not at all not too somewhat very extremely*

*interested interested interested interested interested*

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

*Less than High Some 4 yr college Advanced*

*High school school graduate college degree degree*

What is your estimate of your family’s annual household income (before taxes)?

*< $30,000 $30,000 - $69,999 $70,000-$99,999 $100,000-$200,000 >$200,000*

Which of the following do you consider to be your primary racial or ethnic group?

*White African American Asian American Hispanic Native American other*

What is your age?

*18-24 25-34 35-50 51-65 over 65*

Are you male or female?

*Male Female*

How often do you participate in political activities (e.g. working on a campaign, attending a rally)?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*never a few weekly*

*times a year*

About how many days a week, on average, do you talk about politics with your family and/or friends?

**\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

*never 1 day/week 2 days/week 3 days/week 4 days/week 5 days/week 6 days/week every day*

Some people pay a lot of attention to the news while other people are just too busy. How many days in a typical week do you get information from each of the following sources? In the space below, please indicate the number of days you use each source.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| News Outlet | Number of Days (0-7) |
| Fox News Channel |  |
| MSNBC |  |
| CNN |  |
| Nightly broadcast news on ABC, NBC, or CBS |  |
| Local Television News |  |
| Public Radio (NPR) |  |
| Talk radio shows like Rush Limbaugh or Sean Hannity |  |
| Your local newspaper |  |
| National newspapers, such as the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* |  |
| Right-leaning websites like The Drudge Report or Breitbart |  |
| Left-leaning websites like Vox or HuffPost |  |
| Social media, like Facebook or Twitter |  |

**Post-Test Survey Instrument**

***We are now going to ask you some questions about your general attitudes. Feel free to not answer any question if you prefer not to do so.***

Do you think you learned anything from the article you ready?

*yes no not sure*

Do you think you learned anything from the discussion?

*yes no not sure*

How deeply did you think about the information you received in the article and conversations?

*Not deeply Not too neither deeply very extremely*

*at all deeply nor not deeply deeply deeply*

How important is your identity as a $PARTY to you?

*Not at all Not too Somewhat Very Extremely*

*Important Important Important Important Important*

We’d like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other groups who are in the news these days. We’ll ask you to do that using a 0 to 100 scale that we call a feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person.

Using that 0 to 100 scale, how would you rate each of the following groups or people below?

The Democratic Party: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The Republican Party: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Hillary Clinton: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Donald Trump: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I have a good understanding of the experiences, feelings and beliefs of $OTHERPARTYs.

*Strongly Disagree Neither Agree Agree Strongly*

*Disagree nor Disagree Agree*

Even when I disagree with them, $OTHERPARTYs adopt reasonable policy positions.

*Strongly Disagree Neither Agree Agree Strongly*

*Disagree nor Disagree Agree*

$OTHERPARTYs respect my political beliefs and opinions.

*Strongly Disagree Neither Agree Agree Strongly*

*Disagree nor Disagree Agree*

There are many policy areas where Democrats and Republicans agree and can find common ground to work together.

*Strongly Disagree Neither Agree Agree Strongly*

*Disagree nor Disagree Agree*

Democrats and Republicans agree on many more issues than the media says that they do.

*Strongly Disagree Neither Agree Agree Strongly*

*Disagree nor Disagree Agree*

How comfortable are you having a political discussion with a $OTHERPARTY?

*Extremely Somewhat Not too Not at all*

*Comfortable Comfortable Comfortable Comfortable*

How comfortable are you having neighbors on your street who are $OTHERPARTYs?

*Extremely Somewhat Not too Not at all*

*Comfortable Comfortable Comfortable Comfortable*

How comfortable are you having close personal friends who are $OTHERPARTYs?

*Extremely Somewhat Not too Not at all*

*Comfortable Comfortable Comfortable Comfortable*

Suppose one of your children was getting married. How would you feel if he or she married a $OTHERPARTY?

*Extremely Somewhat Not too Not at all*

*Upset Upset Upset Upset*

How much of the time do you think you can trust the $OTHERPARTY to do what is right for the country?

*Almost Once in a About half Most of the Almost*

*Never While of the time Time Always*

How much of the time do you think you can trust the $SAMEPARTY to do what is right for the country?

*Almost Once in a About half Most of the Almost*

*Never While of the time Time Always*

Below, we’ve given a list of words that some people might use to describe individuals. For each item, please indicate how well you think it applies to $OTHERPARRTY: extremely well, very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not at all well.

How well does each of the following apply to $OTHERPARTYs?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Extremely Well | Very Well | Somewhat Well | Not Too Well | Not at All Well |
| American |  |  |  |  |  |
| Intelligent |  |  |  |  |  |
| Honest |  |  |  |  |  |
| Open Minded |  |  |  |  |  |
| Generous |  |  |  |  |  |
| Hypocritical |  |  |  |  |  |
| Selfish |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mean |  |  |  |  |  |

In the future, if you were to discuss politics with others, what kind of group would you be most interested in joining: one with mostly Democrats, one with mostly Republicans, or one with an equal number from both parties?

*Mostly Equal Number Mostly*

*Democrats from both parties Republicans*

**Facebook Ad Shown to Participants**

The Facebook ad run to recruit participants appears below:

**Be Part of a Research Study and Earn $20!**

[Photo of Prior Session][[1]](#footnote-1)

The GROUP from the University of Pennsylvania will be hosting a research session on DATE at TIME at the SITE (ADDRESS)!  
  
Our non-partisan, University funded study takes less than 1 hour to complete and participants are paid $20 for their time. You may only participate once, unfortunately.  
  
To learn more about the study, visit our webpage (WEBPAGE) or send us an FB message.   
  
Click the link below to sign up now!

[Sign-Up Link]

**Heterogeneous Effects by Group Size, Main Study**

In the paper, we noted that while we aimed to have 4 participants in each discussion group, because of the number of subjects who attended any given session, and the necessity of forming heterogeneous and homogeneous groups, not all groups have exactly 4 respondents. As noted in the paper, all heterogeneous groups have either 4 or 6 respondents (with an exactly even partisan divide), homogeneous and control groups have between 3 and 7 participants in them. We re-estimated our model interacting treatment assignment with the group size to see if there were different effects for larger or smaller groups. As shown below in table A1, we find no such heterogeneous effects.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | | | | | | |
|  | AP Index | Out-Party FT | Out-Party FT < 10 | Out-Party FT >50 | Out-Party Cand. FT | Out-Party Traits | Out-Party Trust | Social Distance (Reversed) |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| Homogeneous Discussion | 0.08 | 0.08 | -0.52 | 0.06 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.15 |
|  | (0.07) | (0.11) | (0.32) | (0.17) | (0.06) | (0.12) | (0.08) | (0.11) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous Discussion | 0.05 | 0.13 | -0.29 | 0.34 | 0.14 | 0.05 | -0.04 | 0.09 |
|  | (0.09) | (0.15) | (0.36) | (0.25) | (0.11) | (0.12) | (0.09) | (0.12) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Number of Discussion Group | -0.004 | -0.002 | -0.04 | -0.02 | 0.01 | -0.01 | -0.02 | 0.01 |
| Members | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.06) | (0.03) | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.01) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Homogeneous\*Number of | -0.02 | -0.02 | 0.12\* | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.01 | -0.04 |
| Discussion Group Members | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.07) | (0.03) | (0.01) | (0.03) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous\*Number of | 0.01 | -0.01 | 0.02 | -0.05 | -0.01 | 0.003 | 0.03 | -0.004 |
| Discussion Group Members | (0.02) | (0.03) | (0.08) | (0.05) | (0.02) | (0.03) | (0.02) | (0.03) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 0.46\*\*\* | 0.11 | 0.97\*\*\* | 0.05 | -0.05 | 0.54\*\*\* | 0.41\*\*\* | 0.80\*\*\* |
|  | (0.09) | (0.11) | (0.26) | (0.15) | (0.05) | (0.14) | (0.12) | (0.10) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| Observations | 464 | 464 | 464 | 464 | 463 | 458 | 463 | 464 |
| R2 | 0.18 | 0.15 | 0.12 | 0.13 | 0.16 | 0.15 | 0.11 | 0.17 |
|  | | | | | | | | |

Table A1: Heterogeneous Treatment Effects by Discussion Group Size

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression efforts with standard errors (clustered by discussion group) in parentheses. All models contain fixed effects for session*.* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Results Using the Difference Between Same-Party and Other-Party Ratings**

As noted in the paper, we follow Druckman and Levendusky (2019) and measure affective polarization by measuring animus toward the other party. But some scholars prefer to measure it by looking at the difference between same-party and other-party ratings (e.g., Lelkes and Westwood 2017, Klar et al. 2018). Because our post-test instrument had limited space (as we promised respondents that we would take no more than 1 hour of their time), we primarily asked respondents to evaluate the other party. However, for the feeling thermometer and trust items, we also asked respondents to evaluate their own party as well. But as we can see in Table A2 below, if we measure affective polarization in this manner, we find the same pattern of results: our cross-party discussion condition reduces affective polarization. The negative coefficient on heterogeneous discussion show that the gap between same-party and other-party ratings falls, just as we would expect if affective polarization is declining.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | |
|  | Party FT Difference | Cand. FT Difference | Difference in Trust |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|  | | | |
| Homogeneous Discussion | 0.07\*\*\* | 0.03 | -0.04 |
|  | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.03) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous Discussion | -0.11\*\*\* | -0.12\*\*\* | -0.13\*\*\* |
|  | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.04) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 0.50\*\*\* | 0.61\*\*\* | 0.46\*\* |
|  | (0.05) | (0.08) | (0.22) |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | | | |
| Observations | 463 | 463 | 463 |
| R2 | 0.16 | 0.12 | 0.12 |
|  | | | |

Table A2: Effects of the Treatment on the Difference between In-Party and Out-Party Ratings

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression efforts with standard errors (clustered by discussion group) in parentheses. All models contain fixed effects for session*.* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Positive versus Negative Trait Ratings**

In the paper, we analyze the trait ratings from the study as an aggregate index, consistent with earlier analyses of similar batteries (i.e.., Druckman and Levendusky 2019). But as Mullinix and Lythgoe (2020) point out, we should expect these sorts of treatments to have a larger effect on the positive trait ratings (American, intelligent, honest, open-minded, and generous) than on the negative trait ratings (hypocritical, selfish, and mean; the original list of traits from Garrett et al. 2014). The logic of this follows from the stronger effects of negative information on political behavior more generally (Lau 1982). Our data are consistent with this hypothesis; see Table A3 below. We find that cross-party discuss significantly improves positive traits (i.e., individuals in this condition think that terms like intelligent and honest are better descriptors of the other party), and while it does decrease negative traits (i.e., people think terms like hypocritical are worse descriptors), the effect is not statistically significant. Note that the effect on positive traits is nearly twice as large as the effect on negative traits, though the difference between the falls just short of statistical significance (p=0.16).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | | |
|  | Positive  Traits | Negative  Traits |
|  | (1) | (2) |
|  | | |
| Homogeneous Discussion | -0.18\* | 0.04 |
|  | (0.10) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous Discussion | 0.35\*\*\* | -0.17 |
|  | (0.10) | (0.15) |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Constant | 2.70\*\*\* | 3.29\*\*\* |
|  | (0.64) | (0.20) |
|  |  |  |
|  | | |
| Observations | 457 | 452 |
| R2 | 0.16 | 0.08 |
|  | | |

Table A3: Effects of the Treatment on Positive versus Negative Trait Ratings

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression efforts with standard errors (clustered by discussion group) in parentheses. All models contain fixed effects for session*.* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Results for Social Distance Items**

In the paper, we analyzed the social distance items as an index; Table A4 presents the results for each individual item separately. Note that in every case, heterogeneous political discussion reduces social distance (i.e., it increases respondents’ comfort with interacting with those from the other party).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Comfort w/  Marriage | Comfort w/ Discussion | Comfort w/ Friendship | Comfort w/ Neighbors |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|  | | | | |
| Homogeneous Discussion | -0.17 | 0.03 | -0.08 | -0.14 |
|  | (0.14) | (0.11) | (0.12) | (0.10) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous Discussion | 0.33\*\* | 0.22\* | 0.40\*\*\* | 0.18\* |
|  | (0.14) | (0.13) | (0.13) | (0.11) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 3.46\*\*\* | 2.97\*\*\* | 3.80\*\*\* | 4.14\*\*\* |
|  | (0.14) | (0.59) | (0.28) | (0.10) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | | | | |
| Observations | 459 | 464 | 461 | 464 |
| R2 | 0.15 | 0.13 | 0.14 | 0.14 |
|  | | | | |

Table A4: Effects of the Treatment on Social Distance Measures

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression efforts with standard errors (clustered by discussion group) in parentheses. All models contain fixed effects for session*.* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Who Participates in the Follow-Up Study?**

In table A5 below, we predict participation in our follow-up study as a function of baseline demographics, treatment assignment, partisanship, and political interest. Luckily, neither treatment, nor any other political variable predicts participating in our follow-up study. The only significant predictors are age, gender, and education—younger, better-educated, and female subjects are more likely to take our follow-up study. Controlling for these factors does not change our substantive pattern of results (see below).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | |
|  | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) |
|  | | | |
| Homogeneous Discussion | 0.01 | -0.06 | 0.004 |
|  | (0.13) | (0.14) | (0.15) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous Discussion | 0.10 | 0.14 | 0.13 |
|  | (0.14) | (0.14) | (0.15) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Democrat |  | 0.12 | 0.03 |
|  |  | (0.16) | (0.17) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Strong Partisan |  | -0.01 | -0.01 |
|  |  | (0.13) | (0.14) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Lib-Con Self ID |  | -0.04 | -0.02 |
|  |  | (0.04) | (0.05) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Political Interest |  | 0.02 | 0.02 |
|  |  | (0.08) | (0.08) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Political Activity |  | 0.03 | 0.03 |
|  |  | (0.04) | (0.04) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Political Discussion |  | -0.01 | -0.0005 |
|  |  | (0.03) | (0.03) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Education |  |  | 0.17\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.07) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Income |  |  | 0.01 |
|  |  |  | (0.05) |
|  |  |  |  |
| African-American |  |  | -0.18 |
|  |  |  | (0.17) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Asian-American |  |  | 0.12 |
|  |  |  | (0.22) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Hispanic |  |  | -0.31 |
|  |  |  | (0.31) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Native American |  |  | -0.05 |
|  |  |  | (0.78) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Other Race |  |  | -0.47 |
|  |  |  | (0.33) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Age |  |  | -0.09\* |
|  |  |  | (0.05) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Female |  |  | 0.41\*\*\* |
|  |  |  | (0.12) |
|  |  |  |  |
| Constant | -0.31\*\*\* | -0.37 | -0.97\*\* |
|  | (0.10) | (0.31) | (0.41) |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | | | |
| Observations | 557 | 549 | 524 |
|  | | | |
|  |  | | |

Table A5: Predicting participation in the follow-up study

*Note: Cell entries are probit regression efforts with standard errors in parentheses.* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Supplemental Analyses, Follow-Up Study**

As a robustness check on our results, we re-specified our model for the follow-up study to test for heterogeneous effects based on the number of days since subjects participated in the original study. As seen below in Table A6, we find no consistent evidence of decay effects, though we note that this is likely due to the fact that all subjects took our follow-up study within a brief window following their experimental session, so this variable has a limited range. Future studies can explore the effects of longer-term re-interviews. Also, to be sure that our sample of returning participants was not “off” in some way, we re-estimated the results of Table 3 from the body of the Element (our main results) using only the sub-sample of those who took our follow-up study. In Table A8, we show that the results on this sub-sample look very similar to those in the Table 3 in the main Element.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | | | | |
|  | AP Index | Out-Party FT | Out-Party Cand. FT | Out-Party Traits | Out-Party Trust | Social Distance (Reversed) |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|  | | | | | | |
| Homogeneous Discussion | -0.06 | -0.15 | -0.49 | -0.04 | -0.12 | 0.08 |
|  | (0.14) | (0.18) | (0.50) | (0.12) | (0.17) | (0.19) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous Discussion | 0.001 | -0.20 | -0.45 | 0.04 | -0.11 | 0.25 |
|  | (0.14) | (0.19) | (0.49) | (0.11) | (0.19) | (0.19) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Days Since Original Study | 0.003 | -0.01 | -0.05 | 0.002 | -0.01 | 0.02 |
|  | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.05) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Homogeneous\*Days Since | 0.005 | 0.01 | 0.05 | 0.0003 | 0.01 | -0.01 |
|  | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.05) | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous\*Days Since | 0.01 | 0.03\* | 0.06 | -0.001 | 0.02 | -0.02 |
|  | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.05) | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 0.51\*\*\* | 0.33 | 0.47 | 0.58\*\*\* | 0.48\*\*\* | 0.71\*\*\* |
|  | (0.14) | (0.20) | (0.48) | (0.18) | (0.16) | (0.18) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | | | | | | |
| Observations | 182 | 158 | 125 | 179 | 182 | 182 |
| R2 | 0.24 | 0.25 | 0.31 | 0.23 | 0.21 | 0.26 |
|  | | | | | | |
| *Note:* | \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01 | | | | | |

Table A6: Follow Up Study, Heterogeneous Treatment Effects by Time Since Original Study.

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression efforts with standard errors (clustered by discussion group) in parentheses. All models contain fixed effects for session*.* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

We also re-estimated our follow-up study model controlling for the significant predictors of participation in the follow-up study (age, gender, and education; see Table A5 above). This does not change our substantive pattern of results; the only difference is that the results for out-party trait ratings are now no longer significant, see Table A7 below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | | | | |
|  | AP Index | Out-Party FT | Out-Party Cand. FT | Out-Party Traits | Out-Party Trust | Social Distance (Reversed) |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) |
|  | | | | | | |
| Homogeneous Discussion | -0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | -0.02 | 0.004 | -0.02 |
|  | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.05) | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.04) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous Discussion | 0.08\*\*\* | 0.14\*\*\* | 0.11\*\* | 0.05 | 0.09\*\* | 0.09\*\* |
|  | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.05) | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.04) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Age | -0.01 | -0.02 | -0.03 | 0.01 | -0.01 | -0.01 |
|  | (0.01) | (0.02) | (0.03) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Education | -0.01 | -0.003 | 0.01 | 0.01 | -0.01 | -0.03 |
|  | (0.02) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Female | 0.02 | 0.07\*\* | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.08\*\*\* | -0.06\*\* |
|  | (0.02) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.02) | (0.03) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 0.57\*\*\* | 0.30 | 0.04 | 0.52\*\*\* | 0.41\*\*\* | 1.08\*\*\* |
|  | (0.08) | (0.20) | (0.20) | (0.18) | (0.12) | (0.10) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | | | | | | |
| Observations | 186 | 162 | 128 | 183 | 186 | 186 |
| R2 | 0.24 | 0.27 | 0.31 | 0.22 | 0.25 | 0.26 |
|  | | | | | | |

Table A7: Follow Up Study, Controlling for Predictors of Participation in Follow-Up Study

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression efforts with standard errors (clustered by discussion group) in parentheses. All models contain fixed effects for session*.* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | | | | | | |
|  | AP Index | Out-Party FT | OutParty FT< 10° | Out-Party FT > 50° | Out-Party Cand. FT | Out-Party Traits | Out-Party Trust | Social Distance (Reversed) |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| Homogeneous Discussion | -0.02 | -0.01 | -0.002 | 0.01 | 0.001 | -0.04 | 0.004 | -0.03 |
|  | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.11) | (0.06) | (0.02) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.04) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Heterogeneous Discussion | 0.10\*\*\* | 0.14\*\*\* | -0.27\*\* | 0.16\* | 0.11\*\*\* | 0.06\*\* | 0.12\*\*\* | 0.08\*\* |
|  | (0.03) | (0.05) | (0.11) | (0.08) | (0.03) | (0.03) | (0.04) | (0.04) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 0.49\*\*\* | 0.14\*\*\* | 0.60\*\*\* | -0.01 | 0.003 | 0.58\*\*\* | 0.36\*\*\* | 0.91\*\*\* |
|  | (0.06) | (0.05) | (0.14) | (0.06) | (0.02) | (0.10) | (0.13) | (0.04) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | | | | | | | | |
| Observations | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 186 | 188 | 188 |
| R2 | 0.29 | 0.30 | 0.17 | 0.24 | 0.31 | 0.23 | 0.25 | 0.26 |
|  | | | | | | | | |
|  |  | | | | | | | |

Table A8: Table 3 of the Element, estimated only on those who took the follow-up study

*Note:* Cell entries are OLS regression efforts with standard errors (clustered by discussion group) in parentheses. All models contain fixed effects for session*.* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Article Only Study**

In the main text, we mentioned that we ran an “article only” study where we had subjects read the articles used in our study, but not take part in any discussion, to try and isolate—in an admittedly crude way—these two effects. To be clear, we ran this study on a separate sample of subjects, drawn from a separate subject pool, so we view this as a rough comparison, but one we think is nevertheless instructive about the effect of the article itself, without the effects of the group discussion.

We recruited N = 1,214 subjects from Lucid’s online survey panel (<https://luc.id>) between 4 September 2019 and 9 September 2019. These subjects are not a random sample, but are balanced to match baseline Census targets on age, gender, race, and region. Samples from this vendor have been used in earlier studies of public opinion, and the data have been shown to be of similar quality to other online vendors (Coppock and McClellan 2019).

We had subjects answer the same questions as in our main study, with a few modifications. First, we did not ask subjects any of the mechanism items, or the social distance items. Second, we added two other items, because we delivered the survey online: a manipulation check (to ensure that subjects understood what they have read) and an attention check (to ensure that they are carefully reading the question); see Berinsky, Margolis, and Sances (2014) for more on these types of measures.[[2]](#footnote-2) Below, we present results from all respondents, but we note that the results look very similar if we subset to only those who pass the attention or manipulation checks.

Table A9 below presents the results. We replicate the effects for out-party feeling thermometer ratings and out-party trust, but not for out-party traits nor for out-party candidate feeling thermometer ratings. Given this, it appears that while reading the article had *some* effect on respondents’ attitudes, it is not as consistent (nor as consistently large) as we found in our study. Reading the newspaper article certainly had an effect—and it provided a basis for the ensuing discussion—but there is a large, and important, effect of the face-to-face discussions in our study as well.

We emphasize, however, that while such a comparison is useful, it is also somewhat limited. Lucid respondents take many studies every week, and like other opt-in panelists, they are expert survey takers: the median time spent completing the study—including reading the article—was only 6 minutes. In our in-person study, most respondents took that long just to read the article, and many took detailed notes on it to prepare for the discussion. We also know that just the anticipation of discussion makes subjects process information more carefully, meaning that even comparing the effects of reading the article in this two environments is not a straightforward comparison (Eveland 2004). Nevertheless, we present these results as a rough estimate of the differences between these two different types of treatments, though we emphasize that future studies will be needed to more fully unpack the effects of discussion qua discussion.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Out-Party FT | Out-Party  Cand. FT | Out-Party Trust | Out-Party Traits |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Polarizing Article | 0.03\* | 0.01 | 0.02 | -0.004 |
|  | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.01) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Common Ground Article | 0.08\*\*\* | 0.03 | 0.07\*\*\* | 0.005 |
|  | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.02) | (0.01) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 0.21\*\*\* | 0.14\*\*\* | 0.38\*\*\* | 0.38\*\*\* |
|  | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) | (0.01) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Observations | 898 | 894 | 905 | 904 |
| R2 | 0.02 | 0.002 | 0.02 | 0.001 |
|  |

Table A9: Article Only Study

*Note: Cell entries are OLS regression efforts with standard errors in parentheses.* \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**Works Cited (Not in Main Article)**

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1. We took the photo at one of our early sessions, with permission of all participants that we would use the photo for recruitment purposes only. Prior to that session, we used a photo of the PIs along with their RAs who worked on the project. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. We find that 77% of respondents pass the manipulation check, and 60% of respondents pass the attention check. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)