PARTISANSHIP AS SOCIAL IDENTITY: USING METHODS OF CONFLICT

RESOLUTION TO REDUCE AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION BETWEEN OPPOSING

PARTISANS

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: Partisanship as Social Identity: Using Methods of Conflict Resolution to Reduce Affective Polarization between Opposing Partisans

Levels of affective polarization in the U.S. have risen significantly in recent decades. Affective polarization, a form of political polarization by which partisans show high levels of antipathy towards opposing partisans because of their membership in that party, can be viewed as a form of social identity, whereby membership in a party is guided by feelings of belonging rather than agreement with ideological stances. Following the established research on Social Identity Theory (SIT), this study hypothesizes that affective polarization can be lowered using dialogic-type processes to recenter the individual identity over the social one in political discussions. Using the online platform Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), the hypothesis was tested using a sample of 60 American partisans who engaged in a short process to simulate these conditions. The results of the study were inconclusive, though methods for expanding and revising the methodology for future studies on the topic are discussed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

When the general public talks about the issue of rising levels of "political polarization" in the United States (as well as many other countries, including the U.K., Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, etc. [Bankert et al., 2017; Knudsen, 2021]), typically the type of political polarization that is discussed is ideological. Ideological polarization, in brief, is the widening in the gap between the median opinions of partisans within each party. However, when it comes to the issues that are discussed when talking about polarization (gridlock, antipathy between partisans, etc.), most of these problems can instead be attributed to a different type of political polarization called affective polarization. Affective polarization is the growing "dislike and distrust of members of the opposite party," resulting in a voting populace that is "not deeply divided ideologically" but one in which the "mass parties have growing antipathy toward one another" (Levendusky, 2018, p. 60).

Affective polarization has many repercussions that can be seen in today's political climate in the U.S. As political ideology and social identity have become more aligned with political parties in recent decades (e.g., conservatives and evangelicals to the Republican Party, liberals and Blacks to the Democratic),[1] members of each party have become more politically and socially homogenous than ever before. Possibly one of the only positives to come from this ideological and social sorting and subsequent rise of affective polarization is that as people find parties that are more aligned with their political views, they become more invested in the political process, and therefore become more involved politically. However, voters that are

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[1] See the section on affective polarization in chapter two of this paper for a more in-depth explanation and analysis of these ideological and social shifts.

closely aligned with their parties are also much more volatile, as the stakes become much higher (Campbell, 2016; Mason, 2016).

The most concerning part about this rise in strong socio-political identification, however, is that it has occurred without substantial changes in levels of ideological polarization.[2] Social sorting that led to affective polarization began as early as the 1970s, but there is little evidence that the dominant parties' median ideological positions became more extreme during this time or in the time period since (Campbell, 2016). This means that partisan antipathy is increasing while the ideological gap between the parties stays the same. Additionally, studies suggest that negative affect fuels misperceptions about the ideological positions of opposing partisans (Ahler, 2014; Ahler & Sood, 2018; Chambers et al., 2006; Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016; Rothschild et al., 2019), which in turns fuels more negative affect, creating a vicious cycle of affect driving affect. These misperceptions about ideological positions of those across the political aisle, in turn, create an electorate that "agrees on many things but is bitterly divided nonetheless" (Mason, 2015, p. 128).

Modern, pluralistic media further catalyzes and magnifies this cycle of antipathy. Since the advent of social media, characterized by pluralistic amateur reporting with low accountability, even the least politically informed can find their political "team" without fully understanding what their team stands for or what their own beliefs are about these political issues without influence from their party (Bail et al., 2018; Lelkes et al., 2017). Therefore, their membership is based not on ideology, but upon social belonging, more like being a fan of a sports team (Mason, 2015). This means that "success" in the eyes of many partisans comes not

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[2] The issue of ideological polarization is one that is hotly debated within the field. Although this paper primarily deals with the issue of affective polarization, there is a short discussion of ideological polarization in part II of this paper.

from policy victories, but from victories over the opposing party. Politics is no longer a give-and-take of policy points; rather, it's a winner-take-all game where one party's success means the other party's loss (Mason, 2018). In such a system, compromise is impossible, and gridlock is all but certain (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016).

Taken a step further, in this system, supporters of each party may not only see leaders and supporters of the other party as rivals, but as "evildoers out to harm the nation" (Abramowitz & McCoy, 2019, p. 151). In such instances, to prevent harm befalling the republic at the hands of the "evildoers," partisans may become more willing to tolerate illiberal measures against their opponents like the use of force or restrictions on freedom of expression. This pipeline from affective polarization to illiberal policies exercised against opponents can be referred to as "democratic backsliding" (Abramowitz & McCoy, 2019) or "democratic erosion" (McCoy et al., 2018), and directly threatens the core principles of democracy.

The U.S. has seen many of the issues in the process of democratic erosion described above in recent decades. It can even be argued that some of these more extreme forms of it have been seen in very recent years (such as Donald Trump's attempt to overturn the 2020 election, and the 2021 storming of the capitol in Washington, D.C. by Trump supporters to halt the certification of the election). Affective polarization is making its presence known in ways that range from small but irritating (political gridlock) to immense and existentially terrifying (democratic collapse). Democracy here can be defined as a representative form of government that allows equal input from all citizens in political decision-making. As McCoy et al. (2018) express, democracy is important because it provides the opportunity for all groups, especially those that are new or historically excluded, to strive for political representation and power.

No matter the stage that affective polarization has reached in the U.S., to protect a healthy democracy, it is imperative to reverse its progression (Abramowitz & McCoy, 2019; McCoy et al., 2018).

   This study seeks to take steps towards that goal. To target and reduce political polarization as we know it, we must focus on the affective aspect rather than the ideological. This project draws on theory and methods from the field of conflict resolution to test an approach for ameliorating affective polarization. To do this, I look at partisanship through the lens of Social Identity Theory (SIT), which takes the view that partisanship is less about ideological identification with a party's platform, and more about social belonging within a group. Using this perspective, I seek to approach political discussions via a dialogic-type process, which primes partisans' personal identities in an effort to shift their mindset away from their social identities, primarily their partisan identities, and subsequently see opposing partisans as individuals rather than parts of a social entity.

Figure 1: Causal Chain from Polarization to Democratic Erosion, from McCoy et al., 2018.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Types of Polarization

Polarization, as can been seen already, is a multifaceted concept that has many different iterations. Although there are other types of political polarization than what will be discussed here, there are three main types that are relevant to this line of research: ideological, negative, and affective.

Ideological Polarization

Ideological polarization is possibly the most widely known type of polarization and is typically what the general public thinks of when they think of political polarization. Theories of ideological polarization posit that the median ideological positions of the major parties are becoming more extreme, widening the gap in ideology between the parties and the members of those parties (Campbell, 2016). This would mean, in the instance of the U.S., that Republicans become more conservative, and Democrats become more liberal. Additionally, with ideological polarization, more people identify with one of the major parties, and fewer identify as Independents, moderates, members of third parties, or the like. This point is especially important because rising levels of ideological polarization between the primary parties would mean much less if most voters remained moderates. In such a case, membership in these polarized parties would be much smaller, and the polarized parties would therefore exert less influence in the political sphere. However, if most voters identify with one of the major parties, the effects of ideological polarization become much more pronounced as these polarized parties and their members wield much more influence.

The occurrence of ideological polarization in modern politics is hotly debated among scholars of political science. Fiorina and Abrams (2008), two leading scholars on the topic of

political polarization, concede that ideological polarization has been increasing at the elite level (politicians, party leadership, etc.) for decades now, but argue that it does not extend to the general public. They also argue that the issues arising in modern politics that are generally attributed to polarization are the result of partisan sorting, not ideological polarization.[3]

Campbell (2016) complicates matters by pointing out that ideological polarization is not an either/or scenario but rather more of a spectrum. On one end of the spectrum is complete agreement on all issues—there are no differing opinions, no need for political parties, etc. On the other end is complete disagreement on all issues—two or more sides hold completely different views, and there is total gridlock that cannot be resolved through any means. This raises a core question when discussing the issue of ideological polarization: at what point along this spectrum is the electorate considered "polarized"? Do we set a subjective benchmark that, once passed, the electorate is considered polarized? Or do we measure it in relative terms, from one decade to the next? Additionally, how do we go about actually measuring levels of ideological polarization? This is usually done by looking at changes in issue positions, but the relationship between issue positions and parties doesn't stay consistent over time. For instance, measuring levels of polarization based on stances that partisans hold regarding gay rights in 1970 vs. 2020, or even 2000 vs. 2020, would be an inaccurate comparison, since gay rights were a left-wing fringe issue up until very recently; now, they are a mainstream political issue. Making this comparison over this period would be like comparing apples and oranges.

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[3] The concept of partisan sorting is explored more later in this chapter in the section on affective polarization. In short, partisan sorting leads to affective polarization (Mason, 2015, 2016, 2018) because it homogenizes the parties, creating less tolerance for differences in political opinions.

Negative Polarization

The next major type of polarization, negative polarization, is characterized by support from voters driven not solely by genuine support for the candidate or party for which the person is voting, but rather by dislike or hate of one candidate or party. It can perhaps best be explained by the mindset of many voters during the 2016 election: "I'm voting for Hillary Clinton because I hate Donald Trump," and vice versa.

Studies suggest that negative polarization has been increasing in recent decades. One of the ways that this can be seen is in rise of voters (especially younger ones) who identify as independents in conjunction with the rise of straight-ticket voting among independents. Normally, independent voters would be expected to vote for candidates from across the political spectrum; however, with straight-ticket voting, we see voters choosing candidates from the same political party down the ballot. Abramowitz and Webster (2016) attribute this to the social desirability effect. Many voters today, particularly young voters, see partisanship or membership in a political party as undesirable, so they choose to identify as independents instead. In some instances, these independents who vote straight-ticket may not like the idea of identifying with a political party but share many of the same political ideals as one of the political parties. There is some evidence for this shown by Theodoridis (2017), who found that "leaners" (those who don't identify with a political party, but lean more towards identifying with one than the other) were really what he termed "closet partisans," meaning that they implicitly identify with a party just as much as those who identify as strong or not so strong partisans (this would also suggest evidence of affective polarization).[4] However, if negative polarization is the motivating factor, voters

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[4] Theodoridis also found that implicit partisan identification is stronger in Republicans than it is in Democrats. This could partially be explained by the theory of partisan and social sorting (discussed later in this chapter in the section on affective polarization), which theorizes that ideological and social identities have become more aligned with political parties since the 1970s. Mason and Wronski (2018) find that this sorting carries greater weight for

instead may be extremely opposed to the political ideals of one of the parties and therefore feel motivated to vote against them. These are not necessarily mutually exclusive conclusions: It is entirely possible that independents vote both straight ticket because they implicitly identify with one party and hate another. Iyengar et al. (2012) found that from 1960-2008 voters had higher levels of out-group derogation than positives evaluations of in-party members. This suggests that voters can hold less favorable views of the party that they voted for (either as a result of or leading to disidentification with the party) while simultaneously deriding the party they voted against.

The pervasiveness of negative polarization can also be seen in the recent decline in incumbency advantage in recent years. Incumbency advantage is the edge that sitting members of Congress hold in elections specifically because of their status as incumbents—as long as voters feel as though their representatives and senators are doing their job well and representing their constituency, they will be reelected to office. However, with the nationalization of local politics, people have started to see these seats as an opportunity to prevent the opposite party from controlling the House or Senate. It no longer matters if a candidate is an incumbent if they're a member of the other political party (Abramowitz & Webster, 2016).

Affective Polarization

Affective polarization, the focus of this study, can be defined as the dislike and/or distrust held by partisans of one party towards partisans of another political party because of their affiliation with that party. For example, in the U.S., this might take the form of: "I'm a Republican, and I don't like/trust that person because they're a Democrat." As mentioned above

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Republicans than it does for Democrats because the Republican Party is more "pure" (that is, made up of fewer diverse social groups); therefore, it is likely that this identity will be more deeply ingrained, specifically to an implicit level as proposed by Theodoridis.

in the section on negative polarization, bias against opposite partisans is stronger than preference for co-partisans: Partisans show more distrust of those across the political aisle than trust of those of their own party (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). This is affective polarization at work. These feelings of dislike or distrust also transcend strength of ideological identification: those across the spectrum within a party (weak to strong) show similar levels of bias against members of the opposite party (Iyengar et al., 2012). Therefore, it doesn't matter whether someone identifies as a moderate or an extremist within a party—they are just as likely to express distrust or dislike for the opposite party. Taken a step beyond this, research suggests that current levels of partisan affect are higher than racial discrimination (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015). This might be attributed, in part, to social norms: It has been socially prohibited for decades now to discriminate against others based on race. This same cultural taboo does not apply, however, to ideology or partisan affiliation.

Although they may seem very similar on first glance, negative and affective polarization do have two main distinctions: 1) the target of distrust or hate on the part of partisans; and 2) the way(s) in which partisans express this distrust or hate. To the first point, negative polarization manifests itself as distrust of a candidate or political party, leading voters to support another candidate or party based solely (or primarily) on this distrust of the other party or candidate. On the other hand, affective polarization is motivated by a distrust or hate of individuals of another party because of their identification with that party. When it comes to expressions of these forms of distrust or hate, negative polarization leads voters to support and/or vote for another political party, while affective polarization leads voters to automatically devalue members of the distrusted party, which subsequently leads to more tense relations between partisans from opposing parties.

Different types of polarization, including types not listed here, are not necessarily mutually exclusive—it is entirely possible that they occur in tandem, none are occurring, or one or more are occurring. For example, Abramowitz and McCoy (2019) directly link negative and affective polarization when discussing politics following the 2016 presidential election, and refers to them like two sides of the same coin: negative polarization explaining increased polarization in voting, and affective polarization explaining the strong feelings of hate directed at those across the political aisle. Although different types of polarization are closely related, as can be seen with this case of negative polarization and affective polarization, for the sake of clarity and brevity, this research focuses solely on affective polarization.

Results of studies suggest that, as a result of affective polarization, voters are more likely to regard members of the opposite political party negatively regardless of the real or imagined ideological gap between them (Ahler, 2014; Ahler & Sood, 2018; Chambers et al., 2006). Given that the ideological gap between the parties seems to have stayed relatively static in the past fifty years (Fiorina & Abrams, 2008), it seems more likely that this ideological gap is imagined or exaggerated. This is dangerous because affective polarization fuels misperceptions about the ideological gap between partisans, creating a negative feedback loop that fuels affective polarization (Ahler, 2014). This may be part of the reason why public tends to talk about polarization in terms of ideological polarization—on the surface, that appears to be the issue dividing the parties. Discussing it in these inaccurate terms, however, may be feeding the problem even further: by perpetuating the idea that partisans across the aisle are moving further and further apart ideologically, it promotes the negative stereotyping that deepens these divisions in a real way.

The intensification of affective polarization in recent decades is well-established among scholars of political science. Campbell (2016) hypothesizes that the origins of modern-day levels of affective polarization lie in the U.S. political party realignment that took place from the 1960s-1990s.[5] He puts forward a theory that he calls Revealed Polarization Theory, where he hypothesizes that the American voting populace first became affectively polarized in the 1960s, but political parties were slow to reflect this polarization, leading to a slow, decades-long realignment. Because parties didn't accurately reflect the interests of voters for several decades, the extent of affective polarization in the American voting populace was masked, and therefore didn't become a widespread worry until the 1990s-2000s when the positions of the political parties finally reflected those of voters.

This intensification of affective polarization in recent decades, Campbell (2016) argues, comes from the emergence of political sorting. Political sorting is a process by which voters' stances on political issues that are not connected become linked. For example, in today's American political sphere, a person who believes in free government-funded healthcare for all is also likely to support freer avenues of immigration, even though, from an outside perspective, there is very little that links these two issues together politically. This leads to more politically

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[5] The literature on political party realignments in the U.S. is mixed—not all scholars believe that political party realignments are the best way to view the changing landscape of political parties (Carmines et al., 1987; Mayhew, 2002; Paulson, 2007). Even within the community of scholars that view political party realignment theory as helpful, there is a lot of debate over whether a substantive realignment occurred during this era of the 1960s-1990s (Campbell, 2006; Couch, 2017; Hawley & Sagarzazu, 2012; Mayhew, 2002). This is for two main reasons: 1) most party movement took place in the South (rather than the country on a whole), as conservative Southern Democrats moved to the Republican party; and 2) there is no short and clear time period in which groups moved from one party to the other (a period of one or two presidential election cycles, for example). Campbell, however, pushes back against these two points. First, regarding party group movement from one party to another: although the South was clearest example of mass migration of partisans from one party to another, previously Republican-held New England became a Democratic stronghold during this same time period. Additionally, when addressing the issue of the length of the realignment, Campbell endorses a theory regarding the 1960s-1990s realignment called the "staggered" realignment theory (also see: Campbell, 2006), which posits that voters went through a decades' long process of realigning with the parties that better expressed their views, eventually influencing the parties to change even more to cater to the interests of voters.

homogeneous parties, or parties in which members share similar political opinions across a wide

range of seemingly unrelated issues. Mason (2015) similarly argues that trends over the past few

decades in increased alignment of political ideology with party (e.g., liberals with the

Democratic Party, and conservatives with the Republican Party) have led to increased social

(affective) polarization. She even goes a step further, and argues that polarization in recent years

has also been driven by social polarization, or the linkage of social identities (race, religion,

gender, sexuality, etc.) to certain political parties (Mason, 2016, 2018). In both instances

(political and social sorting), partisans become more alike and have less social or ideological

differences, meaning that there are fewer "cross-cutting" identities in parties. Cross-cutting

identities are those that defy easy classification because they are not homogeneous. People with

cross-cutting political identities may have political positions that do not "agree" (e.g., liberal

Republicans, pro-life Democrats), or one or more of their social identities may not agree with

their political identity (e.g., Black Republicans, Evangelical Democrats). Cross-cutting identities

lead to greater diversity of experience and opinion, exposing people to a wide range of identities

and opinions.[6]   Therefore, fewer cross-cutting identities mean that people are less exposed to

people with differing political opinions or social identities, which leads to greater entrenchment

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[6] Mason and Wronski (2018) found that Republicans tend to have a stronger group identity on a whole because there are fewer social groups linked to the party and more party "purity" (and therefore, fewer cross-cutting identities) than among Democrats. This homogeneity means that Republicans are more likely to closely identify with their party as well. Republicans are "more reliant than Democrats on their social identities for constructing strong partisan attachments" (Mason & Wronski, 2018, p. 274) making the Republican Party, as they argue, the party more reliant upon identity politics. This could potentially mean, as well, that Republicans are more susceptible to affective polarization. Campbell (2016) addresses this possibility when it comes to ideological polarization, arguing that the Republican Party appears to be more polarized than the Democratic Party for a couple of reasons: 1) the "average" American voter is slightly right of center, pulling all American politics further right; and 2) the Republican Party has more conservatives than the Democratic Party has liberals, meaning that Republican policy is more beholden to more extreme stances than the Democratic policy (Democrats must moderate more in order to capture more votes). Therefore, it appears as though the lack of cross-cutting identities in the Republican Party, both politically and socially, has led to greater levels of affective polarization and ideological extremity than the Democratic Party.

in political ideology and decreased willingness to tolerate those across the political aisle, let alone their political opinions.

Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is a psychological theory, originating in the research of Tajfel and Turner (1971), that seeks to explain how people subconsciously sort themselves into social groupings and why they act the way that they do in these groups. One of the foundational aspects of SIT is the minimal group paradigm which theorizes that merely sorting people into groups, even on the most arbitrary of bases, creates an "us vs. them" mindset. This leads to in-group favoritism and out-group differentiation (and potentially derogation). Group identification is inherent to the human social experience, and the motivating factor underlying group membership is the search for a positive and secure self-concept. This is created through competition and comparison between the in-group and the out-group. Therefore, this positive and secure self-construct is achieved through competition with out-groups in which the in-group comes out victorious (Hornsey, 2008).

Any one person holds many identities at once, and not all of those identities are salient at any given time. This means that social identification depends on context. Furthermore, people hold several different levels of identity: human, social, and personal. These range, in order, from the most general to the most specific. These types of identity emerge depending on context—for instance, human identity may be most salient when there is a natural disaster in a different part of the world, whereas social identity may become more salient during the Olympics (national social identity) or when your football team plays in the Super Bowl (social identity). There is a "functional antagonism" that exists between these identities, where when one becomes dominant, the other two take a backseat. In the context of group identity this means deindividuation (a shift

from the personal to the social) and depersonalization (the shedding of personal identity to become an exemplar of their social group) (Hornsey, 2008).

The Relationship Between Affective Polarization and SIT

The connection between SIT and partisanship has been made by several scholars in the field. The basis for this theory lies in how people identify with political parties. Many people think of partisanship as a transactional relationship: people identify with a political party because that party puts forth ideas with which that person agrees and runs candidates that support and advocate for those ideas. If, over time, the person does not feel as though that party reflects their ideals anymore, they switch their support to another party. However, if partisanship is a form of social identity, the ideology of the party and its candidates are secondary; what matters instead is the feeling of belonging that the group imparts on its members. Even if the party deviates from the party platform or runs a candidate that does not reflect the values of a voter, they will continue to support the party anyway. Partisans will also show in-group favoritism and out-group differentiation: ergo, partisans like co-partisans and dislike opposing partisans purely on the basis of the party membership.

One way to test this theorized connection between partisanship and social identity is by measuring partisanship with the Identification with a Psychological Group (IDPG) scale, a 10-point measurement tool developed by Mael and Tetrick (1992), which seeks to measure the level of a person's identification with a social psychological group (and, in this case, to see if a social grouping can be viewed through the lens of SIT). Greene (1999) found that partisans who scored higher on this test were more likely to estimate a larger cultural or ideological gap between the two parties. For every extra point (out of four) that partisans scored on the IDPG, their ratings of in-group members increased by nine points and their ratings of out-group members decreased by

fifteen points (out of 100 possible). This is a form of intergroup differentiation, and direct evidence in favor of viewing partisanship as social identity. These tendencies are not found just in the U.S.: Bankert et al. (2017), also using the IDPG, found evidence that viewing partisanship as a form of social identity applies to multi-party systems in European countries as well. In a similar vein to both Greene and Bankert, Theodoridis (2017) used the Implicit Association Test (IAT), a test that is used to assess the implicit opinions and biases of people towards specific groups, to analyze the relationship between the subconscious and party identification. He found that those with the strongest implicit associations with a party (that is, those whose social identities as party members were the strongest) showed stronger negative affective towards opposite partisans. This shows the innate biases that exist in partisans against those in the out-group, further evidence for viewing partisanship as a form of social identity.

Although these are just a handful of examples of how the relationship between partisanship and SIT has been tested, there is wide-ranging agreement within the field that partisanship can be viewed through the lens of SIT (Bankert et al., 2017; Greene, 1999, 2002, 2004; Huddy et. al, 2010; Munro et al., 2013; Theodoridis, 2017). Therefore, to reduce affective polarization, we can look to Social Identity Theory for clues as to how to proceed. This is where dialogue comes into play.

The Role of Dialogue

Looking to SIT, perhaps the best way to reduce affective polarization is to change the salience of different identities, shifting the focus from social identity to either personal identity or human identity. This study seeks to make personal identity salient. This is done by using dialogic-type processes to recenter the individual over the political self in political conversations. The term "dialogic-type processes" is used instead of the term "dialogue" because true dialogue

must meet a number of conditions in order to be classified as such. Dialogue as a form of conflict resolution was developed in the 1900s by academic David Bohm, and it typically has five main elements: conversation, creation, collective mediation, participation, and inquiry (Cayer, 2005). The main element that this study will incorporate is conversation. Conversation in a dialogue is different from normal conversation that we are used to. This is because in dialogue, conversation is meant to flow without an agenda or judgement, and participants are expected to listen to each other with open minds. Equally important is that participants are sharing their personal experiences and working to understand the experience of others. These are the elements that are at the heart of the treatment in this study. Since this study doesn't incorporate all five elements of dialogue, that is why the design of the study is referred to as incorporating "dialogic-type processes".

Previous Studies

Although there are many studies that link partisanship and SIT, there are not nearly as many that seek to use this connection to reduce levels of affective polarization. Hess et al. (2010), one of these few studies to exist, studied the use of dialogue in political discussions at the university level and its subsequent effects on students' political lives. This experiment took place in the form of an undergraduate class at the University of Illinois that sought to foster dialogue between students across the political spectrum on a variety of political topics. They found that students, in general, showed positive progress in three areas in their political lives as a result of the dialogue course: 1) discovering a new way to talk; 2) seeing others in a new way; and 3) seeing oneself more clearly. To the first point, participants felt as though the atmosphere created in the course encouraged them to deeply listen to their fellow students, rather than listening to respond or retaliate, which simultaneously made it so that participants felt as though they could

be more open when voicing their own opinions to the group. Secondly, participants said that participation in the course helped them move away from harsh or stereotypical views of opposite partisans and subsequently develop more nuanced and humanized views of individual party members. Many also said that they better understood (although didn't endorse) the opinions of those across the political aisle and understood that opposite partisans held good intentions. Finally, participants were able to see themselves more clearly through helping them discover the reasons why they hold the beliefs they do, unearth passions that they were unaware existed, and/or explore their beliefs better to understand how to classify themselves politically.

One of the more large-scale efforts using dialogue-type methods to target polarization was the "America in One Room" experiment (Badger & Quealy, 2019; Fishkin et al., 2021), a four day-long conference in deliberative democracy that sought to bring together a sample of 500 American voters that were roughly representative of the voting public to have discussions about five broad topics of political issues crucial to the upcoming 2020 presidential election (foreign policy, health care, immigration, the economy, and the environment). The overarching goal of this conference, however, was a little unclear to all involved (participants, spectators, the media, etc.). The New York Times reported that a conference of this sort could help "pollsters…get a picture of what people believe when they're not just relying on sound bites and tribal clues" (Badger & Quealy, 2019). Information for polling did not seem to be the only purpose of the process, however. Fishkin et al. (2021), whose lead author spearheaded this weekend-long conference, also stated that the main goal of the process was to reduce affective polarization. This was far from clear to most people involved. For example, reporters for the New York Times repeatedly asked participants if, during their time at this conference, their political opinions changed in any way. Repeatedly, respondents replied that it had not. This was not the stated goal

of the conference as purported by Fishkin and colleagues. One participant, however, seemed to have a little bit more of an idea of what the purpose of the conference was, saying that it was not an effort to change people's minds—rather, it strove to "'get people to accept each other's points of view in a civil manner'" (Badger & Quealy, 2019). Although this study may have looked in the right direction, the disorganization and lack of clarity surrounding the goals meant that the process could not live up to its full potential.

The format of this study is based on a previous study by Levendusky, outlined in his paper "Americans, Not Partisans: Can Priming American National Identity Reduce Affective Polarization?" (2018). In this study, Levendusky acknowledges the rising levels of distrust between opposing partisans in the United States and seeks to reduce this affective polarization by priming study participants with their national social identities rather than their partisan social identities. In his study, Levendusky attempted to reduce affective polarization by priming individuals for a higher social identity as Americans rather than partisans. While his results suggested some moderate levels of efficacy, there are some caveats to his results. [7] Mainly, Levendusky conducted his study specifically during times of already heightened American identity, including the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing and around the Fourth of July holiday. Maintaining such a level of heightened American identity could very well be difficult to maintain outside of highly patriotic times, especially during times when other social identities such as partisanship are heightened, like during presidential election years, or large political events like

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[7] The other significant caveat to Levendusky's research, besides the one discussed here, was that his results could be characterized (and were characterized by him as well) as modest at best: his method for priming moved the average score for how much participants identified with the label "American" from 4.3 (on a scale of 1-5) in the control to 4.4 in the treatment. Additionally, when it comes to how participants rated opposite partisans on feelings thermometers, those in the treatment condition only favored opposite partisans a few points more than those in the control condition.

impeachment or the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it could be more effective to take the opposite track, and to instead prime individual identity to reduce affective polarization. In a society that is very individualistic, encouraging people to think on an individual scale could be more sustainable and easier to implement.[8] That is the track that this study takes: priming individual identity through dialogic-type processes regarding political issues in order to reduce affective polarization between partisans. Since the purpose of this study is very similar to the purpose of Levendusky's, the structure of this survey very closely mirrors his.[9]

Research Question and Hypothesis

There are three main research questions for this study:

1. What difference, if any, is there between the feelings of participants (judged through responses to the feelings thermometer question) towards Sam in the control condition versus the treatment (in general, as well as broken down by party)?

2. What is the relationship between partisans' ratings of Sam and their ratings of the opposite party? (i.e., Do people like Sam more than they do the opposite party? Do good feelings towards Sam translate into good feelings towards the opposite party?

3. What effect, if any, does priming individual identities through dialogue-based interactions have on levels of affective polarization in the American partisan electorate?

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[8] There is a psychological tendency in humans for people to evaluate individuals more positively than the group that they belong to on a whole: this is called person positivity bias (Iyengar et al., 2012). Partisans are therefore able to humanize individual opposite partisans; scaling this up to a group of party members or the party on a whole is where they hit a psychological wall. In a way, this study seeks to harness this tendency and attempts to scale it up to the larger group (e.g., feelings towards the party, or average members of the party) using theories of social identity.

[9] The evaluation section of this study (used to assess the efficacy of the treatment), however, borrows from the American National Election Studies (ANES) 2020 Times Series Study Pre-Election and Post-Election Survey Questionnaires (2021).

The hypothesis for this study is: Priming partisans for their individual identities through dialogue-based interactions will result in lowered levels of affective polarization.

III. METHODS

<u>Survey Design</u>

Participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk), and the survey

was conducted through the survey platform Qualtrics. A group of 120 MTurk workers were

recruited, and each was paid $2 for their participation in the survey.[10] The study was designed to

take participants roughly 10-15 minutes. It was administered on February 2, 2022. Participants

were randomly split into two roughly equal sized groups: one group was administered the

treatment, and the other was administered the control. Data was collected through Qualtrics.

After the data set had been cleaned and low-quality survey responses have been edited out,

results were analyzed using linear regression analyses in the data analysis platform R.

<u>Procedure</u>

The survey was split into three main parts for both the treatment and the control groups:

1) demographic information; 2) short response; and 3) partisan attitude thermometers.

Part I: Demographics

All participants, regardless of condition, were given a set of seven demographic questions

to answer. These questions asked about their birth year, gender, racial identity, partisan identity,

region of the U.S. in which they reside, and highest level of education achieved. Although these

demographic questions can be helpful for understanding how representative this cohort is of the

American population on a whole, the most important question from this section was the question

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[10] When using MTurk, there are ethical complications of requesting work on the platform. One of the biggest issues to keep in mind here is the compensation rates. MTurk allows requesters to set the payment for completing tasks as low as a few cents; this can expand up into dollar ranges. Some researchers suggest setting the compensation rate at least at the federal minimum wage based on the estimated time it is predicted the survey will take participants (Shank, 2016): for example, if a survey is estimated to take participants 15 minutes, with the federal minimum wage currently set at $7.25 an hour, this means that it is recommended that requesters set the payment for the task at $1.81.

about partisan identity—the other demographic questions were included primarily to hide the true purpose of the study to avoid demand bias. The partisan identity question had two parts: 1) initial partisan identification, and 2) a follow-up about strength of this partisanship. Using survey skip logic, the follow-up question differed based on how the respondent answered the first part. If the respondent identified themselves as either a Democrat or a Republican, it would ask if the respondent considered themselves as a weak or strong partisan (i.e., weak Republican vs. strong Republican). If the respondent identified themselves as an Independent, it would ask if they considered themselves closer to the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, or neither. Their responses to both parts of this question would dictate what they saw later in the survey if they were part of the treatment group and would help to disaggregate results for analysis for both treatment and control groups.[11]

Part II: Short Response Section

In the short response section, participants were asked to write about their feelings on a specific topic that differed based on the participants' status as either part of the treatment or the control. Members of the treatment group were asked to write about their personal feelings on the topic of climate change.[12] The wording of this question is important, as it was meant to guide

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[11] This question was also used to separate out true independents. Since this study focuses specifically on affective polarization among partisans, how true independents reacted to the study was not necessarily of interest. Additionally, there is no treatment that would contrast against the true independent mindset, since "Sam" in this study was written to be either a Democrat or Republican, depending on the partisan identity of participants.

[12] It is important, here, to establish climate change as an issue that is polarizing across the political spectrum. Protecting the environment started out as a non-partisan issue in the 1970s, but slowly became a polarizing issue starting in the 1990s. In fact, up until the 1990s, the split in support for environmental policies in Congress was only 10 points between the parties (Dunlap & McCright, 2008). However, polarization between partisans on the issue of climate change has increased rapidly. Between 2001 and 2010, when asked about whether they believed that the effects of climate change have already begun, this number increased from 60.42% to 69.67% of Democrats, and decreased from 49.09% to 28.96% of Republicans (McCright & Dunlap, 2011). This means that the gap in opinions of Democrats and Republicans towards climate change increased from 11.33 points in 2001 to 40.71 points in 2010. Similarly, the gap in opinions of Democrats and Republicans about whether or not climate change is being causes by humans is increasing as well; in 2001, 70% of Democrats and 53% of Republicans believed climate change was human-made, whereas 84% of Democrats and 43% of Republicans said the same in 2016 (Dunlap et al., 2016). This

participants in the direction of addressing the topic in a more dialogic-type fashion. The question

was worded as such:

> In the box below, please write about your own personal feelings and experiences in relation to the topic of climate change without trying to persuade. Pretend that you are explaining your feelings on this topic to a trusted friend or family member who is genuinely interested in what you think.

Those who were separated into the control group received a question asking them to write about

their favorite movie.

Following this page, participants were asked to read about the feelings of another person

("Sam") on this topic as well. To continue to foster the atmosphere needed for dialogue,

participants were prepared with the following statement:

> On the next page, you will read about how Sam feels about this topic. Pretend Sam is a good friend or family member who wants to share his own feelings with this same topic. Sam gave you his full attention and really wanted to understand your point of view, so you want to give him the same attention and understanding.

Participants in the control condition were prepared in a similar matter, but regarding the topic of

movies instead of climate change.[13]

Part III: Partisan Attitude Thermometers

Following the short-response section, all participants completed a series of short partisan

attitude thermometers. Attitude thermometers are a method for gaging feelings toward

individuals or groups, and are a common feature of many political attitude tests, including the

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gap widened from 17 points in 2001 to 41 points in 2016. There is some evidence, too, that these views that partisans hold about climate change are only reinforced by efforts to educate partisans about climate change science (that is, greater concern among Democrats and decreasing concern among Republicans) (Hamilton, 2011). This seems to lend some credibility to the argument that partisanship can be viewed as a social identity rather than as an ideology; even when faced with facts about climate change, which may contradict beliefs perpetuated by the parties, partisans hold even more firmly to their parties and the positions of those parties.

[13] For full wording used for both the treatment and control conditions, please see the text of the entirety of the survey in Appendix B.

American National Election Studies' (one of the most comprehensive political surveys) pre- and post-election survey questionnaires (*ANES 2020 Time Series Study: Pre-Election and Post-Election Survey Questionnaires*, 2021). These feelings thermometers ask participants to rate how they feel about a given person or group on a scale of 0-100, with 0 representing very cold feelings, 50 representing moderate feelings, and 100 representing very warm feelings.

The first thermometer that all participants completed, regardless of condition, was for Sam. For participants in the treatment condition, completing this thermometer would direct them to another page where they were shown Sam's answers to the demographic information given in part one. The results shown to each participant would again differ according to their answers to the questions about partisanship in the demographic section. Those who identified as strong Democrats, weak Democrats, or Democratic-leaning Independents would see a version of Sam's demographic breakdown that showed that he was a weak Republican, and those who identified as strong Republicans, weak Republicans, or Republican-leaning Independents would see a version of Sam's demographic information that showed that he was a weak Democrat. Other than this difference in Sam's partisan identity based on the partisan identity of the participants, the Sams shown to Democrats and Republicans were demographically identical.[14] The purpose of showing the treatment participants Sam's demographic information was to see if signaling to participants that the person that they were speaking to is a member of the opposite political party

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[14] Sam's demographic information is written to be easily translated across political parties when it comes to information that is not directly related to political parties (age, gender, race, region, and education) so that participants will focus on the information about Sam's political identity. There are several demographics that are associated with one party more than another—for example, non-white racial identities are typically associated with the Democratic Party, whereas those from the South are statistically more likely to belong to the Republican Party. Therefore, Sam is written so that his demographics could easily be associated with either political party (or as an independent) so that participants do not become bogged down in other details that are not central to the point of the study. For a full breakdown of Sam's demographic information, see the appendix of this paper for a copy of the entirety of the survey.

would translate to differing feelings towards the opposite political party on a whole (e.g., to see if greater like for a member of the opposite party can transfer to greater like for other members of the party). Participants were then asked on the next page to rate their feelings towards Republicans, Democrats, and Independents on feelings thermometers the same way they had with Sam. Those in the control condition were not given any demographic information for Sam, so they completed feelings thermometers for Sam, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents all on one page together.[15]

Participants

At the beginning of results analysis, there were 157 surveys either completed or in progress. Before attempting to clean the data, a list of criteria was compiled for eliminating low-quality or irrelevant data from the final data set. Low-quality data for this survey can be defined as incomplete or inconsistent responses to the survey questions. Irrelevant data, on the other hand, can be defined as data that is not needed (or in some cases, cannot be used) in the final data analysis. Essentially, this process of data cleaning sought to create a data set that was complete and included only high-quality data from invested survey participants. Below is the list of criteria used to filter out low-quality and irrelevant data, along with a number specified in parentheses that denotes how many participants' surveys were eliminated at each stage:

1. Those who did not finish the survey (26)

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[15] There were two other short sections on each end of the survey as well. The first section, before demographics, was the informed consent section. This gave an abbreviated summary of the survey, and also mentioned that the full purpose of the study would be revealed at the completion of the survey, along with the chance for participants to withdraw from the study without penalty if they chose to do so. This informed consent process was intentionally vague in order to prevent participants from learning the full purpose of the study in the hopes to avoid any bias. The last section, following the feelings thermometers, revealed the true purpose of the study to the participants and explicitly gave them a chance to back out without penalty, as mentioned in the informed consent section.

2. Those who chose to withdraw from being included in the study (without penalty) at the end of survey (6)

3. Pure independents (i.e., those who indicated both identifying as an independent and not leaning ideology towards either the Democratic or Republican parties) (4)

4. Those with inconsistent short answer responses (41)[16]

5. Those who did not complete the survey within a certain amount of time: 180 to 1500 seconds (3-25 minutes) (20)[17]

This left a total final survey size of 60 participants, of which 29 were part of the control condition and 31 were part of the treatment condition. It was expected that there would likely be a high number of survey responses that would be eliminated for various reasons and was therefore anticipated when requesting the number of participants to take the survey.

Table 1: Demographics of Final Data Set

	Control	Treatment	Total
Democrat	17	20	37
Republican	12	11	23
Total	29	31	60

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[16] "Inconsistent responses" can be characterized in several ways. Some of the most common ones that were eliminated during this data cleaning process included: answers that didn't match the prompt; answers that didn't make sense (gibberish, buzzwords, keyboard smashing, etc.); and answers that were copied and pasted (copied and pasted from some part of the survey, or copied and pasted from internet searches).

[17] These times were determined based on a couple of standards. The lower limit was based on the average amount of time it took a person to read through the survey. On average, simply reading through the survey (without answering the questions) took sample participants approximately three minutes. This became the lower end limit. Twenty-five minutes was the higher-end estimated time to take the survey on this study's application through the IRB, so this was established as the upper-end limit.

IV. RESULTS

Table 2 (visualized in figure 2 below) shows no statistically significant results. Unsurprisingly, Republicans evaluated fellow Republicans positively regardless of condition (median of 78.5 for the control and 80 for the treatment). However, Democrats, the group with potential to see differences between the control and the treatment, do not differ significantly across condition. Although the medians of these two groups are quite a bit different (24 in the control and 35 in the treatment), the middle 50% of responses are nearly identical (see figure 2 for a visualization of this spread), indicating that there is little evidence that the treatment shifted Democrats' opinions of Republicans in a significant way ($t = 0.506$, $p < 0.615$).
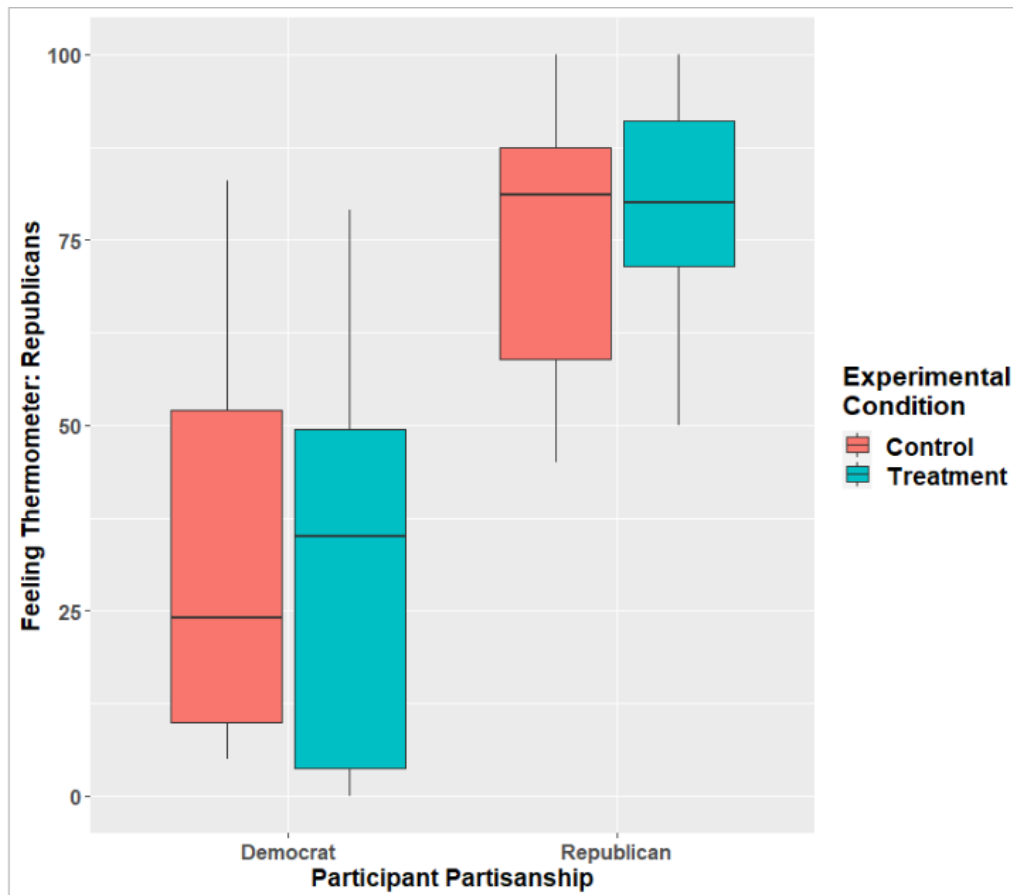

Figure 2: Feelings Thermometer, Republicans

Table 4: Feelings Towards Republicans

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)	2.50%	97.50%
(Intercept)	33.412	5.472	6.106	1.02e-07 ***	22.45	44.37
Republican	43.088	8.507	5.065	4.74e-06 ***	26.05	60.13
Treatment	-2.762	7.443	-0.371	0.712	-17.67	12.15
Republican: Treatment	6.08	12.004	0.506	0.615	-17.97	30.13

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.'

Table 3: Feelings Towards Democrats

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)	2.50%	97.50%
(Intercept)	72.882	5.724	12.733	< 2e-16 ***	61.42	84.35
Republican	-45.049	8.898	-5.063	4.78e-06 ***	-62.87	-27.22
Treatment	-7.982	7.785	-1.025	0.31	-23.58	7.61
Republican: Treatment	18.331	12.556	1.46	0.15	-6.82	43.48

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.'

Table 2: Feelings Towards Sam

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(>|t|)	2.50%	97.50%
(Intercept)	82.765	5.503	15.041	< 2e-16 ***	71.74	93.79
Treatment	-35.015	7.485	-4.678	1.87e-05 ***	-50.01	-20.02
Republican	-6.098	8.554	-0.713	0.4789	-23.23	11.04
Treatment: Republican	30.53	12.071	2.529	0.0143*	6.35	54.71

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.'
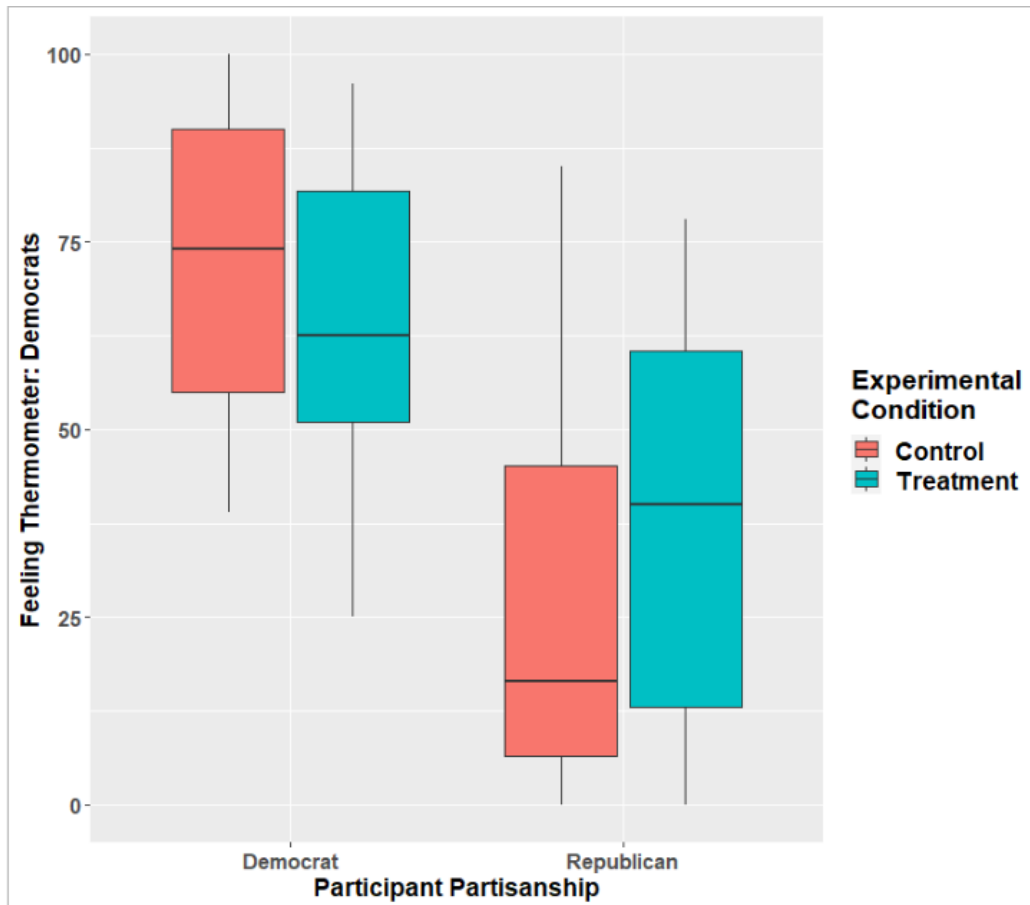
Figure 3: Feelings Thermometer, Democrats

Like Table 2, Table 3 (visualized in Figure 3 above) shows that Democrats evaluated fellow Democrats positively, regardless of condition (median of 74 for the control and 62.5 for the treatment). On the other hand, these results also seem to partially suggest that Republicans in the treatment condition felt at least slightly more positive about Democrats than Republicans in the control; the condition median sits at 16.5, whereas the treatment median sits higher at approximately 40. However, these results do not meet the academically established threshold for statistical significance ($t = 1.46$, $p < 0.15$).
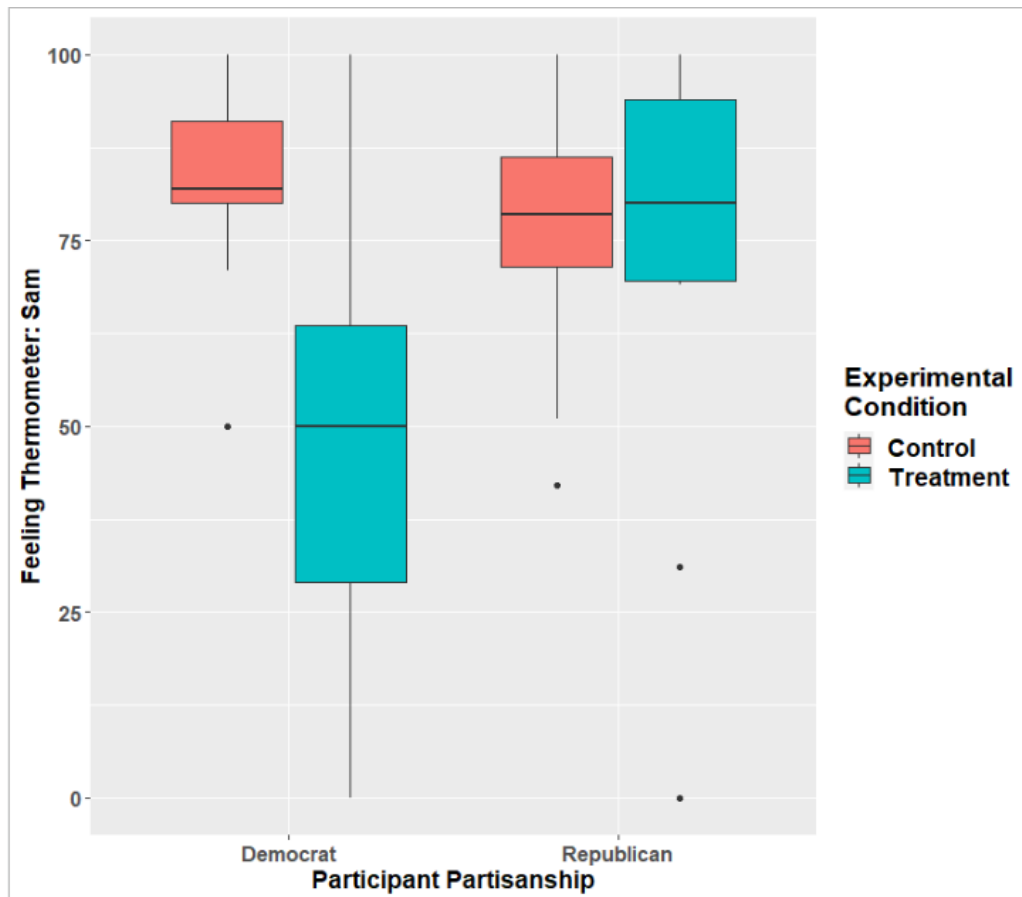
Figure 4: Feelings Thermometer, Sam

Table 4 (visualized in Figure 4 above), on the other hand, does present some statistically significant results. Republicans seemed to evaluate Sam positively regardless of condition; the median for the control group was 78.5, and the median for the treatment group was 80. Democrats, on the other hand, shifted according to condition. Democrats in the control condition evaluated Sam relatively positively with a median rating of 82. Democrats in the treatment condition, however, rated Sam more moderately, with a median rating of 50. These results are statistically significant ($t = 2.529$, $p < 0.01$).

V. DISCUSSION

Analysis

It was hypothesized that participants who engaged in dialogic-type processes would be primed to express their individual identities rather than their social ones. This is because, under SIT, when one form of identity (individual, social, human) is salient, the other two are not. Therefore, shifting attention away from the social identity of partisanship toward individuality is hypothesized to decrease hostility towards those who they may show such hostility to if their social identities were salient. The first place we would see this, in our study, is feelings towards Sam. If the hypothesis is supported, we should see a statistically significant difference in the evaluations of Sam in the control versus treatment groups; specifically, the partisan attitude thermometer evaluations of Sam filled out by participants should be significantly higher in the treatment condition versus the control. These increasingly positive attitudes towards Sam, then, should translate to increasingly positive attitudes towards social groups as well, once it is revealed to partisans that Sam identifies with the opposite party of participants. These results, however, are not what is seen in the results of this study.

Unsurprisingly, Republicans showed warmth towards other Republicans regardless of the treatment condition. Similarly, Democrats showed warmth towards other Democrats regardless of condition. This was to be expected. The surprise, however, comes from how these partisans felt about opposing partisans in the control versus treatment conditions. Running contrary to the hypothesis, Democrats in the control and in the treatment felt similarly negative towards Republicans, with 75% of responses in each condition falling below a feelings thermometer rating of 50. There is some evidence here that Republicans expressed warmer feelings towards Democrats in the treatment versus the control, but with a p-value of 0.15, these results fall short

of the academic standard for statistical significance. The hypothesis for this study is not supported by these results: priming partisans for their individual identities through dialogue-based interactions did not result in lower levels of affective polarization between opposing partisans.

Another interesting finding comes from analyzing the results of the feelings thermometer evaluations of Sam. Republicans showed roughly the same levels of warmth toward Sam regardless of treatment condition. Democrats, on the other hand, differed quite significantly across condition. One way to view this difference is through the median feeling thermometer ratings. Control condition Democrats gave Sam a median rating of 82, whereas treatment condition Democrats gave him a median rating of 50. The differences in evaluations of Sam in the treatment versus the control also have a p-value of 0.015, meeting even the most stringent standard of statistical significance. Interpreting these results can also be taken a couple of different ways. Compared to the control condition, Democrats in the treatment condition can be said to like Sam far less. However, looking at where these opinions fall on the feelings thermometer, it could also be said that Democrats in the control liked Sam, and those in the treatment felt more neutral towards him. No matter how we view these results, however, we can say that the hypothesis was not supported by them.

Limitations

There are a few limitations of this study that affect the generalizability of the results. The three main ones arise from 1) small sample size; 2) unexpected answers from partisans in part two of the survey; and 3) limitations arising from the use of Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Small Sample Size

One of the most important limitations to take into account when interpreting any of these results is the sample size for this study. This study started out with 157 participants; that was whittled down to 60 through various data cleaning processes. Because of this issue in sample size, there is a chance the results of this study were impacted. Larger sample sizes yield more accurate and more concrete results. This much smaller sample size was split even further into treatments and parties for analysis. Ultimately, sample sizes for each category of analysis ranged from eleven to twenty. Such small sample groups make statistical analysis difficult and often inconclusive. Although most of the results from this study were not statistically significant, a larger sample size could be helpful in either solidifying or challenging these results.

Unexpected Answers from Partisans

Another complication that arose from this study was the occurrence of unexpected answers to short answer questions. Only two Republicans out of eleven in the treatment condition expressed opinions stereotypically linked with the Republican Party and conservatives, such as that climate change is not real, that it is not a problem, or that humans are not causing it. The other nine (including one Republican-leaning Independent) expressed concern about the impact that climate change is having right now or will have in the future. For example, here are two responses from participants who self-identified as weak Republicans:

> "I believe that humans are largely responsible for climate change. The more we have carbon emissions and deforestation, the more the climate changes take place. We are seeing the results of climate change all over the globe."

> "[I]t scares me when [I] think about the possibilities of what could happen to our environment and health in the next few decades. [I] think humans are making the world worse everyday [sic], and taking more land from the animals and causing more and more to become extinct."

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This was not unique to weak Republicans. Here are two similar responses from participants who

identified as strong Republicans:

> "It is increasingly clear that global warming is a real danger for future generations, as we see
> its effects on the world daily. I have been increasingly aware of using things that do not harm
> the environment to try to mitigate the degradation of the environment."

> "I think climate change is such a big deal especially nowadays, there are corporations that
> use so much energy and can be inefficient which makes the planet hurt even more. In my
> opinion, the next biggest Refugee [sic] crisis without a doubt we'll [sic] be because of an
> environmental disaster. This makes me really curious about what we can do to help the
> planet. This is only the planet that we can have, ever will, or dream about while I were [sic].
> Elites are single-handedly destroying it for oil. If we act now we can help our planet survive
> instead of making me always frustrated about how we can make sure the people are there."

It is difficult to draw conclusions about this based on such a small sample size. However, this

qualitative responses from self-identified Republicans may indicate that the issue of climate

change is not as polarizing of an issue as we believe it is (or perhaps as it once was).

These responses raise a few questions about the efficacy of this study. First of all, this

may mean that discussing the issue of climate change as opposed to a different polarizing issue

(e.g., abortion, transgender rights, immigration) did not have the intended effect. If partisans

have the same view as the opposing partisan with whom they are speaking (in this case, Sam),

the purpose of fostering a dialogic-type situation about that topic is defeated. This could help to

explain why Republicans' feelings towards Democratic Sam were nearly identical in the control

and treatment conditions; what Sam had to say about climate change in the treatment condition

was likely just as uncontroversial to participants as what he had to say about movies in the

control condition. This is further supported by the fact that the two treatment condition

Republicans that expressed stereotypical opinions about climate change are the two outliers that

rated their feelings towards Sam much lower than the other nine treatment condition Republicans

(this can be seen in Figure 4, with feelings thermometer assessments of 0 and 31).

This same pattern does not hold true for Democrats' feelings towards Republican Sam. Democrats in the treatment condition expressed opinions about climate change stereotypically associated with the Democratic Party and liberals—about the role that humans play in its occurrence, the need to work to curb it now, and the effects that it is having in the present and will continue to have in the future. Sam expressed opinions that, while they may not run directly counter to opinions expressed by Democrats, showed a different thought process and a different order of priorities. Therefore, it follows that Democrats in the treatment would evaluate Sam less positively than Democrats in the control (figure 4).

Although this may appear to be an issue that applies much more to Republicans than Democrats, these assumptions could also encourage stereotypes about Republicans held by Democrats that are not accurate. Republican Sam's opinions were written in such a way to reflect a "typical" Republican response, that, following analysis of these results, may not actually be "typical" at all. As mentioned before, affective polarization thrives on stereotypes about opposing partisans (Ahler, 2014; Ahler & Sood, 2018; Chambers et al., 2006; Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016; Rothschild et al., 2019); therefore, having Democrats read and respond to an opinion that does not represent the typical Republican may inadvertently encourage further affective polarization.

Again, all the issues discussed in this section are built upon a study with an extremely small sample size, meaning that no conclusions should be drawn. These results merely suggest that a larger sample size with a different topic of discussion for the treatment condition could be both more effective and could lead to stronger conclusions.

Reliability of Data and Issues with Sample Size: Amazon Mechanical Turk

Also presenting limitations to this study (while at the same time including some positives) was the use of Amazon Mechanical Turk as the platform on which to conduct the survey. From the time of the founding of Amazon's Mechanical Turk (also known as MTurk), the crowd-sourcing platform's efficacy in providing accurate and reliable results in academic studies has been called into question by academics across many fields. There are several issues that are raised when discussing the usefulness of MTurk: how representative MTurk workers are of the general U.S. population (Buhrmester et al., 2011; Paolacci et al., 2010); if results are reliable when conducted in an unsupervised environment such as this (Thomas & Clifford, 2017); and whether or not workers buy into the interactive experiments conducted on the platform (Thomas & Clifford, 2017), to name a few.

Many researchers have sought to explore these potential issues by conducting experiments to test the efficacy of the platform in producing high-quality results akin to in-person survey methods (such as university survey pools or other forms of in-person surveys) and other forms of online survey recruitment (such as internet discussion boards). Paolacci et al. (2010) found that when conducting the same survey using participants recruited from MTurk, a college survey pool, and an internet discussion board, MTurk participants' results were comparable to the other two methods, and surveys taken by MTurk workers had a lower response error and lower attrition than the surveys of respondents that came from the internet discussion board (these issues rarely apply to in-person studies). MTurk participants also scored the highest on attention check questions (ACQs) among all three methods analyzed, further solidifying the quality of the data.

The reliability question also comes into play regarding the unsupervised nature of the MTurk platform. One of the biggest concerns is that participant will rush through the survey to get max payout in the shortest amount of time. However, Buhrmester et al., (2011) and Paolacci et al., (2010) both found that compensation rates had very little effect on the reliability of results[18]—this could be because most MTurk workers do not rely on money made from surveys for their livelihood. The vast majority of MTurk workers have stated that they participate in surveys on the platform as a form of entertainment, and only 13.8% use work on the platform as their primary source of income (Paolacci et al., 2010).

When all of these issues are taken into consideration, studies conducted on MTurk are arguably more diverse and/or representative than studies conducted in person or on other platforms (Buhrmester et al., 2011; Paolacci et al., 2010), and are at least as reliable as ones conducted in person or on other platforms (Johnson & Ryan, 2020; Paolacci et al., 2010; Thomas & Clifford, 2017).

Going forward, there a few ways that scholars have proposed for designing more effective surveys on the platform that reduce the risk of low-quality responses. A commonly used method for filtering out poor responses is the use of attention check questions (ACQs), or survey questions that seek to determine if participants are paying full attention to the task at hand. Some researchers may choose to integrate ACQs in the form of a question that buries instructions for how to answer it in a lengthy explanation; others may ask the same question of participants at two different points during the survey to see if the respondents' answers match; and some may choose to ask a question with an obvious answer, or only one correct or possible

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[18] The only effect that payment amount seemed to have on these studies was that lower-paying (two cent) tasks took longer to recruit participants for than higher-paying (50 cent) tasks. Even lower-paying tasks, however, were able to recruit all the participants needed within the specified time span of two weeks (Buhrmester et al., 2011).

answer[19] (Peer et al., 2014). However, Peer et al. (2014) found strong evidence that a far more

effective strategy is instead to restrict the task so that only MTurk workers with "high"

reputations (that is, an approval rate from past requesters of 95% or above) can participate. They

found that high reputation workers consistently passed ACQs, whereas workers with lower

reputations were less likely to pass them. They also pointed out that many workers have learned

to spot ACQs in surveys and can better answer them without necessarily giving full attention to

the survey, therefore potentially defeating the purpose of including ACQs in a survey. ACQs can

also flow off the flow of a survey, and they may even offend workers if they believe that the

requesters have little faith in their commitment to the survey. Restricting surveys to high

reputation workers therefore cuts out these issues with ACQs, while simultaneously minimizing

the number of survey results that will have to be removed at the end of the process because of

low quality work. The authors found that although restricting a task so that only high reputation

workers can complete it meant that it took longer for the requested number of responses to

accumulate, this time difference was negligible: usually just a few hours to a few days (Peer et

al., 2014).

The biggest issue that I ran into using MTurk as a requester was what appeared to be

many workers rushing through the task, much like the issue discussed above of workers rushing

through to get the maximum payment in the least amount of time. I had anticipated that this was

something that could potentially be a problem, and therefore built requirements into my survey

that participants must answer the question(s) at hand before moving on. For multiple choice, this

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[19] A great example of this would be the ACQ that Peer et al. (2014) used in their study that partially sought to test the effectiveness of ACQs in obtaining higher quality data: "While watching TV, have you ever had a fatal heart attack?" Given that someone cannot, by definition, survive a fatal heart attack, a positive response to this question would indicate that the worker is not paying sufficient attention to the survey, and therefore is likely contributing low-quality data.

meant requiring that the participant choose at least one provided answer, and for written responses it meant that participants were required to type a certain number of characters before they could move on. There is only so much, however, that requiring an answer can do to ensure that participants slow down to give quality answers. There is technically little that can stop participants from selecting any choice available in multiple choice questions, or merely keyboarding smashing to get up the character count requirement in written responses. Some participants did take this route—along with keyboard smashing to meet the character requirement, other participants copied and pasted the instructions for the task into the response field; some copied and pasted what they found on the internet after a quick search using key terms such as "climate change" (for the treatment condition) or "best movie" (for the control); and others just typed random words. Because of responses like this, and other indications that participants were moving through the survey as quickly as possible, roughly half of the fully completed surveys were eliminated from the final data set, taking the total number of surveys down from 121 to 60. [20]

There are a couple of reasons why I chose to conduct this study asynchronously via MTurk rather than in an in-person setting that might have been more effective for the practice of dialogue. The main reason for this is because the research, planning, and administration of the study itself took place during peak periods of the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2021-March 2022). Planning for in-person events during this time was a difficult process that was subject to

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[20] The data set started out with 157 responses: 26 were eliminated because they were incomplete, six were eliminated because the participants chose to withdraw from the study without penalty after reading the updated purpose at the end of the study, and four were eliminated because they were true independents (i.e. identified as independents without leaning towards one party or another in ideology). The rest that were taken out (61) were eliminated because they either moved too quickly or too slowly to be fully engaged in the task (20) or provided low-quality responses indicating that they did not pay full attention to the questions at hand (41).

constantly changing regulations and public health suggestions. Additionally, as a master's student with limited financial resources for a project such as this, I wanted to make sure that I used the resources that I had at my disposal in a pragmatic way that was more likely to guarantee success (success meaning the ability to fully carry out a study with limited interruptions or interference). These two main obstacles led me to choose the route that was all but guaranteed to yield results regardless of changing COVID-19 regulations: MTurk.

Next Steps and Future Avenues for Research

Keeping the limitations of this study above in mind, there are a few future avenues for research: for one, a future study that better accounts for the limitations and challenges of using a platform such as MTurk (limiting the survey to high-reputation workers, including ACQs, etc.) could ensure that the results are higher-quality, in turn limiting the number of responses that need to be cleaned from the ultimate sample (and hopefully avoiding the need to eliminate more than half of the responses, such as with this study). This would then also help with issues related to sample size.

Another option would be to take the study out of cyberspace and into a real-world setting. Dialogue, the method of conflict resolution of which this study seeks to use elements, is best conducted in an in-person setting where participants can interact in real-time with one another. Choosing to use methods of dialogue in an asynchronous setting such as this diminishes the usefulness of the practice while also causing it to drift further away from the pure form of the method. Therefore, conducting a similar form of this study in-person would better mimic the process of dialogue, and, in turn, boost the effects it has on partisans' evaluation of one another.

Besides these process-related changes, one content-related change that could be useful would be to change the topic discussed in these dialogic-type conversations. As seen from these

results, the topic of discussion chosen for this study, climate change, did not appear to be as polarizing of an issue as it may have seemed before entering into this process. This is not to say, however, that the issue discussed must be one that is seen in black and white terms with completely opposite positions from each party. On the contrary, as we have seen, misperceptions about the supposed ideological chasm between the parties only further fuels affective polarization (Ahler & Sood, 2018; Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016) However, the results of this study seem to at least partially indicate that Republicans did not necessarily receive the intended effect of the treatment, as indicated by the lack of differing evaluations of Sam in the treatment versus the control. This is contrasted with the very different evaluations of Sam made by Democrats in the control versus the treatment. Similar studies conducted using a wide variety of political issues could be helpful to further gauge the efficacy of the treatment.

No matter the details of the next steps taken in this line of research, the research must continue. Affective polarization is a growing issue both in the United States and worldwide. Its effects can range from such small incidents like arguments on Facebook to more detrimental effects like gridlock. The political populace may even make more dangerous forays into democratic decline or collapse. This is not political rhetoric; the Authoritarian Warning Survey tracks threats to democracy in the U.S. and other countries at risk of democratic backsliding, and predicts that there is a 21.9% of democratic breakdown in the U.S. in the next four years. This is based on evaluations of six different categories of democratic threats: treatment of media, executive constraints, elections and treatment of opposition, civil liberties, civil violence, and rhetoric. The two categories that relate most directly to the effects of negative affective polarization, elections and treatment of opposition and rhetoric, are the two categories that are posing the highest threats to American democracy (Authoritarian Warning Survey, 2020).

Projects such as this one, and future ones like it, are imperative to ensuring that American democracy (and democracies around the world) are able to function without threat from non-democratic influences.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Consent for Research Participation

Title: Priming individual identities through dialogue-based processes and the subsequent effects on levels of affective polarization among American partisans

Researcher(s): Tiffany Couch, University of Oregon

Researcher Contact Info: tcouch@uoregon.edu

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The box below highlights key information about this research for you to consider when making a decision whether or not to participate. Carefully consider this information and the more detailed information provided below the box. Please ask questions about any of the information you do not understand before you decide whether to participate.

Key Information for You to Consider
• **Voluntary Consent**. You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.
• **Purpose**. The purpose of this research is to test the effectiveness of dialogue-like methods on attitudes towards certain individuals/social groups.
• **Duration.** It is expected that your participation will last 20-25 minutes.
• **Procedures and Activities.** You will be asked to answer demographic questions, spend a short period of time writing and reading about a specific topic, and answer how you feel about certain individuals and social groups. After the study, you will receive more information and have the option to withdraw from the study if you so choose, without penalty or loss of compensation.
• **Risks.** No risk is anticipated beyond what you may experience day-to-day on social media or reading the news.
• **Benefits**. Researchers hope to learn about effectiveness of methods of conflict resolution on individual and group behavior.
• **Alternatives.** Participation is voluntary and the only alternative is to not participate.

Why is this research being done?
The purpose of this research is to test the effective of dialogue-type methods in certain scenarios about some individuals/social groups. Because of the nature of this research, you will not be informed of the full purpose of the study until its completion. After the study, you will receive a more detailed description of the study and its aims. You will have the option to withdraw from the study if you so choose, without the risk of penalty or loss of compensation.
About 120 people will take part in this research.

Who is conducting this research?
The researcher, Tiffany Couch, from the University of Oregon, is asking for your consent to this research. She has no financial interests or conflict of interests related to this study.

What happens to the information collected for this research?
Information collected for this research will be used in a master's thesis project for the completion of the researcher's Master of Science degree and may be published. Your name will not be collected and therefore not included in any published materials about this study.

How will my privacy and data confidentiality be protected?
We will take measures to protect your privacy including not gathering identifying information (specifically, name) and storing all information on a password-protected computer that only the researcher has access to. Despite taking steps to protect your privacy, we can never fully guarantee your privacy will be protected.
We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information. Despite these precautions to protect the confidentiality of your information, we can never fully guarantee confidentiality of all study information.
Individuals and organization that conduct or monitor this research may be permitted access to and inspect the research records. This may include access to your private information. These individuals and organizations include: The Institutional Review Board that reviewed this research.

What if I want to stop participating in this research?
Taking part in this research study is your decision. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study, but if you do, you can stop at any time. You have the right to choose not to participate in any study activity or completely withdraw from continued participation at any point in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Oregon.

Will I be paid for participating in this research?
For taking part in this research, you will be paid $2 at the conclusion of the survey. Please be aware, compensation for participation in research studies may be considered taxable income.

Who can answer my questions about this research?
If you have questions or concerns, contact the research team at:
 Tiffany Couch
 tcouch@uoregon.edu
An Institutional Review Board ("IRB") is overseeing this research. An IRB is a group of people who perform independent review of research studies to ensure the rights and welfare of participants are protected. UO Research Compliance Services is the office that supports the IRB. If you have questions about your rights or wish to speak with someone other than the research team, you may contact:

 Research Compliance Services
 5237 University of Oregon
 Eugene, OR 97403-5237
 (541) 346-2510
 ResearchCompliance@uoregon.edu

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have had the opportunity to read and consider the information in this form. I have asked any questions necessary to make a decision about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions throughout my participation.

I understand that by signing below, I volunteer to participate in this research. I certify that I am aged 18 or older. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been provided with a copy of this consent form. I understand that if my ability to consent or assent for myself changes, either I or my legal representative may be asked to re-consent prior to my continued participation in this study.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY

PART I—General Demographic Information

1. What year were you born?
[year dropdown]

2. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Other

3. Which of the following best describes your racial identity (choose up to 2)?
   a. Caucasian/White
   b. African-American/Black
   c. Native American/American Indian
   d. Asian/Pacific Islander
   e. Other

4a. I think of myself as a:
   a. Democrat
   b. Republican
   c. Independent

4b. (based on response to question 4a)
→If answered a. Democrat: In terms of my affiliation with the party, I consider myself a…
   a. Strong Democrat
   b. Weak Democrat
→If answered b. Republican: In terms of my affiliation with the party, I consider myself a…
   a. Strong Republican
   b. Weak Republican
→If answered c. Independent: As an Independent, I consider myself…
   a. Closer to Republican
   b. Closer to Democrat
   c. Neither

5. What region of the U.S. do you live in?
   a. New England
   b. Mid-Atlantic
   c. South
   d. South West
   e. Midwest
   f. West
   g. Northwest

6. What is your highest level of education attained?
   a. Some high school, no degree
   b. High school diploma or GED
   c. Some college, no degree
   d. Professional/vocational training
   e. Two-year college diploma
   f. Four-year college diploma
   g. Master's or professional degree (MA, MS, MSW, MBA, etc.)
   h. Doctorate degree (Phd, MD, DPhil, JD, etc.)

PART IIa—Treatment Group

1. In the box below, please write about your own personal feelings and experiences in relation to the topic of climate change without trying to persuade. Pretend that you are explaining your feelings on this topic to a trusted friend or family member who is genuinely interested in what you think.

2. On the next page, you will read about how Sam feels about this topic. Pretend Sam is a good friend or family member who wants to share his own feelings with this same topic. Sam gave you his full attention and really wanted to understand your point of view, so you want to give him the same attention and understanding.

Democrat Sam response, climate change (shown if participant identifies as a strong Republican, weak Republican, or Independent who leans Republican):

I feel like climate change is a bigger issue that ever, and one of the biggest threats to a prosperous future for all of us. Sure, the scientific predictions are scary, but I've already seen some of the effects of the changing climate around me. I live in an area that is supposed to be a temperate forest with lots of rain, but last summer there were raging wildfires caused by unusually high temperatures and months without rain. The smoke was so bad that the sky was a hazy orange for two weeks straight and the air quality was so bad that there wasn't even a proper measurement for it the air quality scale. Breathing in the air was so dangerous that I, along with most other people in the area, were stuck inside for two weeks. My car was covered in ash every time I had to make a trip out. This summer, it has been unbelievably hot. There was a streak of three days where my city broke records for highest temperatures in recorded history: first 108, then 112, then 116. I saw pictures and videos that people took that showed siding melting off of apartment buildings and plastic blinds in windows melting from the heat. There were over 100 heat-related deaths in my state during those days. Less than half of people in my city have air conditioning, including me. Our homes and infrastructure are not built to cope with high temperatures. This is because up until recently, our summers rarely reached the 90s, let alone the 100s. I grew up in this same area, and I remember from my childhood only one day that reached 100 degrees. I remember it because it was so hot that my mom closed up all the blinds and curtains in the house, and then her, my sister and I watched movies all day because it was too hot to move. Now, those days are coming several times a summer. Climate change isn't just real—it's already affecting my life in ways that terrify me.

Republican Sam response, climate change (shown if participant identifies as a strong Democrat, weak Democrat, or Independent who leans Democrat):

Global warming, or climate change, or whatever we're calling it now…I just don't know if I believe in it. Or if humans are causing it. But either way, I don't think it should necessarily be a top priority for us to deal with. People talk about how disastrous it is that the world is heating up a few degrees over several decades, when I have much bigger things that are affecting me and my life right now. I'm also worried about what the job market would look like if we move entirely away from traditional power sources like coal and gasoline. America was built on coal and gasoline! They're at the heart of the American economy, and if we remove them too quickly from use, I don't think anyone really knows what kind of impact that would have. Hundreds of thousands of honest, blue-collar Americans make a great living working in these industries, and in a time where well-paying working-class jobs are difficult to come by, these jobs are as good as gold. All of the "green" forms of energy seem so high-tech, and I just don't trust that those industries would be hiring those who lost their jobs in coal and oil. We've seen two economic crises in the past fifteen years that have cost many hard-working Americans their jobs, and I just don't know if we'd fully recover from a third crisis in as much time. To me, the economic risks that we would take moving to renewable energy just don't seem worth it for "crisis" that we don't really know if it's real or how it would even pan out.

PART IIb—Control Group

1. In the box below, please write you own personal feelings about your favorite movie.
2. On the next page, you will read about your friend, Sam, feels about this topic. Sam gave you his full attention and really wanted to understand your point of view, so you want to give him the same attention and understanding.

Sam's response to movies:

I don't know if I can really pick just one favorite movie…but I guess one of my favorites is Good Will Hunting. Robin Williams was one of my favorite comedians, but he did some great work in serious roles too, like in this movie and Dead Poets Society. It's also so cool to see Matt Damon at the very beginning of his career, right when he was starting to take off! I think that this was the first movie that him and Ben Affleck did together. Did you know that Mindy Kaling, the actress who played Kelly on the Office, was discovered because she and a friend did a two woman show that Mindy wrote about Matt Damon and Ben Affleck's friendship? So funny! But anyway, back to Good Will Hunting. It's such a heartwarming story to see a man plucked from a low-wage janitorial job because he understood the complex workings of high-level mathematics that took highly-trained mathematicians years of training and thinking to solve. I feel like it shows that with enough talent and focus, we can all achieve our dreams regardless of where we come from.

PART III—Partisan Attitude Thermometers

The following question will ask you to rate how you feel towards certain people and groups on a scale of 0 to 100. A score of 0 indicates less favorable or cold feelings towards the person or group; a score of 100 indicates more favorable or warm feelings towards the person or group; and a score of 50 indicates neither cold nor warm feelings towards the person or group.

PAGE 1

SAM

[sliding scale ranging from 0 to 100]

PAGE 2 (skip for control condition)

Here is how Sam answered the first set of questions from section one:

DEMOCRAT SAM (shown if participant identifies as a strong Republican, weak Republican, or Independent who leans Republican):
1. Year born: 1979
2. Gender: Male
3. Racial identity: Caucasian/White
4. Party ID: Weak Democrat
5. Region: Mid-West
6. Education: Some college, no degree

REPUBLICAN SAM (shown if participant identifies as a strong Democrat, weak Democrat, or Independent who leans Democrat):
1. Year born: 1979
2. Gender: Male
3. Racial Identity: Caucasian/White
4. Party ID: Weak Republican
5. Region: Mid-West
6. Education: Some college, no degree

PAGE 3

REPUBLICANS

[sliding scale ranging from 0 to 100]

DEMOCRATS

[sliding scale ranging from 0 to 100]

INDEPENDENTS

[sliding scale ranging from 0 to 100]

PART IV—Updated Purpose of the Study

Study Title: Priming individual identities through dialogue-based processes and the subsequent effects on levels of affective polarization among American partisans

The purpose of the study that you have participated in is to use methods of conflict resolution to reduce affective polarization. Affective polarization is the dislike between a person or people of one political party and the people of the other political party (e.g., Republicans' dislike of Democrats, and Democrats' dislike of Republicans). This study sought to reduce levels of polarization through priming individual identity, or focusing on peoples' individuality, an important element of the dialogue process.

As stated at the beginning of the study, you can choose to withdraw from this study without penalty now that you have been fully informed of the purpose of the study. Do you wish your results to be submitted as part of the research, or do you wish to withdraw?

[Check boxes with "Submit" and "Withdraw"]

Duration	YearBorn	Gender	Race	PID	IDStrength	Region	Education	Condition	FTSam	FTRep	FTDem	FTImd
216	27	1	1	0	2	6	7	0	80	50	50	70
188	20	0	1	0	0	1	5	1	18	13	87	54
242	33	0	1	0	0	5	6	0	80	70	43	89
348	38	1	1	0	1	5	6	1	62	51	75	63
464	58	1	1	0	0	3	3	1	37	51	92	55
303	11	0	4	0	2	5	5	1	3	5	60	70
314	30	1	1	0	0	3	6	1	77	45	93	34
531	23	1	1	0	1	5	5	0	77	64	67	66
198	3	0	1	0	1	3	2	0	83	6	79	42
399	9	1	1	0	0	7	6	1	50	49	51	55
228	18	0	1	0	0	6	6	1	0	0	76	4
337	17	1	1	0	0	3	6	1	50	30	55	50
733	55	0	1	0	0	3	7	0	50	5	85	35
430	17	1	1	0	2	7	3	0	71	24	39	50
853	48	0	1,3	0	0	7	6	1	68	79	44	60
375	25	0	1	0	0	3	7	0	81	52	95	27
278	34	0	1	0	0	6	6	1	26	0	55	53
274	23	0	1	0	1	3	6	1	39	0	32	25
483	20	1	1	0	0	4	3	1	45	48	65	85
926	21	0	4	0	1	6	6	0	78	20	55	91
309	20	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	90	10	70	60
525	12	0	1	0	1	2	6	0	95	65	80	45
864	26	0	1	0	0	6	6	0	93	7	100	49
299	16	0	1	0	2	2	3	1	53	20	40	50
365	17	0	4	0	1	5	7	0	82	30	65	2
204	23	0	1	0	0	6	2	1	20	0	25	15
237	21	1	1	0	1	4	6	0	83	14	74	86
857	43	1	1	0	0	4	6	0	91	83	96	76
294	9	0	1,2	0	0	6	2	0	92	6	90	42
340	17	1	1	0	0	4	7	1	83	34	96	20
207	19	1	1	0	2	1	6	0	100	11	100	15
319	24	1	4	0	1	3	6	0	81	51	51	51
466	25	0	1	0	0	5	7	1	86	53	91	66
367	18	0	1	0	0	5	6	1	100	39	51	51
1115	28	1	1,5	0	0	3	6	1	56	60	60	80
263	20	0	2	0	0	3	3	1	30	0	80	80
314	9	0	1	0	0	5	6	1	52	36	70	43
220	42	1	1	1	0	3	7	1	94	93	16	49
265	14	0	1	1	2	6	5	1	71	50	60	85
359	24	0	1	1	1	6	6	0	72	100	1	41
219	27	1	2	1	1	3	6	0	100	55	52	85
429	27	0	1	1	1	3	6	0	70	79	85	100
485	15	1	1	1	0	3	6	1	31	90	10	45
524	5	0	1	1	1	4	3	1	80	80	25	50
212	23	0	1	1	1	3	6	0	90	92	21	82
349	23	1	1,2	1	0	3	5	1	94	92	61	77
347	14	0	1	1	0	4	7	0	72	83	61	63
556	34	1	3	1	0	6	6	0	80	100	0	5
181	7	0	1	1	0	3	6	1	0	100	0	0
453	31	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	100	87	78	64
186	12	0	1	1	1	1	6	1	69	73	73	71
675	11	0	1	1	1	4	6	1	90	70	40	60
306	16	0	1	1	0	2	6	1	95	80	50	53
935	20	1	1	1	0	4	7	0	82	60	37	59
381	33	1	1	1	0	6	3	0	85	45	2	25
326	21	0	1	1	0	5	7	0	42	56	43	65
728	13	1	4	1	0	3	4	0	77	86	12	89
395	13	0	1	1	0	7	7	1	70	63	7	5
819	14	0	1,2	1	0	4	5	0	99	82	12	48
648	31	0	1	1	0	4	6	0	51	80	8	66

PART I—DEMOGRAPHICS

A—Duration

Duration spent taking survey in seconds. Mean = 424.38 sec.; median = 348.5 sec.

B—Year Born

Year dropdown from 1920-2004. $Y = 2004-n$

C—Gender

    0 = Male (n =36) (60%)
    1 = Female (n =24) (40%)

D—Race

    1= Caucasian/White (n = 47) (78.33%)
    2 = African-American/Black (n = 2) (3.33%)
    3 = Native American/American Indian (n =1) (1.67%)
    4 = Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 5) (8.33%)
    5 = Other (n = 0) (0%)

    Multiracial = 5 (8.33%)

E—Political ID Pt. I

    0 = Democrat (n = 37) (61.67%)
    1 = Republican (n = 23) (38.33%)

F—Political ID Strength

    0 = Strong (n = 37) (61.67%)
    1 = Weak (n = 17) (28.33%)
    2 = Originally identified as an independent (n = 6) (10%)

G—Region

    1 = New England (n = 4) (6.67%)
    2 = Mid-Atlantic (n = 3) (5%)
    3 = South (n = 19) (31.67%)
    4 = Southwest (n = 10) (16.67)

5 = Midwest (n = 9) (15%)
    6 = West (n = 11) (18.33%)
    7 = Northwest (n = 4) (6.67%)

H—Education

    1 = Some high school, no diploma (n = 0) (0%)
    2 = High school diploma or GED (n = 4) (6.67%)
    3 = Some college, no degree (n = 7) (11.67%)
    4 = Professional/vocational training (n = 1) (1.67%)
    5 = Two-year college degree (n = 6) (10%)
    6 = Four-year college degree (n = 31) (51.67%)
    7 = Master's or professional degree (n = 11) (18.33%)
    8 = Doctorate degree (n = 0) (0%)

PART II: TREATMENT/CONTROL

I—Condition

    0 = Control (n =29) (48.33%)
    1 = Treatment (n = 31) (51.67%)

PART III: FEELINGS THERMOMETERS

J—Feelings Thermometer, Sam

Sliding scale of 0-100 regarding feelings toward Sam.
        Average =67.93

K—Feelings Thermometer, Republicans

Sliding scale of 0-100 regarding feelings toward Republicans.
        Average = 49.62

L—Feelings Thermometer, Democrats

Sliding scale of 0-100 regarding feelings towards Democrats.
        Average = 54.85

M—Feelings Thermometer, Independents

Sliding scale of 0-100 regarding feelings towards Independents.
        Average = 53.27

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