

# Supplementary Information: Electoral Threat and the Impact of Interparty Contact on Affective Polarization

Erin Rossiter<sup>1</sup> & Taylor Carlson<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, University of Notre Dame, [erinrossite@nd.edu](mailto:erinrossite@nd.edu), [erossiter.com](http://erossiter.com)

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Washington University in St. Louis, [tncarlson@wustl.edu](mailto:tncarlson@wustl.edu), [sites.wustl.edu/tncarlson](http://sites.wustl.edu/tncarlson)

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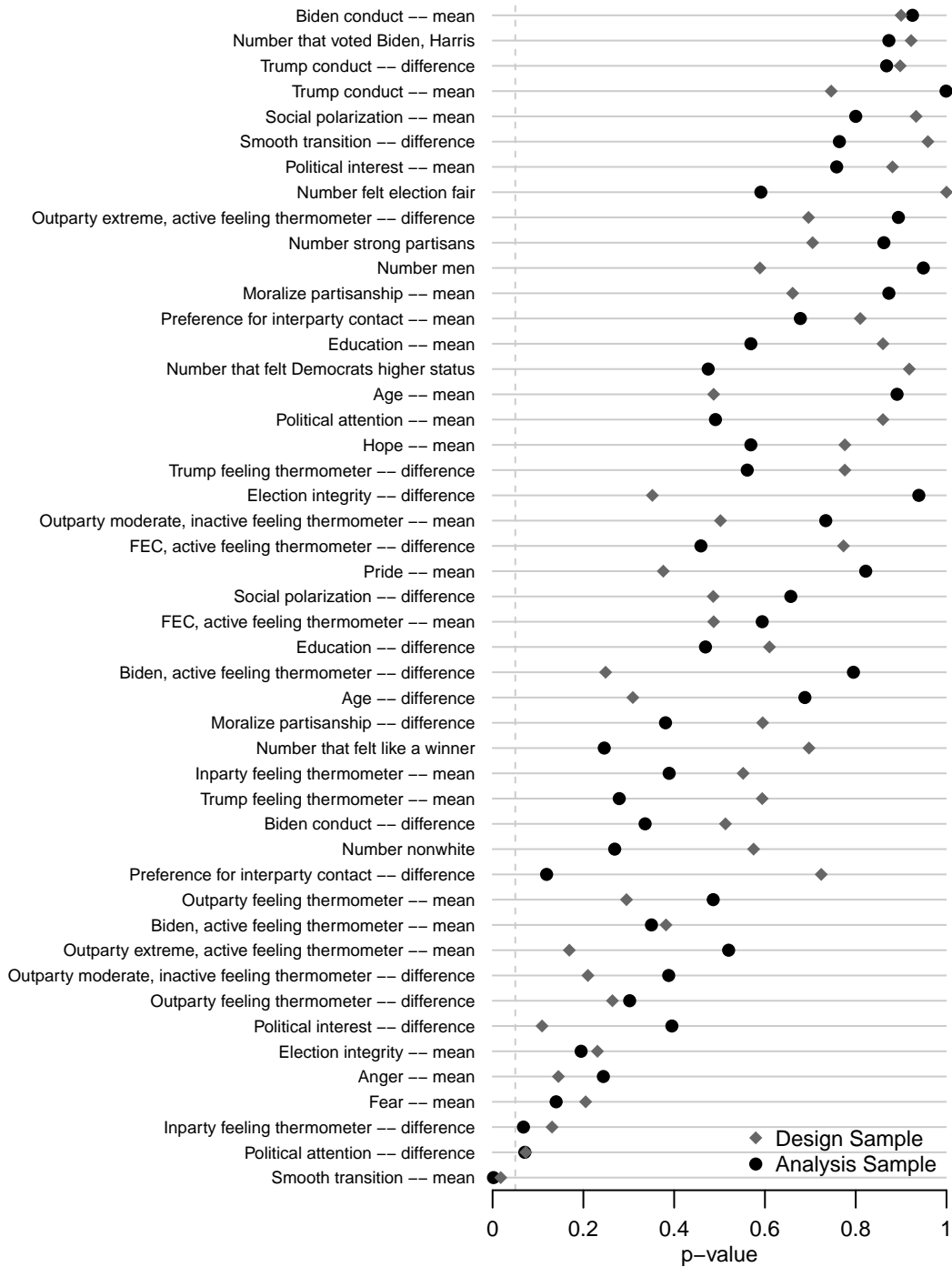
## Appendix A Blocking Strategy

Since treatment is assigned at the partnership level, we sought to maximize partnership-level similarity within each block. For example, if partnership A in a block consisted of a younger Republican and an older Democrat, partnership B ought to have a younger Republican and an older Democrat as well to achieve balance on age at the partnership-level across experimental conditions.

We create blocked partnerships using the following covariates from our pre-treatment survey: age, education, non-white, non-male, partisan identity strength, moralization of partisanship, political interest, vote choice, preference for outparty conversation, feelings about the 2020 election (fear, hope, anger, pride), perceptions of Trump and Biden's conduct since the election, attention paid to the 2020 election, political status of parties, feeling like a "winner" after the election, social polarization, perceptions of election integrity, and feeling thermometers toward Trump, Biden, Republicans, and Democrats.

Figure 1 shows that neither our design or the sample used in analysis after attrition to estimate treatment effects were confounded by these pre-treatment variables. The figure plots  $p$ -values from difference-in-means tests between the treatment and control groups. The only pre-treatment covariate that had a significant difference between treatment and control groups was attitudes toward whether the transition between the Biden and Trump administrations would be smooth.

Figure 1: Balance in Partnership-Level Covariates Across Treatment Conditions



Note: Difference in means p-values assessing balance across treatment conditions for partnership-level pre-treatment covariates. Grey diamonds denote partners included in the design and black squares are partners in the sample in our analyses after attrition.

## Appendix B Attrition

3483 participants completed an initial pre-treatment survey, and of them, 1801 agreeing to return to a follow up task, described as having a conversation with another MTurk Worker or writing a short essay. From those that agreed to return, only 1032 were randomly assigned to treatment and invited back. Because our design required balance on partisanship, but MTurk has more Democrat workers than Republican workers, the number of participants included in the design was smaller than the number that agreed to participate.

Of the 1032 participants included in the design, 698 (67%) completed the conversation or short essay and the post-treatment survey. However, because treatment is assigned at the *partnership* level, we pre-registered dropping all cases where the full partnership does not completed the task, resulting in our main analyses having a sample size of 578 participants.

410 of the 578 participants included in the main analyses returned three days later to complete the follow-up to assess durability of treatment effects. We preregistered analyzing all participants that complete this survey item, regardless of whether their full partnership also completes the item.

We next assess whether rates of attrition differ across treatment and control groups. The first model in Table 1 shows that, of all partnerships in the design (N=516), a partnership was no more or less likely to complete the task depending on if they were assigned to treatment or control. This means we didn't have differential attrition for those assigned to have a conversation, a task requiring more coordination than a short essay.

Furthermore, the second model in Table 1 shows that an individual is just as likely to return to take the follow-up survey whether they were a part of a partnership that was assigned to write short essays or have a conversation. Of the 578 individuals invited back to complete the follow up, 410 did, and it was no more or less likely for an individual to complete this task if they completed a conversation, for example.

Finally, the third model in Table 1 shows that change in outparty animosity, our main outcome of interest, does not explain who returns to take the follow-up survey. Therefore, it is unlikely that the follow-up survey consists of only respondents who had strong treatment effects.

Table 1: Assessing Differential Rates of Attrition

	Partnership Completed Post-Treatment Survey	Individual Completed Follow-up Survey	
(Intercept)	0.55*** (0.03)	0.71*** (0.03)	0.71*** (0.03)
Contact	0.02 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)
Change in Outparty Animosity			0.00 (0.00)
N	516	578	578

Furthermore, in Appendix A, we show that we have balance on all pre-treatment observables except one in the sample used for analyses after attrition. We fail to find any strong determinants of attrition from these balance tests.

## Appendix C Robustness to Different Operationalization of Electoral Threat

Our results are robust to electoral threat operationalized via participants' self-reported perceptions of which party holds a higher political status. When analyzing only participants that felt Democrats were of a higher status, Table 2 reports that all of our results hold. Contact has a positive effect on outparty affect and social polarization, and we find no evidence of heterogeneous treatment effects of contact stemming from electoral threat and reassurance.

Table 2: Results Robust to Electoral Threat Operationalized via Perceived Status of Political Parties

	Outparty Affect	Social Polarization	Election Integrity
Contact	8.13*** (1.91)	0.11** (0.04)	0.00 (0.05)
Partisanship (Republican)	0.72 (1.47)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.02 (0.05)
Contact x Partisanship (Republican)	-2.40 (2.29)	-0.01 (0.05)	0.03 (0.07)
N	532	532	532
R2	0.48	0.41	0.37

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Robustness check analyzing only participants who felt Democrats were of higher political status at the moment. The model includes blocked fixed effects to reflect the design's randomization of treatment. HC2 robust standard errors are clustered at the partnership level for individuals assigned to the contact condition. Contact is 1 if the participant engaged in conversation with outparty member and 0 if the participant wrote an individual short essay. Partisanship is 1 if Republican and 0 if Democrat.

Likewise, Table 3 reports that our results remain consistent when operationalizing electoral threat via vote choice. We analyze partnerships where the Republican reported voting for Donald Trump and the Democrat reported voting for Joseph Biden. Note that only five partnerships in the sample do not fit this pattern. When operationalizing electoral threat in this way, the treatment effect of contact remains positive for outparty affect and social polarization, and we again find no evidence of heterogeneous treatment effects of contact stemming from electoral threat and reassurance.

Table 3: Results Robust to Electoral Threat Operationalized via Vote Choice

	Outparty Affect	Social Polarization	Election Integrity
Contact	7.67*** (1.90)	0.10* (0.04)	-0.02 (0.05)
Vote Choice (Trump)	0.67 (1.71)	-0.07 (0.04)	0.02 (0.05)
Contact x Vote Choice (Trump)	-3.38 (2.46)	-0.04 (0.06)	0.02 (0.08)
N	523	523	523
R2	0.48	0.38	0.37

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Robustness check analyzing only partnerships where the Democrat voted for Biden and the Republican voted for Trump. The model includes blocked fixed effects to reflect the design’s randomization of treatment. HC2 robust standard errors are clustered at the partnership level for individuals assigned to the contact condition. Contact is 1 if the participant engaged in conversation with outparty member and 0 if the participant wrote an individual short essay. Trump Vote Choices is 1 if the participants self-reported voting for Donald Trump in the 2020 election, and 0 if the participant self-reported voting for Joe Biden.

## Appendix D Robustness to Different Operationalizations of Feeling Thermometers

We also examined the extent to which our results were robust to different operationalizations of outparty affect. Consistent with recent work (Druckman et al. Forthcoming), we find that outparty affect was slightly warmer for ideologically moderate, politically inactive outpartisans, compared to ideologically extreme, politically active outpartisans, at baseline. However, we find that the average treatment effect of contact, relative to no contact, holds across all operationalizations of outparty affect. Table 4 shows that regardless of whether individuals were thinking about an outpartisan across the country, an ideologically extreme, politically active outpartisan, or an ideologically moderate, politically inactive outpartisan, we find that conversations with outpartisans can increase positive feelings toward these distinct types of outpartisans.

Table 4: Treatment Effects are Robust to Different Operationalizations of Outparty Feeling Thermometers

	Outparty affect considering...					
	Outpartisans		Moderate, inactive outpartisans		Extreme, active outpartisans	
Contact	6.22*** (1.41)	7.51*** (1.82)	6.68*** (1.41)	7.04*** (2.05)	4.13** (1.35)	4.46* (1.76)
Partisanship (Rep.)		0.31 (1.35)		1.98 (1.77)		1.42 (1.49)
Contact x Partisanship (Rep.)		-2.58 (2.11)		-0.71 (2.75)		-0.67 (2.35)
N	578	578	578	578	578	578
R2	0.45	0.45	0.40	0.40	0.39	0.39

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . The model includes blocked fixed effects to reflect the design's randomization of treatment. HC2 robust standard errors are clustered at the partnership level for individuals assigned to the contact condition. Contact is 1 if the participant engaged in conversation with outparty member and 0 if the participant wrote an individual short essay. Partisanship is 1 if Republican and 0 if Democrat.



## Appendix E Durability

70.9% of participants returned for our follow-up survey at least three days after the experiment. Table 5 reports the details for our findings that treatment effects for the main outcome of interest—change in outparty animosity—persist for at least three days after treatment. We did not ask about our other two main outcomes of interest (social polarization and perceptions of election integrity).

Table 5: Treatment Effects of Contact Persist for At Least Three Days

	Outparty Affect	
Contact	4.54*	5.31*
	(1.78)	(2.30)
Partisanship (Republican)		2.57
		(1.83)
Contact x Partisanship (Republican)		-1.56
		(2.79)
Num.Obs.	410	410
R2	0.591	0.594

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . Models assess durability of treatment effects for main outparty animosity feeling thermometer outcome. The model includes blocked fixed effects to reflect the design’s randomization of treatment. HC2 robust standard errors are clustered at the partnership level for individuals assigned to the contact condition. Contact is 1 if the participant engaged in conversation with outparty member and 0 if the participant wrote an individual short essay. Partisanship is 1 if Republican and 0 if Democrat.

## Appendix F Attitudes toward Democratic Norms

We also asked a seven question battery from Wolak (2020), assessing support for anti-democratic norms. Outcome is measured on a five point scale, with larger values indicating stronger anti-democratic attitudes.

We find that the conversation treatment decreases anti-democratic attitudes, although not to conventional levels of statistical significance ( $p = .137$ ). Moreover, when assessing heterogeneous treatment effects by partisanship, we find that conversation decreases anti-democratic attitudes *more* among Democrats than Republicans; however, not to conventional levels of statistical significance ( $p = .097$ ).

Table 6: Effects of Interparty Contact on Anti-Democratic Attitudes

	Outparty Affect	
Contact	-0.105 (0.070)	-0.195* (0.092)
Partisanship (Republican)		-0.081 (0.077)
Contact × Partisanship (Republican)		0.180 (0.108)
N.	578	578
R2	0.339	0.344

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . The model includes blocked fixed effects to reflect the design's randomization of treatment. HC2 robust standard errors are clustered at the partnership level for individuals assigned to the contact condition. Contact is 1 if the participant engaged in conversation with outparty member and 0 if the participant wrote an individual short essay. Partisanship is 1 if Republican and 0 if Democrat.

## Appendix G Mechanisms

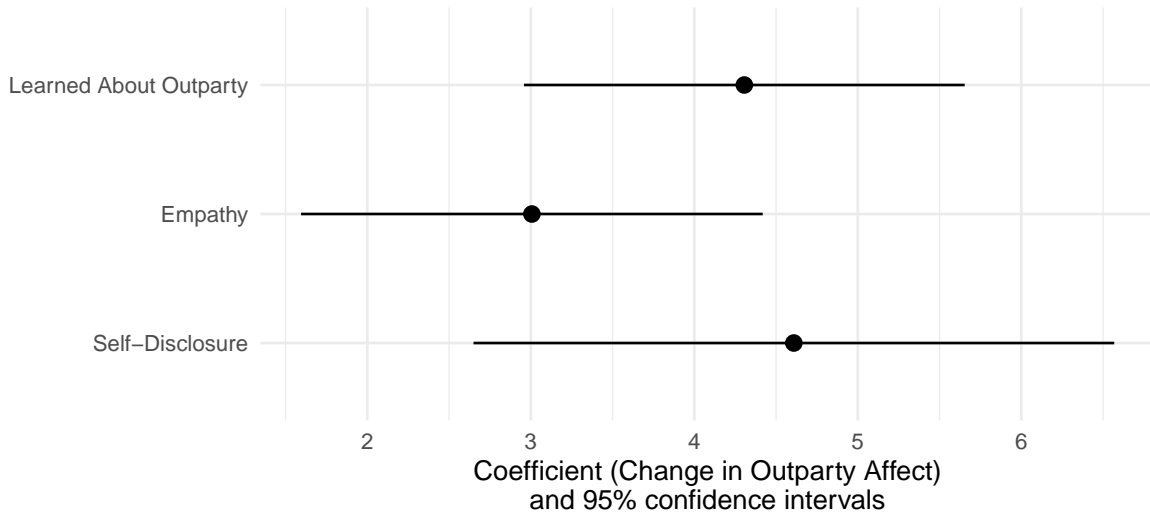
We examine several possible mechanisms, which we pre-registered as exploratory mechanism checks. Our experiment revealed that even in highly competitive contexts, interparty contact can reduce outparty animosity, regardless of partisanship and feelings of electoral threat. There are many possible mechanisms through which intergroup contact can work to reduce outgroup hostility, which we broadly group as the depth and quality of the connection from the contact experience.

### Mechanism Check: Depth of Connection

Previous research on intergroup contact suggests that contact is effective because it allows people to connect with one another despite their differences. The first dimension of connection we consider is the depth of this connection, and one way to consider the depth of connection is how much participants actually engaged in conversation with each other. The more individuals discussed, the more we should expect them to have opportunities to connect and subsequently reduce their animosity toward the outparty. We tested this by analyzing the transcripts of the conversations and short essays. The conversations occurred via an online chat, allowing us to easily measure the number of times each participant "spoke" in the conversation. In the control condition, we broke down the short essays into sentences. We regressed the change in outparty affect on the interaction between treatment assignment and the number of "turns" (sentences for the control group; speaking turns for the conversation group) taken by each participant. We found that in the treatment group, each additional turn taken by a participant was associated with a .46 point increase in outparty affect. But, there was no statistically significant association between the number of sentences written and outparty affect in the control group. Moreover, we did not find that Republicans and Democrats participated at different rates. In all, while both groups varied in how much they engaged with our treatment, it was only in the interactive contact group where more engagement was associated with improved outparty affect.

The second way we consider depth of connection is whether individuals share personal information

Figure 2: Exploratory Mechanisms for Improved Outparty Affect



about themselves (self-disclosure), see things from their partner’s point of view (empathy), and learn something new about the outgroup (learning). We measured each of these variables on a 5-point likert scale.<sup>3</sup> These questions were asked post-treatment and only of participants in the contact group. We are very cautious in interpreting the results from this analysis. We do not intend them to be interpreted causally in any way; but rather, we interpret them as correlations that are suggestive as possible mechanisms future research could explore.

Figure 2 shows the coefficients from simple bivariate linear regressions where the independent variable is the mechanism of interest and the dependent variable is the change in outparty affect. For each mechanism, self-disclosure, empathy, and learning, we observe a positive, statistically significant association with outparty affect. That is, the more someone shared personal information with their partner, felt that they could see things from their partner’s point of view, and learned something about the outparty, the more they also improved their attitudes toward the outparty.

As with our experimental findings, we did not find any evidence to suggest that partisanship conditioned reports of connection and improved outparty attitudes. We interacted each mechanism with partisanship, as we were interested in whether Democrats who reported learning, empathizing, or self-disclosing improved outparty animosity more than Republicans who reported these conversation experiences. We find no evidence that self-reporting these dimensions of connection had differential effects for Democrats and Republicans; however, we again interpret these results as exploratory and warrenting future research.

### Mechanism Check: Quality of Connection

Closely related to the depth of connection between the participants is simply the manner in which they connected—was it a positive or negative experience? Recent evidence suggests that the

<sup>3</sup>We measured self-disclosure using a question adapted from Laurenceau, Barrett, and Pietromonaco (1998): "How personal was the information you disclosed to your partner?" (1=not personal at all; 5=extremely personal). We measured empathy using a question adapted from Davis (1983): "How easy was it for you to see things from the point of view of your conversation partner?" (1=extremely difficult, 5=extremely easy). We measured learning by asking respondents to report how strongly they agreed (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) with the statement "I learned something about [Democrats/Republicans] from the conversation."

anticipated tone of a conversation, as civil or heated, affects individuals' willingness to engage in a political discussion even more than simple disagreement (Connors and Howell N.d.). Moreover, previous research on intergroup contact suggests that its effectiveness is conditioned on whether the experience is civil and positively valenced. To test this, we return to both the self-reported data on the discussion experience and the transcripts.

First, we asked respondents to simply report whether they had a positive or negative experience in the conversation, following a method used by Barlow et al. (2012), and expecting that those with positive contact experiences would have greater improvement in outparty attitudes. Respondents' blunt assessments of whether they had a positive or negative experience was strongly associated with change in outparty affect. The vast majority of respondents reported that they had a positive experience with their partner. Those who reported having a positive experience improved their outparty affect by 10.7 points, compared to those who had a negative experience, who decreased their outparty affect by 2.4 points. The change in affect among those who had a negative experience is not statistically distinguishable from zero. This suggests that negative conversation experiences are not associated with polarized attitudes, while positive experiences are associated with improvements in attitudes. We again caution readers against interpreting these results causally.

When we analyze the free-response descriptions of how participants felt over the course of the conversation, we find - once again - that the positive experiences were associated with more positive outparty affect. We used a sentiment dictionary to estimate the positive and negative sentiment of these descriptions (Young and Soroka 2012). We found that 37% of the descriptions were more positive than negative when describing how they felt at the *start* of the conversation, but when describing how they felt at the *end* of a conversation, 67% of the responses were more positive than negative. Here too, the more positive the change in feelings, the more people improved their outparty affect. These results are correlational, so we encourage future research to experimentally investigate these concepts as potential mechanisms of politically-charged interparty contact.

With a bit more precision, we return to the full transcripts of the conversations and short essays. We estimated the sentiment of the transcripts at the room-level by aggregating the positive sentiment words of the two participants. In contrast to the self-reported experiences, we find no evidence that the positive or negative tone of the conversation or essay was associated with outparty affect. Once the number of turns - which we analyzed as part of the "depth" of connection - was included in the models, the relationship between sentiment and outparty affect disappeared. This suggests that the civility of the language used is perhaps less important than the amount of language used in shaping outparty affect.

## Appendix H Interpreting the Interaction Term

We designed our study to be powered to detect an interaction of size  $|4.00|$  based on results from similar studies. We determined this coefficient size *a priori* through discussion of what would be a substantively interesting difference between partisans based on coefficient sizes from previous studies using feeling thermometer measures. Our discussion of what would be a substantively meaningful difference between partisans also considered that our treatment was particularly intense. We expected partisan competition to be at extremely high levels immediately following Joe Biden taking office and the events of January 2020. Moreover, the topic of conversation was the electoral competition itself (the 2020 election). Despite the intense treatment, our interaction effect was only  $-2.58$ , and we were not powered to detect a coefficient this small. therefore, we encourage future studies to build on this result and consider whether there are conditions that may lead to differential effectiveness of interparty contact.

## Appendix I Validating that Partisans Experienced Electoral Threat and Reassurance

We expect that partisans had unique expressive reactions to the 2020 presidential election outcome. At the core of our inquiry is whether these unique reactions condition the effectiveness of interparty contact. We therefore show evidence to support that the 2020 U.S. presidential election, particularly the official transfer of power on Inauguration Day, sent a message of electoral threat to Republicans and one of electoral reassurance to Democrats, making the timing of our experiment useful for asking two questions—whether interparty contact can be positive during such times and whether there are heterogeneous effects of interparty contact for election "winners" and "losers."

Given that the 2020 election was contested, and as many as 40% of Trump voters still did not believe that he lost the election as of January 2020,<sup>4</sup> we first use our survey data to validate our expectation that Republicans felt threat and were experiencing negative emotions and Democrats felt reassured and were experiencing positive emotions. First, we directly asked respondents if they felt more like a "winner" or more like a "loser" in politics at the time.<sup>5</sup> In our experimental sample, 85% of Republicans reported feeling more like a "loser" and 93% of Democrats reported feeling more like a "winner," providing evidence that the election affected partisans personally as we expected.

Second, we asked participants about their perception of the parties' political status.<sup>6</sup> While we expected Republicans to be reticent to report Democrats to have a higher political status, we find an equal percentage (92%) of Republicans and Democrats felt that Democrats had a higher political status at the time of the survey in the weeks following Joe Biden's inauguration. Across these two analyses, we find the election was interpreted by respondents as we expected.

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<sup>4</sup>PEW Research Center data shows, from a survey fielded January 8-12, 2021, that 40% of Trump voters said he "definitely" won and 36% said he "probably won" the election. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/01/15/voters-reflections-on-the-2020-election/>

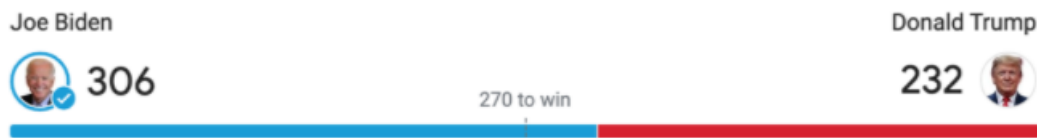
<sup>5</sup>The exact question wording was, "Politics is often compared to sports. After the 2020 presidential election, did you feel more like a "winner" or more like a "loser" in politics?"

<sup>6</sup>The exact question wording was, "Which party do you think has higher political status right now? By higher status, we mean more political power, more political influence, or more of an advantage in politics."

## Appendix J Experimental Conditions

Figure 3: Contact Condition Instructions

After a long, hard-fought campaign, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris defeated Donald Trump and Mike Pence in the November 2020 election for president and vice president of the United States. While some battleground states were closely contested and legal challenges were raised in several states, the Electoral College formally voted on December 14, 2020 and Joe Biden won 306 Electoral College votes, clearing the 270 votes needed to win. After the Electoral College vote, top Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell [congratulated Biden on his victory](#). [Former Vice President Mike Pence declared Joe Biden the winner](#) after Congress formally verified the Electoral College votes on January 6, 2021, despite [challenges raised by some Republican legislators](#) and a disruption in the process when [rioters breached the Capitol building](#). Biden and Harris formally took office upon their inauguration on January 20, 2021.



We've randomly assigned you to have a conversation with someone that belongs to or leans toward the **Republican** party. Please have a conversation about the result of the 2020 United States presidential election between Donald Trump and Joe Biden.

For example, you might talk about some of the following topics.

- How do you feel about the candidates' actions since the election?
- How do you feel about the state of the country these days—fearful, angry, hopeful, proud, or something else?
- Do you think the transition from the Trump Administration to the Biden Administration will go smoothly?
- Do you think that the election in November was administered fairly?

Please have your conversation by sending messages in the chat box below.

With bonus, this HIT is paying above minimum wage. We expect you to provide several comments and to utilize the full 8 minutes without large gaps of time. Participants who do so will receive a \$1.00 bonus.

► Additional instructions about the chat app:

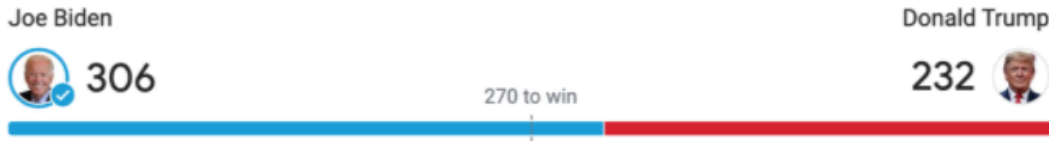
Write your reply...

Send

Done

Figure 4: Control Condition Instructions

After a long, hard-fought campaign, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris defeated Donald Trump and Mike Pence in the November 2020 election for president and vice president of the United States. While some battleground states were closely contested and legal challenges were raised in several states, the Electoral College formally voted on December 14, 2020 and Joe Biden won 306 Electoral College votes, clearing the 270 votes needed to win. After the Electoral College vote, top Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell [congratulated Biden on his victory](#). [Former Vice President Mike Pence declared Joe Biden the winner](#) after Congress formally verified the Electoral College votes on January 6, 2021, despite [challenges raised by some Republican legislators](#) and a disruption in the process when [rioters breached the Capitol building](#). Biden and Harris formally took office upon their inauguration on January 20, 2021.



We'd like you to share your thoughts on the 2020 United States presidential election between Donald Trump and Joe Biden in an individual short essay.

For example, we'd like you to write about some of the following topics.

- How do you feel about the candidates' actions since the election?
- How do you feel about the state of the country these days—fearful, angry, hopeful, proud, or something else?
- Do you think the transition from the Trump Administration to the Biden Administration will go smoothly?
- Do you think that the election in November was administered fairly?

Please answer these questions by sending messages in the chat box below.

With bonus, this HIT is paying above minimum wage. We expect you to provide several comments and to utilize the full 8 minutes without large gaps of time. Participants who do so will receive a \$1.00 bonus.

► Additional instructions about the chat app:

Write your reply...

Send

Done

## Appendix K Willingness to Engage in Interparty Conversation as a Moderator

We asked participants in the pre-treatment survey: “If you were talking with a typical member of the [Democratic/Republican] party, would you be willing to have a conversation with them about the 2020 presidential election?” The response options were definitely yes, probably yes, probably not, and definitely not. We binarized this variable into a yes or no response. In our sample, 241 (41%) said they would *not* be willing to have this kind of conversation, while 337 (59%) said they would. This is representative of our full recruitment sample where 44% indicated they would not be willing to have an interparty conversation and 56% said they would.

We assessed whether having a preference for or against interparty conversation moderated our treatment effects (a pre-registered analysis) in Table 7. We do not find that having a preference for interparty contact moderates our main treatment effect findings.

Table 7: Lack of a moderating effect of pre-treatment preferences for interparty contact

	Outparty Affect
Contact	6.15** (2.13)
Preference for Contact	0.51 (1.87)
Contact $\times$ Preference for Contact	0.17 (2.59)
Num.Obs.	578
R2	0.449

Note: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . The model includes blocked fixed effects to reflect the design’s randomization of treatment. HC2 robust standard errors are clustered at the partnership level for individuals assigned to the contact condition. Contact is 1 if the participant engaged in conversation with outparty member and 0 if the participant wrote an individual short essay. Preferences for Contact is 1 if the respondent indicated they would be willing to have an interparty conversation about the election and 0 if not.



## Appendix L Example Conversation and Short Essay

Below is an example of a conversation and short essay in response to the prompts shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4. The length of the conversation and engagement between users is representative of the sample of conversations. Moreover, the participants in the sample stay on topic, demonstrated in this example.

### Conversation

user1 Hello  
user2 hello  
user2 I think Trump egging on that the election was stolen was very irresponsible  
user2 because QANON followers really ate that up  
user1 Rather unique election it was.  
user1 Yeah, completely agree on that.  
user1 News nowadays has become a cesspool.  
user2 I dont really think it was stolen even though I am republican  
user1 I believe there was probably fraud (just like in any election ever) but not enough to turn the outcome.  
user2 I think it was done fairly but also from hearing everyone saying there was fraud I cant tell  
user1 Yeah. I believe turnout was a bit higher too though, because of mail-in voting. More people were willing to actually participate because of lockdowns, etc.  
user2 yeah so its kind of hard to tell  
user2 I also think the state of the country right now is pretty bad even with Biden  
user2 it looks pretty bleak  
user1 If it were a Covid-free, usual year, I would say Trump may have likely won a second term.  
user2 I 100 percent agree  
user1 For sure—Biden or not, the country has a ways to go to recover.  
user2 Has the transition been smooth  
user1 I lean democrat, but I'm registered independent.  
user2 hasnt biden overturned a lot of stuff or something  
user1 Yeah, his first week was overturning quite a bit.  
user1 Too much

## Short Essay

I find this topic to be very interesting. Do I think that the transition from the Trump to Biden Administration will go smoothly? No, I do not. I think this is because of the massive difference in changes between Biden and Trump. Some of the things Biden called for right off the bat were rather shocking to some. I think anytime you go from a Republican to Democrat and vs, it is not going to be entirely smooth.

The way I feel about the candidates since the election is actually quite surprising to myself. Yes, I did support and vote Trump, but his reaction to the election results was sickening. I fully think he acted like an immature monster, and not going to Biden's inauguration speaks volumes on his character. I think Biden accepted and began his presidency with grace, and that is something I greatly appreciate.

I am in fear for the state of this country these days, but that has been going on for a year now. I think Covid- 19 has had a detrimental effect for so many people, and my particular state (MI) has suffered. I am hopeful our country will get back to normal, but fearful for some of the things Biden wants done. However, I am not doubting him entirely, I would like to see what happens.

Yes, I think the election in November was mostly administered fairly. My biggest concern is the mail-in voting. It simply makes more sense that voting in person is the safest, most effective way to vote. I do fear with mail in voting that some people voted twice, or a deceased person's information was used. However, given the pandemic, it was necessary to offer especially for our most vulnerable.

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