

Supplementary Appendix  
Changing Attitudes and Provoking Action:  
Perspective-Taking Mobilizes White Americans for  
Prisoner Release

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*Perspectives on Politics*

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## Appendix 1 Survey and Measures

The author contracted Lucid to field the survey experiment to a nationally representative sample of 2,000 respondents (i.e., this was not fielded on the Lucid Theorem platform). However, given that Lucid uses opt-in online panels, we should consider this a diverse national sample rather than nationally representative.

During the review process, the author discovered that an error was made in Qualtrics that deleted incomplete responses. This means that the survey is of complete responses only. Because the questions did not have forced choice, respondents could choose not to answer questions and still be included in the survey. But any break-offs—who would not have been compensated because they did not finish the survey—were deleted. If Lucid respondents were motivated to respond carelessly to minimize time and maximize compensation, they would rush through the survey (Aronow et al. 2020). I find that speeding does not pose a large problem. Using YouGov’s survey length calculation, I estimated the survey should take 9 minutes. The median survey response time was 7.2 minutes and the mean was 10.6 minutes.

Due to the deletion of incompletes, I cannot estimate attrition from the sample, I can only know about non-response among the completes (of which there was very little). The only way to probe whether attrition was even across treatment conditions is through the size of the treatment groups. The randomization in Qualtrics was set to evenly present options, which means an equal number of respondents should have been assigned to each condition. The variation in the treatment group size is then a result of uneven attrition. Table A2 shows that the distribution of respondents across treatments does appear to be random, using a Chi-squared test.

For sample descriptives, please see Table A1 in Appendix 3.

Power calculations indicate that the survey experiment is well-powered to observe statistically significant effects in the policy opinion scale of 1 point on the 0 to 20 scale (estimated mean for no treatment group of 8 with  $sd=5$ ). For the semibehavioral task the experiment is well-powered to observe effects as small as 0.10 (estimated mean for no treatment group of 0,  $sd=0.5$ ).

### **Treatment Conditions**

Respondents were randomly assigned to one of four conditions:

1. No treatment: (respondents received no information prior to the dependent variables)

2. Informational Control:

As COVID-19 infections increase across the United States, some public health officials are particularly concerned about the risk of infection spreading among those incarcerated in prisons and jails. Several states have chosen to release some inmates who are particularly at risk of life-threatening complications from the disease, but jails and prisons remain overcrowded.

How does that make you feel? Write a few sentences.

3. Egocentric perspective-taking:

As COVID-19 infections increase across the United States, some public health officials are particularly concerned about the risk of infection spreading among those incarcerated in prisons and jails. Several

states have chosen to release some inmates who are particularly at risk of life-threatening complications from the disease, but jails and prisons remain overcrowded.

Imagine that you were currently incarcerated. How would that make you feel? Write a few sentences.

#### 4. Surrogate perspective-taking:

As COVID-19 infections increase across the United States, some public health officials are particularly concerned about the risk of infection spreading among those incarcerated in prisons and jails. Several states have chosen to release some inmates who are particularly at risk of life-threatening complications from the disease, but jails and prisons remain overcrowded.

Think of the person that you talk to the most about what's happening in your life. Imagine that person was currently incarcerated. How would that make you feel? Write a few sentences.

### **Dependent Variables**

#### **Prisoner Release Attitudes**

How much do you agree or disagree with the following policies in response to COVID-19?

- Release all offenders from jails and prisons
- Release all elderly offenders from jails and prisons
- Release all immunocompromised offenders from jails and prisons
- Release all nonviolent offenders from jails and prisons
- Release all those who are in jail awaiting trial because they could not pay bail

Responses range from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Items are indexed together to range from 0 to 20. Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.89$ . Cronbach's  $\alpha$  scores are high across each treatment group, ranging from 0.863 to 0.909.

#### **Open-Ended Semibehavioral Mobilization Measure**

Some sheriffs are considering releasing some inmates to reduce the risk of the coronavirus spreading in jails. If you would like to submit a comment to your county sheriff about this potential policy change, we will send it for you.

Respondents' county was collected from geographic information in the survey using the R package **zipcodeR**. Substantive comments were sent to the relevant sheriff's office. Respondents who provided a substantive comment resided in 371 different counties.

### **Independent Variables**

#### **Personal Carceral Contact**

Have you spent any time in prison or jail?

- Yes
- No

#### **Proximal Carceral Contact**

In the past five years or so, has anyone you know spent any time in jail or prison? (Check all that apply)

- Yes, a close friend
- Yes, a family member
- Yes, an acquaintance
- No

**Carceral Contact** is coded 1 if respondent answers YES to personal carceral contact or if they say that a family member or close friend has spent any time in jail or prison in the past 5 years, otherwise it is coded as 0.

### **Partisanship in U.S.**

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or something else?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Something else

[IF REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT] Do you consider yourself to be a strong [Republican/Democrat] or a not very strong [Republican/Democrat]?

- Strong
- Not very strong

[IF INDEPENDENT OR SOMETHING ELSE] If you had to choose, do you consider yourself closer to the Republican party or the Democratic party?

- Closer to Republican
- Closer to Democratic
- Don't know

**Democrats** are those who respond that they are Strong Democrats, Not very strong Democrats, or Closer to the Democratic Party. **Republicans** are those who respond that they are Strong Republicans, Not very strong Republicans, or Closer to the Republican Party.

### **Poor Deserve More**

For each of the following groups, please say whether most people in the group have more money than they deserve, less money than they deserve, or about the right amount of money.

- Poor people

Response options are 0 (More money than they deserve), 1 (About the right amount of money), and 2 (Less money than they deserve).

### **Racial Resentment**

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve.

- Irish, Italians, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.
- It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as Whites.
- Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class.

Responses range from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The first and fourth items are reverse coded and the four items are indexed together to create a scale from 0 to 16.

### **Covid Worry**

How worried are you that you or someone close to you will contract COVID-19 and will be unable to recover?

- Not at all worried (0)
- A little worried (1)
- Pretty worried (2)
- Very worried (3)

### **White Linked Fate**

Do you think that what happens generally to members of your racial and ethnic group in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?

- Yes, a lot (3)
- Yes, some (2)
- Yes, but not very much (1)
- No (0)

### **Woman**

What is your gender?

- Man (0)
- Woman (1)

### **Education**

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Grades 1-8 (0)
- Some high school (0)
- High school graduate or GED (1)
- Some college, or 2-year degree (2)
- 4-year college graduate (3)
- Post-graduate education (4)

### **Age**

What year were you born?

Respondents coded into age groups: 18–24 (0), 25–34 (1), 35–44 (2), 45–54 (3), 55–64 (4), 65+ (5)

## Appendix 2 Intercoder Reliability

To code the qualitative responses, the author met with the coders to discuss the codebook. Then each coder began with a training round of a subset of approximately 100 responses and then collectively discussed any disagreements in coding to clarify the instructions. Following this meeting, each coder coded the first 200 responses before an additional team meeting to check intercoder reliability. Then, all coders coded a subset of approximately one-third of the responses total before again checking intercoder reliability. The remaining two-thirds of responses were divided between the coders, with one coder (the author) coding the entire set.

At each of these meetings Fleiss Kappas scored well above the threshold for intercoder reliability. Fleiss Kappas were calculated for three different versions of the coded variable: first, a version that matched the codebook exactly with categories for 1) support, 2) oppose, 3) unsure 4) refuse, 5) unclear, and 6) gibberish; second a version that collapsed categories 3–6 into a single code; third a version that dropped categories 3–6 and only examined support or oppose. The reliability scores across each were above 0.70, but were substantially higher for the second two versions, indicating the most difficult responses to parse were those that didn't express a clear position (e.g., is the respondent unsure of their position or is the response unclear).

The overall Kappas for each coding of the statements were:

- 6-category coding Kappa=0.780
- 3-category coding Kappa=0.840
- 2-category coding Kappa=0.936

The Kappas for each different coding on each round were as follows:

- Round 1 (6 coders)
  - 6-category coding Kappa=0.741
  - 3-category coding Kappa=0.818
  - 2-category coding Kappa=0.947
- Round 2 (6 coders)
  - 6-category coding Kappa=0.795
  - 3-category coding Kappa=0.848
  - 2-category coding Kappa=0.933
- Round 3A (4 coders)
  - 6-category coding Kappa=0.709
  - 3-category coding Kappa=0.803
  - 2-category coding Kappa=0.842
- Round 3B (3 coders)
  - 6-category coding Kappa=0.797
  - 3-category coding Kappa=0.862
  - 2-category coding Kappa=0.912

After all the statements were coded, the principal investigator read through each statement where there was any disagreement across the six coders about the correct code. The principal investigator then assigned a reconciled code. This process again was done in a file without information about the treatment group assigned to each respondent.

An alternative specification of the semibehavioral DV used the modal coding assigned by the coders. Compared to the modal variable, the reconciliation process changed the coding of 78 statements, or 5.1 percent of all respondents in total. However, most of these changes involved the categories of “respondent is unsure,” “refuses to respond,” “response is unclear,” and “junk comment” which were all collapsed into 0 for the analysis (i.e. these comments were neither a message of opposition, scored as -1, or support, scored as 1). Only 2.9 percent of the statements were coded as support or opposition in the modal coding and then changed in the reconciled version; and only 1.8 percent of the statements fit into one of the unclear, unsure, or refusal category in the modal coding and were recoded as support or opposition in the reconciled scheme.

## Appendix 3 Tables & Figures

- Table A1 shows descriptives for the survey sample of White respondents. The sample is 51% women, the average age is between 35–44 years old and 45–54 years old, the average educational attainment is between “some college or 2–year degree” and “4-year college graduate,” and the average partisan identity is between independent (doesn’t lean either way) and leans Republican. The sample is well-distributed regionally.
- Table A2 shows that the treatments are balanced across relevant demographic and attitudinal variables. Age and gender were measured prior to the experiment. The other variables were measured after the survey experiment.
- Table A3 shows the proportion of respondents who had an emotional reaction of concern, worry, sympathy in their written reaction to the treatment condition. Those in the egocentric or surrogate perspective taking condition expressed significantly more concern than those in the informational control condition. Because respondents in the No Treatment condition were not asked about how they were feeling, they are excluded in this model.
- Table A4 shows the treatment group means for each dependent variable. The effects from these treatment group means are plotted in the article in Figure 2.
- Table A5 shows the treatment effects on each of the individual items in the overall release attitudes index. This shows that for each subgroup of prisoners (awaiting bail, elderly, immunocompromised, nonviolent), the surrogate perspective-taking exercise increases support for release. It does not increase support for releasing “all prisoners.” The egocentric perspective-taking exercise significantly increases support for releasing elderly and immunocompromised prisoners. The informational control is insignificant except in the model of releasing all prisoners where it significantly decreases support for release compared to the no treatment condition.

- Figure A1 shows an alternative coding of the policy opinion scale. After inspecting the quantiles of the full 0 to 20 scale, I created a binned version ranging from 0 to 4. A 0 on the binned variable corresponds to a 0 on the original full scale. 1 on the binned variable corresponds to a 1 to 6 on the original. 2 corresponds to 7 to 9. 3 corresponds to 10 to 13. And a 4 corresponds to a 14 or above on the 0 to 20 scale. Figure A1 shows that the findings are robust to this alternative coding of the policy opinion scale.
- Table A6 shows alternative ways of modeling the semibehavioral effects in the article in Figure 2. The first column is an OLS model and the second is an ordered logistic regression. Both show significant positive effects of the two perspective-taking treatments as compared to the no treatment condition. There is no effect of the informational control.
- Table A7 shows the results for two alternative specifications of the semibehavioral DV derived from the messages respondents wrote to their sheriffs. The first uses the modal coding assigned by the six trained coders rather than the version where the principal investigator reconciled any disagreements. The second uses the codes from the one coder who coded all of the statements. The results look nearly identical in terms of magnitude of treatment effects and statistical significance to the average treatment effects shown for the semibehavioral DV in Figure 2b of the article.
- Table A8 shows the conditional treatment group means for respondents with and without carceral contact. The effects from these treatment group means are plotted in the article in Figure 3. Table A10 presents these same analyses using OLS.
- Table A9 shows the conditional treatment group means for Democratic and Republican respondents separately. The effects from these treatment group means are plotted in the article in Figure 4. Table A10 presents these same analyses using OLS.
- Figures A2 and A3 show other potential heterogeneous effects. Figure A2 explores whether the treatments interact with racial resentment and Figure A3 explores whether the treatments interact with concerns about Covid. Both of these figures show largely the same patterns of effects across the potential moderators. The perspective-taking conditions tend to have positive effects but they don't really differ across levels of the moderator.
- Table A11 shows the effects for respondents of color. Relative to the no treatment condition, the informational control, egocentric, and surrogate perspective-taking conditions all increase pro-release attitudes. There are no effects on the semibehavioral dependent variable.
- Table A12 shows an observational regression model where the dependent variable is the three-level semibehavioral variable of whether respondents wrote to their sheriff, where -1 indicates a message in opposition to release, 1 indicates a message in support, and all others are coded as 0. This model shows that the significant predictors of the message content follow what we would anticipate from prior scholarship, and suggests that respondents' attitudes are structured as we would expect.



Table A1: Sample Descriptives

Variable	N	Mean	Min	Max
Woman	1,527	0.512	0	1
Age	1,535	2.732	0	5
Education	1,535	2.317	0	4
Party identity	1,535	3.192	0	6
Region	1,534			
Northeast		0.183	0	1
South		0.376	0	1
Midwest		0.262	0	1
West		0.179	0	1

The variable *woman* only includes those who indicated they are either a man (0) or a woman (1). The N is smaller for this variable because 8 respondents indicated that they are non-binary, genderfluid, or a gender not listed.

Table A2: Experimental Treatments Balance Table

	No treatment (N=420)	Informational control (N=385)	Perspective: egocentric (N=364)	Perspective: surrogate (N=366)	$\chi^2(df)$	p-value
Age	2.802	2.766	2.657	2.691	16.884(15)	0.326
Woman	0.505	0.510	0.514	0.521	0.205(3)	0.977
Education	2.345	2.249	2.321	2.350	17.006(12)	0.149
Resentment	8.189	8.536	8.242	7.844	51.035(48)	0.355
Poor deserve more	1.533	1.466	1.521	1.481	5.311(6)	0.505
Party ID	3.117	3.338	2.989	3.325	17.774(18)	0.471
Covid worry	1.671	1.639	1.692	1.699	11.676(9)	0.232
White linked fate	1.307	1.353	1.308	1.348	12.141(9)	0.206

This table shows mean values in each treatment group and Pearson's Chi-squared test statistic. The Chi-squared value for the distribution of respondents across the four treatments is 5.266 with 3 degrees of freedom ( $p=0.153$ ).

Table A3: Emotional Responses By Treatment Condition

	All Respondents	White Respondents
(Intercept)	0.15 (0.02)*	0.14 (0.02)*
Perspective: Egocentric	0.45 (0.03)*	0.43 (0.03)*
Perspective: Surrogate	0.45 (0.03)*	0.44 (0.03)*
R <sup>2</sup>	0.19	0.18
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.18	0.18
Num. obs.	1468	1111

Reference category is the informational control group. \* $p < 0.05$

Table A4: Treatment Means

	Policy Opinion	Semibehavioral
No treatment	7.869	-0.088
Informational Control	7.768	-0.029
Perspective: Egocentric	8.711	0.060 <sup>n</sup>
Perspective: Surrogate	9.408 <sup>n,c</sup>	0.044 <sup>n</sup>

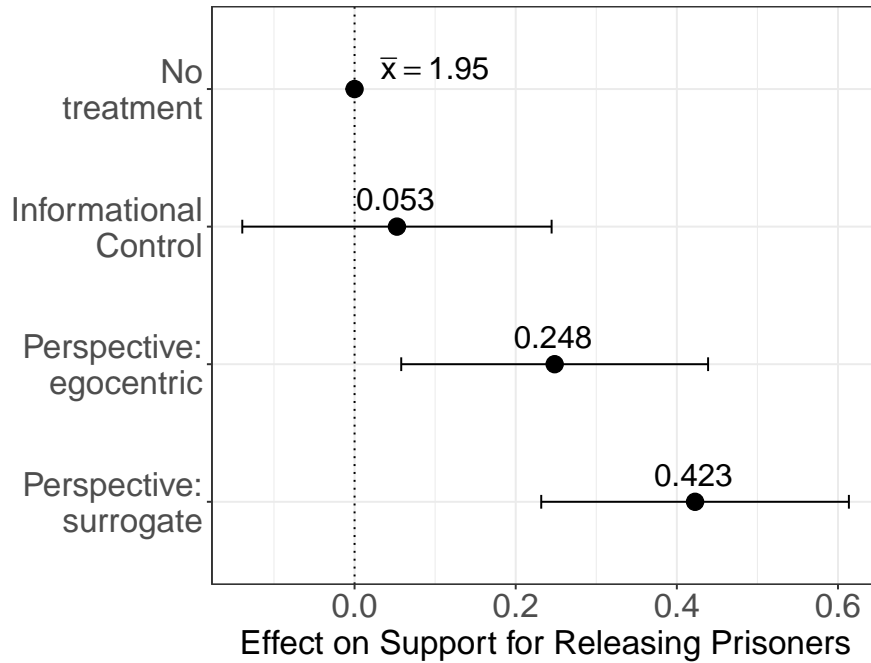
<sup>n</sup> indicates  $p < 0.05$  in a two-tailed t-test with Holm correction compared to the no treatment group.  
<sup>c</sup> indicates  $p < 0.05$  in a two-tailed t-test with Holm correction compared to the control group.

Table A5: Treatment Effects on Individual Policy Opinion Items

	Bail	Elderly	Immuno.	Nonviolent	All prisoners
(Intercept)	1.80 (0.07)*	1.59 (0.07)*	1.45 (0.07)*	1.95 (0.07)*	1.07 (0.07)*
Informational Control	-0.13 (0.10)	0.09 (0.10)	0.05 (0.10)	0.09 (0.10)	-0.19 (0.10)*
Perspective: Egocentric	0.11 (0.10)	0.27 (0.10)*	0.27 (0.10)*	0.19 (0.10)	-0.01 (0.10)
Perspective: Surrogate	0.21 (0.10)*	0.41 (0.10)*	0.45 (0.10)*	0.32 (0.10)*	0.13 (0.10)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.00
Num. obs.	1532	1533	1533	1532	1534

Reference category is the no treatment group. \* $p < 0.05$

Figure A1: Treatment Effects on Binned Version of Policy Opinion Scale



Notes: This version of the prisoner release policy opinion scale ranges from 0 to 4.

Table A6: Alternative Modeling of Semi-Behavioral Effects

	OLS	Ordered Logit
(Intercept)	-0.09 (0.03)*	
Informational Control	0.06 (0.04)	0.19 (0.14)
Perspective: Egocentric	0.15 (0.04)*	0.48 (0.14)*
Perspective: Surrogate	0.13 (0.04)*	0.43 (0.14)*
Cut 1		-1.18 (0.10)*
Cut 2		1.75 (0.11)*
R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	
Num. obs.	1535	1535
AIC		2834.69
BIC		2861.37
Log Likelihood		-1412.34
Deviance		2824.69

Reference category is the no treatment group. \* $p < 0.05$

Table A7: Alternative Codings of Semibehavioral DV: Means by Treatment Group

	Modal Coding	Coding by Single Coder
No treatment	-0.067	-0.105
Informational Control	0.010	-0.044
Perspective: Egocentric	0.074 <sup>n</sup>	0.058 <sup>n</sup>
Perspective: Surrogate	0.074 <sup>n</sup>	0.044 <sup>n</sup>

<sup>n</sup> indicates  $p < 0.05$  in a two-tailed t-test with Holm correction compared to the no treatment group.

Table A8: Conditional Treatment Means: Carceral Contact

	<i>Carceral Contact</i>		<i>No Carceral Contact</i>	
	Policy Opinion	Semibehavioral	Policy Opinion	Semibehavioral
No treatment	9.910	0.024	6.522	-0.162
Informational Control	9.667	0.083	6.629	-0.096
Perspective: Egocentric	10.218	0.099	7.742 <sup>n,c</sup>	0.036 <sup>n,c</sup>
Perspective: Surrogate	10.899	0.080	8.502 <sup>n,c</sup>	0.022 <sup>n,c</sup>

<sup>n</sup> indicates  $p < 0.05$  in a two-tailed t-test compared to the no treatment group.  
<sup>c</sup> indicates  $p < 0.05$  in a two-tailed t-test compared to the control group.

Table A9: Conditional Treatment Means: Partisanship

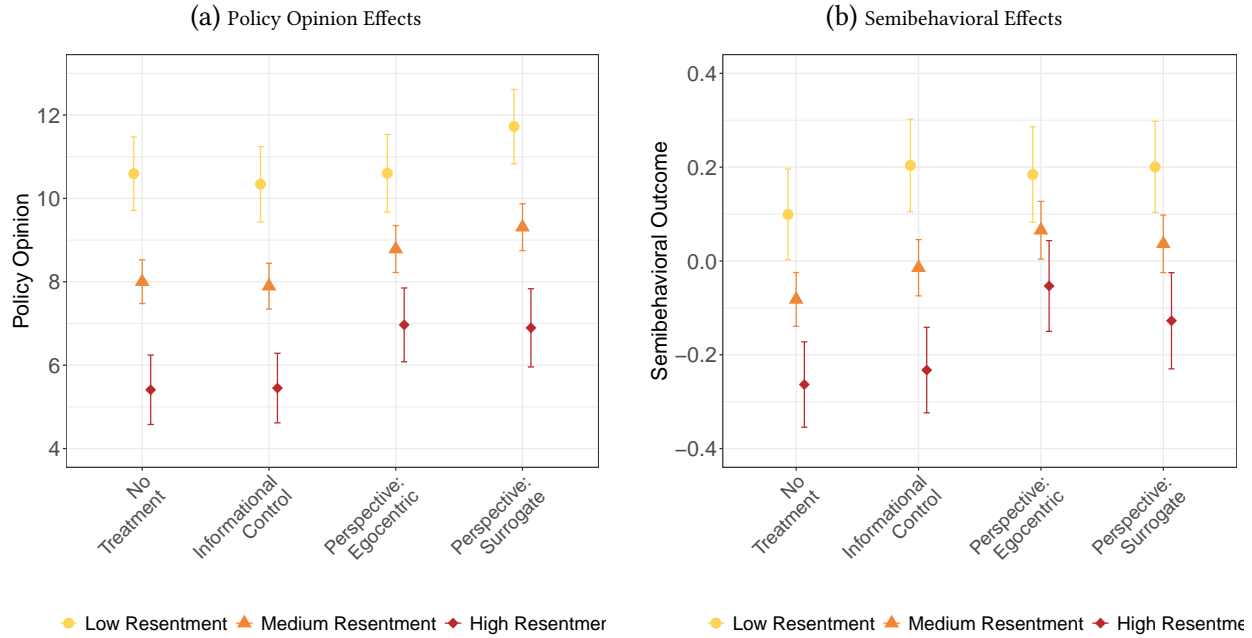
	<i>Democrats</i>		<i>Republicans</i>	
	Policy Opinion	Semibehavioral	Policy Opinion	Semibehavioral
No treatment	9.190	0.011	6.774	-0.181
Informational Control	9.769	0.135	6.582	-0.139
Perspective: Egocentric	9.500	0.143 <sup>n</sup>	8.032 <sup>c</sup>	-0.064
Perspective: Surrogate	10.576 <sup>n</sup>	0.164 <sup>n</sup>	8.810 <sup>n,c</sup>	-0.045 <sup>n</sup>

<sup>n</sup> indicates  $p < 0.05$  in a two-tailed t-test compared to the no treatment group.  
<sup>c</sup> indicates  $p < 0.05$  in a two-tailed t-test compared to the control group.

Table A10: Regression Models for CATEs

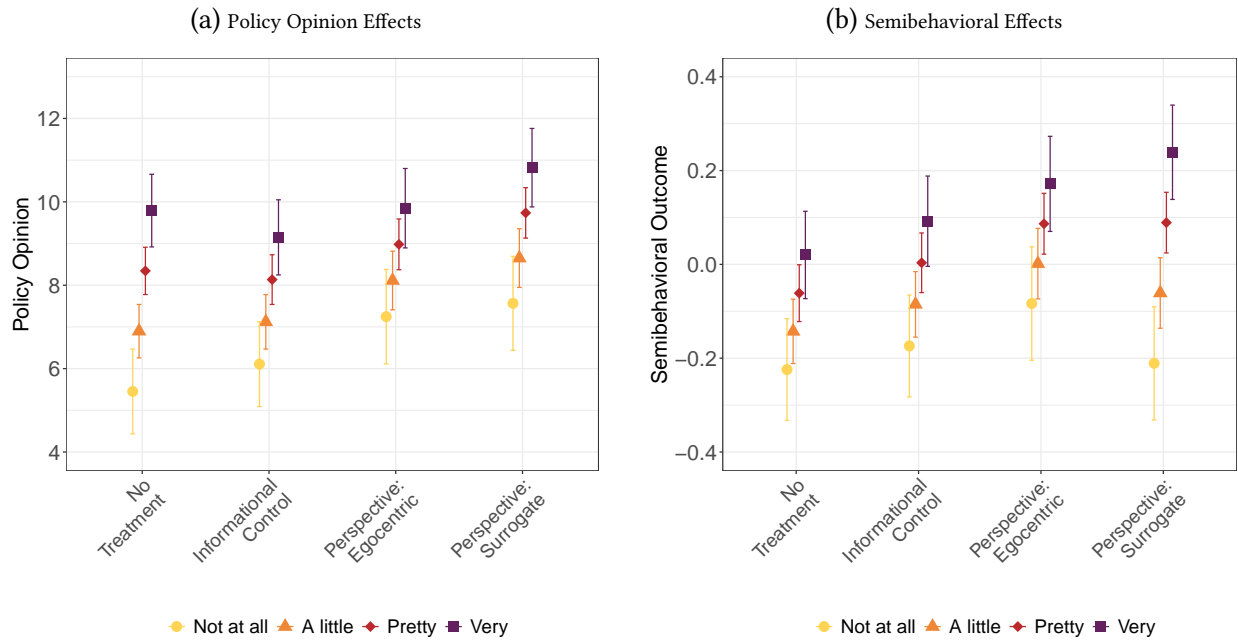
	Policy	Semibehavioral	Policy	Semibehavioral
(Intercept)	6.52*	-0.16*	6.77*	-0.18*
	(0.35)	(0.04)	(0.41)	(0.04)
Informational Control	0.11	0.07	-0.19	0.04
	(0.50)	(0.05)	(0.58)	(0.06)
Perspective: Egocentric	1.22*	0.20*	1.26*	0.12
	(0.52)	(0.06)	(0.62)	(0.07)
Perspective: Surrogate	1.98*	0.18*	2.04*	0.14*
	(0.51)	(0.06)	(0.60)	(0.06)
Contact	3.39*	0.19*		
	(0.56)	(0.06)		
Inf. Control*Contact	-0.35	-0.01		
	(0.81)	(0.09)		
Egocentric*Contact	-0.91	-0.12		
	(0.82)	(0.09)		
Surrogate*Contact	-0.99	-0.13		
	(0.82)	(0.09)		
Democrat			2.42*	0.19*
			(0.60)	(0.06)
Inf. Control*Democrat			0.77	0.08
			(0.87)	(0.09)
Egocentric*Democrat			-0.95	0.01
			(0.88)	(0.09)
Surrogate*Democrat			-0.65	0.02
			(0.88)	(0.09)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.07	0.02	0.05	0.04
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.07	0.02	0.05	0.04
Num. obs.	1532	1535	1353	1356
Reference category is the no treatment group. * $p < 0.05$				

Figure A2: Conditional Treatment Effects By Racial Resentment



Notes: The plots show the expected values from linear regression models interacting the treatment condition with a three-level variable for racial resentment and include 95% confidence intervals around the estimates. Racial resentment scores come from the standard 4-item scale and are then binned into three groups determined by the cutpoints for the 33rd and 66th percentiles.

Figure A3: Conditional Treatment Effects By Covid Worry



Notes: The plots show the expected values from linear regression models interacting the treatment condition with a four-point scale for concern about Covid and include 95% confidence intervals around the estimates.

Table A11: Treatment Effects Among Respondents of Color

	Policy Opinion	Semibehavioral
No treatment (n=107)	8.552	0.037
Informational Control (n=129)	10.703 <sup>n</sup>	0.132
Perspective: Egocentric (n=117)	11.158 <sup>n</sup>	0.060
Perspective: Surrogate (n=113)	10.637 <sup>n</sup>	0.080

<sup>n</sup> indicates  $p < 0.05$  in a two-tailed t-test with Holm correction compared to the no treatment group.

Table A12: Observational Analysis of Predictors of Semibehavioral Outcome

	Model 1	Model 2
(Intercept)	0.120 (0.054)*	0.050 (0.079)
Age	-0.144 (0.051)*	-0.084 (0.052)
Woman	0.032 (0.032)	0.024 (0.031)
Education	0.115 (0.056)*	0.018 (0.057)
Partisanship	-0.249 (0.040)*	-0.062 (0.044)
Covid worry		0.188 (0.046)*
Poor deserve more		0.101 (0.048)*
White linked fate		0.094 (0.045)*
Racial resentment		-0.436 (0.068)*
R <sup>2</sup>	0.034	0.091
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.032	0.086
Num. obs.	1527	1519

OLS Models. Dependent variable is 3-point scale (-1, 0-, 1).  
All predictors are rescaled to range from 0-1. \* $p < 0.05$

## References

Aronow, Peter M., Josh Kalla, John Ternovski and Lilla Orr. 2020. "Evidence of Rising Rates of Inattentiveness on Lucid in 2020." *SocArXiv* <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/8sbe4>.