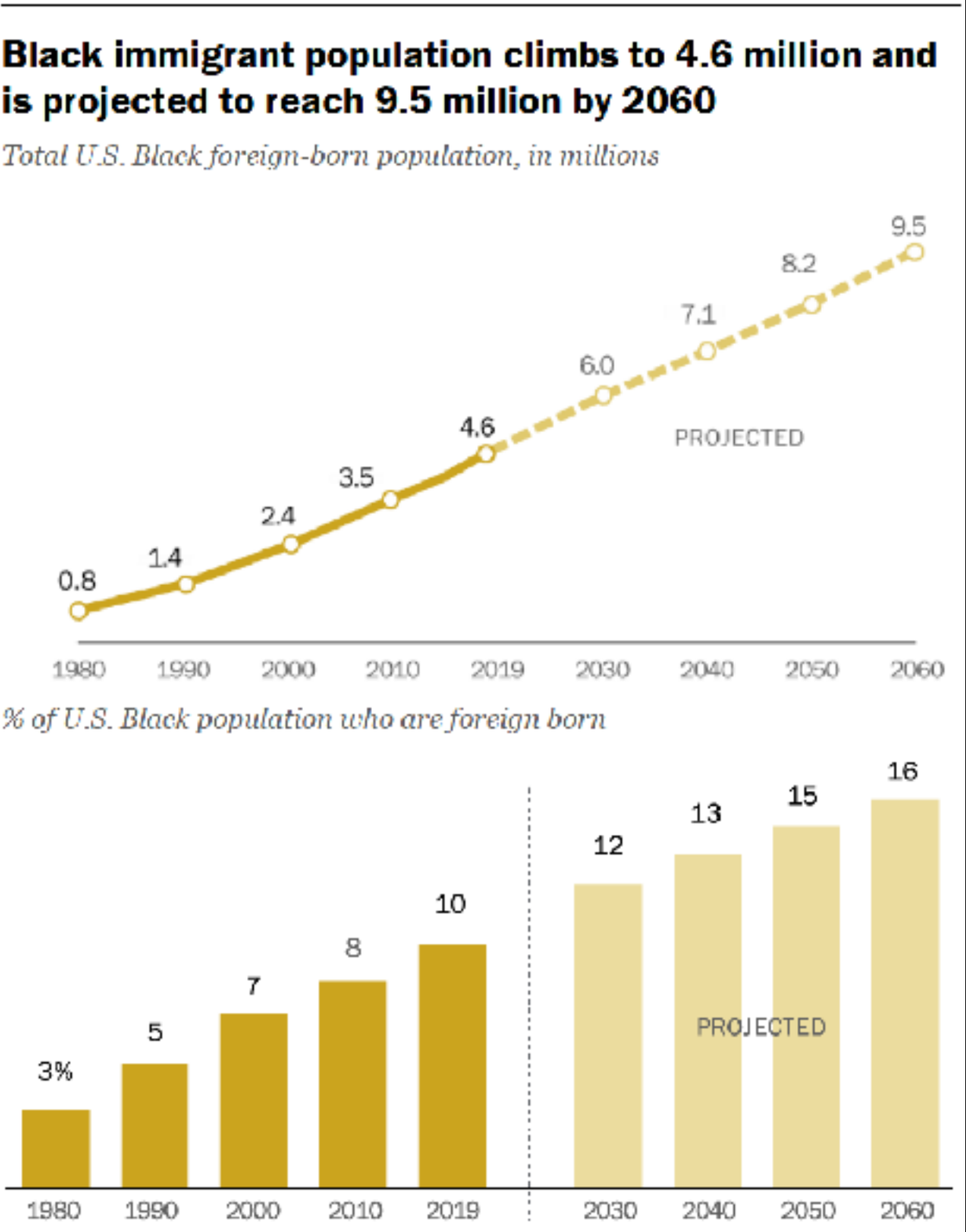
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
COMMITTEE ON POPULATION

RESISTING ASSIMILATION INCREASING INCLUSION

CLAIRE L. ADIDA
UC SAN DIEGO

RESISTING ASSIMILATION



BY THE NUMBERS

- One in ten Black people in the US are immigrants, and this is expected to grow to one in three by 2060.
- Africa has accounted for the fastest growth in the US Black immigrant population (246% growth between 2000 and 2019).

SOME IMMIGRANTS RESIST ASSIMILATION

- Because proximal hosts are themselves marginalized (Waters 1999, Portes and Zhou 1993, Mittelberg and Waters 1992)

- Because immigrant enclaves confer social capital (Laitin 1995, Portes and Manning 1985)

- Because immigrants react to discriminatory environments (Abdelgadir and Fouka 2020, Fouka 2019)

RESISTANCE AS RATIONAL RESPONSE

- Ethiopian immigrants in DC prefer to identify as African, Ethiopian American rather than Black (Chako 2003)
- African immigrant students in Atlanta use ethnicity as a buffer against discrimination (Ogundipe 2011)
- Children of middle-income Nigerian immigrants to the US adopt a hybrid identity to distance themselves from low-income African Americans (Imoagene 2017)
- West Indian and West African immigrant children in NYC retain elements of their immigrant culture deliberately, through cuisine, fashion and language (Sall 2019)
- This is all a rational response to the threat of lowering their social and Econ status (Hamilton 2019)

THE THREAT OF RACIAL LUMPING

- “at automatic and non conscious levels, Black immigrants and Black Americans are perceived in the same way. Whether by passersby, customers walking around a store, or drivers in an upper-class neighborhood, Black immigrants will be categorized as Black and subjected to the same kinds of race-based bias and discrimination as American Blacks” (Tormala and Deaux 2006)
- “by evoking their foreign status” Black immigrants aim to “exit from the stigmatized black category” (Waters 1999)
- Two questions remain:
    - Race is a “bundle of sticks” (Sen and Wasow 2016): how do we know that it is this aspect of race that is doing the work?
    - This core insight about resistance comes out of rich, qualitative case studies that do not hold constant other facets of the immigrant experience: can we isolate one factor?

SOMALI IMMIGRANTS

- A powerful research design that naturally isolates our key independent variable of interest: phenotypic overlap with African Americans

- A key demographic group: one of the fastest growing groups of African migrants to the US

RESULTS

	INTERVIEWS	LAB	SURVEY
DESCRIPTION			
OBJECTIVE			
RESULTS			

RESULTS

	INTERVIEWS	LAB	SURVEY
DESCRIPTION	33 AFRICAN MIGRANTS AT OSU		
OBJECTIVE	GENERATE INSIGHTS ABOUT VARIATION IN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES		
RESULTS	SOME AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS (FROM HORN) PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS MORE IDENTIFIABLE AS FOREIGN		

RESULTS

	INTERVIEWS	LAB	SURVEY
DESCRIPTION	33 AFRICAN MIGRANTS AT OSU	170 UNDERGRADUATES AT OSU	
OBJECTIVE	GENERATE INSIGHTS ABOUT VARIATION IN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES	BUILD OBJECTIVE MEASURE OF VARIATION IN PROBABILITY OF RACIAL LUMPING	
RESULTS	SOME AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS (FROM HORN) PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS MORE IDENTIFIABLE AS FOREIGN	IMMIGRANTS FROM THE HORN ARE MORE IDENTIFIABLE AS IMMIGRANTS	

RESULTS

	INTERVIEWS	LAB	SURVEY
DESCRIPTION	33 AFRICAN MIGRANTS AT OSU	170 UNDERGRADUATES AT OSU	520 (293/227) MEMBERS OF COLUMBUS SOMALI COMMUNITIES
OBJECTIVE	GENERATE INSIGHTS ABOUT VARIATION IN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCES	BUILD OBJECTIVE MEASURE OF VARIATION IN PROBABILITY OF RACIAL LUMPING	TEST MAIN HYPOTHESIS
RESULTS	SOME AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS (FROM HORN) PERCEIVE THEMSELVES AS MORE IDENTIFIABLE AS FOREIGN	IMMIGRANTS FROM THE HORN ARE MORE IDENTIFIABLE AS IMMIGRANTS	ETHNIC BANTUS (HIGHER RACIAL LUMPING) RESIST MORE THAN ETHNIC SOMALIS; THIS DOESN'T DISAPPEAR OVER TIME

TAKE-AWAYS

- Threat of racial lumping can increase resistance to assimilation

- Racism, and how it shapes the lives of Black Americans, has implications for immigrant integration

- But the research design for this project limits our ability to generalize

INCREASING INCLUSION

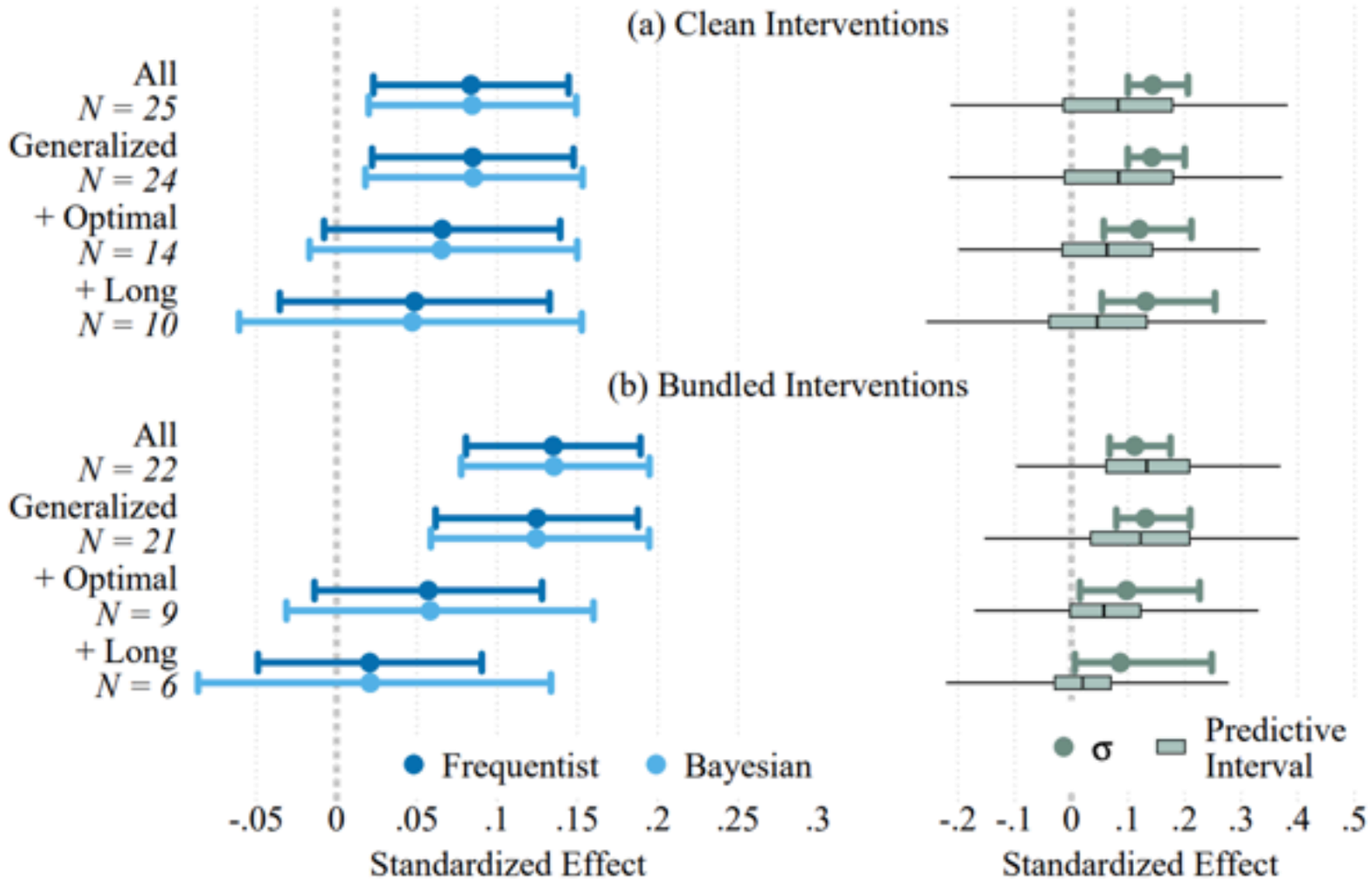
INCREASING INCLUSION

- Contact theory
- Exceptional migrant narratives
- Generating empathy

INCREASING INCLUSION: CONTACT

- Effects are small but robust
- Effects are narrow

Figure 2: Effects of Intergroup Contact Interventions



Notes: The figure shows the output of frequentist and Bayesian meta-analysis of sets of experiment-level effect sizes and standard errors. Panel (a) considers only clean comparisons of high with low or no intergroup contact. Panel (b) considers only comparisons of bundled outgroup contact relative to a control group. Within these two groups, I show estimates using all outcomes and interventions (All), and only outcomes that are generalized to the outgroup (Generalized), only generalized outcomes with in-person contact interventions that satisfy all four Allport conditions (+ Optimal), and the same, but adding the restriction that the contact lasts at least four hours (+ Long). N denotes the number of experiments included in each sample. Point estimates and 95% confidence intervals for the average effect of contact (τ) are denoted in blue, while the equivalent for the standard deviation of effects across settings (σ) is denoted in green. Box plots describe posterior predictive intervals for the effect of contact in a new setting (τ_{K+1}). The whiskers span the 95% interval, the box spans the 50% interval, while the vertical line denotes the mean.

INCREASING INCLUSION: EXCEPTIONAL MIGRANTS

If COVID-19 Vaccines Bring An End To The Pandemic, America Has Immigrants To Thank

December 18, 2020 - 5:00 AM ET

Heard on All Things Considered

Joel Rose

5-Minute Listen + PLAYLIST

Katalin Karikó works at BioNTech, the company that partnered with Pfizer to make the first COVID-19 vaccine to get emergency authorization in the United States.

Jessica Kourkounis

BURTON

Refugee Council USA

Sponsored · Paid for by CHURCH WORLD SERVICE, I... ·

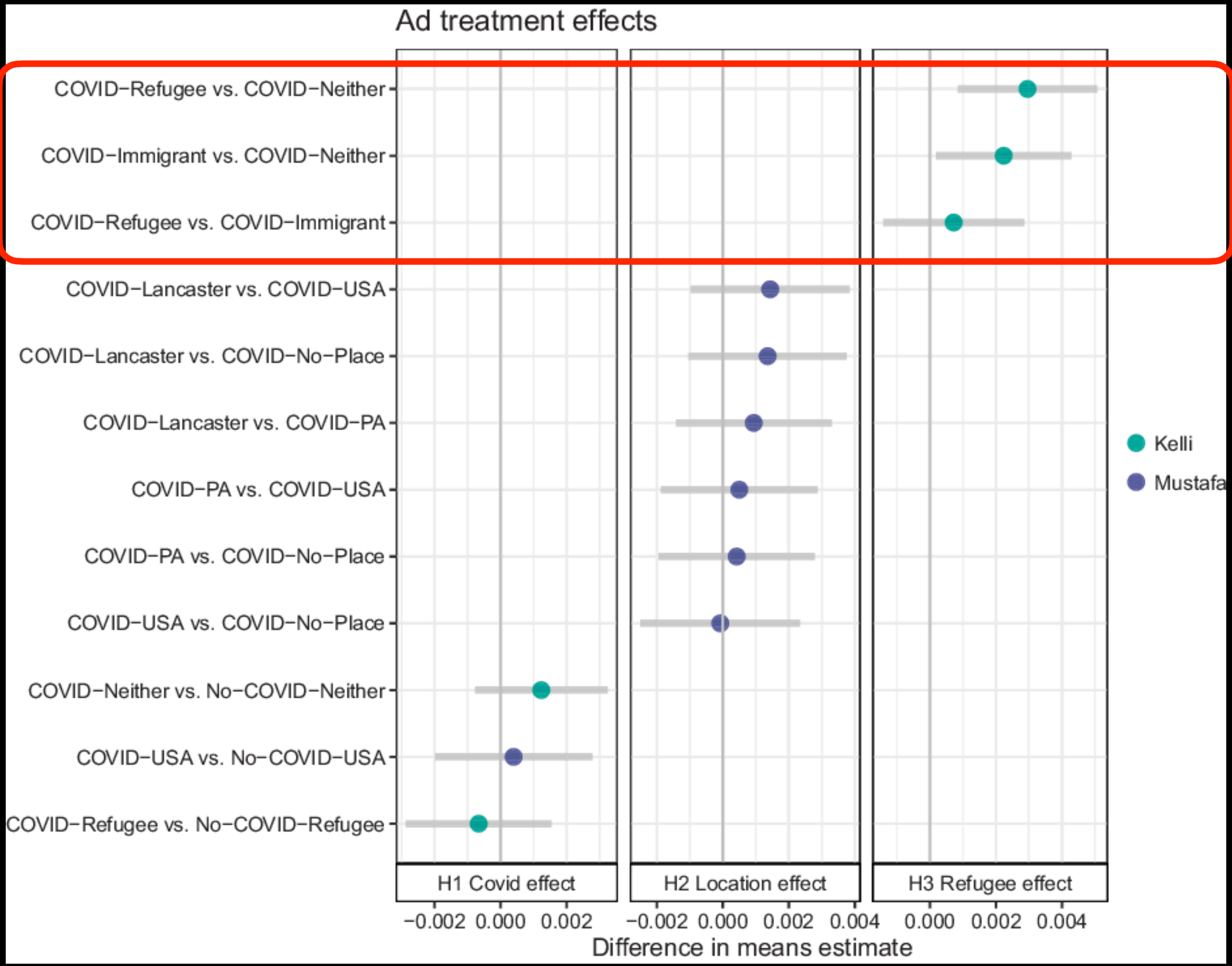
Dr. Heval Kelli fights for his coronavirus patients. Click to support refugees helping us.

STANFORDUNIVERSITY.QUALTRICS.COM

Refugee doctors are fighting coronavirus.

Rosa Ma… 18 Comments 30 Shares

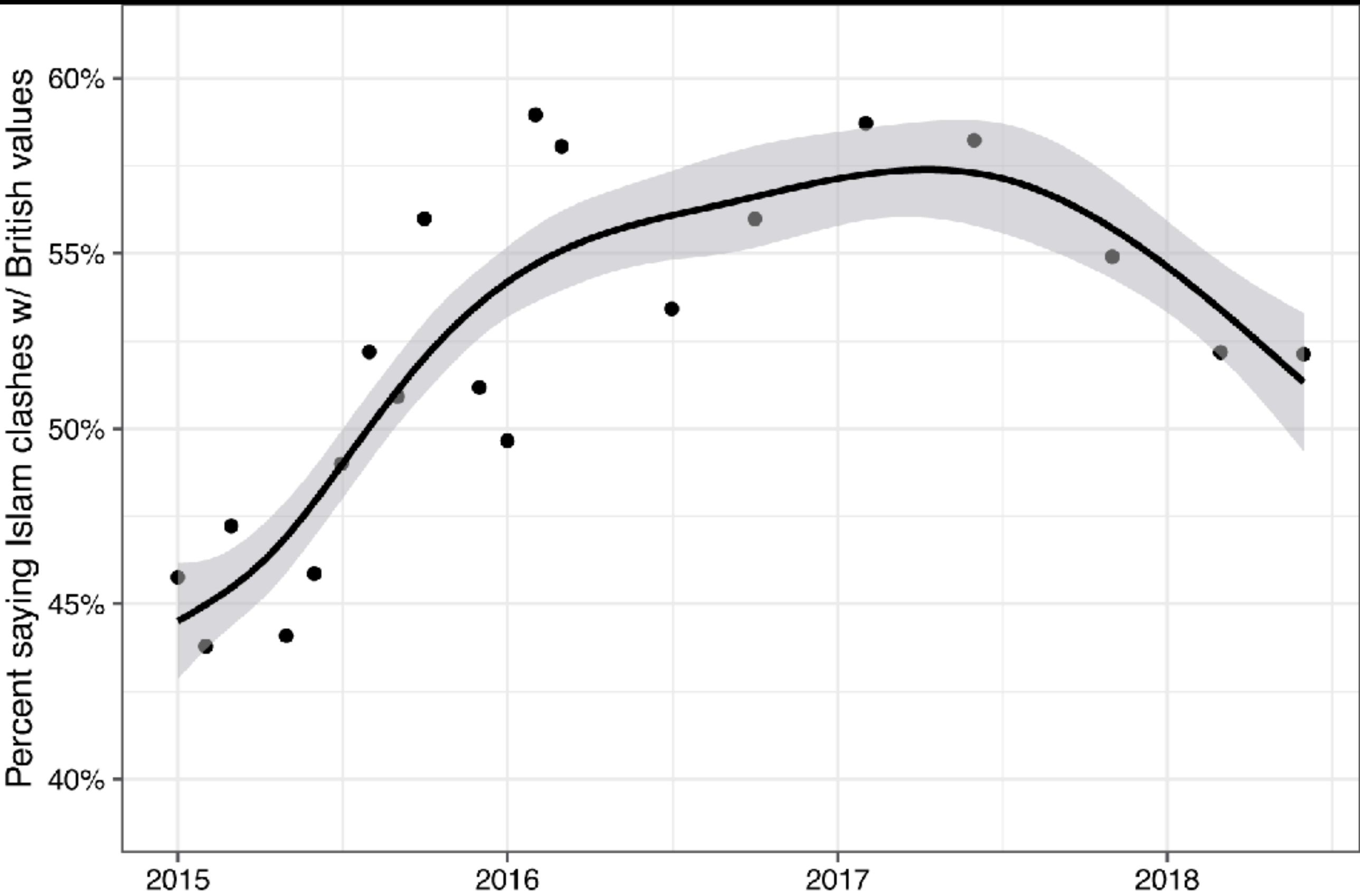
Like Comment Share


Ad treatment effects
COVID−Refugee vs. COVID−Neither
COVID−Immigrant vs. COVID−Neither
COVID−Refugee vs. COVID−Immigrant
COVID−Lancaster vs. COVID−USA
COVID−Lancaster vs. COVID−No−Place
COVID−Lancaster vs. COVID−PA
COVID−PA vs. COVID−USA
COVID−PA vs. COVID−No−Place
COVID−USA vs. COVID−No−Place
COVID−Neither vs. No−COVID−Neither
COVID−USA vs. No−COVID−USA
COVID−Refugee vs. No−COVID−Refugee
Kelli
Mustafa
H1 Covid effect
H2 Location effect
H3 Refugee effect
−0.002 0.000 0.002
−0.002 0.000 0.002 0.004
0.000 0.002 0.004
Difference in means estimate

MO SALAH (AL'RABABAH ET AL. 2021)

PARASOCIAL CONTACT HYPOTHESIS

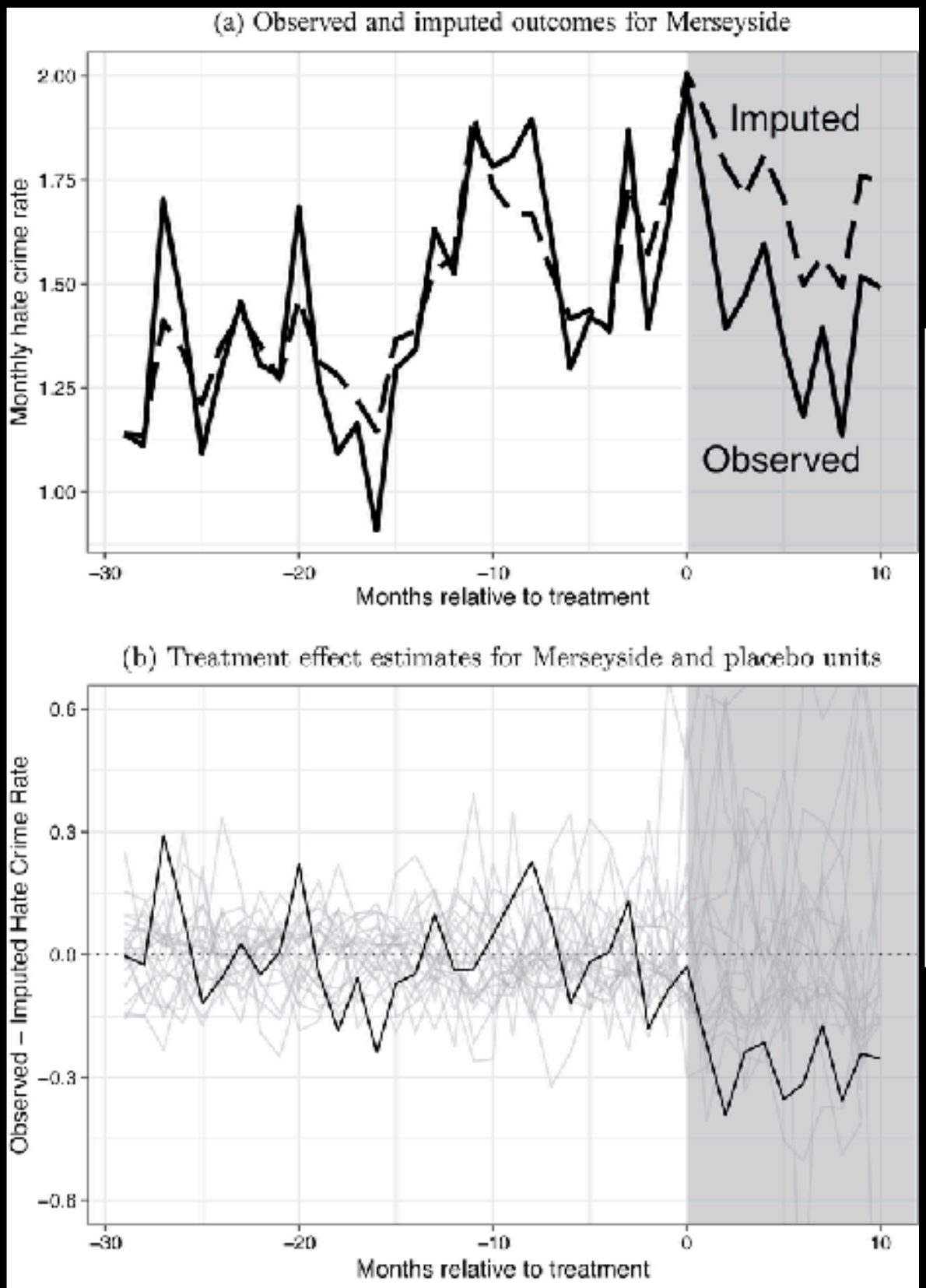
MUSLIM EXCLUSION IS HIGH IN GB

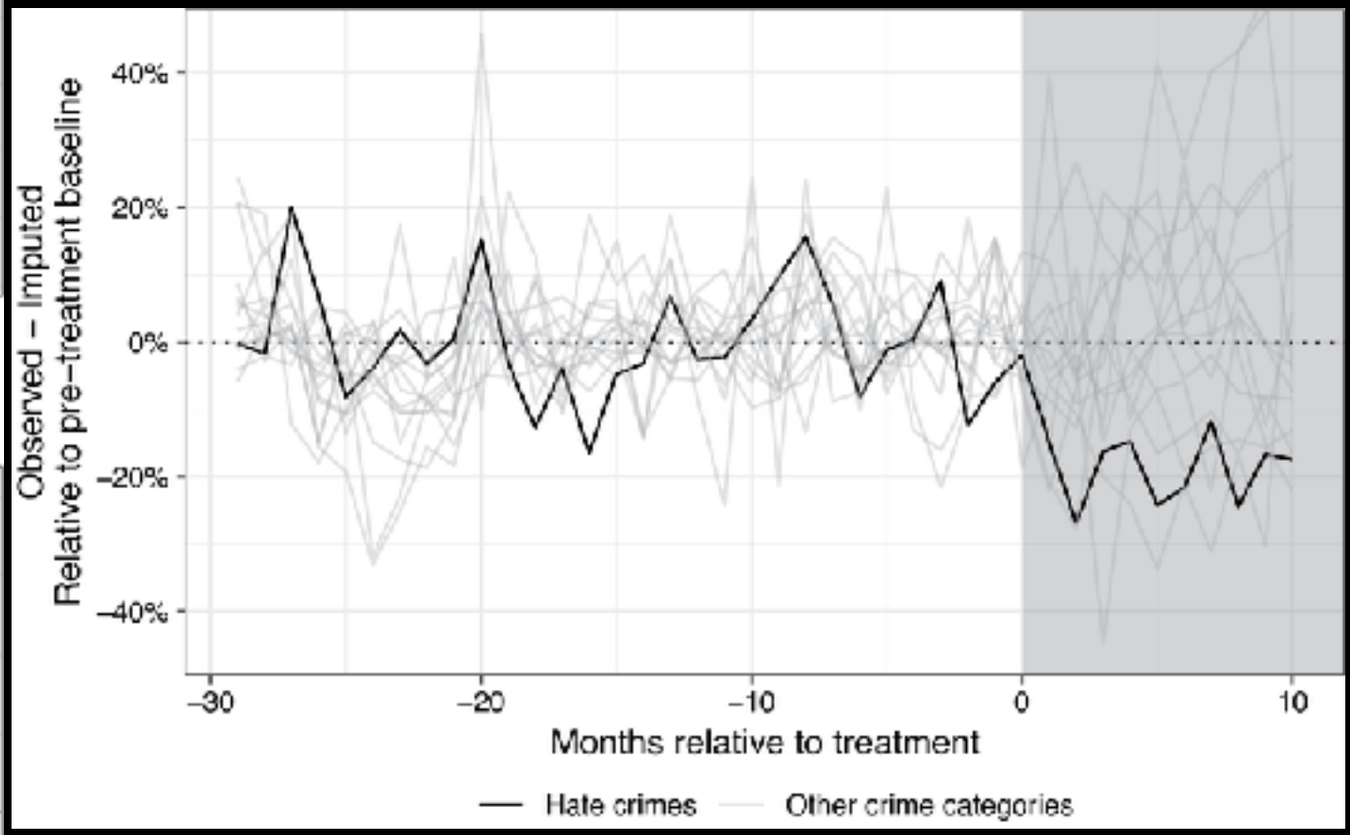


BEFORE AND AFTER SALAH SIGNED WITH LIVERPOOL

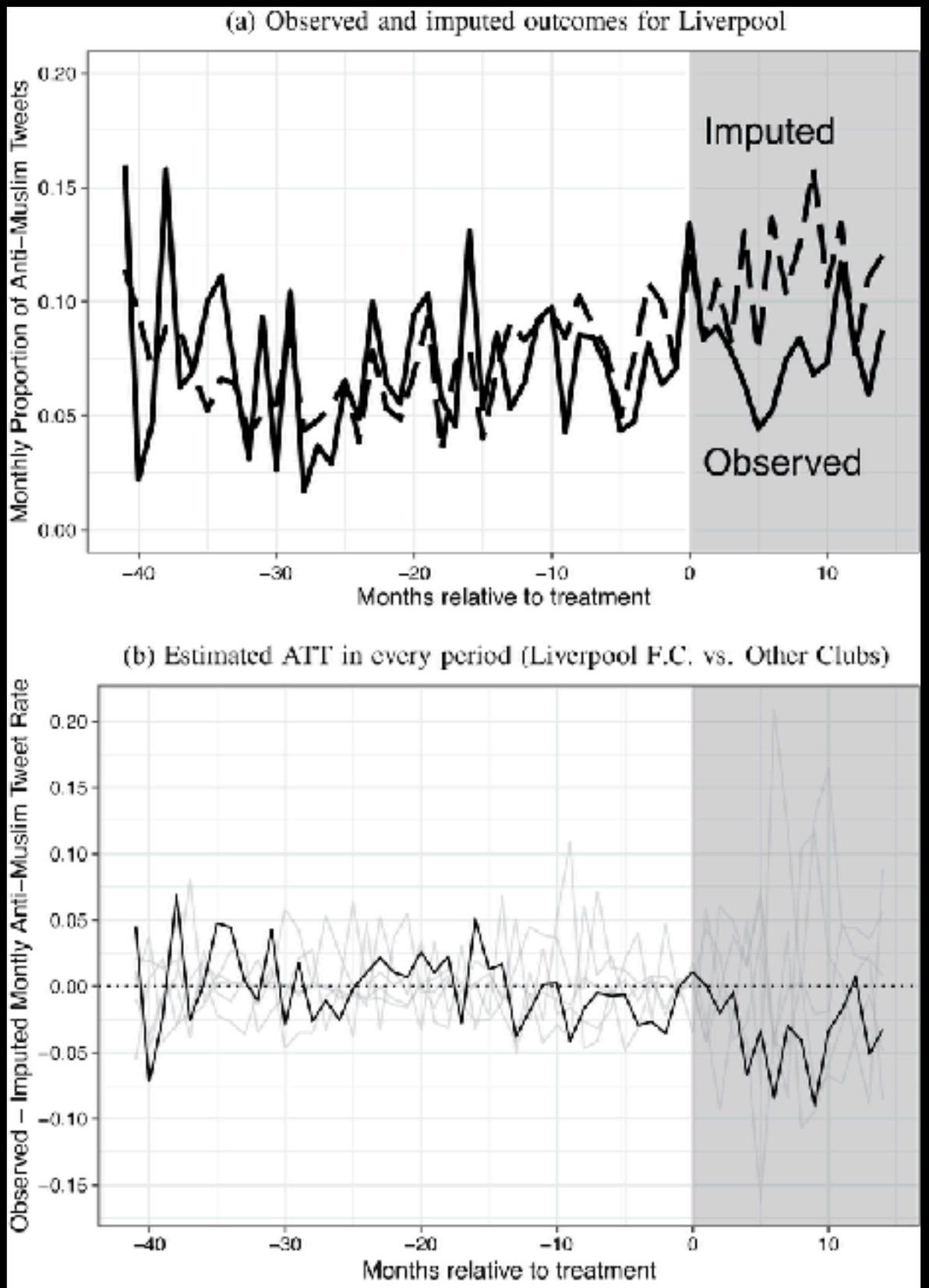
- Crime data
- Twitter data
- Survey data

HATE CRIMES WENT DOWN



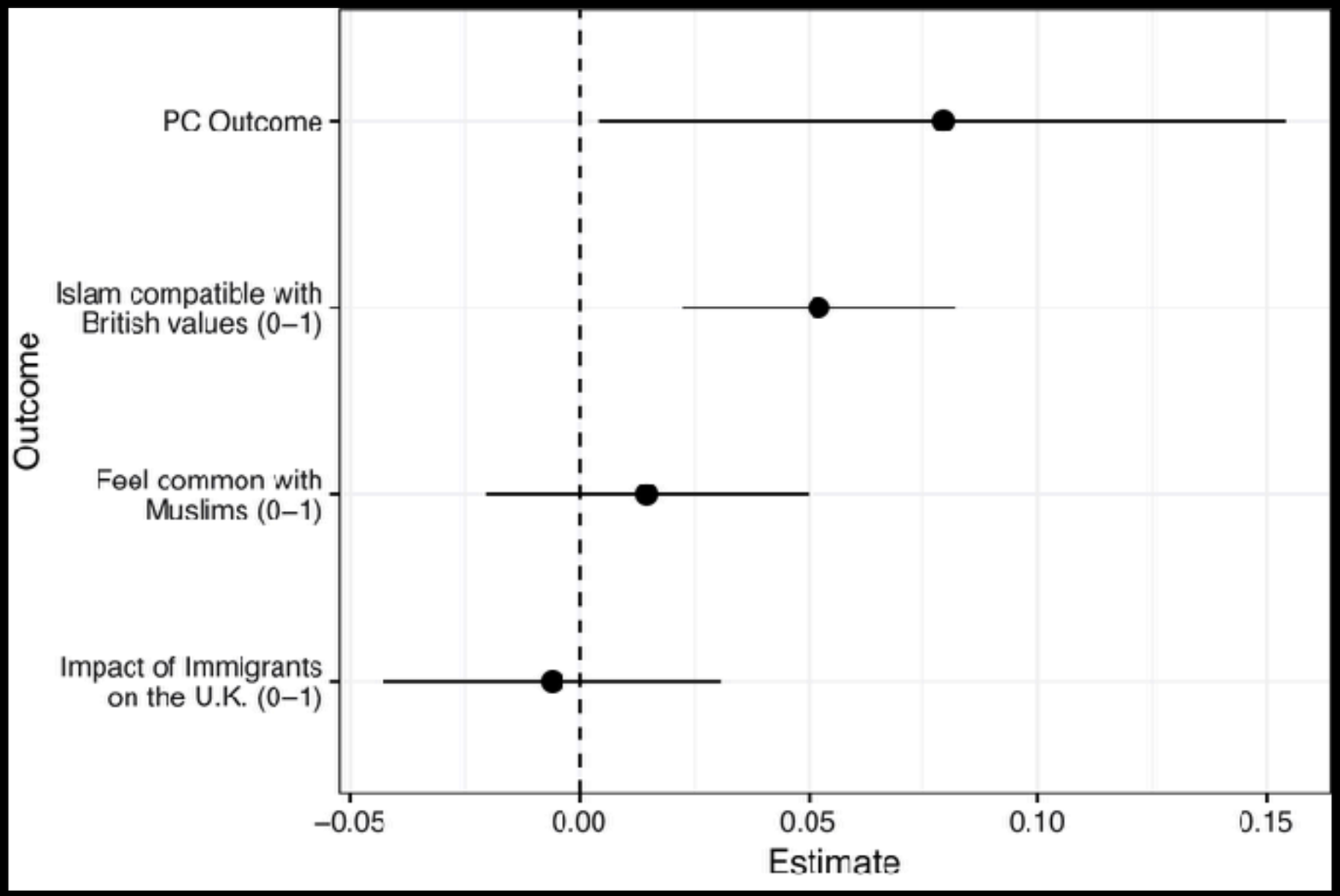


HATE TWEETS WENT DOWN



ATTITUDES IMPROVED

In addition to his goal scoring, Salah is known for an attachment to his Muslim identity both on and off the pitch. After every goal he scores, Salah touches his head to the ground in prayer. He also fasts during Ramadan (except on match days) and shares well wishes with his followers on social media during Islamic holidays. He named his daughter Makka after Islam's holiest site (Mecca).[18]



BEFORE AND AFTER SALAH SIGNED WITH LIVERPOOL

Crime data → Hate crimes went down

Twitter data → Anti-Muslim tweets went down

Survey data → Prejudiced attitudes went down

AND YET...

“ I am a German when we win and an immigrant when we lose.” ~Mesut Özil

“When things were going well, I was reading newspaper articles and they were calling me Romelu Lukaku, the Belgian striker. When things weren’t going well, they were calling me Romelu Lukaku, the Belgian striker of Congolese descent.” ~ Romelu Lukaku

THE HORTEFEUX EFFECT

THE HORTEFEUX EFFECT

French give lower donations when playing in groups with more Muslims

French give higher donations when playing in groups with fewer Muslims

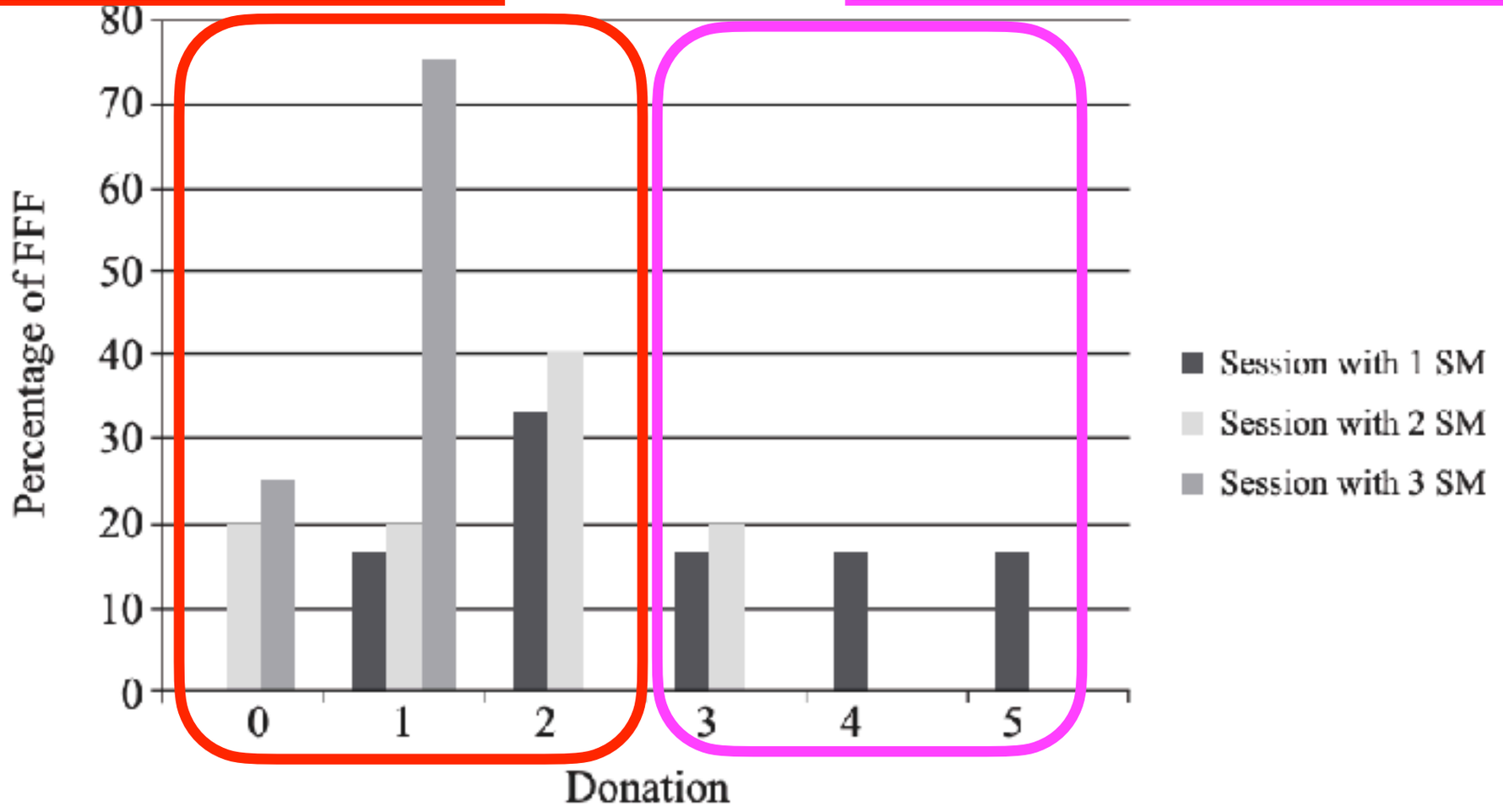


FIGURE 3. – Distribution of FFF Donations To SM Recipients When the Number of SM Increases, Holding the Number of SX Equal To 1

THE HORTEFEUX EFFECT OR THE MO SALAH EFFECT?

“when there’s one (Muslim), that’s ok; it’s when there’s a lot of them that there are problems”

INCREASING INCLUSION: EMPATHY

My Life as a Refugee

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Could you survive?

Help us spread the word:

Like 16 Tweet Share

Available now on
App Store & Android

WELCOME TO

AGAINST ALL ODDS

THE GAME WHICH LETS YOU EXPERIENCE WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE A REFUGEE

OPEN IN FULL SCREEN

OPEN IN THIS WINDOW

CHANGE LANGUAGE

IN DANISH | IN FINNISH | IN FRENCH | IN GERMAN | IN ICELANDIC

IN GREEK | IN SPANISH | IN NORWEGIAN | IN SWEDISH | IN ESTONIAN

IN RUSSIAN

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency Copyright © 2005 UNHCR. All rights reserved.

CREDITS WWW.UNHCR.ORG

Watch Home Shows

Search Videos

Day In The Life - Jordan

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency

March 2, 2019 ·

PREJUDICE-REDUCTION

- Broockman and Kalla have shown that humanizing narratives can reduce transphobia (2016, 2020) and prejudice toward undocumented migrants (2020)

- Simonovits et al. (2018) have shown that a video game in which Hungarians put themselves in the shoes of a Roma reduces their prejudice even one month later, with spillover effects for refugees

- I've conducted a series of studies testing whether empathy-generating narratives can improve migrant inclusion

    - PNAS 2018

    - APSR 2021

    - PSRM 2025

PEAS (2018)

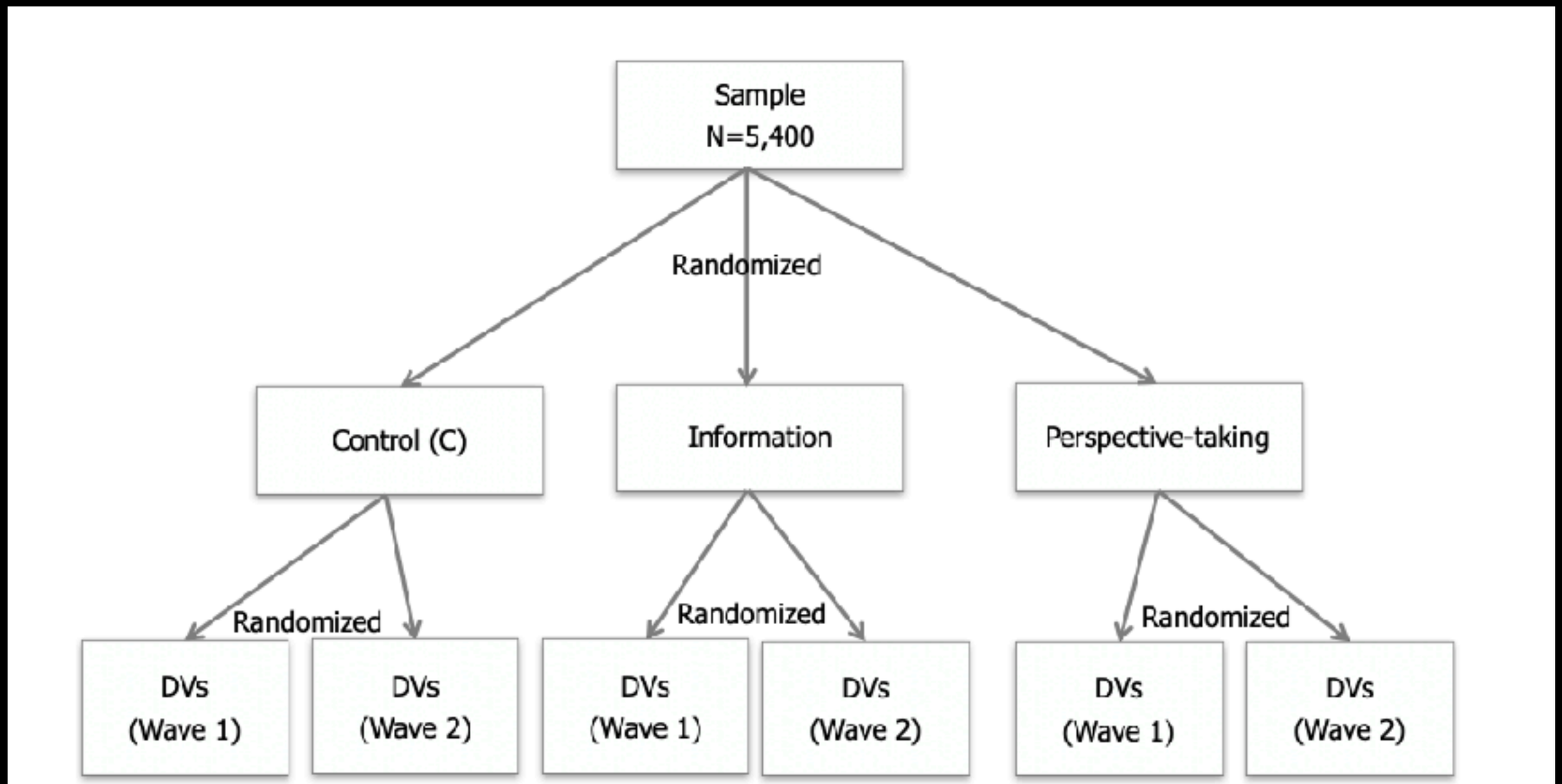


Fig. S1. Research design

THE **EMPATHY** TREATMENT

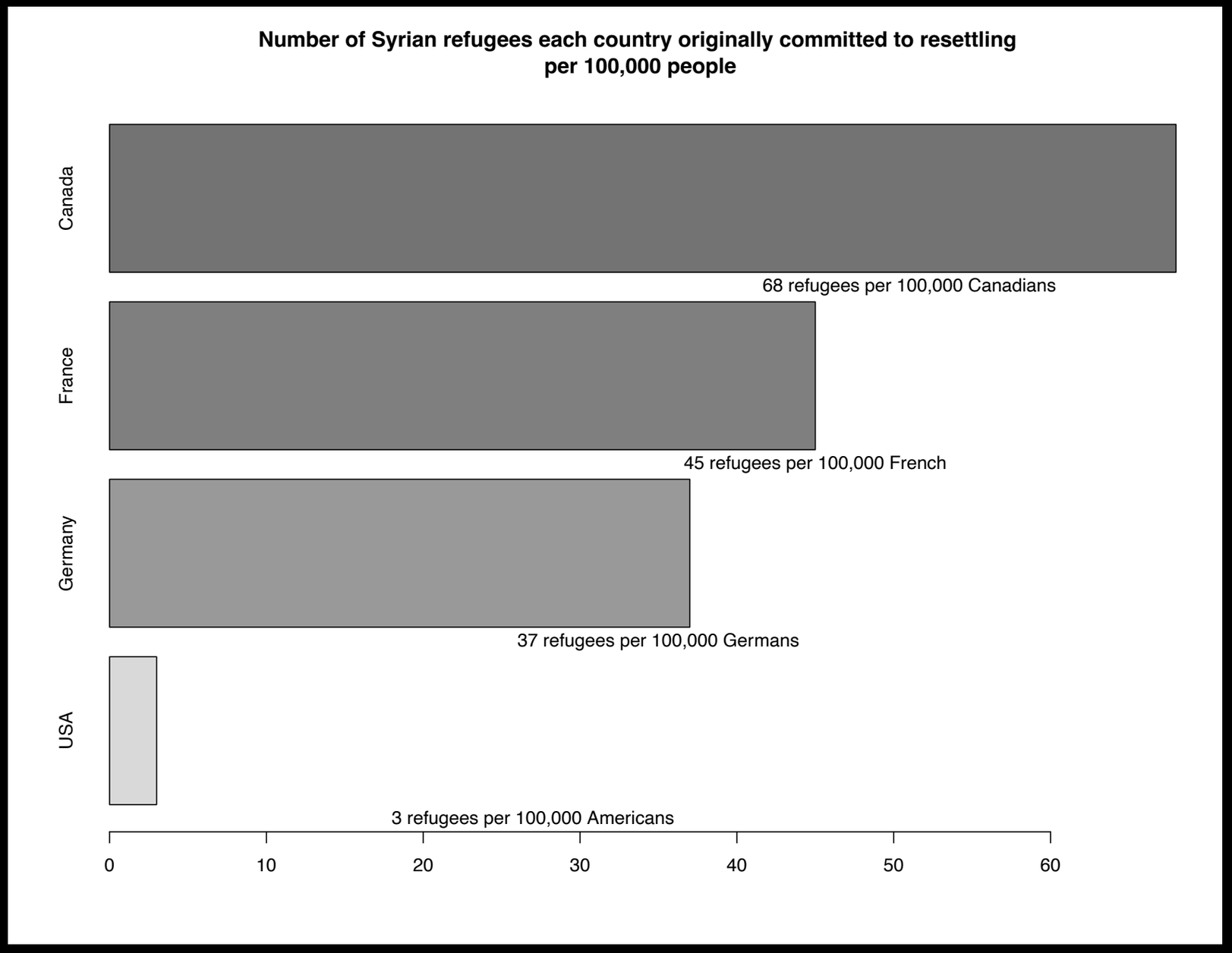
EMPATHY TREATMENT

- Lesson plan from Pulitzer Center:
- “Imagine you are a refugee fleeing persecution in a war-torn country:
    - What would you take with you?
    - Where would you flee to?
    - What do you feel would be the biggest challenge for you?”

THE INFORMATION TREATMENT

INFORMATIONAL TREATMENT

Did you know?



BEHAVIORAL OUTCOME MEASURE

The next President of the United States will have important decisions to make about how to deal with the Syrian refugee crisis. Would you be interested in expressing your support for refugees to the next President of the United States in an anonymous forum?

“**Give me your tired**, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

“**Don’t be a douche**. Help these poor people.”

“**Dear POTUS**, I express my support of refugees coming to the United States. Especially the women and children, they need food and healthcare. Thanks so much.”

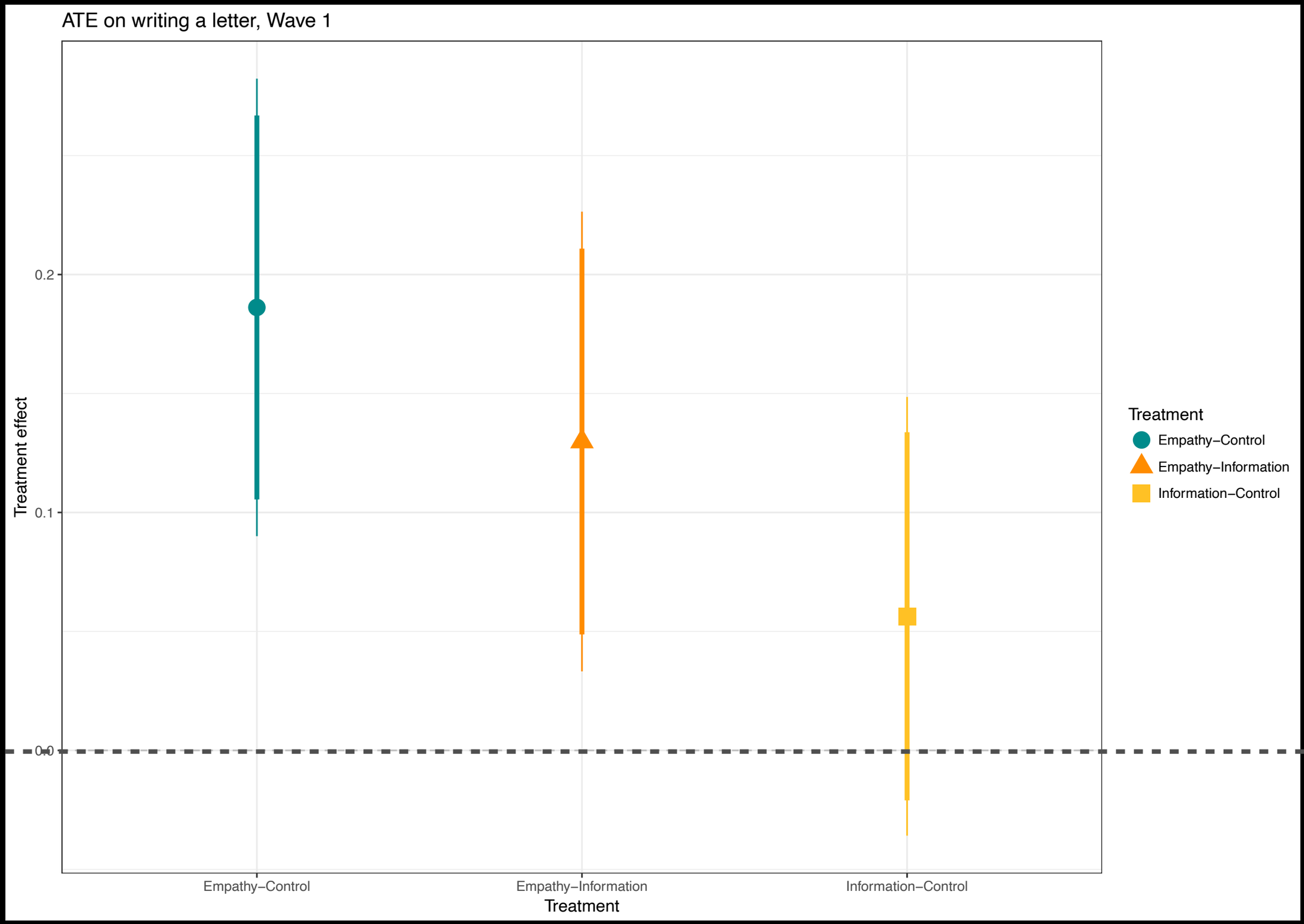
“**Don’t do it**. We are over crowded and can’t even take care of our own. We have homeless veterans on our streets and can’t help them. How do we have money to help immigrants **who will potentially blow us up** in the end? It’s a waste of our resources! Even passing a background check you can’t measure their true intention! I would much rather see the US help US citizens instead of refugees. I’m scared to leave my home. There are refugees everywhere and they are rude and treat me like I’m invading their space! They’re invading mine! I held the door open for one at a department store and was called a female dog! Please **save our country**!”

“**I absolutely do not support** accepting refugees into the US. We have people here who are suffering. Help Americans before you help everyone else.”

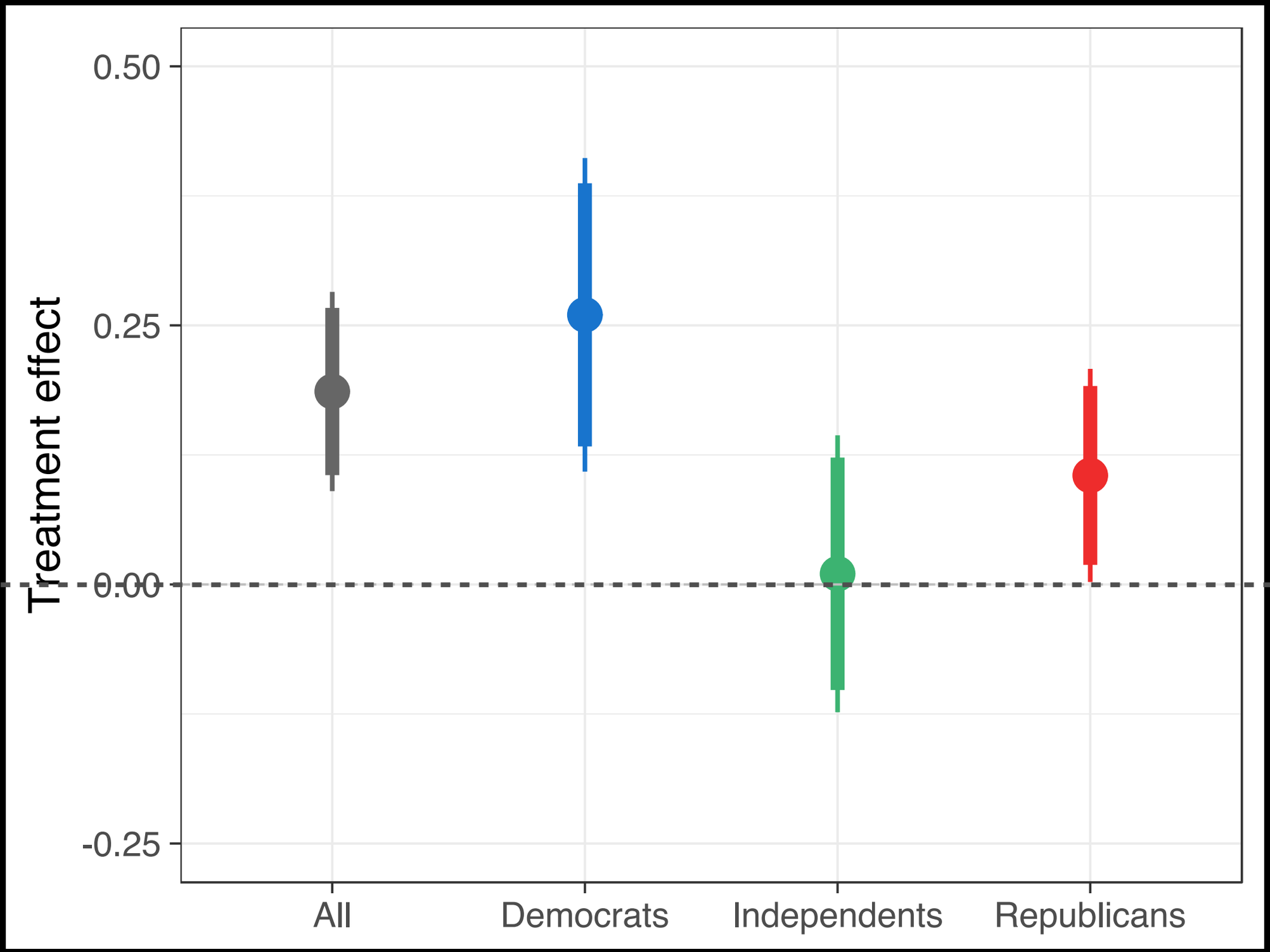
“**Sorry** have no support for them. They should be banned as all **Muslims** should.”

WHAT DID WE **FIND**?

EMPATHY WORKED, INFORMATION DIDN'T



DRIVEN BY **DEMOCRATS**, BUT WORKED ALSO ON REPUBLICANS

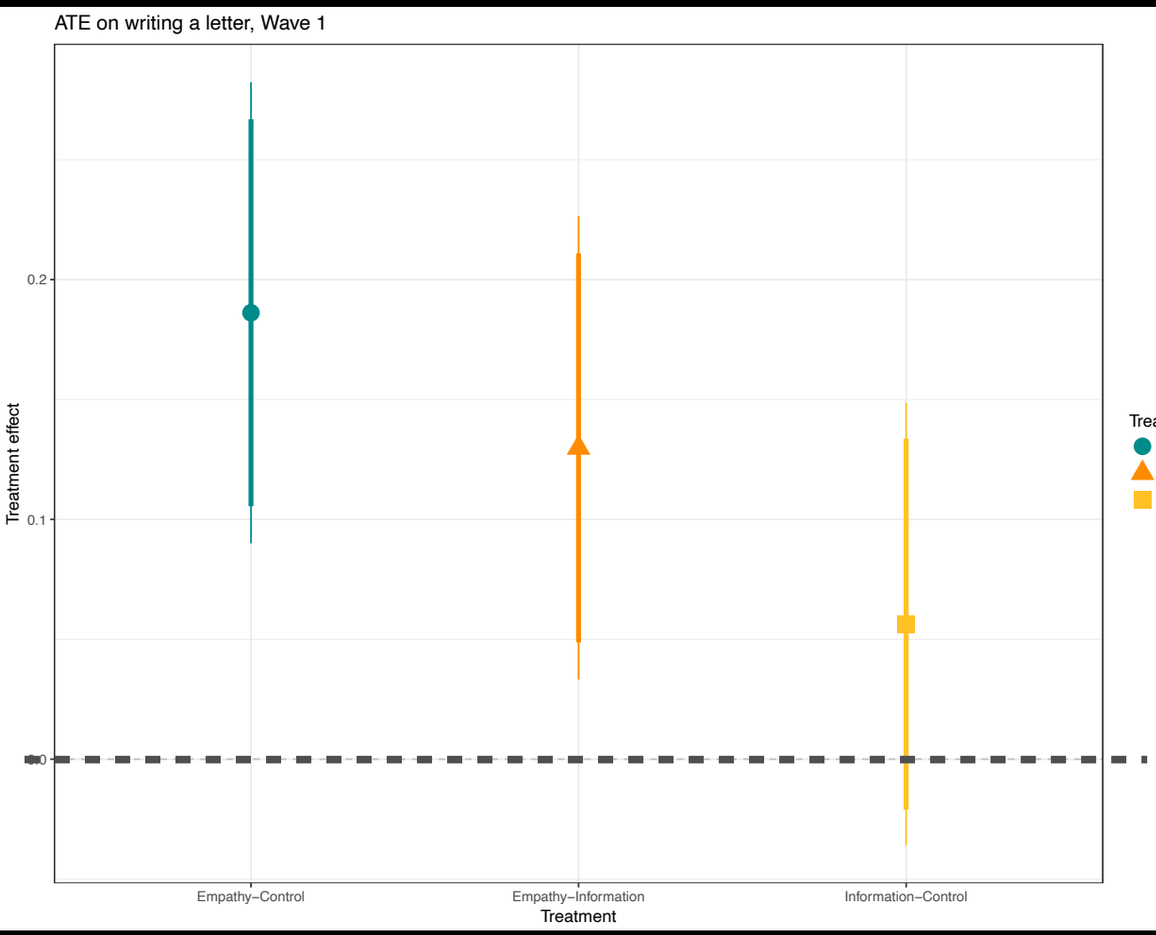


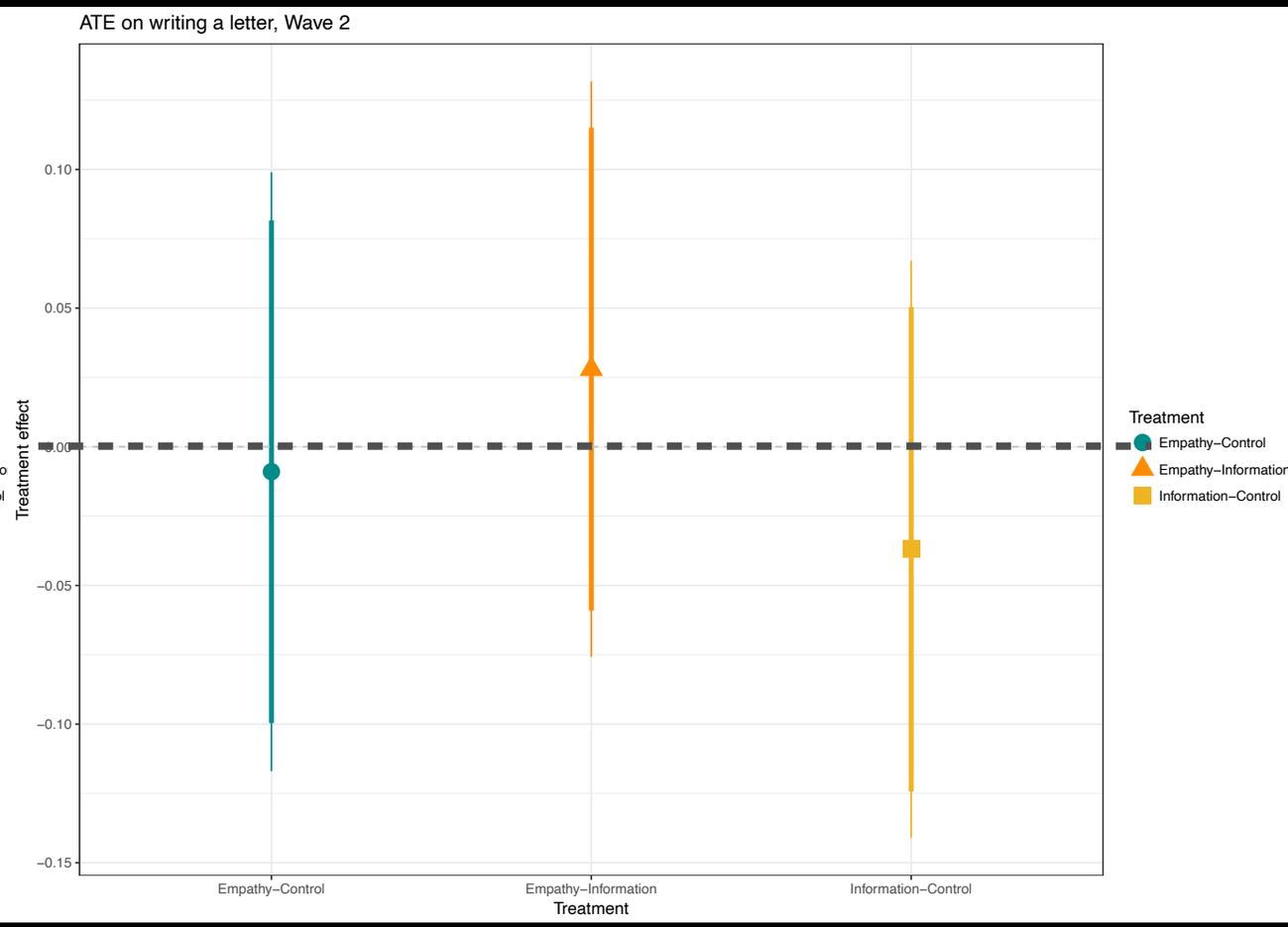
A **SUBSTANTIVE** EFFECT

	CONTROL	EMPATHY INCREASE	SIGNATURES
FULL SAMPLE	18.8%	20.8%	11%	1,500-2,000
DEMOCRATS	23%	34%	50%	8,250-11,000
REPUBLICANS	4.6%	7.4%	60%	2,100-2,800

BUT...

THE EFFECT IS **SHORT-TERM**

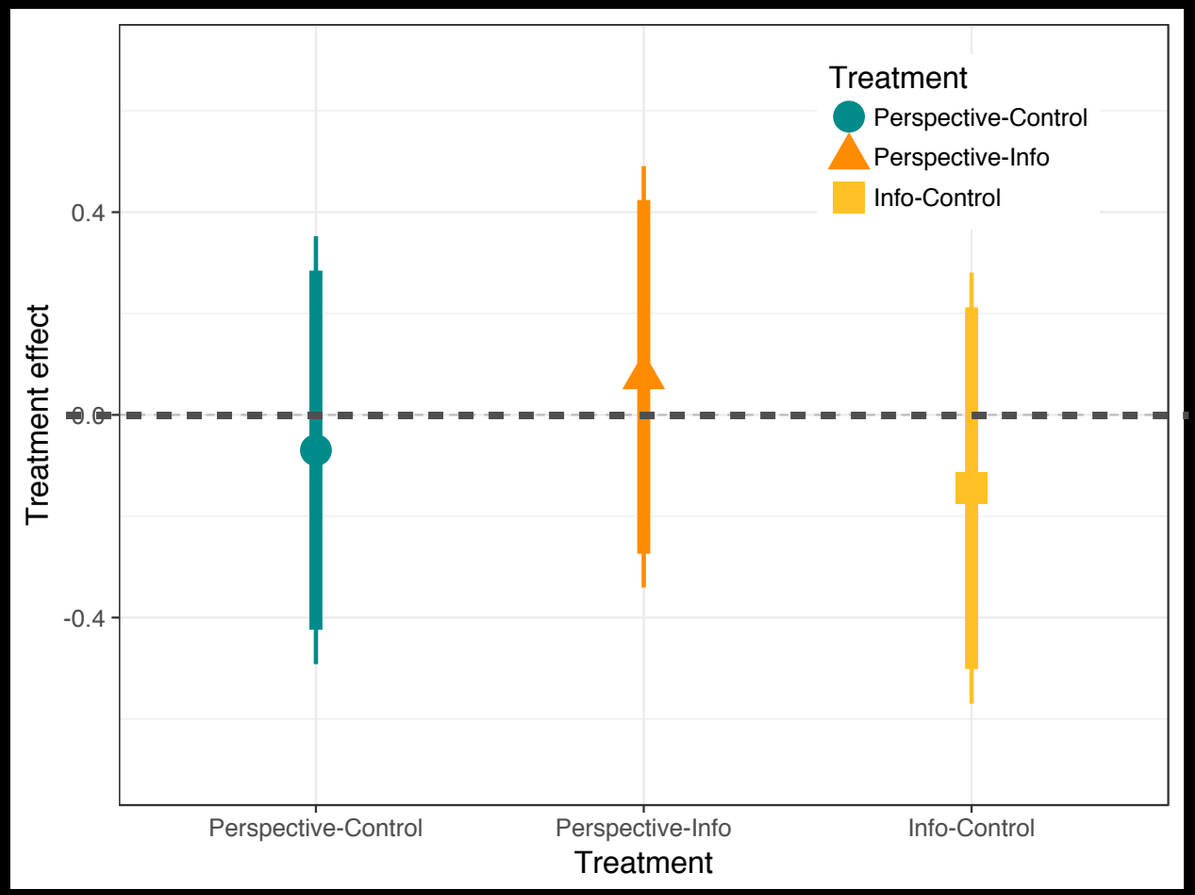




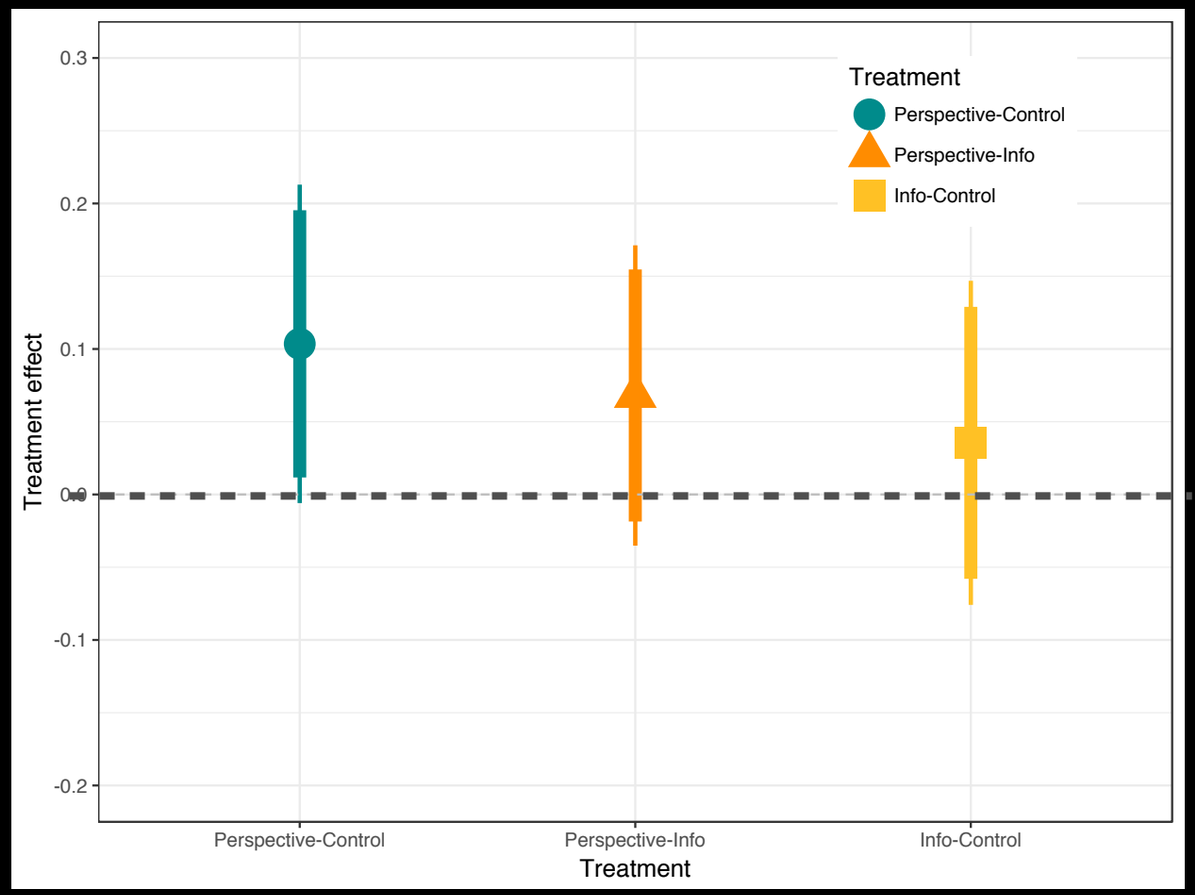
Wave 1

Wave 2

THE EFFECT IS **NOT ATTITUDINAL**



Refugee rating

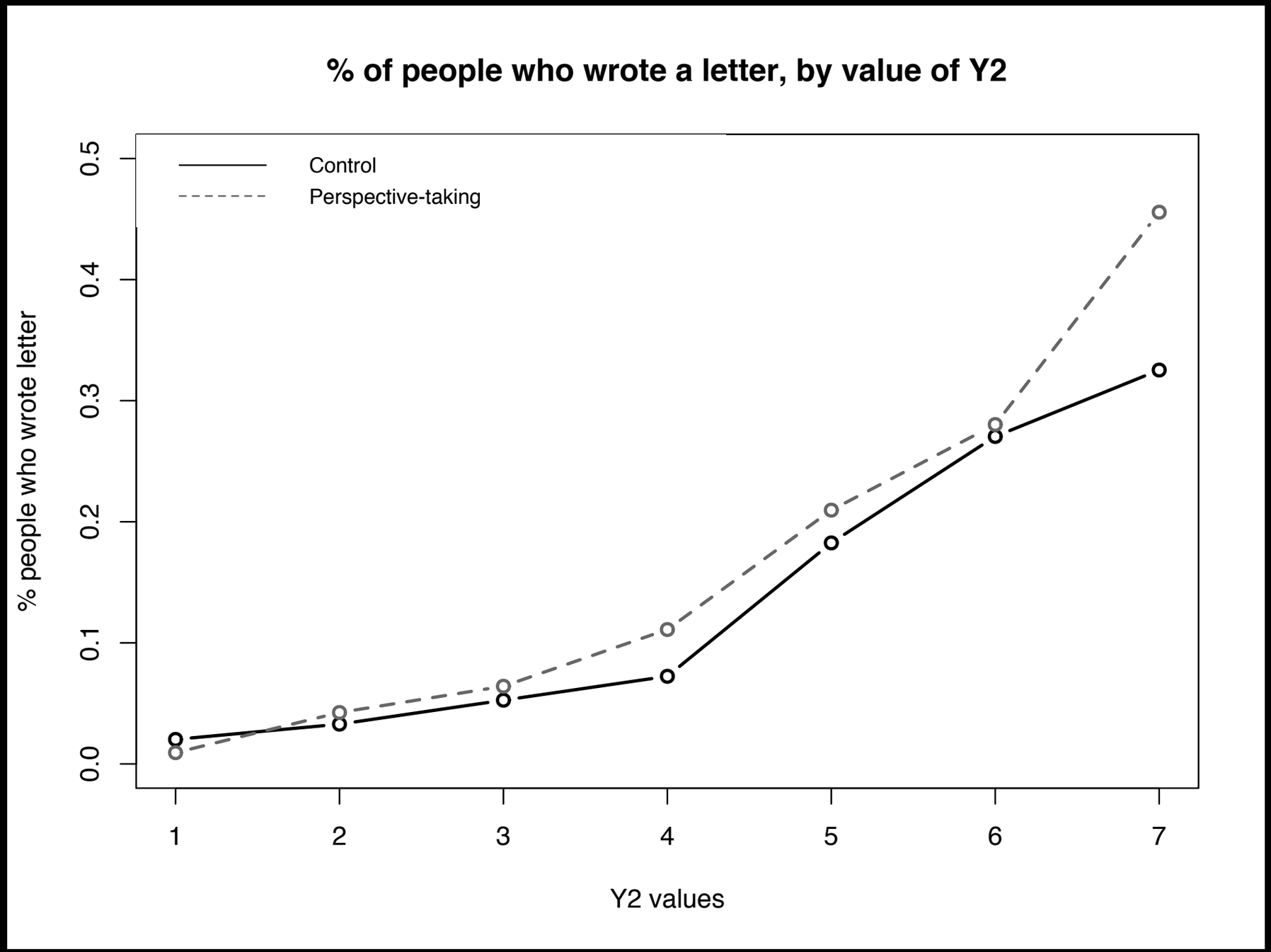


Post-screening

INTERPRETATION: THE NUDGE

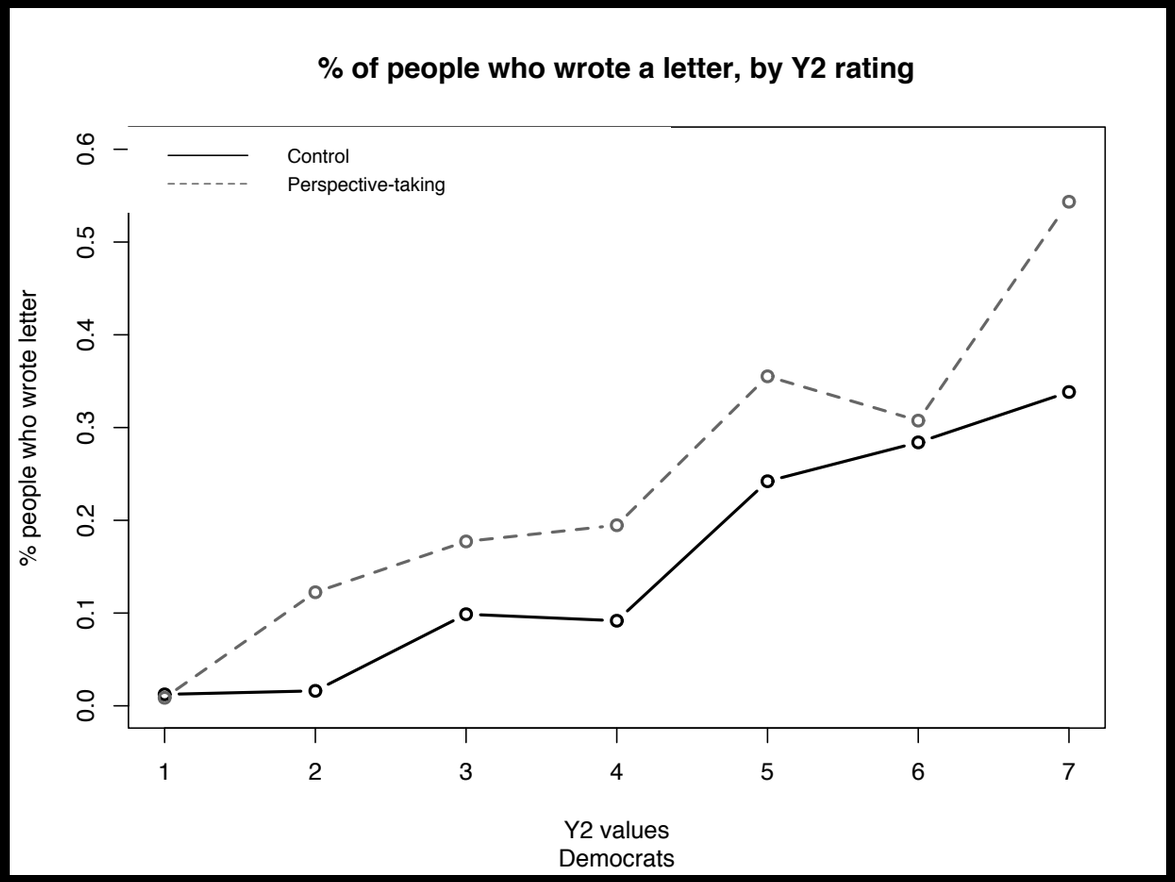
EMPATHY **MOBILIZED**

Probability of writing a positive letter

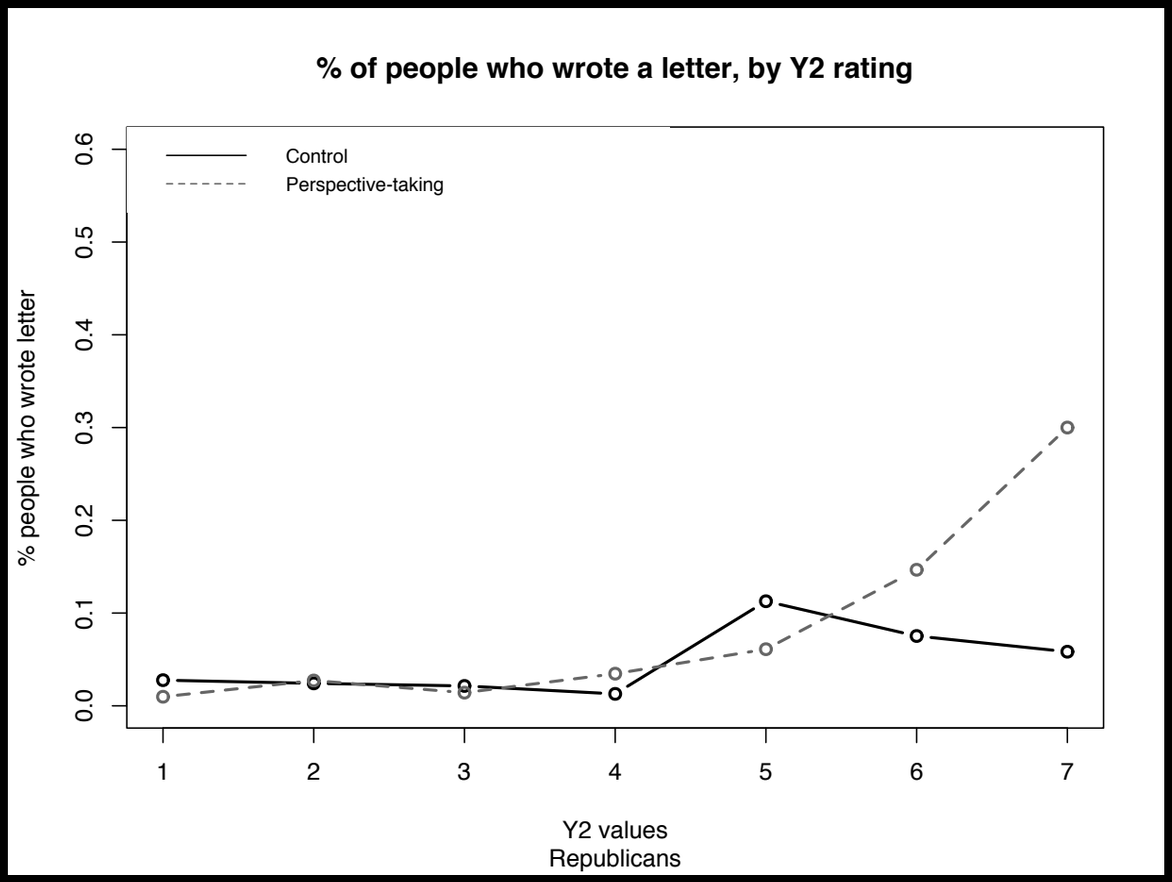


Refugee rating (1: do not admit, 7: admit)

EMPATHY MOBILIZED **BOTH DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS**



Democrats



Republicans

WHAT WE **LEARNED** FROM PNAS (2018)

- An empathy treatment nudged respondents with positive attitudes toward refugees to act
- An informational treatment did no such thing
- BUT
    - This is one result in one experiment
    - We didn’t change anyone’s mind

APSR (2021)

- United States thinks of itself as a “nation of immigrants”
- What happens when we remind Americans that (most of them) were once immigrants?

ATTITUDES TOWARD **IMMIGRATION**

Do you agree or disagree that the United States should limit the number of immigrants entering the country? (From 1, Strongly Agree, to 7, Strongly Disagree)

A SIMPLE PRIME: CONTROL

Do you agree or disagree that the United States should limit the number of immigrants entering the country? (From 1, Strongly Agree, to 7, Strongly Disagree)

Which was the first generation in your family to arrive in America?

A SIMPLE PRIME: **TREATMENT**

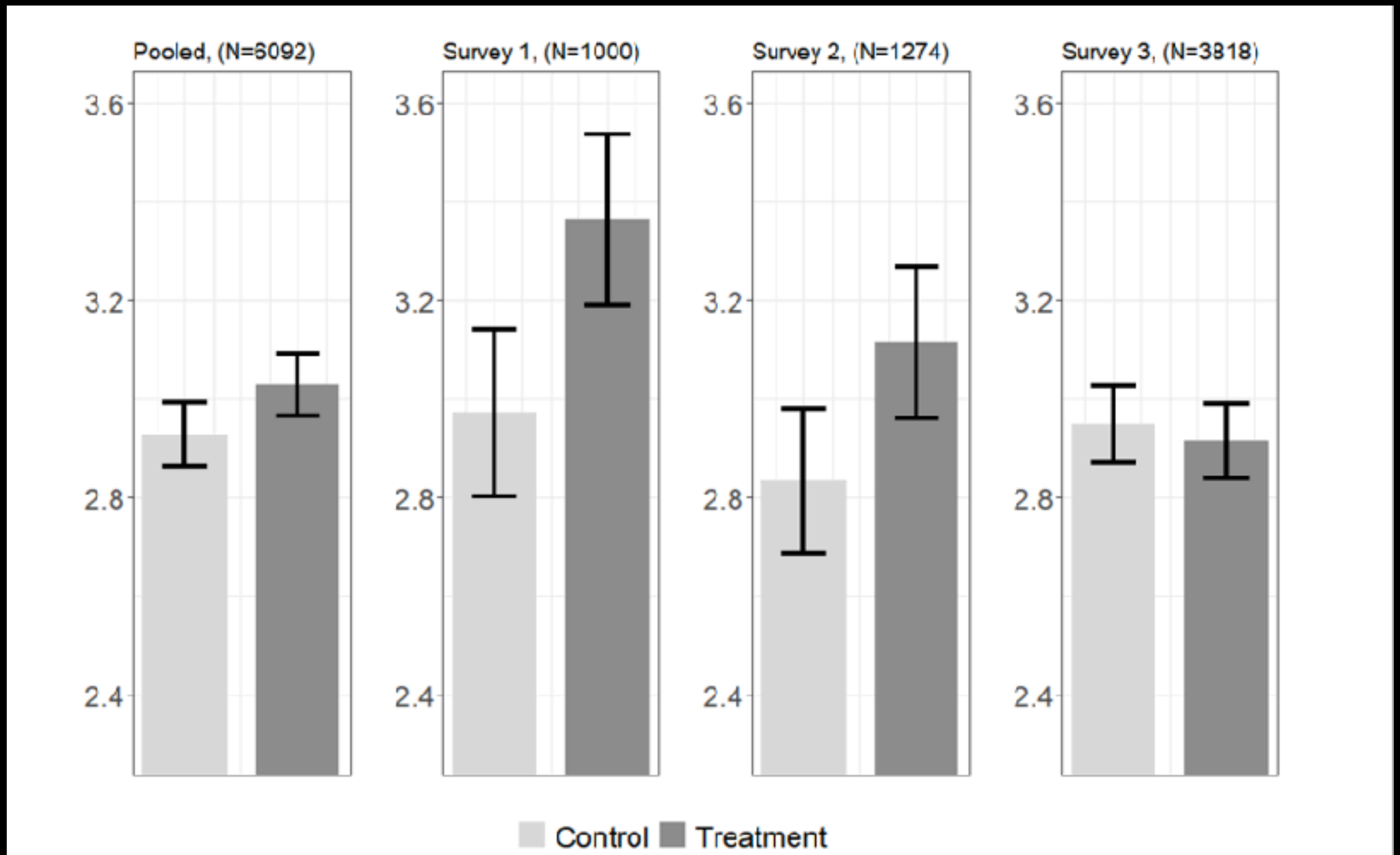
Which was the first generation in your family to arrive in America?

Do you agree or disagree that the United States should limit the number of immigrants entering the country? (From 1, Strongly Agree, to 7, Strongly Disagree)

REPEAT THIS IN **THREE** STUDIES

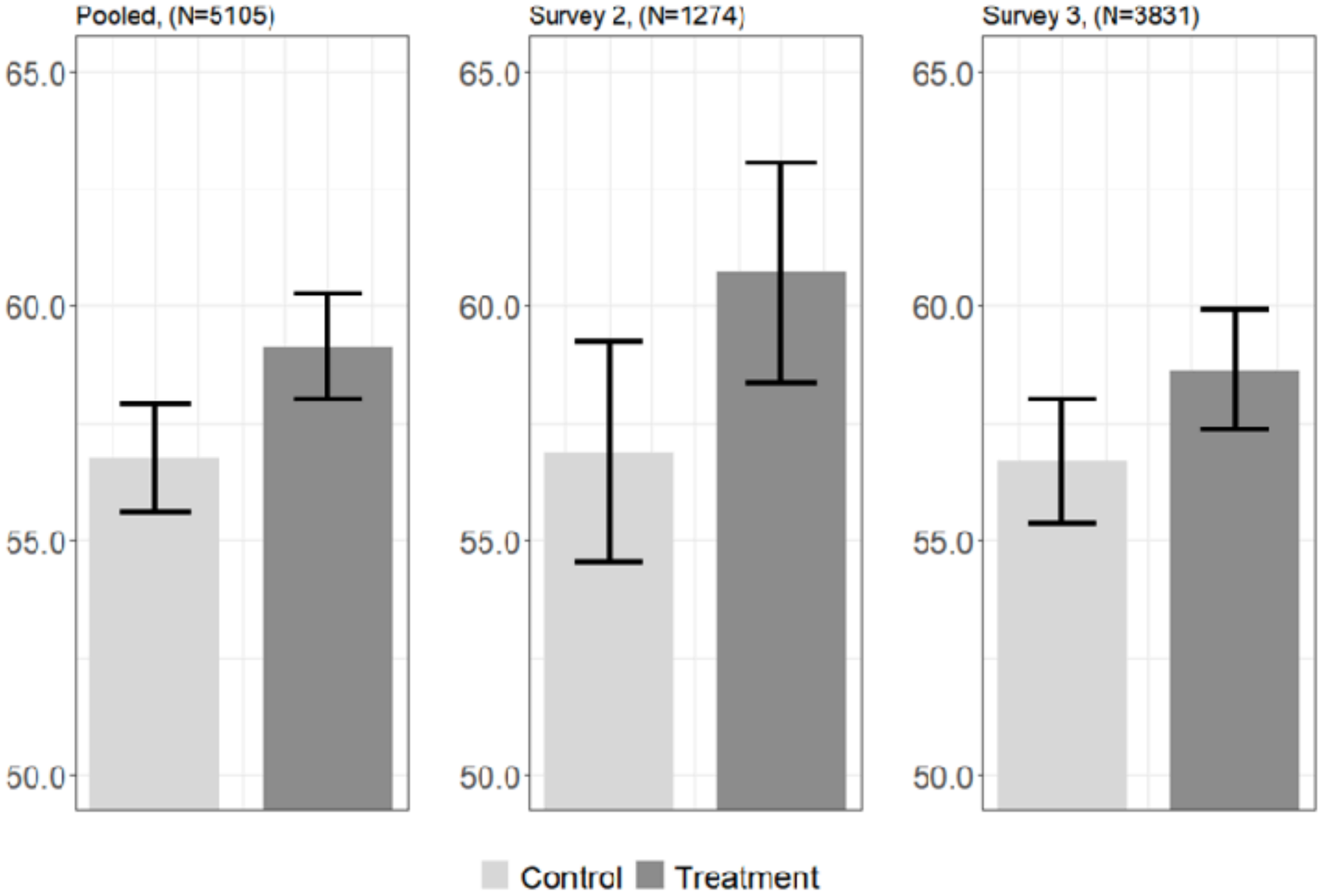
- March 2017
  - Outcome: Support for more open immigration policy (1-7)
  - N=1000
- April 2019
  - Outcome: Support for more open immigration policy (1-7); warmth toward immigrants (0-100)
  - N=1274
- November 2019
  - Outcome: Support for more open immigration policy (1-7); warmth toward immigrants (0-100)
  - N=3818

PRIMING FAMILY HISTORY **INCREASES SUPPORT** FOR MORE OPEN IMMIGRATION POLICY



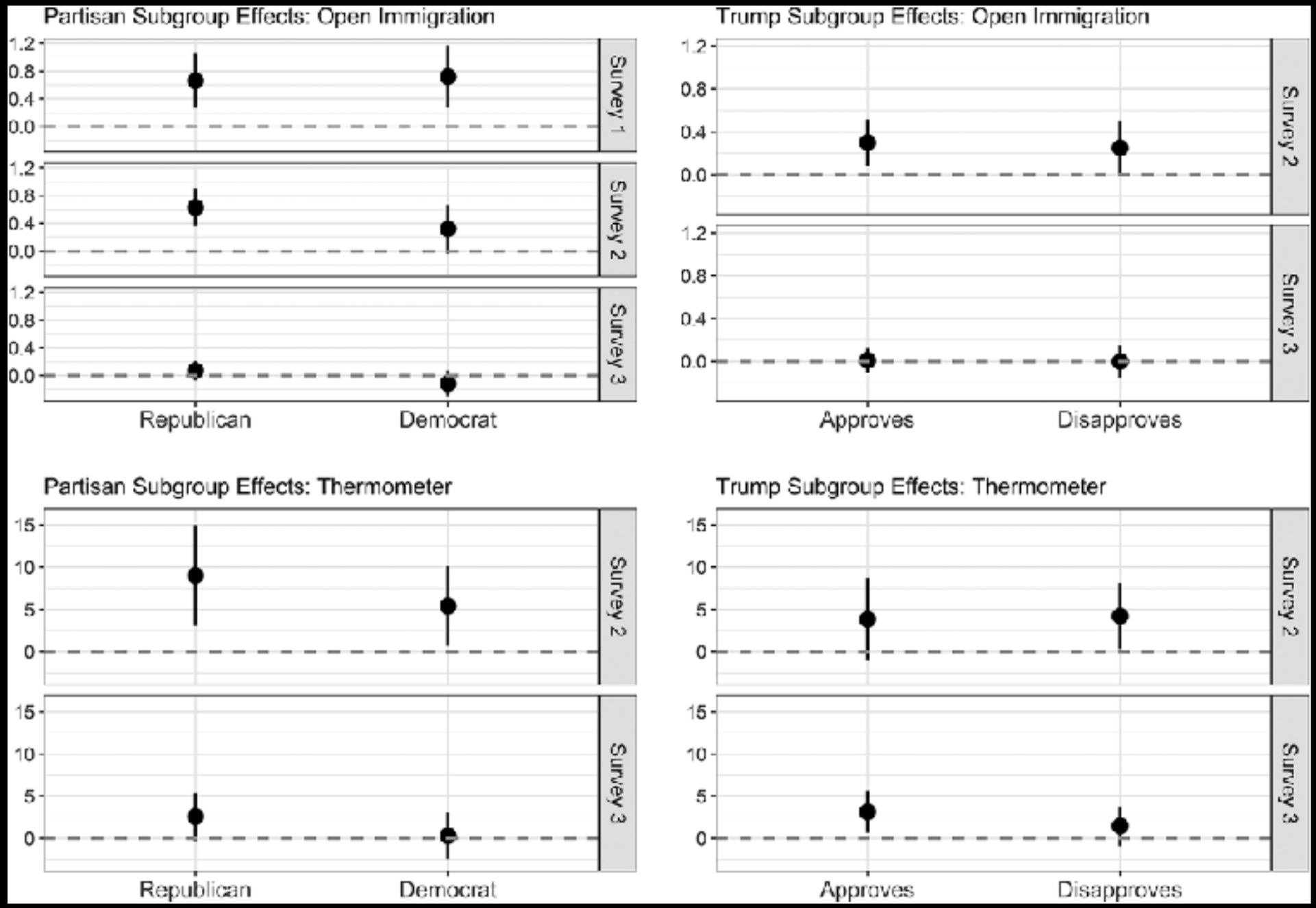
Note: Displays mean responses by treatment group for question: Do you agree or disagree that the United States should limit the number of immigrants entering the country? Scale ranges from 1 to 7, with 7 indicating support for more open immigration policies. 95% c.i.

PRIMING FAMILY HISTORY INCREASES WARMTH TOWARD IMMIGRANTS

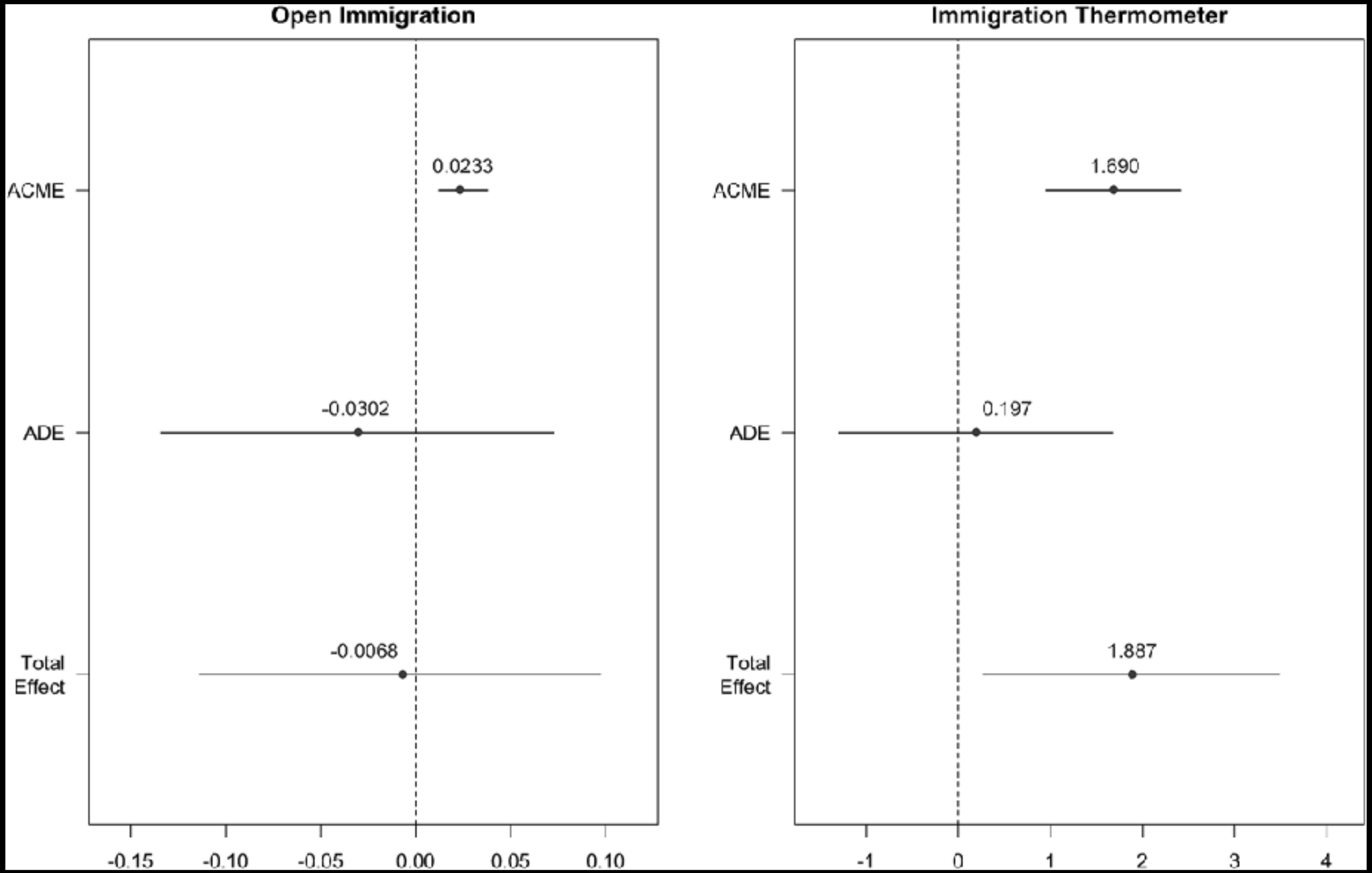


Note: Displays mean responses by treatment group for question: On a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means "completely unfavorable" and 100 means "completely favorable," how would you describe your views of immigrants in the United States? 95% c.i.

EFFECT WORKED ON REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS



EFFECT WORKED VIA EMPATHY



PSMR (2025)

- A three-study buildup to test the inclusionary effects of:
    - The most salient piece of information possible
    - The hardest test of empathy possible
- Doing this addresses important critiques that:
    - Information interventions may not work because the information is neither new nor salient
    - Empathy interventions work only on folks we already feel close to (empathy bias)

THREE-STUDY DESIGN

STUDY 1	STUDY 2	STUDY 3
IDENTIFY NEW AND SALIENT INFORMATION ABOUT REFUGEES	IDENTIFY A HARD TEST FOR EMPATHY	TEST THESE INTERVENTIONS INDEPENDENTLY AND JOINTLY
FALL 2019	SPRING 2021	FALL 2021
N=3840	N=2011	N=9407
NOT PRE-REGISTERED	NOT PRE-REGISTERED	PREREGISTERED

STUDY 1

- What do Americans know about refugees? Not much
    - They under-estimate the proportion who are women and children
    - They over-estimate the proportion who are Muslim
    - They underestimate the amount of vetting they go through
        - Folks who get this wrong have more excluding attitudes toward refugees and refugee policy

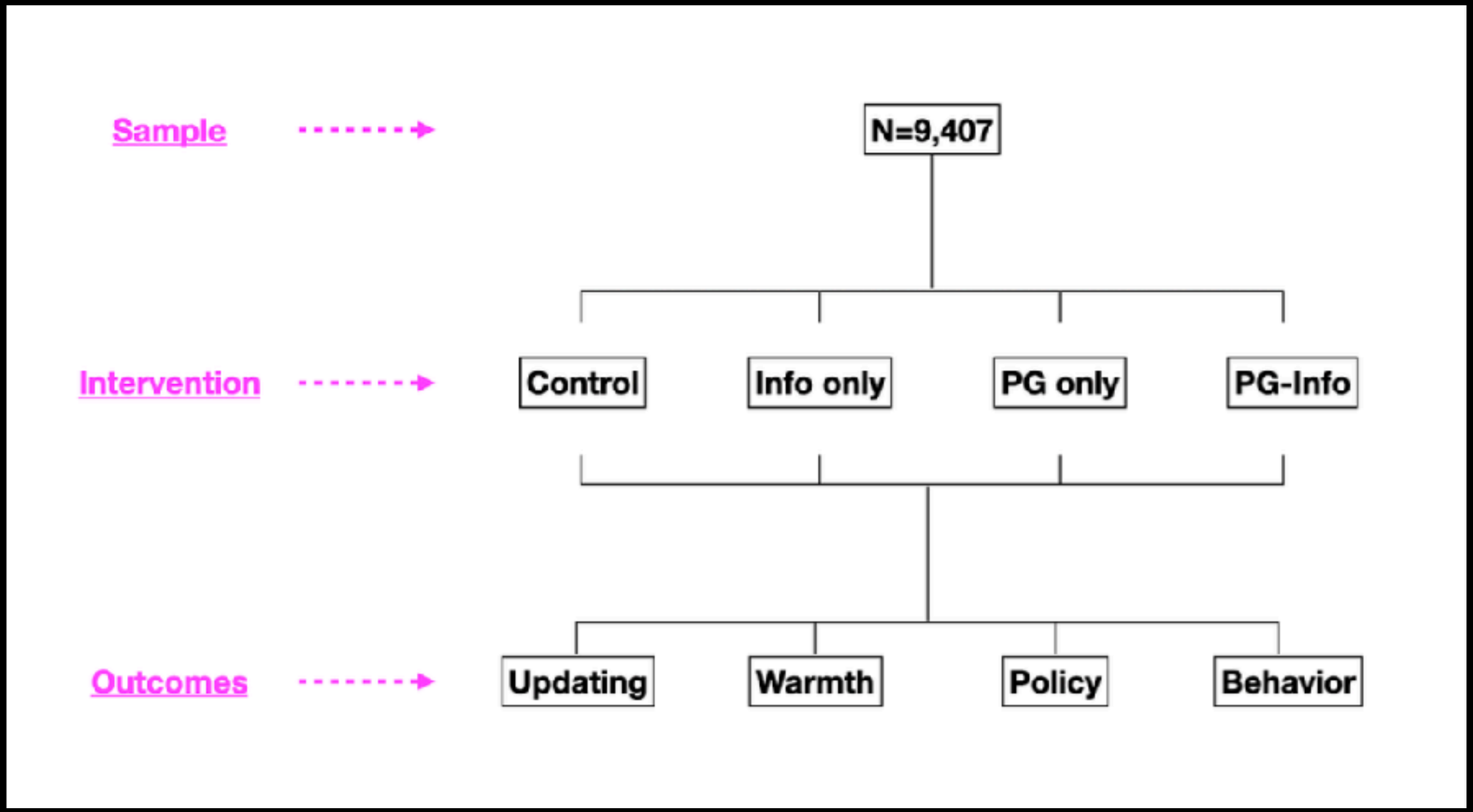
STUDY 2

- Do Americans' response to a perspective-getting exercise vary with the identify of the protagonist?
    - A refugee
    - A Muslim
    - A Muslim refugee
- Perspective-getting works less well on a Muslim refugee

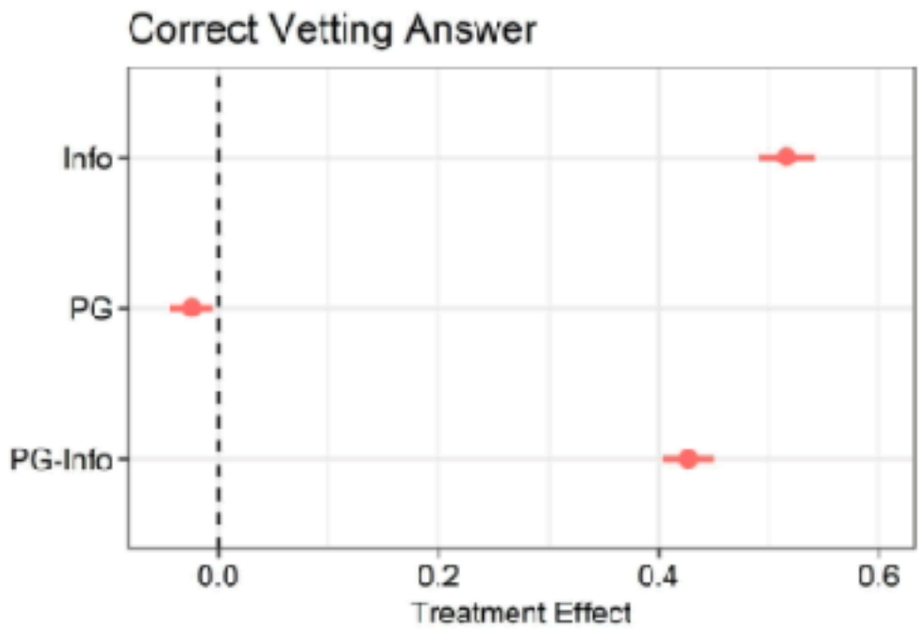
STUDY 3

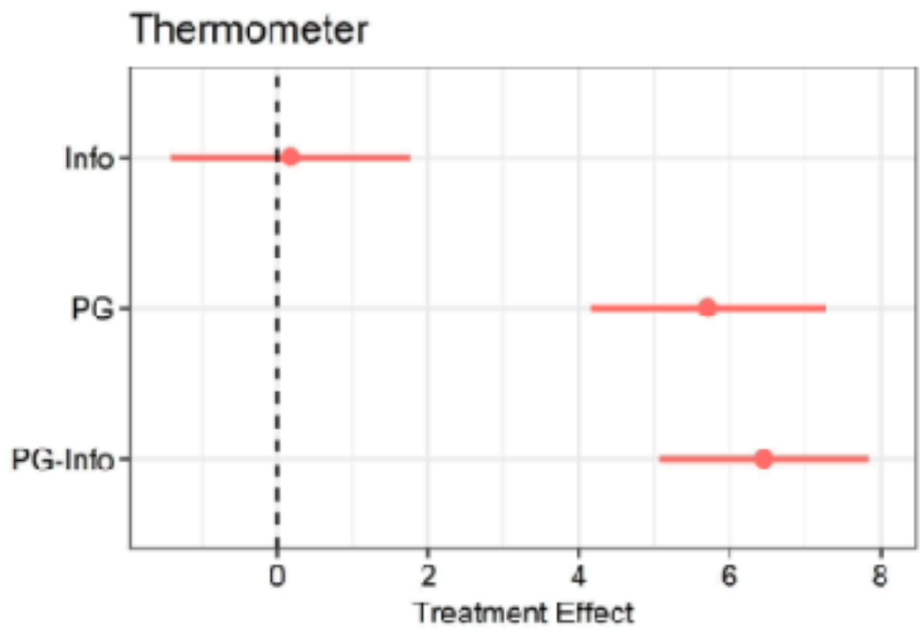
- We have a new and salient piece of information: how many months of security vetting a refugee goes through
- We have a hard test for empathy
- We can now test how well each intervention works, and whether and how bundling the two works

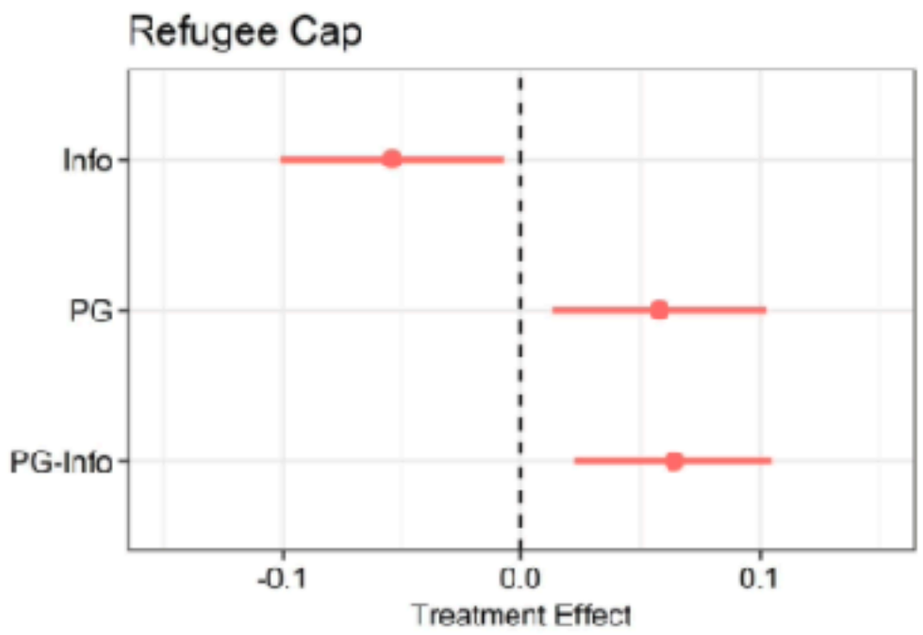
STUDY 3 DESIGN

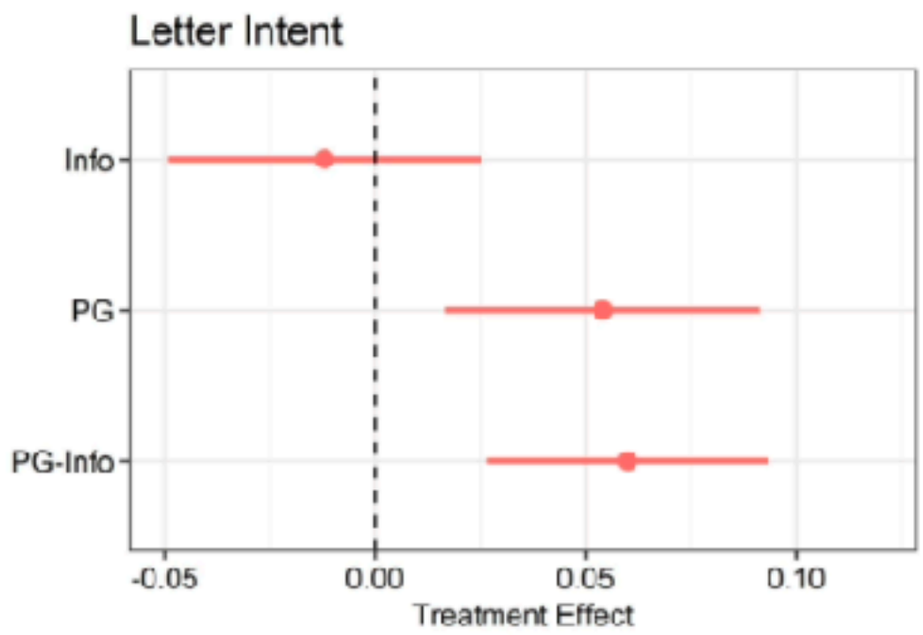


STUDY 3 RESULTS









CONCLUSION

- There is promise to empathetic approaches to shaping public opinion toward migrants

- But questions remain about the durability and scale-up of such strategies

- What does a policy intervention drawing from these insights look like?