

Partisan Cues and Opinion Formation

(Null) Results from a Pilot Experiment and Designs for Version 2.0

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The Original Experiment: Partisan Cues and Opinion Formation on Immigration

Questions of Interest

1. To what extent do partisan cues drive opinions on immigration reform?
2. Does induced deliberation cause subjects to overcome partisan motivated reasoning?
3. How does anticipated social interaction moderate demand for information about immigration reform?

Experimental Design

- Partisan Cue Manipulation (2 levels)
- Expectation of justification (4 levels)
- Access to information (2 levels)

Somewhat recently, the U.S. Senate passed an immigration reform bill. A majority of Senate Democrats voted in favor of the bill, and a majority of Senate Republicans voted against the bill. The House of Representatives has not yet considered the Senate bill.

On the next page, you will be asked about your views on immigration reform. You will later be asked to explain your views on immigration reform in a paragraph or two [to a Republican/Democrat]. Before moving on, would you like to read statements on immigration reform from either political party or facts on U.S. immigration from independent experts? Please select any sources of information that you would like provided.

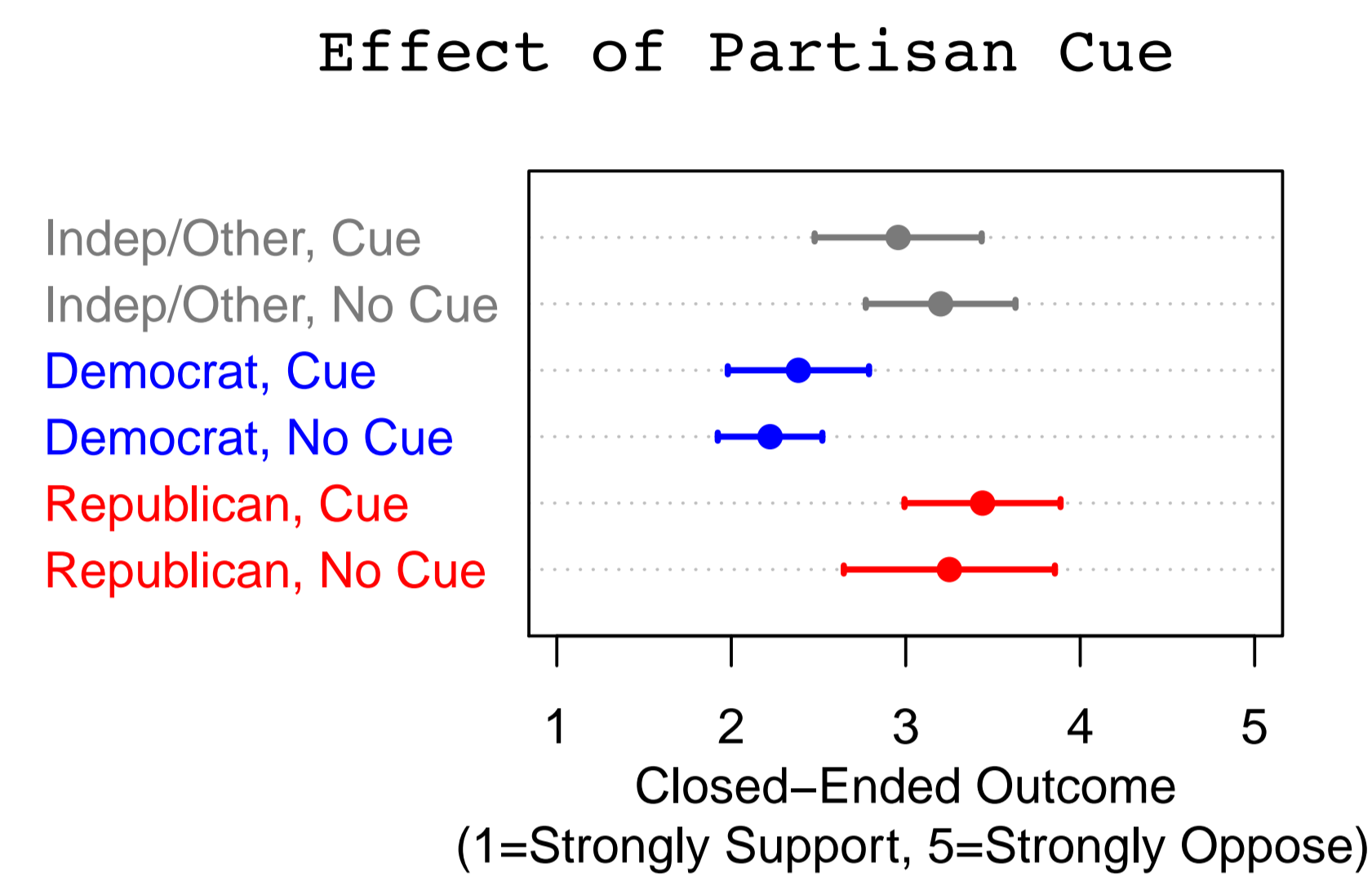
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Outcome (closed): Do you support comprehensive immigration reform similar to that recently passed by the Senate?

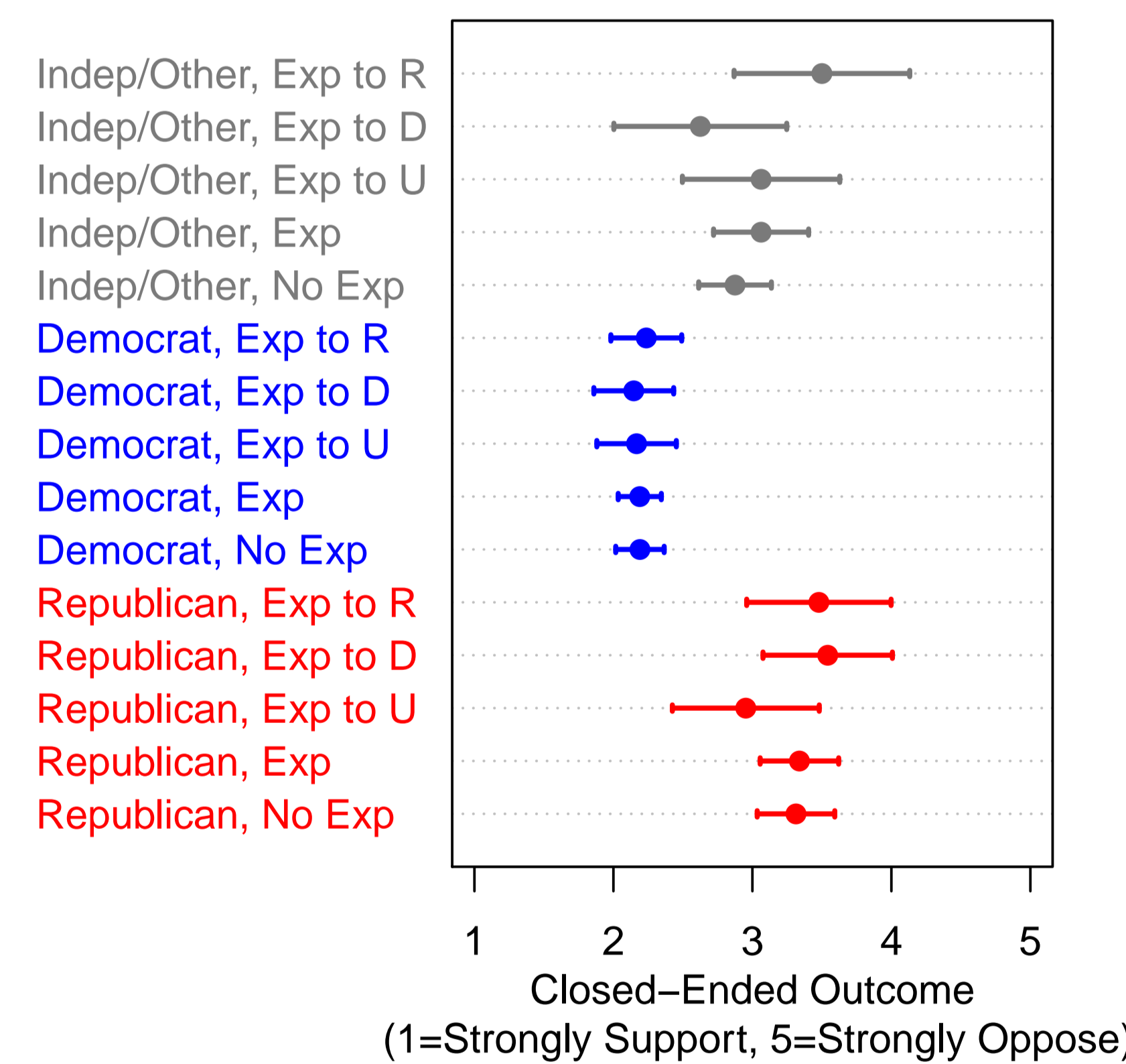
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Outcome (open): In a paragraph or two, please explain why you [strongly/somewhat support/oppose] immigration reform?

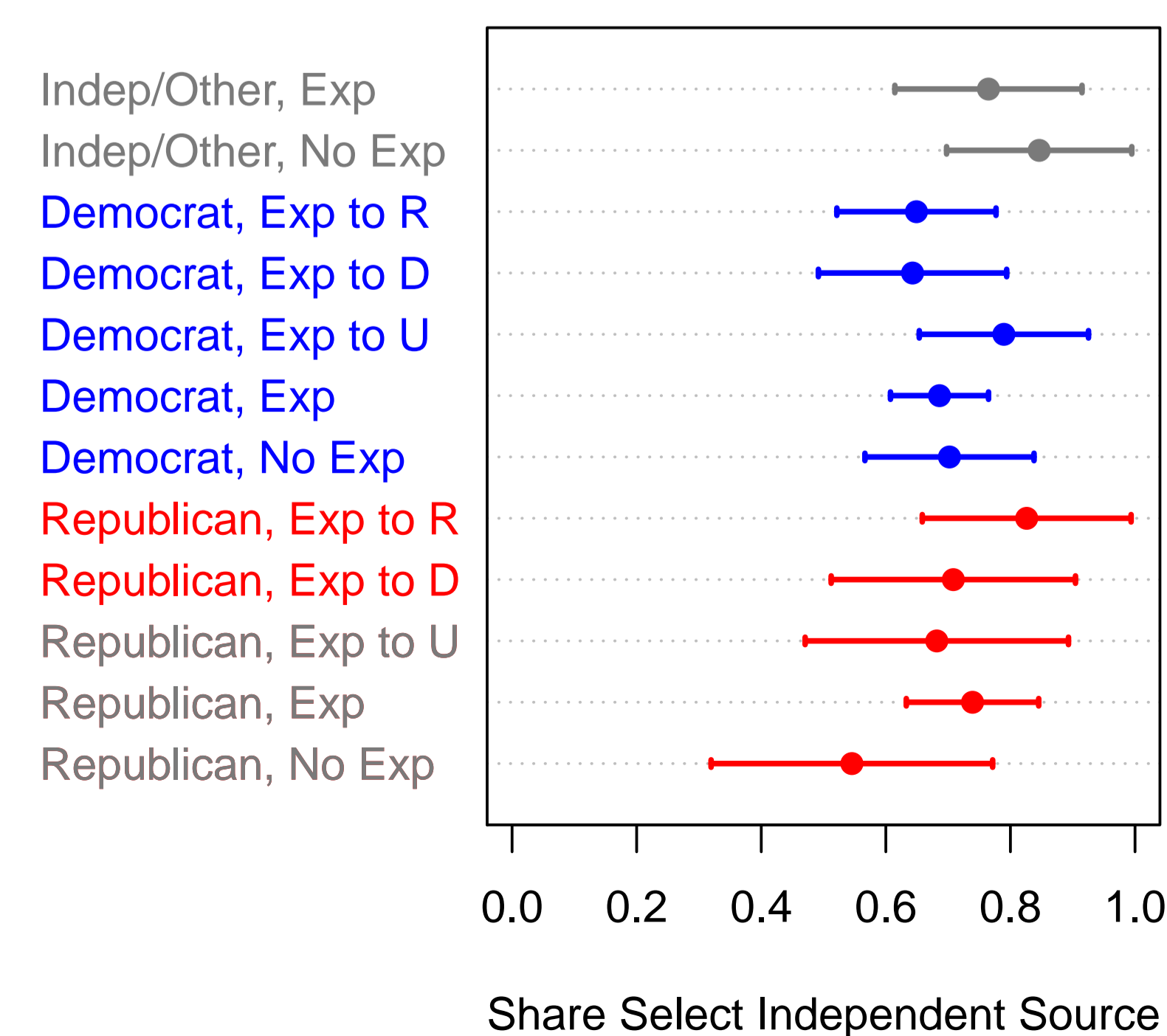
Results (closed-ended)



Effect of Expectation of Justification



Effect on Information-Seeking Behavior



Results (open-ended)

From a structural topic model (Roberts et al. 2014a, 2014b), we identify two interesting and prominent topics:

1. Deserve a chance (chanc, lot, child, everyth, judgment, togeth, treat, hard, given, good)
2. Border/national security (secur, law, border, system, plan, undocu, realli, worker, creat, rule)

Example responses

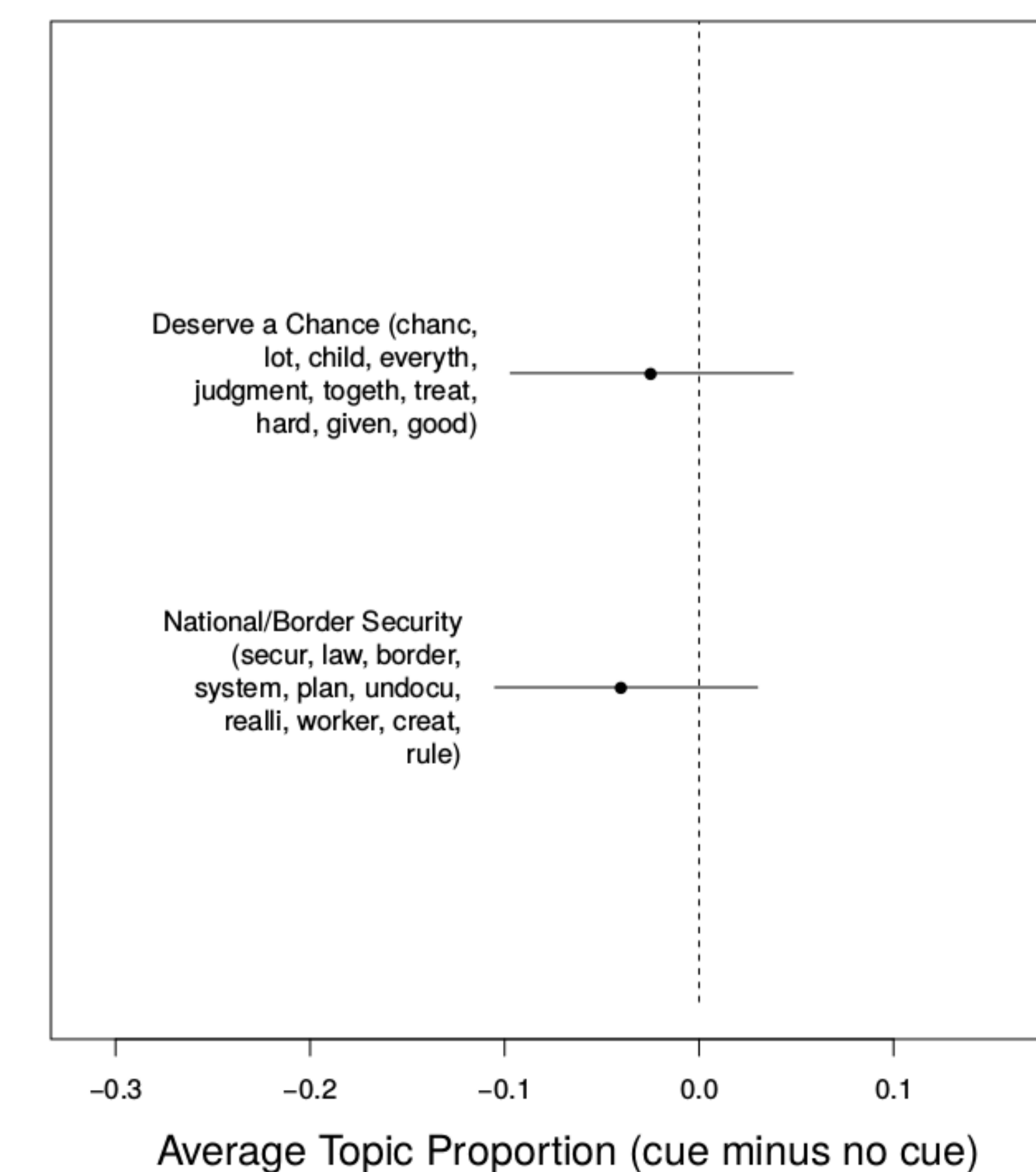
Deserve a chance

"I strongly support immigration reform because immigrants from other countries should be given a chance to live their lives here in America... This is a country where all should be given an equal chance."

Border/national security

"Any immigration reform without a concrete plan to secure borders is a non-starter for me. The amnesty that Reagan granted was predicated on securing the border... Rewarding those who break the law leads to the conditions found in the countries they tried to escape: lack of rule of law."

Effect of Cue on Topic Proportion



Version 2.0: The Remix

Experimental Design

- Issue Specificity (2 levels)
- Partisan Cue (2 levels)

Do you support passage of a [a comprehensive immigration reform bill/the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act]?

- Support (a majority of Senate Democrats support the measure)
- Neither support nor oppose
- Oppose (a majority of Senate Republicans oppose the measure)
- Please provide me with additional information on this bill

Bibliography

- [1] Roberts, Margaret E., Brandon M. Stewart, Dustin Tingley, Christopher Lucas, Jetson Leder-Luis, Shana Gadarian, Bethany Albertson, and David Rand. "Structural topic models for open-ended survey responses." *The American Journal of Political Science* 58, no. 4 (2014a): 1064–1082.
- [2] Roberts, Margaret E., Brandon M. Stewart and Dustin Tingley. "stm: R Package for Structural Topic Models". R package version 1.0.01 (2014b).

Acknowledgments

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