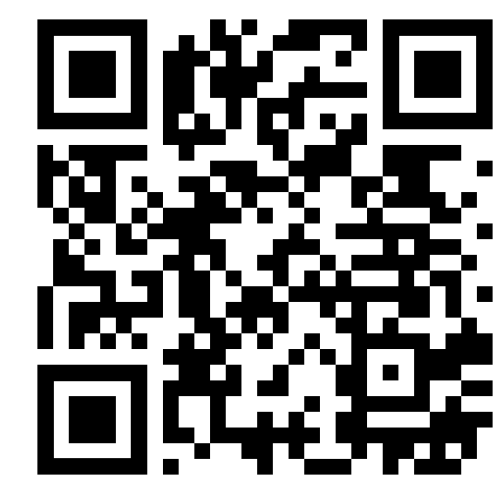


# Prevention or Relief?

## Public Attitudes Toward Disaster Policies



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### BACKGROUND

- Past research has shown that citizens reward incumbents for relief spending in response to disasters, but not for prevention spending (Gailmard & Patty, 2019; Healy & Malhotra, 2009).
- Prevention spending is more effective than relief spending.
- It is not clear whether this reflects the public's true policy preferences.

### PREDICTIONS

1. People prefer relief policies over prevention policies.
2. People will give more attention to deservingness cues in a relief frame than in the prevention frame.

### METHODS

- Data: Amazon Mturk ( $N = 397$ )
- Subjects randomly assigned to read a prevention-frame vignette or the relief-frame vignette.
- Half of the participants in each condition assigned to different deservingness framings: "trying" versus "not trying."
- Participants indicate how likely they are to support the hypothetical policy (+2 being "Very likely," -2 being "Very unlikely").

There is **no** evidence that voters support relief spending over prevention spending.

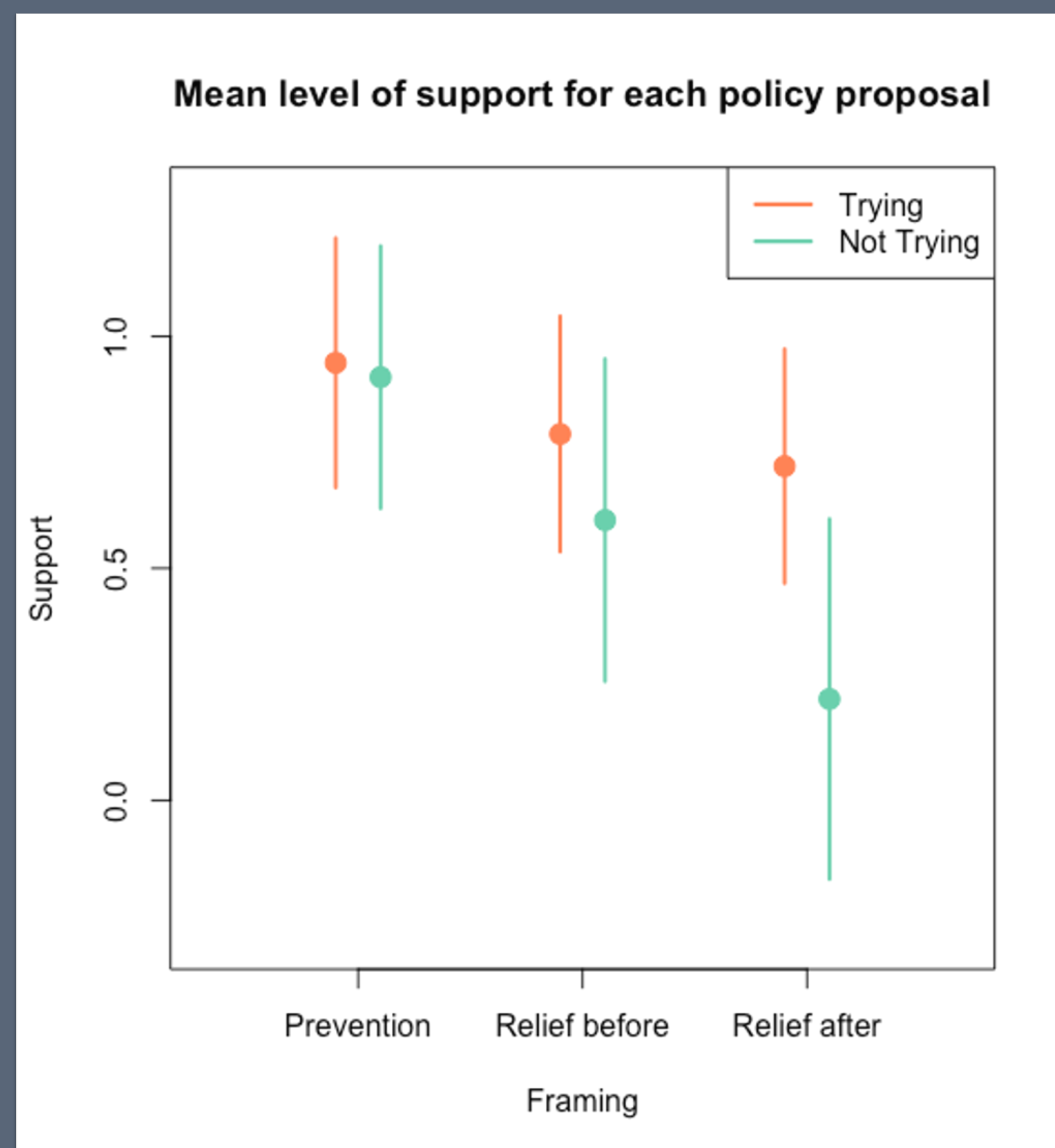


Figure 1

Figure 2  
SURVEY FLOW



### RESULTS SUMMARY

- The level of support for the relief policy is **lower** than the prevention policy. Prediction (1) is not supported. See Figure 1.
- However, this effect seems to be **driven** solely by those in the "Not Trying" treatment group.
- The effect of deservingness cues is **stronger** in the relief (after) frame, but not in the prevention frame. Prediction (2) is supported.

### IMPLICATIONS

- If voters are given the information and the outcomes very explicitly, voters can be convinced to support prevention.

### FUTURE RESEARCH

- Economic game in which real money is at stake. Real people with real "victims."

### KEY REFERENCES

- Gailmard, S., & Patty, J. W. (2019). Preventing prevention. *American Journal of Political Science*, 63(2), 342-352.
- Healy, A., & Malhotra, N. (2009). Myopic voters and natural disaster policy. *American Political Science Review*, 103(3), 387-406.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities  
Small Grant  
Department of Political Science:  
Departmental Scholarship  
Reuben Kline  
James Cragun  
Talbot Andrews