

A process theory of norm information interventions

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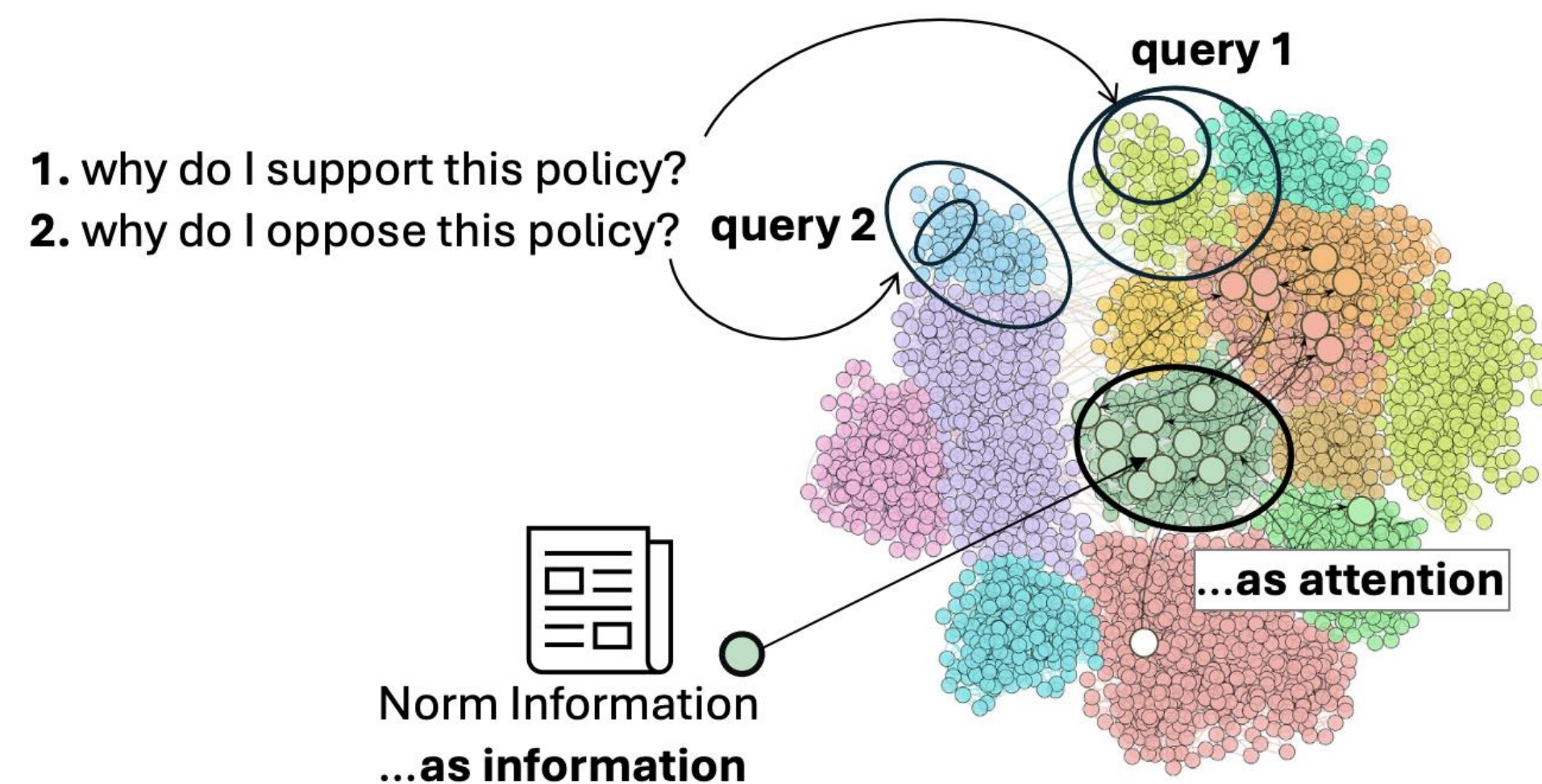
Background

The affect of norm information on individual and collective behaviors and attitudes is studied across the social sciences.

- increasing healthy eating behavior (Mollen et al. 2013)
- increasing tax compliance (Hallsworth et al. 2017)

Norm information interventions are designed to change the evaluative significance of one attitude/behavior over another.

Query theory offers a memory-retrieval process theory of constructed value (Johnson et al. 2007; Weber et al. 2007)



Research Questions

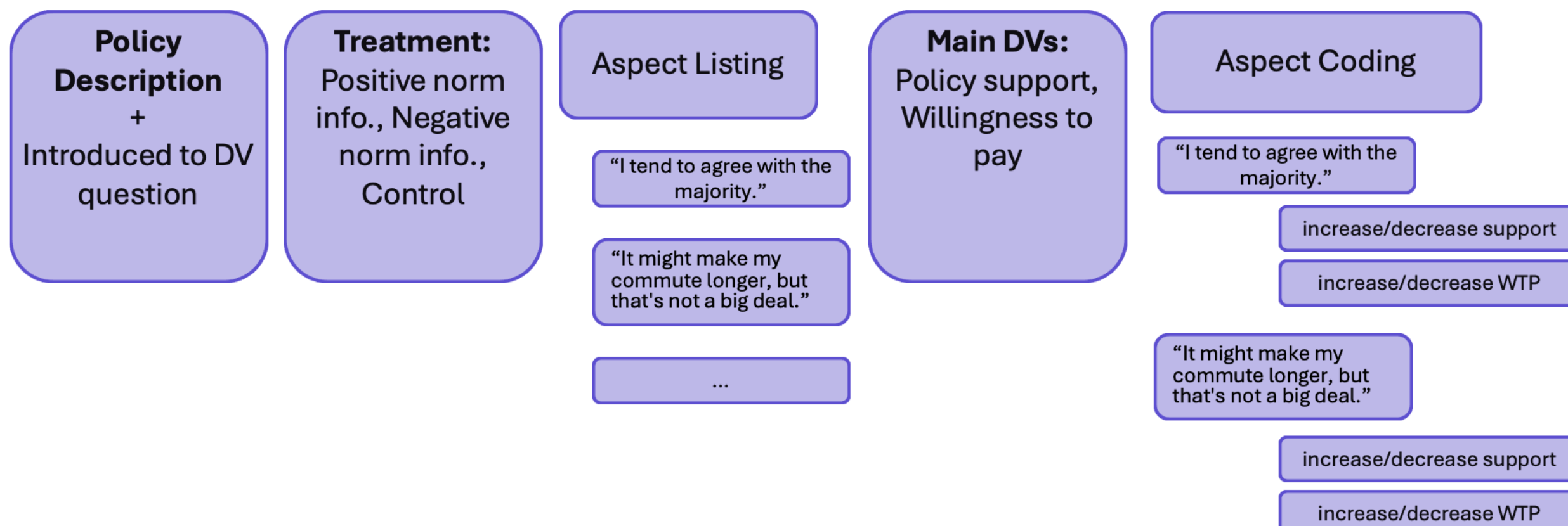
Do norms affect behavior by directing attention or (and) by adding information to the decision process?

Do QT process mechanisms mediate the effect of norm interventions on attitudes/policy support?

Does norm information come up explicitly in aspects? Is the intervention more effective when the norm information is mentioned?

Methods and Materials

Study	Description	Topic	Treatment	Total N
Study 1	Hypothetical policy	Adding a crosswalk	Control, positive norm, negative norm	441
Study 2	Real policy	Energy efficiency; Union rights; CCS investment	Control, positive norm, negative norm	793
Study 3	Real policy + Query order manipulation	CCS investment	Control, negative norm	694
Study 4	Real via tv news	Solar energy investment	Control, positive norm, negative norm	In progress



Results

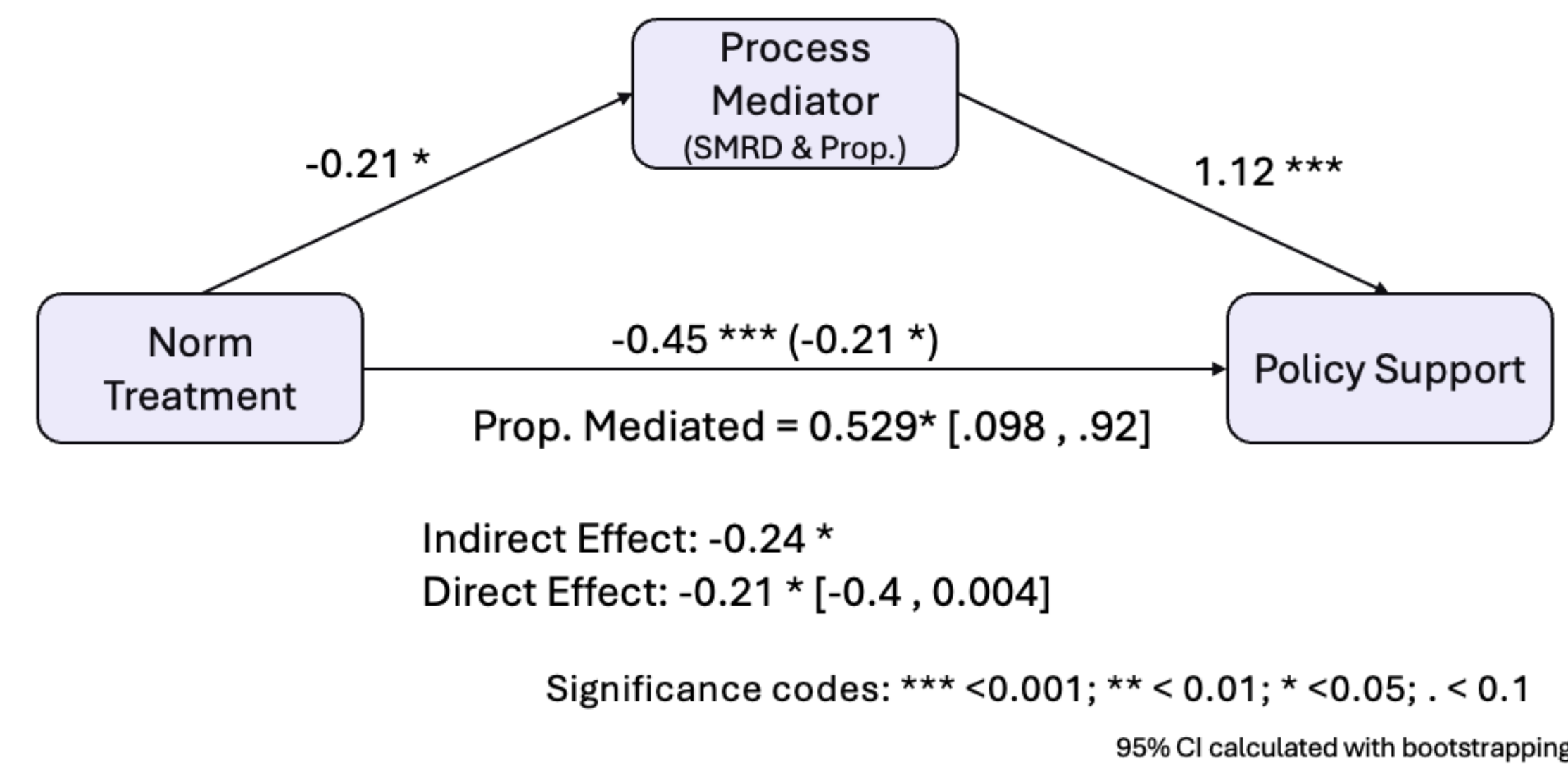
Study 1: Hypothetical Policy

- The proportion of support-increasing aspects is greatest in the support norm condition and least in the oppose norm condition.
 - proportion: $M_{\text{control}} = 0.655$, $M_{\text{pos norm}} = 0.743$, $M_{\text{neg norm}} = 0.580$
 - SMRD: $M_{\text{control}} = 0.35$, $M_{\text{pos norm}} = 0.51$, $M_{\text{neg norm}} = 0.20$
- The combined process factor partially mediates the effect of norm treatment on policy support. Prop. mediated = 0.665*** [0.559, 0.79]
- 16% of people mention the norm information in an aspect. The oppose norm is more prominent than the support norm (M oppose = 0.23, M support = 0.13, $p = 0.06$).

Study 2: Real Policies

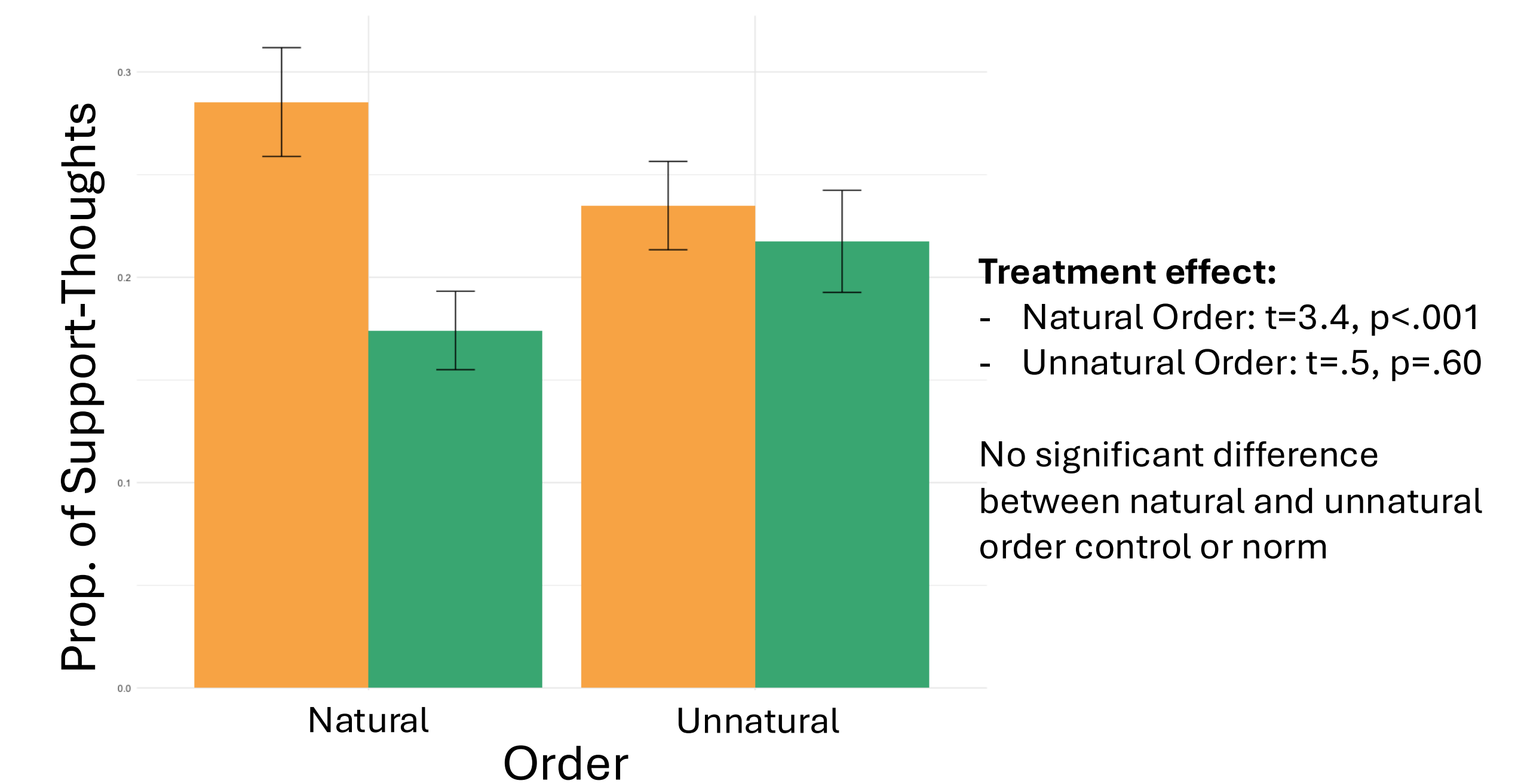
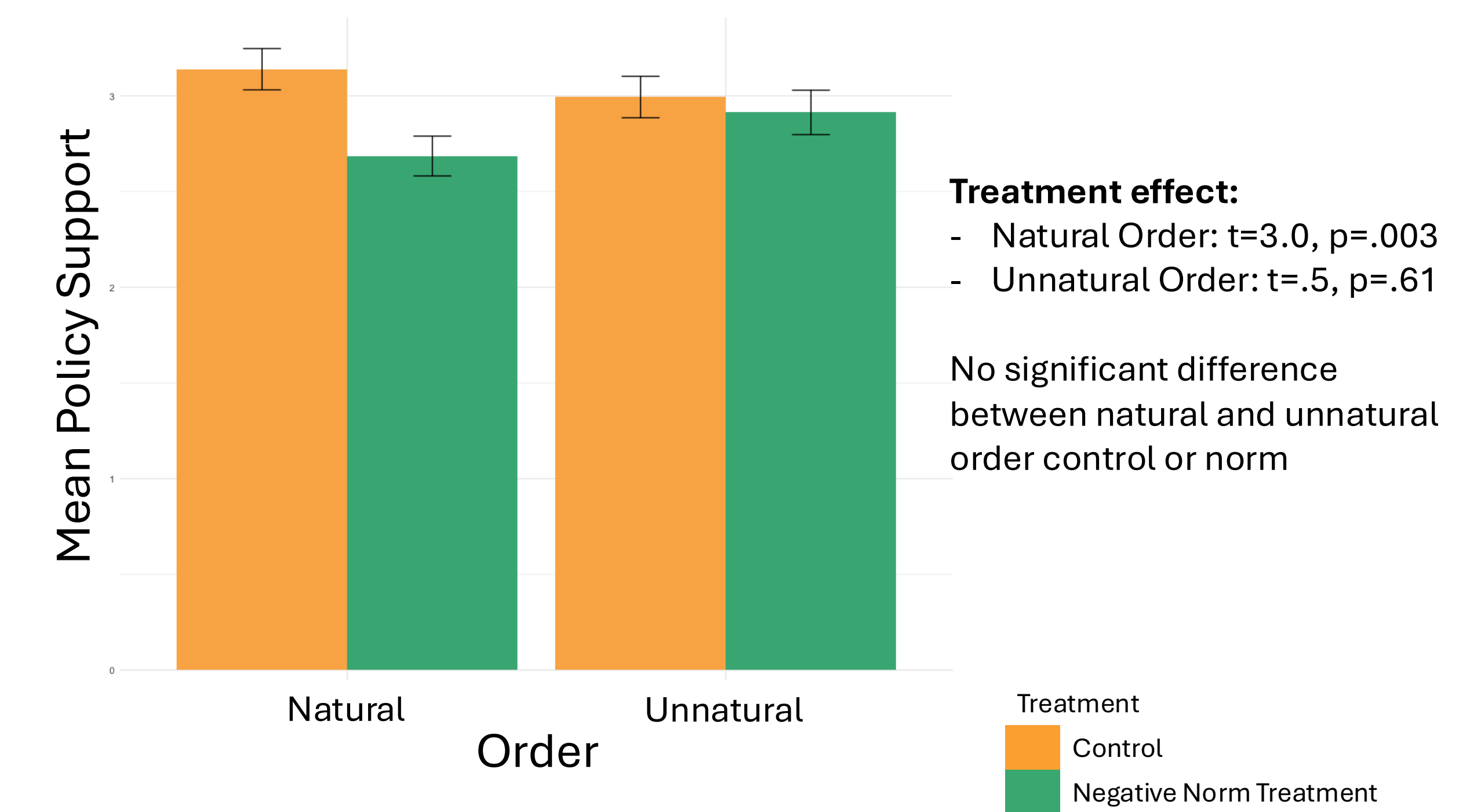
- In the full sample, there is not a significant effect of norm information on the DVs. SMRD and proportion of support-thoughts predict the DVs.
- Of non-skeptics (72% of participants), SMRD mediates the effect of treatment on DVs.
- 13% of people mention the norm information in an aspect. The climate and labor norms come up at similar rates.

Study 2: CCS



Study 3: CCS + Order Manipulation

The unnatural query order removes the effect of the norm information intervention.



Conclusions

We find evidence for the 'norm as attention' mechanism. The QT mechanism (partially) mediates the effect of norm information on policy support, for non-skeptics. The content and order of aspects are affected by norm information. This suggests norm affect policy support by directing attention to the normative option first, which results in greater consideration and memory-searching for evidence in alignment with the norm.

We find weak evidence for the 'norm as information' mechanism. ~14% of people mention the norm information and the norm is mentioned when it is novel or surprising. However, mentioning the norm does not affect the policy support DV.

References

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