

**Background**

# From Values to Violence

- **Lay theories of how to combat extremist violence often fail**  
**Counter narratives, empathy, etc**
- **Theory of Integrative Complexity (Suedfeld)**  
**Variations in IC as a function of relation between groups**
- **Could this be the basis of an intervention?**
- **IC alone is not enough**  
**Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner)**  
**The role of affect**
- **Successful intervention: impact on metacognition & emotional control**

# Relevance to Rebuilding Macro

- **Theorising the intervention → Zero-Sum Mindsets (PAF next)**  
**Perception, Comprehension, Action**
- **Social Identity Theory (see Shayo Ann Rev Econ 2019)**  
**Not just a demographic variable**  
**A psychological structure & process -- cognitive and affective**
- **Values & symbolic goods**
- **Temporal considerations**
- **Importance & difficulties of translational research**
- **Policy or action?**



# ZERO SUM

## MINDSET & ITS DISCONTENTS

D. GOOD & P. ANDREWS FEARON  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



**TO BE SUCCESSFUL,  
YOU HAVE TO PLAY THE RIGHT GAME**

**SO, WHAT KIND OF  
GAME IS THIS?**

**WHAT KIND OF GAME  
DO WE THINK THIS IS?**



**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

**THE **IMPLICIT BELIEF** THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

# **WHAT IS A MINDSET?**

An implicit theory about the essential nature of reality that can shape perceptions, strategies and behaviors that reinforce the mindset.

**THE **IMPLICIT BELIEF** THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

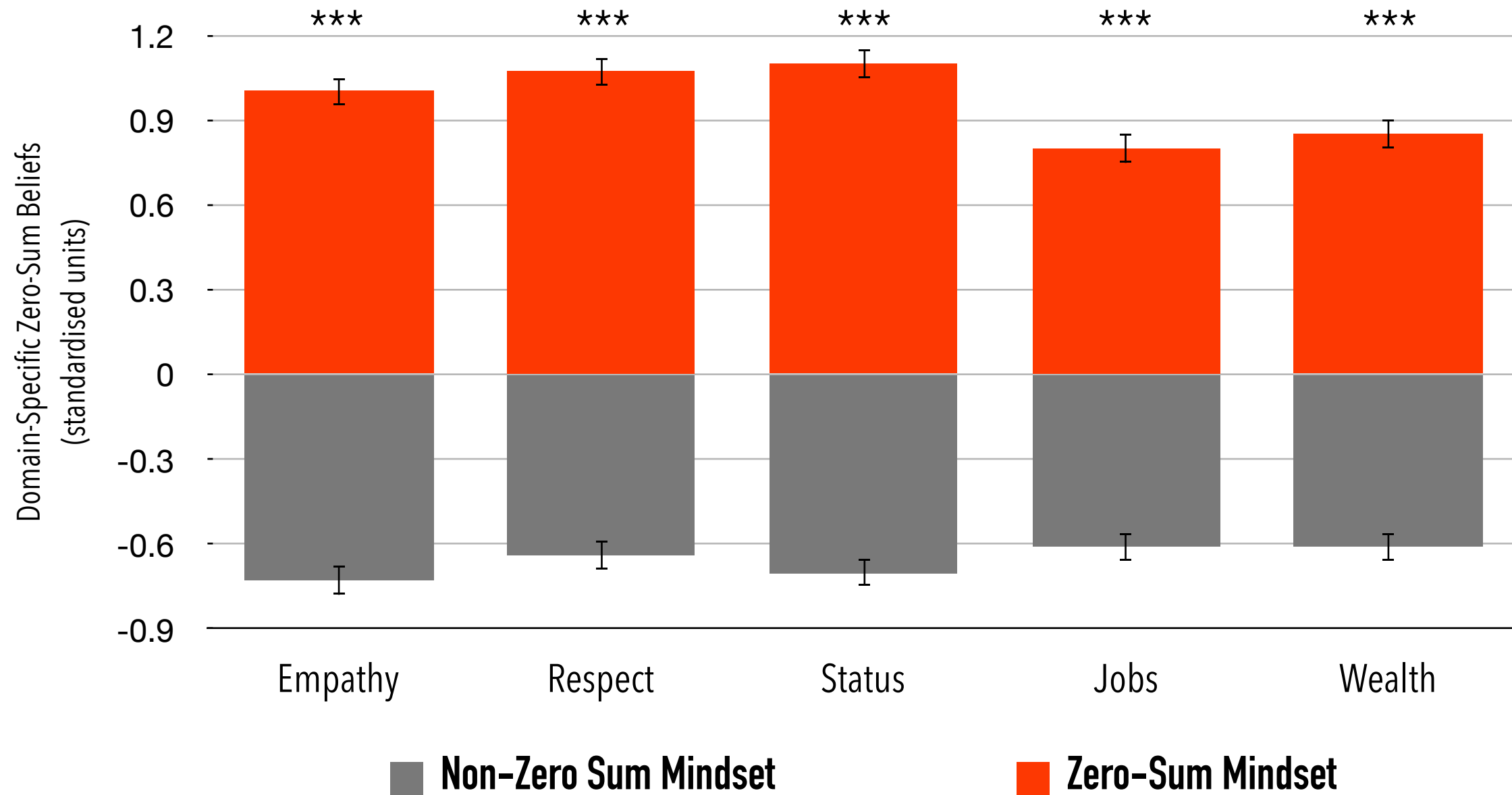
**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

# ZERO-SUM MINDSET

In a zero-sum game, gains for one party are earned at the direct expense of another such that all winnings and losses sum to zero. Zero-sum mindset is an implicit, generalised belief that *life is a zero-sum game*.

# Zero-Sum Mindset predicts Zero-Sum Beliefs Across Domains

e.g. "When one person gets a job it means someone else loses a job"



( $\beta = .66$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .0001$ , Adj.  $R^2 = .43$ ) N = 499

# **LIFE IN A ZERO-SUM WORLD**

People with a zero-sum mindset see the world as characterised by fixed scarcity, competition, hostility, and hierarchy.



IN A 37 NATION STUDY,  
**ZERO-SUM MINDSET NEGATIVELY RELATES TO:**

(Różycka-Tran et al., 2015)

- **GDP:** -.43
- **Human Development Index:** -.56
- **Pluralism:** -.45
- **Civil Liberty:** -.29
- **Government Functioning:** -.35
- **Subjective Well-being:** -.41

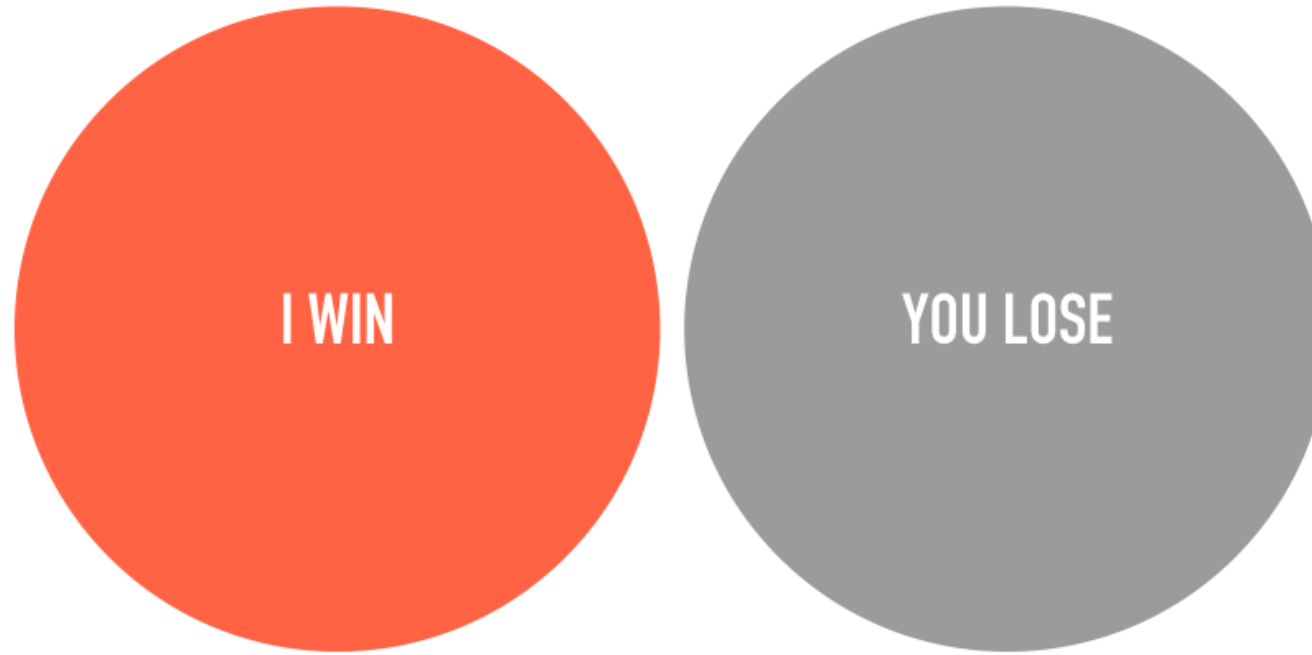
**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

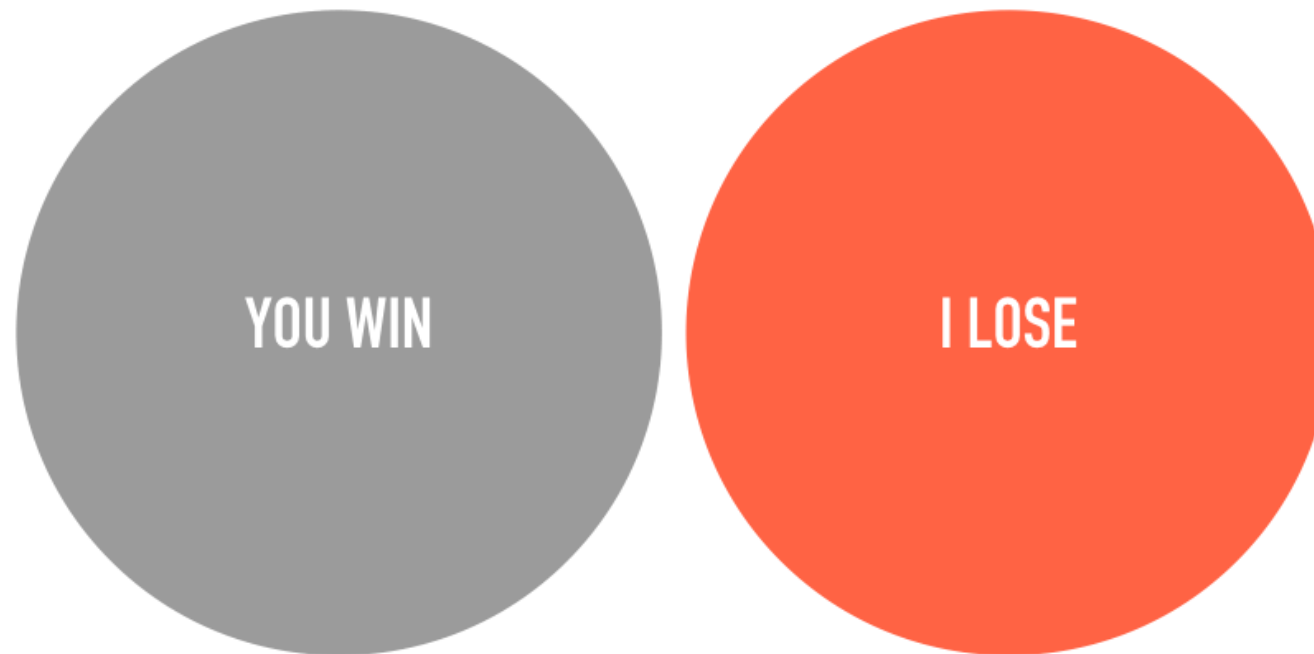
**Non ZERO-SUM GAME Possible Outcomes  
(Infinite)**



**ZERO-SUM GAME Possible Outcomes  
(Finite & Discrete)**



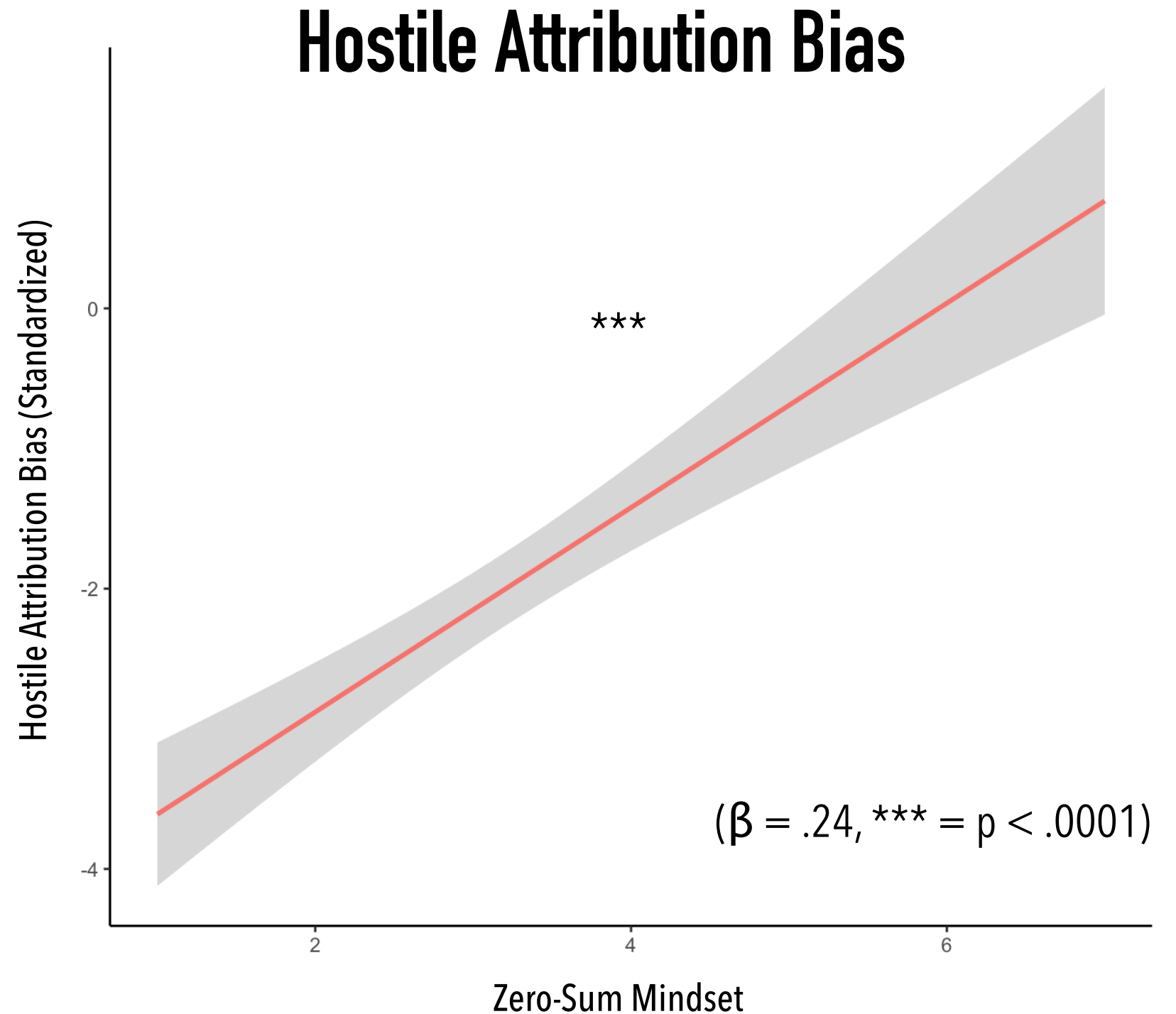
**OR**



## Perception of hostility in ambiguous situations

Zero-sum mindset positively predicts hostile attribution bias. Also holds when controlling for sex, race, age, income.

N = 824



**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**



# **SOCIAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION**

"An ideal  
society requires  
some groups to be on top  
and others to be on the bottom."





# **SOCIAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION**

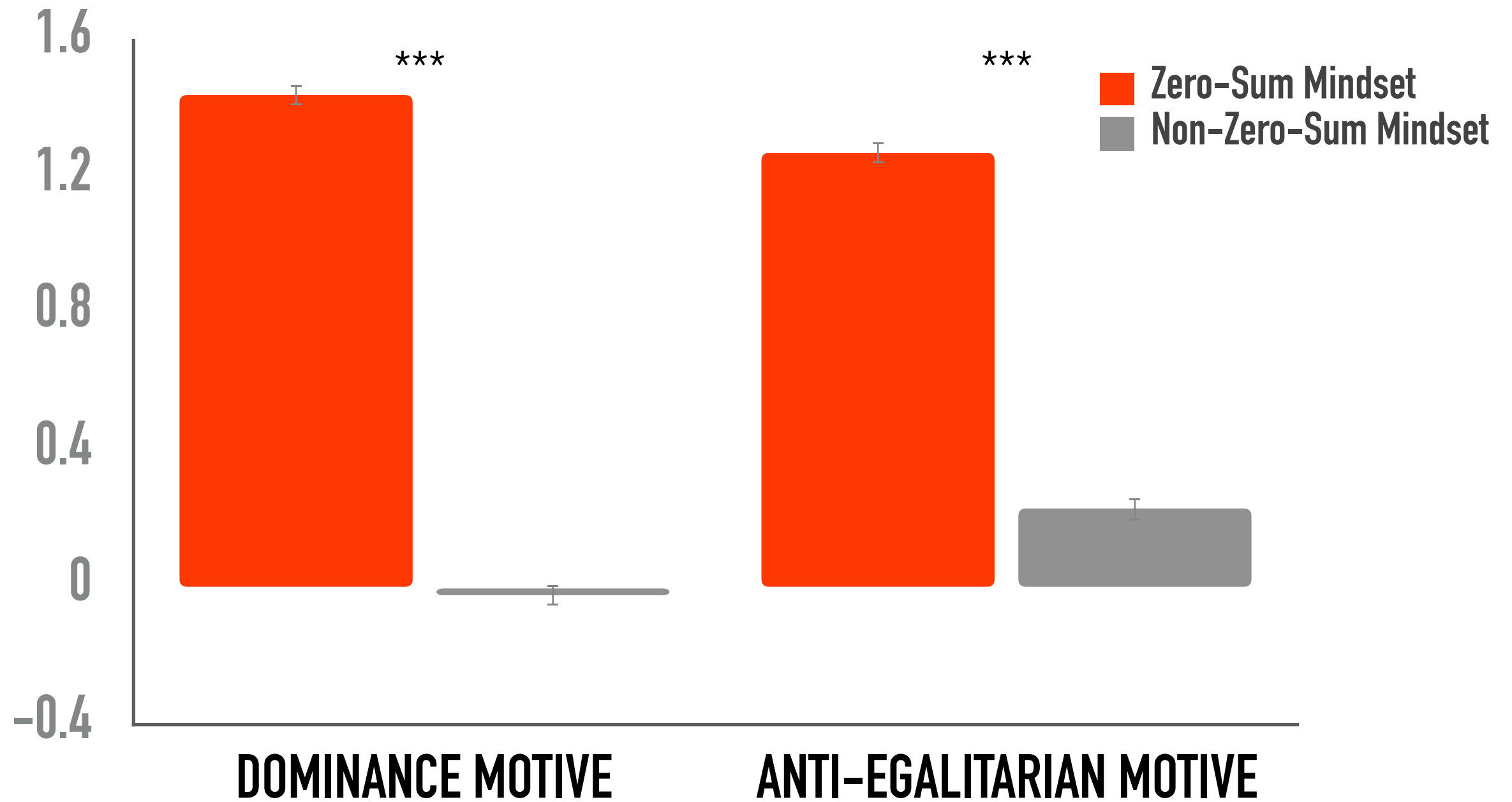
"Some groups  
of people are simply  
inferior to other groups."



# **ANTI-EGALITARIANISM**

"It is  
unjust to try to  
make groups equal."

# SOCIAL DOMINANCE MOTIVES

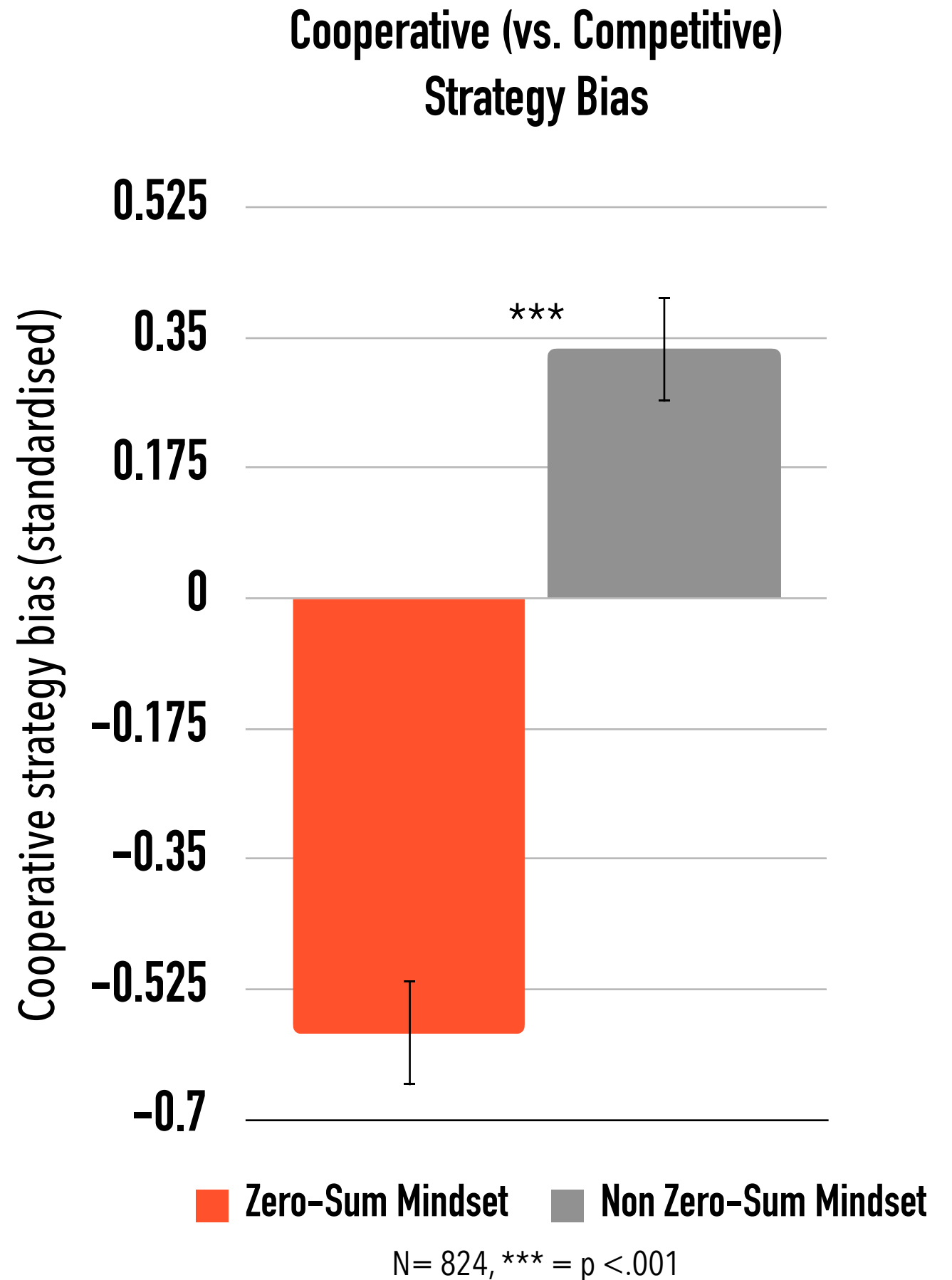


( $\beta = .35$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .0001$ ) N = 824

**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

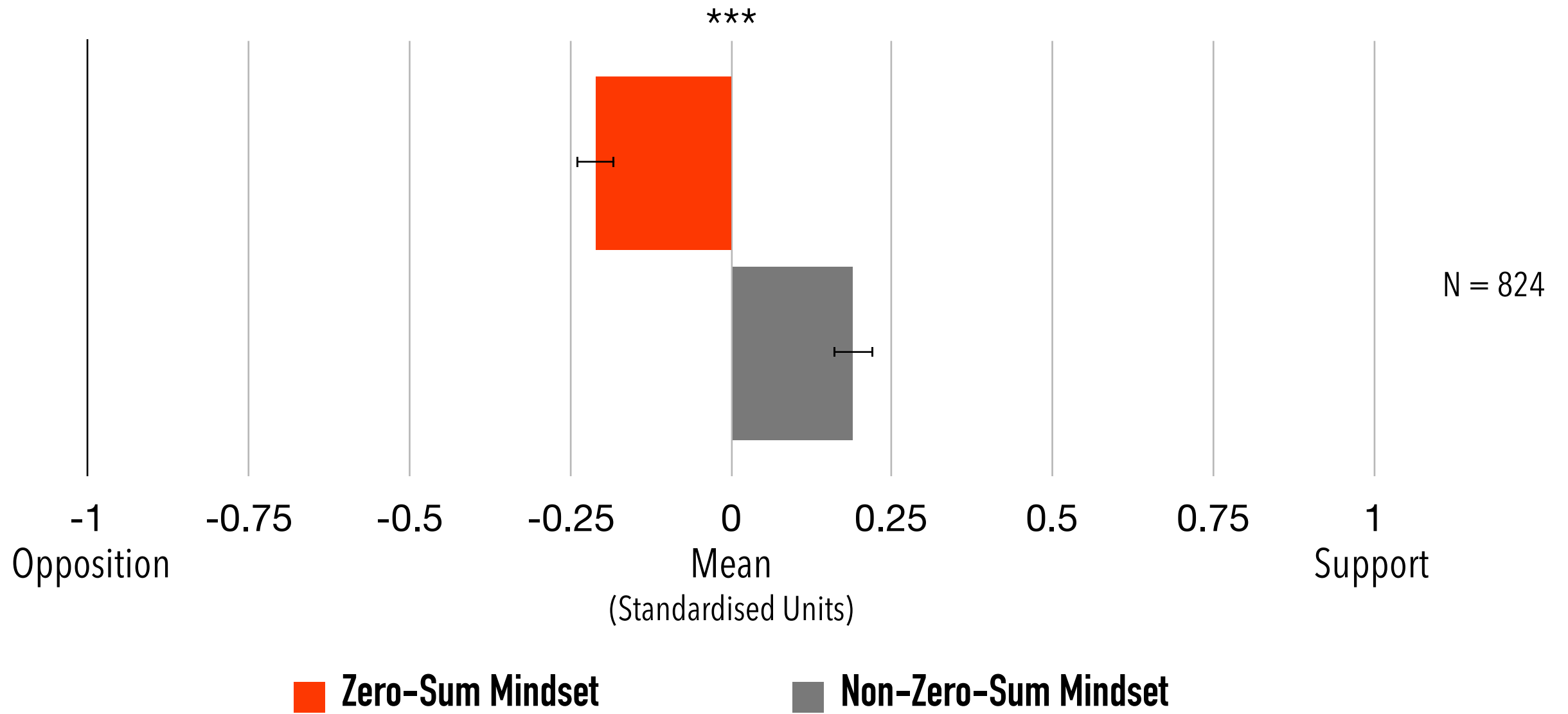
**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

# Can Zero-Sum Mindset affect strategic preferences for cooperation?



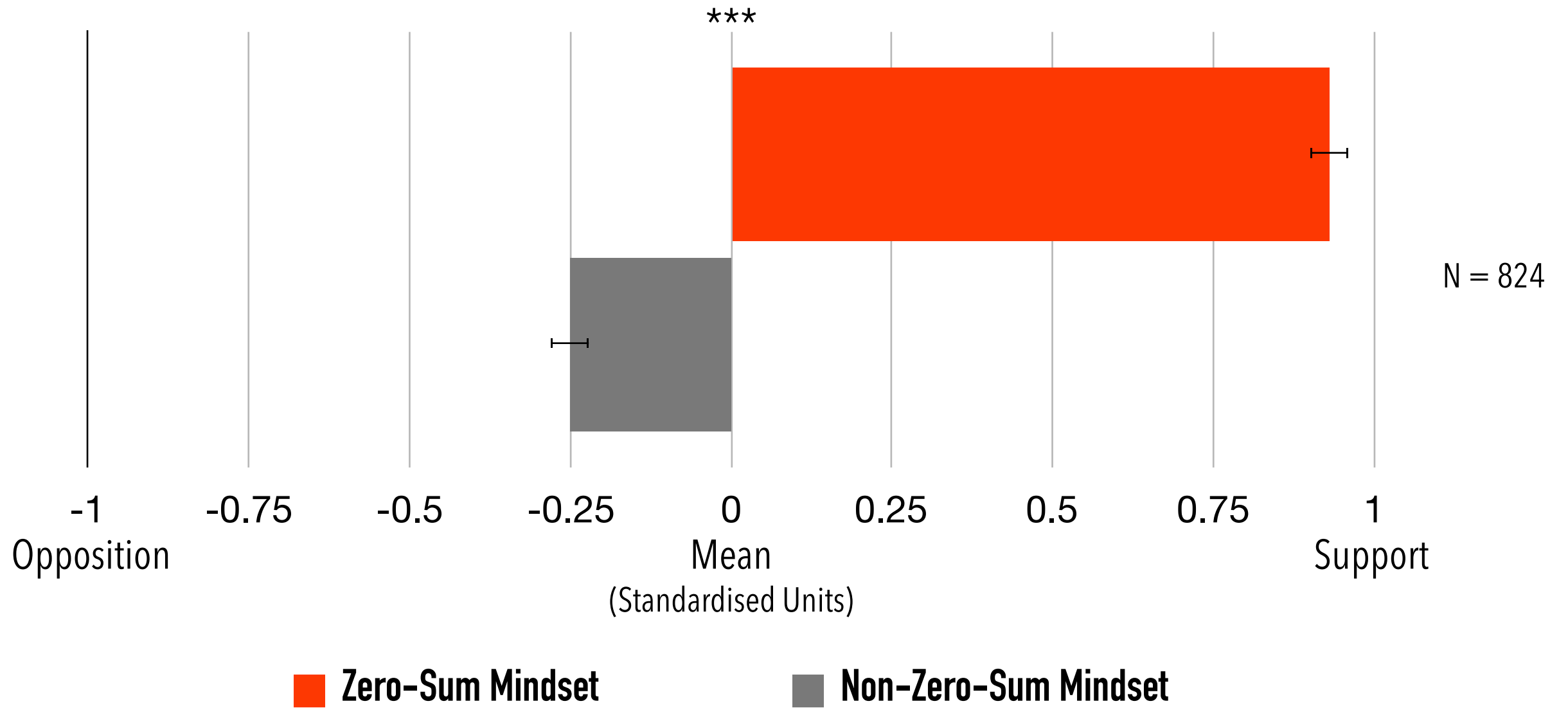
# COOPERATION

with outgroup members



# AGGRESSION

towards outgroup members

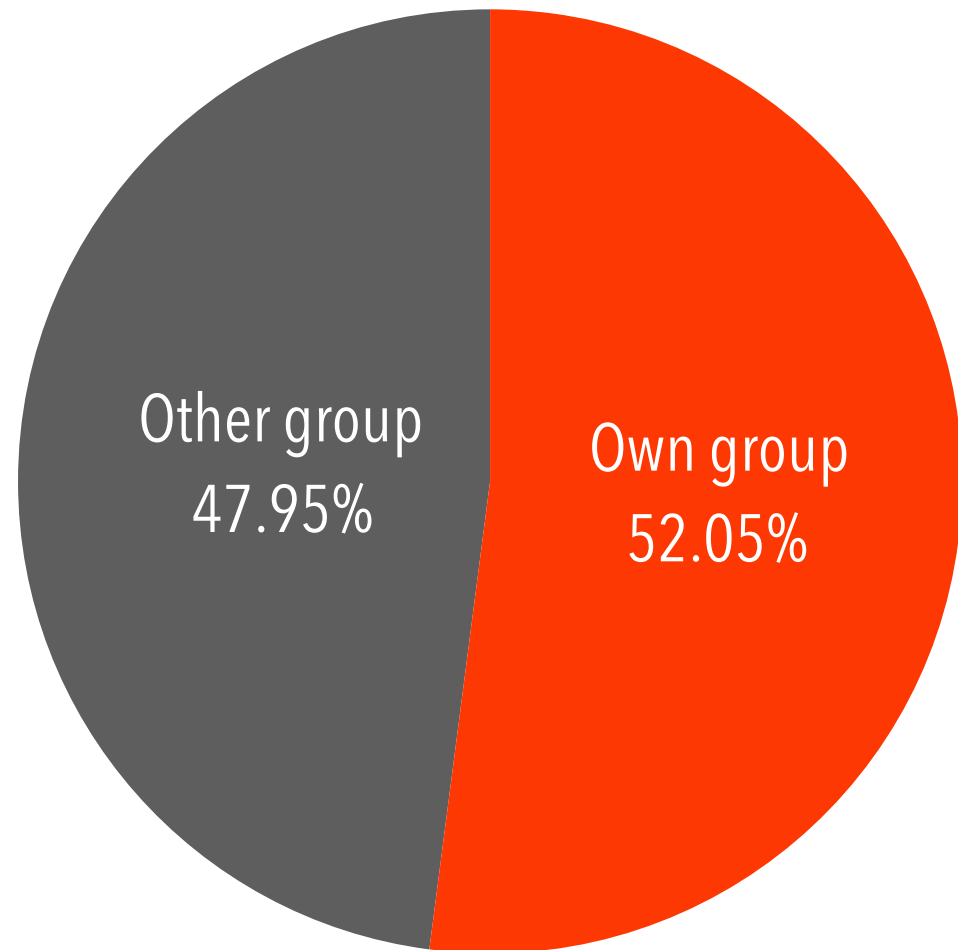




**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

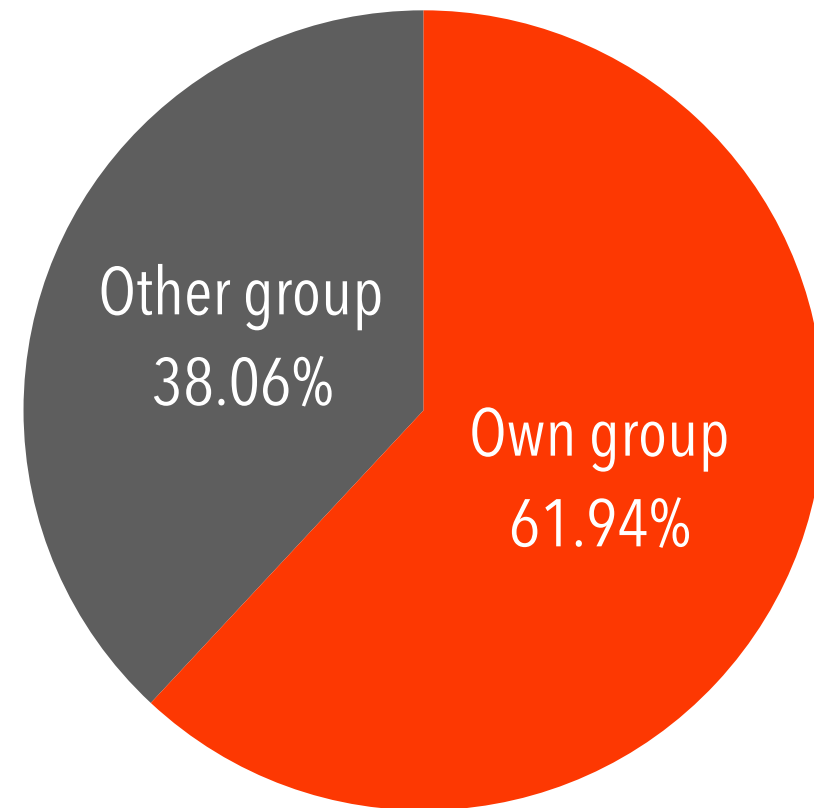
**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY **OUR REALITY****

## Non-Zero-Sum Mindset



>

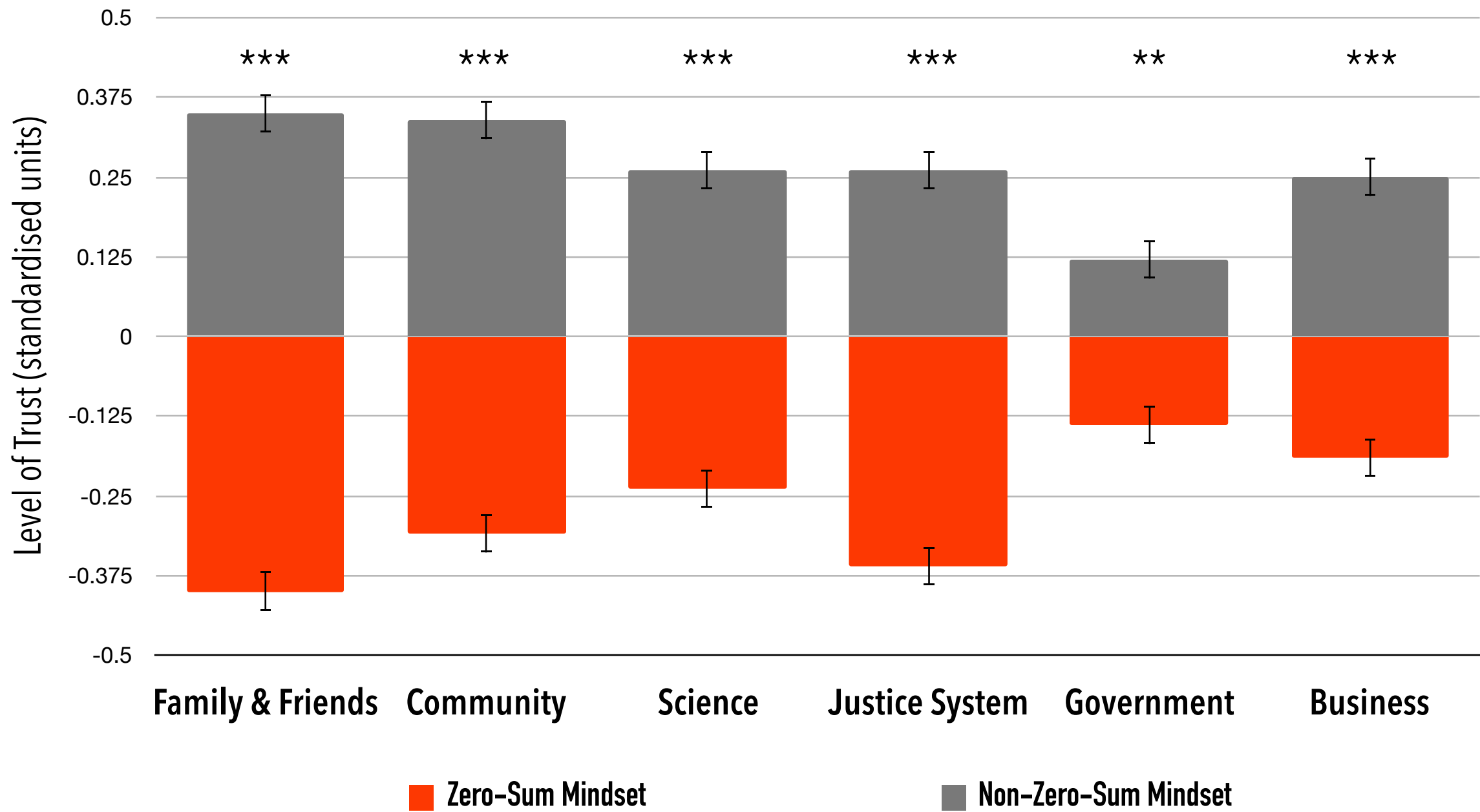
## Zero-Sum Mindset



**Zero-sum mindset predicts smaller “pie” (total value created) and less equitable distributions in dictator/public goods game**

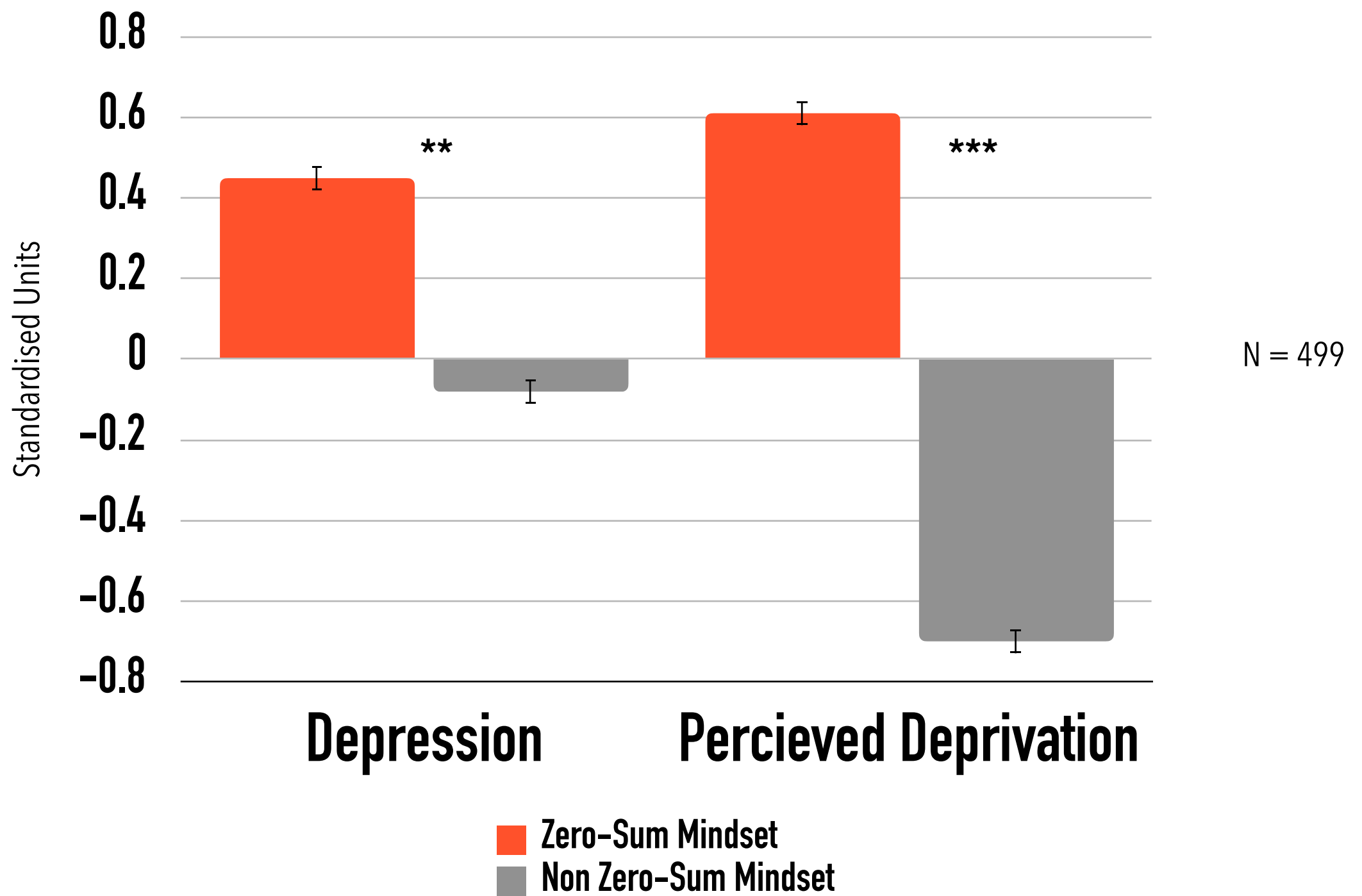
N = 405

# Zero-Sum Mindset predicts lower trust across domains



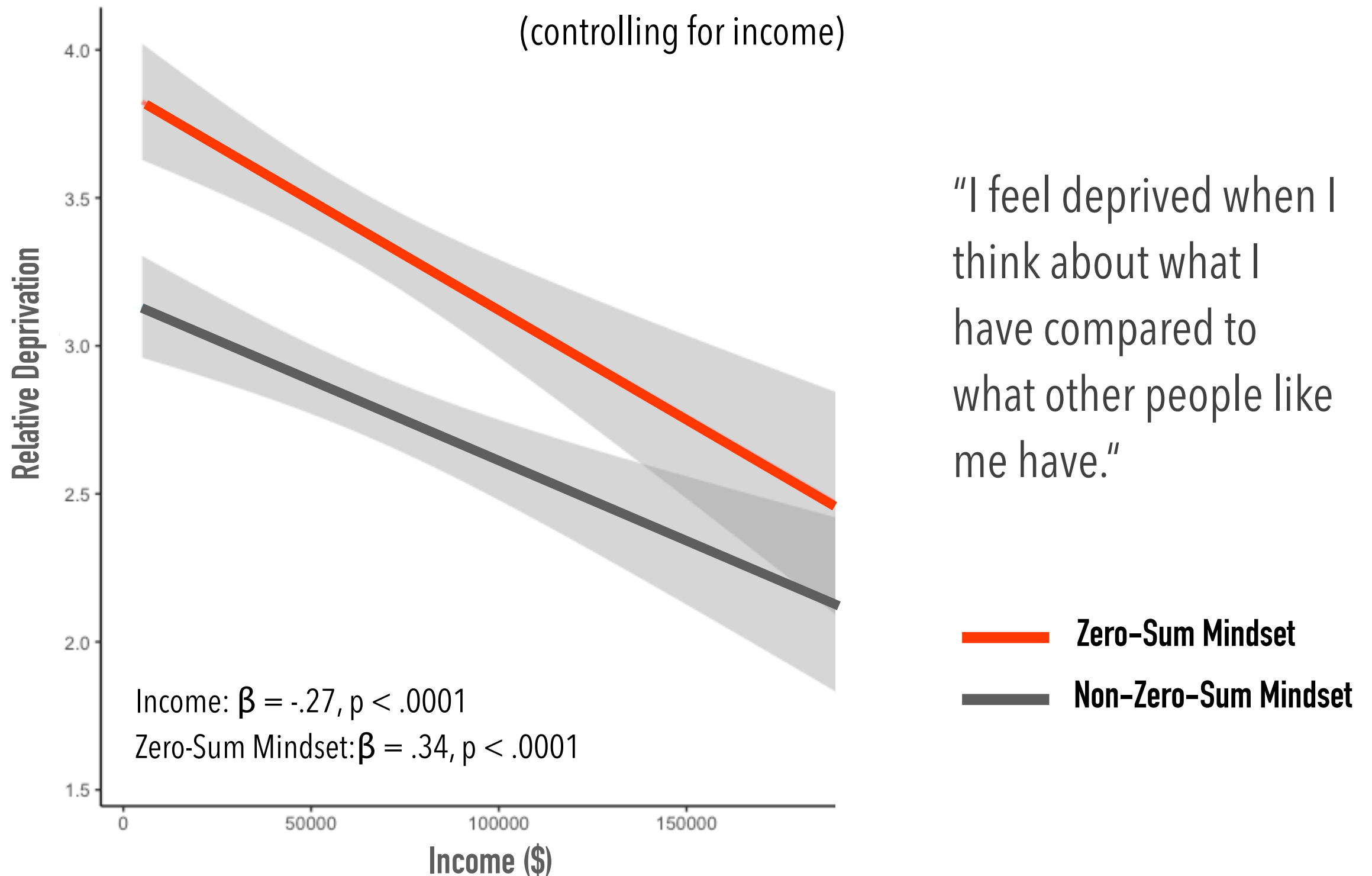
\*\*\* =  $p < .001$ , \*\* =  $p < .01$  N = 904

# Wellbeing



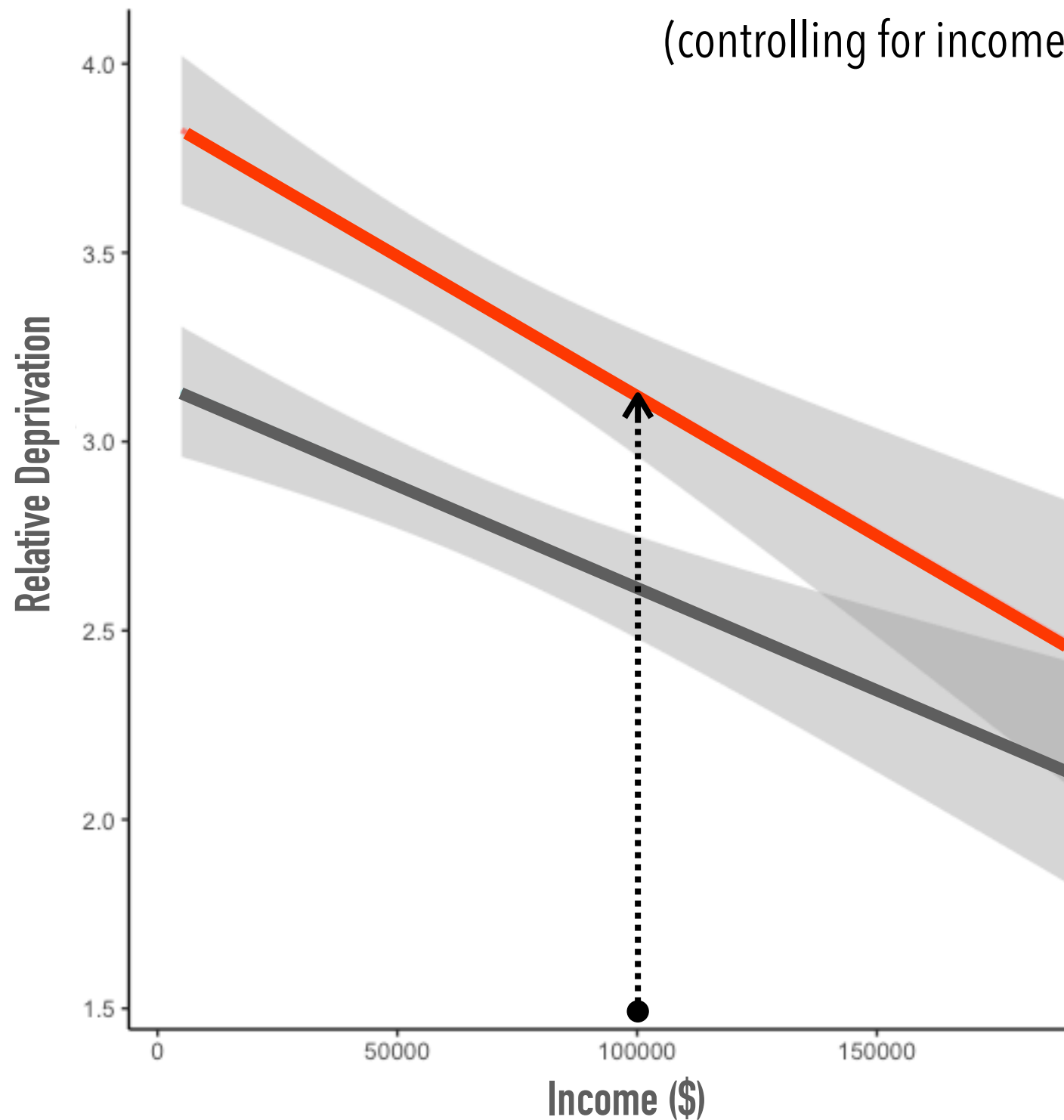
# RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

(controlling for income)





# RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

(controlling for income)

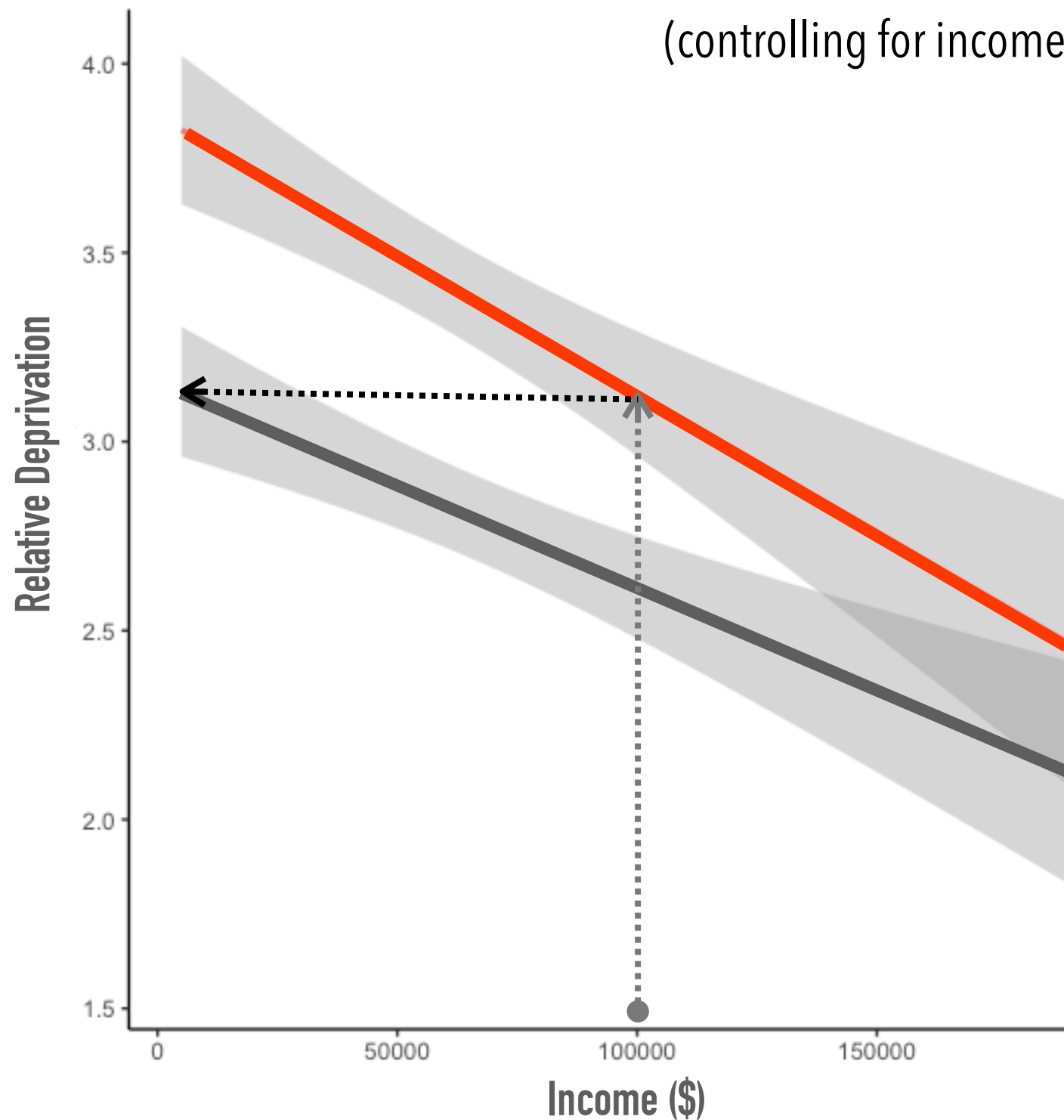


"I feel deprived when I think about what I have compared to what other people like me have."

-  Zero-Sum Mindset
-  Non-Zero-Sum Mindset

# RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

(controlling for income)



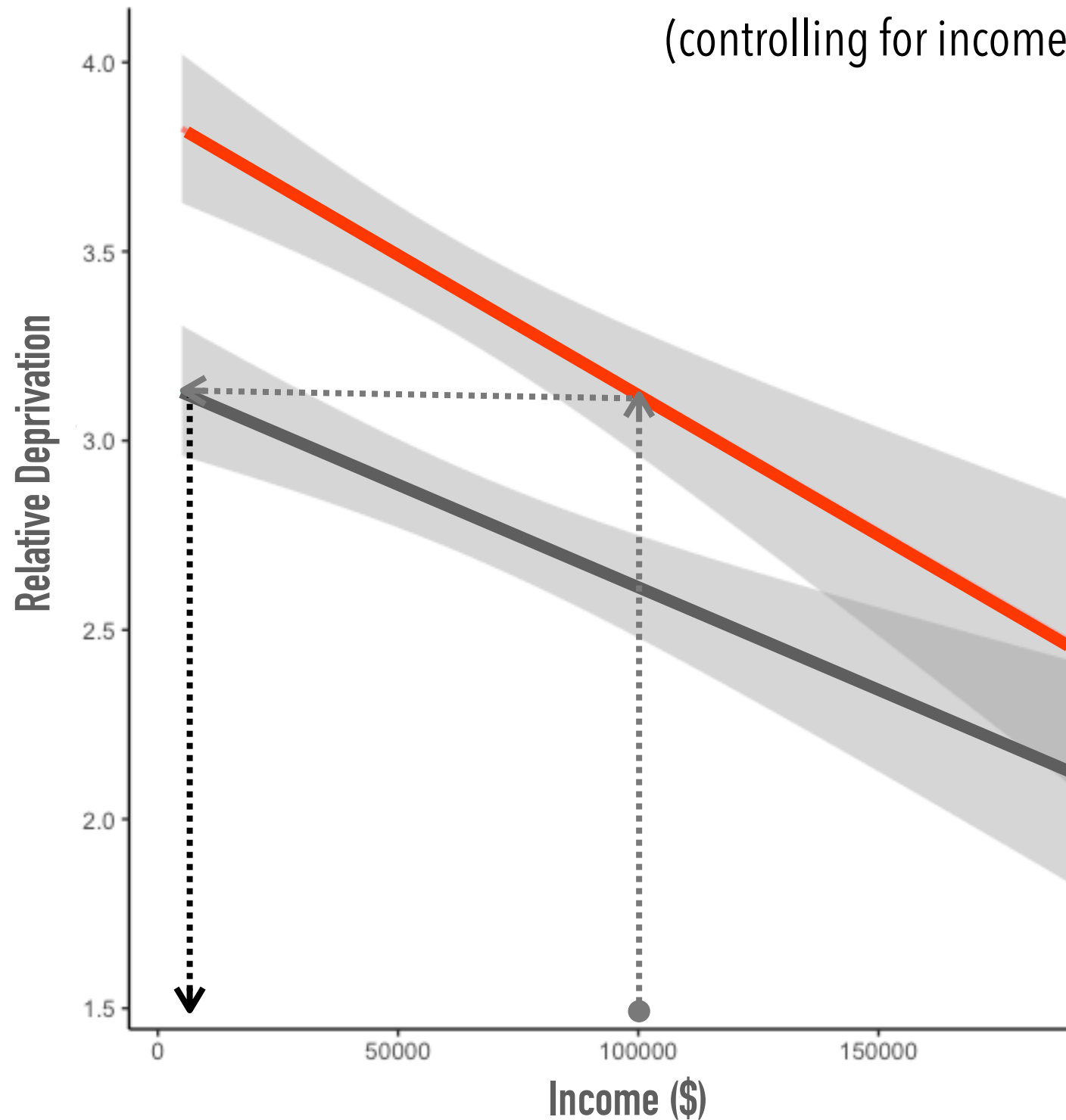
"I feel deprived when I think about what I have compared to what other people like me have."

- Zero-Sum Mindset**
- Non-Zero-Sum Mindset**





# RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

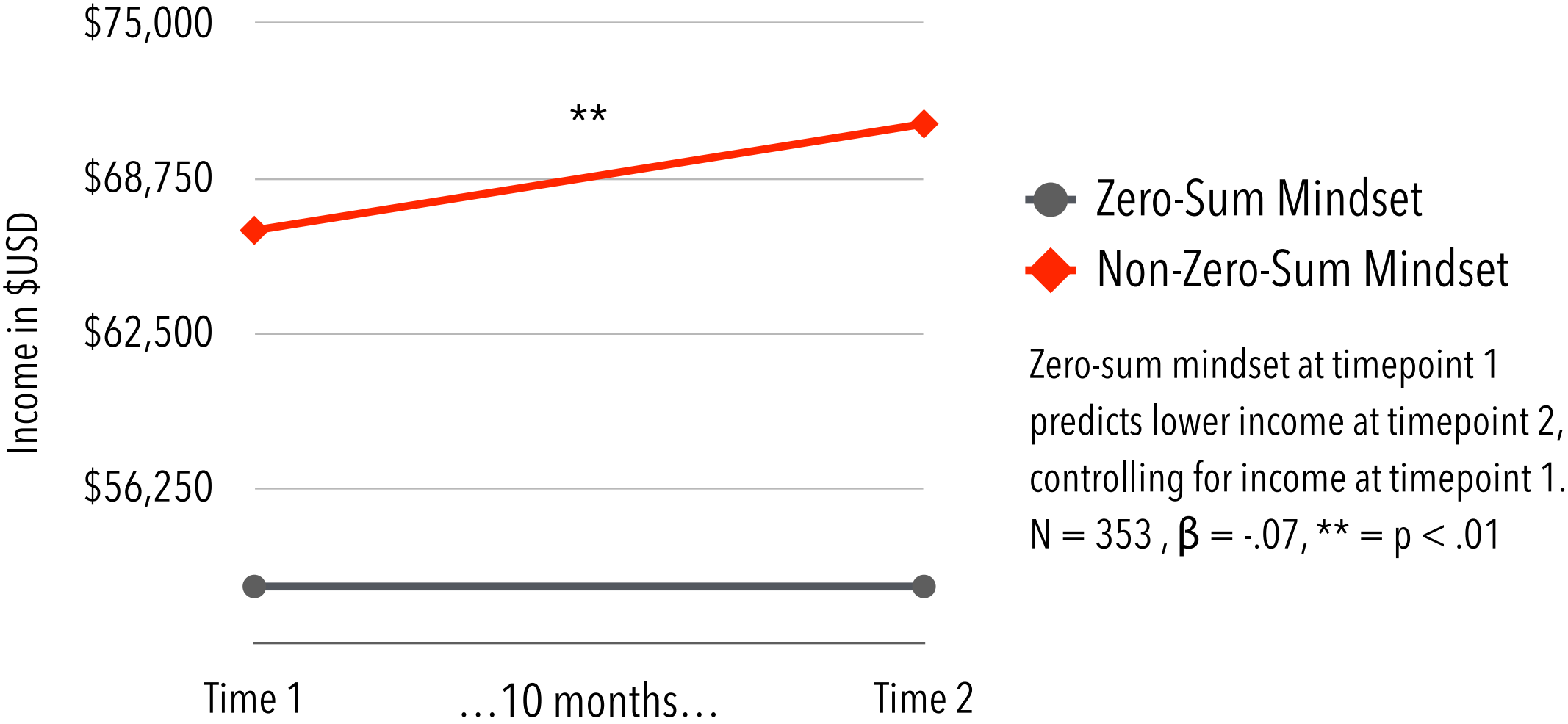
(controlling for income)



"I feel deprived when I think about what I have compared to what other people like me have."

-  Zero-Sum Mindset
-  Non-Zero-Sum Mindset

# CHANGE IN INCOME OVER TIME



**THE IMPLICIT BELIEF THAT  
LIFE IS A ZERO-SUM GAME  
SHAPES OUR PERCEPTIONS,  
MOTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND  
ULTIMATELY OUR REALITY**

## NEXT STEPS

Can zero-sum mindsets be **changed**?

## NEXT STEPS

If so, to what **effect**?

## **NEXT STEPS**

Can reducing zero-sum mindset help us build the social cohesion and cooperation we need to flourish socially and economically?

**Stay tuned.**

**Thank you.**







# Distributions of Actual and Projected Zero-Sum Mindsets



Lower Zero-Sum Mindset << Neutral >> Higher Zero-Sum Mindset

In paired samples test,  $t = 11.67$ ,  $p < .0001$

**Even stronger  
effect of  
Zero-Sum  
mindset when  
thinking of  
group-level**

**“In order to be successful,  
individuals/groups must cooperate”**

