

# Trading Liberties: Estimating COVID-19 Policy Preferences from Conjoint Data

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Author: Felix Hartmann et al

Replication Author: Chenxi Li

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Trinity College Dublin

College Green, Dublin 2

Lic8@tcd.ie

# Research Background

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The research questions of this paper are:

- In which conditions citizens support restricting freedoms?
- How such restrictions affect trust in political institutions?

What we already known are:

- citizens are willing to trade individual liberties for security in light of an external threat (Davis & Silver 2004)
- Regarding COVID-19, citizens with higher health related insecurity are more willing to sacrifice civil liberties (Stantcheva et al. 2020)

And what we can conclude are:

- There is a greater acceptance of more strict policies when severity increases.
- Vaccinated citizens will strongly support stringent policies in extreme conditions.
- Also, Vaccinated citizens will differentiate between vaccinated and unvaccinated fellow citizens and are most likely to support restrictions for unvaccinated people only.

# Variables Introduction

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## Dependent Variable

In this paper, we have 4 different regression models, which refers to 4 different dependent variables  $Y$ .

- $Y_{choice}$ : A binary variable measuring which policy the interviewers prefer. And in this case, the author points out 2 policies to choose (0/1).
- $Y_{rating}$ : The rating to these two proposals (0-10).
- $Y_{trust}$ : Their trust to the federal government (0-10).
- $Y_{probability}$ : The probability of accepting vaccinated for non-vaccinated interviewers.

# Independent Variables

## 1. Pandemic Severity

- Moderate worsening (7-day-incidence 150, intensive care bed occupancy 80%)
- Sharp worsening (... 300, ... 90%)
- Dramatic worsening (... 800, ... 100%)

## 2. Policy Stringency

- Least restrictions (masks)
- Moderate restrictions (plus limitations on social events)
- Most restrictions (plus broader limitations on movements)

## 3. Policy Universality

- Most exemptions (restrictions do not apply to vaccinated, recovered, or tested citizens)
- Some exemptions (... vaccinated or recovered citizens)
- Fewest exemptions (... all citizens)



# Regression Formula

So we can get our regression formula:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{it} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Z_1 + \beta_2 Z_2 + \beta_3 Z_3 \\ & + \beta_3 Z_1 Z_2 + \beta_4 Z_1 Z_3 + \beta_5 Z_2 Z_3 \\ & + \beta_6 Z_1 Z_2 Z_3 + u_i + \varepsilon_{it} \end{aligned}$$

Here, the author made a mistake which wrote  $\beta_3$  twice.

Where  $Z_1$  represents severity,  $Z_2$  represents stringency, and  $Z_3$  represents universality (Hartmann et al. 2024).

# Research Approach

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## Code - Prepare the Variables

Let's see the code in R. These code is used to prepare for the independent variable including interactions.

```
1 df_long_all <-  
2   bind_rows(dplyr::filter(df_long) |> mutate(group = "All"),  
3             dplyr::filter(df_long, vaccinated == 0) |> mutate(group =  
4               "Unvaccinated"),  
5             dplyr::filter(df_long, vaccinated == 1) |> mutate(group =  
6               "Vaccinated"))  
7 custom.coef.map = list(  
8   "severity" = "Pandemic severity",  
9   "stringency" = "Policy stringency",  
10  "universality" = "Policy universality",  
11  "severity : stringency" = "Severity * Stringency",  
12  "severity : universality" = "Severity * Universality",  
13  "universality : stringency" = "Stringency * Universality",  
14  "severity : stringency : universality" = "Triple interaction")
```

## Code - Fit the Model

Let's see the code in R. These code is used to fit the regression model, and we can see details through this block:

```
1  lapply( function(g)
2    list ( rating = lm_robust(rating ~ severity * universality * stringency ,
3      fixed _ effects = ~ ID,
4      data = df_long_all , subset = group == g, se_type = "stata" ),
5    choice = lm_robust(choice ~ severity * universality * stringency ,
6      fixed _ effects = ~ ID,
7      data = df_long_all , subset = group == g, se_type = "stata" ),
8    trust = lm_robust(trust ~ severity * universality * stringency ,
9      fixed _ effects = ~ ID,
10     data = df_long_all , subset = group == g, se_type = "stata" )))
```

## Code - Fit the Model

Also, the author calculate the probability of accepting vaccinated.

```
1 fig_1_models$Unvaccinated$vaccination <-  
2   lm_robust(vaccine_probability ~ severity * universality * stringency ,  
              fixed_effects = ~ ID,  
3             data = df_long_all , subset = group == "Unvaccinated",  
              se_type = "stata")
```

## Code - Check the Model

Now, let's check one of the model. For example, if we want to check when  $Y$  is rating in unvaccinated group, then we can write:

```
1 summary(fig_1_models[[" Unvaccinated" ]][[" rating" ]])
```

And then we will see the outputs from R:

**Table 1:** Coefficient and Significant of  $Y = \text{Rating}$  Regression

	Estimate	Std. Error	$\text{Pr}( >  t  )$
severity	0.002545	0.005734	6.572e-01
universality	-0.021862	0.005951	2.417e-04
stringency	-0.091130	0.005649	4.293e-57
severity:universality	-0.004736	0.007526	5.292e-01
severity:stringency	0.026078	0.006853	1.435e-04
universality:stringency	0.001157	0.007251	8.733e-01
severity:universality:stringency	0.004653	0.008978	6.043e-01

# Regression Model

So in the upon case, we can write our regression formula:

$$\begin{aligned} Y_{rating} = & 0.00Z_1 - 0.02Z_2 - 0.09Z_3 \\ & + 0.00Z_1Z_2 + 0.02Z_1Z_3 + 0.00Z_2Z_3 \\ & + 0.00Z_1Z_2Z_3 \end{aligned}$$

Where  $Z_1$  represents severity,  $Z_2$  represents stringency, and  $Z_3$  represents universality.



# Results Visualisation

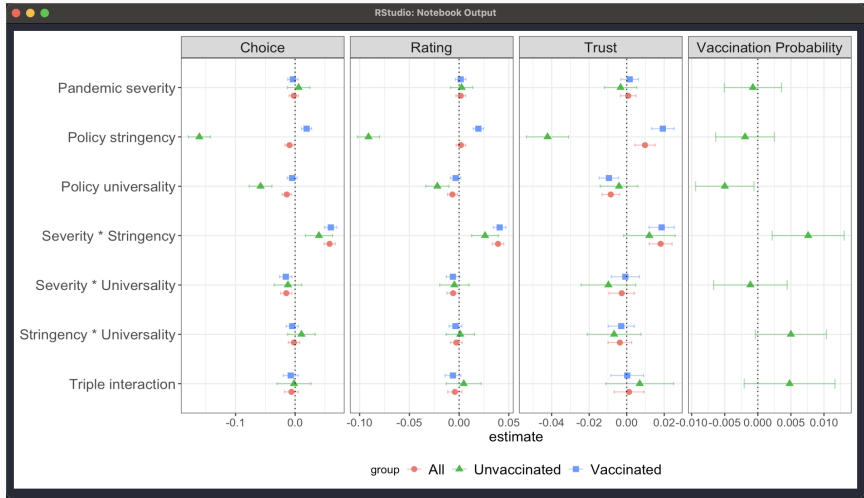
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# Coefficient Visualisation

```
1 fig_main <- fig_1_data %>%
2   ggplot(aes(x = estimate, y = term, color = group, shape=group)) +
3   geom_point(size = 2.5, position=position_dodge(width=0.5)) +
4   geom_errorbarh(aes(y = term, xmin =conf.low, xmax = conf.high),
5                   size=0.5, alpha = 0.5, height = 0.2,
6                   position=position_dodge(width=0.5)) +
7   facet_grid(~ outcome , scales = "free") + theme_bw() +
8   scale_y_discrete ( limits =rev)+
9   theme(axis.title.y=element_blank()) +
10  theme(axis.title.x=element_text(size = 14)) +
11  theme(axis.text.y =element_text(size = 14)) +
12  theme(axis.text.x = element_text(size = 11)) +
13  theme(strip.text.x = element_text(size = 14))+
14  theme(legend.text=element_text(size=14))+
15  geom_vline(xintercept = 0, linetype="dotted", color = "black") +
16  theme(legend.position="bottom")
17 pdf("fig_1.pdf", width = 12, height = 5)
```

# Coefficient Visualisation

Follow the author's code, we can make this visualisation:



## Key Conclusions

- Severity\*Stringency: Citizens strongly prefer more severe policies when conditions are bad. Also we can say, there is a clear evidence that citizens are more supportive of more stringent policies as conditions worsen.
- Greater stringency is associated with greater willingness to vaccinate.
- Severity\*Universality: Citizens are still less supportive of universal restrictions (with fewest exemptions) when conditions are bad.
- There is no evidence for interactions between the stringency and universality of conditions or for three-way interactions.

## References

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- Davis, D. W. & Silver, B. D. (2004), 'Civil liberties vs. security: Public opinion in the context of the terrorist attacks on america', *American journal of political science* **48**(1), 28–46.
- Hartmann, F., Humphreys, M., Geissler, F., Klüver, H. & Giesecke, J. (2024), 'Trading liberties: Estimating covid-19 policy preferences from conjoint data', *Political Analysis* **32**(2), 285–293.
- Stantcheva, S., Alsan, M., Braghieri, L., Eichmeyer, S., Kim, M. J. & Yang, D. (2020), Civil liberties in times of crisis, Technical report, CEPR Discussion Papers.