

Leading by Example?

How Elite Behaviour affects Individual Vaccination Decisions

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What are the limits of cue taking?

Cue Taking

"cues—information about what positions political parties take on policy issues" (Slothuus & Bisgaard 2021a, 1)

- Cues are powerful determinants of reported political attitudes (Slothuus & Bisgaard 2021a),
- even when this goes against personal stakes (Slothuus & Bisgaard 2021b).

But does this translate into behaviour as well?

Partisanship as a "Perceptual Screen"

- builds on evidence of partisan differences in reported factual beliefs.
- Paying people to give better answers mitigates *some* bias, but not all of it (Prior, Sood & Khanna 2015).
- **PS hypothesis**: differences are caused by differences in **perception of reality** (Campbell 1960; Green & Huber 2009).

Can strong cues alter factual beliefs?

(and what about realms beyond the economy?)

Vaccination Decisions

- Behavioral data.
- Highly tangible issue.
- Costly behavior.
- Clear and strong cues.

Ideal case to study limits of cue taking.

Alternatively: Issue Sorting (Carmines & Stimson 1986)

- Citizens do not follow party's incongruent issue position.
- Instead choose different party in line with their preferences.

Little causal inference work here so far.

The Case

Hubert Aiwanger's Vaccination Decision



- Leader of "Freie Wähler" & Deputy PM of Bavaria
- In May 2021, it became increasingly clear that HA **would not get vaccinated** immediately.
- Plenty of media attention.
- Finally got vaccinated in Nov 2021.

Design

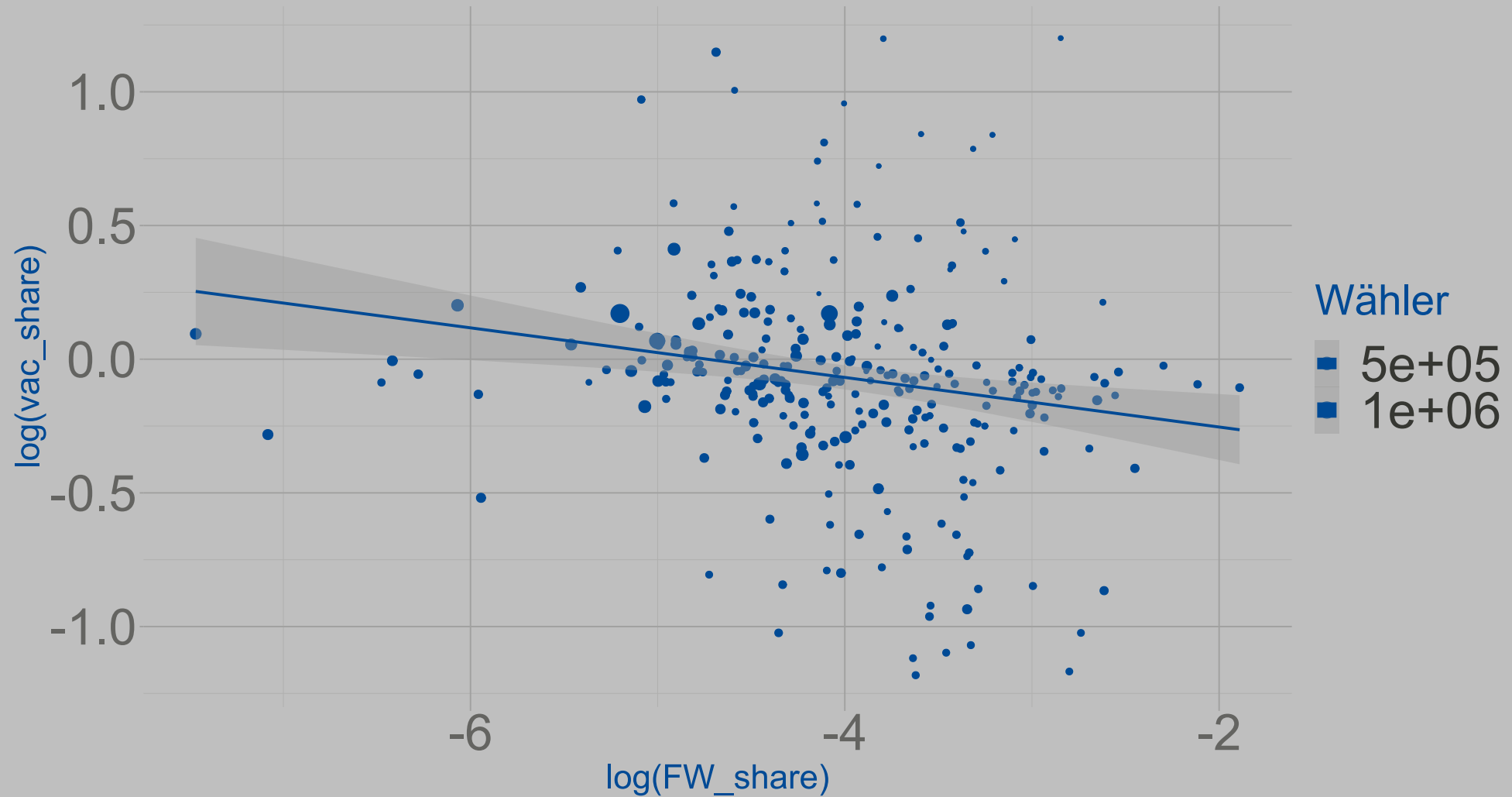
Difference-in-Differences

- Exploit **novelty** of Covid-issue → cannot affect prior voting decision!
- Compare change in vaccination rates of districts with low FW-share to those with high FW-share (cue taking).

Data

- Unit of Analysis: Governing/Voting District
- Conditioning variable: Share of (direct) votes for FW in 2017 Bundestag election.*
- Treatment: pre-post 07.05.2021 (first news report about decision).
- Dependent: Vaccination rates.

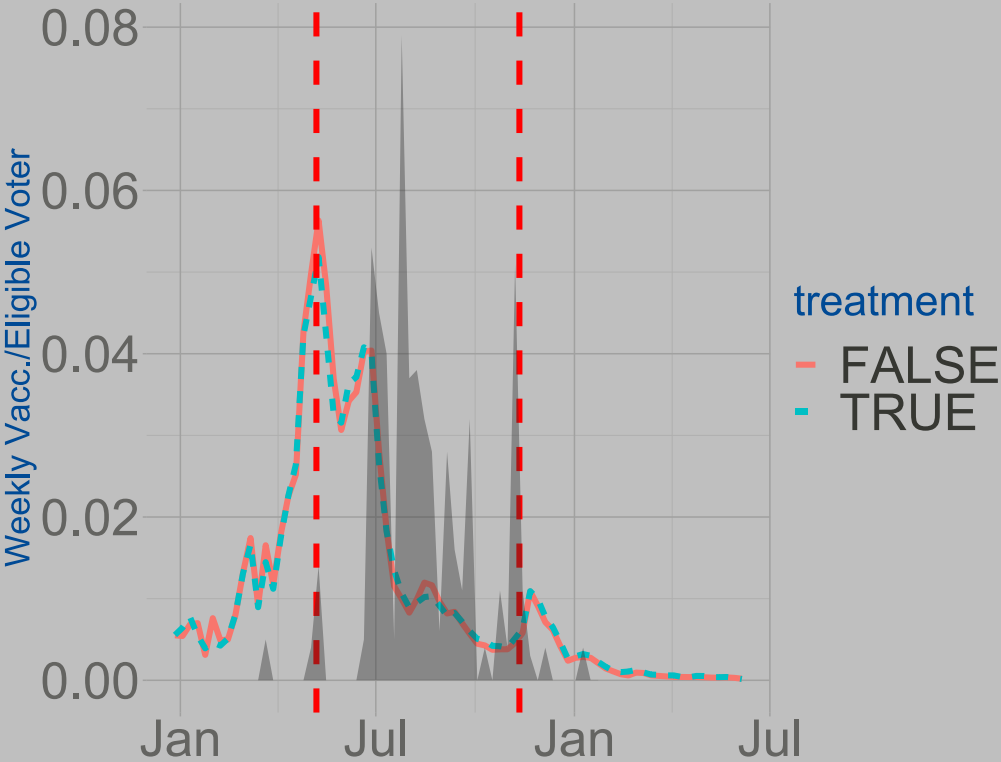
Preliminary Results



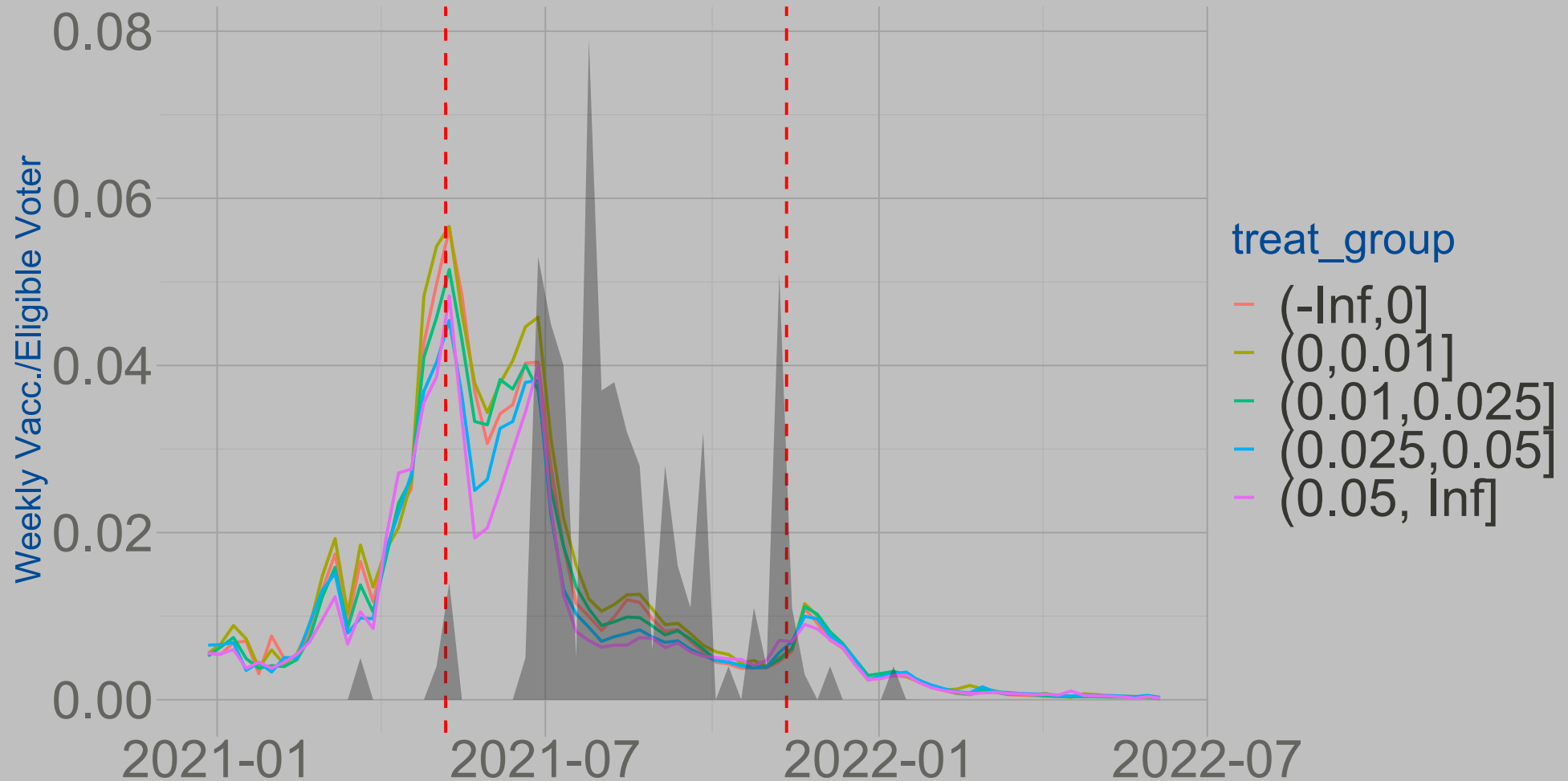
Preliminary Results

	Model 1
(Intercept)	0.241 *
treatmentTRUE	0.004
post_ivTRUE	0.038 *
treatmentTRUE × post_ivTRUE	-0.002

Note: ^ ^ + $p < 0.1$, $p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$** , $p < 0.001$



Preliminary Results

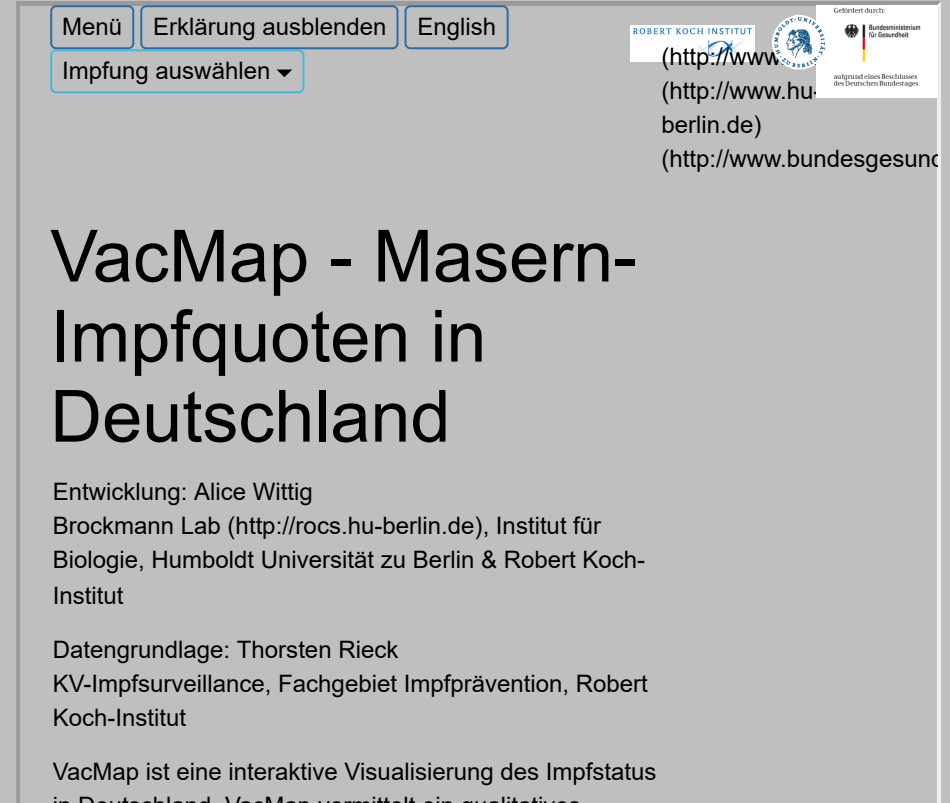


Next steps

Matching

Match based on prior measles-vaccination rate

→ **ensures treatment exogenous to vaccination attitudes.**



The screenshot shows the top section of the VacMap website. At the top, there are navigation buttons: 'Menü', 'Erklärung ausblenden', and 'English'. Below these is a dropdown menu labeled 'Impfung auswählen'. On the right side, there are logos for the Robert Koch Institut, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the Bundesministerium für Gesundheit. Below the logos, there are three links: '(http://www.brockmann-lab.de)', '(http://www.hu-berlin.de)', and '(http://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de)'. The main title 'VacMap - Masern-Impfquoten in Deutschland' is prominently displayed. Below the title, the development team is listed: 'Entwicklung: Alice Wittig, Brockmann Lab (http://rocs.hu-berlin.de), Institut für Biologie, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin & Robert Koch-Institut'. The data source is also listed: 'Datengrundlage: Thorsten Rieck, KV-Impfsurveillance, Fachgebiet Impfprävention, Robert Koch-Institut'. A brief description at the bottom states: 'VacMap ist eine interaktive Visualisierung des Impfstatus in Deutschland. VacMap vermittelt ein qualitatives...

Current Issues

- Future vaccinations function of prior vaccinations.
- What's the right metric?
 - per capita vaccinations (but different organisation),
 - mean vaccinations (but differing pop size)
- Staggered vaccination of different groups.
- Are really only partisans treated?
- Weak case of partisanship.
- Framing: perceptual screen dead?

Potential next steps

- Assess issue sorting effect based on change in 2017-2021 election.
- Panel data (GLES Panel) assessing attitudes towards Covid policy (incl. vax mandate).
- Candidacy as instrument?
- Different case?
- ...?

Thank you for your attention!

