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**Opinions about immigration, patriotism, and welfare policies during the coronavirus emergency:  
the role of political orientation and anxiety**

Francesco Rigoli<sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup>*City, University of London, Northampton Square, London, EC1V 0HB, UK*

**Correspondence:** Francesco Rigoli  
Department of Psychology  
City, University of London  
Northampton Square, London, UK EC1V 0HB  
francesco.rigoli@city.ac.uk

## **Abstract**

The coronavirus pandemic represents a dramatic global health emergency; exploring its cultural impact is important. We contribute to this by investigating changes in political opinions following the pandemic (focusing on the UK and the USA; these were examined jointly given their cultural similarity). Online, participants (recruited via the Prolific website) answered (newly created) questions probing how their opinion about immigration, patriotism, and welfare policies changed following the pandemic. Also, they indicated their political orientation and level of anxiety about coronavirus. We found that political orientation influenced opinion change so that left-wing, compared to right-wing, participants reported decreased patriotism and more positive attitude towards immigration and welfare policies. Higher anxiety about coronavirus was associated with larger opinion change in all areas investigated. Finally, right-wing, compared to left-wing, participants reported lower anxiety about coronavirus. These observations suggest that political orientation and anxiety modulated the impact of the coronavirus emergency on political opinions.

**Keywords:** coronavirus; immigration; anxiety; patriotism; welfare; opinion; political ideology

## 1. Introduction

The ongoing coronavirus outbreak represents one of the most dramatic health emergencies in recent times for the whole humanity. This outbreak is due to the spread of a new type of virus attacking the human respiratory system. Several aspects of the virus' precise nature still remain to be elucidated, but high levels of infectivity and mortality are well established (Wang et al., 2020). In response to the increasing number of infected patients, many countries have adopted unprecedented policy measures such as the closure of economic activities and the prescription to stay at home. Debate about the coronavirus has monopolised the media and the public discourse, leading to widespread anxiety even for those less directly affected (Garfin et al., 2020). For all these reasons, in addition to its medical consequences, the coronavirus emergency has exerted a dramatic impact on the psychology and culture of many communities across the globe. Hence, one important research endeavour is to explore the coronavirus impact at the cultural and psychological level.

This paper contributes to this by investigating how people's opinions about central matters in the contemporary political debate have been affected by the coronavirus crisis, with a focus on the UK and the USA. The choice of these countries is motivated by our attempt to afford generality, hence extending our focus to more than one country, and yet confine our analysis to countries with similar culture and politics (as the UK and the USA are) in order to avoid conflating countries that are very different. We examine three opinions. The first one is about immigration. In recent years, debate about immigration has been central in many countries (including the UK and the USA) and has been determinant in several recent elections (Goodwin & Milazzo, 2017; Reny et al., 2019). The second aspect investigated is patriotism. As reflected in Trump's election and Brexit, feelings of patriotism have been on the rise in the USA and the UK (Flemmen & Savage, 2017; Kaufmann, 2019). The third opinion investigated concerns welfare state policies (van Oorschot et al., 2017). The reason for including such aspect derives from models of political ideology suggesting the existence of two basic dimensions underlying most political opinions: the social dimension (tradition versus modernism) and

the economic dimension (government intervention versus free market) (Feldman & Johnston, 2014). While opinion about immigration and patriotism map to the former dimension, we aimed at exploring also the economic facet by including opinion about welfare policies.

Given a dearth of research regarding the impact of past pandemics (or similar large-scale health emergencies) upon the opinions examined here, we did not have a priori hypotheses about the direction of effects. We argue that different hypotheses can be proposed. As an example about immigration, it is possible that the global nature of the coronavirus emergency might have elicited empathy towards other cultures and other ethnic groups, hence inspiring a more positive feeling towards immigrants. This possibility would be consistent with recent data suggesting that increasing the salience of the coronavirus pandemics makes Americans more willing to prioritize society's problems over the own problems (Cappelen et al., 2020). Alternatively, judgement about immigration might have been guided by considerations that public resources have been employed for the care of immigrants who fell ill, hence leading to a more negative attitude towards immigration. The possibility that anti-immigration feelings have risen would be in line with proposals that threat perception (here represented by the coronavirus) promotes outgroup prejudice (Feldman, 2003; Stenner, 2005).

We analysed changes in opinion about immigration, patriotism, and welfare policies as a function of two potential factors: political orientation (expressed on a continuum from left-wing to right-wing ideology) and anxiety elicited by the coronavirus (we rely on the notion of anxiety in keeping with prior literature which has largely focused on how this emotion impacts on political beliefs (Huddy et al., 2007); however, the similar notion of stress could be equally suitable in this context). Regarding the former factor, it is to be expected that prior political convictions determine the sources of information, and shape the way of interpreting events, concerning the coronavirus. Hence, considering the example above about immigration, left-wing individuals might be more prone to focus on the empathy towards other ethnic groups and hence develop a more positive attitude towards immigrants, while right-wings individuals might emphasis the public resources devoted to treating sick

immigrants, hence developing a more negative attitude towards them. This possibility would fit with the proposal that threat perception is more conducive of outgroup prejudice in individuals who score high on the right-wing authoritarian scale, which is associated with right-wing political orientation (Feldman, 2003; Stenner, 2005).

Regarding the role of anxiety about coronavirus, previous research has shown that anxiety in general has substantial impact upon political beliefs (Huddy et al., 2005; 2007; Ladd & Lenz, 2008; Marcus et al., 2005; Redlawsk, 2006). For example, an influential proposal is that death anxiety elicits psychological defensive mechanisms which lead to embrace ideologies with an emphasis on some sort of after-life existence (Greenberg & Arndt, 2011). Patriotic ideologies have been considered a form of such ideologies in as much as they rely on the concept of fatherland, which transcends the limited existence of single individuals (Arndt et al., 2002; Burke et al., 2013; Castano & al., 2011; Jost et al., 2003; 2007; 2009). Thus, one can predict that higher anxiety about coronavirus might be associated with enhanced patriotic sentiment.

In addition to assess the impact of political orientation and anxiety about coronavirus on opinions, we also investigated the relationship between political orientation and anxiety in itself. With this regard, previous literature raises two distinct predictions. On the one hand, empirical evidence indicates that conservative ideology is associated with enhanced subjective well-being (Napier & Jost, 2008; Schlenker et al., 2012), predicting decreased anxiety about the coronavirus in right-wing individuals. On the other hand, other findings report a link between right-wing ideology and anxiety, raising the possibility of enhanced anxiety about coronavirus in right-wing individuals (Jost et al., 2003; 2007).

This paper investigates people's reports about changes in opinion regarding immigration, patriotism, and welfare policies in response to the coronavirus emergency, and analyses how these are modulated by political orientation and anxiety about the coronavirus. Moreover, the paper examines the very relationship between the two latter variables.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1 Participants**

Recruitment of participants was carried out online using the Prolific website ([www.prolific.co](http://www.prolific.co)). Any (18 years old or older) individual from any country interested in participating to online social science studies can register with the Prolific website. Individuals receive monetary reward after participating to a study. Most people get to know Prolific via social media, poster/flyer campaigns at universities, and through referrals from researchers and participants already using the site. When registering to Prolific, individuals are asked demographic questions which later allow researchers to prescreen participants during recruitment. When a researcher creates a new study, any eligible participant (i.e., those meeting the prescreening criteria) can sign in and participate until the sample is complete (the sample size is established a priori). Eligible participants are informed that a new study is available because the study becomes visible to them when accessing the Prolific website, and because the Prolific system sends an email to a random subset of eligible participants.

For the present study, 400 adults were recruited (age: mean 34.6, SD 12). By relying on the Prolific prescreening, we ensured that half of the participants were females and the other half were males, and that half were UK citizens and the other half USA citizens (citizenship was established based on the following prescreening question: "What is your nationality?"). Participants were all English speakers (this also was ensured based on a prescreening question). The study was published on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and the sample was fully completed on the same day. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University supporting the study (located in the UK; IRB code: ETH1920-0624).

## 2.1 Measures and procedures

Before data collection, we created a novel set of questions to assess the variables of interest. These variables (and the associated questions) are:

- Political orientation, measured by a Likert-type item asking “Do you prefer left-wing or right-wing political ideas?” (1 = strongly left, 2 = moderately left, 3 = no preference, 4 = moderately right, 5 = strongly right)
- Anxiety elicited by the coronavirus crisis ( $Anx_{COVID}$ ), measured by a Likert-type item asking “Do you feel more anxious because of the coronavirus crisis?” (1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = considerably, 5 = extremely)
- Change of opinion about immigration following the coronavirus outbreak ( $Imm_{COVID}$ ), measured by a Likert-type item asking “Since coronavirus emergency started, your opinion about immigration has” (1 = become substantially more negative, 2 = become a little more negative, 3 = remained the same, 4 = become a little more positive, 5 = become substantially more positive)
- Change of opinion about patriotism following the coronavirus outbreak ( $Pat_{COVID}$ ), measured by a Likert-type item asking “Since coronavirus emergency started, do you feel more or less patriotic?” (1 = substantially less patriotic, 2 = a little less patriotic, 3 = as patriotic as before, 4 = a little more patriotic, 5 = substantially more patriotic)
- Change of opinion about welfare state policies following the coronavirus outbreak ( $Wel_{COVID}$ ), measured by a Likert-type item asking “Since coronavirus emergency started, your opinion about welfare state policies has?” (1 = become substantially more negative, 2 = become a little more negative, 3 = remained the same, 4 = become a little more positive, 5 = become substantially more positive)

Note that political orientation was assessed in terms of preference for right-wing or left-wing ideas, rather than, for example, as voting for either left or right parties. We adopted this approach to identify

participants with more nuanced political attitudes, for example those with a slight preference for an ideology which is not expressed in voting behaviour.

Participants answered these questions on-line via the Prolific website. Before answering these questions, participants indicated their gender, age and nationality (the latter was included for sanity check). Answering all questions took approximately one minute, and subjects were paid £0.20 and \$0.25, for UK and USA participants respectively, for participating in the study.

### 3. Data analysis

We aimed at examining the impact of the coronavirus crisis upon opinions about immigration, patriotism, and welfare policies, exploring the role of political orientation and anxiety elicited by the coronavirus emergency. To this aim, we first fitted three ordinal regression models having  $Imm_{COVID}$ ,  $Pat_{COVID}$ ,  $Wel_{COVID}$  as dependent variables, respectively. Ordinal logistic regression was adopted because the dependent variables are ordinal. Each model included political orientation and  $Anx_{COVID}$  as predictors, together with age, gender (with male being the reference category), and country (with USA being the reference category) as covariates of no interest.

In addition, we adopted a different approach by focusing on how much participants changed their opinions independent on the direction of change. To this aim we calculated  $Abs_{imm-COVID}$  as equal to  $abs(3-Imm_{COVID})$ . This captures how much the opinion about immigration has changed since the coronavirus outbreak, independent of whether it has become more positive or more negative. For example, two participants reporting values of 1 and 5 for  $Imm_{COVID}$ , respectively, will both be assigned a value of 2 for  $Abs_{imm-COVID}$  (note that  $Imm_{COVID} = 3$  implies that opinion about immigration has remained unchanged, hence it is associated with  $Abs_{imm-COVID} = 0$ ). Similarly, we calculated  $Abs_{pat-COVID}$  as  $abs(3-Pat_{COVID})$ , and  $Abs_{wel-COVID}$  as  $abs(3-Wel_{COVID})$ . We fitted three further ordinal regression models having  $Abs_{imm-COVID}$ ,  $Abs_{pat-COVID}$ ,  $Abs_{wel-COVID}$  as dependent

variables, respectively. Each model included political orientation and  $Anx_{COVID}$  as predictors, together with age, gender, and country as covariates of no interest. In this way we examined whether political orientation and anxiety about the coronavirus led to larger opinion change, independent of the direction of the change.

Finally, in order to examine the relation between political orientation and anxiety about the coronavirus, we ran an ordinal regression model of  $Anx_{COVID}$  having political orientation as predictor together with gender, age, and country as regressors of no interest.

For regressors of interest in each regression model, we ran a Wald Chi-square test assessing the null hypothesis that the associated regression coefficient is equal to zero in the population. Relying on a Bonferroni correction based on the predictors of interest, we adopted  $p = 0.005$  as threshold for rejecting the null hypothesis.

## 4. Results

Descriptive statistics for all variables measured are reported in tab. 1, while results of the ordinal regression analyses are reported in tab. 2 (for exploratory purposes, we also report results associated with regressors of no interest: country, gender, and age).

### 4.1 Opinion change

Considering the ordinal regression model of  $Imm_{COVID}$  (tab. 2), political orientation contributed to the model ( $b = -.717$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 37.90$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while  $Anx_{COVID}$  did not ( $b = -.027$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = .06$ ,  $p = .815$ ). This indicates that, other things being equal, following the coronavirus outbreak opinion about immigration decreased as political orientation moved to the right. Considering the regression model of  $Pat_{COVID}$  (tab. 2), political orientation contributed to the model ( $b = .585$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 50.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while  $Anx_{COVID}$  did not ( $b = .129$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 2.16$ ,  $p = .142$ ). This indicates that,

other things being equal, following the coronavirus outbreak patriotism increased as political orientation moved to the right. Considering the regression model of  $Wel_{COVID}$  (tab. 2), political orientation contributed to the model ( $b = -.394$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 22.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while  $Anx_{COVID}$  did not ( $b = .139$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 2.28$ ,  $p = .131$ ). This indicates that, other things being equal, following the coronavirus outbreak opinion about welfare decreased as political orientation moved to the right. Altogether, results regarding  $Imm_{COVID}$ ,  $Pat_{COVID}$ , and  $Wel_{COVID}$  indicate that political orientation plays a similar role with regard opinion change after coronavirus concerning immigration, patriotism, and welfare policies. Fig. 1 reports average scores (error bars represent 95% confidence interval) regarding  $Imm_{COVID}$ ,  $Pat_{COVID}$ , and  $Wel_{COVID}$  for right-wing (strongly right or moderately right;  $n = 186$ ) participants, left-wing (strongly left or moderately left;  $n = 190$ ) participants, and for participants with no preference for right nor left ( $n = 24$ ). The graph indicates that the latter group of participants reported no substantial opinion change (remember that a score of 3 indicates no change in opinion), left-wing participants reported a more positive opinion about immigration and welfare policies and a decreased patriotism, and right-wing participants reported more negative opinion about immigration, enhanced patriotism, and no change in opinion towards welfare policies.

#### 4.2 Absolute opinion change

Next, we examined change in opinions independent of the direction of change, focusing on regression models of  $Abs_{imm-COVID}$ ,  $Abs_{pat-COVID}$ , and  $Abs_{wel-COVID}$ . Considering the regression model of  $Abs_{imm-COVID}$  (tab. 2), political orientation contributed to the model ( $b = .379$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 13.00$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Now,  $Anx_{COVID}$  contributed to the model too ( $b = .327$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 7.21$ ,  $p = .004$ ). This indicates that, other things being equal, individuals reporting higher anxiety about the coronavirus changed their opinion about immigration more. Considering the regression model of  $Abs_{pat-COVID}$  (tab. 2), political orientation did not contribute to the model ( $b = .033$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = .19$ ,  $p = .667$ ), while  $Anx_{COVID}$  did ( $b = .319$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 12.19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicates that, other things being

equal, individuals reporting higher anxiety about the coronavirus changed their level of patriotism more. Considering the regression model of  $Abs_{wel-COVID}$  (tab. 2), political orientation contributed to the model ( $b = -.303$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 13.05$ ,  $p < .001$ ) as well as  $Anx_{COVID}$  did ( $b = .407$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 16.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The latter result indicates that, other things being equal, individuals reporting higher anxiety about the coronavirus changed their opinion about welfare policies more. Altogether, results about  $Abs_{imm-COVID}$ ,  $Abs_{pat-COVID}$ , and  $Abs_{wel-COVID}$  indicate that higher anxiety about the coronavirus led to larger change in absolute terms in opinions about immigration, patriotism, and welfare policies, independent of the direction of change.

#### 4.3 Political orientation and anxiety about coronavirus

Finally, we analysed the regression model of  $Anx_{COVID}$  having political orientation, gender, age, and country as predictors. We found that political orientation was associated with a negative effect ( $b = -.223$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 9.65$ ,  $p = .002$ ), indicating that right-wing individuals reported diminished anxiety about the coronavirus (results for other regressors are: age,  $b = -.003$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = .19$ ,  $p = .667$ ; gender,  $b = .458$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 6.39$ ,  $p = .011$ ; country,  $b = -.316$ , Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 3.03$ ,  $p = .082$ ).

### 5. Discussion

This paper investigates opinion change regarding immigration, patriotism, and welfare policies following the coronavirus outbreak. We found that political orientation influenced opinion change in such a way that left-wing participants reported decreased patriotism and more positive attitude towards immigration and welfare policies, while right-wing participants reported more negative attitude towards immigration, increased patriotism, and unchanged opinion about welfare policies. Although anxiety about coronavirus did not influence the direction of opinion change, nevertheless higher anxiety was associated with larger opinion change in absolute terms concerning immigration,

patriotism, and welfare policies. Finally, we observed that right-wing participants reported lower anxiety about coronavirus.

By indicating that, following the coronavirus crisis, political opinions have changed differently for right- compared to left-wing individuals, our findings support the notion that prior political orientation is critical in shaping how dramatic public events are interpreted (Jerit & Barabas, 2012; Tilley & Hobolt, 2011). Specifically, assuming that at baseline right-wing ideology is associated with higher patriotism and more negative attitude towards immigration and welfare policies (consistent with empirical observations; e.g., Baldassarri & Goldberg, 2014), then our results indicate that the coronavirus outbreak has led to increased opinion polarization. In other words, after the coronavirus, right- compared to left-wing individuals reported having even higher patriotism and even worse attitude towards immigration and welfare policies. How can these observations be explained? Besides the specific contingencies characterising the coronavirus pandemics, we offer two general explanations regarding why dramatic public events might lead to opinion polarization, that we refer to as bottom-up and top-down explanations, respectively. A bottom-up explanation would suggest that, when dramatic public events occur, emotional processes are engaged which lead individuals to increase their commitment to prior political opinions. This explanation is consistent with evidence indicating that, when anxiety (and specifically death anxiety) is induced experimentally, right-wing individuals' opinions tends to move further right and left-wing individuals' opinions further left (Castano et al., 2011; Kosloff et al., 2010). Different from a bottom-up explanation, a top-down explanation proposes that political elites and media would play a pivotal role (Garfin et al., 2020). When dramatic public events occur, political elites and media would tend to express more polarized messages. In turn, this would polarize opinions within the general public, given that right-wing and left-wing individuals trust more right-wing and left-wing politicians and media, respectively. In support of this possibility, recent work suggests that in the USA individual differences in managing the coronavirus emergency are strongly shaped by messages from politicians and media (Kushner Gadarian et al., 2020). Notably, bottom-up and top-down processes are not mutually exclusive, but they might reinforce one another.

Anxiety about coronavirus did not affect the direction of opinion change. For example, this observation does not support the notion that patriotism is boosted by death anxiety (Arndt et al., 2002; Burke et al., 2013; Castano et al., 2011; Jost et al., 2003; 2007; 2009). However, anxiety was associated with larger opinion change in absolute terms. We envisage three possible explanations for this. First, anxiety might play the role of gate for opinion change: once elicited, it might open the door to changing opinion. Second, anxiety might instead be the *consequence* of opinion change: revising beliefs about important political matters (as possibly experienced by some individuals during the coronavirus crisis) might boost anxiety. Third, anxiety and opinion change might be independent consequences of a single underlying factor, such as experiencing negative events. Further research is required to understand which of these explanations is better.

Finally, we observed increased anxiety about coronavirus in left-wing individuals. This fits with previous observations showing an association between subjective well-being and conservatism (Napier & Jost, 2008; Schlenker et al., 2012). It has been proposed that, at least partially, conservative ideology arises out as a coping strategy to manage anxiety (Jost et al., 2003; 2007; 2009). Within this perspective, our findings can be interpreted as a manifestation of right-wing ideology protecting individuals from experiencing potential anxieties elicited by the coronavirus outbreak. Whether similar results characterise other countries and other forms of public threat remains a question for future research.

It is important to stress the implications of the sampling method adopted here. This was based on an online recruitment system (Prolific), where some categories of individuals (e.g., young compared to old adults) might be overrepresented compared to their actual frequency in the population. Moreover, the number of participants for each gender and country was established a priori. Finally, the sample size is small ( $n = 400$ ) compared to large-scale surveys. These characteristics do not allow a precise estimate of the variables' average values within the population. However, the sampling

method is adequate for examining the relationships among variables, which is the goal of the present study.

We stress some limitations of the study. First, participants' opinions were assessed via self-report, which is a method vulnerable to biases such as virtue signalling and social desirability (Van de Mortel et al., 2008). To address this, a potential research avenue is to examine the effect of the coronavirus on opinion change by adopting behavioural and implicit measures. Another shortcoming is our focus on a specific time, mid-April 2020. This does not allow us to ask whether the effects observed here change as the coronavirus crisis unfolds. Finally, our study focuses specifically on the USA and the UK. Future research is needed to assess whether similar effects also emerge in other countries. A factor that might be relevant is that in both the USA and the UK conservative parties have governed during the coronavirus emergency. For example, this might explain why right-wing and left-wing participants reported increased and decreased patriotism, respectively.

In sum, our study contributes to shed light on the consequences of the coronavirus crisis at the level of psychology and culture. We found that, in response to the coronavirus outbreak, opinions about important political matters have changed as a function of political orientation, leading to increased opinion polarization. Anxiety about coronavirus also appears to have been relevant in as much as it was associated with larger opinion change in absolute terms. Finally, compared to left-wing participants, right-wing participants reported lower anxiety about coronavirus, supporting the proposal that conservative ideology protects individuals from experiencing anxiety. These results highlight how profound the repercussions of the coronavirus crisis are also at the psychological and cultural level, in as much as they extend to opinions about political issues apparently unrelated to the coronavirus, such as immigration, patriotism, and welfare. This invites politicians and institutions to weight carefully how their actions regarding the coronavirus might indirectly affect political views about such apparently distant issues. It also encourages media and citizens to assess whether

politicians and institutions are competent in considering how their actions regarding coronavirus affect political views about such apparently distant issues.

## 6. declaration of interest statement

The author declares no conflict of interest

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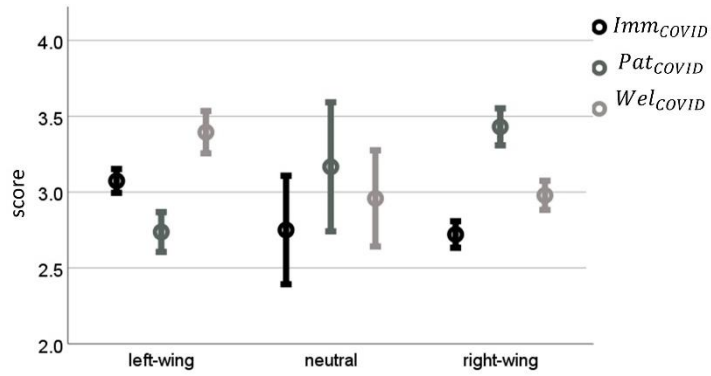
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**Tab. 1.** Descriptive statistics of the variables recorded in the study (note that the sample included an equal number of males and females, and an equal number of UK and USA citizens).

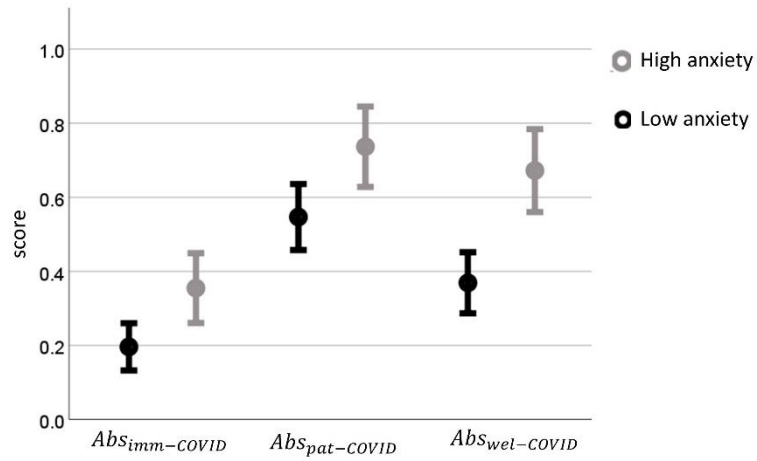
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	18	72	34.59	12.20
Political orientation	1	5	2.88	1.296
<i>Anx<sub>COVID</sub></i>	6	10	8.30	1.111
<i>Imm<sub>COVID</sub></i>	1	5	2.89	.620
<i>Pat<sub>COVID</sub></i>	1	5	3.09	.949
<i>Wel<sub>COVID</sub></i>	1	5	3.18	.855
<i>Abs<sub>imm-COVID</sub></i>	0	2	.27	.568
<i>Abs<sub>pat-COVID</sub></i>	0	2	.64	.709
<i>Abs<sub>wel-COVID</sub></i>	0	2	.51	.708

**Tab. 2.** Statistical description of the ordinal regression models. Different models are in different rows (each indicated by the associated dependent variable). Information for different predictors is in different columns.  $P < .05$  are marked with one asterisk,  $P < .005$  (which was our significance threshold) are marked with two asterisks.

	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Political Orientation</b>	<b>Anx<sub>COVID</sub></b>
<b><i>Imm<sub>COVID</sub></i></b>	b = .015 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 2.19$ , p = .139	b = .187 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .55$ , p = .458	b = .654 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 6.46$ , p = .011*	b = -.717 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 37.90$ , p < .001**	b = -.027 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .06$ , p = .815
<b><i>Pat<sub>COVID</sub></i></b>	b = .014 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 2.86$ , p = .091	b = -.152 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .64$ , p = .425	b = .800 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 16.74$ , p < .001**	b = .585 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 50.71$ , p < .001**	b = .129 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 2.16$ , p = .142
<b><i>Wel<sub>COVID</sub></i></b>	b = .013 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 2.54$ , p = .111	b = -.447 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 4.90$ , p = .027*	b = .183 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .84$ , p = .361	b = -.394 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 22.80$ , p < .001**	b = .139 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 2.28$ , p = .143
<b><i>Abs<sub>imm-COVID</sub></i></b>	b = -.004 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .135$ , p = .713	b = -.550 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 4.55$ , p = .033*	b = .007 Wald $\chi^2(1) < .01$ p = .979	b = .379 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 13.00$ , p < .001**	b = .327 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 7.21$ , p = .004**
<b><i>Abs<sub>pat-COVID</sub></i></b>	b = -.006 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .56$ , p = .453	b = -.022 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .01$ , p = .911	b = .168 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .75$ p = .387	b = .033 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .19$ , p = .667	b = .319 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 12.19$ , p < .001**
<b><i>Abs<sub>wel-COVID</sub></i></b>	b = .006 Wald $\chi^2(1) = .51$ , p = .477	b = -.889 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 17.08$ , p < .001**	b = -.383 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 3.31$ p = .069	b = -.303 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 13.05$ , p < .001**	b = .407 Wald $\chi^2(1) = 16.28$ , p < .001**



**Fig. 1.** Scores for  $Imm_{COVID}$ ,  $Pat_{COVID}$ , and  $Wel_{COVID}$  for different political orientation groups (right-wing (n = 186): those responding “strongly right” or “moderately right” to the political orientation question; left-wing (n = 190): those responding “strongly left” or “moderately left” to the political orientation question; neutral (n = 24): those responding “no preference” to the political orientation question). Error bars describe 95% confidence intervals.



**Fig. 2.** Scores for  $Abs_{imm-COVID}$ ,  $Abs_{pat-COVID}$ , and  $Abs_{wel-COVID}$  for participants with different levels of anxiety about the coronavirus (high and low anxiety groups are created based on a median-split). Error bars describe 95% confidence intervals.