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The Effect of the Big Five Personality Traits on Support for Mask Mandates

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ABSTRACT

Recent research around the public's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has created an opportunity to understand how personality shapes policy preferences. In this thesis, I examine how the Big Five personality traits shape public support for mask mandates to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. I construct a theoretical framework in which I describe how four key traits either influence individuals to support or oppose mask mandates. Combining existing literature about the Big Five personality traits with recent studies related to pandemic precautions, I argue that four of the five traits should affect opinions of mask mandates. Using nationally representative public opinion survey data, I construct several regression models that provide evidence suggesting that higher levels of the agreeableness trait contribute to increased support for mask mandates. Additionally, one of the models suggests that higher levels of openness to new experiences contributes to a greater emphasis on mask mandate policy in the 2022 midterm election. This study provides validation for the inclusion of personality traits in public policy research, suggesting that personality can account for variation in policy support even when controlling for partisanship.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended much of the American public's preconceived notions of what their relationship with government should look like. From stimulus checks to vaccine mandates, national, state, and local governments have implemented a vast array of policies to combat the pandemic. One of the most notable new policies undoubtedly has been mask mandates, which require all residents to cover their faces in businesses, public spaces, and at times even the outdoors. While some have supported mask mandates as a necessary precaution to end the pandemic, others have condemned them as ineffective or authoritarian (Congressional Digest).

The factors influencing an individual's support for mask mandates are complex and multifaceted, as with any other policy area. However, with party polarization on the rise in the United States, many have been quick to point to partisan identity as the primary factor influencing support for mask mandates (Adolf et al. 2020). Other scholars suggest the explanation may not be that simple. While the partisan split on pandemic restrictions in the U.S involves Democrats expressing more willingness to support lockdowns than Republicans, other countries such as Israel have seen the reverse, as the right-wing parties support further restrictions while the left-wing parties protest them (Ayyub 2020). Partisanship could still be the primary driver of these differences, but the variation across countries suggest other factors could play a role. Polls from the U.S. have confirmed this trend, suggesting that a significant minority

of Republicans support mask mandates, while other factors such as population density may play a role in determining an individual's support for the policy (Jackson et al.).

Due to the uncertainty and novelty of mask mandates, exploring individual factors that develop prior to party identification, such as personality traits, is crucial. Specifically, this study examines how the Big Five personality traits influence support for mask mandates. The Big Five are ideal to evaluate because they are present to varying degrees in everyone, change very little over time, and do not overlap (Diener and Lucas 2019). They have also been validated thoroughly and have been shown to predict political behavior. Thus, they could have some influence on an individual's support for mask mandates.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The Big Five Traits

In order to understand how the Big Five traits influence support for mask wearing, one must understand the Big Five personality traits and the concept of personality more generally. Personality represents a person's characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behavior that are stable over time (Diener and Lucas 2019). Personality traits are specific types of individual characteristics, and they are often combined through factor analysis to create a few broad traits that are theoretically independent of each other. These personality traits should appear at varying levels within all people, meaning that researchers can objectively evaluate anyone across the world for the traits (Diener and Lucas 2019).

One of the most common factored trait models, the Big Five, uses five factored traits to predict individual behavior: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to new experiences, and neuroticism. Extraversion measures an individual's tendency to be talkative, sociable, and assertive. Agreeableness measures an individual's tendency to agree with others rather than assert themselves. Conscientiousness measures an individual's tendency to work hard, follow rules, and be careful. Openness to new experiences measures an individual's tendency to appreciate, understand, and accept new concepts. Finally, neuroticism measures an individual's tendency to experience mood swings and negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, and sadness (Diener and Lucas 2019).

Agreeableness is the main trait involved in prosocial behaviors, and it often describes individuals who are altruistic, straight-forward, trusting, soft-hearted, modest, and compliant

(Carlo et al. 2005). Graziano and Tobin (2002) note that agreeableness is not easily manipulated by self-favoring biases, meaning agreeableness measures are valid and do not just reflect how participants want to be seen. In the context of politics, agreeableness has been found to be associated with both liberals and conservatives (Hirsh et al. 2010). Liberals are associated with the compassionate side of agreeableness, which is related to empathy and interpersonal concern. Conservatives are associated with the politeness aspect of agreeableness, which is related to norm compliance and traditionalism. In addition, Furnham and Fenton-O’Creevy (2018) found that agreeableness intersects with class, as higher-class individuals who possess strong levels of agreeableness are more likely to be left-leaning, while agreeableness does not predict lower class individuals’ likelihood of being left-leaning.

Conscientiousness relates to organization, persistence, and ambition, and it is associated with self-oriented perfectionism (Stoeber et al. 2009). Analysis of its sub traits demonstrates that the strongest elements of conscientiousness are industriousness, perfectionism, and organization (MacCann et al. 2009). In politics, researchers have found a negative association between conscientiousness and political interest (Furnham and Fenton-O’Creevy 2018).

Conscientiousness is also associated with right-wing politics (Furnham and Fenton-O’Creevy 2018). In addition, Lawson and Kakkar (2020) found that conscientiousness correlates with a decrease in the sharing of fake news among conservatives (i.e. among low conscientiousness people, conservatives are more likely to spread fake news, while among high conscientiousness people neither conservatives nor liberals are more likely to spread fake news).

Openness to new experiences is marked by broad interests, preference for novelty, inquisitiveness, and imagination (Nusbaum and Silvia 2011). Academics differ over whether to see this trait primarily in terms of intellect (based on aspects such as intellectual curiosity and

quick thinking) or openness (fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, ideas, etc.). One argument against the intellect side is that it does not correlate well enough with intelligence scales. However, openness to new experiences is correlated with deep learning (i.e. learning academic material due to interest in it rather than to pass the class or compete with others) (Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham 2009). In politics, openness to new experiences has been associated with being more left-leaning, more active in political protesting, and possessing an interest in politics (Furnham and Fenton-O’Creevy 2018). It is generally associated with an interest in political issues and taking part in political events.

Neuroticism is associated with experiencing negative emotions, responding poorly to environmental stress, interpreting situations as threatening, and being overwhelmed by frustration (Widiger and Oltmanns 2017). It predicts many forms of mental health issues such as anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and eating disorders. Substance abuse issues may also be traced to neuroticism due to a need to suppress the negative emotions. It is associated with physical problems such as heart issues as well as social problems such as marital issues, and neuroticism not only predicts the actual problems themselves but also the subjective feeling that the problems exist. In politics, neuroticism has been found to be associated with right-wing ideology among lower class people and left-wing ideology among higher class people (Furnham and Fenton-O’Creevy 2018). It also has been found to negatively correlate with life satisfaction (Burton 2015).

Mask Wearing Behavior

The aforementioned five traits clearly influence how people interact with politics, so naturally, these traits should influence how people form opinions on issues like mask mandates. No studies have examined the relationship between the Big Five traits and support for mask mandates, but several studies have assessed how the traits influence masking behavior and compliance with mandates. An important distinction between compliance and support exists: some people such as those who exhibit more rule following behavior, may choose to comply with mask mandates without necessarily supporting them. However, there may be a link between masking and support for mandates, as researchers have already studied how the Big Five personality traits influence mask wearing behavior (Barceló and Sheen 2020; Wilroth et al. 2020; Clark et al. 2020).

Personality and Masking

Three groups of researchers have studied personality and masking. Barceló and Sheen (2020) conducted a study using survey data collected from interviews of Spanish participants. Wilroth et al. (2020) surveyed two samples of people from the United States. Finally, Clark et al. (2020) studied an online survey of a global sample. The results of these studies were mixed, as Barceló and Sheen (2020) found that only extraversion was significant; Clark et al. (2020) found that agreeableness and conscientiousness were significant; and Wilroth et al. (2020) found that extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to new experiences were all significant.

While not entirely in agreement, these data seem to suggest that at least extraversion and agreeableness are significant predictors of mask wearing behavior in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. These compliant individuals may not support the mask mandates, as this behavior does not imply underlying support and, in addition, many of these participants may have masked for a variety of other reasons. Furthermore, only one of the studies was conducted using a sample entirely based in the United States, meaning it is the only one that directly applies to the U.S. political context.

Opposition to Masking

Scholars have also investigated the motivation behind opposition to wearing masks. One study looking at Twitter posts found that people who opposed mask use cited physical discomfort, lack of effectiveness, and the mask itself being unnecessary or inappropriate in some circumstances as explanations for their opposition (He et al. 2021). They also found that more people supported mask use than opposed it, and those who opposed it were less likely to link to studies in support of their argument (He et al. 2021). In addition, Halpern (2020) found that opposition to mask use is due to perceived violations of freedom and disbelief in the effectiveness of masks. Another researcher, Jarry (2020), determined that the four main reasons people do not wear masks are medical reasons, disliking how the mask feels, distorting science, and a belief in personal freedom.

Measuring Support over Compliance

An important distinction exists between support for and compliance with mask mandates. Support for mask mandates implies that a person would want a mandate to be in place, while compliance with a mask mandate merely means that they regularly mask as a result of an existing mandate. A person may comply with a mask mandate without supporting it for numerous reasons, such as wanting to wear a mask to protect themselves or fearing repercussions. More relevant to this study, a person may comply because they feel compelled to follow rules, which is an aspect of conscientiousness (Diener and Lucas 2019). Support, on the other hand, does not involve rule following, so conscientiousness may exert a different influence on levels of support. Existing studies have offered extensive analysis regarding the influence of personality traits on mandate compliance, but this study contributes to scholarship on mask mandates by explicitly measuring levels of support (Barceló and Sheen 2020; Wilroth et al. 2020; Clark et al. 2020). The results from this research provide a thorough understanding of how individual personality traits shape their perspective on salient public policies.

Chapter 3

Theory

In this thesis, I focus on connecting four of the Big Five traits to support for mask mandates. Previous studies suggest that agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to new experiences, and neuroticism have some connection to mask mandate support. I have decided not to focus on extraversion because the theoretical connection between it and support for mask mandates is not as strong. Studies on masking suggest extraversion may play a role in compliance with mask mandates, but this does not mean it relates to support for mask mandates (Barceló and Sheen 2020; Wilroth et al. 2020).

Extraversion primarily involves the desire to talk to others and be the center of attention (Diener and Lucas 2020). Thus, extraversion does not relate to support for mask mandates in an obvious way, as someone high in extraversion may talk to others while still wearing a mask.

Scholars have established that agreeableness includes altruistic behaviors (Carlo et al. 2005). Altruistic individuals are more empathetic, and empathetic individuals take specific actions to care for others. The pandemic quickly cast the world into a state of disarray, as the virus infected people from all walks of life. Empathetic individuals may support mask mandates as a result of their desire to care for individuals who are more at risk of contracting the virus and experiencing potentially damaging consequences. The virus not only upended society by creating a public health catastrophe, but it also threatened the livelihoods of those who managed to avoid contracting the virus, as various industries suffered from sick workers, supply-chain issues, and other forms of financial stress (Rodrigues et al. 2021). Empathetic individuals may support mask mandates in an effort to minimize the chances of people contracting the virus at their workspaces.

Conversely, individuals with low agreeableness may be less likely to support mask mandates due to a lack of empathy (Graziano et al. 2007). While empathetic individuals feel for others and may engage in more altruistic behaviors, individuals without empathy are more likely to focus on themselves. When faced with a pandemic, an unempathetic individual may be more likely to evaluate potential policy solutions based on their effects on their personal life and the perceived costs to people in similar positions. For example, a young, healthy person low in agreeableness may be against masks because the discomfort of the mask outweighs their concern for infection. Individuals low in agreeableness are also likely to value their personal freedom (Iyer et al. 2010). Thus, they may be more threatened by policies such as mask mandates, due to fears of government overregulation in their personal life. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis:

Agreeableness Hypothesis: As agreeableness levels increase, support for mask mandates will also increase.

Conscientiousness includes rule-following behaviors, such as being on time for appointments, obeying traffic laws, and submitting to authority (Diener and Lucas 2019). While this trait naturally may lead someone to comply with a mask mandate, it may have the opposite effect on supporting a mask mandate. Rule following can lead an individual to be more supportive of the status quo, leading to system justification (Jost et al. 2004). System justification occurs when an individual supports the status quo due to believing that the rules underlying the system exist for a good reason. Crucially, this can occur even when an individual is actively harmed by the system, as has been found in some studies of African Americans (Jost et al. 2004). The onset of the pandemic led many public officials to consider greatly overhauling existing

policies concerning public health and welfare, fundamentally changing the government's relationship with its citizens. While only some of these changes were put into practice, an individual high in conscientiousness engaging in system justification may likely see these policies as an attack on the system. They may seek to protect the status quo of pre-pandemic life even if it does not benefit them to do so.

Individuals low in conscientiousness, however, are less goal-oriented and more complacent than those high in conscientiousness (Diener and Lucas 2019). They could be less driven in their career. They could have an external locus of control, meaning they believe they have little control over their own life outcomes (Saint-Germain et al. 2011). This complacency could carry over to their political engagement, as someone low in conscientiousness may believe individuals cannot do enough on their own to prevent infection and must rely on an outside force like the federal, state, or local government. This belief stands in stark contrast to those high in conscientiousness, who are more likely to have an internal locus of control, meaning they feel they have greater control over their life, and may be more likely to believe individuals can survive COVID-19 on their own (Saint-Germain et al. 2011). Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis:

Conscientiousness Hypothesis: As conscientiousness levels increase, support for mask mandates will decrease.

Researchers have established that openness to new experiences is associated with a preference for novelty, inquisitiveness, and imagination (Diener and Lucas 2019). The presence of this trait could allow an individual to have an easier time adopting a new policy or perspective. When the pandemic began, different countries had differing policy reactions that

produced mixed results. Some of these policies were informed by past experiences with public health crises. For example, China, a country that has a history of encouraging masking when ill, swiftly adopted new mask mandates to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus (Tan et al. 2021). Individuals high in openness to new experiences may have been more willing to adopt novel policy ideas that appeared to have been successful in other countries, like China, because of their ability to easily adopt new perspectives.

On the other hand, individuals low in openness to new experiences remain firm in their conventional methods of thinking and committed to their routines (Diener and Lucas 2019). They only trust strategies that have served them in the past, as they are skeptical of change. In the U.S., disease outbreaks in the recent past, such as the 2009 H1N1 epidemic, were managed by health officials through funding health equipment and research, rather than public health mandates (“The Swine Flu Response” 2009). Someone low in openness to new experiences may respond to a mask mandate with skepticism, perceiving it as an unnecessary new idea. Their reliance on conventional wisdom may push them to rely on individualistic responses to the pandemic, in contrast to the communal response of masking. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis:

Openness to New Experiences Hypothesis: As openness to new experiences levels increase, support for mask mandates will also increase.

An important aspect of high neuroticism is the concept of healthy neuroticism, which tends to occur in individuals high in both neuroticism and conscientiousness. While most of the effects of high neuroticism, such as a greater propensity for anxiety, sadness, and emotional instability, impair daily functioning, healthy neuroticism can lead a person to take proactive

behaviors to support their health (Graham et al. 2020; Turiano et al. 2013). This behavior may occur as a result of neuroticism's association with an increase in both real and perceived health issues, as someone who is neurotic may be more likely to notice and be concerned about a potential illness. A pandemic should exacerbate these concerns, leading a highly neurotic person to be more likely to take personal action against the virus. While these actions could simply exist at the personal level, such as limiting time in public, eventually the mounting costs of avoiding public spaces may lead them to leave home to secure essentials and attend important appointments. Thus, a neurotic individual may feel compelled to support policies that make them feel less anxious about the possibility of others infecting them in a public space.

By contrast, individuals low in neuroticism are less likely to panic in threatening circumstances (Diener and Lucas 2019). They tend to have calmer moods, as well as fewer bouts of anxiety or depression. They have developed effective coping mechanisms for maintaining their composure, though these coping mechanisms may cause them to underestimate threats in their environments. In an effort to minimize threats, they may convince themselves that they are not in danger, rather than taking preventative action. Throughout the pandemic, many older individuals have insisted that they are not afraid of COVID-19 (Quadros et al. 2021). These individuals may possess low levels of neuroticism, as they are less threatened by the pandemic than other age groups despite being at greater risk. They may not support mask mandates because they do not feel like they are needed, as they believe the pandemic is not likely to harm them. Therefore, I propose the following hypothesis:

Neuroticism Hypothesis: As neuroticism levels increase, support for mask mandates will also increase.

Chapter 4

Methods

Using an original public opinion survey, I assess how personality traits affect support for mask mandates. I administered the survey instrument using Qualtrics, an online survey software company. The survey was distributed in February 2022, to a national sample (N=214) and is representative of the population with respect to age and sex. In addition, the survey was pretested on two distinct student pools at a large public university in order to assess the strength of original survey questions designed to test my hypotheses.

The Big Five traits were measured using a 44-item Big Five Inventory (John and Srivastava 1999). Participants were asked to rate statements describing themselves and their habits on Likert scale questions with responses ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 corresponding to the “strongly disagree” category and 5 corresponding to the “strongly agree” category. The questions measured a different aspect of each of the four traits. Some questions assess the presence of one of the four traits, asking respondents how closely their habits conform to the high end of the trait dimensions. For example, a person who strongly agrees with the statement “I see myself as someone who likes to cooperate with others” would score higher on the agreeableness trait.

. Other questions involve the relative absence of one of the four traits, meaning they ask respondents to assess whether or not their behaviors resemble the low ends of the trait dimensions. For example, a person who strongly agrees with the statement “I see myself as someone who starts quarrels with others” would score lower on the agreeableness trait. I then

aggregated the results for each of the five traits, with the exact scale dependent on the number of questions for each trait. More information about the scale trait measures can be found in Appendix A.

I operationalize support for mask mandates using two questions. First, participants were asked to rate their support for mask mandates in their community at the current time. Their support was measured on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “strongly support” and 5 being “strongly oppose.” This question attempts to directly measure the participants’ support for mask mandates. Then, they were asked to rate the importance of a politician supporting their views on mask mandates in the 2022 midterm election. I measured this variable on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being “not at all important” and 5 being “extremely important.” This question is a more indirect measure of support for mask mandates and a way of measuring how important the issue is to the participant because it connects their views on this topic to a specific political behavior: voting.

The survey also included questions that measure the respondents’ demographic information, specifically age, biological sex, level of education, population density, partisanship, and race. Finally, participants were asked to report their immediate thoughts when they hear about a mask mandate in their community at the current time in an open-ended question.

The analysis was conducted using a series of multivariate linear regression models. Model 1 regressed the first mask support measure on the Big Five traits, with no control variables. Model 2 regressed the first mask support measure on the Big Five traits while including the control variables. Model 3 regressed the second mask support measure on the Big Five traits without controls, and finally Model 4 regressed the second mask support measure on the Big Five traits while including the control variables.

Chapter 5

Results

I ran a series of OLS regressions to evaluate my hypotheses. The models are displayed below in the following tables.

Models 1 and 2

Table 1. How Personality Shapes Support for Mask Mandates

	Model 1	Model 2
Intercept	4.417 ***	5.977 ***
Extraversion	0.007	-0.007
Agreeableness	-0.056	-0.063 *
Conscientiousness	0.005	0.017
Openness to New Experiences	-0.050 *	-0.034
Neuroticism	-0.026	-0.024
Age		0.001
Female		-0.715 **
Education		-0.021
Population Density		-0.014
Partisanship		-0.312 ***
Black or African American		-0.665
American Indian or Alaska Native		-1.435
Asian		-0.888
Hispanic / Latinx		-0.367
Adjusted R ²	0.026	0.184
N	214	214
Significance Codes: 0.001*** 0.01** 0.05*		

Models 1 and 2 regressed the Big Five traits on individuals' support for mask mandates, with negative coefficients indicating a predicted increase in support for mask mandates. In order to evaluate the Agreeableness Hypothesis, I included the agreeableness variable in these models.

In Model 2, the p-value of this variable is 0.024, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, I can reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between agreeableness and support for mask mandates. The coefficient suggests that agreeableness is associated with an increase in support for mask mandates, which aligns with the relationship I predicted in the Agreeableness Hypothesis.

In order to evaluate the Conscientiousness Hypothesis, I included the conscientiousness variable in these models. In Model 2, the p-value of this variable is 0.556, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, I fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and support for mask mandates.

In order to evaluate the Openness to New Experiences Hypothesis, I included the openness to new experiences variable in these models. In Model 1, the p-value of this variable is 0.025, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In Model 2, when controlling for other variables, the p-value of this variable is 0.169, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Despite the significant coefficient in the first model, I fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between openness to new experiences and support for mask mandates when I operationalize support using the survey question that asks respondents directly about their support for mask mandates. I failed to reject the null hypothesis because the effect of openness to new experiences in Model 1 is removed by the control variables added in Model 2.

In order to evaluate the Neuroticism Hypothesis, I included the neuroticism variable in these models. In Model 2, the p-value of this variable is 0.313, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, I fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between neuroticism and support for mask mandates.

Models 3, 4, and 5

Table 2. How Personality Shapes Concern for Candidates Sharing Views on Mask Mandates

	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Intercept	1.441 ***	1.480 *	2.207***
Extraversion	0.019	0.027	0.026
Agreeableness	-0.001	0.004	-0.004
Conscientiousness	0.027	0.029	0.031
Openness to New Experiences	0.059 ***	0.050 **	0.046**
Neuroticism	0.031	0.031	0.029
Age		-0.075	-0.075
Female		0.181	0.094
Education		-0.010	-0.012
Population Density		0.053	0.051
Partisanship		0.056	0.018
Black or African American		-0.079	-0.160
American Indian or Alaska Native		0.137	-0.038
Asian		-0.466	-0.574
Hispanic / Latinx		0.076	0.031
Mask Mandate Support			-0.122*
Adjusted R ²	0.184	0.097	0.121
N	214	214	214
Significance Codes: 0.001*** 0.01** 0.05*			

Models 3, 4, and 5 regressed the Big Five traits on the importance of political candidate holding the individual's views on mask mandates, with positive coefficients indicating a predicted increase in support for mask mandates. In order to evaluate the Agreeableness Hypothesis, I included the agreeableness variable in these models. In Model 4, the p-value of this variable is 0.846, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, I fail to reject the

null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between agreeableness and support for mask mandates when I operationalize support using the question about a candidate's views.

In order to evaluate the Conscientiousness Hypothesis, I included the conscientiousness variable in these models. In Model 4, the p-value of this variable is 0.137, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, I fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between conscientiousness and support for mask mandates.

In order to evaluate the Openness to New Experiences Hypothesis, I included the openness to new experiences variable in these models. In Model 3, the p-value of this variable is 0.0002, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In Model 4, when controlling for other variables, the p-value of this variable is 0.004, which is also statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Openness to new experiences continued to be statistically significant in Model 5, which included support for mask mandates as a control variable. Thus, I can reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between openness to new experiences and support for mask mandates when I operationalize support using the question about a candidate's views on mask mandates. The coefficients suggest that openness to new experiences is associated with greater importance of shared mask mandate views, which supports my hypothesis.

In order to evaluate the Neuroticism Hypothesis, I included the neuroticism variable in these models. In Model 4, the p-value of this variable is 0.056, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Thus, I fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between neuroticism and support for mask mandates.

Open-Ended Responses

I also examined responses to an open-ended question asking participants to report what immediately comes to mind when they hear about a mask mandate in their community at the current time. I will focus on the results for individuals with high and low levels of agreeableness and openness to new experiences, as these traits were significant in at least one regression model. One individual who scored at the maximum level of agreeableness wrote, “it needs to be worn at all times to be safe.” This response suggests that the individual prioritizes the safety of their community. Another individual scoring high in agreeableness responded, “NECESSARY”, which suggests that they believe mask mandates are necessary to slow the spread of COVID-19. A final individual high in agreeableness wrote, “It’s a good thing. We need to protect the public from infection.” This response suggests that the individual seeks to protect their community from infection.

I also looked at responses from individuals with relatively low levels of agreeableness. One participant said, “I am against masking mandates. We should all have the right to choose if we were (sic) a mask.” This response suggests that the individual primarily considers their own freedom when determining their preferred policy. Another wrote “I didn’t like it and I thought it was fake”, which suggests that they oppose mask mandates. An additional participant relatively low in agreeableness responded, “I am all for it”, suggesting that they are supportive of mask mandates.

Due to its significance in the regressions, I examined responses from individuals relatively high and relatively low in openness to new experiences. One individual with high levels of openness to new experiences wrote, “Ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” This response suggests that they value preventing the spread of COVID-19 through the use of

mask mandates more than relying on methods for recovering from the virus. Another said, “It’s help keeping us safe”, implying that the individual believes the mask mandate is effective at preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Finally, I looked at responses from individuals with relatively low levels of openness to new experiences. One participant responded, “I didn’t understand what was going on”, which suggests that they did not understand the logic behind mask mandates. Another wrote, “Not necessary”, implying that they do not support mask mandates because they do not believe the mandates are needed. Finally, another participant said, “Annoying”, which means they view the mask mandates as causing more harm than good.

These responses give some clues as to why agreeableness and openness to new experiences were significant in the regression models. The high agreeableness responses frequently mention protecting the public from infection, suggesting an empathetic, cooperative approach to the pandemic, in contrast to the responses from low agreeableness individuals, who emphasize personal freedom. The high openness to new experiences responses stress their understanding of the mask mandate and how it affects the spread of COVID-19, while some of the low openness to new experiences responses suggest that many of them may not support it due to a lack of understanding of mask efficacy.

Chapter 6

Discussion

Key Findings

The results from Model 2 indicate that higher levels of agreeableness are associated with greater support of mask mandates. According to my theory, this finding likely reflects the role of empathy in supporting policy. Individuals with higher levels of agreeableness tend to be more empathetic, which could make it easier for them to sympathize with those most vulnerable to COVID-19 (Carlo et al. 2005). Conversely, individuals with less empathy may only engage in policy to maximize their own benefits or may only sympathize with people in situations similar to their own (Graziano et al. 2007). This difference may explain the difference in views on mask mandates, as some feel they are necessary to protect public health while others view them as an unnecessary burden.

The results from Models 3, 4, and 5 indicate that higher levels of openness to new experiences are associated with a greater emphasis on politicians sharing one's views on mask mandates. While this is not necessarily the same as supporting a mask mandate, this finding suggests that people with higher levels of openness to new experiences may be more willing to support candidates with views on mask mandates similar to their own. This finding supports my theory that higher levels of openness to new experiences can lead to a greater willingness to support policies being used in other countries (Diener and Lucas 2019). In this case, individuals may be putting pressure on politicians to keep or reinstate mask mandates (and potentially other pandemic restrictions) in order to mimic stricter restrictions in countries such as China.

The results from the open-ended question largely supported the results from the regressions. The responses from individuals high in agreeableness were largely in support of mask mandates and appeared to be driven by an urge to protect the public from COVID-19. By contrast, individuals low in agreeableness appeared to be less supportive of mask mandates and were more likely to mention freedom when talking about their opposition to the mandate. The results for individuals with varying levels of openness to new experiences were more difficult to interpret, although the most informative responses tended to match the regression results.

These findings were significant despite the fact that partisanship was a control variable in both models. These results suggest that while party identity influences positions on public policies, there is still room to examine other factors that influence an individual's policy preferences. Partisanship has become the go-to explanation for nearly all variation in individual political views on this topic, but this study demonstrates that personality still plays a role in this process, suggesting that individual factors apart from party identity prove meaningful to examine (Adolf et al. 2020).

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the data collection time period. Given how salient mask mandates have been since the COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020, the timeframe in which the survey data were collected likely affected the results. Thus, considering this context proves important when interpreting the results. The data were collected in late February 2022, around the same time that the CDC loosened its guidance on masking, and many states and local areas dropped their mask mandates (Huang and Wroth 2022). The impending end of many mask

mandates may have made this issue less clearly partisan for many people, as even Democratic areas decided to end their mandates.

Models 3 and 4 seem to have been especially affected by the changing policies, as their dependent variable measures how important mask mandates are to participants as they consider candidates for the midterm elections. As the mask mandates were actively ending in many areas, participants may have seen mask mandates as much less important than they would have a year ago. In addition, partisanship was not a significant factor in Models 3 and 4, despite the fact that other scholarship highlights its exclusive importance in shaping individual views on mask mandates (Adolf et al. 2020). This discrepancy may be due to the fact that partisanship heavily influences voting outcomes, but it may not factor into shaping the perceived importance of sharing views on mask mandates with political candidates.

Another limitation is my use of self-reported measures of personality traits in the survey. While the Big Five inventory I used has been validated and provides a direct method of measuring personality, self-reported measures always leave room for potential problems. A common issue involves social desirability bias, in which participants select answers corresponding to how they think they should behave or how they believe the researchers want them to behave, rather than how they actually act (Fisher and Katz 2000). Big Five test averages are typically skewed based on social desirability, with certain trait averages deviating substantially from the midpoint of their scale (Bäckström and Björklund 2013). Researchers must be mindful of these biases when analyzing self-reported survey data.

An additional potential limitation is the adjusted R^2 value in each of my models. These values are relatively low in the models, including those that added control variables. Regression models using survey data often produce relatively low R^2 values, as human behavior is difficult

to predict, but Model 2 still managed to capture nearly 20% of variability in support for mask mandates. Model 4, however, has an adjusted R^2 value below 10%, suggesting that this model did not capture much variability in the importance of sharing views on mask mandates with a candidate. Model 5, which includes one additional control variable than Model 4, had a slightly higher R^2 . In addition, Model 1's adjusted R^2 is only 2.6%, suggesting that the Big Five traits capture very little variability in support for mask mandates without including control variables. Finally, Model 3, which measured the association between the Big Five traits and the importance of politicians sharing an individual's view on mask mandates without including control variables, had a surprisingly high adjusted R^2 at 18.4%, suggesting that the control variables added very little to this model. The relatively low adjusted R^2 in some models reinforces a previous limitation about the data collection timeframe, as variation in shared issue positions may be due to a perception that mask mandates will not be as salient of an issue in the future.

Conclusion

In this study, I have found evidence that personality, specifically the agreeableness and openness to new experiences traits, may play significant roles in determining individual support of mask mandates to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic continues to exert influence on our daily lives, we need to consider the factors that shape our collective responses to it. Political scientists often rely on partisanship exclusively to explain variation in policy preferences, but this study shows that other factors are worthy of consideration. Individual factors that transcend context such as personality can shape policy preferences, and future research should keep them in mind.

Appendix A

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3. Ordinal Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Extraversion	7.336	5.597	-10 to 22
Agreeableness	9.621	5.642	-7 to 22
Conscientiousness	9.285	5.942	-11 to 21
Openness to New Experiences	23.27	5.937	10 to 38
Neuroticism	5.107	6.459	-10 to 22
Support for Mask Mandates	2.678: Neither Support nor Oppose	1.943	1 to 5
Importance of Candidates Sharing Their Views on Mask Mandates	3.346: Moderately Important	1.245	1 to 5
Partisanship	3.893: Independent	2.229	1 to 7
Level of Education	4.308: Some College	1.711	1 to 9
Population Density	2.627: Suburb	1.096	1 to 4
Age	4.5: 45-54	1.649	2 to 8

Table 4. Nominal Variables

Variable	Mode
Sex	1: Male
Race	1: White

Table 5. Mask Mandate Support Frequency Table

Question	Strongly Support	Support	Neither Support nor Oppose	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Mask Support	82 (38%)	58 (27%)	43 (20%)	14 (7%)	17 (8%)

Table 6. Importance of Candidate Sharing Mandate View Frequency Table

Question	Not at all Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Candidate Similarity	18 (8%)	38 (18%)	59 (28%)	50 (23%)	49 (23%)

Table 7. Extraversion Frequency Table

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
E1	21 (10%)	28 (13%)	46 (21%)	73 (34%)	46 (21%)
E2	13 (6%)	29 (14%)	49 (23%)	76 (36%)	47 (22%)
E3	10 (5%)	26 (12%)	68 (32%)	67 (31%)	42 (20%)
E4	6 (3%)	20 (9%)	61 (29%)	74 (35%)	52 (24%)
E5	16 (7%)	34 (16%)	51 (24%)	68 (32%)	45 (21%)
E6	8 (4%)	27 (13%)	57 (27%)	68 (32%)	54 (25%)
E7	19 (9%)	32 (15%)	50 (23%)	67 (31%)	46 (21%)
E8	14 (7%)	34 (16%)	52 (24%)	52 (24%)	61 (29%)

Table 8. Agreeableness Frequency Table

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
A1	38 (18%)	48 (22%)	63 (29%)	45 (21%)	20 (9%)
A2	3 (1%)	10 (5%)	31 (14%)	82 (38%)	88 (41%)
A3	82 (38%)	54 (25%)	37 (17%)	30 (14%)	11 (5%)
A4	9 (4%)	19 (9%)	40 (19%)	70 (33%)	76 (36%)
A5	6 (3%)	12 (6%)	41 (19%)	79 (37%)	75 (35%)
A6	40 (19%)	49 (23%)	54 (25%)	44 (21%)	25 (12%)
A7	1 (.5%)	9 (4%)	33 (15%)	76 (36%)	95 (44%)
A8	51 (24%)	54 (25%)	49 (23%)	40 (19%)	20 (9%)
A9	2 (1%)	11 (5%)	48 (22%)	80 (37%)	73 (34%)

Table 9. Conscientiousness Frequency Table

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
C1	11 (5%)	11 (5%)	29 (14%)	74 (35%)	89 (42%)
C2	37 (17%)	57 (27%)	55 (26%)	47 (22%)	18 (8%)
C3	1 (.5%)	7 (3%)	28 (13%)	57 (27%)	121 (57%)
C4	49 (23%)	42 (20%)	48 (22%)	46 (21%)	29 (14%)
C5	52 (24%)	47 (22%)	52 (24%)	41 (19%)	22 (10%)
C6	2 (1%)	9 (4%)	40 (19%)	74 (35%)	89 (42%)
C7	3 (1%)	15 (7%)	35 (16%)	80 (37%)	81 (38%)
C8	2 (1%)	10 (5%)	46 (21%)	86 (40%)	70 (33%)
C9	36 (17%)	51 (24%)	49 (23%)	47 (22%)	31 (14%)

Table 10. Openness to New Experiences Frequency Table

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
O1	9 (4%)	17 (8%)	48 (23%)	83 (39%)	56 (26%)
O2	0 (0%)	7 (3%)	42 (20%)	77 (36%)	88 (41%)
O3	8 (4%)	14 (7%)	57 (27%)	77 (36%)	58 (27%)
O4	2 (1%)	21 (10%)	48 (22%)	79 (37%)	64 (30%)
O5	5 (2%)	14 (7%)	69(32%)	72 (34%)	54 (25%)
O6	6 (3%)	14 (7%)	57 (27%)	70 (33%)	63 (30%)
O7	9 (4%)	13 (6%)	50 (23%)	84 (39%)	58 (27%)
O8	1 (.5%)	20 (9%)	44 (21%)	88 (41%)	60 (28%)
O9	32 (15%)	44 (21%)	49 (23%)	57 (27%)	32 (15%)
O10	24 (11%)	36 (17%)	56 (26%)	48 (22%)	50 (23%)

Table 11. Neuroticism Frequency Table

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
N1	48 (22%)	48 (22%)	46 (21%)	46 (21%)	26 (12%)
N2	15 (7%)	33 (15%)	55 (26%)	66 (31%)	45 (21%)
N3	18 (8%)	39 (18%)	59 (28%)	59 (28%)	39 (18%)
N4	19 (9%)	35 (16%)	36 (17%)	77 (36%)	47 (22%)
N5	15 (7%)	22 (10%)	56 (26%)	71 (33%)	49 (23%)
N6	21 (10%)	43 (20%)	51 (24%)	65 (31%)	33 (15%)
N7	10 (5%)	18 (8%)	51 (24%)	81 (38%)	54 (25%)
N8	30 (14%)	43 (20%)	52 (24%)	60 (28%)	28 (13%)

Appendix B Survey Questions

Initial Demographic Questions:

Age What is your age?

- Under 18 (1)
- 18 - 24 (2)
- 25 - 34 (3)
- 35 - 44 (4)
- 45 - 54 (5)
- 55 - 64 (6)
- 65 - 74 (7)
- 75 - 84 (8)
- 85 or older (9)

Sex Which term best describes your sex?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Intersex (3)
- Other (4) _____
- Prefer not to answer (5)

Education What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than high school (1)
- Some high school (2)
- High school diploma or equivalent (for example: GED) (3)
- Some college but no degree (4)
- Associate's degree (5)
- Bachelor's degree (6)
- Master's degree (7)
- Professional school degree (for example: MD, DDS, DVM, LLB, JD) (8)
- Doctoral degree (for example: PhD, EdD) (9)
- Other (10) _____

Population Density Which of the following terms best describes your current residence?

- Rural Area (1)
- Small Town (2)
- Suburb (3)
- City (4)

Measures of Support for Mask Mandates:

Open Ended What thoughts immediately come to mind when you hear about a mask mandate designed to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in your community at the current time?

Mask Mandate Support To what extent do you support or oppose mask mandates designed to prevent the spread of Covid-19 in your community at the current time?

- Strongly support (1)
- Support (2)
- Neither support nor oppose (3)
- Oppose (4)
- Strongly oppose (5)

Importance of Candidate Similarity How important is it to you that a political candidate running for office in the 2022 midterm elections share your views on masking?

- Not at all important (1)
- Slightly important (2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Very important (4)
- Extremely important (5)

Big Five Traits:

E1 I see myself as someone who is talkative.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

A1 I see myself as someone who tends to find fault with others.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

C1 I see myself as someone who does a thorough job.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

N1 I see myself as someone who is depressed, blue.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O1 I see myself as someone who is original, comes up with new ideas.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

E2 I see myself as someone who is reserved.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

A2 I see myself as someone who is helpful and unselfish with others.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

C2 I see myself as someone who can be somewhat careless.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

N2 I see myself as someone who is relaxed, handles stress well.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O2 I see myself as someone who is curious about many different things.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

E3 I see myself as someone who is full of energy.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

A3 I see myself as someone who starts quarrels with others.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

C3 I see myself as someone who is a reliable worker.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

N3 I see myself as someone who can be tense.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O3 I see myself as someone who is ingenious, a deep thinker.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

E4 I see myself as someone who generates a lot of enthusiasm.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

A4 I see myself as someone who has a forgiving nature.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

C4 I see myself as someone who tends to be disorganized.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

N4 I see myself as someone who worries a lot.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O4 I see myself as someone who has an active imagination.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

E5 I see myself as someone who tends to be quiet.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

A5 I see myself as someone who is generally trusting.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

C5 I see myself as someone who tends to be lazy.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

N5 I see myself as someone who is emotionally stable, not easily upset.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O5 I see myself as someone who is inventive.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

E6 I see myself as someone who has an assertive personality.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

A6 I see myself as someone who can be cold and aloof.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

C6 I see myself as someone who perseveres until the task is finished.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

N6 I see myself as someone who can be moody.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O6 I see myself as someone who values artistic, aesthetic experiences.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

E7 I see myself as someone who is sometimes shy, inhibited.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

A7 I see myself as someone who is considerate and kind to almost everyone.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

C7 I see myself as someone who does things efficiently.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

N7 I see myself as someone who remains calm in tense situations.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O7 I see myself as someone who prefers work that is routine.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

E8 I see myself as someone who is outgoing, sociable.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

A8 I see myself as someone who is sometimes rude to others.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

C8 I see myself as someone who makes plans and follows through with them.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

N8 I see myself as someone who gets nervous easily.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O8 I see myself as someone who likes to reflect, play with ideas.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O9 I see myself as someone who has few artistic interests.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

A9 I see myself as someone who likes to cooperate with others.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

C9 I see myself as someone who is easily distracted.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

O10 I see myself as someone who is sophisticated in art, music, or literature.

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Ending Demographic Variables:

Partisanship Which term best describes your political party affiliation?

- Strong Republican (1)
- Weak Republican (2)
- Independent but lean Republican (3)
- Independent (4)
- Independent but lean Democrat (5)
- Weak Democrat (6)
- Strong Democrat (7)

Race Which term best describes your race/ethnicity?

- White (1)
- Black or African American (2)
- American Indian or Alaska Native (3)
- Asian (4)
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
- Hispanic / Latinx (6)
- Two or more of these (7)
- Other (8) _____
- Prefer not to answer (9)

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ACADEMIC VITA

EDUCATION

B.A. Political Science; B.A. Psychology; Master of Public Policy
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Expected May,
2023

Schreyer Honors Scholar

- Relevant work:
 - Completed *Rhetoric and Civic Life*, an honors course focused on developing public speaking, critical thinking, and writing skills
 - Honors Thesis Completion- I am researching the effect of the Big Five personality traits on support for mask mandates in the United States during the Covid-19 pandemic

Related proficiencies: Microsoft Office products; R; independent research; writing
Related course work: Public Policy Process, Public Policy Analysis; International Relations, Comparative Government, Statistics, Early American Political Theory, American Foreign Policy; Social Psychology, Personality Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Relationship Psychology, Emotional Psychology

HONORS AND AWARDS

Paterno Fellow

Member of the *Pi Sigma Alpha* and *Phi Beta Kappa* Honors Societies

Recipient of the *Kim Anderson Memorial Scholarship* for superior academic records or manifesting promise of outstanding academic success

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

Research

Pennsylvania State University – Political Science Department

- Part time position assisting with research into judiciaries
- Coding results of surveys

Relevant skills: coding, research, and time management

Campaign Intern

Bognet Exploratory Committee

- Part time summer internship with Jim Bognet's 2022 congressional campaign
- Developed social media content for Twitter and Facebook
- Reviewed and summarized local news for morning updates
- Wrote weekly briefs covering major local news developments

Relevant skills: social media management, current events research, and writing briefs

ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

College Republicans

Treasurer 2020-2022

Relevant skills: fundraising, event planning, communication, leadership

Lion Caucus

Member 2020-2022

Relevant skills: advocacy, communication

Pennsylvania Federation of College Republicans

Financial Director 2021-2022

Relevant skills: fundraising

Penn State Public Policy Association

Treasurer 2022-2023