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**POLICY FORUM
ANTI-CORRUPTION AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN
SOUTHEAST EUROPE: TOWARDS INNOVATIVE PUBLIC-
PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP SOLUTIONS**

Panel 3 Towards shared anti-corruption and good governance solutions.
Enhancing civil society – government cooperation

**CORRUPTION
AS AN OBSTACLE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

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Implemented by:



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About the research project

Institute of Economics, Zagreb funded the research in 2021

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‘Corruption as an obstacle to efficiently fighting the Covid-19 pandemic (PANCORR)’

Motivation

To explore the relationship between corruption and various COVID-19 pandemic outcomes in 34 European countries

The nexus between corruption prevalence and the COVID-19 pandemic is two-fold:

- Corrupt rent-seeking might increase because of the market distortions (shortages that induce illegal trade and profiteering, interruption in distribution of medical supplies including vaccines, and disruptions in relationship between health workers and patients)
- COVID-19 pandemic also presents opportunities for governments to earn more legitimacy, to improve governance, and to build trust in public institutions

We assume that societies with more prevalent corruption, poor bureaucratic quality, and weak socioeconomic conditions have a lack of trust in government and thus face more institutional impediments to efficiently cope with the pandemic.

Interventions after COVID-19 outbreak

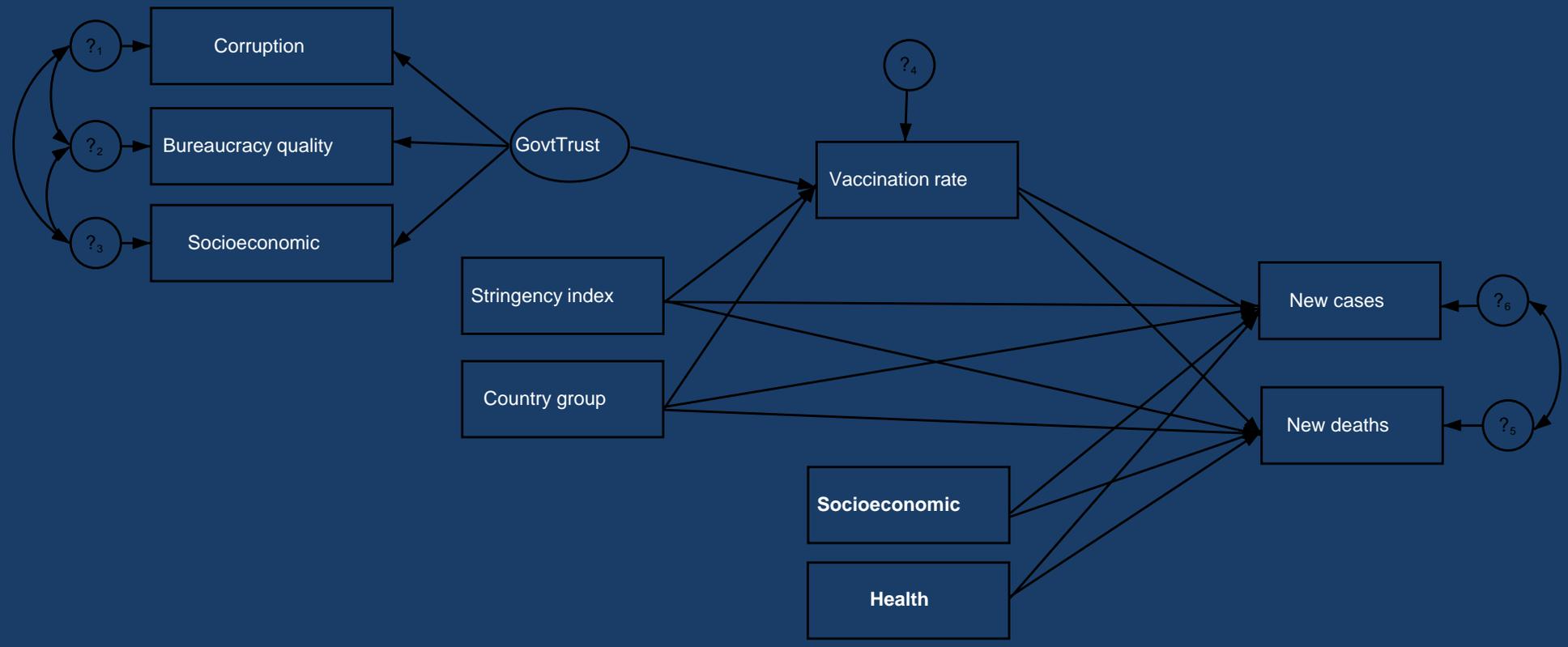
National responses around the world were formed depending on two sets of factors:

- i) health system capacity and health infrastructure preparedness, and
- ii) the quality of governance, in terms of organization, administrative capacity to operationalize measures, and political leadership

Successful implementation of these non-pharmaceutical interventions depends on trust and proper communication, as well as public risk perceptions and individual protective behavioral responses. However, subsequent studies show that the success of harsh measures imposed during the first pandemic wave generated an opposite effect in the later stages of the pandemic, largely explained by reduced public trust in government actions.

Vaccination is seen as a powerful tool to suppress pandemics; however, the public responses to COVID-19 vaccines varied, from high demand to the "anti-vax" movement.

Model



Findings

Corruption, taking also into account bureaucracy quality and socioeconomic conditions, is significantly associated with reduced trust in government

This trust in government, coupled with government COVID-19 response strategies and other specific country group effects, is significantly associated with an increase in the number of people vaccinated, which in turn reduces both new cases and new deaths

This implies that corruption seriously undermines trust in the government and its institutions, and through this mechanism weakens pandemic response

Relevance for policy-makers

Our model shows that both non-pharmaceutical interventions and vaccination are effective tools to decrease the spread of COVID-19 and to reduce its fatality, though the magnitude of the effects indicate that the primary focus should be on vaccination

It also identifies government trust as a key underpinning to effective vaccination campaigns, suggesting the need for renewed efforts to root out corruption and build trust between governments and citizens

The current challenges of COVID-19 should not reduce funding or focus on such efforts, given that corruption significantly undermines pandemic response



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**Thanks for
watching!**

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