

Attitudes towards Government Policies as a Function of Fair Market Ideology, Vulnerability and Academic Major in a Financial Crisis Context

Research questions

How do students from different academic majors endorse attitudes towards state policies in a context of economic crisis?
How does feeling of vulnerability and economic ideology intervene in the process?

Theory

Model of lay conceptions of social order (Staerklé & al., 2007)



Legitimizing myths

- Group shared beliefs about social relations (Sidanius & al., 2004)
- Depends on academic major status and predicts attitudes (Guimond & al., 2003)

Fair Market Ideology (FMI)

Tendency to believe that market-based procedures and outcomes are inherently fair and legitimate (Jost & al., 2003):
Business > social sciences

Issues in groups and ideology (Moliner, 1993)

Two types of issues depending on groups (anchoring)

Economy is a **primary issue** for the group
Business administration (HEC)

=> vulnerability challenges economic ideology

Economy is a **secondary issue** for the group
Social & political sciences (SSP)

=> vulnerability does not influence economic ideology

Hypotheses

FMI endorsement modulates the impact of material vulnerability on policy attitudes only in academic majors in which economy is a primary issue

Prediction for HEC

Material vulnerability's effect on policy attitudes is mediated by FMI

Prediction for SSP

Material vulnerability's effect on policy attitudes is independent from FMI

Method

- Online questionnaire on the financial crisis
- Population: 321 Students (male = 159, female = 163; age: M = 22.9, SD= 4.55) from 2 academic majors:
 1. SSP (social and political sciences, N = 168)
 2. HEC (business administration, N = 153)
- Material vulnerability (4 items, $\alpha = .81$)
- Fair Market Ideology (7 items, $\alpha = .91$)
- DV_s: Four political regulation types (policy attitudes):
 1. Redistributive : Resources redistribution and welfare (4 items, $\alpha = .80$)
 2. Disciplinary: Public order and crime regulation (4 items, $\alpha = .86$)
 3. Discriminatory: Preference for national citizens (2 items, $\alpha = .88$)
 4. Free Market: Labour market and meritocratic policies (4 items, $\alpha = .48$)

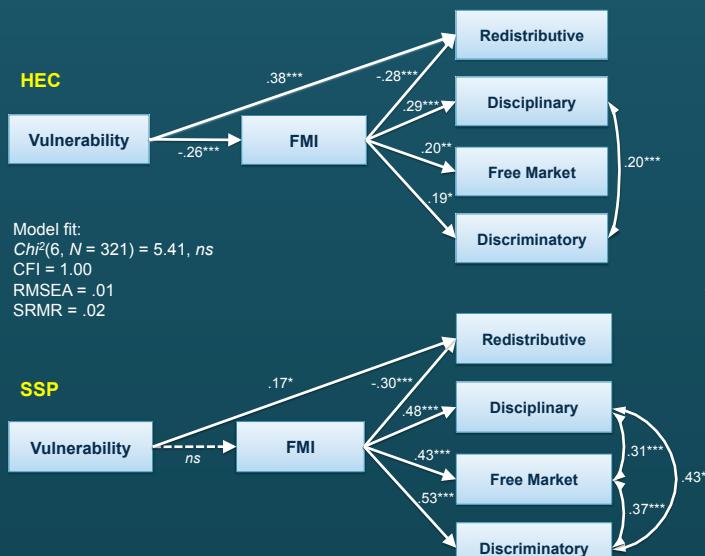
Results

Table 1
Scores and agreement rates on variables as a function of social and political sciences academic major (SSP) versus business school academic major (HEC)

Variable	M (SD)	In agreement	M (SD)	In agreement	F
Vulnerability	3.66 (0.96)	58.9 %	2.86 (0.87)	17.6 %	61.12
FMI	2.16 (0.83)	6.5 %	3.61 (0.85)	54.9 %	253.53
Redistributive	4.63 (0.84)	91.6 %	3.30 (1.03)	42.1 %	161.80
Disciplinary	2.31 (1.02)	12.0 %	3.23 (1.21)	40.1 %	53.50
Free Market	2.32 (0.66)	2.4 %	2.90 (0.71)	13.8 %	57.80
Discriminatory	1.99 (1.11)	8.4 %	2.76 (1.36)	23.0 %	30.90

Note: All F_s are significant at $p < .001$.

Multiple group path analysis



SSP students feel more vulnerable and endorse less fair market ideology than HEC students.

HEC students endorse more hierarchy-enhancing policy attitudes (less redistributive, more disciplinary, free market and discriminatory)

SSP students are clearly opposed to market ideology (93.5 %), whereas there is less consensus among the HEC students.

In both groups:

- impact of FMI on the attitudes toward disciplinary (+), free market (+) discriminatory (+) and redistributive (-) policies
- direct link between vulnerability & positive attitude toward redistributive policy.

For business students:

FMI mediates the impact of vulnerability on the four attitudes:

Indirect effects:

- Redistributive: $B = .07$ ($SE = .028$), $p < .01$
- Disciplinary: $B = -.08$ ($SE = .030$), $p < .01$
- Free market: $B = -.05$ ($SE = .026$), $p < .05$
- Discriminatory: $B = -.05$ ($SE = .025$), $p = .052$

For social and political sciences students:

No significant effect of vulnerability on FMI.

Conclusion

Our findings highlight that Fair Market Ideology endorsement strongly predicts policy attitudes, and modulates the impact of material vulnerability in business administration major. There is no link between vulnerability and FMI in the social and political sciences major.

As such, the thin minority of business students who felt materially vulnerable challenges Fair Market Ideology and henceforth adopts policy attitudes challenging the social order. In SSP, where the economy represents a secondary issue, material vulnerability is not linked to ideology, and the large majority of SSP students challenges FMI and thus adopt social order challenging attitudes.

References

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