

Graphic detail

Daily chart

Incentives may have little impact on American anti-vaxxers

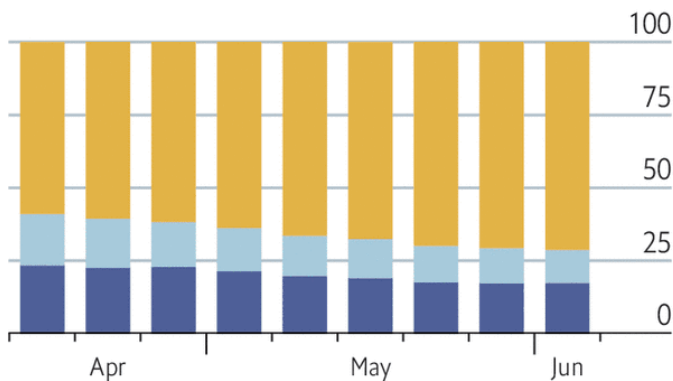
But those who did not vote in the 2020 elections seem more easily swayed, especially by money

Long shot

United States, attitudes towards vaccines for covid-19
June 6th-8th 2021

Self-described vaccination status*, %

- I will not get vaccinated
- Not sure
- I have already been vaccinated or plan to get my shot



Source: YouGov/The Economist

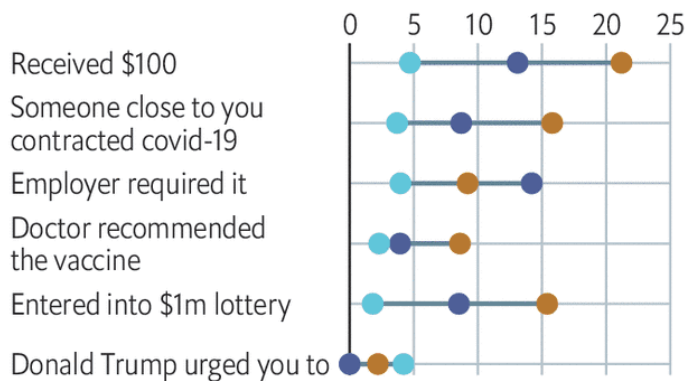
The Economist

Jun 9th 2021

"Would you get the vaccine if...", % replying "yes"

Among respondents who do not plan to get vaccinated

- Trump voters
- Biden voters
- Non-voters



*Average of past four polls



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government's Liquor and Cannabis board announced on June 7th that it would launch a "Joints for Jabs" scheme, in which participating dispensary owners will provide a pre-rolled marijuana cigarette to people who receive vaccines at in-store clinics. The gambit is just the most recent—and perhaps the most humorous—of a fast-growing list of state-sponsored incentives to nudge Americans into getting an inoculation. In May the governor of Ohio launched a programme that enters vaccine recipients into a lottery for \$1m. ([Many other countries are resorting to inducements](#), from free eggs in China to whole cows in Thailand.)

How successful might these efforts be? To judge from new polling data collected by YouGov in partnership with *The Economist*, such schemes will make only a modest dent in the number of Americans who refuse to take a covid-19 vaccine. The initiatives are aimed at an extremely wary cohort. About 17% of respondents said they would not get vaccinated. Of these, just 20% say they trust the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), America's public-health agency, compared with 65% for all other respondents.

Most in this group are Republicans. In theory, they might be more willing to listen to sources with whom they identify politically or culturally. Yet by an overwhelming margin of 81% to 4%, vaccine-hesitant Americans who voted for Donald Trump said that an exhortation from the former president to get the shot would still not convince them to do so.

The survey suggests monetary incentives would be more effective—but just a bit. Among respondents who are unvaccinated and plan to remain so, 9% said that being entered into a \$1m lottery like Ohio's would change their mind. The offer was no more likely to change poor people's minds than those of the rich. Receiving a guaranteed \$100, rather than a lottery ticket, raised this proportion to a still-disappointing 13%.

The most encouraging data in the survey revealed how public-health officials might target their messages more effectively. In general, among people who do not plan to receive the vaccine, those who did not vote in the presidential election of 2020 were much more likely to be swayed by monetary incentives than were those

YouGov's numbers. The \$100 reward would convince 21% of them, compared with just 6% of anti-vaxxers who cast a ballot. For the lottery ticket, these shares were 15% and 3% respectively.

Why are the politically disengaged more responsive to financial vaccination incentives? One potential explanation is that their opinions are more flexible in general. Among all non-voters in YouGov's poll, 18% say they were not sure about getting vaccinated, whereas only 5% and 10% of voters for Messrs Biden and Trump, respectively, were undecided. Non-voters are also far less informed about current events—18% say they pay attention to news “hardly at all”, compared with about 4% of major-party voters—and they may have seen fewer pro-vaccine ads or announcements for incentive programmes.

To slow the spread of the virus, and achieve herd immunity, state governments should start by trying to nudge non-voters to get the jab. They can easily check which of their citizens voted in 2020, and aim their incentives at them. Eventually, though, they will need to mount a much bigger effort to convince the most sceptical anti-vaxxers.

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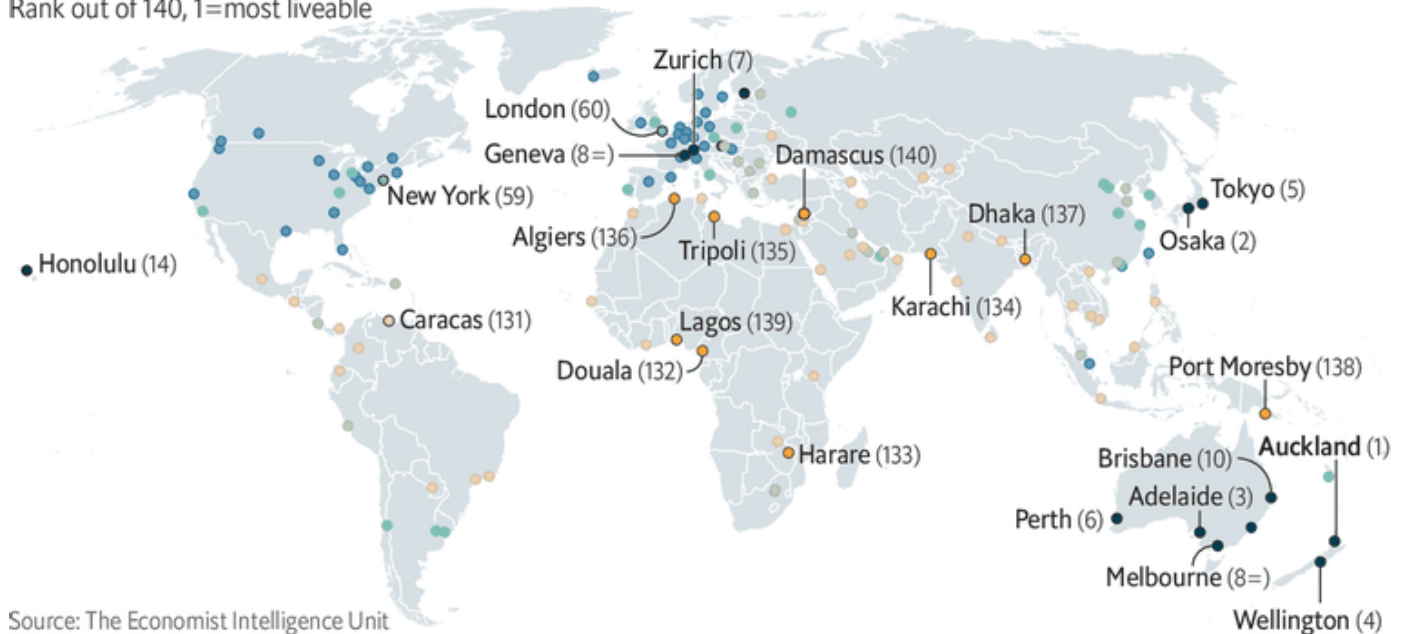
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City liveability index, March 2021
Rank out of 140, 1=most liveable

Score out of 100 | 20 40 60 70 80 90



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit

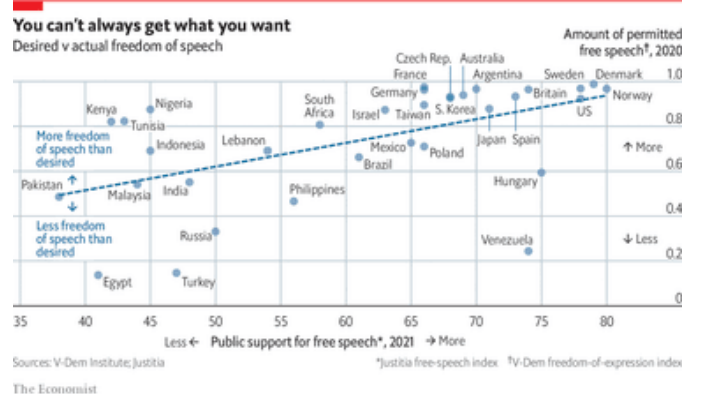
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Daily chart

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Daily chart

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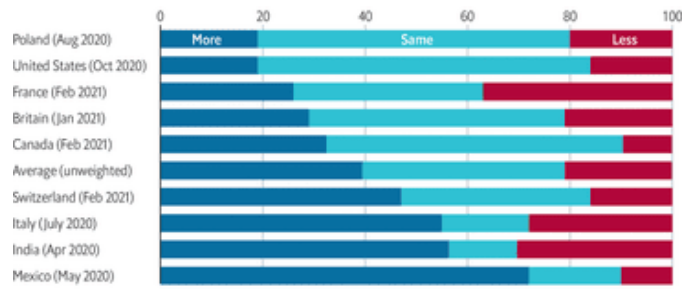
Daily chart

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Tumble out of bed and stumble to the kitchen

"Does working from home allow you to be more or less productive?"
% of workers responding



Source: The Economist aggregation of nationally representative employee surveys
The Economist

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