

Social Research Call 2020

Selected projects

Title: The Effects of the COVID-19 Outbreak on Democracy

Acronym: COVIDEMO

Project leader: Francesc Amat

Host organisation: Universitat de Barcelona

Main purpose of the project: The aim of this research project is to understand the way in which the COVID-19 crisis affects technocratic attitudes and democratic preferences. Declining political trust, the delegation of policy-decisions to experts or, simply, the acceptance of limits on civil liberties may pave the way to a new political landscape.

Design/methodology/approach: The COVIDEMO project will essentially combine the collection of individual-level data via online surveys and survey experiments – in order to generate a new panel dataset tracking the evolution of technocratic attitudes and political preferences in real time – with the re-collection of municipality-level data on contextual factors.

Potential results: The project will investigate the extent to which citizens have switched towards more technocratic preferences and lower levels of political trust. It will explore the contextual moderating role of social capital and latent authoritarianism. It will also analyze if the changes in political preferences are short-term or will have long-lasting consequences.

Social relevance of the research: The previous economic shock, the 2008 financial crisis, had very profound political consequences. For sure, the COVID-19 pandemic shock will also have important political implications. This process will help to shed light on understanding the determinants of political trust and the drivers of political polarization.

Originality/value of the project: The value of the project is to increase the knowledge of the formation and development of citizens' political preferences when a pandemic crisis happens. Understanding changes in citizens' preferences is crucial for the correct development of the policy-making process, in order to be aware of the political feasibility of policy decisions.