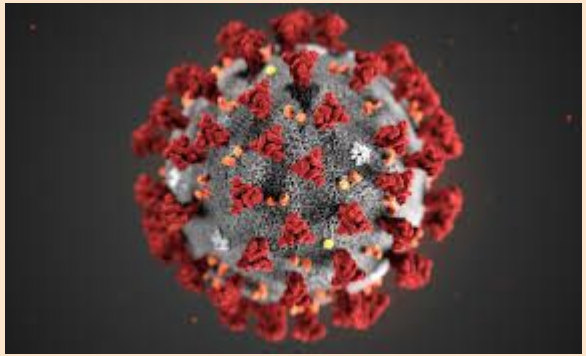
COVID-19 and How it Affected European Political Engagement



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COVID-19 lessened political engagement in European countries

COVID-19 was broadcasted internationally as dangerous and scary, instilling great fear in many people, alongside real problems they may be having financially and physically as a result of the pandemic.

This fear and overall hardship during this period influenced people to speak out and want change, actually increasing political engagement in most cases.

- Overall Theory: How did COVID-19 influence civil and political engagement in European countries?

Relevant Variables Utilized

- IV: Amount of fear resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and overall health (physical and economic) as a result of COVID-19
  - Operationalization 1: Surveys regarding their own personal health
  - Operationalization 2: Their own household financial situation
- DV: Overall Political Engagement
  - Operationalization: Surveys about their overall political engagement, specifically if they've taken part in a public demonstration
- Control variable: Geographic region where people are surveyed (within Europe)

```
#Histograms for the IV's
hist(my_data$B1_1_2, breaks = 10, main = "A", xlab = "Physical Health Rating", ylab = "Amount of people", col = "blue")
hist(my_data$B1_1_4, breaks = 10, main = "A", xlab = "Financial Health Rating", ylab = "Amount of people", col = "blue")

#Histogram for the DV
hist(my_data$B9_1_6, breaks = 10, main = "A", xlab = "Taken Part in a Public Demonstration", ylab = "Amount of people", col = "blue")
```

Table A: Personal physical health (rows) VS political engagement (columns)

B9_1_6 - Taken part in a public demonstration	No	Yes, once	Yes, sometimes	Yes, often	Don't know	Total
B1_1_2 - Your personal health						
0 - Not a threat at all	445 5.87%	18 0.24%	15 0.2%	7 0.09%	8 0.11%	493 6.5%
1	334 4.41%	10 0.13%	11 0.15%	6 0.08%	6 0.08%	367 4.84%
2	482 6.36%	22 0.29%	12 0.16%	6 0.08%	9 0.12%	531 7.01%
3	565 7.45%	20 0.26%	23 0.3%	6 0.08%	7 0.09%	621 8.19%
4	490 6.47%	16 0.21%	33 0.44%	7 0.09%	7 0.09%	553 7.3%
5	1090 14.38%	52 0.69%	77 1.02%	18 0.24%	68 0.9%	1305 17.22%
6	763 10.07%	37 0.49%	60 0.79%	13 0.17%	16 0.21%	889 11.73%
7	842 11.11%	34 0.45%	50 0.66%	18 0.24%	14 0.18%	958 12.64%
8	697 9.2%	26 0.34%	49 0.65%	16 0.21%	11 0.15%	799 10.54%
9	320 4.22%	14 0.18%	19 0.25%	7 0.09%	11 0.15%	371 4.9%
10 - A major threat	600 7.92%	17 0.22%	39 0.51%	12 0.16%	24 0.32%	692 9.13%
Total	6628 87.45%	266 3.51%	388 5.12%	116 1.53%	181 2.39%	7,579 100%

```
regression_A <- lm(my_data$B9_1_6 ~ my_data$B1_1_2)
summary(regression_A)
plot(x = my_data$B1_1_2, y = my_data$B9_1_6)
abline(regression_A, col = "red")
```

*Regression plot comparing physical health (B1_1_2) against the public demonstration variable (B9_1_6)

Table B: Personal financial health (rows) VS political engagement (columns)

B9_1_6 - Taken part in a public demonstration	No	Yes, once	Yes, sometimes	Yes, often	Don't know	Total
B1_1_4 - Your household financial situation						
0 - Not a threat at all	730 9.63%	12 0.16%	14 0.18%	6 0.08%	8 0.11%	770 10.16%
1	360 4.75%	10 0.13%	8 0.11%	3 0.04%	4 0.05%	385 5.08%
2	559 7.38%	20 0.26%	11 0.15%	7 0.09%	8 0.11%	605 7.98%
3	511 6.74%	21 0.28%	21 0.28%	2 0.03%	5 0.07%	560 7.39%
4	458 6.04%	20 0.26%	25 0.33%	7 0.09%	20 0.26%	530 6.99%
5	1008 13.3%	34 0.45%	71 0.94%	20 0.26%	57 0.75%	1190 15.7%
6	689 9.09%	34 0.45%	50 0.66%	15 0.2%	14 0.18%	802 10.58%
7	758 10%	36 0.47%	66 0.87%	20 0.26%	11 0.15%	891 11.76%
8	610 8.05%	36 0.47%	50 0.66%	15 0.2%	14 0.18%	725 9.57%
9	308 4.06%	12 0.16%	25 0.33%	8 0.11%	11 0.15%	364 4.8%
10 - A major threat	637 8.4%	31 0.41%	47 0.62%	13 0.17%	29 0.38%	757 9.99%
Total	6628 87.45%	266 3.51%	388 5.12%	116 1.53%	181 2.39%	7,579 100%

```
regression_B <- lm(my_data$B9_1_6 ~ my_data$B1_1_4)
summary(regression_B)
plot(x = my_data$B1_1_4, y = my_data$B9_1_6)
abline(regression_B, col = "red")
```

*Regression plot comparing financial health (B1_1_4) against the public demonstration variable (B9_1_6)

Analysis, Conclusions, and Limitations

- As seen in the two tables, people's personal conditions have a role in their political engagement and whether they were politically active in demonstrations or not.
  - People who were either financially struggling or physically struggling with their health tended to be more politically active, as those people (who reported health or financial situations anywhere from 5 to 10 on the survey's scale) also more often reported that they had either sometimes or often attended public demonstrations.
  - Based on this, we can conclude that people in European countries increased overall political engagement in those who had real negative effects from this pandemic, which we know was a large amount of people not just in Europe, but also on an international level.
- Limitations
  - Each individual country may have different standards for personal health, both financially and physically, as well as how much political engagement is the standard in their country, whether there's an active health crisis or not. In future studies, these discrepancies between countries should be dove into more in order to get a more clear picture of how COVID-19 affected Europeans.
  - The data I had downloaded into RStudio wasn't actually stored in an integer vector, it was a mix of numerical values and strings at points (it was organized as 0 - Not a threat at all to 10 - A major threat, as opposed to simply to 10, which is where I ran into issues. I was unable to run the regressions and get the plots that I had wanted, due to the fact that it wasn't an integer value in the tables, which R informed me of by giving me an error every time I tried to make some plot or obtain some value from the data. I did include the the lines of code I would've utilized at each point throughout the presentation to hopefully show that I did have a plan to obtain the relevant information had I not run into this roadblock so late into the project. Also, as a side note, I know you mentioned that if I ran into issues I should find an office hour time slot to meet with you, but when I looked on Thursday night, as I'm writing this, there were no slots available that I could make since I work through the morning into early afternoon.

Database: https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=doi:10.7910/DVN/YNBJWK