

# **Who loves lockdowns? Public service motivation, the bureaucratic personality, and support for Covid-19 containment policy stringency**

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**Note:** This presentation is to be included in the panel entitled **Governance in Crisis Conditions: Measurement, Management, and Government Capacity** chaired by Jesse Campbell of Incheon National University, and Juraj Nemec of Matej Bel University, Slovakia, and Masaryk University, Czech Republic. Details below.

**Abstract:** The policies adopted to curb the spread of Covid-19 have imposed limits on individual freedom and although some citizens have shown sustained support for government, others have resisted. While governments may impose fines and other sanctions on individuals that fail to comply with public health directives, policy support can facilitate voluntary policy compliance and effectiveness. Researchers have sought to estimate both the effectiveness of these Covid-19 containment policies and their secondary economic, social, and psychological costs. However, beyond political orientation, little research has examined the attitudes associated with support for stringent virus containment policy. This study looks at attitudinal factors associated with support for virus containment policy stringency. Containment policy entails costs for individuals, and we argue that those with higher levels of public service motivation will be more likely to accept such sacrifices and support strict policies to contain the virus. Second, we argue that this direct effect will be transmitted by greater trust in government, which those with higher levels of public service motivation tend to view as an instrument with which to realize desired public outcomes. Third, we look at how an individual's bureaucratic orientation, which denotes their attraction to strict rules in general, can impact support for stringent Covid-19 containment policy and moderate the other relationships in the model. Using a survey of 568 South Korean citizens collected in the fall of 2021, we estimate a conditional process model of support for Covid-19 policy stringency. We find that PSM has both a direct and indirect relationship on support via trust in government. Second, our results suggest that this mediation is moderated by the individual's bureaucratic personality orientation, though not in the expected direction. This study contributes to our understanding of trust in government during trying times by identifying

individual differences and estimating their impact empirically. We discuss both our contribution and the limitations of our study in detail.

**Keywords:** public service motivation, bureaucratic personality, covid-19, policy support, compliance

# **Governance in Crisis Conditions: Measurement, Management, and Government Capacity**

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## **Chairs**

Jesse W. Campbell, Incheon National University, South Korea

Juraj Nemec, Matej Bel University, Slovakia, and Masaryk University, Czech Republic

## **Presentations**

*The Impact of COVID-19 on Municipal Finance*, Juraj Nemec, Matej Bel University and Masaryk University, with co-authors Daniel Klimovsky and Vladislav Bukharsky

*Bureaucratic Bashing and Employee Work Attitudes: Evidence from a Natural Experiment*, Shinwoo Lee, Incheon National University, with co-authors Gordon Abner and Taha Hameduddin

*The Methods of Indicative Evaluation of the Risks of Countries' High-Technology Development in COVID-19 Epoch*, Alexey Barabashev, Higher School of Economics, with co-authors Sergey Zarochintsev and Ivan Makarov

*Who loves lockdowns? Public service motivation, the bureaucratic personality, and support for Covid-19 containment policy stringency*, Jesse Campbell, Incheon National University, with co-author Yongjin Ahn

## **Section Abstract**

The challenges for contemporary governance are complex, deep rooted, politicized, and urgent. For nearly 2 years, the COVID-19 pandemic has consumed the attention of public administration scholars, the resources of government, and the lives of many citizens around the world. As governments and citizens adjust to life with an endemic virus, it is obvious that the social, economic, and environmental challenges that occupied us before the pandemic have not only persisted, but demand attention with an even greater urgency. While there are neither easy nor obvious solutions to any of these, government has an important role to play in both addressing

them and providing the governance framework necessary to facilitate the involvement of a broad set of critical actors.

The competencies and strategies necessary to deal with persistent turbulent conditions and external shocks are themselves complex and must strike a difficult balance between a number of legitimate values. In the face of turbulent conditions, public managers may instinctively tighten organizational control, embracing a centralized and top-down approach to insulate critical operations and sustain performance (Stazky & Goerdel 2011). However, when turbulence degrades into crisis, centralized, routinized, and efficiency-oriented governance arrangements may prove fragile, with public managers incapable of marshaling the flexibility necessary to successfully cope (Stark 2014). Even as crises become more frequent, the factors that drive government performance in crisis conditions are not fully understood (Boin & Lodge 2016). Government must be resilient, responsive, and sensitive to how the strengths and limitations of its broader operational context (Im & Campbell 2020; Termeer et al. 2015). Moreover, the political dimensions of a crisis cannot be ignored, as even technical performance may prove inadequate in the absence of legitimacy (Boin & Lodge 2016; Christensen, Lægreid, & Rykkja 2016).

Deepening our understanding of performance under sustained turbulence or sudden shocks is likely to assume a more central place in public administration studies. This section brings together an international group of public administration scholars who will present research relevant to the theme of government performance in difficult environments.

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