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THE EFFECT OF CONSERVATIVE AND POPULIST POLITICAL TENDENCIES IN THE CONTAINMENT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

EL EFECTO DEL CONSERVADURISMO Y LA POLÍTICA POPULISTA EN LA RESPUESTA DE LA PANDEMIA DEL COVID-19

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Abstract

On March 11th of 2020 the World Health Organization declared the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the COVID-19 disease, as a pandemic. This event caused a series of diverse reactions trough the International Community and from being seen as a local outbreak in the Chinese City of Wuhan has turned to be 26 months of global challenges. In this study we focus our analysis on the relation between the pandemic response and the political ideologies of the countries. Because of this observation we propose that the countries with conservatives' tendencies had a bad management of the emergency.

Keywords: COVID-19 response, political ideology and political conservatism

Resumen

El 11 de marzo de 2020 la Organización Mundial de la Salud declaró el novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, causante de la enfermedad de COVID-19, como pandemia. Este evento inesperado causó reacciones diversas en la comunidad internacional y, de ser visualizado como un brote local en la ciudad de Wuhan (China), se ha convertido en 26 meses de retos globales. De esta manera, este trabajo va dirigido a identificar la relación que se observó entre la respuesta de la pandemia y las ideologías políticas. Se propone que los países con tendencias conservadoras tuvieron un manejo deficiente a esta emergencia.

Palabras claves: respuesta a la pandemia del covid-19, ideología política y conservadurismo político

Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19 disease, as a pandemic. The unexpected rise of this virus causes diverse reactions among the countries, many of them ignored the threat that it represented and viewed as a regional outbreak in the city of Wuhan, China. Given this contempt for the threatening capabilities of the virus to the security of the countries, it went from being a regional disease to over 26 months of global challenges, as reported at the time of this writing. On the page of "Coronavirus Resource Center" at John Hopkins University the disease cost the lives of over 6,000,000 people. However, the impact of this event cannot be limited to the challenge of health systems worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic has been, without a doubt, a historic event that has modified our interpersonal, economic, and political relationships. This research studies the reaction of the political ideology, such as liberal and conservative, have taken over the events previously mention. The problem that this research tries to answer is that countries with conservative ideology tends to lead with the highest number of cases of the virus. This suggests that there is a relationship between conservative ideology and the mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is for this reason that the work is aimed at being able to answer this question and contribute empirical knowledge. Finally, the results will help us understand the effects of political ideology in the development of public policy to face the new challenges for the coming decades.

Literature Review

The central element of the study will be based on the relationship that may exist between political ideologies and the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to take in consideration that the pandemic is an ongoing event which has limited the availability of information and it can be considered non-existent. Therefore, this literature will focus on the theorical elements that can support the observations previously made, identifying that the countries with conservative tendencies had a poor handling of the pandemic. During the administration of Donald Trump, the United States response, serve as basis to construct a theorical framework, which principals were copied by other leaders with similar ideologies.

Consequently, "Conservative" or "Political Conservatism" must be presented. The most basic definition of this term is found in the textbook "Political Perspectives"

by Lyn-Darrel Bender. The Author defines conservatism, "… as the name implies, represents a political orientation to conserve something, which can vary between countries and even within the same country at different historical moments" (Bender, 2005). Based on this the United States is no exception. In his work "Conservatives, Populism, and the Future" (2018), George H. Nash defines American conservatism as one developed under the idea of "intellectual conservatism" and under the presidential mandate of Ronald Reagan. The author presents certain characteristics that were part of the American conservative discourse, where market freedom, individual freedom, and the idea of "small government" (Political Liberalism) are part of it. Although these ideas were and still are present in Trump's speeches, the author emphasizes the effect that this political ideology has had after the 2016 presidential elections. The main characteristic is a called "to break" with the ruling political classes that have forgotten the needs of the traditional masses, "At the heart of Trumpist populism, however-and I suspect of all populism-is a different yearning: for security, especially for those who feel forgotten and left behind" (Nash, 2018, p. 26). It is to those traditional American masses that the Trumpist discourse alludes and under the phrase "America first" or "Make America Great Again" emphasizes the idea of rescuing and preserving traditional American values that have been corrupted by what the author defines as "political elite of Washington." In this way, the conservative populism of President Trump has a strong nationalist influence. Although the author has a strong inclination to favor conservatism, this helps to identify certain characteristics and aspects that matter to understand the response of the United States to the pandemic.

There is no doubt that President Trump stands for a new conception in American conservative ideology, since it is the emergence of a wave of conservative populism rooted in great nationalist influences, whose central figure is Donald Trump. Now, it is of utmost importance to evaluate the characteristics based on how it is presented in the work "Trump, Authoritarian populism, and COVID-19 from a US perspective" (2021) by Douglas Kellner. The author is emphatic in identifying that the President's speeches and actions follow a principle of "authoritarianism." Kellner defines Trumpist conservatism as an authoritarian movement that requires a group of followers faithful to the speeches and ideas that the leader presents. These expressions by the author make a relationship between the response of the United States and the conservative ideology that characterizes President Trump. It is no surprise, scientific experts clashed with those who carried out public policies to contain the virus. In Paul E. Rutledge's "Trump, COVID-19, and the war on expertise" (2020), Trump's conservatism interacts with the various scientific experts in the face of an imminent emergency. This element is essential, since these actions by Trump delayed the response of the Federal Government of the United States and,

as the text indicates, every time the scientific community provided a report or raised some type of concern, the President acted with little to no importance and gave recommendations which on many occasions were not backed by any scientific evidence. The conservative base of the President was focused on those traditional American masses who suffered from those "political elites" (The administrative bureaucracy). An argument can be made that the community of scientific experts belongs to that "Administrative Bureaucracy". Because of this, as Rutledge indicates, Trump “declared war” on them from his campaign. Thanks to the authoritarian influence of the President, a replacement with people with less experience and faithful to his figure was established. This has played a critical role in the federal government's responses to the pandemic (Rutledge, 2021).

Following the discussion presented above, it is important to emphasize that the President's position was one that we can consider as "anti-scientific" and that its direct effect was to lead the nation to a period of misinformation about the reality and imminent threat that the virus represented. The vision that his followers presented was at the other end of the spectrum, because “the autocrat mobilizes the masses to follow autocratic rule and dictates, as he attacks democratic forces that oppose him” (Kellner, 2021, p. 32). What was raised is that the masses who favored President Trump's position were repeating his rhetoric. On one end, the virus was taken as one that did not pose a great threat, since it was contained, and it was taken as a political strategy of the left (the Democrats) to delegitimize the president. The effect of these ideas provoked the formulation of less restrictive public policies whose only result was the loss of control and the sudden rise of cases in the United States. An example of this is the issue of the use of masks among the population. This issue is presented in the paper entitled “Conservativism and infrequent mask usage: A study of US counties during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic” by Gonzalez et al (2021). In this study, researchers identify three pillars of Trumpist conservatism, which are: 1) The political leadership of the Republican Party, 2) Conservative Protestantism, and 3) The consumption of media with right-wing ideological tendencies. Each of these was aimed at identifying the group of conservative people and their use of masks, where the President showed strong opposition to use and ridiculed the political opposition for promoting this measure. This was well perceived by his followers who opposed this public health measure with a rhetoric in which those conservative Trumpist values were present. Furthermore, religion also had a strong relationship with Trumps conservatism and populism. The literature has shown that among the groups of powerful conservatives there was a strong opposition to the use of masks, since among them there is an "anti-scientific" idea, "Religious conservatives, guided by pastors and other religious elites, often draw on religious scriptures to oppose scientific recommendations that

are perceived as immoral or defined as encroaching on religious liberty or the will or grace of God" (Gonzalez et al., 2021, p. 2372). These religious groups played a fundamental role within Trumpist populism, because the President's discursive resources addressed religion and American Christian values.

Having identified the conservative characteristics of President Trump and how they affected the US response to the threat of COVID-19, this paper briefly addresses how these characteristics are present in different countries. Speed and Mannion (2020) present how the rise of conservative populist governments has affected the development of public policies that are aimed at health systems. In this study, the authors take three countries as the object of investigation: United States, United Kingdom, and Italy. The most important thing about this work is that it supports the ideas that were presented throughout this writing and showed that those conservative characteristics, which were identified in the case of the United States, have been exported and used by leaders of other countries. United Kingdom's situation identifies what the exit of this country from the European Union (Brexit) represented and its effect on the British Health System. The main issue presented by the authors is about the element of access to health systems. Because it was under the principle of freedom of movement between the European Union, which will be affected by Brexit. Therefore, it is important to identify how that principle was defined and what its effect was for the UK. In conclusion many of the discourses that favored Brexit, identified that the EU's principle of movement was a cost that put the country's health system in a vulnerable position. It also addressed how a population that is affected by that vulnerability and the reaction provoked from those masses. On the other hand, in the case of Italy, the problem was caused by the mistrust of scientific experts, identified it through the rise of the *Movimento Cinque Stelle* and its discourse opposing childhood vaccination directed at the conservative masses, which usually oppose compulsory vaccination. The authors concluded that "populist policies tend to create specific barriers and challenges for people accessing services, and for the type of services that are available" (Speed & Manion, 2020, p. 1977).

Altogether, the earlier discussion helps to establish a theoretical framework to understand and identify the relationship between conservative or populist ideology and government action in containing the spread of the virus. First, the example of the United States and President Trump presents us with three characteristics that were key to the nation's poor response to the threat. These characteristics are: 1) high distrust in scientific data: when it was presented from the president who did not give importance to the recommendations of the experts and gave his own recommendations without scientific bases; 2) high degree of influence of political liberalism and conservative populism: when the idea of breaking with "the political

elite" and nationalist ideas is presented; and 3) religious fundamentalism: when the position of religious groups and the use of masks is presented. Finally, it is important to bring into consideration that when it is presented, "conservatism," is referring to the American conception of the term which is founded in the idea of less state intervention, market freedom and individual freedom. This is because this research will identify how these ideas affected the response to the emergency. This note had to be made because the concept differs internationally and is known as "Liberal."

H1: Thus, the central hypothesis of this research is that countries with conservative and populist ideological governments had more lax measures in their effort to contain the spread of the virus, and thus higher number of cases and deaths.

Research Design

For this paper, government ideology and COVID-19 cases were needed to prove what it is stated in the hypothesis. However, the limited availability or reliability of data represented a challenge. In first place, the countries represent the main unit of analysis. 217 countries and territories were included and 19 were excluded. The names of the exclude countries are presented in Table 1. These were excluded because there was no information regarding COVID-19 cases or their cases were included in the statistics of another country. Consequently, a database was created from the website *Our World in Data* from Global Change Data Lab and it was recollected the information of cases of COVID-19 per country, the Political Regimes, and the Civil Liberties Index. However, the number of cases were reduced to include the, the information of political parties' ideology from 163 countries from the Global Party Survey by Pippa Norris (2019).

People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), Saint Martin Island (French and Dutch parts), Caiman Islands, The Channel Islands, Marshall Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, The Virgin Islands (American and British), Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, Palau, Puerto Rico, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu.

TABLE 1: LIST OF EXCLUDED TERRITORIES/COUNTRIES

To build the dataset, I first identified current political party in control of the executive of each country in 2020. To identify the ruling party, the country records found on the website of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) were used. On the other hand, if a country didn't have a republican form of government, the political party that dominated the body with the greatest political power of that government was chosen. In addition, and most importantly, the term of the ruling political party

must start before March 11, 2020. Based on the information collected, two categorizations of variables were created. As presented in Table 2, the first category was aimed to identify the political characteristics of the countries (Independent Variable) while the second will analyze specific elements regarding the COVID-19 pandemic (Dependent Variable).

Political Variables (Independent Variable)	COVID-19 Variables (Dependent Variable)
VP_1 RegPol- Political Regime From the website Our World In data. It classified the countries in the following categories. 0=Closed Autocracy 1=Electoral Autocracy 2=Electoral Democracy 3=Liberal Democracy	VC_1.1 RiIn- Initial COVID-19 Stringency levels. From the website *Our World In data.* It presents the stringency level in a scale from 0 to 100. This variable measured the stringency level on March 11,2020.
VP_2 ParPol- Ruling Political Party After identified in the CIA website, the information of the ruling party was confirmed in the Global Party Survey.	VC_1.2RiFin- Final COVID-19 Stringency Level From the website Our World in Data From the website *Our World In data.* It presents the stringency level in a scale from 0 to 100. This variable measured the stringency level on March 11,2021.
VP_3 SiePart- Intensity of the Ruling Political Party In the Global Party Survey is described as "The Size of the parlamentary parties is gauged by categorizing their share of seats in the lower house of the national parliament/congress". (Norris, P. 2020). This is identified by Pippa Norris in the Following Scale. Fringe: 0% thru 2.99% Minor: 3% thru 9.99% Major:10% thru high	VC_1.3 CambioAbsRi- Asbsolute change in COVID-19 Stringency Levels From the website *Our World In data.* This variable presents the change of VC_1.1 and VC_1.2.
VP_4 ValPat- Political Party Ideology In the global party Survey is defined as "The party values typology combines two binary variables for each party, namely whether the types of economic values are left (Pro-State)	VC_2 CasesXmil- COVID-19 Cases per 1,000 inhabitans. From the website de *Our World In data*, after that it was converted into a proportional

or right (pro-Market) and Wether types of social values are liberal or conservative." (Norris, P. 2020). This variable is measured is the following scale.
1=Left-Liberal
2=Left-Conservative
3=Right Liberal
4=Right-Conservative

VP_5 PaPopuVal- VP_4 and la VP_6
From the Global Party Survey, this variable is defined as "The Populist values typology combines the categories of rhetoric and social values for each party." (Norris, P. 2020). It measured by using the following scale.
1=Pluralist-Liberal
2=Pluralist- Conservative
3=Populist-Liberal
4=Populist-Conservatives

VP_6 ParPopu- Populist and Pluralist Values
The Global Party Survey defines the variable as "The Party populism typology categorizes whether party favors the use of pluralism or populist rhetoric." (Norris, P. 2020). The variable is measured using the following scale.
1=Strongly Pluralist
2=Moderately Pluralist
3=Moderately Populist
4=Strongly Populist

VP_7 CivLib- Civil Liberty Index
On the website Our World in Data, it measured the Civil Liberty Index in a scale from 0 to 1.

VD_1 DensPo- Population Density
From the website *World Bank.*

number of cases per 1,000 inhabitants. It was used the following equation.
TP/1,000=PT
TC/PT= Cases per 1,000 Inhabitants.

TC= Total Cases
TP=Total Population
PT=Population per 1,000 inhabitants.

TABLE 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIABLES

This research will analyze the first year of the pandemic. The COVID-19 cases were recollected according to the timeframe between March 11, 2020, to March 11, 2021. These dates were selected because, on March 11, 2020, the WHO declared the virus a pandemic. Then the total cases of COVID-19 were converted into a proportional

number of cases per 1,000 inhabitants. By doing this, it will allow to work with more simple numbers and, predominantly, identify the intensity of cases per country.

After establishing the data, we focused the analysis only in four political variables (VP_1, VP_4, VP_5, VP_6) and one COVID-19 variable (VC_2). The focus of those political variables was identified in the literature review. Table 3 presents the operationalization of these variables and what it will measure. In addition, this work will have a correlational-descriptive scope. This research will try to identify how the average number of COVD-19 cases is higher or lower according to the selected political variables. On the other hand, the descriptive scope of the study tries to identify whether there is a relationship between political ideologies and the containment of the spread of the virus. Finally, the ANOVA method was used in the SPSS program which will measure the different categories of variables. This is because as elaborated, the dependent variable is continuous and the independent variable is categorical. The ANOVA analysis will provide the statistical level of significance, which will prove that the variables are correlated.

Variable	Metric
VP_1	Closed Autocracy (0), Electoral Autocracy (1), Electoral Democracy (2) and Liberal Democracy (3)
VP_4	Left-Liberal (1), Left-Conservative (2), Right-Liberal (3) and Right-Conservative (4)
VP_5	Pluralist-Liberal (1), Pluralist-Conservative (2), Populist-Liberal (3) and Populist-Conservative (4)
VP_6	Strongly Pluralist (1), Moderately Pluralist (2), Moderately Populist (3) and Strongly Populist (4)
VC_2	Scale from 0 to 144. Cero (0) is the minimum and 144 is the maximum.

TABLE 3: OPALIZATION OF ANALYZED VARIABLES

Results

The first analysis that was made, it was focused to identify a possible relation of the political regimes and COVID-19 cases. As a result, 99.99% significance, were able to identify that the countries classified as "Liberal Democracies" and "Electoral Democracies" were the groups with the highest means number of cases. As presented

in Table 4, the highest average number of COVID-19 cases corresponds to the group of countries that were classified as “Liberal Democracies”.

Political Regime and COVID-19 cases Per 1,000 inhabitants

Cases Per 1,000 people

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Closed Autocracy	20	12,24	17,823	3,985	3,90	20,58	0	59
Electoral Autocracy	62	15,97	27,251	3,461	9,05	22,89	0	132
Electoral Democracy	53	30,38	33,655	4,623	21,11	39,66	0	129
Liberal Democracy	34	39,97	28,596	4,904	30,00	49,95	0	91
Total	169	24,88	30,344	2,334	20,27	29,48	0	132

TABLE 4: POLITICAL REGIME AND COVID-19 CASES PER 1,000 INHABITANTS

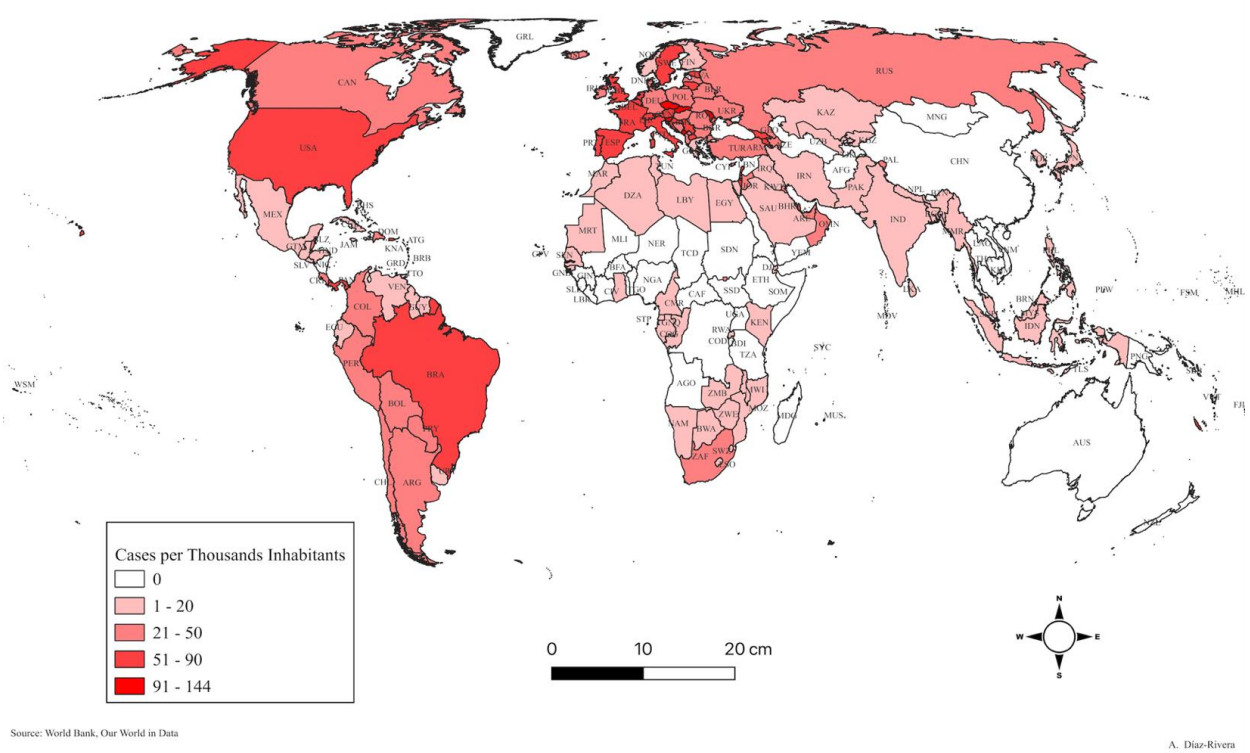
ANOVA

Cases Per 1,000 people

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	17469,117	3	5823,039	7,002	<,001
Within Groups	137219,668	165	831,634		
Total	154688,786	168			

TABLE 4.1: ANOVA OF TABLE 4

In collaboration with Andrés J. Díaz Rivera, Master's student in Cartography and GIS at the State University of New York (SUNY), the QGIS program was used and developed a map with the data previously analyzed. This was made to bring up visually the intensity of cases per country. In Map 1, the countries that wore traditionally classified as “Electoral Democracies” and “Liberal Democracies” are the ones with highest intensity of COVID-19 cases for the analyzed period.



MAP 1: INTENSITY OF CASES BY COVID-19 PER THOUSAND INHABITANTS BETWEEN THE PERIOD 2020-2021
SOURCE: WORLD BANK, OUR WORLD IN DATA AND POWERED BY QGIS

In the second analysis, the focused was in answering the main hypothesis. Therefore, the analysis of VP_4, VP_5 and VP_6 with the cases of COVID-19 per 1,000 inhabitants was performed. In the analysis of VP_4, with 99.30% significance, it was identified that the highest average number of COVID-19 cases corresponded to the countries classified as Right-Liberal and Right-Conservative (see Table 5). On the other hand, VP_5 was analyzed and as presented in Table 6 in which a 99.20% significance the highest average number of COVID-19 cases corresponded to the countries classified as Pluralist-Liberal. Finally, VP_6 showed that among the classifications that measure the variable, the mean number of COVID-19 cases are very similar to each other. The level of significance was 49%. Thus, this result is not significant (see Table 7).

Cases per 1,000 inhabitants and VP_6

Cases Per 1,000 people

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Left-Liberal	23	18,63	19,806	4,130	10,07	27,20	0	68
Left-Conservative	42	21,21	31,340	4,836	11,44	30,97	0	129
Rigth-Liberal	15	49,43	35,273	9,108	29,89	68,96	1	132
Rigth Conservative	46	27,86	28,380	4,184	19,43	36,29	0	94
Total	126	26,53	30,084	2,680	21,22	31,83	0	132

TABLE 5: CASES PER 1,000 INHABITANTS AND VP_6

ANOVA

Cases Per 1,000 people

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10570,978	3	3523,659	4,191	,007
Within Groups	102563,501	122	840,684		
Total	113134,479	125			

TABLE 5.1: ANOVA OF TABLE 5

Cases per 1,000 inhabitans and VP_5

Cases Per 1,000 people

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Pluralist-Liberal	19	48,48	39,205	8,994	29,58	67,37	0	132
Pluralist-Conservative	18	16,81	16,704	3,937	8,51	25,12	0	46
Populist-Liberal	22	22,15	21,671	4,620	12,54	31,76	0	80
Populist Conservative	66	25,78	32,050	3,945	17,90	33,66	0	129
Total	125	27,30	31,144	2,786	21,79	32,81	0	132

TABLE 6: CASES PER 1,000 INHABITANTS AND VP_5

ANOVA

Cases Per 1,000 people

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11235,069	3	3745,023	4,156	,008
Within Groups	109039,480	121	901,153		
Total	120274,549	124			

TABLE 6.1: ANOVA OF TABLE 6

Cases per 1,000 ihabitants and VP_6

Cases Per 1,000 people

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Strongly Pluralist	13	34,68	32,732	9,078	14,90	54,46	1	113
Moderately Pluralist	26	30,99	34,471	6,760	17,07	44,92	0	132
Moderately Populist	41	23,62	27,190	4,246	15,04	32,20	0	117
Strongly Populist	49	24,96	31,603	4,515	15,88	34,04	0	129
Total	129	26,73	30,863	2,717	21,35	32,11	0	132

TABLE 7: CASES PER 1,000 INHABITANTS AND VP_6

ANOVA

Cases Per 1,000 people

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1846,006	3	615,335	,641	,590
Within Groups	120074,786	125	960,598		
Total	121920,792	128			

TABLE 7.1: ANOVA OF TABLE 7

As a result, the previously made analysis helped answer the central hypothesis. The main theoretical approximation, as established in the literature review, proposed that countries with conservative and populist ideology had a poor response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, what it was presented in the hypothesis was not completely correct. Due to the results obtained divide the hypothesis into two parts, one that was confirmed and the other that was not. Based on the results, it was divided into 1) "Countries with conservative tendencies had a poor response in handling the COVID-19 pandemic" and 2) "Countries with Populist tendencies had a poor response in dealing with the pandemic." The first part of the hypothesis was confirmed. The result of the analysis of the VP_4 with the cases of COVID-19 per 1,000 inhabitants showed that in the countries with right-wing ideological tendencies they had a high average number of cases. It should be noticed that this interpretation can be differenced because in that same analysis it was identified that the "Right-Liberal" option was the one with the highest average number of cases and the hypothesis established that the countries are under the classification of "conservatives". On the other hand, the second classification with the highest average was the Right-Conservative. Thus, this first part of the hypothesis was confirmed. This is because there was a deficient response to the COVID-19 emergency by countries classified as right-wing on the political spectrum, which are traditionally categorized as "Conservative". This is to the fact, as presented in our literature review, that under the definition of "Conservativism", right-wing

governments are usually recognized for their strong belief in less state intervention. It is for this reason that the data analyzed in Table 5 confirm part of the hypothesis. Now the second part of the hypothesis was completely rejected. The data in Tables 6 and 7 show that the countries classified as pluralist and liberal pluralists had a higher average number of COVID-19 cases. This completely contradicts what was stated in the literature review and completely rejects the second part of the hypothesis.

Conclusions

The results of this paper were not what it was expected, but this research is a steppingstone in the development of empirical knowledge about the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on this analysis, two important aspects were identified. First, democracies in general had a poor response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, it was identified that the impact of right-wing governments played a significant role in the management of the pandemic, but no information was found to prove the impact of conservative populism in the mishandling of the pandemic. Based on the analyzes carried out, even though the hypothesis was not completely verified, there is statistical evidence that suggests a significant relationship between political ideologies and the response to the COVID-19 emergency. Although the data shows us that the "Liberal Democracies" have not positioned themselves completely on the right of the political spectrum, it is in totally agreement with the following sentence, "Over the past decade, many established liberal democracies have witnessed a new wave of "right-wing populist" political movements, parties, and leaders" (Speed & Mannion, 2020, p. 1967). It would be of high empirical value to evaluate the role that the COVID-19 pandemic has played regarding the rise of these governments, leaders, and parties that author presented.

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