

American's attitudes and behaviors in response to the covid-19 pandemic: An explanation based on affective polarization and information source

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Deskripsi Lengkap: <https://lib.ui.ac.id/detail?id=20512441&lokasi=lokal>

Abstrak

Why do some Americans oppose social distancing and lockdown policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic? This study argues that, given the current trends in affective polarization, partisanship is a factor that could influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward social distancing and lockdown policies. Moreover, the effect of partisanship on individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward social distancing and lockdown policies can be mediated by their level of trust in partisan leadership's information. By conducting chi-square tests, t tests, and ANOVA tests on a public opinion survey implemented by the Kaiser Family Foundation during March 25th-30th, 2020, we find that being a Republican is strongly related to holding negative behaviors and attitudes toward social distancing and lockdown policies. Furthermore, by employing logistic regression, multinomial logistic regression, and causal mediation analysis, we find that Republicans have a higher likelihood of opposing social distancing and lockdown policies because they trust president Trump to provide them with reliable information on the coronavirus.