# CONVERGE COVID-19 Working Groups for Public Health and Social Sciences Research

## Research Agenda-Setting Paper

*This paper was written to help advance convergence-oriented research in the hazards and disaster field. It highlights areas where additional research could contribute new knowledge to the response to and recovery from the pandemic and other disasters yet to come. Questions about the research topics and ethical and methodological issues highlighted here should be directed to the authors who contributed to this paper.*

**Working Group Name:**

COVID-19 and Shifting Public Opinions, Attitudes, Behaviors

**Working Group Description:**

While the COVID-19 pandemic is a public health problem, it is also a social problem, as public adoption of advised health behaviors relies on an interplay of public policy, social communication, and public attitudes. This Working Group developed a nationally representative panel survey to explore the ways in which the pandemic altered the lives of Americans. The data will be made publicly available at https://CoronaData.us. By making the data public and providing an interface which allows non-academics to do basic analysis, it will increase knowledge of the social, behavioral, and cultural impacts among policy makers, journalists, and the public at large.

**Priority Research Topics and Specific Research Questions:**

| Priority Research Topics | Potential Research Questions |
|---|---|
| 1. Valuing of Information and Expertise | • <u>Research Question 1</u>: Through what intermediaries was COVID-19 information communicated?<br><br>• <u>Research Question 2</u>: How does inequality in civic capital impact acquisition of information?<br><br>• <u>Research Question 3</u>: How does different valuing of expertise impact public health behaviors? |
| 2. Partisanship and Trust in Government | • <u>Research Question 1</u>: How have COVID-19 and the policy response impacted trust in public institutions?<br><br>• <u>Research Question 2</u>: How did partisan messaging, polarization, and de-investment in public education impact public health behaviors?<br><br>• <u>Research Question 3</u>: Under what circumstances do individuals accept or reject COVID-19 scientific information? |

Institute of Behavioral Science
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

CONVERGE | NATURAL HAZARDS CENTER
483 UCB | Boulder, Colorado | 80309-0483 | USA | (303) 735-5844
converge.colorado.edu | hazards.colorado.edu

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| 3. Civic Networks and Information Exchange | • <u>Research Question 1</u>: How are information and resources exchanged in communities at a variety of levels?<br><br>• <u>Research Question 2</u>: How did community information networks impact policy response? | |
| 4. Creating Behavior Change | • <u>Research Question 1</u>: How can we overcome the gap between attitudes and behaviors in COVID-19 public health behavior?<br><br>• <u>Research Question 2</u>: What public messages effectively create behavioral change? | |
| 5. Social Upheaval and Disruption | • <u>Research Question 1</u>: Where did the pandemic spark social upheaval?<br><br>• <u>Research Question 2</u>: Did the pandemic impact negative social attitudes such as blame, hate, and stereotyping? | |
| 6. Resilience and Recovery | • <u>Research Question 1</u>: What were the political consequences of COVID-19?<br><br>• <u>Research Question 2</u>: Did the pandemic impact political engagement?<br><br>• <u>Research Question 3</u>: Where did the pandemic create solidarity and where did it create division? | |

## Ethical / Methodological Considerations:

Most of the work in the group utilizes survey data. This includes public opinion polls, large longitudinal survey panels, and other attitudinal and behavior survey data. Data are often coupled with administrative or external data.

## Other Frameworks, Considerations for Collaboration, and/or Resources:

Our Working Group helped launch the COVID-19 Social Change Survey (https://CoronaData.us), a longitudinal panel survey in field since mid-March. Partners and collaborators are welcome.

## Contributors:

**Beth Redbird,** Sociology, Northwestern University
**Tabitha Bonilla,** Political Science, Northwestern University
**James N. Druckman,** Political Science, Northwestern University
**Laurel Harbridge-Yong,** Political Science, Northwestern University
**Thomas McDade,** Anthropology, Northwestern University
**Rachel Davis Mersey,** Journalism, Northwestern University
**Andrew V. Papachristos,** Sociology, Northwestern University
**Sera Young,** Anthropology, Northwestern University