

Effect of COVID-19 lockdown on elections in several countries

Edina Joe*

Department of Sociology and Legal Studies, University of Milan, Milano, Italy

*Corresponding author. E-mail: edinajoe432@gmail.com

Received: 01-Feb-2022, Manuscript No. GJPSET-22-59646; **Editor assigned:** 03-Feb-2022, Pre QC No. GJPSET-22-59646(PQ); **Reviewed:** 17-Feb-2022, QC No GJPSET-22-59646; **Revised:** 21-Feb-2022, Manuscript No. GJPSET-22-59646(R); **Published:** 04-Mar-2022, DOI: 10.15651/GJPSET.22.3.025.

DESCRIPTION

The 2020 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic poses an unknown challenge to established democracies. Governments face an apparent trade-off between a large number of deaths and an profitable arrestment. In response, utmost countries have executed strict social confinement measures unbelievable outside war times, and generally referred to as 'lockdowns'. Although there seems to be an agreement that analogous policies are the most effective means to reduce the prevalence of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which causes COVID-19, they also strongly reduce civil liberties, erode social capital and bring about economic instability. Hence, whether and how lockdowns affect political attitudes is far from being trivial. As emphasized by Stephens in the Financial Times, we observe, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, 'the return of government to centre stage (that) marks the close of a period in which power and responsibility migrated from states to markets'. In this new period, a crucial question emerges when confronted with grave threats similar as those caused by a major health extremity, do citizens trust the popular system to respond? To answer this question, we study the short term effects of lockdowns on political attitudes in the environment of Western European democracies. In particular, we probe public support for decision makers, institutions and administrations. Analogous support, specifically directed towards political actors and further diffuse towards the political system, is crucial for the good functioning of democracy.

Public elections in nine countries, and multitudinous further subnational votes, were disintegrated in some

way between January and August 2020, with frequent allegations that opinions on election administration had been politicized. Given the rapid onset of the pandemic and the acute health risks it posed to voters, postponements were not always unreasonable. Yet analogous moves constantly failed to meet popular norms, either because new choices were not listed instantly or because officers set new dates without making acceptable medications for safe and secure voting. Among the 24 countries that had a public election planned during the period under review, 22 civil votes took place. Seven countries moved an election date, including three that did not instantly plan for new elections, though they ultimately set new dates. COVID-19 provoked changes in election rules in four countries, damaging the credibility of the choices in two cases. There were 13 countries that introduced alternative voting styles that minimized health hazards.

In Sri Lanka, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa dissolved the opposition- controlled parliament in March in a shot to hold early parliamentary elections in April. Due to the health extremity, still, the country was unable to conduct the choices within the indigenous timeframe of three months. Five months ultimately passed before the balloting was held in August, during which the chairman ruled without a council. Rajapaksa's party won the choices in a landslide, adding to fears that he and his family, former president and current high minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, would consolidate power and assemble authoritarian governance. Other votes also sounded designed to strain an authoritarian grip. Burundi's election went ahead on May 20 with numerous health precautions for the population, yet foreign observers were demanded to counter blockade; accessibly for the ruling party, none showed up. According to

an expert on Belarus, where a fraudulent election has led to ongoing mass demurrers, “The authorities, having done nothing to stop the spread of the coronavirus, used the epidemic solely to limit the rights of citizens during the election crusade,” including by confining transnational and original observers. Choices were held up in Ethiopia and Bolivia, dashing expedients that voting would bring clarity to transitional situations. In Ethiopia, reformist high minister Abiy Ahmed took power in 2018 through an internal party process, and Parliament’s term was set to expire in October 2020. The government decided this spring that the coronavirus needed an indefinite electoral detention. This has led to political uneasiness and fears of a return to authoritarian rule. In Bolivia, the peremptory government was meant to serve on an interim base after demurrers against a seriously defective vote led former chairman Evo Morales to flee the country in November 2019. Yet the special election was held up three times, presumably due to the coronavirus. (It was listed for October 18 at the time of jotting.) Critics of the caretaker president who’s also a presidential seeker see her running of the health situation as politically motivated.

As one replier said of Bolivia, “The coronavirus arrived at a moment of popular fragility, since our country was in the midst of a governmental transition pending new choices. this formerly again threw the country into a state of social bouleversement.”

Among the countries that held elections, two encouraging cases stand out. South Korean citizens suggested for their National Assembly in April with high confidence in their government’s response to the pandemic. Protective measures were enforced at polling places and specific arrangements were made to avoid disenfranchising voters who were sick or quarantined. The ruling party was awarded with a resounding palm amid the topmost turnout in 28 times. In May, New Zealand officers announced a range of measures to help ensure that it’s September parliamentary choices could go forward, including more early voting, particular protective outfit for polling places, and colorful forms of remote voting. Although the choices were latterly pushed to October, the government will remain within its accreditation under the plan, and maintains high public trust.