

**INSTITUTIONAL TRUST AND CITIZEN SUPPORT  
FOR THE GOVERNMENT SOCIOECONOMIC POLICY  
IN THE EARLY PHASE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

**PETRU NEGURĂ  
LUCIA GAȘPER  
MIHAI POTOROACĂ**

*This paper<sup>1</sup> analyses the citizens' attitudes and support for the government initiatives aiming to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the early phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in Moldova. It draws on mixed method research carried out in the Republic of Moldova, in June and July 2020, by a questionnaire conducted with a nationally representative sample (n=1202), and a qualitative survey utilizing in-depth interviews (n=95). The respondents of the questionnaire survey share high dissatisfaction with the way the authorities managed the Covid-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic impact. Respondents with more confidence in state institutions are more satisfied with the way the government managed the pandemic and its effects. Participants in the qualitative survey through interviews highlighted several gaps and inconsistencies in the way the authorities managed the pandemic and its impact on people's life. The actions or inactions of the authorities might further undermine citizens' trust in state institutions and in the official interpretation of events. The "pro-business and pro-citizens" measures announced by the government of Moldova on 1st of April 2020, in a context strongly influenced by the presidential elections, which took place in November 2020, proved to be modest and little effective. The support measures assumed by the Moldovan government for businesses and employees*

---

**Address of the corresponding authors: Petru Negură, Lucia Gașper, Mihai Potoroacă,** The Centre for Sociology and Social Psychology, the Institute for Legal, Political and Sociological Research (ICJPS), office 309, Bd. Ștefan cel Mare, 1, 2001, Chișinău, Republic of Moldova, e-mail: petru.negura@gmail.com; gasperlucia@mail.ru; mihailpotoroaca@gmail.com.

<sup>1</sup> This article is part of an ongoing institutional project "Formation and consolidation of social cohesion in the Republic of Moldova in the context of the rapprochement with the European Union", no. 20.80009.1606.05, carried out by the Centre for Sociology and Social Psychology within the Institute of Legal, Political and Sociological Research from Chisinau, and supported by the government of the Republic of Moldova. Excerpts from this article have previously been published in the working paper drafted in the frame of the CRC 1342 Covid-19 Social Policy Response Series at the University of Bremen: Negură, P., Gașper, L., Potoroacă, M. (2021). *Moldova's Social Policy Response to Covid-19: Citizen Support for Government Initiatives*. In the *CRC 1342 Covid-19 Social Policy Response Series 35* (CRC 1342 Covid-19 Social Policy Response Series, Issue 35). Authors are grateful to the colleagues from the CRC 1342 project, and to the *Calitatea Vieții* journal's anonymous reviewers for their suggestions and insights.

*represented 1.2% of GDP, which is extremely low, compared to the support provided to enterprises and employees in Western countries and in countries from the region.*

**Keywords:** *institutional trust; Covid-19; pandemic; social policy; Moldova.*

## INTRODUCTION

The crisis caused by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in the Republic of Moldova in the early phase of its development<sup>2</sup> is revealing on the citizens' attitudes and support for the government's initiatives to mitigate the health and socioeconomic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The analysis sheds light on the role of citizens' trust and support to government institutions in a broader, international discussion about social capital in the pandemic's context.

In the first months of the pandemic, the Republic of Moldova reported a relatively low infection rate. It appears from Covid-19 Community Mobility Reports data presented by Google, which measured people's mobility in public and residential spaces during the pandemic compared with pre-pandemic data, that Moldovans showed compliance with health regulations imposed by the government during the state of emergency from 17 March to 15 May 2020 (Spătari 2020). Experts have pointed out that, precisely because of the weakness of the health system and expected vulnerability to the new virus, governments firmly applied lockdown restrictions during the first days of the pandemic (Petrović *et al.* 2020). Later, however, in the fall of 2020, Moldova was among the countries in the region that had reported high rates of infection with the new type of coronavirus, and many deaths. At a population of fewer than 3 million inhabitants, Moldova registers on 26 October 2020, 17,739 cases of Covid-19 infections and 418 deaths per 1 million population. For comparison, in neighbouring Romania, this ratio was 10,921 cases of infection and 333 deaths per 1 million. In Ukraine, 7,870 cases of infection and 146 fatalities per 1 million inhabitants are reported. Among the post-Soviet countries, only Armenia recorded a higher number of infection cases (26,252), but slightly fewer deaths (398) per 1 million inhabitants. A significant part of the population considers the official estimates exaggerated and denies the gravity of the crisis, avoiding the observance of the sanitary and physical distancing rules.

The crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic coincides with the government of the Moldovan Socialist Party (PSRM) and President Igor Dodon, the party's informal leader. The Socialist government is established in October

---

<sup>2</sup>The GDP per capita in Moldova was recorded at 3715.77 US dollars in 2019. The GDP per Capita in Moldova is equivalent to 29 percent of the world's average (Source: World Bank). The population of the Republic of Moldova in 2019 represented 3.55 million people, without Transnistria (Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova).

2019, after a short-lived cohabitation with the Action and Solidarity Party (PAS), led by Maia Sandu, and the Dignity and Truth Platform (PPDA). These parties had formed a coalition government, headed by Sandu, to oust the Democratic Party of oligarch Vlad Plahotniuc, who was accused of “capturing the state.” This cohabitation ended abruptly amid mutual mistrust. The cessation of this political cohabitation also put an end to a potential civic and political consensus in society, between supporters of the left- and right-wing parties, between citizens with European aspirations and those with pro-Russian orientation, between the Romanian-speaking majority and the Russian-speaking minority. The end of PAS-PPDA-PSRM cohabitation has also shaken the fragile balance of relative social cohesion (Negură 2021).

The case of Moldova is interesting from the perspective of institutional trust and the support provided by society to government measures to prevent the spread of the virus, and to reduce the negative social and economic effects of the pandemic. Society has shown rather high compliance with health regulations during the state of emergency, from 17 March to 15 May 2020. Against the background of growing anxieties over socioeconomic insecurity and increased distrust of state institutions, observance of health rules and various forms of cohesion and solidarity have given way to manifestations of distrust and tacit sabotage of the government policies, especially those imposing mobility restrictions and social distancing measures, perceived to contradict the interests of the population.

Opinion polls conducted in Moldova during the last decades reveal a low trust in institutions and politicians. Confidence in the Government fell sharply in 2015–2016 (from 23% in 2012 to 7% in 2015), following the high-scale bank fraud at the end of 2014, with the involvement of some politicians and state institutions. Low confidence in public institutions fueled widespread adherence to conspiracy scenarios during the first phases of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the poll carried out in May 2020 by Watch-Dog and the polling company CBS-Axa, half of the respondents would admit that “the [Covid-19] virus is no more dangerous than common flu and everything is done intentionally to destroy the economy.” President Igor Dodon himself downplayed the severity of the coronavirus in a YouTube program in the pre-election period. According to a survey conducted in October 2020 by the Institute of Public Policy and CBS-Axa, 9.8% of respondents believe that the Covid-19 pandemic is certainly a myth, and others 15.9% believe “it is rather a myth”. Following a series of corruption scandals, and in particular the “theft of the century” at the end of 2014, low trust in politicians and state structures fuels distrust in the official interpretation of events in the pandemic’s context.

The pandemic disadvantaged a significant part of citizens during the state of emergency and afterwards, especially manual workers and service employees. The survey conducted in July 2020 by the Centre for Sociology and Social Psychology at the Institute for Sociology and Social Psychology within the Institute for Legal, Political and Sociological Research in Moldova (CSSP-ILPSR) shows a high sense of socioeconomic insecurity among respondents: 63.4% of respondents said that

they are afraid and very afraid that, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, they will not be able to provide the family with necessities, 67.3% of the respondents confessed that they are afraid that they will not be able to cover the expenses for the services, and 47.8% that they will lose their jobs. It is noteworthy that people with primary or secondary education share the highest level of fear of not being able to provide the family with necessities: 72.7%, compared to 58.6% among respondents with higher education. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics of Moldova for 2020 confirm that these fears are not without reason. Thus, the incomes of the general population decreased by 4.8%, especially in cities, according to official estimation. Incomes decreased the most for the poorest quintiles (-12% for the 1<sup>st</sup> quintile, and -2.2% – for the 4<sup>th</sup> quintile) (UNDP 2020). Vulnerable groups, namely poor households, vulnerable women, NEET youth, returned migrants and self-employed people have felt the sharpest decline in incomes during the pandemic (PwC Vulnerable Groups survey, UNDP 2020). Moreover, 83% of households in urban areas and 74% in rural areas stated not having enough money to cover the current bills (UNDP 2020).

This paper aims to answer the following research questions: what social variables influence the citizen attitudes and support for government initiatives aimed at reducing the spread of the Covid-19 virus, and mitigating the socioeconomic impact in the early phase of the pandemic in Moldova. Likewise, through the qualitative interviews, we aim to examine the perception and attitudes of the respondents regarding the anti-Covid-19 measures taken by the state institutions. The primary hypothesis that guided our study, inspired by the literature on the relationships among various components of social capital and matters of public health, was that the belief in the existence of the Covid-19 and satisfaction with the Government actions to prevent the spread of the virus and the social and economic effects of the pandemic positively correlate with the respondents' age, social status and trust in government institutions. Qualitative analysis of the interviews contextualises and gives nuance to our findings. A working hypothesis that guided us in conducting and interpreting the in-depth interviews is that the social status of the respondents, and their institutional relationship with the state authorities framed the people's agreement or disagreement with the Government management of the pandemic.

### **A NOTE ON DATA AND METHODS**

In May 2020, the authors of this study, together with colleagues from the CSSP-ILPSR conducted a qualitative survey of 95 in-depth interviews with people of higher status in their communities or society. The authors and their colleagues conducted the interviews based on an interview guide developed around several themes drawing on a set of indicators of social cohesion, namely belonging, participation, trust, solidarity, integrative norms, and socioeconomic security (Berman and Phillips 2012). The interview guide also contained questions about

attitudes, behaviour, and social transformation during the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. In this article, we addressed, in particular, the attitude of the respondents towards how the government and the state institutions managed the early phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. The authors analysed the transcribed interviews based on the “grounded theory” model, using NVivo-10 software (Bazeley and Jackson 2013; Corbin and Strauss 1990). They structured the sample according to gender, place of residence, socio-occupational status, age, and ethnicity of the respondents, without pursuing national representation. Participants voiced their agreement to take part in the research, with a commitment to the anonymity and confidentiality of the resulting data.

One criterion for selecting respondents in the qualitative research through in-depth interviews, determined from discussions in the research team, was that respondents have a formal or informal leadership status in their communities and/or society. The purpose of this selection was to produce a body of qualitative data formulated by leaders and experts in their fields, and in communities, but not necessarily political leaders. We structured the sample according to gender, place of residence, socio-occupational status, age and ethnicity of the respondents, as follows. By gender/sex, the sample comprises 41 female respondents and 54 male respondents. By age, the sample is structured according to 6 age categories: 16–25 years (n=6), 26–35 years (n=22), 36–45 years (n=21), 46–55 years (n=17), 56–65 years (n=20) and 66–75 years (n=8). According to the place of residence of the participants, three categories of the sample were generated: rural area (n=21), urban area without Chişinău (n=37), and Chişinău (n=37). Depending on occupational status, the sample is divided into the following subgroups: public sector employees (n=44), private sector employees (n=20), public and private sector employees (n=2), non-public sector employees in government (n=18), self-employed (n=6), retirees (n=4), and unemployed (n=1). Respondents’ ethnicity was also considered. Thus, the sample comprises the following ethnic subgroups: Moldovans/Romanians (n=78), Ukrainians (n=3), Russians (6), Gagauz (n=4), Jews (n=1), Bulgarians (n=3). From the point of view of education level, the vast majority of respondents have higher education (n=87), of which three respondents have a doctoral degree, seven respondents have secondary education, and one respondent is a student. The research team did not have the ambition to select a nationally representative sample as far as is a qualitative study. For this reason, certain subgroups are overrepresented, namely people with higher education, people of Moldovan/Romanian ethnolinguistic affiliation, people employed in the public and non-governmental sector, and, to a lesser extent, men. An agreement to take part in the research was verbally agreed upon with each of the research participants, with the obligation assumed by the researchers to respect the anonymity and confidentiality of personal data.

The authors corroborate the qualitative findings with the results of the questionnaire survey conducted by the CSSP-ILPSR research team in July 2020 on a nationally representative sample of 1,202 adults. Some questions in that

questionnaire referred to the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular to fears during it, while one question was about satisfaction with the government's management of it. To analyse the trust in institutions, the authors used data of the Public Opinion Barometer conducted by the Institute of Public Policy (IPP) and CBS-Research, in October 2020 on a nationally representative sample of 1,224 adult respondents, outside the Transnistrian region (IPP and CBS-Research 2020).

## THEORETICAL STATEMENTS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper refers to the concept of social capital, developed by Robert Putnam (1993, 2000), James S. Coleman (1988), Pierre Bourdieu (1980), and other scholars. This concept is defined by Putnam as follows: “(...) «social capital» refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1993). Interpersonal trust and institutional trust are, at the same time, a factor of, and consequence of capital social and social cohesion (Putnam 2000; Ward and Meyer 2009). Also, citizen trust and support for government policies are key to policy performance (Córdova 2011).

Drawing on Bourdieu's theoretical work, other researchers have pointed out that socioeconomically and culturally disadvantaged people and groups have limited access to civic associations and public institutions, and benefit from a weak social support network (Portes and Landolt 1996; Negură 2020).

Several studies have shown the link between certain indicators of social capital and the success of combating and preventing the spread of Covid-19 and its effects (Koh and Cadigan 2020; Pitas and Ehmer 2020; Kokubun 2020; Borgonovi and Andrieu 2020; Varshney *et al.* 2020; Kristin 2020; Bian *et al.* 2020). Some studies show that high social capital, defined by the level of collective adherence to norms, values and trust, promotes higher cooperation of the civilian population with state authorities and civil society organizations in combating the pandemic, and thus preventing the spread of the virus (Kokubun 2020; Makridis and Wu 2020). In countries where no firm lockdown measures have been taken in March and April 2020, social cohesion played a positive role in preventing the spread of the virus (Borgonovi and Andrieu 2020; Varshney *et al.* 2020). Historical case studies and recent research suggest that when people do not support government health policies, they might be less willing to comply with them. Moreover, low trust in government influences public opposition to compulsory government health policies (Taylor-Clark *et al.* 2005).

In the long run, governments would consider investing in social capital (Kokubun 2020; Kristin 2020; Borgonovi and Andrieu 2020). Yet, the institutional trust increase over time, through consistent, diligent and good faith actions of the Government and other state institutions (Khemani 2020).

According to some studies, social trust, especially trust in institutions, is one of the most significant components of cohesion and social capital that have helped prevent the spread of the virus and mitigate its negative social and economic effects. The compliance with lockdown and social distancing rules depends on the level of trust in decision-makers (Bargain and Aminjonov 2020; Brodeur, Grigoryeva and Kattan 2020). Impractical, inapplicable and without addressing the socioeconomic dimension of the crisis lead to opposite effects (Elcheroth and Drury 2020). Based on a comparative study of different government responses to Covid-19, Petrović *et al.* (2020) suggest that East-European countries, with lower trust in institutions, had implemented more stringent interventions to enforce physical distancing, which gave better results in the initial phase of the pandemic than most of the Western countries, with greater trust in government. The explanation for that is that countries with less trustworthy governments and weaker health systems quickly imposed lockdown restrictions that proved to be effective in the short term (Petrović *et al.* 2020).

### **MOLDOVA'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY RESPONSE**

In Moldova, the pandemic caught the state unprepared, as the authorities themselves confessed, bringing to the fore a weak and inefficient health system. The government's social and economic policy response to the pandemic came late, and with little impact on businesses and people's life. Shortly after the official recognition of the pandemic in Moldova, on April 7, the number of infections continued to increase within the population, and especially among the medical staff. Some experts have criticized the inconsistent quarantine measures, and the premature lifting of restrictions, which has led to an increase in the infection rate. Parliament and the Government have started a series of legislative measures to reduce the negative economic and social effects of the pandemic. Some analysts and representatives of opposition parties have criticized the "populist" nature of some measures, such as the "First House", a subsidized program for lending young families to buy a home, and the "Good Roads" program proposing the repair of roads in the country (Law 12 in Appendix 2). Both programs were initiated by the previous government, and continued by the current government, despite criticism (Agora.md 2020). Several analysts found the electoral context of 2020 strongly influenced the way the government handled the health and socioeconomic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In November 2020, the election of the President of Moldova takes place. Experts and civil society activists criticized the government for not imposing stricter restrictions when the infection rate was rising, unlike other countries in the region and the world. In the context of the forthcoming elections, any legislative initiative that seeks to improve the living conditions of the population, whether from the government or opposition parties, is often labelled as "populist" and financially unsustainable.

On 1 April, two weeks after the quarantine began, the government of the Republic of Moldova announced a series of “pro-business and pro-citizens” measures. This package of measures enters into force only on 23 April 2020, along with other controversial measures, such as the one supposed to favour some tobacco companies. One measure provided for tripling the unemployment fund. Persons dismissed during the state of emergency were to receive unemployment benefits equivalent to a minimum wage in the real sector (MDL 2775, the equivalent of EUR 137.50 on 1 April 2020). The support measures for companies, of modest value, were rather indirect (loans, loan interest subsidies, VAT refunds), and, therefore, difficult to access. Fiscal measures and the increase in unemployment benefits have favoured the increase in the number of dismissals of employees (Spătari 2020). The support measures assumed by the Moldovan government for businesses and employees represent 1.2% of GDP. This proportion is extremely low, compared to the support provided to enterprises in Western countries (in Germany, 28.5% of GDP, Italy, 21.4%, France, 15%), compared to other countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Poland, 6.2%, Romania: 3.5%), and even compared to those in the Eastern Partnership countries (Georgia: 6.9%, Azerbaijan – 3.2%, Armenia – 2.3% of GDP) (Spătari 2020). According to research conducted in August and September 2020 by UNDP, 91% of respondents – representatives of enterprises – did not receive any support from the state, and only 3.6% benefited from some support measures during the pandemic (PwC B2B survey, UNDP, 2020). Besides, the crisis caused by the pandemic is being felt through declining jobs, and thus through increased demand for employment. The National Agency for Labor declared a decrease of 7.6% of jobs, especially for unskilled workers (12%) and textiles (30%). Research commissioned by UNDP shows that 49% of poor households were looking for a job in Moldova, and 4% abroad (PwC Vulnerable Groups Survey, UNDP 2020).

#### **ATTITUDES TOWARDS COVID-19 PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT: QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS**

In this section, we will analyze the satisfaction of respondents to the quantitative research with the way Government administered the Covid-19 crisis and mitigated its socioeconomic effects according to the respondents’ age, level of education, place of residence, intention to take part in voting and trust in state institutions. To facilitate the analysis, we grouped the answers to the question “To what extent are you satisfied with how the Moldovan authorities managed the Covid-19 pandemic?” in two categories: those who are satisfied and very satisfied; and those who are little satisfied or not at all satisfied (*Table no. 1*).



Table no. 1

**The satisfaction with the management of the pandemic crisis, according to sociodemographic criteria (age, level of education and place of residence)**

		The satisfaction	
		Satisfied and very satisfied	Little satisfied or not at all satisfied
Age	18–24	14,2%	85,8%
	25–29	15,1%	84,9%
	30–39	16,5%	83,5%
	40–49	20,3%	79,7%
	50–64	20,7%	79,3%
	65 +	30,3%	69,7%
Level of education	Primary/ secondary education	23,4%	76,6%
	High school education	17,4%	82,6%
	Professional/ technical/ vocational studies	19,1%	80,9%
	Higher education / doctorate	17,6%	82,4%
Place of residence	Rural	18,1%	81,9%
	Urban	20,4%	79,6%

The correlation analysis using the Chi-square test shows statistically significant associations between pandemic management satisfaction and respondents' age ( $p < .01$ ). Satisfaction with how the authorities have handled the crisis increases with age. Respondents in the 18–24 age group are less satisfied with the actions of the authorities (14.2%), and/ whereas those in the 65+ category are more satisfied (30.3%). However, there are no significant associations between the satisfaction with anti-Covid-19 Government policies and the education level ( $p = .327$ ), the same for satisfaction and the environment of residence ( $p = .304$ ).

We also analyzed the association between satisfaction with pandemic management and respondents' intention to take part in the upcoming elections (Table no. 2). Respondents satisfied with the actions of the authorities share a higher certainty to participate in the elections (66%), compared to those dissatisfied – 52.3%. Those dissatisfied with the actions of the authorities are less determined to take part in the elections. The results are statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ).

Table no. 2

**Intention to go to the vote and satisfaction with the way the authorities handled the Covid crisis**

	<b>Intention to go to the vote in the upcoming elections</b>					
	I am absolutely sure that I will go	I am sure that I will go	Probably I will go	Probably I will not go	I am sure that I will not go	DK/NA
Satisfied and very satisfied	31,9%	34,1%	17,5%	2,6%	8,3%	5,7%
Little satisfied or not at all satisfied	23,4%	28,9%	29,5%	6,3%	4,6%	7,3%

We also correlated satisfaction with the management of the pandemic with the level of trust in the state's political institutions (*Table no. 3*).

Table no. 3

**The trust in institutions and satisfaction with the management of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis**

		<b>The satisfaction with the management of the pandemic</b>		
		Satisfied and very satisfied	Little satisfied or not at all satisfied	Chi-Square Test significance
Parliament	Not at all or little trust	15,9%	84,1%	p < .001
	Some trust or a lot of trust	27,8%	72,2%	
	DK/NA	37,2%	62,8%	
Gouverment	Not at all or little trust	14,4%	85,6%	p < .001
	Some trust or a lot of trust	29,0%	71,0%	
	DK/NA	36,4%	63,6%	
Presidency	Not at all or little trust	12,7%	87,3%	p < .001
	Some trust or a lot of trust	26,3%	73,7%	
	DK/NA	21,4%	78,6%	
Mass-media	Not at all or little trust	18,8%	81,2%	p = .957
	Some trust or a lot of trust	19,3%	80,7%	
	DK/NA	20,0%	80,0%	
Church	Not at all or little trust	22,4%	77,6%	p < .001
	Some trust or a lot of trust	16,1%	83,9%	
	DK/NA	34,2%	65,8%	

Respondents who trust Parliament and Government are to a lesser extent dissatisfied with the actions of the authorities in managing the pandemic crisis. Thus, of the respondents who have no or little trust in the Government, 85.6% are not at all or are to a small extent satisfied with the way the authorities manage the pandemic, while those who have some or much trust in the Government are dissatisfied in 71.0% of the pandemic management.

The association of the data on the respondents' social status and the answers on the belief in the existence of the Covid-19 virus suggests that people with a low perceived socioeconomic status, with a lower level of education, and those who share a lower trust in state institutions, are more inclined to deny the severity of the Covid-19 pandemic. Denial of the severity or existence of the Covid-19 pandemic by the most disadvantaged could be interpreted as a "maladaptive coping strategy" in the face of the perceived threat of insecurity and socioeconomic exclusion (Jaspal and Nerlich 2020).

Table no. 4

**Summary of responses regarding the belief that the Covid-19 pandemic exists or is a myth, according to trust in Government and Parliament, socioeconomic status, and education**

		<b>The Covid-19 pandemic rather exists or certainly exists</b>	<b>The Covid-19 pandemic is more of a myth or certainly a myth</b>	<b>DK/NA</b>	<b>Chi-Square Test significance threshold value</b>
<b>Trust in Government</b>	Very much or some confidence	80.8%	16.5%	2.7%	p<.001
	Little or no confidence	64.8%	28.6%	6.7%	
<b>Trust in Parliament</b>	Very much or some confidence	78.5%	17.4%	4.1%	p<.001
	Little or no confidence	66.5%	27.3%	6.2%	
<b>Perceived socioeconomic status</b>	Low	57.9%	33.6%	8.5%	p<.001
	Medium	69.5%	25.3%	5.2%	
	High	76.9%	18.3%	4.8%	
<b>Education level</b>	Low	54.5%	36.6%	9.0%	p<.001
	Medium	65.0%	28.9%	6.2%	
	High	83.5%	12.1%	4.4%	

Source: Calculated based on data provided by POB, IPP & CBS-Research, October 2020.

Therefore, the results of the questionnaire survey show that respondents share high dissatisfaction with the way the authorities managed the Covid-19 pandemic. Over 80% are dissatisfied and only 19% are satisfied with the management of the

pandemic and its socioeconomic effects. Correlation analysis suggest that young respondents are the most dissatisfied, and the level of satisfaction increases with age. Respondents with primary or secondary studies are slightly more satisfied with the Government management of the pandemic than those with high-school and higher education. Respondents satisfied with the measures taken by the authorities are more certain to participate in the upcoming elections. Finally, respondents that are more confident in state institutions are a little more satisfied with the way the Government managed the pandemic. These results confirm the relevance of studies showing the link between trust in institutions, support for government-promoted health policies, and compliance with government-imposed health measures and rules (Kokubun 2020; Makridis and Wu 2020; Taylor-Clark *et al.* 2005). The quantitative findings examined above also suggest that social status and the perception of socioeconomic vulnerability influence both trust in state institutions and support for government-promoted health measures.

### **GOVERNING THE PANDEMIC SITUATION: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS**

Many in-depth interview participants discussed the Covid-19 crisis from the perspective of how central and local authorities managed the crisis because of the pandemic. Participants addressed this topic by answering the following questions: “Do you think that the authorities (local, central) are taking the right measures to prevent the spread of the virus? And to lessen the negative effects of the pandemic on the economy and people’s daily lives? Give examples from your locality.”

Most of the themes and thematic references coded within the generic theme “Governance of the Covid-19 pandemic situation” have a general negative significance (19 themes and 94 references). Other subthemes and thematic references have rather a neutral-ambivalent significance (14 themes/56 references). A smaller number of thematic units and references have a positive significance (4 themes/27 references). This thematic distribution according to their general significance suggests that the respondents of this research appreciated negatively and neutral-ambivalently the actions of the local and central government in managing the Covid-19 crisis, and, to a lesser extent, positively. These data are consistent with the results of quantitative research on satisfaction with the administration of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The subtopics with negative significance, the most critical, were, with some exceptions, formulated by all sociodemographic categories of respondents. Some positive subthemes, such as “Authorities control the situation” were expressed by people employed in the public sector, foremost in the administrative system (6 references out of 6). A negative subtheme, such as “Inadequate State Communication” was formulated by respondents employed in the public sector (6 out of 11), and the non-governmental sector (5 out of 11).

### **Critical assessments: health and social arguments**

Several respondents consider that the state strategies and actions of communication with citizens were inadequate (7 sources/11 references—henceforth: 7s/11r). The government did not properly inform citizens since the beginning of the pandemic (F/36-45/urb/Mold/sup/pub)<sup>3</sup>. Politicians' statements were contradictory (M/66-75/Chis/Mold/sup/pub). But this is also explained because, at first, both society and the authorities were confused and did not know how to proceed (M/56-65/Chis/Mold/sup/pub; F/46-55/urb/Mold/sup/pub). Some respondents referred to the infamous episode in which President Dodon tried to explain how the Covid-19 virus manifests and spreads as an example of irresponsible communication between the authorities and citizens (M/36-45/Chis/Mold/sup/NG).

Neither the authorities nor the press have informed sufficiently and professionally, hence the large proportion of those who do not believe in the virus's existence. "Instead of useful medical advice for self-protection, the press only transmitted obituaries and statistics about the infected and the dead. The media have not disseminated balanced information. The need for the slogan "Stay home" was not clearly explained" (M/56-65/Chis/Mold/sup/pub). Correct information of Moldovans returning from abroad would have prevented the spread of the virus in Moldova. However, their information was largely delayed and incomplete (M/56-65/Chis/Mold/sup/pub). Another mistake reported by some respondents is the late placement of returned migrants in quarantine (M/46-55/rur/Mold/sup/pub).

Authorities and medical staff have not attempted to popularize certain biomedical knowledge that would have been useful to the population in order to protect themselves and limit the spread of the virus (M/36-45/Chis/Mold/sup/NG). According to the same respondent, the state authorities missed the chance to communicate a message of solidarity with the citizens. Instead of such a message, the state delivered flawed and contradictory communication. (M/36-45/Chis/Mold/sup/NG).

Some respondents expressed concern that focusing the information message on Covid-19 on isolation, distancing and "stay home" would leave its mark on the collective mind and behavior, and could alienate people from each other (F/26-35/urb/Mold/sup/NG).

---

<sup>3</sup> Each interview excerpt is coded according to the socio-biographical data of the interviewee, namely by gender (M/F), age group (16–25, 26–35, 36–45, etc.), environment of residence (urban – urb., rural – rur or Chisinau – Chis.), declared ethnicity (Moldovan - Mold, Ukrainian – Ukr, Russian – Rus, Gagauz – Gag., Jewish – Jew.), education (higher – sup., secondary – sec.), professional activity sector (public – pub., private – priv., public/ private – pub-priv., non-governmental – NG, self-employed – self-empl. and unemployed – unempl., medical – med.). Thus, M/36-45/urb/Mold/sup/pub means that the interviewee is a man, 36–45 years old, resident of an urban locality (but not Chisinau), Moldovan/Romanian, with higher education, employed in the public sector.

Some respondents believe that the state mismanaged the medical system before, and especially during the pandemic (3s/3r). Some believe that the medical staff has been inadequately equipped to cope with the growing task of preventing and treating infected people, as evidenced by many infected people among the medical staff (7s/7r). Instead of fortifying and empowering the system and the medical staff, “On the first line are the politicians in the chase for PR (...). They did not comply with the emergency regime” (M/66-75/Chis/Mold/sup/pub). The authorities have taken some politicized decisions in the upcoming elections (2s/2r). Some respondents consider that the Covid-19 pandemic has been politicized (M/56-65/Chis/Mold/sup/pub-priv; F/26-35/urb/Mold/sup/NG).

Some respondents consider that the authorities have sometimes taken exaggerated or arbitrary measures (4s/5r). An example in this sense is the ban imposed on the elderly to leave the house (at certain hours), without providing these people with necessary things for protection and survival (M/46-55/Chis/Rus/sup/pub-priv). Introducing restrictions, and then lifting them was done abruptly and arbitrarily (M/26-35/Chis/Mold/sup/priv). Too high fines are another example of exaggerated measures (2s/2r). Another respondent considers fines an example of a fair measure applied by the authorities (F/16-25/rur/Mold/stud/pub).

Attempts to rectify the budget and attract external credit have taken too long (M/26-35/Chis/Mold/sup/NG). The promotion of laws considered aberrant would show, according to one respondent, the incompetence and even bad will of this government in crisis management (M/26-35/rur/Mold/sup/priv). Another mistake of the central authorities in the crisis management was that they included no doctors in the Commission for the state of emergency.

### **Economic and social effects of the pandemic**

The negative economic effects caused by the pandemic are self-evident for most respondents who spoke on the subject. Therefore, this issue must be treated with seriousness and with a sustained effort by society and the authorities, the respondents consider (5s/7r). The economic crisis is already being felt, but the worst crisis is just around the corner, some respondents say, and this would evolve into serious phenomena, such as rising prices, wage cuts, massive layoffs, declining productivity (M/16-25/rur/mold/sup/pub; M/56-65/Chis/mold/sup/pub; F/56-65/rur/mold/pub/NG).

A fairly high number of negative assessments refer to policies considered inefficient in the economic field (21s/21r). Several respondents considered the restrictions imposed in quarantine too harsh. These have put a heavy obstacle in the existence and further development of businesses, especially small businesses, the most vulnerable in such a crisis. Measures to support the business environment have not been sufficient and effective. One participant considered that it would have been sufficient for the authorities to focus on protecting vulnerable groups, leaving the economy to work (M/26-35/Chis/Mold/sup/NG).

As unemployment rises, some respondents also expect negative social phenomena, such as rising crime (F/46-55/Chis/mold/sup/med). Other respondents make a connection between the economic crisis, the disappearance of jobs, and the negative psychomoral manifestations of society: “Human society will be worse, many have lost their jobs, many will be without a job” (F/56-65/urb/mold/sup/pub; F/36-45/urb/mold/super/priv; M/36-45/rur/mold/med/pub). The topic of “job losses” was addressed especially by respondents from Chisinau city (n=4) and other urban areas (n=3). Another point of view comes from a respondent, a resident of a rural area, namely that the pandemic did not affect agriculture much less than the spring drought, which the authorities did not support too much, anyway. In particular, grain production was severely affected (M/46-55/rur/mold/med/pub; M/56-65/rur/mold/med/selfempl).

The pandemic has particularly affected private sector companies, according to one respondent, who herself is the manager of such a company. Many companies were closed and employees were laid off or transferred to technical unemployment (F/36-45/Chis/mold/sup/priv). Two respondents (both young) consider that market price fluctuations during the pandemic hide certain concerted actions by politically supported economic agents (M/16-25/rur/mold/sup/pub; M/16-25/urb/gag/sup/non-guv).

Many interviewees discussed their perception of economic insecurity (15s/17r). One respondent, an urban resident, confesses that she lives from savings, but shares a sense of financial insecurity in the medium term (F/26-35/Chis/rus/sup/pub-NG). Another respondent, self-employed in an NGO, predicts that the experience of precariousness will lead many people to revise their life principles and delegitimize the neoliberal ideology, according to which everyone must manage on his/her own (M/36-45/Chis/mold/sup/non-guv). A category of citizens, those considered “privileged,” a category to which one respondent attributes himself, would not have been affected too much by the pandemic from an economic point of view, but possibly from a psychological and social one (M/36-45/Chis/jew/super/pub).

Most respondents acknowledged economic insecurity as an important issue in the Covid-19 pandemic. The period of the interviews (May 2020) may not yet allow for a full assessment of the situation, but some respondents have already felt the effects of the crisis following the dismissal, job transfer or job loss, the closure of the company they run, or in which he/she works. However, they all share a more or less acute sense of socioeconomic insecurity, which some respondents associate with negative developments from a moral and social point of view.

### **Positive assessments: institutional and normative compliance**

A significant number of respondents, especially those employed in administrative structures, consider that central and/or local authorities have taken the right and timely measures to deal with the health situation and limit the spread

of the virus (M/36-45/urb/sup/Mold/pub). Thus, the sub-theme “Correct measures [in crisis management]” accumulated 17 references from 17 sources, and the sub-theme “Generally correct measures” appear in 19 sources/19 references.

Some participants (6s/6r) consider that the measures taken by the authorities were correct, but were not carried out correctly for several reasons: sabotage of its actions by the society, low capacity (including financial) and will to implement and control by the authorities, the complexity and unpredictability of the situation, and the lack of experience in managing pandemic situations. However, in connection with the last argument, some respondents also invoke an “excuse” namely that even international institutions (including the WHO) failed to provide sufficient information to limit the spread of the virus in China and around the world (F/26-35/rur/Mold/sup/pub; M/26-35/rur/Mold/sup/priv).

Some respondents thought that the actions of the authorities were more effective where the population supported these measures by getting involved in monitoring and compliance with the rules, and reporting the violators (M/46-55/rur/Mold/sup/pub).

### **Neutral/ambivalent assessments: the lessons to learn**

Some respondents (4s/5r) suggest several measures that should have been taken to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic. These include the introduction of a state of emergency earlier, the prior preparation of society, and the economy for quarantine (M/56-65/rur/Ukr/sup/pub). Other respondents consider that the relaxation of the restrictions was done too early (3s/3r). One respondent considers economic activities should resume on the individual responsibility of economic operators (M/46-55/Chis/Mold/sup/pub). Economically, some respondents believe that the authorities should have found ways to keep businesses afloat during the pandemic, since most companies are not able to pay for the technical unemployment of employees (F/46-55/Chis/Mold/sup/pub; F/26-35/rur/Mold/sup/pub).

Another participant suggests that the government and society should have learned some important things from this experience, namely: the priority of food resilience capacity, which involves, on the one hand, the concentration of vital food resources in Moldova (an allusion to the case criticized in the press for the export of quantities of wheat in March and April 2020), and the empowerment of the population to be food resilient by providing opportunities to grow plant foods, even in urban areas. This respondent believes that the state should have launched a more ambitious program to support citizens in reducing the increase in precariousness among those who suffer most from quarantine measures and the economic crisis. The individualistic “stay home” message should turn to a call for vigilance, but also solidarity. Regional hospitals should not have been closed to “optimize” them, but should have been equipped to meet local needs, including in crises (M/36-45/Chis/Mold/sup/NG). The pandemic showed us, says the same respondent, that



cities, especially the capital, were widowed by many public spaces – parks, green spaces, and recreational areas – which proved so necessary for citizens in this period of the pandemic. The government could have learned a lot about public policy in the pandemic’s context, but it does not, as it seems, because the authorities do not acknowledge their mistakes and do not build a medium and long-term strategy, even more necessary as epidemiologists predict the outbreak of a “second wave” of the pandemic in the fall 2020 (M/36-45/Chis/Jew/sup/pub; M/36-45/Chis/Mold/sup/NG).

As seen from this analysis, respondents expressed some critical views on the actions taken by the Government and other state institutions to prevent the spread of the virus and combat the negative effects of the pandemic. These data are consistent with the results of the survey conducted by CSSP/ILPSR in July 2020, according to which 80.75% of respondents are not satisfied at all, or only to a small extent with the way the Moldovan authorities manage the Covid-19 crisis. In-depth interviews criticized the inadequate communication operated by the state (n=10), inadequate supply of medical staff (n=7), insufficient economic and social measures (n=21). Several respondents rated the measures applied by the state as wrong (n=10), correct decisions but not fulfilled (6), and 21 respondents share the perception of inadequate management of the pandemic situation. However, most of the interviewees expressed a constructive attitude towards the actions of the state. Numerous people expressed positive (n=17) or moderately positive (n=19) opinions. Some respondents who expressed positive opinions work in the public sector (n=11). The critical opinions are relevant and constructive.

In-depth interviews with community and society leaders partly confirm the results of studies that emphasized differences in pandemic management in Eastern and Western European states, but also between the early phase of the pandemic and the phases that followed (Petrović *et al.* 2020). As suggested by several respondents in the qualitative research, the reliance on state institutions and the low level of support for government measures required firmer enforcement of health regulations by state institutions in the first phase of the pandemic. However, these restrictive measures do not prove to be sustainable, in conditions of lack or inefficiency of support measures for citizens and businesses.

## CONCLUSIONS

This paper examines the association between some components of social capital, namely institutional trust and citizen support for the government, and the assessment of actions undertaken by the authorities in fighting the pandemic and its negative effects on the economy and people’s wellbeing. Most participants in the quantitative questionnaire (with 1202 participants) and interview participants (95 subjects) are broadly dissatisfied with the actions taken by the Moldovan authorities to “flatten the curve” of infections and counteract the negative social

and economic effects, or consider them insufficient. Participants in the interviews highlighted several gaps and inconsistencies in the way the authorities managed the pandemic, especially in a pre-election period (in November 2020, the election of the president of the republic takes place). Respondents employed in public institutions express greater agreement with the measures taken by the government to combat the pandemic and its effects. The study confirms the primary hypothesis that the belief in Covid-19 and satisfaction with government health, social and economic policies implemented in the early phase of the pandemic positively correlated with respondents' age, social status and trust in government institutions. Young people, self-positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy, with a low level of education and low confidence in state institutions tend the most to deny the severity of the pandemic and express dissatisfaction with the measures taken by state institutions to combat the virus and the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic. These people feel the most vulnerable to the socioeconomic risks caused by the pandemic. This piece of finding suggests that disadvantaged people are most likely to apply "maladaptive coping" strategies to the pandemic and quarantine conditions.

This paper confirms the relevance of studies that suggest a link between different components of social capital and social cohesion, and how the authorities and society took part in combating the pandemic and its negative effects. Yet, the analysis of the Moldovan case brings some significant nuances to the general picture, and contributes to a critical discussion of studies on social cohesion and social capital in the Covid-19 pandemic. In the perception of several participants in the research, the Moldovan society has not adopted enough strategies of collective resilience beyond the state's ability to manage the crisis, such as those applied in certain Asian societies (Bian *et al.* 2020; Tufekci 2020). Besides, the government policy response to support the businesses and citizens in the pandemic were small and little effective. The actions of the authorities are likely to further undermine citizens' trust in state institutions and in the official interpretation of events in the pandemic.

## REFERENCES

- Agora.md (2020). Expert-Grup despre împrumutul rusesc: „Nu este altceva decât un nou program de „Drumuri bune” ((Expert-Grup about the Russian loan: it is nothing more than a new “Good roads” program), 24 April 2020, <https://agora.md/stiri/70238/expertgrup-despre-creditul-rusesc-nu-este-altceva-de-cat-un-nou-program-de-drumuri-bune?fbclid=IwAR0y1XejjpTw-26VD7v7I74oxAieKTnqyWfTwsuhPd1KLHcRJoVC9DCPRB4Y>.
- Bargain, Olivier and Aminjonov, Ulugbek (2020). Trust and Compliance to Public Health Policies in Times of Covid-19. *Bordeaux Economics Working Papers*, 33(May).
- Bartscher, Alina Kristin (2020). *Social Capital and the Spread of Covid-19: Insights from European Countries* (No. 8346; CESifo Working Paper). <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/219164>.
- Bazeley, Patrica, and Jackson, Kristi (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVIVO*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Bian, Yanjie, Miao, Xiaolei, Lu, Xiaolin, Ma, Xulei, and Guo, Xiaoxian (2020). The Emergence of a Covid-19 Related Social Capital: The Case of China. *International Journal of Sociology*, 50(5), 419-433. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207659.2020.1802141>.
- Borgonovi, Francesca, and Andrieu, Elodie (2020). Bowling together by bowling alone: social capital and Covid-19. *COVID Economics*, 17, 73–97.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1980). Le capital social. *Actes de La Recherche En Sciences Sociales*, 31(1), 2–3. <https://doi.org/10.3917/idee.169.0063>
- Brodeur, Abel, Grigoryeva, Idaliya, Kattan, Lamis (2020). *Stay-at-Home Orders, Social Distancing and Trust* (No. 553; GLO Discussion Paper). <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/217491>.
- Corbin, Juliet. M., and Strauss, Anselm (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00988593>.
- Córdova, Abby (2011). The Role of Social Capital in Citizen Support for Government Action to Reduce Economic Inequality. *International Journal of Sociology*, 41(2), 28–49. <https://doi.org/10.2753/IJS0020-7659410202>.
- Coleman, James S. (1988). Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *The American Journal of Sociology* (Vol. 94, pp. 1–27). [https://www.crcresearch.org/files-crcresearch/File/coleman\\_88.pdf](https://www.crcresearch.org/files-crcresearch/File/coleman_88.pdf).
- Elcherath, Guy, and Drury, John (2020). Collective resilience in times of crisis: lessons from the literature for socially effective responses to the pandemic. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(3), 703–713. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12403>.
- Jaspal, Rusi, and Nerlich, Brigitte (2020). Social representations, identity threat, and coping amid Covid-19. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(S1), S249–S251. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000773>.
- Khemani, Stuti (2020). An Opportunity to Build Legitimacy and Trust in Public Institutions in the Time of Covid-19. *Research & Policy Briefs* (Research & Policy Briefs, Issue 32).
- Koh, Howard K., and Cadigan, Rebecca O. (2008). Disaster Preparedness and Social Capital. In *Social Capital and Health* (pp. 273–285). Springer New York. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-71311-3\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-71311-3_13).
- Kokubun, Keisuke (2020). *Social capital may mediate the relationship between social distance and Covid-19 prevalence*. July. <http://arxiv.org/abs/2007.09939>.
- Makridis, Christos, and Wu, Cary (2020). “Ties that Bind (and Social Distance): How Social Capital Helps Communities Weather the Covid-19 Pandemic.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, doi: 10.2139/ssrn.3592180.
- Negură, Petru (2021). Moldova’s Thirty-Year Search for Independence. *Current History*, 120(828), 268–273. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.2021.120.828.268>.
- Negură, Petru (2020). Homelessness in a Post-Soviet City: Weak Social Support and Institutional Alienation. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 50(4), 1031–1048. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcz091>.
- Pitas, Nicholas and Ehmer, Colin (2020). Social Capital in the Response to COVID-19. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 34(8), 942–944. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0890117120924531>.
- Petrović, Dalibor, Petrović, Marijana, Bojković, Nataša and Čokić, Vladan P. (2020). An integrated view on society readiness and initial reaction to Covid–19: A study across European countries. *PLOS ONE* 15(11), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0242838>.
- Portes, Alejandro, and Landolt, Patricia (1996). The downside of social capital. *The American Prospect* 26, 1049–7285. <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/67453> (accessed 15 September, 2021).
- Putnam, Robert D. (1993). What makes democracy work? *National Civic Review*, 82(2), 101–107. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ncr.4100820204>.
- Putnam, Robert D. (2000). *Bowling alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Simon & Schuster.
- Spătari, Marcel (2020). *The Socioeconomic support measures in the context of the Covid-19: delayed, modest and rigid* (Labour and Social Justice, Issue July).

- Taylor-Clark, Kalahn, Blendon, Robert J., Zaslavsky, Alan and Benson, John (2005). Confidence in Crisis? Understanding Trust in Government and Public Attitudes Toward Mandatory State Health Powers. *Biosecurity and Bioterrorism: Biodefense Strategy, Practice, and Science* 3 (2): 138–47.
- Tufekci, Zeynep (2020). How Hong Kong Did It. *The Atlantic*. 12 May 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/05/how-hong-kong-beating-coronavirus/611524/> (accessed 15 September, 2021).
- Varshney, Lav R., and Socher, Richard (2020). Covid-19 Growth Rate Decreases with Social Capital. In *medRxiv* (p. 2020.04.23.20077321), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.04.23.20077321>
- UNDP (2020). *Social and Economic Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable groups and economic sectors in the Republic of Moldova. Impact Assessment Report* (Issue November).
- Ward, Paul, and Meyer, Samantha (2009). Trust, social quality and wellbeing: a sociological exegesis. *Development and Society*, 38(2), 339–363.

**A**cest articol analizează atitudinile și sprijinul cetățenilor față de inițiativele guvernamentale care vizează atenuarea impactului socio-economic al fazei incipiente a pandemiei de Covid-19 în Republica Moldova. Articolul se bazează pe o cercetare cu metode mixte efectuată în Republica Moldova în lunile iunie și iulie 2020, prin aplicarea unui chestionar, a unui eșantion reprezentativ la nivel național ( $n=1202$ ) și a unei anchete calitative prin interviuri aprofundate ( $n=95$ ). Respondenții chestionarului împărtășesc un sentiment de nemulțumire față de modul în care autoritățile au gestionat pandemia de Covid-19 și impactul socio-economic al acesteia. Respondenții care au mai multă încredere în instituțiile statului sunt mai mulțumiți de modul în care guvernul a gestionat pandemia și efectele acesteia. Participanții la ancheta calitativă prin interviuri au evidențiat mai multe lacune și inconsecvențe în modul în care autoritățile au gestionat pandemia și impactul acesteia asupra vieții oamenilor. Acțiunile sau inacțiunile autorităților ar putea submina și mai mult încrederea cetățenilor în instituțiile statului și în interpretarea oficială a evenimentelor. Măsurile „pro-business și pro-cetățeni” anunțate de Guvernul Republicii Moldova la 1 aprilie 2020, într-un context puternic influențat de alegerile prezidențiale din noiembrie 2020, s-au dovedit a fi modeste și puțin eficiente. Măsurile de sprijin asumate de Guvernul Republicii Moldova pentru întreprinderi și angajați au reprezentat 1,2% din PIB, ceea ce este extrem de puțin comparativ cu sprijinul acordat întreprinderilor și angajaților în țările occidentale și în alte țări din regiune.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** încredere instituțională; Covid-19; pandemie; politică socială; Republica Moldova.

Received: 27.07.2021

Accepted: 29.09.2021