



Sociological Briefing

Patriotism in the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the way that public institutions communicate urgent measures to the population, including specific messages to target groups such as health professionals. Social media have been extensively used for this purpose and research shows its influence on the dissemination of information to reach citizens. However, the “traditional” communication channels have also played a role in the global COVID-19 crisis. In many cases, the research studies focus on concrete countries, regions, or municipalities, and less has been explored to have an international overview of what has happened across the globe to identify commonalities or divergences in the different continents. Four authors from Chile address this topic to advance knowledge in this field.

The contribution “Pandemic patriotism: Official speeches in the face of the global COVID-19 crisis” published in *International Sociology* and authored by Jorge Atria, Juan Alfaro, Magdalena Tapia and Raimundo Frei analyses official speeches to unveil the axes underlying them: appeals for solidarity and references to war context. The authors demonstrate that at the very beginning of the pandemic, the official public discourses have been based on the aforementioned aspects, contributing to supporting collective memories and national identities, thus activating patriotic feelings.

The action of governments and official measures

The article frames the global situation at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, with data about the economic consequences, and the people falling below the poverty line. The measures to be implemented and how they should be communicated to the population became a major challenge to be faced. The authors highlight the relevance of patriotic feelings and the sense of belonging to a national community in the crisis, which are behind the official messages about health and economic measures. In this vein, the contribution analyses the role of nation-states when the territories were more controlled, in particular closing borders. Literature shows the effects of the pandemic policies concerning the support to democracy, the presidential popularity, or the reinforcement of welfare policies, among others. The authors explain how the idea of nation is redefined in times of adversity and the ways that consent or coercion influences the acceptance of state regulations. Within this framework, the authors focus their analysis of the presidential speeches, on the grounds of the critical discourse analysis.

Collecting speeches, illustrating solidarity, patriotism, and defending the homeland

The authors have collected 238 speeches by official authorities from 66 countries, most of them in Europe but also from other continents. The authors provide a characterization of the analyzed discourses, including the dates of the speeches between March 2020 and May 2020, the diverse profiles of the speakers (presidents, monarchical authorities...), and gender. The results of the analysis show the relevant role of solidarity and patriotism during the pandemic, with three types of references that appeal to solidarity: the allusion to a common cause to be faced by all layers of society, the recognition of the role of specific groups of civil society (health professionals, religious organizations...), and the need for international cooperation. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate the relevance of defending the homeland against the “invisible enemy”, with discourses referring to a conflict or war against the coronavirus pandemic. There is an important role in the comparison of the pandemic sit-

uation with disasters such as wars, and the authors also raise issues about collective memories to reinforce common identities.

The article compares the results obtained in the analysis of official speeches in America, Europe, Africa, Oceania, and Asia, showing that “although the authorities differ in their emphasis when communicating their actions against the pandemic, the frameworks of solidarity and war were widely used together”. Finally, the authors suggest further developments in the field, for instance, the evaluation of citizens about the role played by their leaders and the state.