

Preference for redistribution and institutional trust: Comparison before and after COVID-19

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Abstract

Using an individual-level panel dataset from Japan covering the period 2016–2024, we examined how the COVID-19 pandemic, as an unanticipated public crisis, affected preferences for income redistribution. Furthermore, we investigated how the association between redistribution preferences and trust in government changed before and after COVID-19. The major findings are as follows: (1) individuals in the high-income group are less likely to prefer redistribution after COVID 19 than before it; (2) the degree of decline in redistribution preference is lower when trust in government is higher; and (3) generalised trust and reciprocity did not influence the decline in preference.

Keywords: Redistribution preference; Institutional trust; General trust; Reciprocity; COVID-19; Panel data.

JEL classification. D63; D73; A13