1. **Title:** Trust and Compliance to Public Health Policies in Time of COVID-19

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3. **Abstract:** The COVID-19 crisis has led to fast policy responses all over the world to reduce social interaction and limit contagion. Using Google mobility data at regional level in Europe, we study whether the compliance to containment policies depends on the level of trust in governments, the stringency of the enacted policies and their combination. We find that high-trust regions reduce their mobility significantly more. This result applies to recreational activity, work, transport or the time spent at home but consistently not to necessary activities such as going to the grocery/drugstore. The effect of trust is similar whether we adopt a simple difference over the lockdown period of March 2020 or a difference-in-difference approach. It is essentially explained by the mediating role of trust on the efficacy of policy stringency. Indeed, we observe a significant impact of the stringency of lockdown measures on mobility in European regions but the diminishing effect is larger in high-trust regions. The effect of trust is nonlinear (it increases with the degree of stringency). Finally, we assess how the impact of trust on mobility translates in terms of death growth rate. While degraded trust and cohesion within a country are often shown to have large socio-economic impacts, we point to their dramatic consequences when compliance is required for collective survival.

4. **Data description:** We combine three main data sources: COVID-19 mobility reports from Google, trust data from the European Social Survey (or alternatively from the Eurobarometer) and policy stringency from the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker.

5. **JEL codes for the project:** E71, H12, I12, I18, Z18

6. **Key-words:** COVID-19, government trust, policy stringency.

Link to the paper: https://sites.google.com/site/bargainoliv/covid-19