

POLITICAL ORIENTATION, TRUST IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND ADOPTION OF PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOR DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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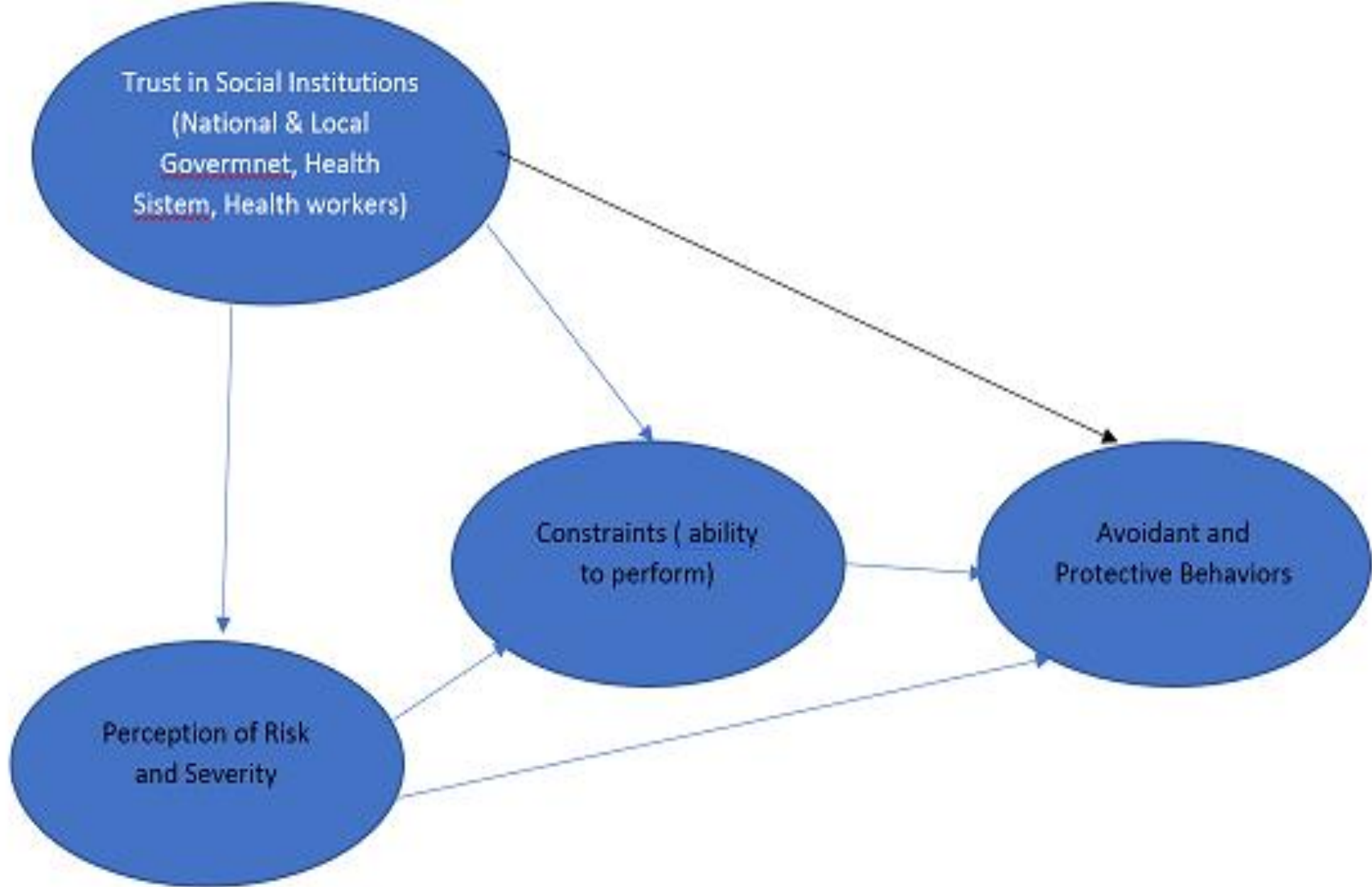
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- Latour, B. (2020). “The first lesson the coronavirus has taught us is also the most astounding: we have actually proven that it is possible, in a few weeks, to put an economic and social system on hold everywhere in the world...”
 - ***Trust & Regulatory Governance in an Age of Crisis (TIGRE)***
 - Issues of trust and regulation stand at the center of social science analysis. They are becoming even more important nowadays with the Covid-19 crisis.

PERSPECTIVES TO UNDERSTAND ADOPTION OF PREVENTIVE AND PROTECTIVE BEHAVIORS

- Recreancy hypothesis (Freudenburg, 1993, 2001): concept developed to describe the relationship between modernization (risk inherent to societies), trust and risk.
- The emphasis of the recreancy model is that citizens living in technological advanced societies have become dependent upon their technology rather than being in control of their technologies (Giddens 1990, 1992; Beck 1992).

PERSPECTIVES TO UNDERSTAND ADOPTION OF PREVENTIVE AND PROTECTIVE BEHAVIORS

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- Trust is explained by people's perception of both the competency of institutional actors and their confidence that these actors will behave with fiduciary responsibility; that is – with honesty and integrity, with the right values as guidelines.
 - Recreancy refers either to a lack of available knowledge or to lack of expertise to adequately control technological risks.
 - Lack of either of these, can lead to a perception by the public that **societal institutions do not adequately understand the risks and lack of trust.**
 - **Citizens base their risk assessments upon the abilities of social institutions to adequately manage and regulate risk.**

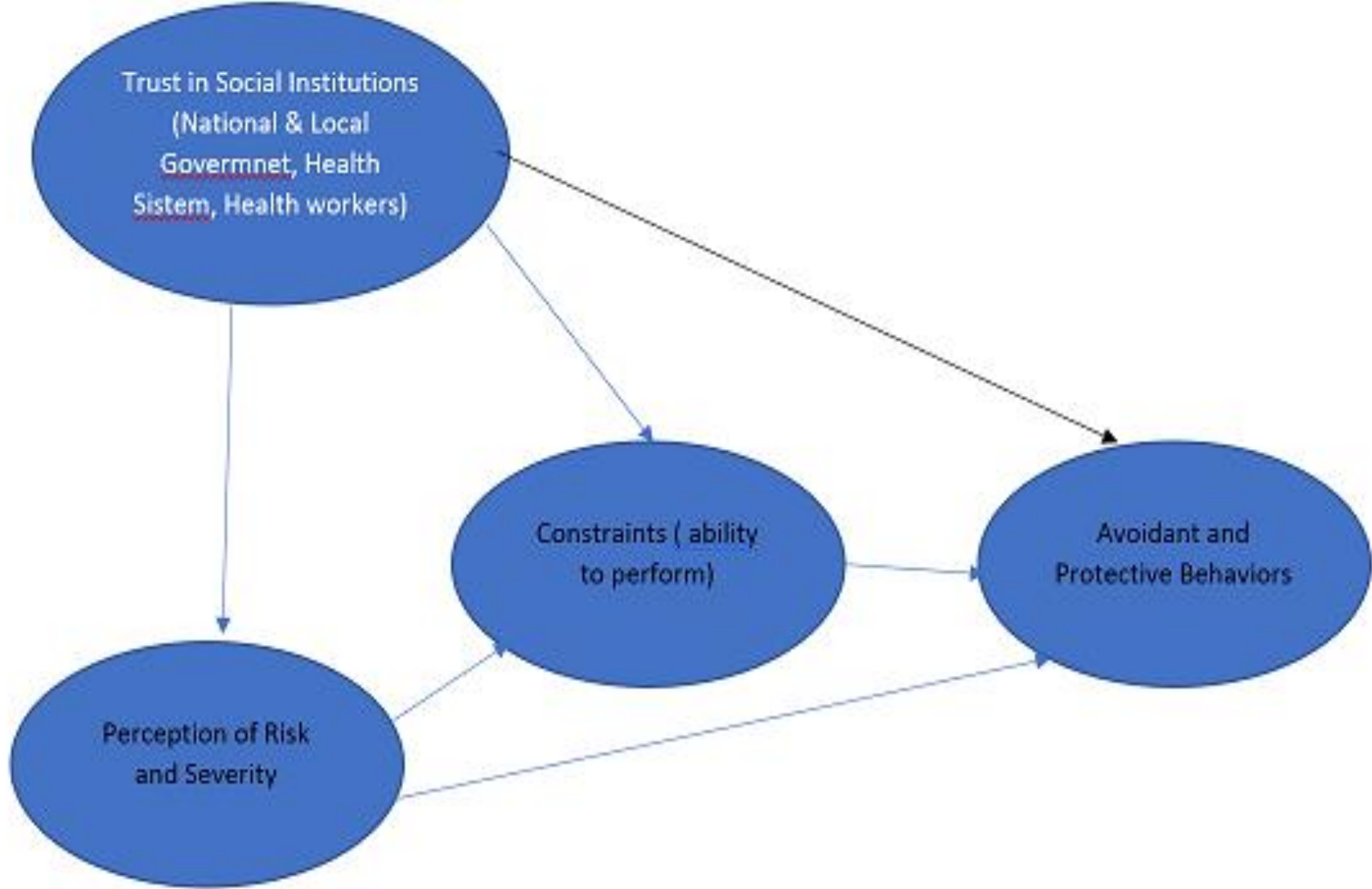


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- Recreancy theory, public perception of social institutions to deal with the crisis or risk
 - But
 - The “public” holds values, ideologies, political identifications that in politically polarized societies shape their views of what is “true” and what is “false”.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON THIS CLAIM

- Study on the U.S. 2009, on vaccination willingness in the U.S.. Main result (controlling for socio-demographic variables): Confidence in the government positively related to willingness to take vaccine but **Republicans** less confident in government's ability to cope with swine flu pandemic, **less willing** to take the vaccine than democrats (Obama). (Mesch & Schwirian, 2014)
- Study on the U.S. 2020. Confidence in the performance of the U.S. President was **negatively** associated with adoption of avoidant behaviors. Positive evaluation of the State government and health institutions is **positively** related to the adoption of avoidant behaviors. **Republicans** perceive the COVID 19 **less threat to the population** than democrats. **Republicans are less** willing to adopt avoidant behaviors. (Trump). (Mesch & Schwirian, 2020)

Political Orientation



CULTURAL COGNITION THEORY

- Individuals selectively attend to risk in a way that reflects their membership in social groups such as political party and religious affiliation (Kahan and Braman 2006).
- Individuals have a tendency to selectively credit and dismiss information in a manner that confirms previous beliefs and cultural dispositions shaped by their membership or support of social and political groups (Kahan, et al, 2009).
- Furthermore, for the majority of the population the source of scientific knowledge is the media and individuals' evaluations of social risk depend largely on their exposure to media.
- Thus we have a tendency to fit our evaluation of risk and trust in institutions to the view of others with whom they share some important, self-identifying commitments.

CULTURAL COGNITION THEORY

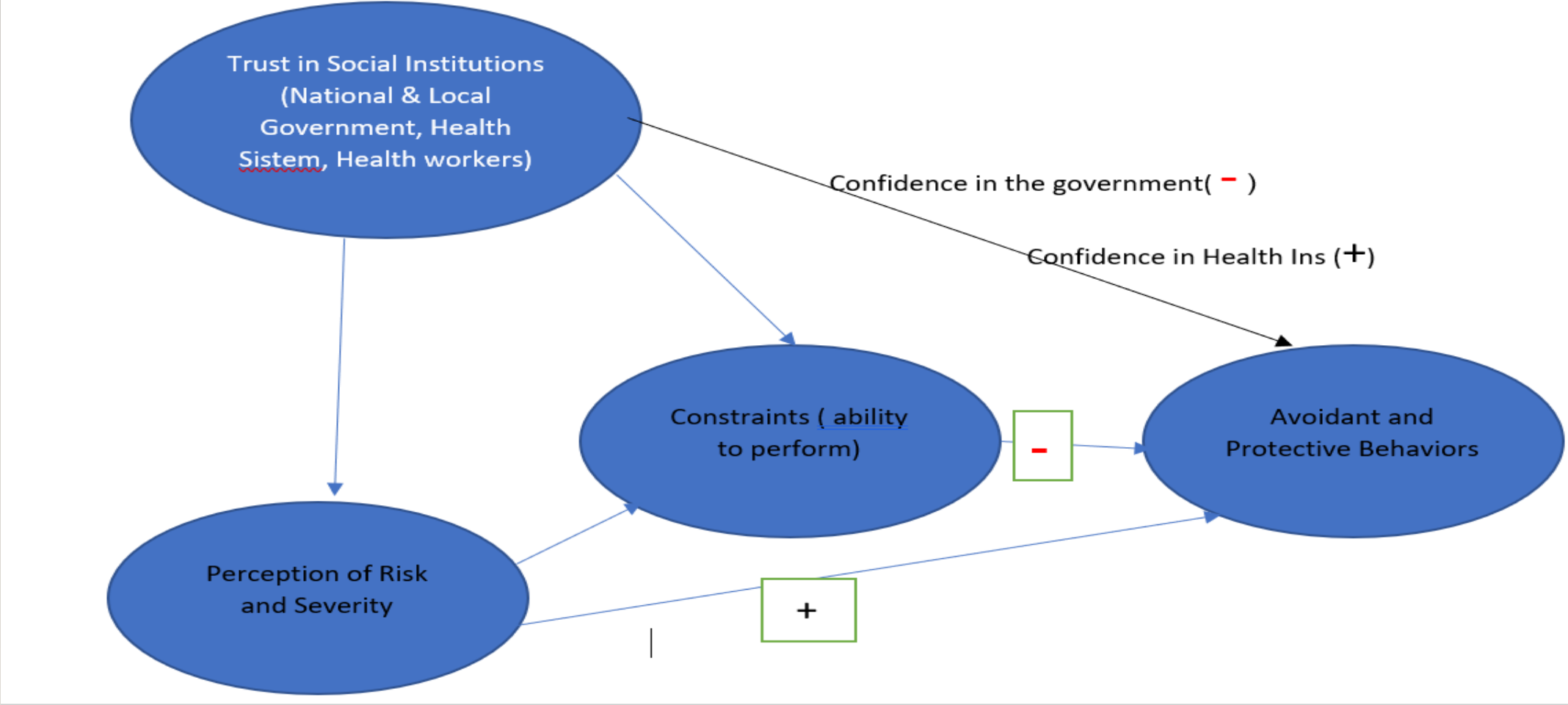
- Studies have found that party identification were associated with the perception of risk in issues such as global warming, gun risk perception and HPV vaccination (Kahan, et al, 2010). Thus, it seems party identification and worldview values **affect perceptions of risk** and trust in social institutions.
- Mooney (2005) and Gauchat (2012) have shown that over the last 40 years in the U.S. political ideology of conservatives has become increasingly skeptical and disapproving of the institution of science and of the nature of the connections among science, government and Big Pharma.

A RECENT CASE: BRAZIL

- Brazil is an important case to study in this regard for several reasons. Covid-19 has been spreading rapidly. Brazil has the fourth highest number of deaths and the second highest number of confirmed infections: There were more than 700,000 confirmed cases and almost 40,000 deaths, as of June 9, 2020.
- The President of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, dismissed the danger posed by the virus, and rejected state-mandated social distancing and other measures (Freitas, Silva and Cidade, 2020).
- A recent study concluded that the pandemic management in Brazil was dysfunctional, the health sector adopted a risk management policy through social distance to reduce contagion often at odds with the positions adopted by the President (Freitas, Silva and Cidade, 2020).

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- Brazil's response to COVID-19 has been limited by institutional paralysis driven by its president. The lack of trust in institutions has prompted some population groups to adopt the denialist discourse of the President (Filho 2020).
 - The conflicting messages from the President and health authorities, and the declining trust in social institutions have left the population uncertain about the merits of protective measures to avoid the spread of the virus (Ortega and Orsini, 2020).

STOROPOLI, DA SILVA NETO & MESCH (2020)



THE STORY BEHIND: POLITICAL DETERMINANTS OF TRUST AND ADOPTING SOCIAL DISTANCE

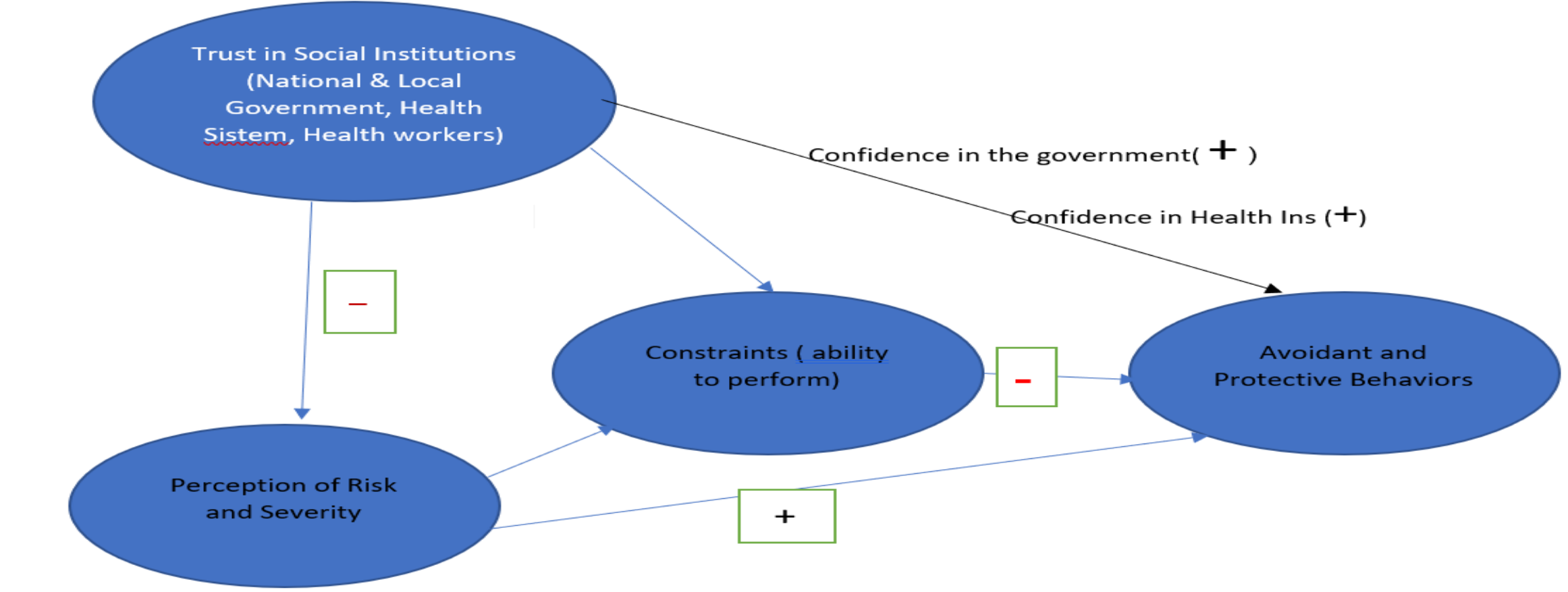
- Political polarization is alive and well in Brazil (Samuels & Zucco, 2014).
- At the heart of the discussions about the adoption of social distancing measures is the apparent trade-off of values between public health and economic well-being.
- To test the relative importance of these explanations, Ramos, Vieites, Jacob and Andrade (2020) investigated the association between support for social distancing and political orientation, which is at the core of the presumed trade-off between public health and economic well-being.

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- Although the health and economic consequences of social distancing may impact both liberals and conservatives alike, the latter may be much more sensitive to the possible economic effects of adopting strict social distancing measures.
 - Unlike liberals, conservatives consider institutions such as businesses and industries as key aspects of society and tend to endorse protestant work values, which emphasize the importance of continuous hard work and oppose increased public spending
 - Therefore, they hypothesize that conservatives will be systematically less supportive of social distancing practices and policies than liberals.

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- political orientation systematically predicted support for social distancing and donation decisions. The more the participants self identified as conservatives (vs. liberals), the less supportive of both social distancing practices

Conservatives are likely to give more weight to the detrimental economic effects of social distancing than liberals when facing the apparent trade-off between the health-related consequences of the disease and the expected economic side effects of social distancing.

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DISCUSSION

- Trust is not universal and we find examples expressing conflicting confidence in social institutions.
- Trust seems to be dependent on ideology and political orientation.
- Trust affects our perceptions of risk

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