

Social Scientists Scramble to Study Pandemic, In Real Time

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If pandemic lockdowns have people feeling a bit like lab rats stuck in cages, in some ways that's exactly what they are.

As the coronavirus touches on virtually every part of life around the globe, social scientists are rushing to suck up real-time data on how people are responding to the unfolding pandemic. Economists are gathering data about supply chains. Political scientists are scrutinizing [how government responses track with ideology](#). Psychologists are monitoring children in after-school programs. Behavioral scientists are surveying thousands of people to see how they respond to information in a crisis.

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Charissa Cheah, a psychologist at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, is recalibrating her research on how Chinese and Korean American children in the state cope with discrimination. With money from the National Science Foundation, which is working to quickly fund coronavirus-related research, she's surveying several hundred families she has studied over the past 5 years. She's also expanding to families elsewhere in the country. She's hoping to learn how parents and children are responding to anti-Asian discrimination that has surged with the virus, and what broader lessons it might hold about these dynamics. "I did see [the pandemic] creating, I wouldn't say opportunity, but a unique context in order to understand how some of these processes work," she says.