DO POLITICIANS AND CITIZENS AGREE ON HOW TO COMBAT COVID-19?
EVIDENCE FROM THREE STUDIES

Abstract
Government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have involved important tradeoffs between shutting down services, businesses, and other activities, and saving lives. To maintain public support for these policy decisions, it is important that citizens and politicians agree on which sectors and services should be closed to combat the pandemic. We investigate the presence or absence of this agreement using a paired survey of more than 600 politicians and several thousand citizens in Canada. We have three main findings. First, citizens and politicians are generally aligned on the policies that should -- and should not -- be used to combat COVID-19. Second, they nevertheless disagree in one crucial area: politicians express a greater willingness than citizens to keep schools open. Third, politicians overestimate public support for reopening schools. Our findings deepen our understanding of COVID-19 policy and have important implications for the study of policy responsiveness and representation.

The Lecture will be held on Monday, 8 November 2021, at 16:15, Room 527, Naftali Building, Tel Aviv University, Ramat–Aviv