**Generating Voluntary Compliance Across Doctrines and Nations: Integrating the Behavioral and Regulatory Aspects of Governments’ Ability to Trust the Public’s Cooperation, Ethicality, and Compliance**

**Section a. State of the Art and Objectives**

*Introduction*

This project presents a new conceptual paradigm that will advance the theoretical and empirical understanding of the concept of voluntary compliance (VC), thereby helping states find means to generate and encourage VC. This project will address issues such as what regulatory approach is more likely to elicit VC, what could undermine it, and what needs to be done to understand how the individual, situational, regulatory, and cultural dimensions of the behavioral regulatory policy paradigm interact. In addition, we will suggest methods balancing the risk to the public of reduced regulatory coercion and monitoring with the potential long-terms advantages to the public arising from a cooperative regulatory approach in which regulatees feel trustworthy. The nature of this analysis is inevitably malleable, depending on the distinct types of behaviorally based regulatory tools, and with different target populations with diverse backgrounds and ethical preferences.

Drawing on a synthesis of related bodies of literature (behavioral ethics, regulation theory, behavioral public policy, social cooperation, and compliance) that rarely interact regarding the similar but somewhat distinctive variables under study here (e.g., compliance, behavioral change, and encouraging honesty and cooperation) this project will advance our understanding of the typology of the mechanisms of behavioral reactions of diverse population segments to different regulatory tools across distinct doctrinal and national contexts. It will create a taxonomy for examining the different dimensions of VC, including whether it is spontaneous or induced, the regulatee’s consciousness of the decision to comply, and how coercion free VC measures actually are.

This project will lead to a much more nuanced and meaningful understanding of the antecedents of cross-sectional variation in levels and types of VC. This will be accomplished by focusing on dependent variables (DV) beyond the classical regulatory and compliance measures of impact (e.g., proportion and typology of cooperators, broad-term[[1]](#footnote-1) impact of regulatory tools, quality of cooperation, beyond compliance measures of cooperation, and the likelihood of internalization processes following the regulatory intervention) as well as on the long-term effect of regulation (by measuring attitudes repeatedly on the same panel). We will also systematically compare how the same (or comparable) participants react to a combination of general ethical and cooperation dilemmas, as well as measures of cooperation levels across different regulatory domains (Ethical behavior, COVID, Tax, and Environment), in which different levels of compliance are expected.[[2]](#footnote-2) In addition, conducting this analysis in four countries (two high trust countries – Denmark and the Netherlands –and two low-trust countries – Israel and Greece – will enable us to better determine the national context of the regulatory effect. Our longitudinal, inter-disciplinary, cross-national and cross-sectional analysis will synthesize the findings from this multi-pronged research and demonstrate the extent to which VC could and should be advantageous and the optimal ways to achieve it. During the last phase of the project, we will conduct a normative analysis that considers the different costs of VC in areas such as equality, communication, uncertainty, and increased risk to the public, as well as the benefits of VC to the public in terms of its effect on autonomy, resilience, quality of compliance, and enhanced trust relationships.[[3]](#footnote-3) Suggestions for how to extend the findings and conclusion to other countries with different parameters and to other contexts will be explored as well.

*Background*

In research and policy analysis, “trust” is typically studied in the context of the trust of the public in institutions.[[4]](#endnote-1) This research project seeks to reverse the trust paradigm and examine how we can identify ex-ante when governments can trust the public, to what extent, and how trust should affect the regulatory style and governments’ efforts to foster voluntary cooperation of the public. The apparently unambiguous goal of states to have their citizens engage in VC is examined from different social science perspectives (psychology,[[5]](#endnote-2) sociology economics,[[6]](#endnote-3) political science,[[7]](#endnote-4) criminology,[[8]](#endnote-5) law,[[9]](#endnote-6) and philosophy[[10]](#endnote-7)).

To date, the empirical basis of our understanding of when and to what extent the public can be trusted in a given situation is weak both theoretically, since most of the relevant literatures (compliance, ethics cooperation, and more) rarely intersect, and empirically, since most studies focus on one type of behavior in one regulatory context and fail to examine broader questions regarding the distributive effects in the context of a heterogeneity in a population, or sustainability in terms of duration of regulatory effects on behavior. In various meta-analyses, studies show that most people don’t cheat most of the time.[[11]](#endnote-8) While we know now to identify the contexts in which even self-perceived “good” people can cheat,[[12]](#endnote-9) we still do not know enough to accurately predict ex ante in what regulatory contexts such unethicality will dominate.[[13]](#endnote-10) Furthermore, the related literature in behavioral public policy[[14]](#endnote-11) usually focuses on the extent of the effect of certain interventions (e.g., nudges, incentives), but rarely discuss theoretically, empirically, or normatively all other dimensions, such as the heterogeneity of the effect, the long-term effect on trust, and the quality and intensity of the compliance. As a result, risk-averse policy makers resort to monitoring and to coercive measures, simply because there is not enough information about the benefits of VC, in terms of its effect on autonomy, resilience, quality of compliance, and enhanced trust relationships, or about its costs, in terms of resulting inequality, communication costs, uncertainty, and increased risk to the public.[[15]](#endnote-12) For example, the current COVID-19 pandemic led many countries to resort to sanctions and fear-based rhetoric to gain public cooperation given the first signs of certain levels of non-compliance, with limited ability to understand whether fear-based rhetoric and taking harsher steps actually improved all aspects of compliance, not to mention the possible negative effect on intrinsic motivation. Given this lacuna in information that critical for effective policy-making, this project will undertake to synthesize and test the mechanisms that lead to cooperative responses by the public to different types of behaviorally informed regulations. It will also evaluate normatively the desirability and legitimacy of using behaviorally informed regulation in different regulatory domains.

**An integrative behavioral regulatory approach to voluntary compliance**



*Objectives and Research Questions*

**RQ1:** What are the behavioral and institutional antecedents of the heterogeneity of compliance, quality of compliance, public reactions to cooperative vs. coercive regulatory approaches, and how do these reactions interact with VC-related factors (e.g., perceived interpersonal trust, honesty, prosocial behavior, willingness to cooperate, behavioral change, and perceived duty to obey)?

**RQ2:** What is the variation in the contribution of different types of cooperative-based (e.g., nudges, incentives) and coercive-based (e.g., sanctions, duties) regulatory approaches to the different dimensions of VC by the public (proportion, intensity, sustainability, internalization, trust enhancing, and trust reduction) across different regulatory contexts?

**RQ3:** How do different societal and national factors (e.g., trust,[[16]](#footnote-4) solidarity, legitimacy, honesty, rule of law) and different regulatory contexts (e.g., COVID, tax, environment, ethics) interact with the likelihood of VC under cooperative-based vs. coercion-based regulatory approaches?

**RQ4:** How can we determine what is the best regulatory approach to use, normatively and descriptively, to achieve sustainable behavioral change when accounting for the advantages and disadvantages of each regulatory approach from a broader behavioral perspective in each regulatory context and country?

*Originality and Novelty*

There are many bodies of literature that are highly related to voluntary cooperation, but they all suffer from the lack of any discussion about how they interact with regulatory policy or about whether they are able to contribute to a systematic shift in states’ regulatory policies. In fact, all the literatures provide only partial contributions to the most important questions of compliance theory. Literatures that explore concepts such as trust, efficacy of incentives, behavioral ethics, compliance, nudges, the regulatory toolbox, experimental legislation, behavioral approaches to law, cross-cultural differences in solidarity, and rule of law, rarely ask, for example, about the long-term effect of different regulatory interventions on trust or solidarity. This project will be the first to combine regulatory policy theory and behavioral theories to answer the most fundamental questions of compliance – when and to what extent states should trust the public to cooperate and what regulatory policies are likely to contribute to the creation of VC. I posit that the motivation to cooperate voluntarily with a regulatory requirement cannot be understood by using only a single perspective, and that there is a need to combine behavioral, institutional, and cultural contexts across many types of doctrines, cultures and behaviors to help create a regulatory balance which can offer insights into the advantages and disadvantages of trying to achieve voluntary compliance.

**The Compliance Literature**

VC and its importance have been recognized across a number of dimensions.[[17]](#endnote-13) VC, especially if driven by intrinsic motivation,[[18]](#endnote-14) is usually considered more sustainable and of higher quality than coerced compliance when the government is afraid to trust the likelihood of public cooperation with coercive measures, which tends to be short-term and sensitive to the existence of sanctions.[[19]](#endnote-15) In addition, reliance on VC is more likely to increase feelings of trust and trustworthiness among regulatees,[[20]](#endnote-16) entail lower enforcement costs,[[21]](#endnote-17) and result in a higher quality of cooperation.[[22]](#endnote-18) VC is also more likely to lead to greater resilience,[[23]](#endnote-19) as evidenced in findings from research on therapeutic jurisprudence[[24]](#endnote-20) and on happiness.[[25]](#endnote-21)

Efforts to understand how to stimulate and encourage VC have acknowledged that factors related to fairness,[[26]](#endnote-22) morality,[[27]](#endnote-23) duty to obey, and trust[[28]](#endnote-24) play an important role in compliance in areas from environmental and health regulations (including COVID-19 measures)[[29]](#endnote-25) to traffic and tax laws. This focus on VC has also been highly relevant to the growing recognition of the importance of intrinsic compliance motivations,[[30]](#endnote-26) and supports the preference for tailoring the focus of compliance measures to individuals’ motivations.[[31]](#endnote-27) It has been shown that extrinsic motivators, such as deterrence, are not only less effective than was once assumed, but that they also undermine the ability of intrinsic motivation to enhance compliance with regulation efforts.[[32]](#endnote-28)

However, it is not fully clear from the literature whether compliance can be considered voluntary only when people *want* to cooperate. Or is compliance voluntary also when people are not being coerced, but, rather, motivated to act in a certain way directly through incentives, or indirectly, through community norms or reputational mechanisms? In addition, current research does not differentiate between different types of intrinsic motivation, usually assuming that all of them (trust, reciprocity morality, procedural fairness) function in similar ways. Finally, the literature on VC assumes its desirability, but rarely examines its effect on the distribution, sustainability, and quality of compliance. It also fails to account for any research on the societal externalities of compliance.

**The Regulation Literature** has recently begun studying a number of softer approaches aimed at reducing the regulatory burden and eliciting voluntary compliance. Two especially relevant paradigms are responsive regulation,[[33]](#endnote-29) a widely discussed paradigm that advances a more flexible and customized approach whereby smarter, less coercive regulatory measures are targeted at those parts of the population for which coercive measures are not needed. Another emerging area is that of self-regulation,[[34]](#endnote-30) which focuses on transferring responsibility for the creation of standards and their enforcement to the regulated parties or businesses. However, these paradigms also fail to deal with a fundamental question of whether compliers and whether comply all the time and non-compliers fail to comply all the time? Part of the complexity is reflected in the growing research on compliance motivation,[[35]](#endnote-31) where scholars differ in their perceptions of what can be considered the leading motivation for compliance, whether procedural legitimacy,[[36]](#endnote-32) costs of compliance,[[37]](#endnote-33) deterrence,[[38]](#endnote-34) obligation to obey the law.[[39]](#endnote-35) and political orientation.[[40]](#endnote-36) As part of its conceptual work regarding regulatory theory, this project will create a taxonomy which will examine to what extent each regulatory tool could be treated as *cooperative* (e.g., how to define high incentives or system 1 nudges), with a special focus on behavioral-based regulation.

**The Behavioral Public Policy Literature** serves as one of the basic foundations of this project, with its emphasis on the recognition that people cannot comply solely by reacting to prices. This literature has contributed to the greater variety of regulatory tools available to policy makers (e.g., nudges, framing, pledges,[[41]](#endnote-37) etc.) aimed at changing people’s behavior through means other than coercion. While the greater number of tools available render the instrument choice dilemma more difficult, they do allow for concrete, quantitative measurements and comparisons of their efficacy.[[42]](#endnote-38) The nudge approach, based on the influential work of Thaler and Sunstein,[[43]](#endnote-39) represents an important addition to the regulatory choice dilemma, leading numerous scholars to examine when nudges can be relied upon to replace more mandatory rules.[[44]](#endnote-40) While nudges are perceived as a tool that maintains people’s freedom of choice, the fact that they are employed with limited awareness by the public could potentially lead to their being viewed as a more sophisticated form of coercion.[[45]](#endnote-41) The salience of this literature in the context of this project is that it breaks many of the dichotomies usually seen in the regulation literature, whereby government either attempts to focus on external factors, such as prices, or on internal factors, such as morality.[[46]](#endnote-42) An important goal of this project is distinguishing the long-term impacts of the vast array of behavioral regulatory tools, which lie somewhere on the spectrum between intrinsic and extrinsic measures, in the context of the above-mentioned dimensions.

**Behavioral Ethics** is another relatively new field exploring peoples’ ethical decision-making processes.[[47]](#endnote-43) My recent book,[[48]](#endnote-44) *The Law of Good People*, examines the challenges faced by governments that need to regulate people who don’t view themselves as needing regulation in view of their ethical and legal perceptions, or, more accurately, misperceptions, of their own behavior. Scientific research on honesty and dishonesty has spiked in recent years.[[49]](#endnote-45) In most studies, “dishonesty” is typically mentioned in the context of rule following or rule violation.[[50]](#endnote-46) Laboratory studies of dishonesty have shown dishonesty in games to be related to various types of unethical behaviors outside the laboratory. For example, dishonesty in dice role and coin toss tasks has been associated with free-riding on buses,[[51]](#endnote-47) not returning undeserved pay,[[52]](#endnote-48) and being late to work.[[53]](#endnote-49) However, because a connection between honesty and compliance to rules which are not solely related to honesty has not been studied, it is not clear to what extent honest people differ from cooperators or compliers. For example, are honest people more likely to care for the environment? In addition, current dishonesty research, while focusing on the notion of the proportion of dishonest people,[[54]](#endnote-50) nonetheless fails to predict the distributive effect of the situational factors which might undermine honesty.[[55]](#endnote-51) Recognizing that different people engage in misconduct on different levels of awareness and intentionality is an important contribution to understanding the likelihood of coercive vs. cooperative regulatory styles succeeding in creating voluntary compliance in different segments of the population. Reviewing this literature is also important to help discern the proportion of “good” people in a given population who might be more likely to react to trust-enhancing cooperative regulatory measures.

**The Trust Literature: Institutions, Interpersonal and Social Capital** involves the growing recognition of the importance of trust and legitimacy in achieving VC.[[56]](#endnote-52) Numerous studies across almost all the social sciences have sought to understand what builds trust[[57]](#endnote-53) and how trust contributes to the creation of a just and well-functioning society.[[58]](#endnote-54) However, most of this literature focuses in what ways people can trust public and legal institutions,[[59]](#endnote-55) and overlooks the other direction – the regulatory mechanisms state institutions need in order to trust the public to cooperate with regulations.[[60]](#endnote-56) While, clearly, there are some reciprocal relationships in place, many of the mechanisms related to the ability of states to trust its own citizens[[61]](#endnote-57) involve concepts which have received almost no attention in the behavioral regulatory policy literature, such as social capital[[62]](#endnote-58) and interpersonal trust.[[63]](#endnote-59)

**Social and Community Norms Literature** offers an additional theoretical perspective on VC, indicating that behavioral change can be achieved even with limited involvement of the state, whether in response to regulation (as in cases such as using children’s car seats, where VC was achieved by applying reason and science),[[64]](#endnote-60) or even in the absence of regulation, where the social and community norms emerged without any state involvement (as in the case of allocating fencing costs among the farmers in Shasta County, California[[65]](#endnote-61)). Nonetheless, not only is it unclear whether one can even define compliance with social and community norms as voluntary, but it is impossible to generalize from the few well-known examples, such as that of people learning not to smoke in public places, or the changing norms with regard to sexual harassment,[[66]](#endnote-62) and then apply them to other contexts. In this branch of our project, which will be analytical and based on existing data, we will attempt to answer conceptual questions, such as whether people who are nudged to behave a certain way be considered as complying voluntarily. Furthermore, because this literature has not traditionally been considered part of the regulatory and behavioral ethics literature, many important questions on the interaction between regulatory choices and the response of communities have not been studied. For example, what regulatory interventions are more likely to lead to change, if at all, in a sustainable way within the social norms of a given community? To what extent can a strong sense of solidarity with one’s community lead one to comply with states’ laws and regulations? These questions are of particular interest in contexts in which the greater good (global warming or enriching the state treasury) is not seen as being aligned with that of the community, thus raising the need to adjust the regulation to account for community as well as behavioral factors. Insights from the social norms literature also has great importance because it, too, breaks the dichotomy between external vs. internal measures, as people’s reaction to their surrounding communities represents a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.[[67]](#endnote-63)

**Integrating the Literature**

This current lack of understanding of the interaction between cultural, behavioral, and institutional factors which can predict public cooperation with certain interventions, has led to a situation where the data on the relative success or failure of regulatory interventions employed in one country cannot be applied in another, as there is no existing framework which would allow for a meaningful comparison between the national and regulatory contexts. To better clarify the issue of compliance, it is critical to approach it from both a behavioral, bottom-up approach, understanding the level of ethicality and willingness to cooperate with the law by the public, as well as from a top-down perspective, examining the contribution of regulators’ views about the public and regulatory style (monitoring, sanctions, reasoning, etc.), which in itself has an immense effect on public behavior.[[68]](#endnote-64) This project will also focus not just on the size of the regulatory effect, but also on factors which are more important for VC, such as the proportion of compliers,[[69]](#endnote-65) sustainability, quality of compliance, and effects on feelings of trust and trustworthiness among regulatees. Finally, the project will also engage in discussing what type of tools are desirable based on the information on the advantages and disadvantages of each regulatory approach from a normative perspective.

*Country selection*

In order to obtain a more nuanced and generalizable understanding of voluntary compliance that will enable us to develop a new innovative paradigm with an assured broad global impact, the proposed research will focus on four countries. Two high trust countries – Denmark and the Netherlands – and two low trust countries – Greece and Israel – each represent different cultural, economic, and governmental approaches. These countries were chosen precisely because they differ in various fields and therefore present important national differences that enable the project to efficiently analyze the effectiveness of different types of governance. Several variables were measured in order to reflect the differences between the selected countries.

Israel has relatively high rates of international tax evasion, with Greece having even higher rates. Denmark’s tax evasion rates are relatively very low, while the Netherlands has a high rate of international tax evasion.[[70]](#endnote-66) With reference to prosocial behavior, it was found that Denmark and the Netherlands have high rates, while Israel was around the average, with Greece ranked at the low bottom of the chart with a very low score.[[71]](#endnote-67) Similarly, Denmark and the Netherlands have high rates of trust, while Israel and Greece, in particular, have relatively low rates of trust among their citizens.[[72]](#endnote-68) Similarly, with respect to social cohesion, Denmark and the Netherlands are ranked high on rates of social cohesion, while Israel and Greece place toward the bottom.[[73]](#endnote-69)

Interestingly, during the coronavirus pandemic, stringency levels of the governments were distributed quite differently than what would have been expected based on the above-mentioned parameters.[[74]](#endnote-70) As for the Environmental Regulatory Regime, Denmark and the Netherlands rank relatively high, while Israel and Greece, especially, rank at the low bottom of the chart.[[75]](#endnote-71)

In addition to examining these four countries, in each of this project’s Work Plans (WPs), we also draw on existing studies from many other countries, thereby significantly widening the range of countries in which to test propositions gathered from the four chosen test case countries. In the concluding part of the project, we will also run some additional surveys in Kenya to be able to test, at least initially, the Global South perspective using the accumulated results found on the four target European countries on.

**Section b. Methodology**

In order to address the research questions laid out above, this project will combine differing bodies of literature on cooperation, interpersonal trust, compliance, and ethicality with a series of surveys, experiments, meta-analyses, interviews with regulators, econometric analyses, and text mining to understand the likelihood of sustainable cooperative behavior emerging in response to different regulatory interventions.

**WP1: (answering RQ 1) (0–18 months)**

As described above, relevant literature has emerged that identifies voluntary compliance and self-regulation as the optimal guiding principles of regulatory governance. However, these concepts can be elusive, and therefore it is difficult to fully capture important behavioral and institutional factors that moderate the behavioral effect of different regulatory governance measures. Considering the range of situations in which there is public interest in promoting honest and ethical behavior, this lacuna is especially significant for legal and public policy, as such behavior goes beyond mere compliance with the rules.[[76]](#endnote-72) While a liberal democratic state may only be able to expect and demand compliance with respect to what is required by the law, it is invaluable to understand not only what underlies questions of compliance, but also behavior that goes beyond the breaking of explicit rules. Our ability to predict such behavior influences policy regarding how to best encourage both accounts of honesty vis-à-vis compliance and vis-à-vis other aspects of ethicality can contribute to better theoretical predictions about voluntary cooperation with different regulatory measures.

Thus, the main purpose of this WP is to create a new conceptual language and an integrated concept of voluntary compliance which will combine concepts from different literatures, such as being honest, trustworthy, moral, compliant, and cooperative and examine to what extent findings from the different literatures can help explain VC and in what contexts. Clearly, there are many situations in life where one is required to comply. These include contexts where, for example, honesty is not part of the target behavior (parking illegality), some contexts within which compliance and honesty are far more tightly intertwined (e.g., misreporting income on tax forms), and still more contexts within which the relevant behavior appears to be linked primarily to rule-surpassing honesty, or some other aspect of substantive ethicality, as distinct from compliance (e.g., reporting problems in the sale of property, withholding information that could help a customer find a less costly solution, or that the price will go down tomorrow).

**Task 1.1 Literature Review Focusing on Comparing Related Concepts**

This task involves organizing the competing relevant literatures on compliance, behavioral public policy, regulatory theory, trust, behavioral ethics, and cooperation concepts and their antecedents in a comparative way. We will examine, for example, the differences between being ethical, honest, cooperative, or compliant. The aim of this task will be to create a unified concept of VC based on an integration of the different antecedents from each of the above-mentioned literatures, their attributes, and the interactions between them. Special focus will be put on clarifying in what aspects the concepts differ with regard to both antecedents and moderators.

**Task 1.2** C**omparison and Integration of Existing Findings.**

This task involves using a meta-analysis approach to compare the above-mentioned bodies of literature to determine the following: the proportion of honest citizens, cooperators, or compliers; sustainability – for how long an effect was documented in each literature and whether there was a reduction in the effect over time; evidence regarding the quality of public cooperation (e.g, no cutting corners); whether it was beyond what was required; and the nature of noncompliance (e.g., brazen or moderate).

**Task 1.3** I**dentify Optimal Regulatory Approaches.**

This task examines what regulatory tools were tested in the different literatures and what their effects were on cooperation, as well as factors that moderate the likelihood of a cooperative response. The meaningfulness of the new behavioral concept will be examined also regarding the likelihood of the effectiveness of more advanced self-regulatory approaches based on certain assumptions about regulatees. This task will also identify whether certain types of tools, such as nudges, have been proven effective in increasing ethical behavior in organizational contexts.

**WP1** will result in a theoretical book on the antecedents of voluntary compliance (expected to be completed within the first 18 months).

**WP2 Empirically Testing the Conceptual Foundations of Ethics, Cooperation, and Compliance (answering RQ1 and RQ2) (6–24 months)**

This stage complements and supplements the previous conceptual stage and will explore the relationship across the dimensions of voluntary compliance, identified in **WP1** across four countries in which most of the experiments will take place. At this stage, we are intentionally not focusing on any specific doctrinal context, but rather on comparing measured scales from the literatures discussed in **WP1**.

**Task 2.1 Attitude Survey**

In this task, we will run attitudinal surveys on large nationally representative samples[[77]](#footnote-5) in all four target countries. This will help to identify the relationship between the different factors which exist in current value surveys (e.g., trust, solidarity, rule of law, honesty). We will then measure these relationships in representative samples from each target country (e.g., whether the public believe the government trusts them, perceptions of prevailing social norms, perceived duty to obey, perceived legitimacy of institutions). Based on scales from previous value surveys,[[78]](#endnote-73) we will also conduct surveys aimed at capturing relationship between scales, such as self-reports taken from the scales developed to measure honesty,[[79]](#endnote-74) compliance,[[80]](#endnote-75) and cooperation.[[81]](#endnote-76) Using the different scales during this stage of the study and returning to the same samples will provide the needed validation of the relationship between the scales we are interested in integrating[[82]](#endnote-77) and will help create cross-national baselines for WP2’s subsequent studies.

**Task 2.2 Experimental Surveys**

In this task, we will run experimental surveys[[83]](#footnote-6) to identify the causal effects of different behaviorally based regulatory design[[84]](#footnote-7) when the dependent variables measure participants’ reported likelihood of behaving in ethical, honest, cooperative, and complaint ways in randomly assigned hypothetical vignettes. The advantage of this method is its ability to identify and clarify causal mechanisms between the regulatory approach and participants’ attitudes and reported intention to behave. This task will also involve using the same experimental approach of examining the effect of regulatory tools on the likelihood of crowding out effects by measuring people’s perceived trustworthiness, ethicality, and reported motivation behind their willingness to cooperate, after being exposed to competing regulatory approaches.

**Task 2.3 Online Behavioral Experiments**

In this task,we will run incentive-compatible[[85]](#footnote-8) behavioral games, where being honest and cooperative is costly, using existing behavioral tasks (e.g., cooperation games,[[86]](#endnote-78) trust games,[[87]](#endnote-79) and honesty tasks) from the literatures we are integrating to understand how regulatory interventions which were effective in Task 2.2 prove to be effective when measured behavior is actual rather than reported, given the well-known limitation of self-reports, especially when the desired behavior is so clear.[[88]](#endnote-80)

**Task 2.4 Testing the Effect of Cooperatively vs. Punitively Framed Pledges on Ethical Behavior and Compliance**

This task involves a second series of online experiments to examine the effect of a cooperative trust-enhancing regulatory approach to be carried out by conducting a large comparative study of pledges replacing a command and control approach, with a protocol as described in previous research.[[89]](#endnote-81) We will also conduct pledge studies across all of the studied nations where different regulatory approach tones will be used (punitive vs. moralistic language) prior to different types of games, such as dishonesty, cooperation, and compliance, in an effort to determine how the rhetoric and level of monitoring affects each of these behavioral measures, all of which are related to the concept of VC.[[90]](#footnote-9)

The efficacy of pledges is an exemplary tool for studying the potential for VC across different types of typical ethical behaviors (e.g., honesty, performance in good faith, trustworthiness), as pledges represent a simple and realistic regulatory tool through which to examine what states can do to enhance people’s general ethicality by using small interventions which could be equally applied across countries with differing levels of ethicality.[[91]](#endnote-82) Research on standards vs. rules[[92]](#endnote-83) suggests that balances must be found between detailed and general commitments. For example, broadly defined commitments, which communicate more trust, are preferable in uncertain circumstances.[[93]](#endnote-84) In contrast, detailed pledges might reduce self-deception as to what the meaning of the promise is[[94]](#endnote-85) while focusing people’s attention on particular aspects of their tasks.[[95]](#endnote-86) In addition, some studies have shown the advantages of formal and punitive language over softer and less formal references, for example, with regard to the framing of ethical codes.[[96]](#endnote-87) We thus examine in which of the studied countries, and in what type of ethical behaviors, specific, formal, and punitive pledges would be more effective in eliciting the cooperative and honest behavior of participants.

At this stage, we will combine the conceptual approaches studied in the work of **WP2** with the findings of **WP1** on a few points. First, what factors (e.g., honesty, cooperation, trust, obligation to obey) are more likely to predict people’s likelihood to cooperate with behaviorally driven regulatory approaches? This linkage should help us understand the interrelations between the different measures of ethicality, the subject matter, and the regulatory approaches used. Second, we will discuss the distribution of people’s reaction to the different regulatory tools to determine which of the regulatory tools is more likely to create an effect which is either homogenous or at least as effective with regard to people who are low on the different measures of ethicality. This analysis will help reveal the factors about which sensitivity is needed regarding the likelihood of voluntary compliance as well as the relative efficacy of each regulatory approach. The panel study approach, whereby we will return to participants every six months for a period of two years will enable us to detect the ability of the different regulatory tools to change ethical preferences over time and affect behavior in other contexts. Consequently, the expectation is that at the end of **WP2**, we will be able to develop a new language that captures all the behaviorally based ethical components related to voluntary cooperation. The findings of **WP2** are expected to create a very strong baseline for many other regulatory and compliance related projects seeking to understand how each of the specific attributes of willingness to cooperate can be expected to be affected by different regulatory styles. These findings should also help lead to a better awareness of the shift in distribution of cooperators and non-cooperators, which, in many contexts, is far more important than just the size of the effect.

A conference will be organized to summarize the work of **WP2**, bringing together psychologists, political scientists, economists, and regulation scholars. They will explore how the knowledge we have of human nature and of the likelihood of voluntary compliance in terms of trust, ethics, honesty and cooperation, could be used to affect the likelihood of more trust-based regulatory approaches, such as self-regulation and pledges. The conference will also focus on how trust-based regulatory approaches might succeed, leading to a more trustworthy society in the long term. We will also examine the gap between the perceptions of the concept of voluntary from a behavioral as opposed to a legal and normative perspective.

**WP3 a, b, and c (answering questions RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3) (months 18–56)**

**Three Case Studies Aimed at Expanding our Understanding of the Contextual Aspects of VC**

To further understand the meaning of voluntary compliance and how different regulatory approaches could affect different segments of a given population, short-term and long-term behavioral changes, and broader attitudes toward the state, the law, and society, we will engage in three additional large-scale, cross-national studies. As will be explained in more detail in the relevant descriptions, each case study hones in on additional important dimensions. The **COVID** study, for example, focuses on an array of behaviors which are not typical daily behaviors, and where the cooperative behavior of most people is necessary for the success of COVID regulation. In **Tax** law, where people’s honesty is mostly aligned with compliance, there is an emphasis on concepts such as trust in science or goals, and the research mostly involves a social dilemma domain. Finally, the **Environmental** case study will add an important component of behavioral change that extends far beyond classical compliance (e.g., buying an electric car or not flying) and will include behaviors in which a coercive approach is irrelevant and only the good will of the public can be targeted.

**Case Study 1 – COVID: Understanding COVID Regulation Impact (0–24 months)**

The purest form of the dilemmas faced by governments in recent history arose regarding how to mobilize the public to cooperate during the COVID period, when it was clear that the research on compliance could not provide sufficient answers as to what government could do or expect from the public. This facet of the project focusing on COVID-19 regulations will begin by documenting the quality of voluntary and coercive compliance across representative global cases studies (masks, immunizations, etc.). Analyzing the quite extensive comparative studies that have been amassed across many countries with regard to adherence to relatively similar COVID-19 regulations could lead to better insights on how to elicit the VC of the public.

**Task 3.1 Literature Review on Existing COVID Case Studies**

Many studies have focused on indexes comparing the strictness of COVID regulation with the level of adherence across nations. The first task here will be to gather all these studies together and examine them for common themes regarding success and failure of COVID regulatory efforts. For example, some studies have found evidence that increase in compliance was related to stricter government restrictions,[[97]](#endnote-88) while others claim that using highly restrictive guidelines is less efficient.[[98]](#endnote-89) It is also significant to mention that with respect to social structure, it has been found that high social capital areas were highly compliant with COVID regulations (this conclusion is based on lower excess mortality and a decline in mobility).[[99]](#endnote-90) Another variable that was found to be related with high compliance is high trust.[[100]](#endnote-91) Additionally, it was concluded that tight-knit groups cooperate much faster under threat and have higher survival rates than do loosely-knit groups [[101]](#endnote-92)

**Task 3.2 Meta-Analysis of Existing Studies, Focusing on Public Cooperation across COVID-Related Behaviors**

This meta-analysis will take advantage of the hundreds of empirical studies on adherence and compliance with COVID regulations and will analyze to what extent taking an approach which was more trusting led to higher compliance over the course of the different waves of COVID.[[102]](#endnote-93) This analysis will focus especially on comparing the different effects of COVID-related behaviors (mostly, wearing masks, quarantine, vaccine, social distancing). Due to the different characteristics of each of the COVID-related behavior, it should be possible to ascertain whether differences in type of behaviors (intentional, repeated, social) represented consistently differing reactions to different types of COVID regulations.

**Task 3.3 Government Rhetoric and Public Cooperation in the COVID Era (text mining)**

The importance of relational concerns, such as legitimacy vis-a-vis deterrence, reflects a central dilemma faced by those seeking to motivate voluntary compliance. Should the emphasis be on using a rhetoric of fear or sanctions, or on generating social solidarity and moral commitment? We hypothesize that when governmental measures for mitigating the pandemic were perceived as legitimate and people felt they were well-treated (perceptions of fairness and respect), they exhibited higher levels of compliance with the measures. While some research has shown that fear appeals can be effective in general,[[103]](#endnote-94) and in terms of compliance to COVID-19 restrictions in particular, there is strong empirical support that beyond fear, people comply if they view the requesting body as one that represents their moral values and a group to which they feel they belong.[[104]](#endnote-95) The notion of social solidarity is also related to the power of social norms, and has been shown to be highly influential in guiding peoples’ behavior.[[105]](#endnote-96) We will use an analysis of government rhetoric[[106]](#footnote-10) (e.g., identifying punitive sentiment) across different countries and their measured impact on behavior, drawing on information from important data sources about this aspect of the COVID-19 regulations.[[107]](#endnote-97)

**Task 3.5 Evaluating Effect of Incentives in the COVID Context**

For this task, we will focus on documenting all the evidence gathered on the usage of incentives in encouraging people to get tested and to get vaccinated, gathering the existing studies across all nations to answer some basic questions. How many people were affected? Where was this behavior repeated (in the context of getting tested)? Were community incentives used (benefits received only when certain portion of a given community was cooperating with tests/immunizations)? We will then explore whether there are certain COVID-related behaviors which were more likely to react positively to incentives than others. In addition, we will look for evidence for possible negative effects that were reported in the areas were incentives were used.

**Task 3.6 Experimental Surveys, Comparing Attitudes toward Some of the Leading Behavioral-Based Regulatory Interventions**

In this last task for **Case Study 1**, we will conduct large scale experimental surveys[[108]](#footnote-11) in all four target countries to study how different regulatory interventions (informative messages, social messages, expressive messages, and incentives) affect perceptions of morality, commitment, trust in science, and reported social norms and self-behavior with regard to an array of hypothetical vignettes (masks, testing, quarantine, vaccine) This design will lead to a much better understanding of the effect of different regulatory interventions on the likelihood of VC across different regulatory interventions.

**Case Study 2 – Tax: Understanding the Potential for Voluntary Compliance in the Tax Context**

The focus on taxes adds to our effort to apprehend the likelihood of voluntary compliance, especially as the subject of taxes is considered the most distrustful interaction between the public and the government. First the main dilemma in taxation is related to honesty, which is not the case in most environmental or COVID-related behavior. This creates a unique context for understanding why it is important to understand why people may be honest. Second, with taxes, in contrast to the environment, for example, there is less of an expectation for a beyond-compliance situation or behavioral change, as the context is that of bureaucratic compliance. Third, tax is the context in which the dilemma can be viewed as a zero-sum game, where every dollar paid is taken from the individual, while in the environmental context, for example, the situation is very different, whether the conduct involves buying an electric car, enjoying green energy, or buying a circular economy product. One of the areas in which the relative efficacy of VC vs. strict monitoring and high sanctions has been widely and deeply studied is that of taxation.[[109]](#endnote-98) What can be learned from the type of studies that focus on different framings of texts sent to people? What can be ascertained from the research on procedural justice and taxations? What can be learned from the various studies focusing on ethical nudges, such as signing at the beginning of tax forms,[[110]](#endnote-99) as well as on various pledges which might reduce the need of states to monitor the ethicality of the people?[[111]](#endnote-100) In many countries, various initiatives to obtain public cooperation were suggested with some clear advantages to these approaches over coercive power-based tax collection[[112]](#endnote-101). Much research done in the area of tax compliance by tax compliance scholars such as Krichler[[113]](#endnote-102) and Wenzel[[114]](#endnote-103) have observed two competing forces – power of authorities vs. trust in authorities. The classical findings from many of these studies is that perceptions of trust in tax authorities increases voluntary compliance while perceptions of the power of tax authorities increase coerced compliance. This approach is not without merit, as, clearly, power is associated with deterrence, monitoring and sanctions, and trust is associated with intrinsic motivation and cooperative behavior. However, as discussed in the preceding section, here, too, the approach is a bit more simplistic than a behavioral approach based on a combination of broader behavioral and institutional accounts. First, conducting research on conditional cooperation, we will demonstrate how, for many people, knowing that the tax authorities will collect tax from other evaders might actually increase their willingness to pay. Second, a meta-analysis conducted on the effectiveness of deterrence has shown that increased levels of trust also improve authorities’ ability to deter people.[[115]](#endnote-104) Third, most of the studies in this area ignore factors developed in previous sections on understanding the heterogeneity of the effect (e.g., what segment of the population reacts to what type of regulatory approach), its durability and sustainability (e.g., what is the effect on taxpayers’ behaviors in the year that follow), and its broader effects (e.g., how will taxpayers behave in other contexts). As in the preceding section, much of the discussion in these case studies will focus on gathering and analyzing data on what were the best practices for enhancing compliance and what can be generalized from them to other contexts.[[116]](#endnote-105)

**Task 4.1 Review of Behaviorally Based Tax Compliance Policies around the Globe**

As with **WP2**, the first task will be to map the terrain in terms of creating a typology of tax policies found to have significant impact on our perception of compliance. While referring to the use of coercive measures, tax studies have shown that the use in what is called “high power,” meaning stricter enforcement, can cause a decline in compliance.[[117]](#endnote-106) Various motivations were found to enhance tax compliance, such as the use of financial and non-financial aids, such as morality, guilt, or sympathy.[[118]](#endnote-107) It was also found that political ideology had an impact on the perception of the use of coercive measures and tax compliance.[[119]](#endnote-108) As a result, at this stage, the focus will be on accumulating all of the behaviorally based tax compliance programs (nudges, reminders, framing of letters, changing defaults, etc.) which have been used in different countries by different tax authorities in the context of priming social norms and fairness, for example.[[120]](#endnote-109) We will also examine various voluntary tax programs offered in different countries designed to reduce tax evasion, analyzing their overall effect on the public attitudes in these countries.[[121]](#endnote-110)

**Task 4.2 Identifying What Factors were Proven to be Successful Moderators of Increased Tax Compliance**

We will also engage in running experimental surveys, where messages to the public will be manipulated (manipulating intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation, manipulating presence of sanctions, and information on social norms). The dependent variables will be self-reported scales related to intention, prevailing norms, and feeling trustworthy. In addition, the surveys will focus on aspects such as how people interpret an ambiguous tax clause, their estimation of the likelihood other people abusing the reduction in regulatory burden (as is in moves to online tax platforms based on declarations), and how they are likely to behave with regard to components of tax compliance which are harder to monitor. The statistical analysis will also focus on differentiating between brazen evaders vs. those who would evade only when there is a legitimate justification.

**Task 4.3 Panel Data Analysis on Long-Term Impact of Regulatory Styles on Tax Attitudes**

We will also engage in a panel (data) analysis, where the repetition of surveys four times (every two months) to similar panel participants will lead to a better grasp of the long-term effects of different regulatory messages from tax authorities and the repeated behavior of different segments of a given population towards the tax system in tax experiments, relative to their earlier positions.[[122]](#endnote-111)

**Task 4.4 A Series of Online Incentive-Compatible Tax Experiments across Four Countries**

This task, which involves surveys, examines factors which were shown to be incentive-compatible designs where participants’ choices affect how much money they will be left with at the end of the experiment.[[123]](#endnote-112) In addition, as with the previous stage, we will provide people with an opportunity to interpret an ambiguous clause on taxation and examine how aggressive an interpretation they will make (compared with method described here[[124]](#endnote-113)).

**Case Study 3– Environmental: Generating Compliance and Behavioral Change in the Environmental Context**

This case study will focus on the VC with environmental law, which is a field with many new regulatory tools based on behavioral research. Similar to the situation with COVID, the idea of trust in science is crucial in the environmental context. As suggested above, in focusing on the environment, we make contributions on a few important aspects which are not available in the other domains. First, the environmental context is one in which much of the focus is on changing peoples’ behavior, and where not all outcomes are affected by compliance. Second, in the environmental context, many of the behavioral changes could be amplified if carried out as part of a community change, which raises an important direction for achieving behavioral change. In addition, environmental harm could create different types of challenges to the health and future of the individual, community, or the earth, thereby allowing for a study of different types of voluntary compliance behaviors by individuals. Another important aspect of the environmental challenge is related to the difficulty people have implementing certain behaviors in their daily life, as the environment includes almost all areas of people’s daily behavior, including energy, recycling, transportation practices, shopping practices (e.g., shift to a circular economy), food consumption, eating norms (disposal dishes), travel plans (amount of air travel), recreational behavior, and more.

The environmental regulation field is considered one of the most advanced regulatory areas where different types of innovative regulatory choices have been extensively examined and empirically studied.[[125]](#endnote-114) A number of non-coercive approaches have been applied in the environmental field, with softer types of regulatory measures being tested and compared.[[126]](#endnote-115) Studying the data gathered in this field, this phase of the project will try identify and clarify what approaches have worked in this field, what were the best practices with regard to both corporate environmental compliance,[[127]](#endnote-116) and recycling norms.[[128]](#endnote-117)

The environmental task contributes to understanding behavioral change beyond what the law can order people to do. For example, moving to an electric car or to relying on green energy is based on much broader components of behavioral change, where in some cases, coercion or even imposing a duty is irrelevant. This fact allows us to ask a number of questions. What are the barriers to change in different countries? How will the different regulatory instruments affect the public views regarding alternative energy resources? Does public participation enhance or decrease the willingness of the public to switch to alternative energy resources? Are there differences in the effect on individual vs. groups/collectives? Is there a difference in what regulatory instrument should be used if trying to change behaviors with regard to solar panels, electric cars, or common alternative energy resources? Who should be in charge of the attempt to change the behavior of the public – the government or private firms? In the environmental task, the comparison between countries will focus not just on the difference in motivations, but also on the differences in barriers, and we will make comparisons between behavioral barriers (e.g., resistance to change, free-riding), legal barriers (e.g., bureaucracy), economic, and cultural (community, autonomy).

**Task 5.1 Comparing Public Perception of Existing Regulatory Intervention Effects on Peoples’ Environmental Behavior**

In this task, we will run experimental surveys on large representative samples in each country in which we will examine the perceptions of the public with regard to energy goals as well as with regard to the different legal instruments which could be used in this context, such as taxes, subsidies, and behavioral measures. In addition, we will analyze the potential legal, economic, and cultural barriers to people’s decision to participate in the respectable programs available to them (we will test factors such as uncertainty aversion, price procrastination, status quo bias, lack of trust in government, lack of trust in other members of the group, lack of knowledge of how much time they will live in the same location).

**Task 5.2 Studying Barriers to Environmental Cooperation (Using Experimental Surveys)**

After establishing the main factors that seem to affect people’s decisions in the previous stage, we will engage in experimental surveys to determine what the different barriers are to their decisions. We will compare how the same dilemma is presented to the public and try to establish a causal connection between the barriers and people’s reported intention to behave (e.g., manipulating trustworthiness, level of cooperation by others, cost, level of uncertainty, rationale provided for the change, moral/solidarity with next generation, ecological, economic).

**Task 5.3 Studying Public Perception of Hypothetical Regulatory Approaches**

A second set of experimental survey studies will focus on understanding how the public in the studied countries react to the different regulatory instruments.[[129]](#footnote-12) We will manipulate the level of public participation in the adoption of the alternative sources of energy, the use of subsidies vs. taxes, and using the power of social norms.[[130]](#endnote-118) We will also manipulate the effect of choice architecture (i.e., what was default).

**Task 5.4 Interviews with Regulators (Repeated for both Tx and Environmental WPs)**

We will also combine interviews with people working in regulatory bodies in each of the studied countries, trying to clarify their predictions on the likelihood that the public will cooperate with different regulatory styles. The gap between public perception and the actual level of cooperation and the regulatory approach is of course important in this context. These interviews will be done both for the environmental and the tax contexts to ascertain whether there are differences in perception of trustworthiness between the two contexts.

**Task 5.5 Local vs. Global Harm as a Trigger to Voluntary Compliance (Using Experimental Surveys)**

We will also examine how people will behave when the situation described to them in the vignette is not a typical social dilemma, but, rather, when the type of environmental harm is described either as local, at the level of the municipality, or the state, such as water or air pollution, relative to situations where the harm is related to global warming. In this task, we will examine whether communities might work together to overcome a local threat. For each one of the described harms, we will examine how they might affect the interaction with different regulatory interventions.

**Task 5.6 Panel Study Analysis**

Finally, as with the previous WPs (2 & 4) we will engage in panel study analysis where we will return to the participants’ experimental studies four times every two months[[131]](#footnote-13) to examine the level of change in their attitudes and whether we can attribute this to their the original experimental manipulation of the regulatory style. This approach is important for determining how sustainable was the change in their behavior.

These stages of the project will advance the discussion of the ability of different regulatory styles to lead to a cooperative behavior to a far more detailed level because of the focus in **WP 3** on COVID, tax and the environment. Since, in contrast to most studies that attempt to explain how regulation can change behavior by looking at one domain, the synthesis of this strand in the research will be innovative in that it examines the likelihood of regulatory success from a much broader perspective – the behaviors expected by individuals, allowing for a much deeper understanding of the interaction between regulatory style and behavioral responses to it, above and beyond a particular regulatory context. Similarly, focusing only on voluntary cooperation in the abstract without taking the doctrinal context into consideration has only limited theoretical importance, as the premise of this project will demonstrate.

Furthermore, in each one of these three case studies, we will accumulate data on numerous types of behavior about which we will know the level and quality of cooperation, the reaction to different regulatory styles, and the interaction between the individual, doctrinal, and type of cooperative behavior needed. By understanding the comparison between the different doctrines and behaviors, we will be able to discern far more concretely the promise and perils of VC. For example, what are the differences between changing people environmental behaviors and tax behavior? This approach will also enable us to understand how different types of behaviors within one domain operate (e.g., changing recycling behavior vs. purchasing practices vs. energy consumption). At the end of Strand II, we will organize a conference in which leading international scholars working in public health, tax and environmental regulation will be invited to discuss the empirical findings which might affect the feasibility of adopting more cooperative behaviors in their fields and thee lessons about changes in regulatory styles.

**Sampling Methods WP 2, 3 a b c**

1. **Sample Size and Sampling Method**
2. **Sample size**: In a sample of N = 1,000, under the assumption of P = 0.5 in the population, the maximum sample error is ±3.1%, with a confidence level of 95%. In other words, in order for the sample error not to exceed ±3.1% (a totally acceptable sample error in general population health surveys) and under the assumption of a proportion in the population of P = 0.5, the calculated sample size is N = 1,000. We are taking a conservative approach with a planned sample size of N = 1,500 that reduces the sample error to less than 3%. Since we are interested also in the ability to compare between countries by the ratio of expected effect size for the main divided by expected effect size for the interaction (e.g., the difference between a trust and non-trust treatment across high/low trust countries). We will sample 6,000 per country per round.
3. **Sampling:** The large scientific internet panels available in all target countries[[132]](#footnote-14) will be used to obtain access to representative samples in each of the targeted countries, including a very large number of members that have been assembled scientifically by major research companies so that they represent the main sub-groups of the national populations across the country’s geographical dispersion. Within each country, we will use stratified Random Sampling within demographic stratums, such as age groups (adults 18–65, and seniors 65+) and country-specific main population groups (e.g., main ethnic groups). This will reflect the diversity in each country, enabling analyses of main target subpopulations, such as women, immigrants, parents of school children, adolescents, seniors above 65, etc.
4. After obtaining the national samples, we will use each country’s published census data to obtain the population demographic distribution. Then, we will use this information to calculate **sample weights** according to gender, age, and other subgroups in order to provide an accurate representation of the various segments of the national population in the sample.
5. All these calculations and considerations led us to decide to recommend that the national bi-monthly sample sizes to be N = 6000 for each of the targeted countries for each round. After completing the first wave of the survey, we will revisit this decision after viewing the observed proportions in the samples and calculating the actual sample errors.
6. With four countries being surveyed, the cross-national dataset for each of the four survey waves will include assessments on N = 24000 respondents – a sample size that will make the sample error negligible for aggregated cross-national analyses of each single survey wave. This means that a total number of 96,000 respondents will be examined throughout the course of the entire research project. The same can be said regarding time trend analyses over time within countries, where survey data are aggregated across survey waves and the time of measurement becomes a variable in the trend or time-series analyses.

## *Synthesizing regulatory approaches, contexts, nations and public behaviors in a new voluntary compliance paradigm*

**Strand 1 Theoretical and Empirical Conceptualization of the Antecedents of VC (based on WP1+2)**

**Strand 2 Understanding the Interaction of Regulatory Context with the Likelihood of Voluntary Compliance (WP 3)**

**Synthesis and Normative Discussion**

The final phase of the project will be dedicated to a few tasks which focus both on the descriptive integration of the multi-layer model of VC as well as the normative examination of whether what we know on the antecedents of VC means for the contexts in which we actually want to implement it. Creating a paradigm will enable scholars to determine how a specific regulatory approach may actually work when taking into account all of the relevant factors. Creating a framework that will help identify what regulatory tool can work with respect to types of compliance and cooperation is needed. It is critical for policy makers that we develop a new version of responsive regulation which will be evidence based, and sensitive to the behavioral public policy findings, to national contexts, and to the behaviors we are trying to change. What is the interaction between national context and different institutions with regard to the likelihood that more trust-based regulation would work in a given country given what we would know about the ethical makeup of the country? While there is a lot of research on cross-national difference, is it usually conducted on only one dimension, such as honesty or trust, and it therefore never manages to interact with the type of behaviors we are interested in changing as well as the different regulatory approaches used. During this phase, we will also be able at to look much more deeply at the broad effects of different regulatory instruments, such as incentives, duties, and nudges in leading to sustainable and prevalent changes in attitudes toward the behavior in question.

**Normative Discussion**

The findings of this project will contribute to the discussion on the desired relationship between states and their citizens. Any democratic state should aspire to convince its citizens that the state should be obeyed voluntarily; hence, any legal instrument that aims to maximize voluntary behavior will be preferred. From a normative perspective, we might need to evaluate critically the costs of encouraging the public to cooperate voluntarily. Our empirical findings will help to clarify a number of important issues. The focus on heterogeneity and distributive effects of law demonstrates, for example, that less educated and less privileged groups in the population might be more prone to changing their preferences following an influencing campaign. Distributive effects might suggest, for example, a situation where less privileged members of a given government might be less likely to protect themselves in situations where self-regulation and limited monitoring by regulators might be preferred. Finally, another normative effect which is related to distributive effect which we will examine is related to the long-term effects of such interventions on how people might feel about whether they trust their government. We will also discuss what is the optimal level of trust between government and the public in the normative part. For example, regulators who have excessive trust in the industry might jeopardize the safety of the public, hence justifying the need to examine the different regulatory tools that will be tested from Strand 2, including what is their likely effect on increasing compliance, and reducing the likelihood of errors which might be too costly for the public safety.

Here, we will also create a taxonomy of the different legal doctrines based on the need for proportion of cooperators, the sustainability of their compliance, and its quality. Different regulatory contexts might call for different types of cooperation from the public, and we will integrate the findings to answer some of the preliminary questions in this component. For example, within the context of COVID-related behaviors, we might want to differentiate between mask wearing, where quality and proportion is important, and vaccination efforts, where proportion is very important but quality is less important. The findings will help inform normative questions such as, do we want government to try to change people’s intrinsic values and motivations, and what type of intrinsic motivations are likely to be sustainable over time? For example, the intrinsic motivation of trust in science, which will be studied in both COVID and environmental contexts, might be hard to achieve in many countries, where these issues are connected with ideologies.[[133]](#endnote-119)

Another important normative discussion on regulation and VC is related to doctrine of proportionality.[[134]](#endnote-120) According to this leading constitutional approach, states are allowed to use the least coercive measure needed for changing the behaviors of the public. If we see that least coercive measures might have broader and more durable effects on public behavior than more coercive measures, the legitimacy of using sanctions will be limited. At the same time, given the costs of behavioral approaches, it is not necessarily the case that command-and-control approaches are the worst possible choices. Based on findings also from **WP 3,** we will further discuss from a normative perspective what are the proportion of cooperators needed with each doctrine and what regulatory tools are needed to obtain that level of cooperation. For example, in the context of wearing masks or getting the vaccine, obtaining a majority might be enough. However, in quarantine, a few non-cooperators might cause the pandemic to spread. In the environmental context, we will also use the accumulated data across various numbers of domains to understand what proportion of cooperators is need for VC to work. Similarly, when focusing on changing the intensity of preference of people, it might be the case that as with vaccines, we only need one type of behavior, so we don’t want to people to do it too eagerly. However, when we focus on mask wearing, we do want the public to believe in it, because we need them to do it even in areas that we cannot control (such as indoors gatherings). In the normative discussion, we will also consider questions to which this project can provide answers, such as to what extent do we want to use the cross-regulatory perspective? To what extent do we want to consider people’s past behavior in general and in other contexts? What are the limits of allowing communities to use their own social governance power to change their behavior of people (e.g., in the environmental context)? What did we learn about the sustainability of different type of intrinsic motivation which we would like not to crowd out? What regulatory instruments are less likely to vary based on national context and are hence safer to implement from experience gathered in other nations? How will data accumulated on individual cooperation across different regulatory domains affect the usage of algorithmic regulatory practices?[[135]](#endnote-121)

**Project Team**

The Project will be carried out by a team consisting of multi-disciplinary experts in the fields of social and behavioral science (four postdocs and four PhD candidates, a statistician and a programmer) who will be under the PI’s supervision. There will be one postdoc and one MA student in each country who will be jointly supervised by me and the country expert in each of the studied countries for a period of three to four years. In addition, there will be four PhD candidates in Israel gaining expertise in one of the four main subjects of this proposal (Ethics, Environment, Tax and COVID-19). The literature review will be reviewed by five MA students. The PI has extensive experience in performing behavioral and experimental research in the fields of compliance and behavioral law, and has 20 years of experience as an expert in the field of law and behavior. The PI has worked over the years in the theoretical and practical fields, which has enabled him to gain experience with all the methods and theories used in this study. Meta-analysis will be carried out by Ewout Meijer of Maastricht University together with one postdoc.

**Advisory Board**

The proposed research will benefit from having a wide ranging advisory board comprised of from experts in the social and behavioral sciences who are experts in either a country that needs to be studied (Denmark, Greece, The Netherlands, Kenya) or a method (meta-Analysis, econometrics). The board members will make a significant contribution to the research by advising, overseeing and guiding the project. The communication with the advisory board will take place (online/in Bar Ilan/abroad/selected workshops). The Board consists of the following experts: Benjamin van rooij (Law and Society, Amsterdam Law School), Lucia Reisch[[136]](#footnote-15) ([Behavioral Economics](https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=search_authors&hl=en&mauthors=label:behavioural_economics), [Copenhagen Business School](https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_org&hl=en&org=8531754682472345493)), Tom Tyler (Law and Psychology, Yale Law School), Erich Kirchler (Economics and Psychology, especially in the context of taxation, University of Vienna), Holger Spamann (Ecometrics, Law and Economics, Harvard) Ewout Meijir Mastricht, (expert on meta-analayis) Georgia Kaplanoglou, Taxation, University of Athens,) and David Ngira Otieno (Human Rights, Law & Development and Legal Theory, Mt. Kenya University).

**Generalization to Other Countries**

While we focus our data collection mainly, but not only, on four countries, we are also applying cultural trajectories of the model developed in countries from the Global South. To do that, we will analyze what the differences between the four countries indicate about the interaction between low and high trust countries in a way which will enable us to predict how results might look for countries with a different make-up of the factors we have measured. Finally, we will also replicate the same surveys from Tasks 3a 3b and 3 c on Kenya[[137]](#footnote-16) as a test case for a Global South perspective in order to facilitate an initial understanding of differences in responses to different styles of cooperative vs. coercive regulations relative to the four target countries.

**Risk and Contingency Strategies**

This project seeks to develop a new conceptual paradigm which will advance the theoretical and empirical understanding of voluntary compliance and the way in which regulation is applied worldwide. There are several challenges in this ambitious project, as it is being performed in several locations worldwide. In order to address this, the PI will be highly involved in all of the stages of the research and will directly guide each member of the project team. The team members will be advised and monitored by the PI and the advisory board, which consists of globally renowned experts with regard to both the countries and the methods, such as meta-analysis and econometrics. Furthermore, the selected design of the proposed research enables an examination of multiple approaches to the voluntary compliance ability of government to trust the public.

A first challenge is to manage the empirical research across four countries. To address this challenge, the PI will be directly involved in all initial research preparation (including developing access, developing proper translations (through double-blinded methods), and collecting initial data). The PI will spend substantial time in each country location with the local researchers from an advisory team as well as the postdoc in charge, directly guiding them and supporting them as they set up the research, as well as coordinating work between them and keeping them connected with key experts who have agreed to aid the research locally.

A second challenge is related to the robustness of the existing data sets in areas where original data collection will not be possible. Over the last decade, the replicability of empirical findings, especially in the behavioral sciences, has attracted increased attention.[[138]](#endnote-122) Discussions about replicability also applies to fields relevant to this proposal. For example, several high-profile findings from behavioral ethics have failed to be replicated in recent multi-laboratory replication projects.[[139]](#endnote-123) In the meta-analytic project, we will therefore employ state-of-the-art statistical techniques to map the quality of previous research, including measures of publication bias and p-hacking. For the new empirical data resulting from this project, we will adhere to the most recent standards in open science, such as pre-registration, registered reports, and data sharing where possible.

**There are many preconditions needed to cumulative studies.** A third challenge is related to retention of participants in panel studies. We will solve that by focusing on representative samples. By starting with a very large sample and creating an incentive scheme, we will ensure that even in the final stages, we will have enough participants to allow for statistical power.

Honesty
Solidarity, Interpersonal Trust

Regulatory

Instruments

Cultural General

Belief in Environment

Belief in Science

Culture Specific

Rule of Law, Quality of Institutions

Behavioral Change

Nudges

Fines

Duties

Self -Regulation

Institutional Characteristics

Homogenous, Immigration gaps

+

Societal Characteristics

Morality, Perceived Duty to Obey Risk Attitudes

Individual Characteristics

Empirical Phases (2-6)

1. Measuring the effect on cooperative behaviors, outside the immediate regulatory context. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Where each context is more likely to trigger somewhat different aspect of voluntary compliance, be honest in ethical context, change behavior in environmental contexts, comply in tax context, and cooperate with COVID restrictions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. ##  Cook, T. E., & Gronke, P. (2005). The skeptical American: Revisiting the meanings of trust in government and confidence in institutions. *The Journal of Politics*, *67*(3), 784-803.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
5. ##  Clark, C., Davila, A., Regis, M., & Kraus, S. (2020). Predictors of COVID-19 voluntary compliance behaviors: An international investigation. *Global transitions*, 2, 76-82; Alm, J., Kirchler, E., & Muehlbacher, S. (2012). Combining psychology and economics in the analysis of compliance: From enforcement to cooperation. *Economic analysis and Policy*, *42*(2), 133-151.

 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
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