

Research Activities

LIVEWHAT undertakes the following research activities:

- **Defining, identifying, and measuring crises** by setting forward an operational definition and a set of indicators that will enable researchers to detect and compare the impact of crises on European societies.
- **Comparing national policy responses to crises** through interviews with policy-makers and the study of secondary sources and identifying good practices.
- **Examining collective responses to crises in the public domain** through the analysis of political claims.
- **Assessing individual citizens' perceptions and responses to crises** through a nationwide survey in each of the countries studied in the project.
- **Assessing causal effects of crises on citizens' attitudes and behaviors** by conducting laboratory and survey experiments.
- **Detecting alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis** through an online survey and interviews with key informants and explaining what these initiatives suggest for the impact of crises on vulnerable groups and communities.

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About LIVEWHAT

LIVEWHAT — Living with Hard Times : How Citizens React to Economic Crises and Their Social and Political Consequences

LIVEWHAT aims to provide evidence-based knowledge about citizens' resilience in times of economic crises in nine European countries :

- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Italy
- Poland
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom

The project examines the ways in which European citizens have reacted to the crisis that, at different degrees of intensity in different countries, has struck Europe since 2008. Additionally, it aims to examine how they deal with economic crises and their consequences more generally.

The project studies both the **individual** and **collective** responses by citizens, the **private** and the **public** dimensions of such responses, and **political** and **non-political** responses. LIVEWHAT not only focuses on citizens' responses but also sheds light on policy responses so as to have a baseline for assessing citizens' resilience in times of crisis.

Objectives

LIVEWHAT has the following objectives :

- **To advance knowledge** regarding the ways in which citizens respond to economic crises and their social and political consequences.
- **To contribute to placing citizens' responses to economic crises and their negative consequences on the political agenda** by raising awareness about the situation of groups particularly at risk in situations of economic crisis.
- **To improve the problem-solving capacity of policy-makers and practitioners** by providing policy recommendations and a catalogue of good practices.
- **To help develop a more comprehensive and concerted problem-solving approach** within member states and the European Union by promoting knowledge-transfer and policy-learning.

The project's objectives are addressed by means of a **variety of data and methods** : a cross-national comparative dataset on economic, social, and political indicators ; the analysis of policy responses, collective responses, and individual responses by private citizens to crises ; lab and survey experiments designed to assess causal effects of different dimensions of crises on citizens' attitudes and behaviors ; and the analysis of alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis.

Theoretical Approach

LIVEWHAT's **theoretical approach** allows for studying resilience along the analytical continuum between the individual level of single citizens who learn how to "bounce back" and downplay the costs of crises, and the far-reaching forms of collective resilience aimed at entering the public domain so as to challenge inequities and foster common empowerment.

The project conceives of resilience as the capacity of European citizens to stand against economic hardship through an **active process of contestation and empowerment**. Going beyond previous studies that have studied the impact of economic crises on specific groups such as children, youth, and families treated as passive categories, LIVEWHAT puts citizens engaged in **alternative forms of resilience** at center stage.

Alternative forms of resilience include the strengthening of social and family networks and community practices to foster solidarity in the face of crises, change of lifestyles toward more sustainable forms of consumption and production, developing new artistic expressions. Although these transformations in citizen practices (from adapted to alternative) are decisive for citizens' resilience in times of austerity, they have not yet been thoroughly studied.