W11 / The Politics of Governing Crises: Understanding the Complex Linkage between Crises and Policy Processes

Topic : Policy Process, Policy Making

Chair : Giliberto Capano (Università di Bologna)

Second Chair : Philippe Zittoun (ENTPE - LAET - University of Lyon)

CALL FOR PAPERS

We would like to discuss different types of dynamics of ‘governing crises’ and how the definition of crises is not separable from the political definition of how to govern. Thus, we would like to focus on the political and policy dynamics dialectic as follows:

1. How policy-makers govern in a crisis. Ship captains navigate through a storm and have to decide if the storm will incur either dramatic or insignificant damage to their ship, and thus they have to interpret the storm and decide how to govern the ship. Captains must factor in the weather and eventually make the decision to either wait for the storm to pass or adopt a more proactive strategy. The same applies to policy-makers when they perceive a crisis as a temporary event. In this case, they will govern the crisis according to two strategies:

- If they think that the crisis effects will be not relevant, they adopt the usual frameworks of understanding and thus interpret the crisis as a normal event that can be dealt with without having to make any new decisions or policy instruments in particular. They wait until the storm passes, relying on the usual public policies to absorb the shock of the crisis.

- If they think that the crisis will result in serious socio-political and policy damage, they will define the crisis according to a new cognitive framework and will thus design new measures to combat it.

2. How policy-makers govern by crisis. This occurs when the crisis is defined as a more structural phenomenon and a test of legitimacy issue that structures responses in the form of reforms and projects shaping a new future. The crisis becomes an opportunity for those in power. As Rham Emanuel, a former mayor of Chicago, said, ‘You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that is an opportunity to do things you could not do before’. Thus, the crisis becomes an event that can accelerate existing but still undeveloped or minoritarian policy frameworks or allow the introduction of new policy solutions.

We welcome papers on both the theoretical and empirical sides of the discussion.

From the theoretical side, we would like to receive papers’ proposals that focus on the following:

1. Defining crises in terms of related political and policy dynamics.

2. Clarifying the different dimensions between crises and policy makers’ reactions in terms of framing and goals.

3. Reviewing the literature in social sciences and crisis management to find possible common definitions and concepts for analysing the government of crises.

From the empirical side, we would like to receive papers’ proposals that focus on the following:

3. Analyses of the political and policy dynamics of specific crises.

4. The ways in which policy makers choose to frame crises and accordingly design policies.

5. The ideational and contextual drivers of the politics of governing crises.

6. The processes through which crises activates critical junctures and the subsequent political and policy outcomes.

ABSTRACT

In this workshop, instead of exploring crisis and policy processes separately, we would like to shed light on new perspectives through the complex dialectic between crises and political/policy dynamics by focusing on the way in which crises are defined or re-defined by policy-makers as they formulate their proposal, define their role, claim their legitimacy and prove the effectiveness of their policy.

Thus, we would like to deepen the link between how policy-makers try to shape the meaning of crises and

how they design their policies as responses to these crises. We hold that policy-makers can either govern the crisis in different ways and according to different frames, or they can govern by the crisis, by using critical events as opportunities for innovating not only policies but also the political dynamics. Therefore, this workshop calls for the contributions of not only policy scholars but also of political scientists, and experts in crisis management to bridge these scientific fields and increase our comprehension of the political and policy sides of crises in the contemporary world.

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Session 1Theories and Concepts on Crisis

Wednesday, June 26th 10:15 to 12:00 (AULA 22)

Discussants

Lydie Cabane (Leiden University)

Introduction

Philippe Zittoun (ENTPE - LAET - University of Lyon)

Giliberto Capano (Università di Bologna)

Intro

The many faces of crises: a response-oriented classification proposal

Stefania Profeti (Università di Bologna)

Crisis management scholars are well aware that not all crises are the same and that there are different types of crises. The literature is replete with classificatory proposals. Recently, scholars have focused in particular on distinctions that insist on the time/velocity dimension (between 'sudden/fast burning' crises and creeping/slow burning crises, see 't Hart and Boin 2001; Boin et al. 2020) and the spatial and functional dimension (crises with local/limited impact vs. 'transboundary' crises, 'megacrises', 'polycrises', see Ansell et al. 2010; Boin 2019; Boin et al. 2021; Juncker 2016). Other prominent but less recently highlighted dimensions concern the source of the crisis (e.g., man-made vs. natural, see Pearson and Mitroff 1993) and the intentionality or otherwise of the agent causing it (e.g., crises caused by natural disasters or unintentional human error vs. crises involving an adversary/antagonist with strategic capabilities, see Coombs & Holladay 1996; Quarantelli, Lagadec & Boin 2006).

All of these distinctions seem relevant to those who find themselves in crisis management, as they can impact the construction of sense-making and meaning-making strategies, public perceptions of responsibility, and, consequently, accountability, coupled with the operational management of the response. However, despite the existence of various labels to distinguish crises of different types, to our knowledge, there are no attempts to classify crises that attempt to cross-reference the various dimensions listed above, respecting the criteria of mutual exclusivity and exhaustiveness, nor any systematic reflection on response patterns (in terms of both crisis management and crisis leadership).

This paper aims to take a first step in this direction. Through a structured literature review, we will attempt to arrive at an exhaustive classification of different types of crises. We will then reason, both empirically and deductively, about response patterns associated with or desirable for different types of crises.

Authors: Stefania Profeti (who is the corresponding author and will attend the panel) and Federico Toth

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Session 2Crisis as an opportunity to structural reform

Wednesday, June 26th 14:00 to 17:15 (AULA 22)

Discussants

H. Tolga Bolukbasi (Bilkent University)

Arya Pillai (Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati)

Conceptualising the crisis state: what does the normalisation of crisis do to governance and the policy process?

Lydie Cabane (Leiden University)

Rather than punctual events that induce a deviation from standard life, crises now appear as the norm. We live in an age of turbulence, crisis (even polycrisis, some say), disruption or catastrophe. Climate change, debt, inflation, pandemics, heatwaves, but also political crises with the rise of populism, polarisation or the disruption of multilateralism are some of the defining features of a world in crisis.

At the same time as crisis management and government of crisis have become much more mainstream in policy debates following COVID-19 and the piling up of crises in Europe, their nature has changed. Whereas crisis used to be conceptualised as a deviation from the regular policy process – a punctuation that policymakers would occasionally face - in today's disrupted world, it has, in many ways, become a perennial feature of governing practices. Crisis management has become a much more common, day-to-day, and widespread activity of government. And as crises have proliferated in our daily lives, so too have crisis expertise, plans, policies and organisations.

We have yet to draw the implications from the ubiquity of crisis (management) for public policy and governance. What does it mean to govern when crises are no longer punctual events but daily and/or recurrent phenomena that keep policymakers busy? The paper examines how the prominence of crisis and crisis management redefines governing activities and the policy process beyond the events and critical junctures. It argues that the normalisation of crisis (management) is central to governing and policymaking today.

The paper relies on a review of both old and new literature in public administration, public policy, governance and crisis management. Three aspects are considered. First, what does the normalisation of crisis (management) mean? There is a burgeoning of concepts (creeping or slow-burning crises, polycrisis, turbulences) to make sense of the accumulation of disruptions, which complexifies the notion of crisis and raises questions for (re)defining crisis management and its place in the policy process (Boin et al. 2020; Henig and Knight 2023; Seabrooke and Tsingou 2019).

Second, the most common perspective on the normalisation of crisis can be found in debates related to recent major crises and turmoil and their impact governing practices. These crises and their consequences for decision-making and governing processes have either been studied in their own right (as for covid, for example), or more recently, a number of authors have considered how the accumulation of crises creates 'turbulences' for governance (C. Ansell et al. 2022; C. K. Ansell et al. 2017)

Finally, the paper considers a perspective, less present in the literature but no less important for the analysis of policymaking and governing, that relates to the normalisation of crisis management (Borraz and Cabane 2017; Cabane and Lodge 2023). Instead of looking at crises and crisis management per se, this perspective shifts the focus to governing activities that anticipate and prepare for crises, and how they restructure and

normalise the activity of dealing with crises in government and bureaucracies.

How do crises affect policy processes and change? A systematic literature review

Laura Mastroianni (Università di Bologna)

In the policy process literature, crises are thought of as one of the factors possibly leading to policy change. Among the many frameworks that have been developed from the 1980s, the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF), the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET), and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) are the ones which explicitly hypothesise this relationship. For the MSF, crises – included in the broader category of focusing events – increase the probability of policy change. The PET understands crises as punctuations over long periods of stasis. According to the ACF, crises (interpreted as shocks internal and/or external to subsystem dynamics) interrupt the stability of policy subsystems, eventually leading to policy change. Even if, for all of these three frameworks, crises seem to be one of the pivotal elements affecting the stability of policy actors, there is still a significant gap in the policy studies literature concerning the conceptualisation and operationalisation of crises. Moreover, the MSF, the PET, and the ACF assume that, in order to get to change, crises must be exploited. Accordingly, in disrupting the stability of policy subsystems, crises open up 'windows of opportunity' that only, if successfully controlled by policymakers, may lead to change. Although in slightly different terms, the crisis management literature employs this same concept of 'windows of opportunity' to deal with the political and policy implications of crises. In managing a crisis, political and policy actors face a set of challenges: sense-making, decision-making, meaning-making, accountability, and learning. Each of these stages represents an opening (if well-exploited) for political and policy change. However, the policy studies literature on the effects of crises on policy processes (apart from disrupting their stability) and on the mechanisms driving to political and policy change lacks a thorough elaboration. Whether in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of crises or the elaboration of their effects and the mechanisms leading to change, a dialogue between the policy studies and the crisis management literature seems majorly beneficial. This study aims to investigate this dialogue. Through a systematic literature review from 1990 to 2024, this paper looks at the different conceptualisations and operationalisations of crises and the effects and mechanisms elaborated, both at the theoretical and empirical levels. Furthermore, some descriptive information is provided on the temporal and geographical dispersion of the publications, as well as on their nature (theoretical, empirical or both) and their methodological approaches. Such a review is necessary not only to account for the state of the art of this 'cross-pollination' but also to move the way towards a more comprehensive theory building and testing in policy process research and, more generally, in public policy studies.

A comparative analysis of the formulation of National Recovery and Resilience Plans: Domestic 'usages' of Europe

Igor Guardiancich (SPGI - Università di Padova)

Enrico Borghetto (Università degli Studi di Firenze)

In response to the covid-19 pandemic and its economic fallout, the European Union (EU) adopted the 'Next Generation EU' (NGEU) funding programme, the centrepiece of which was the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) to support economic reforms and investments in EU countries. In order to access this funding, EU member states had to submit National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) prepared in consultation with the European Commission. This paper examines the domestic factors that have affected the formulation of the NRRPs by focusing on structural reforms – a key feature of the strengthened conditionality embodied in the RRF, which is operationally and legally embedded in the European Semester coordination policy cycle – rather than investments. As the crisis has both hit the Member States and is domestically interpreted in markedly different ways, three features of the reforms are of particular interest: their intensity and scope; their timing; and the extent to which they incorporate Countries-Specific Recommendations previously adopted by the EU. The paper engages in a structured focused comparison of three country studies – Germany, France and Italy – as well as within-case process tracing of the Italian case. It is argued that Italy used its NRRP as an 'external constraint' to bring about far-reaching domestic reforms, while Germany committed to minimal reforms, and France took a midway position. This variation is primarily explained by the domestic politics of the formulation of NRRPs and, in particular, by the different interpretations of the enabling or constraining attributes of the crisis, mainly expressed through varying 'usages of Europe' in national policymaking.

In the opinion of the authors, the article neatly fits within the scope of the workshop. As highlighted by recent advances in European integration scholarship (e.g. Ferrara and Kriesi, 2022), the crisis-specific scope conditions are key not only to understand the domestic-level interpretations and responses to be expected

but also the leverage that each theory of integration, or combinations thereof have to offer.

At least one of the authors will be present on-site at the IPPA workshops in Guadalajara.

(Virtual) Crisis as a Juncture: An Analysis of the Policy Landscape of Dam Safety in India

Ayushi Jain (Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay)

In December 2021, the Parliament of India enacted the Dam Safety Act 2021 to institutionalise the dam safety apparatus for the country's policy landscape. The legislation, widely debated for its legitimacy and constitutionality, has aimed to redefine the role of the state in the prevention of disasters owing to dam failure-related incidents. The state cites contemporary challenges to the governance of new and ageing large dams, as well as cautions over the growing number of incidents of dam failure to reframe the concerns of dam safety as a long–term policy problem, where a policy intervention has been impending for decades. To the state, its structural response stands at the intersection of formulating a policy for the prevention of crisis, and in response to a long–term and imminent crisis unfolding owing to the governance challenges for dam safety. Here, a crisis is not limited to a single external event, rather the focus is on defining a 'crisis' in governance. The policy solution reveals a critical juncture in the dam safety discourse, where the state's contemporary framing of the dam safety challenges has allowed it to successfully legitimise a policy solution, unlike prior attempts.

In this context, the research paper aims to explore the framing of a crisis in a policy process of the enactment of the legislation, and its historical pathways of the dam safety discourse in India. It is rooted in two primary considerations. First, how the defining of dam safety concerns as a crisis presents a critical juncture in the policy process of dam safety legislation. Second, the framing presents an exceptional opportunity for the state to evolve its role and accountability in the governance of dams. Here, the conceptual understanding of 'crisis' allows us to analyse the drivers for how dam safety concerns are defined and re-defined in the policy process over time to reveal the critical junctures in the governance of dams, and the evolution of the state's perception of the dam safety concerns itself. This paper primarily focuses on the shifts in framing the dam safety concerns, and the shift towards framing the concerns under the conceptualisation of crisis triggered a distinctive policy response. Therefore, the research first aims to understand the framing of dam safety concerns as a crisis, and second, how that framing makes a critical juncture in the policy formulation.

For this purpose, the study aims to incorporate the history of the dam safety discourse in independent India, and specifically focus on the policy process for dam safety legislation. It plans to use the method of frame analysis for secondary data sources of draft bills, parliamentary debates and committee reports, and other relevant documents. The research situates itself to analyse dam safety as a case to dwell deeper into the theoretical linkage between crisis and policy processes.

I would like the opportunity to present on–site.

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Session 3Crisis as change of relationship between Policymakers

Thursday, June 27th 09:00 to 12:15 (AULA 22)

Discussants

Igor Guardiancich (SPGI - Università di Padova)

Ayushi Jain (Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay)

POLITICS OF GOVERNING BY CRISES: CO-CONSTRUCTING IMF CONDITIONALITY IN CENTRAL BANKING REFORM IN TURKEY

H. Tolga Bolukbasi (Bilkent University)

Policymakers govern by crises when it comes to bringing policy reform. Crises open the widest windows of opportunity for policy change. The public policy and political economy literatures are replete with instances where historic, paradigmatic policy reversals happen only through crises. We have learned that crises, themselves, are not drivers of change, however. They set the context in which policymakers pursue policy change. This paper shows how policymakers engineer policy reversals by framing crises. It does so by bringing evidence from the deepest economic crisis of an emerging market economy, Turkey, back in the early 2000s. It shows how top bureaucrats in the driving seat of the Turkish economy successfully used sweeping crisis conditions to sell their pet projects on central bank independence to domestic politicians. The case study on Turkey illustrates how key technocrats with the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey and the Treasury managed to push through the largest IMF program in history otherwise unpalatable to politicians under non-crisis contexts. Under burning crisis conditions, the IMF program acted as what Dyson and Featherstone (1996) call a vincolo esterno, an external link strengthening the hands of technocrats vis-à-vis politicians especially in a land notorious for reform-sclerosis. Contrary to the conventional wisdom in the literature on Turkey, it shows that it was actually Turkish policymakers themselves who pushed to bring about the reforms that were inserted into the IMF program but how they could not succeed in doing so until the crisis opened the widest policy window in living memory. What is equally striking, and once again contrary to the conventional wisdom in the literature, is that policymakers effectively co-constructed the content of the IMF program with IMF officials in favor of their homegrown preconceived policy solutions. This set of evidence is in line with a long line of research findings by Vreeland (2003) which suggest that ‘governments often accept IMF loans because they want conditions imposed on them’ and by Drazen (2002) concluding that ‘when a government faces political opposition to policies that are in the nation’s ultimate self-interest, it may be happy to have those policies imposed by outsiders’. The paper relies on primary evidence from (i) semi-structured interviews with key policymakers who had leading positions with the Central Bank of Republic of Turkey, the Treasury, and the Ministry of Finance , and, (ii) programming and legislative documents, in-service reports, minutes of parliamentary committees and plenary sessions, and print media. The paper concludes that crises are what powerful domestic actors, in this case key policymakers, make of them even if it seems there is no alternative under impending emergencies. It also concludes that seemingly externally induced policy solutions are not that externally induced and that they are almost always co-constructed.

Assessing the Impact of Crisis on Policy Change : Examination of the Advocacy coalition framework f

Arya Pillai (Indian Institute of Technology Tirupati)

Sanchayan Nath (XLRI, Delhi NCR Campus, India)

Demonetization in India, a significant economic transformation, is a unique lens to explore the intricate relationships between external events, advocacy coalitions, and policy changes. This research, guided by the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), aims to address gaps in understanding how crises, particularly demonetization, impact beliefs within advocacy coalitions and subsequently shape the changes in policy. The study recognizes the evolving role of media, primarily Twitter, in influencing stakeholder beliefs and contributing to policy dynamics.

The research gap lies in the complex linkage between external events and policy change within the ACF, particularly in understanding how external events influence core beliefs and policy attributes. A standardized method for assigning beliefs to hierarchies is necessary to conceptualize coalition belief systems. This study employs sentiment analysis, a novel method, and explores the application of the ACF in diverse settings beyond the often-studied domains of environment and energy subsystems.

The research objectives are twofold: first, to understand the contribution of external events to the evolution of belief systems within advocacy coalitions, and second, to examine how these belief system changes influence subsequent policy changes, emphasizing the three-tiered belief hierarchy. The hypothesis posits that external events affect policy change, with this relationship mediated by changes in coalition belief systems.

The theoretical framework, ACF, provides a comprehensive understanding of policy processes, focusing on advocacy coalitions within policy subsystems. Beliefs, resources, and external events are critical elements in this framework, shaping policy evolution through interactions and negotiations. A three-tiered belief hierarchy encompasses core, policy, and secondary beliefs, influencing coalition characteristics and responses to external events.

The methodology employs a belief hierarchy coding approach adopted from Douglas et al. (2022), sentiment analysis on Twitter data, and content analysis models to analyze stakeholder beliefs and policy changes conducted using Atlas.ti for pre- and post-demonetization. Data from various sources, including news articles and press releases (PIB), supplements the analysis. They are analyzed using the Knill & Tosun(2020) model on the dimensions of policy change. Keyword searches on Twitter, both broad and specific to demonetization, capture stakeholder sentiments and sector-specific policy changes.

Potential findings may uncover insights into the interplay between crises, advocacy coalitions, belief systems, and policy changes. Understanding the dynamics of belief shifts before, during, and after events can contribute to more adaptive policymaking. The research also explores the role of Twitter in shaping stakeholder beliefs and its influence on policy narratives. The impact of emotions, sentiments, and beliefs on the policy process may offer valuable insights, contributing to the validation or extension of the existing theoretical framework.

City hall under pressure – how crises impact politico-administrative relations on the local level of government

Nicolai De Wulf (Universiteit Gent)

Local governments are facing a growing number of crises, posing significant challenges to their governance (Salvador and Sancho, 2023). In this study, we set out to analyze empirically the impact of two types of crises - Covid-19 as a fundamental crisis and the Ukrainian refugee crisis as a conventional crisis (Gundel, 2005) - on the politico-administrative relations in local governments. The expectation to be agile and adaptive in their response can be challenging for bureaucratic and hierarchical governance structures (Salvador & Sancho, 2023), while leaders are confronted with significant time pressure, risks, and uncertainty (Wu et al. 2021). Institutional structures and regulations may limit the range of choices available, but decision makers always have a choice as to what degree they decide to utilize the available scope of action (Sandberg 2023).

We are interested in the local crisis governance structure, and the way local politicians and administrators function during the crisis phases of sense-making, decision making and coordinating, meaning making, accounting, and learning (Boin et al. 2016). The central research question is: “How are politico-administrative relations in local government impacted by crises in terms of response, transformation and lessons learned?”.

The paper reports a multiple case study of 2 crises in 4 cities in the Flemish region of Belgium, allowing for comparison, using semi-structured interviews (minimum 8 for each city) and document analysis. We selected cities of medium to large size cities due to their established administrative structures, greater resource endowment, and enhanced capacity for self-organization (Salvador and Sancho 2023). This paper aspires to bring significant new insights in the literature on politico-administrative relations, which models’ are based on non-crisis situations, and to increase our understanding of local crisis management. The findings, including visualizations, relate to the role and leadership of individual and collective actors within

both the political and administrative sphere, and how these relations evolve, paying attention to organizational learning. Presentation will preferably be on site.

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- Gundel, S. (2005). Towards a new typology of crises. Journal of contingencies and crisis management, 13(3), 106-115.

- Salvador, M., & Sancho, D. (2023). Local Governments Facing Turbulence: Robust Governance and Institutional Capacities. Social Sciences, 12(8), 462.

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How governments cope with crisis in cooperative multilevel governance systems: Polarizing and stabilizing forms of blame avoidance

Céline Honegger (University of Bern)

Transboundary crises like the COVID-19 pandemic or climate change are challenging for governments because problems are complex and many actors involved. In addition, mediatized policy controversies in the context of crises put policy-makers under pressure. The concept of blame avoidance allows to categorize officeholders’ response to these challenges (Hood, 2011; Weaver, 1986). While crises provide a fertile ground for blame games, elections lead to greater salience of party competition and might further fuel the blame game. The institutional context on the other side, can either decrease or foster blame deflection. This paper investigates how the institutional and political context affect blame deflection in times of crisis and if institutions can hinder polarizing forms of blame-shifting.

Empirical studies have revealed that officeholders use multi-level structures to deflect blame to actors on different governmental levels (Heinkelmann-Wild & Zangl, 2019; Hinterleitner et al., 2022). In the context of cooperative federalism, politicians can shift blame to different levels but are simultaneously forced to cooperate within intergovernmental and party networks. They hence use softer forms of blame attribution like “passing responsibility” instead of “scapegoating” (Souris et al., 2023). While existing research shows that governments can effectively diffuse blame through complex governance structures, less is known about the patterns of blame diffusion.

This paper investigates how officeholders in federal and consensus-oriented contexts deflect blame when facing complex transboundary crises and which forms and directions they choose to deflect blame. For this purpose, the paper elaborates the concept of stabilizing and polarizing forms of blame avoidance. The empirical analysis focuses on pandemic related media conferences held by the German and Swiss Minister of Health during the COVID-19 crisis. I expect that due to cooperative federalism and consensus culture, policy-makers use soft and stabilizing forms of blame deflection or shift blame to actors outside of the political system. I also expect that even during elections in Germany officeholders rather use stabilizing than polarizing forms of blame avoidance due to the potential need to build a coalition with opponents after the elections. Understanding blame games in times of crisis is crucial if we want to understand political systems, their capacity for problem solving and the robustness of democracies.

(presenting on-site)

Literature

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Session 4Crisis as an opportunity for Policy Innovation

Thursday, June 27th 14:00 to 17:15 (AULA 22)

Discussants

Catarina Segatto (Universidade de São Paulo)

Camila Nastari Fernandes (Federal University of São Paulo)

Conceptualizing Interorganizational Crisis Networks: Climate-Related Emergencies as Illustrations

Carlos Bravo-Laguna (Leiden University)

In an increasingly interdependent world, transnational collaborative arrangements have become common reactions to complex policy problems demanding coordinated solutions. The growing recurrence of crises affecting multiple countries and policy sectors is an additional manifestation of this changing order. Moreover, the salience of climate change has motivated perceptions that we live in a never-ending crisis. Inspired by these phenomena, the literature on crisis management has recently experienced a boom. However, the subject of coordination during crises demands further theoretical rigor and conceptual clarity. Indeed, much of the published work on crisis networks has focused on interpersonal exchanges. In contrast, the study of relational dynamics among crisis management bodies remains confined to a few predominantly empirical pieces.

The collaborative governance framework and the policy networks model are promising theoretical tools to bring theoretical clarity to this literature, since they approach dynamic and multilevel sets of complex multi-actor public policy processes, decision-making practices, and managerial structures from a systemic perspective. However, they have not fulfilled their potential to explain crisis management dynamics yet. Indeed, the focus of the policy networks model on ideal-type structures —such as policy communities and issue networks— has limited its applicability to crisis situations, which require the involvement of particular structures. While more pieces have applied the collaborative governance framework to crisis management, additional dialogue across theoretical models is required.

To address these gaps, this paper conceptualizes interorganizational crisis networks as multi-actor collaborative governance arrangements whose characteristics correspond to a distinct and unexplored type of policy network: while their reliance on prior contacts and dependence on resources such as information makes them loosely coupled to policy communities, interorganizational crisis networks also share the instability of network memberships and goal-oriented nature of issue networks. Thus, this study highlights the coexistence of bodies that are regularly involved in policymaking with newcomers in crisis management structures.

While this paper has a primarily theoretical emphasis, it is sensitive to the need for moving beyond metaphorical usages of policy networks. Therefore, its reflections are directly applicable to the empirically-focused studies that dominate this field. As such works have already operationalized the idea of crisis networks by using social network analysis, this paper will use empirical evidence merely to illustrate its theoretical arguments.

This study develops its theoretical insights by examining academic papers, press articles, and reports pertaining to two climate-related crises, namely the 2021 floodings in Central Europe and the 2019 response to Cyclones Idai and Kenneth. This strategy deviates from the tendency in crisis management studies to use single case studies, which has limited the identification of common patterns across episodes, and allows for

comparing how countries with different crisis management capacities handle climate-related incidents. Both threats demanded urgent coordinated action by networks of state and non-state actors under conditions of uncertainty: their nature as typical representations of transboundary crisis networks maximizes the applicability of the arguments in this paper to other structures of this kind. These reflections are relevant for theorists and practitioners alike, considering the advantages of understanding the functioning of crisis management arrangements.

Data, frames, and decision-making in Brazil’s subnational context

Catarina Segatto (Universidade de São Paulo)

Fernanda Lima-Silva (Universidade de São Paulo)

A growing body of studies has been discussing the use of data in informing decision-making. This article aims to contribute to this debate by analyzing how data influences the development and use of specific frames in complex contexts featured by crises and in multilevel public policies.

This study analyzes Brazil’s case, a federal country featured by public policies that involve federal coordination, decentralized provision, and state-local relations. Since the return to democratization in the 1980s, Brazil has gone through an intense decentralization process. This process of decentralization was followed by a strengthening of the coordination role of the federal government in recent decades. At the same token, Brazilian subnational governments have assumed a growing role in implementing and providing public policies, which increased their responsibilities and powers, as well as pushed for an increase in subnational state capacities. However, studies show that there are remarkable variations in the patterns of national coordination in the different public policy fields, as well as in state-local relations, a result of the interplay between the national coordination scheme and contextual aspects, such as state capacity, previous legacies, and political-institutional contexts.

This study seeks to better grasp how data influences decision-making at the subnational level by analyzing how data is used by actors to frame specific problems, ideas, and policies. This study explores the interactions between state and non-state actors and intergovernmental relations in this process in moments of crisis. The empirical analysis is based on a longitudinal case study on implementing the Civil Protection and Defense public policy, a field featured by weak national coordination, in the state of Acre/Brazil. The analysis of this state’s experience is valuable since it has experienced multiple crises connected to recurrent and intense fluvial floods in the last decades, which disproportionately affects the most vulnerable population, and, in response, conducted an intense process of institutional and data-driven transformations to tackle the crises and the socio-environmental problems associated with them. Based on the analysis of research data collected by documents and semi-structured interviews with state-level bureaucrats, the work investigates how the production, circulation, and usage of flood-related data influence the development of frames on crisis and their socio-environmental problems.

Navigating crisis: innovations, resilience, and governance in Brazil's social policies during the COVID-19 pandemic

Camila Nastari Fernandes (Federal University of São Paulo)

Rogerio Schlegel (Federal University of São Paulo)

During crises, such as health and environmental emergencies, governments are compelled to act quickly and make decisions rapidly. In such periods, policymakers have greater independence from the structural and environmental constraints affecting their communities. They can either reinforce their preferences around specific interests (BERNHARD, 2015, p. 978) or use the situation as an opportunity to trigger innovations (MCGUIRK et al., 2020). The paper discusses both possibilities, exploring how the COVID-19 pandemic's acute phase, which lasted from 2020 to 2022, allowed Brazilian municipalities to adopt innovative measures and resilient strategies for governance in social policies.

Previous analyses have shown that the Brazilian federal response to contain the virus was disorganized and ineffective during the Bolsonaro administration (CASTRO et al., 2021). There was a lack of a clear strategy and a denial of the seriousness of the situation (BARBIERA et al., 2020; ABRUCIO et al., 2020). Against this backdrop, sub-national governments, municipalities and states, not only took the lead but also exhibited a heightened degree of autonomy, actively seeking regional and local solutions. Furthermore, social policies to address the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic (predominantly health, education, and social assistance) operate within sectoral systems characterized by varying levels of consolidation. Although these policies are interconnected and interdependent in addressing social challenges, they function within separate sectors that have limited communication, resulting in poor articulation and synergy, especially for vulnerable families.

In this complex coordination landscape amid the health crisis, our work aims to pinpoint key factors influencing governmental synergy, both vertically (within the federal system) and horizontally (in interactions among sectorial policies). We also investigate how policymakers exhibited resilience in response to challenges and assess the extent to which innovation played a role in reshaping social policies during the pandemic. Our ongoing research takes the local level as a focal point to understand how multilevel governance performed. We devised the Integrated Social Governance Index (IGSI) to gauge combined effectiveness in three social policy sectors – health, education, and social assistance – in Brazil's most populous cities (>150,000 inhabitants) before the pandemic. The index revealed a limited synergy: correlation coefficients between areas peaked at 0.498, and a comparison of the first quartile with higher burdens in each area showed a 60% recurrence rate among municipalities. Preliminary findings of our in-depth investigation in nine cities suggest that the withdrawal of federal coordination fostered horizontal collaboration within and among cities but left a gap that might have hindered the best possible outcomes.

W11 / The Politics of Governing Crises: Understanding the Complex Linkage between Crises and Policy Processes

Chair : Giliberto Capano (Università di Bologna)

Second Chair : Philippe Zittoun (ENTPE - LAET - University of Lyon)

Session 5Crisis as an opportunity for Policy Innovation

Friday, June 28th 09:00 to 12:15 (AULA 22)

Discussants

Nicolai De Wulf (Universiteit Gent)

Rogerio Schlegel (Federal University of São Paulo)

Governing crisis in Latin America during COVID-19 pandemic: State capacities, leadership, and policy-making

Nelson Cardozo (Universidad Argentina de la Empresa)

Policy analysis has evolved from its original rationalist and positivist formulation, incorporating nonlinear elements such as complexity, external perturbations, non-objective aspects, or uncertainty into new theories. In the case of Latin America, the traditional conception of the public policy process in the region emphasizes the decisionist imprint centered on the executives, the lack of instances of deliberation and confrontation of evidence, or the existence of bureaucracies with deficits in professionalization. This has an impact on the quality of policies and is raised by the literature as part of the problems of development in the region. However, this was challenged by the great capacity for response to the COVID-19 pandemic shown by some Latin American governments. Countries such as Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay demonstrated high capacity and effectiveness in measures to contain the contagion, the deployment of health policies, or measures to counteract the economic effects of lockdowns.

This paper will focus on the governance of the pandemic in the countries of Latin America based on empirical evidence, to propose new hypotheses of public management in times of crisis. The questions that this work attempts to answer are the following: To what extent did the COVID-19 pandemic introduce changes in the public policy process in the region? How did crises present an opportunity to innovate in government agencies? What role did ideas, political leadership capabilities, and coordination of the different levels of government play in the success of the responses to the pandemic?

This work will conduct a comparison among the Southern Cone countries (Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay) considering the two major dimensions of the responses to the pandemic: 1) Non-health policy measures (administration of lockdowns, restrictions on social life, telework, implementation of transfers to affected sectors, among others); and 2) Health policy measures (equipment acquisitions, vaccination campaigns, equipment distribution, among others). For this purpose, the results of crisis management will be contrasted based on four basic indicators: a) Number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants; b) Percentage of the population vaccinated as of December 2022; c) Percentage of the population reached by transfers to the affected; and d) Variation in the school enrollment rate between 2019 and 2022 at the initial level. The hypothesis is that the better performance of the mentioned indicators demonstrates more effective crisis management. The variables that impact the implementation of responses to the pandemic that the work will analyze are a) the concentration of power in the executives (type of leadership, legislative majority, and the territorial distribution of federal/unitary power); b) the type of welfare regime (liberal, statist, or mixed) and the articulation of the health system; and c) the functional capacity of the civil service in each country.

Finally, this paper will discuss the two major opposing perspectives on crisis management raised in the literature. On the one hand, the more technical-bureaucratic conception focuses its analysis on the reinforcement of government capacities and an improvement in public management, pointing out the opportunities for change that the governance of an unprecedented crisis presented. On the other hand, the perspectives focused on democratic politics highlight the more controversial elements of pandemic

administration, such as the concentration of power in the executives, the restriction of basic freedoms, or the lack of discussion that presented much of the policy process in the period. These perspectives refer to a classic discussion throughout the theory of public policies: the dichotomy of technical rationality versus democratic rationality.

W11 / The Politics of Governing Crises: Understanding the Complex Linkage between Crises and Policy Processes

Chair : Giliberto Capano (Università di Bologna)

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Session 6

Friday, June 28th 14:00 to 16:00 (AULA 22)

Conclusions and Prospective

Giliberto Capano (Università di Bologna)

Philippe Zittoun (ENTPE - LAET - University of Lyon)

Conclusions