

Resilience building during the management of the COVID-19 crisis in Lithuania: major breakthroughs and incremental change

Vitalis Nakrošis¹, Rasa Bortkevičiūtė²

This is a draft version of this paper. Please, do not share and cite without permission of authors.

Modern societies are facing an increasing number of transboundary systemic threats. The sudden spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has once again highlighted concerns about governments' capacity to deal with disruptions that go beyond routine crises and stressed the need for more resilient governance, which is able to absorb shocks, adapt and transform itself to be better prepared for future crises. Building on ideas of the new institutionalism, more specifically, the normative logic of appropriateness and the rational logic of consequentiality, we examine how different courses of action in changing political, policy and governance contexts lead to different mechanisms of resilience building. Based on the analysis of the Lithuanian case of COVID-19 crisis management in 2020, we argue that in environments where the logic of consequentiality was dominant, resilience was mostly strengthened as a result of major breakthroughs, stemming from fast and ambitious policy action from the center of government. In contrast, more incremental practices contributed to resilience building in professional environments, where the logic of appropriateness prevailed. We argue that, while the logic of consequentiality helps to strengthen resilience in the context of the turbulence at the time, the logic of appropriateness is especially important for ensuring its sustainability.

Keywords: resilience; mechanisms of change; new institutionalism; crisis; COVID-19; Lithuania

¹ Professor, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University, Vokiečių str. 10, Vilnius LT-01130, Lithuania. Email: vitalis.nakrosis@tspmi.vu.lt.

² PhD candidate, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University, Vokiečių str. 10, Vilnius LT-01130, Lithuania.