EUROPEAN MIGRATION CRISIS AS A CATALYST FOR GOVERNMENTAL TRANSFORMATION: THE CASE OF SLOVENIA

Danila Rijavec[1], Primož Pevcin[2]

Abstract

The European migration crisis, with its peak in 2015/16, was one of the largest transnational challenges facing the EU and has created significant tensions in national governments. Slovenia was one of the transit countries on the Western Balkans route and was therefore under immense pressure from the influx of migrants in a very limited period and, above all, at an unprepared moment. It was found that there was a lack of a holistic strategy to address the migration crisis and that the early warning function was very weak, resulting in ad hoc reactions by actors and stakeholders. Following the stated observations, the paper proposal at hand aims to explore how and to what extent the European migration crisis has served as a catalyst for change in the Slovenian government. These observations and analyses are based on a multiple case study approach and the application of the findings to the theory of triple-loop learning. The phases of organisational learning offered us an insight into the maturity of the situation in Slovenia, which showed the presence of single loop learning in the post-crisis phase. This means that standard procedures are used with limited adjustments to achieve the desired goals. The double- or triple- loop learning did not materialise. The research also provided us with a basis to map the main needs to cope with the migration crisis and cluster them into the nine priority areas. The indicated priority areas are: (1) clear and coordinated migration crisis management, (2) strengthening early warning capabilities and needs assessment, (3) strengthening existing international organizations, (4) strengthening existing collaborative work and structures, (5) adaptable and effective relief logistics, (6) capacity building, (7) learning across borders, (8) building trust and resilience, and (9) clear and coordinated humanitarian support. These priority areas serve as a basis for the development of a strategic roadmap for a holistic governance structure. The main academic contribution of the paper is that it takes a comprehensive and interdisciplinary look at Slovenia's crisis management and applies it to the proposed theory. Limitations of the research relate to the isolation of the migration peak, to the focus on only one crisis and only at one national level, and to the parallel study of all levels of governance. The originality of the paper lies in its interdisciplinary approach of looking at the complexity of the crisis from a national perspective and on developing a simplified strategic roadmap for future potential crises.

Points for practitioners

Practical implications include crisis response analysis, needs assessment and development of a strategic roadmap for effective decision-making and policy creation in future crisis situations.

Keywords

Crisis management, migration crisis, governmental transformation, Slovenia, strategic roadmap

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[1] Assistant, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration, Slovenia, danila.rijavec@fu.uni-lj.si
[2] Full Professor, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration, Slovenia, primoz.pevcin@fu.uni-lj.si

1. Introduction

Crises are a social construct defined by high threat, uncertainty, and urgency, and are typically perceived through a specific change in a system that necessitates immediate action, known as crisis management. The literature on crisis management in public administration has grown significantly, addressing the framework of crises, their various types, complexity, the significance of networks, leadership, learning from and during crises, and capacity building for crisis management. The number of studies has increased considerably in recent years, with previous contributions assessing and elaborating on critical crises such as migration crises, natural disasters, and terrorist attacks. Area studies usually cover most of the world, allowing for easier insight and generalization of conclusions. This is particularly important as crises become increasingly transnational. Despite acquired knowledge and skills, there is no simple solution and things can go wrong during crises, so the learning process must continue. Crisis operations will remain in the hands of public bureaucracy, relying on unchanged processes and flexibility of crisis management.

In 2015, Europe encountered one of its largest challenges in history: a surge in (unmanaged) migrant arrivals. According to Frontex (2017) data, between 2015 and 2017, the EU detected approximately 2.5 million illegal border crossings. Migrants travelled via various routes, primarily in the southern and south-eastern regions of the continent. Frontex identified eight main active migration routes. One such route was the Western Balkan migration route, established in 2015 due to the flow of migrants on the Eastern Mediterranean route. This route was mainly used by Syrian and Afghan nationals and began in Turkey, crossed the Aegean Sea, and entered the EU through Greece. From there, it continued through North Macedonia, Serbia, Hungary, and Austria before reaching destination countries like Germany or Sweden. After Hungary closed its border in late summer 2015, the migration flow shifted to Croatia and Slovenia. The latter became directly affected transit country from September 2015 to March 2016. Mass migration placed immense strain on national security and domestic operations in all affected countries.

The migration crisis 2015/16 has raised broader concerns about the government's ability to perform, adapt to changing situations quickly, and oversee decision-making. The situation in Slovenia required an ability to think, act and collaborate quickly, making difficult decisions and rapidly allocating resources. Bureaucratic and administrative processes needed to be simplified and altered, even in the face of long-standing obstacles. Sometimes these changes required new laws or regulations, as well as determination and direction from leaders; other times, change occurred naturally due to the circumstances. Emergency measures have resulted in the curtailment of civic freedoms and rights, leading to reduced in-person civic participation and limitations on access to information and freedom of expression. At times, institutional accountability by parliament and independent institutions has been very slow. These factors indicate that Slovenia needs to evaluate its performance not only in response to the migration crisis but also considering what the crisis has revealed about its pre-crisis performance. The crisis presents a terrible but significant opportunity for the government to act in new ways on an ongoing basis. The question is whether government will seize this opportunity or whether it will limit its dramatic responsiveness to the exceptional circumstances of this crisis until the next one arises. Following the stated observations, the paper proposal at hand aims to explore how and to what extent the European migration crisis has served as a catalyst for change in the Slovenian government. These observations and analyses are based on a

multiple case study approach and the application of the findings to the theory of triple-loop learning. Paper intends to answer following research questions: (1) what was the extent of organizational learning in government as a consequence of coping with migrant crisis?; and (2) which are the necessary elements that enable effective coping with migrant crisis?. The paper is organized as follows: first, short note is given on the presentation of theoretical framework and literature review. Afterwards, case study is presented on Slovenian government copying with migration crisis. Evidenced shortcomings serve as an input to the following chapter discussing necessary elements for governmental transformation, followed by concluding reflections.

2. Theoretical framework and literature review

Triple-loop learning is a concept in organizational learning literature that refers to a third order of organizational learning (Tosey, Visser and Saunders, 2012). It enables new learning strategies to be created to encourage complex problem-solving and increase the performance of organizations. Triple-loop learning involves transforming who we are by creating a shift in our context or point of view about ourselves. It is used to develop innovative and effective approaches to dealing with long-standing or complex issues. It involves questioning the very basis (learning frameworks and assumptions) through which single-loop and double-loop learning occur and influencing them to change. It improves how the system learns through deliberate changes or producing new learning structures, processes, and strategies. In a triple-loop learning process, a learner proceeds one step further and additionally questions values and normative beliefs underlying those factors, which in turn can lead to an understanding of how to change the way they learn. Triple-loop learning can help develop innovative and effective approaches to dealing with long-standing or complex issues. It enables individuals or organizations to determine how they need to be different to create transformational change. Triple-loop learning involves "learning how to learn" by reflecting on how we learn in the first place. This form of learning helps us to understand a great deal more about ourselves and others regarding beliefs and perceptions.

Although scholars and officials have learned a lot from past crises, it is important to be cautious when applying this knowledge to new situations. Crises are unpredictable and constantly changing, so relying solely on past experiences may not always lead to an effective response (Deverell, 2012). Christopher (2009) proposed three stages of organizational learning through operational improvements. The first stage, adaptive learning, responds to crises and reduces their impact. The second stage, single-loop learning, adapts standard operations to achieve goals. The third stage, double-loop learning, involves analysing past and current events to identify and address failures in standard operations. Foldy and Creed (1999) added a fourth stage, triple-loop learning, which involves reflecting on the learning process itself and re-evaluating the values that supported past actions (Rupčić, 2020).

As part of emergency preparedness, it's important to recognize the significance of structure and apply solutions while balancing the exploration of new knowledge with the utilization of existing knowledge. Due to the complexity of this task, researchers have proposed focusing on building resilience during acute crises. Learning should be an ongoing process that encompasses all phases of a crisis and allows for practice. Since uncertainty is inherent in crisis management, learning and crisis should work together in a dynamic process. This concept, known as "learning in crisis" (LiC), was introduced by Antonacopoulou and Sheaffer in 2013.

Previous research suggests that solutions, such as identifying relevant existing knowledge and selecting actors with the appropriate skills for an inclusive network, determining which learning processes should be allocated to specialists, and developing a monitoring and control system for ongoing learning to be effective (Moynihan, 2008). Centralization and openness are generally well-received principles in these processes, but they may also introduce new challenges (Schiffino et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2018). It is not possible to simply apply past solutions in their entirety due to the risk of false lessons (Moynihan, 2008). Instead, it is important to consider national differences (Baekkeskov, 2016; Christensen et al., 2016) and adopt an entrepreneurial approach to learning (Schiffino et al., 2017). Increased openness has a positive impact on organizational adaptation, with risk perception mediating the effect of exposure and changed behaviour, and institutional capacity supporting the overall adaptation model (Zhang et al., 2018). However, implementing these recommendations remains a challenge for public administrators. Transitioning from routine to flexible, open, and inclusive workflows requires an adaptive mindset along with the necessary skills and knowledge (Farazmand, 2007; Christensen et al., 2011; Persson et al., 2017;).

The literature acknowledges that there are significant obstacles to learning during all phases of crisis management and at all levels, including individual, organizational, and institutional. These barriers can be related to factors such as leadership style, knowledge and experience, interactions, management culture and tradition, and political pressures (Schiffino, Taskin & Donis et al, 2017; McCreight & Harrop, 2019). Additionally, as the decision-making process progresses, it can become isolated from situational constraints such as lack of capacity, knowledge and experience, rigidity due to information hygiene, risk of narrow focus, time constraints, and urgency of learning and acting beyond ordinary situations in an inter-organizational network. There may also be risks associated with political games and opportunism of leaders. However, clear task division and perception, coordinated and inclusive decision-making, and stable interpersonal relationships can help overcome these obstacles. Despite these barriers, there are still propositions about crisis-induced institutional learning that are worth considering. For example, certain types of crises, such as those that scrutinize security frameworks or new forms of crises that cannot be linked with past institutional learning, may lead to major policy changes when public and political pressure is lower (Moynihan, 2008; Nohrstedt, 2018; 't Hart, 2013).

The ability to effectively manage a crisis while maintaining high performance in daily operations is key to successfully handling an emerging crisis. This balance requires attention and can create tension. Crisis management procedures, which are used in acute and potentially infrequent situations, require specific training, preparation, facilitation, and leadership. At the same time, daily operations must remain highly uninterrupted (Boin & van Eeten, 2013). While crisis management should be adaptable, central bureaucracy often remains inflexible (Stark, 2014). Resilience is considered a response to crisis management and research indicates that an organization can only be resilient if it distinguishes between anticipation and attempt-learning (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Steen & Morsut, 2020; Leite & Hodgkinson, 2021).

However, the pursuit of efficiency and rationality - two key bureaucratic values - can impact resilience. It is up to stakeholders to foster an environment that balances efficiency and flexibility and prioritizes innovative crisis management (Stark, 2014; Stark, 2011). There is a relationship between organizational characteristics, processes, and resilience. Capacity must be structured to allow for the coexistence of various modus operandi. As risks increase, more research is needed on the relationship between organizational characteristics, processes, and

resilience (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Steen & Morsut, 2020). Throughout the crisis management cycle and the development of resilience (Howlett et al., 2018), legal constraints must also be considered (Stark, 2011). Various frameworks and metrics have been suggested to evaluate the effectiveness of crisis management (Schulman & Roe, 2011; McConnell, 2011). However, a review of the literature revealed a lack of research on crisis management in particular in smaller states, highlighting the need for further study in this area. The following research adds to this gap, by focusing on the capacity assessment of the level of readiness to face a transboundary crisis by Slovenian government when facing migration crisis. The capacity assessment is performed by using a Survey Tool (Boin et al., 2017), which structurally assesses the crisis management capacities of national levels retrospectively. The assessment model aims to gain a deeper understanding of EU transboundary crisis management.

3. Case study of crisis response in Slovenian government – results of the analysis and mapping of shortcomings

To comprehend the impact of the migration crisis on government institutions, it is useful to analyse how Slovenian government has reacted. The scope of these responses can provide insights into the severity of the crisis in terms of decision-making processes, service delivery, and public sector operations. The German policy of open borders and "asylum shopping", as referred by Niemann and Speyer (2018), led to direct Slovenian participation as a transit country, where the national government gathered a high degree of bundling power. Given its temporary nature, the national level tried to use its centralised strength to optimise border control, reception, and accommodation and to promote flow (see Rijavec and Pevcin, 2021).

Thus, Slovenia served as a transit country and had no interest in integrating migrants, nor did the migrants themselves. Public opinion on migration was not favorable towards migrants or the EU's common migration policy. The media depicted migrants as a security issue. Slovenia maintained open national borders and adopted a solidarity approach to the influx of migrants. However, its strategy was strictly controlled transit through a state-managed corridor. The primary challenge was logistical, which Slovenia addressed on an ad-hoc basis due to a lack of contingency planning. The urgency of the situation and lack of preparation led to centralized decision-making domestically. The establishment of reception and accommodation/crisis centers focused on the rapid passage of migrants made Slovenia a credible actor at the supranational level. However, it also supported this approach to avoid becoming a pocket country, which was not in its interest. Coordination was centralized by the Ministry of the Interior, resulting in a strong top-down orientation of decision-making. This provided some clarity but excluded the subnational level from contributing important aspects of crisis management. The subnational level was mainly responsible for fulfilling operational tasks related to the logistical aspect of the migration flow (more on this Rijavec and Pevcin, 2018; Rijavec, Štambuk and Pevcin, 2021).

Humanitarian organizations and international organizations played a significant role in managing the crisis. They responded immediately and worked continuously from the outset. Tensions arose mainly due to a lack of proper leadership, resulting in duplication of effort and disputes over responsibility for specific tasks. In Slovenia, these tensions were later addressed through the establishment of an umbrella organization. The unpreparedness and weakness of the system were evident in the collapse of border management. This was a major issue in neighbour country Croatia, which failed to meet fingerprinting requirements under the Eurodac Regulation and thus could

not comply with the Dublin Regulation. As the migration flow continued, this breakdown extended to Slovenia. It also contributed to regional tensions on the borders. A lack of communication, shared knowledge, and information appears to have been a common underlying cause. Refusing to cooperate across borders to address a transnational crisis does not bode well for a positive outcome.

A capacity assessment[3] based on the Survey Tool methodology revealed that Slovenia's ability to handle mass migration, particularly in relation to transit pressures, is relatively underdeveloped. Several factors, including political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental, and media factors, shape the dynamic "corridor." While Slovenia actively supported migrant transit, it did not address the potential for intense transit pressures in preparations for the crisis. This left national levels to respond on an ad-hoc basis using existing rescue capacities and frameworks, such as the National Earthquake Protection and Rescue Plan. Despite the existence of legal frameworks and resources for joint decision-making, the actual implementation of crisis management is left to individual actors and stakeholders at national and local levels. There was a lack of cross-border cooperation and joint action. According to the evidence and observations, learning related to crises was inadequate. A capacity assessment revealed that there was a lack of accountability during the crisis. Currently, there are no measures in place to track actions taken before and during a crisis. The national level has not been held accountable for its actions during a crisis and has not provided any public explanation for its performance. Long-term learning has also been limited, necessitating a need for extensive reforms to enhance crisis management capabilities. Slovenia released a migration strategy 2019 that covers legal and illegal migration, international protection, integration, and security and financial aspects. The Aliens Act was also amended, primarily to limit and discourage immigration, indicating a lack of interest in implementing pull factors. Nonetheless, Slovenia still lacks a comprehensive approach to migration and the capacity to address migration crises from a cross-border perspective.

There is no solid evidence of learning related to crises in Slovenia. While past knowledge is valuable, it is not enough to effectively manage future crises due to their dynamic nature and the uncertainty and urgency they entail. During the crisis, the country focused on adaptive learning by responding to the immediate crisis and attempting to reduce its impact. Some minor operational improvements were made based on logistical experience. As a result, we found evidence of single loop learning in the post-crisis phase. Slovenia maintains standard operations but adapts them to achieve its goals. However, this is limited, as evidenced by the changes to the Aliens Act in Slovenia. Double or triple loop learning have not occurred yet. We would like to emphasize the importance of building resilience and incorporating the concept of learning during crises. Given the known challenges and uncertainties associated with crisis-related learning, there should be opportunities for practical exercises to enhance learning and crisis management simultaneously.

Despite this, not much has changed at the supranational (EU) level. We believe that the EU should re-evaluate its migration strategy to ensure it is effective across all member states, regardless of their individual national preferences. Small states are at greater risk due to their location along the EU's external border. These countries must maintain their efforts to protect national and supranational borders, comply with international and national conventions, and implement solidarity measures. As small states have limited resources, capacities, and strategic

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[3] More on this see Rijavec (2022).

plans, the EU must play a more active role and provide stronger support mechanisms. Actors and stakeholders must begin preparations as soon as possible. Effective policy cannot be developed during a crisis but must be created during calm periods when there is sufficient time and capacity and a clear goal of harmonizing migration crisis management.

Since achieving full harmonization of migration policy at the EU level is challenging, policymakers should instead focus on the push and pull factors that drive migration. This includes not only push factors such as political instability, war, and climate change; but also, the openness and appeal of European societies to potential migrants and differences in national migration policies (e.g., some member states have open borders while others prioritize protecting their sovereignty and citizens). To prevent future migration crises like the one in 2015/16, policies should be determined at the supranational level and not be subject to the whims of individual countries. This "individualism" played a significant role in triggering the 2015/16 migration crisis along the Western Balkan route.

It is also important to consider the size of states. Small states like Slovenia have limited (institutional) capacity, which becomes more apparent during crises, making them more reliant on the EU and joint policymaking than larger states in situations like the migration crisis. This case study demonstrated how a small state located at a strategic entry point to the EU and Schengen area faced a dilemma: should it follow EU rules or its national interests? The crisis was imported and represented a broader EU problem but primarily affected member states along the migration route. With limited action from the EU, member states had to manage the crisis independently, often using all available resources and only developing strategies at the last minute. Small states are more vulnerable to such crises than larger states when they escalate into major problems. For example, Slovenia had to use almost all its resources, even granting police powers to the military, to manage the migrant influx. This unprecedented "ultima ratio" solution posed a political challenge with far-reaching consequences. Policy decoupling is therefore more challenging for smaller EU member states as their size and capacities limit their ability to take individual policy actions. Additionally, their strategic influence is lower, reducing their scope for policy decisions in critical situations.

Small states also face constraints related to systems learning. In addition to a general lack of human capacity, their size contributes to the potential lack of knowledge and expertise in specific areas, which can be difficult to acquire. Maintaining the separation between politics and administration also presents challenges, limiting learning processes to the initial phase. According to the literature, small states manage crises by relying more on their ability to improvise and to be flexible in problem-solving (Högenauer, Sarapuu & Trimikliniotis, 2021). The evidence presented supports this argument, as we see limited systemic learning and a high degree of flexibility in addressing ongoing and potential crises. Existing research also highlights the limited impact of domestic strategies in small states in managing crises, with the international system playing a relatively more significant role. This means that domestic strategies in small states require more support from external factors than in larger states, making supranational strategies, actions, and support crucial (Bohle & Jacoby, 2017). Therefore, the lack of a supranational response, as described in the analysis above, both worsened the crisis and hindered the national level's ability to manage it.

These generalizations apply to small transit countries but are limited when applied to destination countries for migrants. For example, during the 2015/16 migration crisis, destination countries were either larger or more economically advanced, such as Germany or Sweden. With their larger populations, available economic and human resources, they are less likely to face capacity constraints like those experienced by the countries studied. This further supports the argument against a decoupled structure as there is more capacity for collaboration and mutual understanding. Destination countries face different challenges, such as long-term planning and monitoring and stronger integration policies. However, the proposed shift towards a network orientation should be cross-national, allowing for some generalizations.

4. Discussion and potential implications for Slovenian government transformation

One of the contributions of this research is the development of strategic roadmap created from the need's clusters examined in the research. Certainly, there can be different aftermaths of the migration crisis, but in this research, we have identified the main shortcomings. We must emphasize that the roadmap presented has mainly considered the perspective of crisis managers, actors, and stakeholders who play an important role in managing crises. It indeed advocates a people-centered approach but does not elaborate on the tools to ensure respect for human rights and existing international conventions. This is an important aspect that should really be at the core of crisis management. We therefore call for further research in other social science fields to develop a disciplinary approach.

The fundamental objective in developing strategic roadmap is to ensure an effective and timely response to any major migration crisis. Developing the roadmap is justified in the needs assessment arising from the case studies. Benefits of its realization are applicable to the first crisis management phase, which is the preparatory phase which is urgently necessary given the high risk of future crises. The practical contribution of it are nine detailed recommendations with specific guidelines for implementation. Given the broader structure outlined, the strategic roadmap could also be applied to other types of crises, although developing on holistic roadmap for governance represents a very difficult task. On the one hand, ensuring crisis response and management has its own difficulties, which are addressed below, but require much coordination and training. On the other hand, it is easier for countries and the EU to bypass some of the human rights or international conventions but supporting their duties in crisis time. Therefore, we must reiterate that a holistic governance structure must put people at the center and emerge from the perspective of needs.

Based on the needs clusters we have examined in this study; we propose nine priority areas for improvement at all levels of government. The proposed strategic roadmap should:

1. *Develop a clear and coordinated migration crisis system:* With an objective to ensure a coordinated crisis management in case of large-scaled migration crisis we propose three concrete recommendations. Firstly, a crisis manager with expertise in handling various types of crises, including transboundary and transnational ones, should be appointed at the national level and maintain an apolitical stance. This position should promote good governance by fostering strong relationships with relevant domestic and international stakeholders and actors. Secondly, an effective crisis management system should be established and regularly updated and

trained. It should include a contingency plan with well-defined responsibilities and the ability to scale according to the specific crisis. Regular training, at least once or twice a year, should be provided to all public servants involved to standardize procedures. Continuous modernization should be ensured by adapting to changing situations and incorporating evidence-based practices. Lastly, the bureaucratic structure should allow for flexibility in emergency response by enabling the crisis management system to operate outside of the traditional administrative framework and function within a parallel system.

2. *Strengthen early warning capabilities and needs assessment:* With an objective to ensure early situational assessing prior and during the crisis we propose five concrete recommendations. Firstly, methods and tools should be developed to enable decentralized assessment of needs and foster strong relationships and trust among actors and stakeholders. Secondly, the current early detection mechanism should be enhanced and contextual information from sources such as the Intelligence and Security Agency, International Organization for Migrations, and humanitarian organizations should be centralized. Thirdly, an evidence-based practice should be established that incorporates the latest scientific evidence into professional decision-making and supports the implementation of modern approaches to crisis management. This promotes continuous development and improvement. Fourthly, methods for characterizing initial demand should be developed in conjunction with efforts to enhance existing early detection systems. Lastly, support should be provided for the implementation of interventions and the assessment of the early warning system at the end of a crisis. Opportunities for learning based on evidence-based practices should also be made available.

3. *Strengthen existing supranational organizations:* With an objective to ensure transboundary approach to transboundary crisis we propose two concrete recommendations. International organizations should be given more authority at the supranational level with well-defined expectations, tasks, and responsibilities. Tools for assessment should be provided and strong connections with lower administrative levels should be maintained. Also, offer regular training and knowledge assistance to global organizations and promote collaboration with national-level participants and interested parties.

4. *Strengthen existing collaborative work and structures: With an objective to e*nsure a stable and efficient network of shared processes we propose the following concrete recommendations. Enhance the communication of information between interested parties and guarantee fair exchange of information. Guarantee availability of databases pertinent to managing crises. Supply appropriate tools for managing tasks to all interested parties.

5. *Strengthen adaptive and effective relief logistics:* To ensure disaster management supply chains that are cost-effective, prompt, scalable and efficient we propose four concrete recommendations. Firstly, create a strong network of interested parties to exchange and disseminate knowledge, information, and best practices. Establish a well-defined allocation of duties within this network. Secondly, create resources to aid in making strategic choices, including modeling and simulation tools. Thirdly, develop an open budget strategy that includes distinct cost centers and a blueprint for managing financial transactions. Lastly, create a contingency plan to increase the number of human resources through methods such as public works programs, volunteer networks, partnerships between public and private sectors, contracting strategies, and outreach to public employees.

6. *Strengthen the capacity: With an objective for* capacity building and promoting the ability of people, organizations, and society to manage migration crisis we propose two recommendations. Encourage the development of abilities by involving the public, participants, and interested parties in a systematic effort to

foster and enhance collective capacity. Enhance the understanding, expertise, and capabilities of the public, participants, and interested parties in dealing with crises. Create evaluation metrics and instruments.

7. *Promote cross-border learning:* To ensure crisis management is not limited by borders provide resources to facilitate collaboration across borders and encourage the development of a networked structure. Further, offer resources to facilitate the distribution of information and tasks among various levels. Guarantee the spread of acquired knowledge across borders and supply education.

8. *Build trust and resilience:* To ensure a resilient society that builds on same values and trust encourage and guarantee clear and honest communication through a dependable, fair, and efficient exchange of information among crisis managers, the public, and the press. Also, create techniques to encourage collaborative methods for the distribution of information.

9. *Ensure a clear and coordinated humanitarian support:* With an objective to provide safe and human crisis management that is efficient, scalable, and collaborative we propose four concrete recommendations. Firstly, create a long-lasting, overarching humanitarian institution. Secondly, guarantee a distinct separation of tasks to prevent repetition and allow for effortless expansion. Thirdly, encourage interaction and collaboration throughout the network. Lastly, aim for a common comprehension of a crisis by utilizing modeling and simulations to disseminate information.

5. Conclusion

The paper at hand explores the impact of the European migration crisis on the Slovenian government and how this crisis potentially served as a catalyst for change. The crisis, which peaked in 2015/16, created significant tensions in national governments and Slovenia, as one of the transit countries on the Western Balkans route, was under immense pressure from the influx of migrants. To address the first research question, i.e. on the extent of organizational learning in government as a consequence of coping with migrant crisis, the investigation pointed a lack of a holistic strategy to address the migration crisis and that the early warning function was very weak, resulting in ad hoc reactions by actors and stakeholders. The analysis, based on a multiple case study approach and the application of the findings to the theory of triple-loop learning, showed the presence of single-loop learning during the post-crisis phase. This means that standard procedures were used with limited adjustments to achieve desired goals, while double- or triple-loop learning did not materialize. For the second research question, i.e. on the necessary elements that enable effective coping with migrant crisis, the investigation enabled the identification of nine priority areas for addressing the migration crisis, including clear and coordinated migration crisis management, strengthening early warning capabilities and needs assessment, strengthening existing international organizations and collaborative work and structures, adaptable and effective relief logistics, capacity building, learning across borders, building trust and resilience, and clear and coordinated humanitarian support. These priority areas serve as a basis for developing a strategic roadmap for holistic governance in response to future migration crises.

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