The Contextual Determinants of Achieving Robust Crisis Governance: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis of European Networked Localities During the COVID-19 Crisis

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Abstract: Scholars of robust crisis governance identified a broad set of factors that are conducive to it, including negotiated societal intelligence, hybridity, and interactive multi-level governance. It remains unclear, however, which of those conditions are necessary or sufficient to achieve robustness in the face of turbulence. Instead of including all those broad factors (several of which have weak relevance in CEE) simultaneously, our analysis focuses on a few basic features of governance that seem equally relevant for our diverse group of European localities. We ask the question: How does the number and diversity of actors, the formalisation of interactions, and the choice between (hierarchical and network) governance modes affect the robustness of local crisis response initiatives? We approach this question through a qualitative comparative analysis of 35 public value solutions in 18 European networked localities during the COVID-19 crisis. Our results are expected to shed light on the necessary and sufficient conditions for robust governance at the local level across diverse contexts, including those in CEE, where MLG, democratic hybridity, and negotiated societal intelligence do not manifest in the same way as in our Western European cases.