Ideal-type Coordination and Garbage Can Dynamics in Romania's Ukrainian Refugee Response

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Abstract: This study examines how hierarchical and emergent coordination logics interacted in Romania's response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis between 2022 and 2024. The analysis employs qualitative document analysis of fifteen governmental, inter-agency, and assessment reports, structured around six analytical dimensions and three temporal phases. Luther Gulick's integrated executive model serves as an ideal type for hierarchical coordination; the garbage can model provides a framework for identifying adaptive and emergent decision-making patterns. The findings indicate that Romania established hierarchical coordination structures rapidly, but these structures could not cover the full scope of the crisis. The paper proposes an interpretive sequence linking bounded rationality to hierarchy's design limits, the emergence of a design-implementation gap, temporal misalignment, and distributed coordination. Informal solutions that emerged during the crisis were subsequently incorporated into the formal framework through a process termed reverse legitimation. Romania's crisis governance is better understood as polycentric rather than purely hierarchical, with institutional attention modulating the relative prominence of formal and emergent coordination. The study contributes an interpretive framework for analyzing crisis governance as a system where hierarchical design and adaptive practice coexist.

Keywords: crisis governance; garbage can model; hierarchical coordination; polycentric governance; refugee response; Romania

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