



LEGITIMULT

WP 2 – From Crisis Management to Legitimate Crisis Governance in MLG Systems

Lead beneficiary: ULEI

Participants: Eurac; UiB; UAnt; FUBe

Start month: M1; **End month:** M36

Goal: Identification of the trade-offs between democratic legitimacy and crisis governance and their public perception.

Governments faced a series of fundamental trade-offs between democratic legitimacy and effectiveness during the crisis governance. WP 2 studies the impact of MLG on the legitimacy of crisis governance in the Covid-19 pandemic. Thereby, it focuses on citizens' perception of the legitimacy of the crisis measures. Conducting a vignette survey experiment in a set of European countries, WP 2 sheds light on factors that shape citizens' perceptions of the legitimacy of different Covid-19 measures. Finally, based on the results this work package formulates good practices on the interaction between different dimensions of democracy and crisis governance.

Objectives

Objective 1: Identify the trade-offs democratic governments face in the Covid-19 pandemic

From time to time, governments are confronted with external shocks that shake their foundations. During the past two decades, governments worldwide have experienced the severe impacts of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the 2008 global financial crisis and, very recently, the Covid-19 pandemic. In the very early stages of a crisis, in moments of high uncertainty and fear, citizens demand a swift and adequate response from the authorities. But after the first shock is over, democratic governments' leeway for doing 'whatever it takes' dwindles and citizens demand measures that reflect core democratic values, accountability and legitimacy.

In crisis situations, democratic governments are hence confronted with a fundamental dilemma: how to act in a state of emergency without becoming dictatorial? *How, in other words, can democratic governments ensure minimal levels of legitimate crisis governance?* Democratic leaders must deal with a series of fundamental trade-offs. There is for example the liberty-security trade-off. To contain the spread of the Covid-19 virus, governments need to impose for security and safety reasons restrictions on the mobility of its citizens, thereby curbing the fundamental liberties of its citizens. Another trade-off democratic governments make is between security and efficiency as governments decide how far they will go to impose restrictions on the economy and market for the sake of containing the virus.



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Objective 2: Conceptualise further the effect of multilevel governance decision-making during the Covid-19 crisis

Empirical comparative research on European government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic has found variations in government responses across government types and capacities. One of the most important factors driving responses is the degree of multilevel governance in the architecture of the state. In the early stages, these studies found that more layered national systems of governance lengthened the time it took to implement measures to contain the spread of the virus. Federal states with more centres of democratic decision-making required more coordination costs than unitary countries. It seems however that in later stages of the pandemic, the proximity of democratic decision-making to citizens benefited the acceptance among citizens of the severe measures.

This WP combines the two objectives to produce an encompassing conceptual and theoretical framework on the relationships between multilevel governance and legitimate crisis governance. As European states represent a variety of complex multilevel governance systems, we will specifically focus on the multilevel governance dimension in our discussion. We aim to capture this variety as an important independent and intervening variable and develop several expectations on the trade-offs concerning legitimate crisis governance.

This WP is conducted in close cooperation with other WPs. First, the conceptual and theoretical framework is tailored to the overall research design developed in WP 1 and employed by other substantive WPs (3-6). Based on extensive literature reviews, this WP develops, in close interaction with WP 1, the key research design components. Second, together with the teams working within WPs 3-6, ULEI develops and further operationalises the trade-offs that are specific to the domains under study in those WPs. Finally, WP 2 will work together with WPs 7-8, where the project's findings are prepared for societal impact and dissemination, in order to make transferable and usable the key concept of legitimate crisis governance to policy makers and the broader audience.

Description of work and methodology

ULEI conducts a systematic literature review of Covid-19 government responses papers and brings together all published knowledge on government responses to Covid-19. Specifically, we assess the effect of multilevel governance in these studies. The positioning of the concept of legitimate crisis governance requires a strong founding on studies of political and administrative legitimacy, particularly their insights on input-throughput-output legitimacy. A broad survey of the legitimacy literature, focused within crisis management literature and public administration, studies is conducted.

After, a conceptual framework is developed, which specifies the conditions under which crisis governance is seen as legitimate and how it is related to varying degrees of multilevel governance. In order not to miss confounding variables and to account for heterogeneity in the models that in other WPs will be employed, the paper offers a multifaceted perspective on legitimate crisis governance. Next to exploring the effects of MLG, the paper develops a framework that assigns factors such as electoral/party system, structure of central government, administrative styles, trust, and citizen participation a place in this framework.



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As a further check on the robustness of the conceptual framework and set of expectations that are developed before, ULEI – with support from Eurac, UiB, UAnt and FUBe – conducts a number of qualitative case studies and survey experiments in selected states, both at national as well as regional levels, to map how governments at different levels of governance have actually dealt with the shock of Covid-19 and to what extent citizens perceived those responses as legitimate. Through the use of process tracing, QCA analyses, and survey experiments, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks are validated.

As a final contribution, WP 2 discusses with WPs 3-6 their main findings and assesses which trade-offs are visible during crisis governance. In particular, the focus is on good practices in each WP and how the different dimensions of democracy interact in the governance of a particular crisis. The findings of the trade-off discussion result in a final book chapter and a clear set of policy recommendations developed with WP 7 on legitimate crisis governance.

Deliverables of WP 2

D2.1 Working paper: literature review and methodology

D2.2 Submission of Peer-Reviewed Article: Qualitative case study reports of selected countries and regions

D2.3 Submission of draft book chapter for edited volume



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