THE ANALYSIS OF A PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CRISIS SITUATION: THE CASE OF MIGRATIONS IN SLOVENIA

Danila Rijavec[*]
Primož Pevcin[**]

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Abstract

This paper fits into the ex-post migration crisis of 2015-16 dialogue and offers added value through its complex transboundary perspective while bringing in the national perspective of a transboundary crisis. After the largest migration flow, lacking supranational coordination and governance, Slovenia's coping strategy was oriented towards logistical mechanisms to keep up the pressure and move the flow forward. Given the scale of the crisis, such a setting lacked a rapid response at the local level, and the high dimensionality and nonlinear interactions caused pink noise. Using a case study method, the paper argues that crisis management moved backwards and had a decoupled structure. It also calls for a more inclusive multi-level crisis management structure and investment in existing international organizations. Indeed, if the crisis interactions had taken place globally, the crisis would be less dimensional and more linear, thus avoiding pink noise.

Keywords: *public administration, crisis management, migrations, Slovenia*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the period following 2015, European countries began to face one of the biggest challenges in history, namely the increasing influx of migrants. Data from Frontex (2018) show that in the three years, from 2015 to 2017, some 2.5 million illegal border crossings were detected in the EU. The migrants used different routes, mostly along the southern and south-eastern part of the continent - according to Frontex (2017), there were (and still are) eight main active migration routes. One of these routes is the so-called Western Balkans migration route, which was created in 2015, mainly because of the migrant flow on the Eastern Mediterranean route (Frontex, 2016) and was composed mainly of Syria and Afghan nationals (Frontex, 2015).

Slovenia became the country on this route, as it was diverted after the Hungarian border was closed in the summer of 2015. Afterwards, the migrant wave shifted from Serbia to Croatia, then to Slovenia and from there to Austria and Germany. This transit route started in Turkey, continuing through Greece and Macedonia to Serbia (BBC News, 2015), but the Hungarian

[*] Danila Rijavec, PhD candidate, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration, Gosarjeva ulica 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia, telephone: +38641895258, E-mail: danila.rijavec@gmail.com

[**] Primož Pevcin, PhD, associate professor, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Public Administration, Gosarjeva ulica 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia, telephone: +38651677010, E-mail: Primoz.Pevcin@fu.uni-lj.si

border closure later diverted the flow to Slovenia. This flow started in September 2015 and was stopped in March 2016. This was a result of the EU-Turkey agreement, which resulted in the official closure of the Western Balkans route until then (European Commission, 2016).

The specificity of this flow is its scale, as about 0.5 million individuals have migrated through Slovenia in this 6-month period, which can be determined relatively accurately, based on the above-mentioned figures on illegal border crossings in the EU. Out of the total migration flow, only around 500 individuals applied for international protection (Eurostat, 2016). Moreover, not only the scale but also the nature of the migration was quite specific, as it was almost completely uncontrolled, which caused an enormous administrative burden for the countries, affected by this route. Those were mainly due to the problems in implementing the Dublin Convention (see e. g. Trauner, 2016). Indeed, the political circumvention of this route by some Member States in 2015 was the main trigger, reinforcing one of the pull factors of migration to the destination countries in the Western and Northern Europe, where the countries on the Western Balkans route were only transit countries.

This paper focuses on the analysis and evaluation of decoupled policy-making and the layering of actions and decision-making at all levels of government during the migration crisis. The existing literature, focusing on organizational research, has long been interested in crises and crisis management, and this paper intends to add to this field of study, by focusing on the example of transboundary crisis, where governments and different layers of governance are involved. As crises are infrequent events, we follow the common logic of the descriptive and prescriptive approach. We utilize the configurational approach and focus on crisis outcomes as a combination of factors shaping it (Pearson & Clair, 1998; Bundy et al, 2017).

The value-added of the research is mitigating migration crisis from the complexity perspective and focusing on the national perspective of a transboundary crisis. Previous research has pointed to the failure of multi-level governance (Rijavec & Pevcin, 2018), but it has not assessed why and how stratification and decoupling of policy and decision-making occurred in the management of the migration crisis, which in its scope is a transboundary crisis (Boin, 2019; Rijavec & Pevcin, 2018). Furthermore, the existing literature has addressed the necessity to analyse single crises, measures used and impacts evolved (Filipović et al, 2018).

Thus, the present research aims to bridge these gaps. In this context, the analysis has its practical reasons, i.e. to involve also subnational level, limited to Slovenia as a transit country for migrants on the Western Balkans route, and the focus is on the developments during the six months, from October 2015 to March 2016, when the crisis was at its peak (OECD, 2017). This limitation still enables generalization of results obtained, as the hierarchical governance structure is addressed; at the same time, the focus remains on a single transboundary crisis.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the contemporary discontinuity systems and continuous change-driven organizations, crises are more norms, rather than exceptions, leading to actors' and

stakeholders' preparedness necessarily at a high level in any crisis management phase. Furthermore, the nature of interactions between causal factors and dimensionality of casual systems have changed over the years, becoming much more complex. Their complexity comes with an increased number of interactions, causing high dimensional systems and changed interactions that are changing the known, or anticipated linear structure (Dooley & Van de Ven, 1999), causing tensions with unalike subsystems (Zahariadis, 2012). Furthermore, contemporary complex crises tend to fail with the linear cause-and-effect approach as they are too rigid and fail to adapt to the constantly changing system, sensitive to the internal and external conditions (Dooley & Van de Ven, 1999).

Specifically, when addressing the crisis management of public administration, one must acknowledge also the prevailing fundamental values of public administration, i.e. rationality and efficiency. This reflects the situation that crisis management is bound within a rather inflexible system, strongly based on Weber's theory. Acute crises require different management, planning, leadership, training, etc. Therefore, the success of crisis management depends more on the individual innovation of the actors or stakeholders, rather than on system innovation. Therefore, innovation lies in the ability to maintain parallel environments of efficiency and flexibility (Stark, 2011; Stark, 2014; Boin & van Eeten, 2013).

The response to an occurring crisis is normally a subsystem of an administrative level or entity, seen as a complex system with different actors, and boundaries are not clearly defined. Such a transboundary approach usually helps to understand the contemporary global threat of complex transboundary crisis, which by nature surpass geographical, policy, public-private, cultural, legal and other existing boundaries and bring uncertainty to decision-makers. The transboundary settling of a crisis shows that the existing domestic political-administrative crisis settling is not enough. Regardless of the transboundary shape and type, they come in, they tend to share multiple domains and multiple manifestations, among many national levels, where it is usually impossible to define a single geographical location. Such is even more intense as multiple actors with conflicting responsibilities are included and their responsibilities and boundaries among them are not clear so decision-makers lack ready-made solutions (Boin, 2019). When a crisis exceeds either national or policy-domain boundaries, the general questions become hard to answer and deliver more substantial challenges to crisis management, such as crisis sense-making, coordination and legitimacy (Ansell et al, 2010).

Dooley and Van de Ven (1999) defined such instances as "pink noise" when there is a high dimensionality of casual systems, but the interactions between causal factors are nonlinear. An example of such behaviour is a transboundary crisis. An interesting feature of such behaviour is entity's constraints occurring locally rather than globally meaning that all the included entities interdependently influence each other. Namely, if they would occur globally, the system would be less dimensional and, hence, pink noise would not occur.

Challenges of the transboundary crises tend to lie in the boundaries of political-administrative entities that are structured around expertise areas and authority. Hence, we can either negotiate or transcend them by using two mechanisms of coordination or centralisation of emergency powers. However, they both present a challenge

with transboundary crises. Namely, it is difficult to coordinate or negotiate the ownership, if it is not clear who the critical actors are or should be and what their role is. Furthermore, transcending boundaries and centralising authority also seem impossible as the roles cannot be defined. In the transboundary crisis, a single state under crisis is usually not the actor, hence, the theory would suggest centralising at the supranational level. Yet, centralising on the level of international institutions is often not an option as they do not possess the power for decision-making and can generally create weakness and legitimacy issues (Boin, 2019).

Given the boundary challenges, researchers suggest two options to prepare and react to transboundary crises: decoupling (Perrow, 1984) or building resilience through trial-and-error strategy (Turner, 1978). By applying the former, the system moves back to the simplified system, normally separated from another environment. Such insulation and entrenchment mean decoupling from the benefits of the other system. On contrary, by applying the latter, the system moves forward and prepares for an effective response, starting from the point that citizens know what is good for them and, hence, leaders should demand resilience (Boin, 2019). The network model implies that power is distributed among the ties between entities, pulling them together by the strength of a single tie, determined by the compatibility among entities. Given the possibility of risk, leaders should detect vulnerabilities, build transboundary sense-making and establish transboundary decision-making systems (Boin et al, 2016). Further policy recommendations for tackling problems include boosting analytical and political capacities. Analytical capacities can be enhanced by individual training, introducing strategic organizational units on the supranational or systemwide levels and then introducing certain roadmaps. Boosting political capacities can be achieved by individual interdepartmental rotations with the aim of competence development, the inclusion of other horizontal organizations, such as non-governmental organizations, and other alternative epistemologies (Hartley et al, 2019).

The crisis cycle changes and circumstances are often additionally challenged by the crisis complexity resulting from globalisation and the highly transnational reach. Since today's crises are typically large-scale and involve multiple actors and stakeholders, many vital systems are threatened simultaneously (Rosenthal, 2003; Fleischer, 2013). Moreover, the complexity often encompasses cross-border issues requiring international cooperation, sometimes as a transnational public good (Rhinard, 2009), ensuring common capacities, regardless of space. Given the complexity, the practice tends to centralise crisis management operations to provide clarity, but in reality, it provides weak and limited operations (Zahariadis, 2013).

Instead, decentralised operations with multi-level governance should take over. Such an arrangement attempts to create the basis for networked functioning of the various levels of government by achieving the dispersion of authority away from the national level, either horizontally to supranational and subnational actors, or vertically to non-state actors because of a centrifugal process (Marks, 1993; Hooghe & Marks 2003). The concept that explains the changing attitudes and participation of actors at different levels was first developed in the context of a study on EU cohesion policy and later used in the EU decision-making process (Bache, 2005) as a result of two processes - Europeanisation and

regionalism (Hooghe, 1996). Based on inductive reasoning, many studies followed, exploring EU integration theories and why EU's issues were treated as domestic rather than international policy (Ongaro et al, 2019). Following the theory-building process, studies on this model can be summarised as an equal and interdependent network of actors based on a transparent dialogue that is usually not influenced by external factors and spatial differences (Stephenson, 2013). The model has been applied to several issues ranging from politics to policy-making or the reorganisation of the state, which, by definition, require more than two levels of government to influence joint decision-making towards a governance approach (Ongaro et al, 2019), with a binding commitment of actors that are politically independent but otherwise interdependent at different levels (Schmitter, 2004).

Given the challenges that transboundary crises pose, national levels are forced into transboundary collaboration with other systems and collectively tackle the crisis. Usually, that means centralising on an upper administrative or political level. The EU is a good example of that, as supranational institutions usually lack power in the international scope, as the EU still has subsidiary power and competencies over certain sectors, combining both elements of governance and government. However, the EU administrative backbone follows multi-level governance that follows cooperation among different levels in a non-hierarchical setting. Also, the Solidary Clause of the Lisbon Treaty asks for joint action and assistance in event of crises. Furthermore, the European Disaster Response Capacity and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are building their power within and outside of the EU borders. Recently, the EU is tackling preparation for transboundary crises by developing generic and sectoral capacities. The first aims to reach common awareness and joint decision-making, such as establishing the EU Crisis Coordination Arrangements (CCA) or ARGUS. The second aims to entrust smaller networked clusters and EU agencies (Ansell et al, 2010).

3. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The case of the migration crisis 2015/16 on the Western Balkans route serves as a basis for research that takes Slovenia and related governance issues into account. The events of 2015 and 2016 showed that the system was not able to solve the continuous migration crisis (Rijavec and Pevcin, 2018; Pevcin and Rijavec, 2021; Grigonis, 2016). Indeed, previous research has shown that multi-level governance was not successful in the case of the migration crisis of 2015/16 on the Western Balkans route (see Rijavec & Pevcin, 2018), partly because a rigid type 1 governance prevailed when we follow the classification of multi-level governance by Hooghe and Marks (2003). Previous research has explicitly pointed to the lack of a common response to the crisis and building resilience on the supranational level. This harmed the management of the crisis itself and, in addition, the status of the Union as a whole (Grigonis, 2016; Pevcin and Rijavec, 2021). Indeed, it led to tensions between the actors and called into question the very foundations of the existence of the Union and the Schengen area. The lack of cooperation and transparent dialogue has led to the decoupled formation of smaller clusters of countries with similar political positions and interests, which is contrary to the idea of EU integration (Evropska komisija, 2015).

Subsequently, we aim to assess the degree of policy layering and decoupling in

the event of a migration crisis in 2015/16. Decoupling is, in fact, a possible governance configuration in a multi-level system in which either vertical relationships are missing or policy in a single policy area is dissociated and sometimes even contradictory, leading to policy conflicts and reduced policy effectiveness (Scholten, 2016). This policy layering and decoupling has already been addressed in the literature on EU agricultural policy, especially after the 2003 reform (see Viaggi et al, 2010; Daugbjerg & Swinbank, 2016), and more recently in the integration of migrants, where deviations of local integration policies compared to national policies can be observed (see e.g. Scholten, 2018). Since previous research on the migration crisis has highlighted problems of multi-level governance, this research will examine the extent to which policy-making is decoupled between different levels of government and how this has led to stratification of policy-making and its implementation.

The analysis in this paper follows the logic of observational study, i.e. non-experimental research, in which we focus on the analysis of outcomes and attributes leading to them. We neither get involved with the observed units nor do we control for the effects of secondary variables. Instead, we focus on revealing potentially important associations, intending to build knowledge as evidence for public policy (National Research Council, 2012). In essence, we are utilizing mainly exploratory research, as we are investigating a problem that is not clearly defined and we, thus, want to provide a better understanding of it. The expected output is to identify issues that can serve as input for future research, related to crisis management (Babbie, 2007).

The data were collected from primary and secondary literature. This study uses the majority of the data coming directly from the actors involved, policy reports, memos or from journalistic reports on the subject. The interpretation of the results has been developed mainly based on the case study approach to assess the main question of the research, i.e. the decoupling and layering in policymaking while addressing the migration crisis in Slovenia. Layering is also being used to illustrate how each level coped individually with the situation and how the concept of multi-level governance was not fully applied. In addition, policymaking was developed separately, at different levels, without mutual negotiations. The presentation of the layering was based on a detailed examination of the measures, taken by each level. Three levels were considered: supranational, national and subnational level. The supranational level is the EU level, the national level is the central government of Slovenia, and the subnational level is related to Slovenian municipalities, as the only tier of subnational governance.

The study is limited to the period under review, i.e. the peak of the migration crisis in Slovenia in 2015/16, and does not include measures or policies introduced after that date, as they were not essential for coordinating the influx. Some policies introduced by supranational and national levels before the period under study are presented in the results, as their creation was essential or at least was intended to contribute to the effectiveness of crisis management. Moreover, the research focuses mainly on the vertical dispersion between levels and does not take into account the horizontal one with non-state actors. The top-down approach was mainly investigated as the most active direction through the use of hierarchical governance.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Due to the lack of coordination and cooperation resulting from the specific political conditions, peculiarities and interests, the emerging crisis lacked a rapid and holistic strategy with close cooperation at all levels. Therefore, it began to structure itself as a layered structure for policy-making and decision-making. Since the migration crisis was essentially a European problem, several actions were taken at the EU (supranational) level, some to resolve the crisis, others to maintain existing support programs. Two groups of actions could be highlighted: the first took place between April and September 2015, the second from February 2016 onwards; the first group of actions also included a strategic document entitled "European agenda on migration", including short and long-term solutions (European Commission, 2015). The second set of actions aimed at implementing the EU Turkey Joint Action Plan where an agreement was reached in March 2016 (European Commission 2016).

The first actions were not directly relevant for the Slovenian national level, as the support seemed to be mainly focused on the Member States most affected, the so-called frontline countries, and actions to find solutions with third countries (European Commission, 2015; Thielemann, 2017). Yet, the second action had a major impact on Slovenia and the crisis as a whole, as it also led to the closure of the Western Balkans Route and, thus, to the limitation of the influx of migrants in Slovenia.

When the EU withdrew its potential to solve the crisis, crisis management was transferred to member states, with limited support and guidance from the EU level causing pink noise on the local level. Dysfunctionalities of the system, especially at the supranational level, were intensely problematic at Common European Asylum System, as the crisis revealed a false understanding of the entire system (Niemann and Speyer, 2017). In addition to the failure of the Dublin Regulation, Temporary Protection Directive tried to be activated holistically with the common intention of protecting migrants in the event of a mass influx, based on solidarity (Bačić Selanec, 2015). In the absence of a reaction from the supranational level, the decentralisation of policy-making has begun. As a result, the influential member states gained strength and sought alternative courses of action based on the Geneva Conventions and concerning their political characteristics and national interests (Bačić Selanec, 2015). Asymmetric management proved detrimental for fast and efficient crisis resolution and the holistic integration of the Common European Asylum System.

The German policy of open borders and "asylum shopping", as referred by Niemann and Speyer (2017), 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. In this context, measures were defined in line with the solidarity response, including the standards for procedures for granting international protection and rights and obligations requested (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia (RS) no. 22/2016), which was carried out as a legislative amendment to the International Protection Act. The national level was seen as a credible partner in the response to the crisis. However, in preparing for the influx, the national government failed to develop crisis management, which had undesirable consequences. An example of this was the contingency plan that was introduced,

which provided for a system of accommodation and care in the event of a large number of asylum seekers (Republic of Slovenia, Government of the RS, 2015). The document was well prepared just before the influx of migrants but was rather irrelevant as there were hardly any asylum seekers in Slovenia. This is evident also from the table below, which indicates that the vast majority of migrants that entered the country left it very soon. This is reflected also in the data on applications for granting asylum and international protection. During the period from September 2015 to June 2016, only 733 such applications were filed in Slovenia (Pristavec Đogić & Križaj, 2016).

Table 1. Migrants entering and exiting Slovenia (2015-16)

Period	Number of migrants entering	Number of migrants exiting
October 15-31, 2015	116,627	98,981
November 2015	164,313	170,387
December 2015	96,607	96,575
January 2016	62,785	62,796
February 2016	34,795	33,666
March 1-8, 2016	1,607	1,528

Source: Pristavec Đogić & Križaj (2016).

Consequently, the protection of the external Schengen border was one of Slovenia's priorities. As a result of border control, two focal points of individual national activities can be highlighted during the period under study. The first was the reintroduction of temporary border control at the internal land border with Hungary[1] following Article 25 et seq. of Schengen Borders Code (European Commission, 2018). The second was the installation of temporary technical barriers at the Schengen external border with Croatia[2], which was introduced in November 2015. The 150-kilometre long wire was intended to prevent the dispersal of migrants' entry points, while the border remained open (Republic of Slovenia, Government of the RS, 2015a). Both measures were Slovenian initiatives and did not support the standard Schengen idea, but both were also supported by the supranational level (European Commission, 2015a; STA, 2015), as member states are free to use their border control instruments. Nevertheless, the activities caused unintended side effects. Specifically, the fencing harmed the environment, especially on wildlife and tourism, and the subnational level wastefully applied for compensation at the national level for any damage or costs incurred (The Association of Municipalities of Slovenia, 2015), or even for full reimbursement (Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Defence, Administration of the RS for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief, 2015). This was followed by a protest rally and a civil society petition which, interestingly, put aside the general attitude towards migration at the subnational level and showed disagreement, especially on environmental

[1] Twice, between 17 - 26 September 2015 and between 27 September – 16 October 2015, grounded on the prevention on spread uncontrolled entry points before the official redirection of the migrant flow to Slovenia.

[2] While both countries, Croatia and Slovenia, are EU members, only Slovenia is a member of Schengen Zone, thus being in charge for Schengen border checks.

protection[3] (Prava peticija 2017; E-utrip, 2015).

In addition to the actual physical border control, the lack of resources posed a serious threat to national security and crisis management. When migrants were allowed to enter the country, various stakeholders were involved, but there was a lack of human resources in providing extensive support. The lack of police personnel began to pose a serious threat to national security, and several measures were taken to limit this possibility. By amending the Organization and Work of the Police Act and the Defence Act, the provision of additional support to Slovenian Police has been provided[4] (Official Gazette of the RS no. 86/15; Official Gazette of the RS no. 95/15). In addition, the national level also requested additional support from several actors at the horizontal level[5]. In addition, international assistance was requested to strengthen local police forces, mainly from other member states, thus overriding support at the supranational level. This means that about 500 to 1,000 police officers and affiliate personnel support border controls daily (STA, 2016). In contrast, the lack of staff in the registration and accommodation centres led to the failure of daily procedures and the appropriate care for the flows of migrants. Two important national measures[6] were financial support and the provision of additional staff. In terms of staff support, several actors were involved in activating people at the national and subnational level. Public officials were called in to provide additional assistance concerning voluntary work in registration and accommodation centres, and additional jobs were created through the Public Works Programme. The administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief and national units for civil protection joined forces to also provide official assistance in the reporting and accommodation centres (Pristavec Đogić & Križaj, 2016).

The lack of capacity could also have been observed in other areas, where the lack of accommodation capacity for new arrivals was by far the most worrying. In addressing the problem, the national level mainly provided a single response, without the cooperation or support of other levels. On the one hand, the supranational level did not intervene in the accommodation system at the national level, and on the other hand, the subnational level was very critical and sometimes avoided cooperation. For example, in February 2016, many protest rallies were organized at the subnational level to avoid the construction of new accommodation centres in their vicinity (Dnevnik, 2016; Radiotelevizija Slovenija, 2015a; 24ur, 2016; STA, 2016a), at a time when the national level had no more capacity and was looking for new possibilities for centres. Hardly any municipalities were positively committed to the additional placement of centres in their ownership

[3] Slovenian biodiversity is known to be above world's average and any negative human intervention is highly criticised by competent authority and civil society.

[4] One was allowing the activation of previously retired police officers and the other one was the activation of Slovenian Army for the police tasks and authorizations, under strictly defined conditions.

[5] Military Officers Association of Slovenia, Veterans' Association for the War of Slovenia, firefighters, auxiliary police officers and special police units specialised on crowds were utilized for help.

[6] Support to reception capacities established to cope and manage the mass arrival of third-country nationals at the Slovenian Schengen border and Establishing of new and facilitation of existing accommodation capacities to cope and manage the mass arrival of third-country nationals at the Slovenian Schengen border.

(Rudman, 2015). Although the costs for migration management were later taken over by the national level (Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Defence, Administration of the RS for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief, 2015), the construction of accommodation centres in new locations in some municipalities had a very negative impact on public discourse, mainly because of the general outset towards migrations.

The subnational level has not been responsible for additional policy decisions or activities that could contribute to solving the wider migration problem. Activities focused on supporting coordination in the reception and accommodation of migrants. Municipal authorities played an important role in meeting staffing needs and providing technical assistance.[7] The subnational component of policy-making for migrants is reflected not just in the differences in the way crisis management was defined at national and the subnational levels, but also in how they interacted. In other words, there was mainly top-down coordination, and there was little interaction between the two levels, and bottom-up initiatives were rather limited, as only the municipalities most directly affected took action. One initiative, for example, was that of the Municipality of Brežice, a municipality on the external Schengen border with Croatia, hosting four reception centres during the crisis. Municipality prepared the proposal on the requirements, related to the solution of the migrant crisis. This proposal was forwarded to the national level to influence policy-making and widen the scope of action for subnational policy. The requirements focused on preventing the dispersion of entries and structuring them at one or two points of entry, preferably using the possibility of train transport, on the increased involvement of the participating stakeholders, on an efficient flow of information and data exchange, and financial compensation for the costs and damages caused by the crisis (Municipality of Brežice, Municipal Council, 2015).

Namely, the negative side-effects of the migration crisis were observed mainly in the border municipalities located near the main entry point for migrants into the Schengen area. For example, in the municipality of Brežice, this was reflected in the overall reduced quality of everyday life, as security measures increased, which was not considered beneficial for the inhabitants, and economic damage could also have been observed, especially concerning tourism (Municipality of Brežice, 2015). The local community tried to raise its voice, mainly through social media, to influence national decisions (Radiotelevizija Slovenija, 2016a).

Tensions in multi-level governance were mainly related to the lack of discourse and the tendency of national governments to dominate policy-making. There was a lack of dialogue at the subnational level, and communication was mostly operational, i.e. the exchange of statistics on the influx of migrants. This was observed, for example, in the issue of the establishment of accommodation centres, where the subnational level stated that the national level did not provide complete information on the "encampment" in certain municipalities, and the national level showed disparities with local needs and perceptions (24ur, 2016).

The case study shows that weaknesses in overall crisis management were revealed during the influx of migrants, leading to tensions in multi-level governance and

[7] Various volunteers and employees participated in accommodation activities. In addition, municipalities provided basic goods supplies, especially beds, clothing, footwear and hygiene items (Mestna občina Ljubljana, 2015).

causing "pink noise". As Slovenia served mainly as a transit country[8] on this Western Balkans route, national decision-making and policy-making at the national level tried to optimise border controls and registration of migrants, and, consequently, to direct the flow of migrants to its northern border with Austria as efficiently as possible, as the flow tried to reach the destination countries. Nevertheless, at the national level the main concern was maintaining and defending the external border of the Schengen area but, due to the country's size, and the large scale of the crisis, there was a lack of resources to carry out this task efficiently. Starting from the issue of the lack of resources, the national level called for international support for European Civil Protection Mechanism. With the help of other member states and international organisations, Slovenia received the necessary material, human, material, financial and health support (Republic of Slovenia, Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 2018). Despite the assistance received, it was clear that efficient crisis management requires joint action by institutions and diverse organisations at all levels. Therefore, resilience building and sound multi-level governance are considered essential for the efficient management of the influx of migrants as this is a transboundary crisis.

Although many assurances were given that Slovenia had been prepared for the influx of migrants, the situation had many shortcomings; the situation in neighbouring countries was carefully monitored and a contingency plan was drawn up. It was later recognised that this was a circumvented document, as migrants were not interested in applying for international protection, but merely in travelling through Slovenia and entering the destination countries in Western and Northern Europe. The findings also point to many ad hoc decisions and improvisations on the ground. For example, the national level tried to comply with supranational guidelines and regulations but also wanted to follow the demands of the subnational level, which did not materialise as expected.

Several individual measures have been taken at the national level to alleviate the situation at the borders, with the strengthening of border controls being by far the most exemplary measure. The results portrayed indicate a rather passive supranational response, but this was not just the case in the crisis on the Western Balkan migration route. The same was observed in the Italian sea and air operation Mare Nostrum (Ministero della Difesa, 2018; Centre for European Reform, 2015). The operation was an action at the national level to save the lives of migrants who tried to reach the EU, and supranational support came only after a few months, mostly in the form of financial aid (Ministero della Difesa, 2018).

Interestingly, there are existing agencies on the EU level that were formed to tackle transboundary crises on the immigration issue, such as Frontex and European Migration Network (EMN) and similar institutions. Regardless of the existing agencies on the EU level, we still lack the power to mitigate situations that cause pink noise. For example, we faced pink noise in the migration influx as a problem, which required supranational action, but this was left to the national levels. Theoretically, if the Common European Asylum System and Dublin regulation acted as stable guidelines and if they didn't fail under the crisis pressure, it would be possible to generate low

[8] Supported by the fact that only 280 (890) asylum applications were filled in Slovenia in 2015 (2016), according to the OECD (2017) data, although the country lies on the Schengen zone border and these two years were the peaks of the migrant crisis on the Western Balkan route.

dimensionality and, hence, to avoid pink noise.

Thus, the supranational level responded to the crisis with considerable delay, and it also failed to meet member states' expectations in terms of providing adequate support and resources. The national level therefore rather decoupled and acted individually, based on their national policies, capabilities and national preferences. Namely, member states and even different levels of government within member states created several different policies to manage the crisis, i.e. asymmetric crisis management was observed. As crisis pressure increased, countries formed alliances with countries sharing similar problems and preferences, and some of them even promoted policies that were not in line with the official European solidarity response (Bauerova, 2018).

It could be argued that action at the national level was justified, but not in line with the solidarity response. Nevertheless, some actors at the subnational level and civil society did not agree with this policy, as demonstrated by protest rallies and petitions. Moreover, there was a clear lack of political decision-making at the subnational level, except in the communities directly affected. The result of the lack of strategy and coordination between the different levels of government is the failure of multi-level governance. There was a lack of a holistic strategy to address the migrant crisis as a whole, which also led to a lack of clear task allocation. Since crisis management was conducted separately at different levels, there was also a lack of dialogue between the stakeholders. The lack of transparency in some actions slowed down cooperation between levels, making it even more difficult for some stakeholders to participate adequately in certain actions. For example, the lack of dialogue and cooperation between the national and subnational levels aggravated the already sensitive issue of the establishment of accommodation centres in selected municipalities. The situation led to the layering of action planning and policy-making, rather than managing the situation through multi-level cooperation.

5. CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate the failure of multi-level governance when managing the migration crisis on the Western Balkans migrant route. This led to policy layering and decoupling, resulting in asymmetric crisis management. Ultimately, the crisis response had been inadequate, and since this was a large-scale crisis negative implications were further amplified. Although policy layering might strengthen the position of some actors (stakeholders), this comes at the expense of others, which further hinders effective management. The discourse does not imply that any level was unwilling to contribute to solving the crisis; on the contrary, all levels tried to manage the migration crisis as efficiently as possible, but policy and decision-making were mostly stratified and decoupled. This was a direct consequence of the lack of vertical relationships and the inappropriate type of governance used to address this crisis, as well as the political stratification that led to decoupled policy-making, where policies were sometimes contradictory and conflicts arose between the levels.

The results present the lack of a holistic strategy to tackle such transboundary crisis and no clear task assignment for problem-solving. Furthermore, a lack of dialogue and transparency was observed. This could be partially attributed to the inappropriate way of governance that prevails

in EU decision-making. Unlike the standard practice, there should be a greater focus on task-specific actions and solutions, where decision-making powers would have been distributed horizontally and vertically across all levels by actors specifically focused on migration crisis management, thus contributing to policy effectiveness. This would require a more flexible EU architecture in which decision-making processes are more nested between the different levels of government, giving soft governance a greater role in deciding policies and procedures.[9] Namely, arrangements and processes that work reasonably well for "bounded" crises are unlikely to work in the case of transboundary crises, so national levels generally have two options, either decoupling or building resilience and pursuing transnational crisis management strategy. The results of the research indicate the prevalence of the first option.

Furthermore, we should invest more in existing international organizations and build transboundary crisis management institutions as they are supposed to bring swift solutions or at least clear coordination and guidance on the table, such as reengineering, transformation, ad hoc processes and changes in the existing organisational culture. The institutional challenge, therefore, remains in building effective transboundary systems for managing future complex transboundary crises.

Although the analysis focused only on the one vertical structure of governance, i.e. Slovenia serving as an exemplification, this still enables some generalization of the challenges portrayed. Still, there is a recommendation for future research that a similar approach is followed also in other countries, affected by such transboundary crises. This involves not just migration crisis, where different challenges might arise with the destination countries, but also in situations where the crisis does not have very different impacts on the countries involved.

[9] More on the issue of softer governance in general, see: Cram (1997) and Tömmel (1994).

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ANALIZA KRIZNE SITUACIJE U JAVNOJ UPRAVI: SLUČAJ MIGRACIJA U SLOVENIJI

Sažetak

U ovom se radu ex-post analizira i uklapa u dijalog o migrantskoj krizi 2015-16 godine, pri čemu se pruža nova vrijednost, utemeljena na kompleksnoj i interdisciplinarnoj perspektivi, koja u obzir uzima i nacionalnu perspektivu globalne krize. Nakon najvećeg tijeka migracija, koji se odvijao bez međunarodne koordinacije i upravljanja procesom, slovenska strategija suočavanja s problemom bila je orijentirana na logističke mehanizme, kojima se smanjivao pritisak i usmjeravao tijek migranata prema njihovom krajnjem cilju. S obzirom na opseg krize, nedostajao je brzi odgovor na lokalnoj razini, a veći broj dimenzija i nelinearne interakcije unutar krizne situacije izazivali su smetnje u komunikaciji. Korištenjem metode studije slučaja, u ovom se radu utvrđuje da je došlo do povlačenja i nekoordiniranosti kriznog menadžmenta. Također se poziva na stvaranje inkluzivnije i višerazinske strukture kriznog menadžmenta i financiranje postojećih međunarodnih organizacija. Štoviše, da su se krizne interakcije događale na globalnoj razini, krizna situacija bi imala manje dimenzija te bi se odvijala linearno, čime bi se izbjegle i smetnje u komunikaciji.

Ključne riječi: *javna uprava, krizni menadžment, migracije, Slovenija*