

2013/5

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on Political Leadership

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Paper Presented at the 7th ECPR General Conference,

Section on Elites and Transatlantic Crisis

Bordeaux, 4-7 September 2013

Crises present extraordinary challenges for political leaders. The uncertainty due to unprecedented circumstances along with increased levels of threat and risk require decisive action and appropriate responses from the incumbent political leaders. Not only do crises alter the external conditions of government, but they also frequently put political leaders to the test by calling for innovative answers over and beyond the customary. The chief question the present paper explores is precisely how states of emergency modify the conditions of leadership, the opportunity structure and room for manoeuvre enjoyed by leaders and how they impact political leadership along with the respective success of different types of leaders.

There are two widely recognized and significant distinctions in the literature on politics and political science. One of these contrasts the state of normalcy with the state of emergency; the second distinguishes administrators from great political leaders. The latter approach links the rise to prominence of great leader and hero characters to major social-political changes and extraordinary circumstances, while considering leadership within the confines of management/administration to be more naturally fitting the normal state of politics (e.g. Hook 1955; Blondel 1987, 19-21; Köröseyi 2005, 126; Grinin 2010, 123-127). Nevertheless, differentiating between political leadership as it is exercised under conditions of normalcy and emergency implies an implicit link between the state of the community (i.e. normalcy/emergency) and the type of leader at its helm. This dichotomy-based tradition was cultivated in 20th century modern political science by Sidney Hook (1955), with his distinction between “*eventful*” and “*event-making*” styles of leadership, followed among others by James McGregor Burns (1978) who contrasted *transactional* and *transformational* leaders. Jean Blondel refused to adhere to the conventional dichotomy, introducing a strikingly sophisticated typology of leaders in his *Political Leadership* (1987).¹

We can agree with Blondel’s argumentation that when constructing a typology based on the *output* of the activity of leadership, viz. its political and social impact, the dichotomic approach will encounter formidable obstacles. The empirical diversity of the activity of leadership breaks up the narrow confines of the dichotomy. For instance, the two-dimensional typology set up by Blondel (1987, 97) defines nine leader types. The analytical distinction between the states of normalcy and emergency can nevertheless prove to be a useful starting point in analyzing the

activity of leadership when the latter is approached from the *input* side. The dichotomy between the realization of the legal order and the state of exception, emergency or war that partially or entirely suspends said order is also one of the fundamental distinctions of public law. Furthermore, this dichotomy has compelling heuristic force in conceptualizing political phenomena as well as in the everyday understanding of politics. When a given political situation is perceived as a crisis or a state of exception, that perception will not only shape the politicians' action strategies, but will also mold citizens' expectations. In what follows, we are going to analyze the impact of crises and states of exception on political leadership. The concept of the state of emergency or crisis, however, will be interpreted inclusively, meaning that financial and economic, domestic, and international political crises will also be covered by the analysis besides the public law dimension. Considering that crises and the state of emergency are characterized by insecurity, the lack of predictability and a dramatic increase in terms of risks (as the scope of and the stakes involved in political decisions suddenly grow), we will explore how all of this impacts political decision making, and how it leads to leadership behaviors characterized by risk avoidance or risk taking.

The present paper is part of an explorative undertaking aiming to interpret and clarify the above questions. We are going to set up a two-dimensional framework of interpretation for the aims of the analysis. One dimension shall be given by the various aspects of leadership along with the research questions and hypotheses they give rise to (cf. Table 1.), while the other dimension is defined by the empirical types of crises.

The exposition is going to proceed as follows. In the first part, we are going to clarify a number of theoretical starting points in political science as well as the notions of the states of normalcy and emergency. In the second part, we are going to sketch out the research hypotheses. In the third part, an outline of the empirical typology of crises shall be given, followed by an evaluation of the relevance of hypotheses according to crisis types. Finally, the last section summarizes the conclusions of our paper.

State of Normalcy vs. State of Emergency

Theoretical Starting Points

By the state of normalcy in politics we mean the situation when laws and customs are observed and respected along with more or less well-known, routine forms of the exercise of power. For example, in the framework of the liberal state, constitutionality and the rule of law will ensure more predictability for citizens while enforcing strong constraints on leaders' action.

In the state of exception or emergency of politics, however, these rules are not operational, the conventions are breached, and processes become unpredictable. Crises amount to such extraordinary states when the equilibrium is lost, uncertainty and risks grow dramatically, while the law and customs fail to provide answers to the problems arising the way we are accustomed to.

It is an old *topos* of political thinking that states of crisis and emergency increase the role of political leaders. While in the state of normalcy, citizens are expecting their problems to be solved by laws and by public administration, in the state of emergency, they turn to political leaders. Leaders then receive an extraordinary mandate to resolve the crisis, the classic example of which is provided by the *Roman dictators* who were given a special mandate for a predefined period.²

On the other hand, why do leaders receive such extraordinary mandates in situations of crisis? Why do citizens accept the state of emergency and the suspension of the laws and norms of normalcy that go with it? First of all, crises require prompt decisions and actions to ensure that conditions do not deteriorate even further. These cannot be achieved in the state of normalcy (due to representative government and the separation of powers, there are many actors participation in decision making, making the latter time consuming and all too frequently, inconclusive). Second, the state of crisis creates extreme uncertainty in public policy, which makes risk avoidance the dominant motive in the behavior of the elected representatives as opposed the short term maximization of power. They will tend *to delegate some or all their powers to the executive* (Sebők 2010, 93). Third, at least according to Jefferson's argumentation,

the protection of the public interest is even higher a duty than allegiance to the law, which can instigate the leaders in charge of the executive to carry out emergency measures in a state of emergency.³ The extraordinary mandate will enable the realization of the absolute *priority of the common interest*, even at the cost of harm to private interests and liberties (private property, self-determination or individual freedom), along with breaching conventional moral norms.⁴

The traditional perspective thus separates the political process into temporally separated segments of state of normalcy and state of emergency. In the “normal” state, there is no need for political leadership, only for administration. Political leadership is only called for in a state of “emergency”, such as an external attack, declaring war and concluding peace (Lockean federative powers), or in the case of unexpected, extraordinary domestic problems (Lockean sovereignty) at times when sovereignty itself is questioned (cf. Slomp 2009; Ruscio 2004). Thus the political leader cannot be more than an interim figure, whose job is to create or restore the impersonal order (Blondel 1987, 42). The role of political leaders is thus temporary in the traditional account; having fulfilled their tasks (having resolved the crisis or state of emergency), they withdraw from politics. They leave ruling to the institutions, and leadership is again replaced by administration.

In agreement with Blondel we believe that the role of leadership is not restricted to the state of emergency, but it exists in the state of normalcy as well (Körösenyi 2005). For this reason, the traditional dichotomic account is misguided. It is nevertheless also enlightening from a certain aspect, for it sheds light on the fact that the conditions of and opportunities for political leadership are different at times of crises and states of emergency. This difference is the object of the present investigation.

Dichotomy, gradualness, decision

Politically relevant states of emergency can be brought about by different kinds of factors. A financial collapse (e.g. currency crises, stock exchange crash, banks failing), economic crises (oil crisis, a prolonged depression), international crises (the Suez crisis, the Falkland war), ethnic conflicts (the war of the Balkans following the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia), labor

conflicts, strikes and domestic conflicts can all lead to a political crisis and to extraordinary political (governmental) measures.

A number of key remarks and conceptual distinctions need to be introduced at this point. First of all, we can see that it is oftentimes economic, ethnic etc. problems that lead to political crises, while there are also crises which are of an eminently political origin. For this reason, exogenous and endogenous sources of crises and states of emergency should be distinguished. Natural and industrial disasters, economic crises or foreign policy crises will be considered exogenous, while crises arising from domestic politics shall be considered endogenous.

Second, we shall have to distinguish between the concept of a state of emergency as it is used in political science and as it is used in public law. It is only a minority of the occurrences of states of emergency that also create a state of exception from a public law perspective, as that function of the decision of the public officials/decision makers entitled to make that decision by the constitution. At the same time, states of exception or emergency are often proclaimed at times of natural or industrial disasters, which normally do not lead to political crises (even if they rarely fail to have an impact on politics, as was shown by the reelection of the Schröder cabinet in the wake of the 2002 flooding of the River Elbe).⁵

Third, when analyzing the states of normalcy and emergency, one needs to distinguish three classical dimensions of the concept of politics (polity, politics, and policy). The dichotomous contrast between normalcy and the state of emergency can receive public law validation with reference to the state and political sovereignty as a constitutional state (*polity*),⁶ but the dichotomy seems less rigid in the empirical dimension of the political process (*politics*) or in the areas of public policy and administration (*policy*). The reasons for that are as follows: (1) First, it is difficult to formulate *objective criteria* for the “normalcy” and “emergency” of the political situation given at the time, and thus making such a decision can be a question for interpretation and often for debate. The state of emergency in public law, however, is always the result of a positive *decision*. (2) Second, empirical diversity calls for classification in terms of degrees as opposed to in terms of bipolar either/or dichotomies. For example, the economic cycle is analyzed in terms of consecutive stages of *expansion – peak – recession* and *recovery*. (3) Third, regarding the material field and scope of the crisis, empirical diversity appears over and beyond

the issue of gradualness. The more narrow the scope of a crisis and the lesser its stake, the lower its political significance, and even if it is an extraordinary state in the given field, it fits into the colorful nature that characterizes policy at all times.

In summary, the diverse political situations are characterized by gradualness instead of dichotomy *at an empirical level*, and thus there can be interim degrees between the states of normalcy and exception that can be *analytically* be construed in a dichotomy.

Hypotheses

One of the preliminary assumptions of our research is the thesis that crises and extraordinary conditions exert a significant impact on leadership. Now we wish to formulate further hypotheses related to these impacts. Our chief question concerns the impact of crises on political leadership: do they increase the role of the incumbent leaders and their room for manoeuvre, or, to the contrary, do they constrain their opportunities? We formulate our research questions and hypotheses in five areas related to the crisis and the extraordinary conditions, along with the impact of their various types on political leadership (Table 1.) For the sake of simplicity, we call our research questions hypotheses, even if the majority of them are far from meeting the requirements of statistical testability.

The hypothesis of political instability

Our first hypothesis is that crises increase political instability and strengthen political selection (H1). The reason is that crises mean declining prospects and increased insecurity, while economic, social, and political indicators dramatically deteriorate. Crises have a destructive impact, as they cancel out previous leadership strategies, and thus they decrease predictability. Not only do they decrease the governments' reelection chances, but often lead to ousting them between two elections. The reason therefore is that liability is generally ascribed by voters to the

incumbent politicians for the deterioration of the situation. Thus crises raise standards for governments, and can only be “survived” with a better political performance (output) (Chwieroth and Walter 2010).

Table 1. The impact of crises on political leadership in five areas. Research hypotheses

IMPACTS OF THE CRISES	ROLE OF POLITICAL LEADERS AND THEIR ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE
1. The immediate impact	<i>H1 The hypothesis of political instability</i>
2. The opportunity structure of leaders	<i>H2 The inescapable path vs. room for manoeuvre hypothesis</i>
3. The agents of leadership and crisis management	<i>H3 The hypothesis of bureaucratic delegation vs. political revaluation</i>
4. The system of relationships among political leaders	<i>H4 The hypothesis of consensus vs. polarization</i>
5. The relationship of leaders and their environment	<i>H5 The institutionalist vs. constructivist hypothesis</i>

The opportunity structure for leaders: the inescapable path vs. room for manoeuvre hypothesis

The second area of our analysis concerns the transformation of the opportunity structure of leaders. The new situation created by the crisis creates new constraints and new opportunities at the same time. It creates the conditions for applying the tools of state of emergency, or the reassessment of the leadership skills brought about by the new situation. The reassessment hypothesis starts from the assumption that the new situation cancels out earlier leadership strategies, and changes the opportunity structure of political leadership, and thus devalues certain leadership skills and certain kinds of politicians, while raising the value of others. Thus the crisis can have an impact on the makeup of the cabinet, can increase the proportion of “expert” ministers of a technocratic bent as opposed to party politician ministers. Increasing insecurities, risks and stakes can provide incentives and greater opportunities for risk avoiding political leaders. The modification of the opportunity structure raises the dilemma of the

inescapable path or the room for manoeuvre, and that is what our second pair of hypotheses is related to.

In the inescapable path *hypothesis* (H2A) we start from the assumption that if the character of the crisis is known, then there tends to be some kind of a consensus regarding the solution as well. Or at least a mainstream conception. Crises, especially crises of an economic and financial nature often enforce an inescapable path and thus constrain the political room for manoeuvre. Agreement is created among politicians and experts on the therapy required and on the assumption that there is no alternative to the therapy proposed. According to post WWII Keynesian consensus, for example, economic depression can be remedied by anti-cyclic policies. For instances of grave indebtedness – and the loss of trust by financial markets – the only safeguard for governments were provided by international organizations (IMF, the World Bank) which handed out the same recipe for all patients.

According to the *room for manoeuvre hypothesis* (H2B) we assume, in contrast with the above, that a crisis or the perception of a crisis dramatically increases the room for manoeuvre for leaders and raises the stakes for their decisions and actions. For extraordinary circumstances warrant extraordinary measures which thus become justifiable and potentially legitimate. This reasoning was the basis of the special mandate of the Roman dictators, and this provides the constitutional foundations for contemporary state of war and state of emergency. In the case of economic crises, which in a constitutional perspective still represent the state of normalcy, the gravity of the situation (e.g. the budgetary deficit becoming unfettered) can be used to justify novel, extraordinary governmental measures (e.g. budgetary restrictions). The crisis provides stronger incentives for innovation than the normal state, as it creates new, unknown, extraordinary circumstances that call for *innovative* solutions breaking from the customary (*innovation thesis*).

It creates a special situation when sovereignty is questioned either external or internal forces or events. According to our hypothesis then the rules of the normal state are more likely to be replaced by the politics of the state of emergency in the public law sense (*sovereignty thesis*). This extraordinary state of affairs provides an extraordinary mandate for the incumbent leaders, and thus increases their room for manoeuvre to an extreme extent. This is the opposite of the

delegation hypothesis (H3A, see below), as the mandate is here received by the incumbent political leader.

The agents of leadership: the hypothesis of bureaucratic delegation vs. political revaluation

The third area of our analysis is provided by the selection mechanism exerted on the possible agents of leadership and crisis management by various types of crises. Our hypothesis pair is intended to answer the question whether the crisis reinforces the role of experts or politicians.

According to the delegation hypothesis or the caretaker theory (H3A) the crisis reinforces the role of experts within decision making. We can differentiate between two subtypes of this hypothesis: delegation to dedicated expert politicians and delegation to technocratic managers. The first can arise in parliamentary governments, while the second can be realized in any system of government.

(i) According to the *technocratic government* hypothesis, party politics based governments will more likely to be replaced by technocratic governments at times of financial and economic crises than in the crisis free periods. Parties and politicians can get some time to breathe freely and can trust that the technocratic government will put things right, while it is not they who have to bear the painful political costs of crisis management – others will “take the blame” for it.

(ii) According to the *technocratic delegation* hypothesis, the crisis will increase the competence of bureaucratic institutions, i.e. the ones managed by non-elected leaders. Politicians decide to delegate a number of competences to technocratic institutions for an interim period (Sebők 2010; 2011; 2012).

In case of the revaluation hypothesis (H3B), we start from the assumption that the room for manoeuvre hypothesis, as presented above (H2B), an external shock will increase the room for manoeuvre of the incumbent. At a time of crisis, the established uncertainty will increase the desire for decisive leaders.⁷ Citizens and institutional actors expect to get directions from the political leaders, whose role will thus be revaluated and whose political weight will thus

increase. It is especially the first, firefighting phase of crisis management that requires immediate and clear decisions, something that cannot be served by the elected institutions of representation. According to Tilo Schabert (1989), the explanation to the reevaluation of the role of leaders from a political science perspective is provided by the fact that – chaos being the opposite of government – the citizens are more likely to be aware of the divide between chaos and leadership at a time of crisis.

The relationship between political leaders: the hypothesis of consensus vs. polarization

The fourth area of investigation for our analysis is provided by the unification or polarization effect of the system of relationships between the rival political leaders (H4). According to the *consensus hypothesis* (H4A), decision makers tend to show greater agreement at a time of crises than under normal circumstances. Research by Sebők (2011, 81) suggests that this is because there is a *public policy agreement* as to what should be done in terms of crisis management. This enables, on the one hand, that the crisis fosters the delegation of public policy choices to caretaker-type institutions, and on the other hand, that the competitive and rivaling behavior of politicians under normal circumstances is replaced by the *search for political consensus*.

Our contrary hypothesis, the *hypothesis of polarization* (H4B) suggests that an external shock or a crisis is much more likely to polarize, while an incidental consensus is only temporary or superficial. One has to differentiate to stages of reacting to the crises, the *firefighting stage* characteristic of the short early stage and the later, longer *crisis management stage*. Consensus is more likely to be formed in the early initial stage of the crisis and firefighting, when the political actors follow the strategy of risk avoidance due to raised stakes and extreme uncertainty. Following an external shock, the incumbent follows the politics of national unity, which is not advisable for the opposition to oppose. According to our hypothesis, after the short phase of firefighting, the crisis can rapidly polarize the political actors and the government-opposition dichotomy can promptly set in again.

The relationship of leaders and their environment: the institutionalist vs. the constructivist hypothesis

The fifth question of our analysis concerns the impact of the crisis on the relational system between the political leaders and their environment (institutions, interpretative schemes), that is, the application of the “structure-agency” problem.

It is a well-known tenet of political science that the extent to which the division of powers is institutionalized determines the room for manoeuvre of political leaders and their opportunities to react. An increase in veto points decreases the decision making capacity of political leaders and the flexibility of the governmental system. According to our *institutionalist hypothesis* (H5A), this thesis equally applies to situations of crisis. The larger the extent of the division of powers, the more an external shock or the crisis of domestic policy may paralyze the government. Vice versa, the smaller the extent of the division of powers, the more dynamically the room for manoeuvre for leaders may be widened at a time of crises (cf. Sebők 2010, 90, 97; Cox–McCubbins 2001).

In contrast, in our *constructivist hypothesis* (H5B) we are seeking to find an endogenous explanation for political autonomy. As we could see above (H2B), unusual measures can also be *legitimate* under extraordinary circumstances. Thus the political leadership might have an interest vested in “dramatizing” the situation in order to increase its political room for manoeuvre (Shiffman 2002). And while exogenous shocks (just as endogenous crises) do exist for governments, like, for example, in the case of the financial crisis of 2008, the *perception* of the actual situation as a crisis depends not so much on exogenous events, the “objective” situation as from the interpretation and framing by the political actors. In other words, situations of crises can be politically construed, can be “invented”, and thus can be of *endogenous* origin (Grint 2000; Shiffman 2002; Körösényi 2005).

On the other hand, how should we account for the fact that crises can be construed? Though the crisis discourse generally has some factual bases, e.g. the case of the GDP really decreasing, there are no objective criteria of how much GDP decrease one needs to observe in order for the situation to be considered a crisis. The crisis narrative implies an interpretation or decision for

evaluating the situation (defining the crisis, determining indicators). As the crisis discourse and perception legitimate extraordinary measures, they thus increase the leeway of the incumbent political leaders. Thus the crisis discourse raises political stakes, as it leads to decisions that break with graduality and proclaim the state of exception, and thus to increased room for manoeuvre for leaders.

Types of crises and the validity of the hypotheses

Given that there are many kinds of crises, there is need for a typology. We classify crises and states of emergency according to four major descriptive types based on the causes that brought them about. We differentiate crises brought about by natural or industrial disasters, economic and financial crises, crises of domestic politics and international crises. We are going to investigate one or more specific cases from these major types of crises and we are going to explore the plausibility of the hypotheses with their help. Our objective is to investigate how the different situations of crises can impact political leadership. We are assuming that the validity of the hypotheses formulated above can be different in the case of the different kinds of crises.

State of emergency brought about by a disaster

In political terms, the situation is of *exogenous* origin, while managing the consequences of the disaster is a technical/managerial task. In the wake of an earthquake, a flood or an industrial disaster, rescuing and relocating the population from the danger zone and providing care to them, terminating the threat, protecting the surrounding areas and restoring the original conditions are all administrative tasks for the competent authorities. On the other hand, the coordination of the aforementioned tasks, informing the population of the danger, as well as providing subsequent compensation (in the case of major disasters) are all tasks at the governmental level, putting the political leadership to the challenge.

One is dealing with administrative areas (e.g. water, disaster management, health care etc.) that are normally characterized by a technocratic delegation of management responsibilities under ordinary circumstances. A state of danger, however, activates the *extraordinary powers* of the technocratic leaders of the competent authorities, giving them entitlement to take extraordinary measures (closing down certain areas and residential districts, forced relocation of citizens, etc.). The occurrence of a major disaster will nevertheless heighten the role of political leadership (H3B). The *wider the scope* of the disaster, and the higher the risk or the actual harm (*high stakes*), the more the political weight of the situation grows, with an increased likelihood that political leaders will personally appear on site, either symbolically, or as the chief of crisis management. That is, the higher the stakes and the scope of the disaster, the more it works against delegation.

The apolitical nature of disasters implies that they do not in general lead to political instability (H1). At the same time, they do not provide an extra web of protection or some kind of “natural support” at the level of the entire nation (H4A) to the incumbent leader if the latter’s role is not stable. In the months following the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster of 11 March 2011, Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan had to face a parliamentary motion of no confidence by the opposition Liberal Democratic Party and several challenges from within his own party as well, until he was eventually forced to resign in the summer (Metz 2013). But the example of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 also showed that disasters are far from necessarily creating consensus (H4A), as the U.S. authorities and President George W. Bush himself were criticized for alleged mismanagement (H4b). In contrast, Chancellor Schröder clearly benefited politically from the flooding of the River Elbe in 2002 hitting Germany right before the federal election campaign period. Firm action and personal presence increased his reputation as a leader, defusing a number of rather unpleasant campaign issues such as economic problems and unemployment. Thus he was able to win the election even in a situation where he started out from a losing position. Disasters thus often alter the opportunity structure of political leadership, which Schröder could profit from while Naoto Kan and G. W. Bush failed to do so (H2).

Overall, we can say that disasters do not generally lead to political instability and do not necessarily increase the room for manoeuvre for incumbent leaders (H2B). The latter are forced

to delegate some of their competence in the *firefighting phase*, either in a hidden or obvious manner, to the dedicated authorities (emergency units, national guard, army) who normally have clear responses in terms of the immediate tasks (H2/A). The incumbent leaders then act as crisis managers at the symbolic or rhetorical levels. In the *crisis management phase*, however, their freedom of action can increase if the political conditions (polity and politics) are right (Metz 2013).

Financial-economic crisis

Financial-economic crises bear more direct political relevance than disasters. While citizens will blame disasters either on the forces of nature or on human omission (the management of the industrial facility etc.), it is the government they will hold liable for the economic situation in the last resort. Better economic performance increases, worse performance decreases the reelection chances of governments (Duch et al 2008; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2007). Most economic crises are of an international character, and thus arise as exogenous shocks for nation states and their political leaders (as in the case of the 1929 economic crisis or the crisis of 2008-2011). Citizens expect political leaders to address the crisis and its consequences – which enhances the value of the role of leaders at a time of crisis (H3B).

Economic and financial crises radically transform the *opportunity structure* of political leaders, realizing the conditions of the reassessment thesis (H2). For economic difficulties easily lead to social dissatisfaction and political instability – and ultimately, a crisis of domestic politics – as they did in Greece between 2009-2013 (H1). Political instability often leads to the fall of governments, when the incumbents cannot redress the situation, or lose political trust (H1). This is what happened in the most indebted countries in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. As a result of the protests of the policies implemented as a reaction to the crisis and the loss of parliamentary support, a number of European heads of governments were ousted or were forced to resign. In this vein, the Haarde cabinet had to step down in Iceland (February 2009), followed by the Godmanis cabinet (Latvia, February 2009) and the Gyurcsány administration (Hungary,

March 2009), Brian Cowen, the Irish Prime Minister (January 2011), Portuguese PM Jose Socrates (March 2011), Greek and Italian Prime Ministers Papandreou and Berlusconi (November 2011).⁸

Political leaders worked out a number of strategies of action and various political innovations to stabilize the political situation and to improve the efficiency of crisis management. They resorted to forming grand coalitions more frequently than in periods of normalcy (H4A); technocratic governments were created with increasing frequency as well (H3). Government by grand coalition replaced the alternation of successive governments for example in the UK in the 1930s – the National Cabinet was formed under the leadership of MacDonald in 1931 (Ondré 2013), as in Greece in the period 2009-2013. In Italy, establishing technocratic governments became frequent, the last example of which has been the Monti cabinet formed in 2011 (Patkós 2013). The Papademos cabinet in Greece was formed as a combination of the forms of technocratic government and the grand coalition in 2011, where the prime minister himself was a politically independent expert, while the members of his cabinet came from among the politicians of the two parties participating in the grand coalition.

The grand coalition and the technocratic government are both based on the consensus among the parties (both from the left and from the right of the political spectrum) participating in the cabinet (H4A). Both represent an acceptance of the lack of political alternatives, which corresponds to the inescapable path hypothesis (H2A). Wide political support provides extraordinary political legitimation to the extraordinary measures required for managing the crisis.

The differences, however, also merit our attention. In contrast with the grand coalition government, technocratic governments have no politician members. After agreeing on identity of the head of government and the chief measures to be taken, the parliamentary parties support the government “from the outside”. This means power is delegated by politicians to civilian technocrats (H3A), amounting to channeling the responsibility towards the latter as well. This is a way for political leaders to avoid having to pay the political cost (loss of popularity and votes) of carrying out the unpopular measures required for managing the crisis.⁹ The grand coalition serves the same goal in a weaker format, as it spreads out responsibility (more or less) among the

participating parties, even though the parties left out from the coalition or the forces outside parliament may profit from the situation at the next elections.

The grand coalition crisis management and the technocratic government equally validate the consensus hypothesis (H4A). Nevertheless, bridging the right-left divide characterizing the normal state of the political spectrum by means of a grand coalition agreement often creates conflicts, in some cases even a party split within the parties to the coalition, when the less pragmatic or more radical wing of the parties refuse to acknowledge the agreement. Creating the first British National Cabinet in 1931 brought about a split both in the Labour and the Liberal Parties (H4B), which lead to a landslide victory for the conservatives at the next round of elections (Ondré 2013).¹⁰ In a similar vein, the grand coalition Merkel government, formed in 2005, lead to a crisis of identity and divisions within the social democratic party and among its voters, which contributed to the social democrats losing the elections in 2009 and the second Merkel government being established without their participation (Hajdú 2013). Both cases illustrate that consensus is only partial and relative, and that the mode of managing the crisis will bear differently on the opportunity structure of the leaders of different parties and the way they are judged (H2). Behind the “consensus” of the grand coalition or the expert cabinet, a new shift can take place in the political lines.¹¹

While in the case of delegation, politicians renounce power – paradoxically – for an interim period, an economic crisis might lead to just the opposite. Here, it is the incumbent leaders themselves who request/receive an *extraordinary mandate* for the interim period while the crisis ends (H2B). With the assistance of the two thirds majority received at the elections, the second Orbán cabinet vindicated such an extraordinary mandate when it assumed office in 2010 in Hungary. This is an alternative to grand coalition government where the wide mandate required for extraordinary crisis management government can be assured by just one of the political sides.

Summarizing the above, we have had the chance to see that economic and financial crises create instability (H1) and a strong set track (H2A, H4A) for political leaders. The lack of a crisis management alternative leads to a temporary consensus (H4A), when political leaders tend to delegate part of the mandate of leadership towards experts (H3A). Orbán’s example shows that political leaders can only break from the inescapable path by means of extraordinary innovation

and transcending the conventional interpretations of crises (H5B) so as to create political room for manoeuvre for themselves (H2B, H3B). We have also seen that crises modify the opportunity structure of political leaders in different ways (H2), thus behind the scenes of the grand coalition or the technocratic government, the political power lines might frequently shift, as is shown by the example of the Liberal and Labour Parties in the UK or the Social Democrats in Germany. The examples of the British National Cabinet and the first Merkel government showed that the consensus characterizing the firefighting phase might be replaced by polarization (H4B).

Crises in domestic politics

Domestic political crises are the most typical forms of states of emergency. While disaster, economic-financial and international crises do have exogenous roots, domestic crises are to be accounted for endogenously. The source of the crisis is to be found in the political process itself, in the intentional acts and interactions of politicians as opposed to being clearly identifiable exogenous shocks.

At the same time we know that economic and financial crises can equally become sources of (domestic) political crises, as was the case in Italy in 2011 and a number of other European countries. They can also induce constitutional conflicts as they did in the wake of the 2008 Icelandic crisis or in the period 2011-2013 in Hungary. The crisis or the state of emergency often “trickles over“ from the economy into politics. Economic and political crises are thus frequently grafted one onto the other.¹²

Due to their nature, states of crisis of a domestic origin involve heightened political insecurity (H1). As opposed to economic crises, there is no previously given or conventional therapy or way out that all political actors would accept. Thus a crisis of domestic politics is characterized not by an inescapable path; rather by extreme political uncertainty and extreme undecidedness of the political situation (H1, H2B). The incumbent political leaders characteristically keep the decision making competences to themselves, even if delegation may take place in a number of constitutionally well regulated circumstances (H3A). In parliamentary regimes, decision making

competences are often delegated to the head of state at a time of governmental crises and frequently to the constitutional court at a time of a constitutional crisis. The main actors, however, remain the political leaders; characteristically they are the ones expected to resolve the situation (H3B). It is a question how the political leaders can exploit the undecided character of the situation.

In contrast with a narrow understanding of economic crises, in the case of crises of domestic politics, opposition party leaders and the leaders of extraparliamentary movements can play a great role. The same happens when the economic crisis becomes an extraordinary state of political crisis.

While economic crises often create a consensus in the first, firefighting stage of crisis management, the domestic political crises by definition arise in the form of heightened internal conflict (H4B). The solution of the crisis, nevertheless, through crisis management by means of delegation, will lead to accepting the authority entitled to deliberation and decision making, even if not to a consensus (H4A). Our institutional hypothesis is relevant at a time of crisis of internal/domestic politics (H5A), to the effect that deeply seated separation of powers will render resolving or transcending the crisis more difficult.

While an economic crisis characteristically revolves around identifying the right *policy* and ensuring that it will be accepted politically, crises of internal politics arise in the very fabric of the political process (*politics*) as it unfolds in a form different from the normal one, and furthermore, at times of crises of the regime, what is at stake is the nature of the governmental system, the constitution and the state itself (*polity*). The game among the political actors becomes a strategic game and cannot be predicted as far as its outcome is concerned. Almost everything depends on the strategic objectives of the players, their tactics of action and the nature of the game that develops around them. Transcending the crisis, the outcome characteristically takes place by means of the victory of one of the contestants and often results in the elimination of the defeated players (e.g. this is what the outcome of civil wars is like).

THE SPECTRUM OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL CRISES

The crisis or state of emergency of domestic politics covers much more ground in itself than the three other types of crisis taken together. From the wide spectrum of endogenously generated crises, we are going to present two sharply contrasting types: the cabinet crisis and the regime crisis.

The cabinet crisis can lead to the reshuffle or to the fall of the cabinet and an extraordinary elections, and as such, it is an outstanding event in the process of parliamentary politics. Its outcome (usually a new cabinet with a different composition) can determine government policies for years to come, and thus it can have a widespread impact on the citizens' life conditions. And though we are talking about a cabinet *crisis*, as a break takes place in the continuum of governance, this is nevertheless a natural part and normal state of parliamentary government (such as in Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium). The cabinet crisis thus in a wider sense – as opposed to a crisis of the regime – does not imply a crisis in the state of political normalcy and the leap to the state of emergency of politics.

Let us, however, take a more detailed look at the differences. In the case of a cabinet crisis, the political stakes (determining incumbency and policy) are significant. The scope of the crisis is “narrow”, limited to Parliament; its resolution is constitutionally regulated and is a recurrent, routine event of political practice. It has been especially frequent in post 1945 Italy, the fourth French republic or Belgium. In the case of a *regime crisis*, on the other hand, the political stakes are the highest possible, since it is the very existence of the regime and sovereignty itself which is at stake (*polity*). The scope of the crisis is wide as well, since it has relevance over and far beyond parliamentary arithmetic and identifying the incumbent, it impacts the whole of political life, and in general, economic and social life as well.

As opposed to a cabinet crisis, there are no rules for resolving regime crises, since the crisis of regime means precisely that the actors question the functioning of rules and institutions, or that these cease to function. This in practice means total openness (undecidedness) and unpredictability of political action. Overstepping the rules (constitutional crisis) leads to state and measures of emergency, the justification of which is given by a reinterpretation of the

political situations. The American civil war, the crisis of the Weimar republic between the two world wars, the Austrian and Spanish civil wars, or the crisis of the Fourth Republic in France are examples of regime crises. Furthermore, the crises of authoritarian regimes lead to the democratic transitions in the state of Central and Eastern Europe between 1989-1991.

The character of instability is different in the case of the two kinds of crises. In the case of a cabinet crisis, instability (H1) arises in the relationships of parliamentary parties towards each other. Characteristically in the form a coalition reshuffle, the outcome of which is the creation of a new governmental coalition, or dissolving parliament and proclaiming new elections. In contrast, instability during a regime crisis spreads to the whole of political life, with the institutions shuddering and sometimes the constitution as well. The escalation of regime crises can lead to civil war and/or the creation of a new regime, or even when the outcome is milder, the impact can be dramatic on economic and social life, on public safety, on the everyday living conditions etc. While cabinet crises are part and parcel of the state of normalcy of parliamentary politics, regime crises mean that a state of emergency sets in.

Eroding the legitimacy of the political system and of the constitution can often lead the sharp political conflict and regime crises, but this rarely leads societies to the threshold of civil war. The unfolding of the regime crisis often happens within constitutional limits and induces changes that significantly modify the nature of the political system and/or the constitution. Such a state of crisis leading to a partial regime change was for example the Italian *tangentopoli* between 1992-96 or such regime shifts as the one in Hungary in the period 2010-13. The Icelandic political events between 2008-2013 raised the perspective of a partial regime change, but in the end, those in favor of the status quo proved to be stronger.

Summarizing the above, domestic crises due to their nature create instability (H1). Sharpening of the conflicts implies validation of the polarization hypothesis (H4B). Crises of domestic politics – in contrast with economic crises – do not represent an inescapable path however, leads to greater leaders' room for manoeuvre (H2B), and is the terrain of political innovation. The reason therefore is that the state of crisis in domestic politics is not an “objective” state developed as a result of exogenous shock, but often an outcome of the intentional strategic action of competing political leaders. Political leaders might have an interest in “dramatizing” the

situation to shape and increase their room for manoeuvre (H5B). The crisis leads to new opportunity structures which can lead to a reassessment of the identity of political leaders: leader type and activity often assumes the position of an independent, endogenous explanatory factor (H2). Escalating the domestic political crisis, the risk of civil war, or the threat to sovereignty can call forth extraordinary measures by leaders (H2B).

Crisis in foreign and security policy

The political stakes of the crisis can increase to the highest level in crises which impact national sovereignty, since in this situation the very existence of the state and the character of the political system (*polity*) depend on the outcome. The higher the stakes for the crisis, the more severe the political instability produced (H1). The international crises arise as external shocks, and often require immediate answer or reaction from the incumbent leaders (H3B).

While in the case of an economic crisis, we have been emphasizing the inescapable path hypothesis, a previously known remedy is rarely available in the case of international political crises. Here, the room for manoeuvre and the responsibility of leaders are increased (H2B), which is in line with the fact that foreign policy traditionally seems to be the prerogative of the leaders.

In contrast with economic-financial crises, for great powers international political crises impacting the national sovereignty increase *domestic* political support and widen the room for manoeuvre of the incumbent leaders (H2B). The “rally-round-the-flag” effect of external threat is synchronous with the consensus hypothesis (H4A). Margaret Thatcher’s popularity rose after the 1982 Falkland war to such an extent that she won the next year’s parliamentary elections. Support for G. W. Bush attained an unprecedented 90% in the first stages of the crises right after 1 September 2001, as a consequence of which his party won the majority of seats at the 2002 midterm elections both in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. Nevertheless the Bush Doctrine elaborated as a part of managing the crisis, containing a number of unprecedented elements (unilateral foreign policy, the emphasis and use of military intervention, not heeding

the international community, suspending certain constitutional rights with the *Patriot Act*) in the medium run, by the time of the second presidential mandate, became strongly divisive in American domestic policy (H4B).

Extraneous threats (e.g. terroristic or military) putting the security of the state or sovereignty at risk is the paradigm case of the state of emergency arising. The defense of the country/state is a political priority that precedes all other considerations and overrides all other rules. “Necessity knows no law” is a maxim everyone admits. This tenet may supersede the rule of law that prevails in quiet times (Femia 2004, 72; Mansfield 2006; 2007). Proclaiming the state of emergency in a public law sense gives the extraordinary tools into the hands of the incumbent that are required to provide the rapid and efficient answer to the threat (such as mobilization, ordering mandatory military service) (DiPaolo 2009). These extraordinary entitlements significantly widen the range of actions political leaders can take while suspending or at least constraining the functioning of the public institutions designed to check and control them, as was the case with the adoption of the *Patriot Act* after 11 September 2001 in the USA.¹³ According to Giorgio Agamben (2005), the reason for this is that the state of emergency became more and more an integral part and continued practice of governance in the 20th century as opposed to being a state of exception.

The international crisis creates a new situation, profoundly altering the opportunity structure of political leaders. For example the room for manoeuvre of G. W. Bush was rather limited before 9/11, his legitimacy weak due to the disputed presidential election results. The political environment of the average one-mandate president underwent radical change following 9/11. The “emergency presidency” created an opening opportunity structure, which Bush was able to exploit (Metz 2013a). Bush, considered as of mediocre talent, underwent dramatic changes in the wake of Bush 9/11 (Greenstein 2002). (H2)

Research by Michael Genovese (1979; 1986) suggests that different leaders could make use of the changes of the opportunity structure to different extents. While Abraham Lincoln F. D. Roosevelt could rise to the opportunity provided by the extraordinary circumstances, and what seemed to be an average skillset possessed by Winston Churchill also rose to unexpected heights, James Buchanan or Jimmy Carter for example could make no use of the shock of the American

civil war or the 1979-81 Iran hostage crisis. G. W. Bush was able to implement unambiguous politics when the situation changed. This did not lead him into the ranks of the great leaders of history, but brought political success for Bush and party at the coming midterm election, followed by the 2004 presidential elections.

Table 2. Typology of crises based on the source (the cause) of the crises

TYPE OF THE CRISIS /ASPECTS OF THE ANALYSIS	STATE OF EMERGENCY BROUGHT ABOUT BY DISASTERS	FINANCIAL-ECONOMIC CRISIS	CRISIS IN DOMESTIC POLITICS		CRISIS OF FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY
			<i>cabinet crisis</i>	<i>regime crisis</i>	
major traits	extraordinary measures	increasing budget deficit; foreign debt	coalition conflict, parliamentary arithmetic	constitutional crisis; crisis of sovereignty; danger of civil war	threaten sovereignty and/or national security,
dimension of politics	policy	policy	politics, policy	politics, polity	politics, polity
source	exogenous	exogenous/endogenous	endogenous	endogenous	exogenous/endogenous
political stake	low	low	significant	high	high
scope	narrow	narrow / wide	narrow	wide	narrow
Relevant hypothesis	H2A, H3A, H4A	H1, H2A, H3A, H4A, H5B.	H1, H2A or H2B, H3B, (H5B).	H1, H2A or H2B, H3B, H4B, H5B.	H1, H2A or H2B, H3B, H4A, H5B.
Examples	Hurricane Katrina in the USA, 2005; Fukushima disaster in Japan, 2011; red mud flood disaster in Hungary, 2010:	1930's UK; WS crisis in the 1970's; financial crisis since 2008 in Iceland, Italy, Greece and some other European countries	Germany 1983 and 2005; Italy 2011 and 2013; Hungary 2004 and 2008.	American Civil War 1861-65; Civil War in Austria 1934; Crisis of the Fourth Republic 1958.	Berlin crisis in 1948-49 and in 1961; USA 1961; 2001; Falkland war, 1982;

Due to the “rally-round-the-flag” effect increasing domestic support, the incumbent leaders can have a growing interest in making the situation dramatic, in exaggerating the level of threat and construing the latter (H5B). Crises of foreign policy often make up for the loss of domestic room for manoeuvre for the incumbent, or are used to get them more leeway.

In summary, foreign policy and defense crises arise as results of strategic measures taken by the incumbent leaders, but appear as external shocks for certain countries. Given that international crises potentially or in fact threaten sovereignty, they often lead to extraordinary measures such as embargoes, military mobilization and intervention or a state of war (H2B). Being threatened externally normally fosters the creation of domestic consensus (H4/A). Owing to the prerogative nature of foreign and defence policy, institutional barriers constrain the movement of political leaders only to a minor extent. This contributes to the fact that they represent situations which are more open and provide more room for manoeuvre compared to disasters and economic crises (H2B). The room for manoeuvre is further increased by the fact that international politics is less transparent for the average citizen, thus the incumbent leader has wider opportunities in shaping the crisis narrative that favours them(H5B).

Political leadership in different types of crises

Conclusions

The general conclusions of our analysis are as follows. First, in line with our expectations, crises have an impact on the room for manoeuvre of political leaders and their opportunity structures. Second, the validity of our hypotheses is significantly linked to the type of crisis involved. Third, the paradigm of the state of emergency highlights the strong voluntaristic element of political leadership, i.e. that the intentions and decisions of political leaders strongly contribute to the institutional mode of functioning (normal or emergency) politics will enter into.

Our findings results regarding the individual areas and hypotheses explored are as follows:

(1) The immediate impact of the crisis

In our first hypothesis we expected that crises always bring about instability in domestic policy (H1). This hypothesis was, however, seems to be only partially grounded. Our hypothesis is in fact valid for domestic crises and major financial and economic crises often lead to instability. Disasters on the other hand have no such directly political consequences, and international crises also generally reinforce the position of the incumbent.

(2) The opportunity structure of political leaders

In line with our expectations, crises create new opportunity structures for political leaders, sometimes even in the case of apolitical disasters. In the latter case, the chief roles are played by the experts, with no significant new political room for manoeuvre created for the incumbent. In the case of economic crises, the inescapable path hypothesis is manifest, albeit to a lesser extent: (H2A). The impact of domestic and external crises is strongly dependent on the situation: they often narrow down, while in other cases, they enlarge the political room for manoeuvre for incumbent political leaders (H2A and H2B). Leaders try their hands at innovative solutions to widen the room for manoeuvre, which is possible even in disaster situations. The altered opportunity structure engenders a significant reassessment of political leaders' capacities (H2). Political leaders can meet new challenges in different ways, and thus the crisis can represent a breaking point in their career tracks. Regime crises and international crises validate the sovereignty hypothesis: for the incumbent, the politics of the state of emergency becomes attainable (H2B). Great leaders often arise amidst serious internal or international situations of crisis (Hook 1955).

(3) The agents of leadership and crisis management

In this aspect we investigated who implemented crisis management and how they did so. One of our third couple of hypotheses assumed an increase in the role of experts, the other in politicians. In the analysis we could see that different kinds of crises have a different impact on

the opportunity structure of opposition leaders. In case of disasters, delegation is widespread, whereas in the case of economic-financial crises it is a tool also employed with frequency (H3A) – thus the incumbent leaders are not really reevaluated. In case of economic crises the impact is strongly situation dependent. Crises of domestic and international crises, however, reevaluate the incumbent leaders according to the rule of thumb (H3B).

(4) The system of relationships among political leaders

Disasters – contrary to our intuitions – do not create consensus in the *political* sense among political leaders, when political life is otherwise strongly polarized. While financial-economic crises and international threats often create consensus in domestic politics in the first, firefighting stage of crisis management, crises of domestic politics always manifest themselves in the form of sharp conflict. In case of both the financial-economic and the international crises it can be observed that initial internal consensus is fragmented by time, the political competition returns and political conception regarding crisis management also get polarized.

(5) The relationship of political leaders and their environment

How do external factors (institutions, the interpreting framework of politics) shape actions and how do leaders interpret and shape their environment? Here the role of institutional factors are significant (H5A), even if proclaiming the state of emergency is the result of political decision, thus the political leaders at the given point in time can switch to another institutional mode of operation and dramatically increase their room for manoeuvre (H2B). The crisis as an exogenous shock changes the opportunity structure, while we have seen that the “crisis character” of the situation can hardly be linked to clear objective material criteria, and is rather based on (political) interpretation and decision. Crises can be construed, “invented” politically (H5B), thus can arise as a result of *endogenous* factors . Thus we can talk of a two-way causal relationship between crises and political leadership. The crises impacts political leadership, can change its opportunity structure and nature, while at the same time, political leaders can also shape and even construe the crisis by means of strategic measures and discursive tools.

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¹ The first of the two dimensions underlying his typology concerns the width of the politics of the leaders in the policy sense, whereas the second one reflects the robustness of the change brought about by politics. Blondel's typology provided a major boost to empirical research on political leaders and enabled more finely tuned analyses of political leadership (cf., for example, Helms 2012).

² Carl Schmitt (1928) referred to this form of dictatorship as commissary dictatorship as distinguished from sovereign dictatorship.

³ Cf. Jefferson's letter on the good official: http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/a2_3s8.html

⁴ In his letter quoted above, Jefferson considers it proven that the northern army was justified in taking horses, hay, provisions and even men by force based on the primacy of the public interest.

⁵ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2211615.stm>

⁶ The emphasis is on the potential, since in a material sense, one is also involved with gradualness. It is a question of a decision as to how far a conflict in domestic politics that leads to an outbreak of violence and from what point is it an affair concerning the order of the state (sovereignty), which can set the stage for proclaiming the state of emergency and the deployment of the army.

⁷ "Start the engines, Angela" – this call to action was featured on the cover of *The Economist* on 09/06/2012: <http://www.economist.com/node/21556577> (downloaded on 25/06/2013).

⁸ Among the countries most heavily hit by crisis, it was only Spain and Cyprus that did not see an extraordinary resignation or ousting the government.

⁹ Installing an expert cabinet represents an innovative case of managing the instability arising in the wake of the crisis where the leaders sacrifice their short term interests for the sake of their long term interests.

¹⁰ The politics of MacDonald after assuming office following the 1929 elections divided his party from the very beginnings. Labour party MacDonald at the helm of a minority government with external support from the conservative

party and the liberals, giving up radical labor objectives, governed from the center and deployed a conservative” politics of crisis management.

¹¹ Besides setting up a technocratic cabinet, the delegation hypothesis is also confirmed by *bureaucratic delegation* (H3A), which was employed with the *financial bailout packages* introduced to manage the 2008 financial crisis in European countries (Sebók 2010; 2011).

¹² As all crisis can lead to domestic political crises as far as their *consequences* are concerned, the four different types of crisis discussed can only be differentiated from an analytical point of view. (cf. Table 2).

¹³ The decrees issued in a state of emergency can thus override institutional control and checks and balances implemented in the state of normalcy (DiPaolo 2009), thus indirectly conforming to our institutionalist hypothesis (H5A).