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Governing decentralised States during the Covid-19 pandemic: challenges of intergovernmental coordination and cooperation in Chile, Italy, and the Netherlands

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Example of interview for the Netherlands

1. Personal Introduction.

Good afternoon, Mayor Thank you very much for this opportunity to engage with your knowledge and experience, which directly connects to my research.

My name is Esteban Szmulewicz, and I am PhD Candidate at the Constitutional and Administrative Law Department, at Leiden University. Professor Wim Voermans, who is my thesis supervisor, sends his warmest regards.

I am very interested in your opinions and thoughts regarding decentralisation and the Covid-19 pandemic, both as Mayor of ..., as well as head of the ... Security/Safety Region.

For the sole purpose of my research and the accuracy of your own opinions, would you mind if I record this meeting?

2. Research introduction.

I am working on decentralisation and the COVID-19 pandemic. I am interested in trying to understand why some countries adopted coordinated nation-wide policies, while others privileged subnational autonomy and decentralisation. Also, understanding the factors that explain countries' responses to the crisis from a territorial perspective.

The study will focus on The Netherlands, Italy, and Chile.

3. Opening question.

First of all, how would you assess the functioning of the Safety Regions in general in the country and in ... specifically?

How would you characterize the relationship between the national government and subnational authorities during the pandemic in the Netherlands?

4. Following questions/topics

Following your response, what do you think are the main factors that explain these dynamics between the national and subnational governments in The Netherlands?

Can you point to particular mechanisms for coordination/collaboration between subnational and national authorities in The Netherlands in emergency contexts?

How would you assess the performance of the Security Council in light of the experience with the Covid-19 pandemic so far?

Furthermore, do you think Municipalities are sufficiently considered in the Security/Safety Regions working’?

Do you think this mechanism represents properly large municipalities, as well as smaller communities?

What are your opinions and thoughts on the recent decisions announced by the government, in order to extend the Covid-19 restrictive measures?

Do you think the interests and perspectives of the local authorities have been properly considered in these recent announcements?

What are the accountability mechanisms in place for heads of the Safety Regions and do you think they have worked well during the pandemic?

Finally, are there any other remarks or comments that you would like to incorporate into my research?

5. Closing remarks

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Your insight and opinions are very valuable for my research.

I am looking forward to continuing exchanging ideas with you and learning from your expertise.

Appendix B: Example of interview for Italy²⁰⁶

1. Personal Introduction.

Good afternoon Mr. Thank you very much for this opportunity to engage with your knowledge and expertise, which directly connects to my research.

My name is Esteban Szmulewicz, and I am PhD Candidate at the Constitutional and Administrative Law Department, at Leiden University. Professors Wim Voermans and Geerten Boogaard suggested it might be worth talking to you.

For the sole purpose of my research and the accuracy of your own opinions, would you mind if I record this meeting?

2. Research introduction.

As you may remember from our previous conversations, I am working on decentralisation and the COVID-19 pandemic in several countries. I am trying to answer why some States adopted coordinated nation-wide policies, while others privileged subnational autonomy and decentralisation, and also how these strategies can be assessed in terms of their effectiveness with managing the pandemic. The objective is to test this perspective in dealing with emergencies in unitary States, with different degrees and types of decentralisation.

The study will focus on The Netherlands, Italy, and Chile.

3. Opening question.

In that regard, focusing on Italy, how would you characterize the relationship between the national government and subnational authorities during the pandemic?

4. Following questions/topics

Following your response, what do you think are the main factors that explain this dynamic between the national and subnational governments in Italy?

Can you point to particular mechanisms for coordination/collaboration between subnational and national authorities in Italy?

Furthermore, do you think Regions have been sufficiently considered/involved in the decision-making process during the pandemic?

²⁰⁶ The interviews in Italy were conducted predominantly in English, with some informants replying in Italian when it was more adequate for them.

What are the accountability mechanisms in place for heads of the Regions and do you think they have worked well during the pandemic?

Many authors have highlighted the idea of power-sharing, collaboration/cooperative decision-making for managing the pandemic, which includes the functioning of the decentralised system, multilevel relations, and the like. How do you evaluate the Italian response to the pandemic in light of these ideas?

Many reports on the Italian case have focused on the role of the regions and their decisions and actions during the pandemic. What is your assessment of the functioning of decentralisation at the local level, given that Municipalities also have competences for dealing with emergencies and for taking up tasks related to the health sector?

Do you think the Italian approach has been effective and adequate for dealing with the crisis?

Could you recommend me some key actors in the decentralised systems in Italy to conduct interviews on how the system has actually worked during the pandemic? For instance, in the Dutch case, I have interviewed Mayors that have leadership positions in Safety Regions, as well as local councillors which have used accountability powers to raised questions about the management of the pandemic.

Finally, are there any other remarks or comments that you would like to incorporate into my research?

5. Closing remarks

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Your insight and opinions are very valuable for my research.

I am looking forward to continuing exchanging ideas with you and learning from your expertise.

Appendix C: Example of interview for Chile²⁰⁷

1. Introducción personal.

Buenas tardes señor/a. Muchas gracias por esta oportunidad de contar con sus conocimientos y experiencia, que se conectan directamente con mi investigación.

Mi nombre es Esteban Szmulewicz y soy doctorando en el Departamento de Derecho Constitucional y Administrativo de la Universidad de Leiden.

A los únicos efectos de mi investigación y de la exactitud de sus propias opiniones, ¿le importaría que grabara esta reunión?

2. Introducción a la investigación.

Mi investigación versa sobre la descentralización y la pandemia de COVID-19 en varios países. Estoy tratando de responder por qué algunos Estados adoptaron políticas coordinadas a nivel nacional, mientras que otros privilegiaron la autonomía subnacional y la descentralización, y también cómo estas estrategias pueden ser evaluadas en términos de su eficacia con la gestión de la pandemia. El objetivo es poner a prueba esta perspectiva en la gestión de emergencias en Estados unitarios, con diferentes grados y tipos de descentralización.

El estudio se centrará en los Países Bajos, Italia y Chile.

3. Pregunta inicial.

Centrándonos en el caso de Chile, ¿cómo caracterizaría las relaciones entre el Ejecutivo nacional y las autoridades subnacionales, sobre todo Municipales, durante la pandemia?

4. Preguntas/temas siguientes

Tras su respuesta, ¿cuáles cree que son los principales factores que explican esta dinámica entre los gobiernos nacional y subnacional? ¿Obstáculos institucionales, políticos, culturales, etc.?

En muchos países, la pandemia ha puesto en primer lugar a los ejecutivos de los distintos niveles de gobierno (nacional, regional o local), en muchos casos en desmedro de los órganos deliberativos. ¿Cuál ha sido el rol y participación de los concejos comunales en el proceso de toma de decisiones y en el control de las mismas en el contexto de la pandemia?

¿Cómo se evalúa la participación de la AChM en la Mesa nacional Covid-19? ¿Sirvió como mecanismo de coordinación multinivel?

²⁰⁷ The interviews for the Chilean case were conducted in Spanish.

¿En qué medida la declaración de estado de excepción constitucional y la emergencia sanitaria y los poderes excepcionales de las autoridades centrales, han afectado las relaciones entre el gobierno nacional y las municipalidades?

En algunos países descentralizados, se observó una dinámica de mayor centralismo en la primera etapa de la pandemia, en la urgencia. Luego, con las medidas de relajamiento y en materias económico-sociales, se volvió a la situación de mayor autonomía y potencial diferenciación entre los territorios. ¿Se observó esta dinámica temporal en el caso de Chile?

¿Cómo cree que se pueden evaluar estos modelos en términos de eficacia y adecuación para hacer frente a una crisis de emergencia?

Asumiendo que en la nueva Constitución se mantendrá algún tipo de autoridades representativas del nivel central en los territorios, ¿qué cambios tendrían que ocurrir para fortalecer las relaciones entre las autoridades democráticas regionales y estas autoridades designadas?

¿Podría recomendarle algunos actores clave de Chile para realizar entrevistas sobre cómo ha funcionado realmente el sistema durante la pandemia? Por ejemplo, en el caso holandés, he entrevistado a los alcaldes que ocupan puestos de liderazgo en las regiones de seguridad, así como a concejales que han hecho uso de sus poderes de rendición de cuentas para plantear cuestiones sobre la gestión de la pandemia.

Por último, ¿hay alguna otra observación o comentario que quiera incorporar a mi investigación?

5. Observaciones finales

Muchas gracias por su tiempo y consideración. Sus ideas y opiniones son muy valiosas para mi investigación.

Espero seguir intercambiando ideas con usted y aprender de su experiencia.

Appendix D: Considerations for organizing the interviews.

In terms of preparation, the first thing was to select and contact the key informants. In the selection process, a list of potential informants was constructed, which is then narrowed down to key informants belonging to different sectors and expertise (public sector, local elites, academia), according to the research focus and hypothesis. This was then discussed and agreed with the thesis supervisors. After the interviewees were selected, the particular informant was contacted first by email, explaining the purpose of the research and the interview, and then confirmed by telephone. In some instances, with high-ranking officials or elites, an initial contact by an email from the thesis supervisor introduced the PhD candidate and also open further and more direct communication. In order to achieve the expected results, a meeting of one hour was estimated as the ideal, yet considering that many respondents were not be able to grant that time, some of the interviews were scheduled for 20-30 minutes.

In terms of the venue, even though an in-person interview at the place of work of the interviewee could have been preferred, given the sanitary restrictions were still present when the large majority of interviews were conducted, in the first semester of the year 2021, the use of online communication software, such as ZOOM or Microsoft Teams, was the final means for the conduct of the interview. The interviews were recorded with permission from the informant.

Also, since the responses will be included in the research to be published, informed consent was asked of the interviewee, and delivered before the interview was initiated.

The dress code was formal, but not too formal. The impression of someone who takes the interview seriously while also giving room for open and honest responses.

In terms of the script for the start of the interview, it considered the following steps.

1. Introduction of the researcher.
2. Introduction of the research. This research is part of the empirical foundation of my PhD project, as part of Leiden Law School PhD program, under the supervision of constitutional and administrative law professor Voermans.
3. Opening.
4. Key initial question: (here). In your opinion and experience (here, follow-up questions).
5. Closing and further recommendations.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Your insight and opinions are very valuable for my research. Also, if possible, I would appreciate it if you could suggest to me other colleagues of yours who might be good contacts for my project.

I am looking forward to continuing to exchange ideas with you and learning from your expertise.

Appendix E: Anonymized list of interviews

1. Former Undersecretary of Territorial Development (SUBDERE), Chile. Date: 14-09-2021.
2. Former Rector of a Chilean University and expert on decentralization in Chile. Date: 03-09-2021.
3. Long-time public servant at the Chilean Undersecretary of Territorial Development (SUBDERE). Date: 01-09-2021.
4. Member of the Constitutional Convention, from the form of the State and decentralization commission. Date: 14-10-2021
5. Crucial advisors of the Chilean Association of Municipalities (AChM, Spanish acronym). Date: 12-08-2021.
6. Professor of Public Administration specialized in Chilean decentralization. Date: 23-08-2021.
7. President of a Region, Italy. Date: 03-06-2021.
8. Former advisor to the Italian Cabinet at the national level, on constitutional affairs. Date: 25-06-2021.
9. Member of the Italian Constitutional Court. Date: 09-03-2022
10. Expert on federalism and regionalism in Italy and in comparative scholarship. Date: 14-05-2021.
11. Professor of Italian constitutional law and expert on Italian intergovernmental relations. Date: 29-07-2021.
12. Emeritus Professor of Public Law, Italy. Dates: 01-03-2022 and 03-03-2022.
13. Professor of constitutional law with an emphasis on constitutional courts, Italy. Date: 22-07-2021.
14. Professor of constitutional law expert on Italian regionalism. Date: 22-07-2021.
15. Professor of Italian constitutional law from Rome. Date: 21-07-2021.
16. City Councilor from a Maastricht municipality. Date: 17-05-2021.
17. Mayor of a smaller Dutch Municipality salient during the COVID-19 pandemic. Date: 03-05-2021.
18. Public management expert with an emphasis on Dutch intergovernmental relations. Date: 22-04-2021.
19. Mayor and Head of a Safety Region. Date: 29-04-2021.
20. Public management Professor, an expert on crisis management. Date: 02-02-2021.

21. Professor specialized in Dutch health law. Date: 02-02-2021.
22. Dutch Emeritus Professor of Public Administration. Date: 18-08-2021.
23. City Councillor from The Hague. Date: 10-11-2021
24. City Council alderwoman in a Municipality in central The Netherlands. Date: 27-08-2021.
25. Dutch public management specialized in network governance. Date: 19-08-2021.
26. Long-time “Griffier” from a Municipality in North Brabant, The Netherlands. Date: 27-05-2021.
27. Dutch Professor of Public Administration specialized in decentralization in the Netherlands and comparative scholarship. Date: 28-01-2021.
28. Professor of Human Rights in the Netherlands and the European Union context. Date: 30-06-2021.
29. Professor of Constitutional Law specialized in Dutch decentralization. Dates: 30-06-2021 and 16-07-2021.
30. Interview a Belgian public law professor who is an expert on intergovernmental relations. Date: 14-04-2021.