
**BALANCING NATIONAL INTERESTS AND GLOBAL SOLIDARITY
IN CRISIS GOVERNANCE: A MANAGED INTERDEPENDENCE
FRAMEWORK FOR MULTI-LEVEL CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

***Dr. Pritee Verma**

India.

Article Received: 17 May 2026, Article Revised: 5 June 2026, Published on: 25 June 2026

***Corresponding Author: Dr. Pritee Verma**

India.

Doi: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijarp.1354>**ABSTRACT**

The growing frequency of transboundary crises has exposed fundamental weaknesses in contemporary governance systems. Global pandemics, climate change, geopolitical conflicts, cyber threats, financial instability, and information disorder increasingly transcend national boundaries, while governance institutions remain predominantly state-centric. This structural mismatch creates persistent tensions between national interests and global solidarity. Governments prioritize domestic security, economic stability, and political legitimacy, whereas effective crisis management often requires collective action and international cooperation. This paper examines the interaction between national interests and global solidarity through a comparative analysis of major international crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change governance, the Russia–Ukraine conflict, global financial instability, cybersecurity threats, and the global infodemic. Drawing upon realism, cosmopolitan institutionalism, and polycentric governance theory, the study identifies recurring structural bottlenecks that impede collective responses. The paper proposes a Managed Interdependence Framework based on ex-ante commitments, stratified subsidiarity, and incentive alignment. The findings suggest that global solidarity should not be viewed as an alternative to national interest but as its most sustainable extension in an interconnected world. The study contributes to international relations and public policy scholarship by offering a practical governance model capable of reconciling sovereignty with collective resilience.

KEYWORDS: Crisis Governance, National Interest, Global Solidarity, Polycentric Governance, Managed Interdependence, Global Public Goods, International Cooperation, Multi-Level Governance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has been characterized by increasingly interconnected crises that challenge traditional governance structures. Unlike earlier crises that were largely confined within national borders, contemporary disruptions rapidly spread across political, economic, environmental, technological, and social systems. Global pandemics travel through international mobility networks; climate change affects entire ecosystems regardless of territorial boundaries; cyberattacks disrupt infrastructure across multiple countries simultaneously; and financial crises cascade through interconnected markets.

Despite the globalization of risk, governance remains predominantly organized around sovereign states. Consequently, governments often respond to crises through policies designed to protect domestic populations, even when those policies undermine broader international efforts. During emergencies, leaders face strong incentives to prioritize national security, economic stability, and political legitimacy. Such responses are rational from a domestic political perspective but may weaken global resilience.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how vaccine nationalism prolonged global vulnerability. Climate governance illustrates how short-term economic priorities frequently delay collective environmental action. The Russia–Ukraine conflict revealed the fragility of global food and energy systems. The spread of misinformation during public health emergencies highlighted the governance challenges of digital interconnectedness.

This paper argues that the apparent conflict between national interests and global solidarity is increasingly unsustainable. In an era of complex interdependence, long-term national security depends upon effective international cooperation. Therefore, governance systems must evolve toward institutional arrangements capable of aligning sovereign interests with collective action.

The paper addresses three questions:

1. Why do national interests often undermine global solidarity during crises?
2. What structural bottlenecks impede effective multi-level crisis governance?

3. How can institutional design reconcile sovereignty and cooperation?

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Realism and Sovereign Survival

Realist theory views the international system as anarchic and characterized by competition among sovereign states. Governments prioritize survival, security, and relative advantages. During crises, this perspective predicts that states will adopt self-protective measures.

Example: Vaccine Nationalism

During COVID-19, wealthier countries secured vaccine supplies through advance purchase agreements. Canada, the United States, and several European countries acquired quantities exceeding domestic requirements. While these actions protected national populations, they limited vaccine availability for developing countries and contributed to prolonged global transmission.

This example demonstrates how rational national behavior can generate collectively suboptimal outcomes.

Cosmopolitan Institutionalism

Cosmopolitan institutionalism emphasizes interdependence and collective action. It argues that many contemporary threats are non-excludable and therefore require international cooperation.

Example: COVAX

The COVAX initiative was designed to facilitate equitable vaccine distribution globally. Although imperfect, it demonstrated how international institutions can coordinate resources and reduce inequalities.

Polycentric Governance

Polycentric governance involves multiple centers of authority operating simultaneously across governance scales.

Example: Germany's Pandemic Governance

Germany coordinated responses among federal institutions, state governments,

municipalities, and health agencies. This structure allowed local adaptation while maintaining national coordination.

Polycentric systems often exhibit greater flexibility and resilience than purely centralized or decentralized arrangements.

3. Research Gap

Existing studies focus predominantly on specific crises such as pandemics, climate change, or financial instability. Limited research systematically examines the relationship between national interests and global solidarity across multiple crisis domains.

Furthermore, much of the literature identifies governance failures without proposing practical institutional frameworks capable of reconciling sovereignty and collective action. This paper addresses these gaps through the development of the Managed Interdependence Framework.

4. Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative comparative case study approach.

Cases Examined

1. COVID-19 Pandemic
2. Climate Change Governance
3. Russia–Ukraine Conflict
4. Global Financial Crisis
5. Global Infodemic
6. Cybersecurity Threats

Data Sources -

Scopus-indexed journal articles WHO reports

UN publications IMF reports OECD databases

World Bank governance indicators Analytical Dimensions

National Interest Dynamics Global Solidarity Mechanisms Governance Outcomes

Cross-case comparison identifies recurring patterns and governance bottlenecks.

5. Structural Bottlenecks in Crisis Governance

Resource Nationalism Example -

India temporarily restricted exports of essential pharmaceutical products during the early stages of COVID-19 to secure domestic supply.

Consequences-International shortages Supply chain disruption

Reduced collective resilience

Information Asymmetry Example

Delays in reporting outbreaks reduce the effectiveness of containment measures and weaken international trust.

Consequences-Increased uncertainty Slower response

Greater economic losses

Regulatory Fragmentation Example

Different travel restrictions and vaccine certification systems during COVID-19 complicated international mobility.

Consequences-Trade disruptions Coordination failures

Uneven recovery

Strategic Competition Example

The strategic rivalry between the United States and China influenced cooperation on public health, technology governance, and supply-chain resilience.

Consequences-Institutional fragmentation, Reduced trust, Lower cooperation

6. Comparative Case Studies

COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic exposed weaknesses in global health governance. **Governance Failure- Vaccine nationalism created inequalities in access.**

Governance Lesson-Global public health requires equitable resource distribution.

Climate Change Governance Example: Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement balances sovereignty and collective action through nationally determined contributions.

Governance Lesson

Climate governance demonstrates both the possibilities and limitations of voluntary cooperation.

Russia–Ukraine Conflict Example

Disruptions in grain and energy markets generated inflation and food insecurity worldwide.

Governance Lesson

National security crises increasingly generate global economic consequences.

Global Financial Crisis Example

The 2008 financial crisis spread rapidly through interconnected financial markets.

Governance Lesson

Economic stability requires coordinated regulatory oversight.

Global Infodemic Example

Misinformation regarding vaccines and public health measures undermined trust and compliance.

Governance Lesson

Information integrity is now a critical dimension of crisis governance.

Cybersecurity Governance

Example: WannaCry Ransomware Attack

The attack affected institutions in more than 150 countries. **Governance Lesson**

Cyber threats cannot be managed solely through national responses.

7. Managed Interdependence Framework

The framework consists of three pillars. **Pillar 1: Ex-Ante Commitments** Examples:- International Health Regulations Pandemic preparedness agreements Climate reporting requirements

Purpose:- Reduced delays and uncertainty during crises. **Pillar 2: Stratified Subsidiarity**

Examples:-Japan's disaster management system European Union multi-level governance structures Purpose:

Allocate responsibilities to the most appropriate governance level. **Pillar 3: Incentive Alignment**

Examples:-Global diseases surveillance networks Shared cybersecurity intelligence

Climate adaptation funds Purpose:

Transform cooperation into enlightened self-interest.

8. Conceptual Model



9. Policy Recommendations:

Establish legally binding crisis protocols. Create automatic response mechanisms. Expand regional governance institutions. Strengthen global early-warning systems. Improve transparency and accountability. Develop coordinated cybersecurity frameworks. Promote equitable burden sharing.

Enhance resilience infrastructure.

10. CONCLUSION

The dichotomy between national interests and global solidarity is increasingly obsolete. Contemporary crises demonstrate that national resilience depends upon global stability. Governments cannot effectively protect citizens within a fragmented and unstable international system.

The Managed Interdependence Framework offers a practical approach for reconciling sovereignty and cooperation through institutional design. By combining ex-ante

commitments, stratified subsidiarity, and incentive alignment, the framework transforms solidarity from an ethical aspiration into a strategic necessity.

Future governance systems must recognize that global solidarity is not a constraint on national interest but an essential component of long-term national security and resilience.

REFERENCES

1. Beck,U.(2009). WorldatRisk.
2. Keohane, R. O. (1984). After Hegemony.Ostrom, E. (2010). Beyond Markets and States.
3. Gruszczynski,L.,& Wu,C. H.(2021). Vaccine Nationalism.
4. Puyvallée,A.B.,&Storeng,K.T.(2022).COVAXandVaccineEquity. Zhou, Y. R. (2022). Vaccine Nationalism and Globalization.
5. Boin,A.,&Blondin,D.(2020).TransboundaryCrisisGovernance. Hale, T., et al. (2021). Pandemic Policy Responses.
6. Biermann, F., et al. (2022). Earth System Governance. Acharya,A.(2022).RegionalismandGlobalGovernance. Slaughter, A. M. (2023). Networked Governance.
7. Young,O.(2022).InstitutionalFitandGlobalGovernance. Abbott, K. W. (2021). Transnational Governance.
8. Gupta, A., et al. (2022). Governance for Sustainability. Jordan,A.,etal.(2022).ClimateEmergencyGovernance.