Multilevel Crisis Management: Covid-19 Responses in Federal and Decentralised Polities

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*Summary*

The COVID-19 pandemic was a multidimensional crisis that seriously affected public health, social well-being and economic performance. To protect and support their citizens and economies, governments set up a wide range of public health as well as social, fiscal, and economic measures. While central governments used their broad powers and resources to tackle the crisis and played a coordinating role, subnational governments provided essential public services, assisted their population and played an important role in the economic recovery. Against this background, it is essential to understand how multilevel systems deal with a major crisis such as COVID-19. Therefore, this contribution discusses the advantages and disadvantages of de/centralisation and highlights the importance of intergovernmental coordination when it comes to the management of crises in general and of the COVID-19 pandemic in particular. Based on examples from different countries, it examines the de/centralising effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and presents variations and conditions that inform crisis responses across different multilevel systems.