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RECEIVED 03 January 2025

ACCEPTED 07 January 2025

PUBLISHED 24 January 2025

## CITATION

Papadakis N, Tzagkarakis SI and Franke M  
(2025) Editorial: Public policies in the era of  
PermaCrisis. *Front. Polit. Sci.* 7:1555060.  
doi: 10.3389/fpos.2025.1555060

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# Editorial: Public policies in the era of PermaCrisis

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## KEYWORDS

PermaCrisis, public policies, policy responses, governance, evidence-based policy making

## Editorial on the Research Topic

### Public policies in the era of PermaCrisis

In recent years, the world has witnessed a rapid increase in the frequency, transferability and intensity of crises, ranging from economic recessions and political instabilities to environmental disasters, global pandemics, energy crises and wars. This perpetual state of crisis, referred to as PermaCrisis, presents unique and unprecedented challenges for public policies. It demands a rethinking of traditional policy approaches and subsequently requires innovative solutions that can effectively mitigate the impacts of crises, while promoting long-term economic resilience and social cohesion.

Considering that, the present Research Topic titled “*Public Policies in the Era of PermaCrisis*,” aimed to explore, analyze and categorize the challenges and opportunities that arise for governance and public policies in the face of persistent and interconnected crises in Europe and beyond.

Within this framework, 27 eminent scholars, namely Professors, Researchers and Experts, from the USA, China, Germany, UK, Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Greece and the UN have contributed in the Research Topic with 11 papers, in total. By examining the intersection of different public policies and the concept of PermaCrisis, these innovative contributions shed light on how public policies are (or should be) adjusted and transformed in order to address pressing issues affecting societies worldwide, as well as focus on the multidimensional (social, economic, political etc.) consequences of the crises on these policies and on societies/economies, in the context of complex and uncertain environments.

Given all the above mentioned, this Research Topic focuses, but not limited, on the following pillars within the overarching context of “*Public Policies in the Era of PermaCrisis*.”

- A. *Crisis Governance, Decision-Making and Evidence-based Policy Responses* during crises,
- B. *Policy Innovation and Adaptation* (mainly in the fields- policy realms of Health, Employment, Higher Education, Environment, Welfare State, Migration, Gender Issues, etc.), identifying best practices and lessons learned from policy challenges and experimentation.

C. *Resilience and Sustainability*, examining the interplay between sustainability (environmental, economic, social) and crisis management, assessing the impact of long-term policy decisions on future crisis preparedness.

Currently, significant problems and dysfunctions exist as long as, all across the globe, societies and labor markets are simultaneously globalized and fragmented with a strong insiders-outsiders divergence, high labor market slack, high in-work poverty (see Papadakis et al., 2022), rising forms of socio-economic inequalities and vulnerability and a series of societal, economic threats. In Europe as well as globally, addressing these issues is of vital importance in order to ensure an overall sustainability in times of multilevel crises, given that the permacrisis (multiple crises), along with the Mega-Trends (see Eurofound, 2020, p. 3–4), within the framework of the rising Lego-flexibility Economy (see Sennett, 2006) have a clear impact on the structure of economy and labor market, industrial relations systems, and business models, as well as in society at large (Papadakis and Tzagkarakis, 2024). It is worth noting that the phenomenon of multiple crises has already been a focus of academic discourse for some time (see Brand, 2016). However, the concept of permacrisis extends beyond the recognition of simultaneous, mutually reinforcing crises by highlighting their permanent, long-term nature and the challenges they pose to social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

The economic crisis, the pandemic and the current energy & inflation crisis highlight the necessity of the welfare state in protecting citizens from the multidimensional social risks that are being reproduced, multiplied or readjusted. At the international level, the socio-economic and cultural context is becoming more complex, with more interdependence and a speed of events that is constantly increasing (according to Schwab and Malleret, 2021), creating new challenges for achieving economic, environmental and social sustainability and social cohesion, within the broader framework of an actual sustainable development.

At the level of social policy, permacrisis legacy indicates the importance of an organized, effective and inclusive welfare state (see Melidis et al.), while the refugee-migrant crisis sets a constant challenge for migration policy and social cohesion, as well as actual inclusion (see Papadakis and Tzagkarakis, Gerson et al.). Further, new issues (raised by the impact of the permacrisis) address the broader issue on how we can strengthen democracies in a globalized and rapidly digitalized world, in order to result in effective public policies, aiming at coping with the challenges constantly set by the Permacrisis. At the same time: (a) the climate crisis has a tremendous impact in every aspect of our present and future, while resulting in new (climate) migration flows (see Koskina et al.), (b) societies, especially in Europe, are aging and demographic shifts are calling for new fertility policies (such as in the case of China see Chan and Cheang), (c) Higher Education and LLL are under pressure and tend to be re-perceived in terms of their role and capabilities in a changing economy and society (see Stamatakis et al., Chiang et al.), (d) existing gender-based inequalities have a clear impact in social cohesion and development (see Koutselini), and (e) public health policies, especially after the pandemic, have been provided a substantial policy learning in terms of policy

adjustment and governance capabilities within emerging Crises (see Wei et al., Xie et al.), while the relevant reforms are (and should be) gradually related to people's societies' and systems resilience and equity (see Souliotis and Papadonikolaki).

Given all the above-mentioned contributions, there is no doubt that the permacrisis era (multiple crises which form a context of permanent crisis—see Oyelere et al., 2023) highlights that the respective public policies need to be more prepared for phenomena that one might mistakenly consider rare. The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as all other crises occurred the last decades (economic, energy, migration etc.), are not “black swan” but “white swan” phenomena (Schwab and Malleret, 2021, p. 34), as humanity has experienced similar situations many times in the past, if one takes into account the historical data of pandemics (Huremović, 2019) as well as economic (Sewell Jr, 2012) and migratory crises (Hoerder, 2019) and (last but not least) the ongoing and gradually threatening climate crisis.

Within this context, all the 27 authors' valuable contributions, forming the Research Topic, actively engage with diverse disciplinary perspectives, including but not limited to public policy, political science, economics, sociology, international relations, law, education sciences and environmental and gender studies.

Along with our gratitude to all the authors, we should add our most sincere thanks to the, prestigious, “Frontiers in Political Science” Journal (including all the Journal's Specialty Editors and Reviewers involved in the Research Topic) and in particular the Journal Manager, Dr. Gabriele Sak, as well as Luisa Moratelli and Jason Hill, for providing us the chance (along with their constant help and support) to edit-develop and deliver this Research Topic to the public.

We do hope and believe that both the theoretical and empirical studies, included in this Research Topic, delve into the complexities of policymaking, within the context of PermaCrisis and eventually, actively, contribute on an interdisciplinary dialogue, raising a set of, evidence-based, multilevel challenges that should not, by any means, remain unresolved, in terms of the public policy complex. The clock is truly ticking....

## Author contributions

NP: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. ST: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. MF: Formal Analysis, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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