Assessing public policies in prevention and management of industrial crises

Background

The pollution and risks induced by industrial and technological activities are subject to many different types of regulation. These regulations define the respective prerogatives and responsibilities of the public and private spheres in terms of risk prevention, management and governance, particularly of major risks.

The occurrence of a major disaster or a major accident is often a window of opportunity to question the effectiveness and sustainability of the regulatory, administrative or even scientific and technical arsenal. This was notably the case in France after the AZF accident in Toulouse on 21 September 2001 and more recently following the accident at the Lubrizol plant in Rouen on 26 September 2019.

To date, the question of evaluating the effectiveness and sustainability of a public policy and regulation in the field of risk prevention in safety, security and health-environment has only arisen in three major ways: (i) evaluation of the objectives' achievement, (ii) evaluation of the means, (iii) analysis of the dynamics of controversies and openness to dialogue and collaboration.

Some academic work done

The issue of public policy evaluation has given rise to a considerable amount of literature (Parson, 1995; Perret, 2008).

In the field of risk and crisis prevention, the articulation and critical analysis of these numerous works is one of the fundamental lines of research.

In what follows, we will give a few examples that in practice are not designated as part of evaluation approaches in the sense of public management.

In terms of risk governance, ballistics and casuistry of Chateauraynaud (1999, 2011) have made it possible to account for the dynamics of mobilization of actors around the various issues that involve or even impact them.

In the same line, the shaping of what responsible risk governance could look like (Rosa et al, 2015; IRGC, 2017) is also another form of approach to evaluation that is intended to be indirect.

The focus on learning from accident investigations (Llory, 2000; Dechy et al., 2009; Hayes and Hopkins, 2019) provides an opportunity to account for what is being constructed before and during the accident.

The operation and practices of technical expert institutes and agencies provide an account of the way in which the matter is referred to public organisations involved in risk and crisis prevention and management (Merad and Trump, 2018; 2019).

Research topics

Following key questions will be investigated:

- What are the different approaches to public response' assessment in prevention and during crisis management?
- How are government responses (prescribed or not) after major accidents perceived?

- How are the conditions for questioning current risk prevention practices constructed and implemented?
- In what way and how do political actions to a public request action materialize into effective and legitimate actions?

Interested candidates need to have a solid background in decision/management science with possibly in sociology, philosophy, political science and risk analysis. Both abstract reasoning, ability to carry out field investigations as well as formal modelling skills are very much appreciated.

The research be both theoretical and embedded. Funding is assured for 3 years (36 months). Knowledge of the French language will help. The research will be carried out at the LAMSADE, a Joint Research centre of the CNRS and Paris Dauphine University within the PSL University. A long stay to a foreign (out of France) research centre should be considered.

Prospective candidates should get in touch with Myriam Merad (myriam.merad@lamsade.dauphine.fr) and Jan Hayes (jan.hayes2@rmit.edu.au) that will supervise the research, submitting a CV and a motivation letter.

References

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