The Covid-19 Crisis: A Catalyst for Climate Action: How Covid-19 crisis has opened up the window of opportunity for green crisis recovery?

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Abstract

The year 2020 has not evolved as many had expected. The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has put almost all parts of the societies all over the globe on halt. Besides impacting human health, the fastest and the most severe impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been on the economic and financial sectors. The global health crisis has occurred at the time when the world is already in a major crisis, the climate crisis or green crisis. In spite of all the austere consequences of green crisis, the actions taken to lessen the green crisis are nowhere near the efforts required to meet the Paris agreement goal of keeping the global temperature well below 2°C and preferably 1.5 °C. Many started viewing the already existing green crisis and the newly emerged Covid-19 crisis as part of the same battle and they envisioned an opportunity in response to Covid-19 crisis to address the green crisis as well and they strived to attach green conditions to the Covid-19 recovery until they reached the green recovery agreement which not only helps in the recovery from the ramifications of the Covid-19 crisis but also addresses the green crisis. This research has sought to find out how a devastating crisis has opened up the window of opportunity for another destructive crisis. A small-N, Within-Case analysis approach is used to study the intervening variables on causal path from the Covid-19 crisis to the opening up of the window of opportunity for green crisis recovery. Moreover, theory-testing process tracing was applied on the case of EU to find out whether Advocacy Coalition Framework helps to comprehend the puzzle and answer the research question. The result of the research revealed that actors in coalitions made extensive use of frames and changed the policy image as well as used expertise to dominate the decisions, resulting in the Covid-19 recovery plan with green strings attached to it to also address the green crisis.

Keywords*: Crisis, Covid-19, climate change, green crisis, green recovery*

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1. Introduction

In spite of the prognostications of the end of the history, this century has presented novel challenges and plethora of global crises (Reifer, 2015). Momentous changes in technology, warfare, economic activities, information systems and communication have transformed the world countries into a global community making them more vulnerable to the emerging challenges and crises. Moreover, the borders of countries are being frequently invaded by various pandemics, pollutants and severe effects of climate change unleashed by austere economic activities. At the present time, the side-effects of the human activities have exceeded the limits, putting unprecedented stress on the earth's ecosystem and engendering permanent deterioration (Sandler, 1997). As little as few decades ago, the terms like global warming, biodiversity, desertification and pandemic were foreign to most of the people around the world but nowadays everyone is well aware of these terms and almost nowhere is safe from their devastating impacts. Subsequently, these crises have encompassed all parts of the human society (Sandler, 1997). Thus, the world needs to find ways not only to tackle these inevitable crises but also to see an opportunity in them as John F. Kennedy (1959) stated that when the word crisis is written in Chinese, it "is composed of two characters – one represents danger, and one represents opportunity" (para.8).

The year 2020 has not evolved as many had expected. At the end of 2019, a severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS CoV-2) commonly known as Covid-19 was identified in China. In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak as a pandemic (WHO, 2020b). This pandemic has put almost all parts of the societies all over the globe on halt as states have had to take radical measures to diminish the devastating effects of the pandemic. The borders have closed, businesses have stopped and the entire populations around the world have been put into lockdown and quarantine. Moreover, in a short period of time the very way of living of most of the people on the planet has been fundamentally changed (Glaser, 2020). Currently, the whole humanity is combating with an unprecedented global crisis. At the time of penning this paper, more than 170 million people are infected with the Covid-19 and more than three million people have lost their lives across the globe (Worldometer, 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic is the major global health crisis and the greatest challenge the world has encountered since World War II (UNDP, 2021a). Besides

human health, the fastest and the most severe impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is on the financial sector. The global health crisis has discernibly veered off the growth of global economy and finance. In other words, every part of the economy from capital spending and exports to consumption has experienced an unparalleled freefall (Roubini, 2020).

The global health crisis has occurred at the time when the world is already in a major crisis, the climate crisis. No corner of the world is exempt from the catastrophic consequences of the climate change. The rise in earth's temperature is engendering natural disasters, environmental degradation, food and water security, weather extremes and economic disruptions. Although most of the earth's warming occurred in the last 40 years, the recent few years were the warmest. Especially, 2016 and 2020 were the hottest years on record globally (NASA, 2017; NOAA, 2021b). Moreover, in recent years the Antarctic ice sheets have declined in mass. According to data from NASA's Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment, Antarctica has been losing 148 billion tons of ice every year (NASA, 2021a). Moreover, the sea level has risen up to 20 centimeters as a result of melting ice, which will continue to rise past 2100 (NASA, 2021b). The year 2020 has experienced extensive flooding and heavy rainfalls especially in Asia and Africa, as a result of climate crisis. The Indian subcontinent, Japan, the Republic of Korea, China and some South-East regions of Asia have received abnormal high downpours in the course of the year. While many countries such as Paraguay, northern Argentina and Brazil were worst affected by the severe drought in 2020. In addition, in 2020, USA recorded the largest fires ever occurred in the country (WMO, 2021). Moreover, the 2020 North Atlantic hurricane season saw 30 storms making it the most active hurricane season on record (NOAA, 2021a). According to the World Migration Report 2020, in the last couple of years there have been 17.2 million migrations forced by the impacts of the climate crisis (IOM, 2020). The earth's temperature has risen about 2 degrees Fahrenheit in the past decades causing all these severe changes. Although 2 degrees Fahrenheit sounds a small amount but, in the recent history of the planet it is an unusual event. Moreover, small changes in the earth's temperature cause immense changes in the planet's environment (NASA, 2021b). These changes are the consequences of humans' unsustainable behavior such as overconsumption and overexploitation of natural resources (Monroe, 2017; European Commission, n.d.-a; MBN, n.d.; National Geography, n.d.).

Despite all these severe consequences, not much has been done yet to tackle the climate crisis. The actions taken to lessen the climate crisis are nowhere near the efforts required to

meet the Paris agreement goal of keeping the global temperature well below 2°C. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in UN75 conference stated that "the climate emergency is a race we are losing" (UN, 2020, para.1). The Secretary-General further insisted that the fight against climate change is the topmost priority of this century (European Parliament, 2020a).

Amid all these severe impacts of the climate change that the world has fallen short to address, emerged a novel global health crisis (UN, 2020). Many started viewing the already existing climate crisis and the newly emerged Covid-19 crisis as part of the same battle. From the very beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, a common refrain has been that political actors should at least now get serious about addressing the climate crisis (Frankel, 2020). Likewise, a climate activist Jamie Margolin argued that "the way the world has been able to mobilize itself and shut down in the blink of an eye to properly respond to the coronavirus is proof that political leaders actually do have the ability to make rapid change happen if they want. So where is that rapid response for the climate crisis?" (Margolin, 2020, para. 3). In addition, the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO's) Secretary-General called for the need to flatten the curves of both climate change and the pandemic given that while Covid-19 has caused global health and economic crisis, failing to tackle the climate crisis threatens ecosystems, human well-being and the economies for centuries to come (WMO, 2020). Furthermore, it has been also argued that environmental damage and contagious disease are considered as classic examples of negative externalities, therefore, climate change and pandemic both are considered to be global externalities. Also, many other connections have been drawn between global environment and global health, offering grounds for hope that advancement in one policy area could potentially imply improvement in the other (Frankel, 2020). Many economic experts, scientists and policy experts have envisioned an opportunity in response to Covid-19 crisis to address the climate crisis as well and they strived for it until they reached the green recovery agreement (Sheng, 2020; Evanson, 2020).

The puzzle is that how a global health crisis with such devastating consequences has become an opportunity for countering another destructive crisis. Consequently, the puzzle leads to the research question that this paper will seek to answer, which is:

How Covid-19 crisis has opened up the window of opportunity for green crisis recovery?

Before proceeding further, it is worth to clarify the concepts used in the research question as well as in the course of this research to better understand them.

The first conceptual clarification to make is regarding the concept of crisis used in the context of this paper. Since crisis can be defined as a turning point in the middle of something or an event where the time is short and abrupt decision is required (Management Study HQ, 2021), a crisis can be as small as a disruption in a daily routine or as big as a pandemic. In the context of this research, the concept of crisis is used as a situation that restricts the amount of time available to make decisions, threatens the fundamental values and basic structures of a social system, and necessitates making critical choices. In addition, it creates a high degree of uncertainty. Hence, in this paper the concept of crisis used for the 'Covid-19' and the 'green crisis', refers to the conditions of high uncertainty, urgency and severe threat caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and human-induced climate change respectively (Rosenthal et al., 1989).

Moreover, another concept that requires clarification is the concept of green crisis. The sustainable behavior, which is a set of deliberate actions to minimize harm to the environment and to conserve natural resources, is called green behavior (Tapia-Fonllem et al., 2017; Steg & Vlek, 2009). This paper uses the concept of green crisis for the climate change instigated by the unsustainable behaviors of humans. The unsustainable behaviors such as burning fossil fuels, pollution, deforestation, increase in livestock farming, use of nitrogen comprising fertilizers, overconsumption and overexploitation of resources, which have modified the environment and pose existential threat to all living things and the world as a whole (Monroe, 2017; European Commission, n.d.-a; MBN, n.d.; National Geography, n.d.).

Furthermore, green crisis recovery refers to long term policies, planning, budget and tactics designed to recover from green crisis in a way that benefit people as well as the planet. It involves measures which emphasizes on addressing climate-related problems, protecting ecosystems, safeguarding the environment as well as creating a resilient, inclusive and sustainable society by setting benchmarks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promoting renewable energy, investing in environmentally friendly projects and greening the agriculture (Abnett, 2020; BRODIES, 2020; European Commission, 2019a).

The focus of this research is to open the causal black box between the Covid-19 crisis (X) and the opening up of the window of opportunity for the green crisis recovery (Y). Since the research question already assumes that there is a causal link, the research will shed light on its mechanism by tracing the process of how actors have seen a window of opportunity in Covid-19 crisis to respond to the green crisis as well.

The subsequent chapter will review the literature on crisis situation and its implication for policymaking, the contribution of Covid-19 to other areas and major advances in green crisis recovery. Chapter three will present the theoretical framework. Chapter 4 explains the research methodology while chapter 5 will analyze the data and chapter 6 will discuss the research findings. In the last chapter the findings will be placed in a larger context and will discuss the research limitations and provide impetus for future work.

2. Literature Review

In order to find out how the Covid-19 crisis has opened up the window of opportunity for green crisis recovery, it is essential to review the literature on the related topic from different perspectives to have a better understanding of the subject matter as well as to find the gap in the literature so that the research addresses it. Although the topic covers a wide variety of literature, this chapter seeks to review the literature focusing on three major themes emerged throughout the literature reviewed. One of the themes is crisis situation and its implication for policymaking, to better understand how crisis facilitates or triggers policy change. In addition, in order to understand how a crisis contributes to the advances in different policy areas, this chapter will also review the contribution of Covid-19 crisis to policy areas other than the green crisis. Moreover, it will also review the literature on the theme major advances in green crisis recovery. The scope of this theme will be limited to the advances in green crisis recovery before the emergence of the Covid-19 crisis for two reasons, firstly, to understand how much progress has been already made in addressing green crisis before the pandemic and how much green recovery is committed to contribute to these advances. Secondly, during the Covid-19 crisis almost all activities have been halted even the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) on green crisis has been postponed (Harvey, 2021), thus there has been no major progress in this area during the pandemic except for the green recovery which this paper will study in detail in chapter 5.

In the following sections, the above-mentioned themes will be discussed in detail.

2.1 Crisis Situation and its Implication for Policymaking

Problems are not always self-evident by the indicators, that is why, they sometimes require a push to draw the attention of people and policy makers towards them. That push is often facilitated by a focusing event such as a crisis that calls for attention to a problem or serves as a symbol to depict the intensity of an issue. In addition, symbols have significant focusing effects given that they capture the reality that people already sense in a more diffuse and vaguer way. Moreover, such focusing events as crises tend to tell a causal story to inform the

decision makers about a policy problem (Kingdon, 1995). Therefore, crises tend to promote policy change, although the dynamics differ from one crisis to another. Furthermore, crisis mostly functions as a catalyst for policy change as its existence alerts the policymakers about a serious problem that needs an urgent response (Nice & Grosse, 2001). Moreover, the dramatic changes that takes place in a policy domain as a result of a focusing event or a critical juncture is called by Baumgartner and Jones (1993) as policy punctuations. Policy punctuations tend to challenge the current policy venue and policy image. Policy image is the shared ideas held by the policy entrepreneurs regarding a policy at stake. Policy change takes place when actors give the problem a new policy image and shift it to a new policy venue (Walgrave & Varone, 2008).

Moreover, there are numerous implications for policy making during crisis. Kingdon (1995) asserts that it is quite rare that focusing events like crises carry the issues to the policy agenda by themselves, according to him they need to be accompanied by other things. Primarily, the already existing perception of a problem needs to be reinforced. As Downs' (1972) issue-attention cycle model suggests that after a while a problem gets fade away and being replaced by a new one, however, any major problem that was once raised to national prominence may recapture interest or some significant aspects of it may become attached to a novel problem that is currently dominating the center stage. Consequently, problems that have once gone through the cycle would receive a higher level of attention and concern from the policy makers than those that are in the pre-discovery stage (Downs, 1972).

Kingdon (1995) argues that focusing events like crises can impact the definition of a problem in combination with other cognate events. For instance, if one aviation accident, one railroad bankruptcy and one bridge collapse is not enough to create a sense of a problem, then several such incidents occurring close together might draw a serious attention to the problem (Kingdon, 1995).

Furthermore, some of the crises are attributed as transboundary crises when the functioning of several life-sustaining infrastructures is severely threatened, and the causes of the fiasco and courses of recovery remain ambiguous (Boin, 2009). Although this definition of transboundary crisis is based on its traditional definition with its main elements of urgency, threat and uncertainty, what distinguishes it from the traditional definition is its emphasis on intertwined critical infrastructures that describes the modern society. Furthermore, a

transboundary crisis can easily cross territorial borders, threatening many cities, countries and continents. In addition, it can also cross functional boundaries such as from one sector to another. Moreover, these transboundary crises have no clear starting point, they suddenly escalate and move in unforeseen directions, exploit the relationship between geographical and functional domains like climate change and pandemics that know no borders and transcends from one sector to another, since a pandemic not only impacts health but also effects other sectors such as economy, education and tourism to name but a few (Boin, 2009; ILO, n.d.).

According to Boin et al. (2009), crisis and its implications for the policymaking can be understood with reference to 'frame contests'. Crises generally create a contest between the frames and counter-frames regarding the nature and asperity of the crisis. In addition, there is also a contestation of frames between actors concerning its causes, its escalation and its future implications. Actors strategize, manipulate and fight for their frames to get it accepted as the dominant policy narrative ('t Hart, 1993; De Vries, 2004; Brändström & Kuipers, 2003). These actors seek to exploit the state of emergency that crises entail, and they seek to strengthen and defend their positions to get rid of existing policies or to pave the way for the new ones (Boin et al., 2009). Stone (2002) points that the framing of former events derives actors' definitions of the present event and they would tend to adopt the prepackaged solutions. As illustrated by the garbage can model, actors scan their horizons for the problems so as to endorse their favored solutions (Howlett et al., 2009). Moreover, focusing events such as crises tend to unpredictably open the policy window or the window of opportunity (Cobb & Primo, 2003). This opening up of window is usually unpredictable and actors are not able to control the events once they are set off, however, they can dramatize the problems and link them to their solutions and formulate strategies to push their solutions onto the agenda (Howlett et al., 2009). In the view of Kingdon, the notion of crisis is understood as a window of opportunity (Saurugger & Terpan, 2016). As Kingdon (1984) points that there are three streams namely problem, policy and politics. The problem stream is related to the perception of the problem as an issue that requires attention. The policy stream consists of actors who propose solutions to the perceived problem while the politics stream is the influence of power games such as interest group pressure campaigns or legislative or administrative turnover or political actors' frame. According to Kingdon (1984), these three streams pursue their courses independent from each other and operate on separate paths until a critical time such as an external shock like crisis opens the window of opportunity so that the policy entrepreneurs bring these three streams together by linking the problems, solutions

and opportunities, and then trigger policy change. Thus, with the emergence of a crisis, well-positioned, resourceful and skillful actors through strategic manipulation couple the already existing policy problem and the already known policy solution with the political opportunity to bring about dramatic change which can be described as a change that goes beyond incremental adjustments (Kingdon, 1984; Keeler, 1993).

At most, a crisis provides an opportunity for espousing new policies or changing the existing ones, however, the opportunity created must be well managed to acquire actual policy change (Nice & Grosse, 2001). Winston Churchill, the British prime minister once said that "Never let a good crisis go to waste" (as quoted in Van Nispen & Scholten, 2017). Moreover, Langen-Riekhof et al. (2017) assert that history shows how extreme threats and crises have proved to be beneficial in leading a country or even the whole world to a solution. Furthermore, crisis whether its economic, financial, migration or a pandemic, it usually facilitates agenda setting and tends to open the window of opportunity for the introduction of new policy or change of the previous one (Van Nispen & Scholten, 2017). Moreover, crisis is seen by many politicians and policymakers as a mechanism that necessitates expeditious inventions and innovations, leading to swift advances in policy and procedures. In addition, during the crisis motivations and incentives of decisionmakers and politicians change, potentially engendering new cooperative behaviors and even the establishment of new structures and systems (Langen-Riekhof et al., 2017). Furthermore, global crises that overturn the existing orders and the long-held norms, can open the way for new structures, values and systems to emanate and take hold. Nevertheless, without such destruction to practices and systems, politicians and decision-makers are usually resilient to any major changes. Moreover, the crises that are large in scale and transcend the national boundaries, and challenge multiple equities and interests have a tendency to bring together diverse actors, allies and rivals all alike to tackle the crisis. In addition, to convert a crisis into an opportunity it usually requires reframing of the issue and looking at it via a different lens (Langen-Riekhof et al., 2017).

After reviewing the literature on crisis situation and its implications for policymaking, in the next section, the literature on the contribution of Covid-19 to policy areas like digital transformation, health, and economy, trade, and finance will be reviewed.

2.2 Covid-19 and Its Contribution to Policy Advances in Other Areas

The Covid-19 has considerably shifted public policy all over the globe. The policy changes that were once expected years away, due to Covid-19 pandemic they have been implemented over the past few months. The Covid-19 pandemic contributed to policy advances in various policy domains but the policy change in policy areas such as digitalization, health, and trade, economy and finance have been more manifested (OECD, 2020). In this section, the Covid-19's contribution to all these policy domains will be reviewed.

In the coming years 2020 will be seen as the turning point for the digitalization. No other sector has experienced such unforeseen and unprecedent growth as digital sector (UNCTAD, 2021). Moreover, Covid-19 has accelerated the digital transformation which has been underway for years. As Satya Nadella the CEO of Microsoft, in April 2020, said that "We have seen two years' worth of digital transformation in two months" (Stone, n.d., para. 1). The augmentation has not only been in the work of international organizations but also in the functioning of governments and national agencies to administer public services (Digwatch, n.d.). For instance, in March 2020, the Estonian government used an unprecedented digital approach to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic by arranging an event called 'Hack the Crisis' to crowd source ideas from its citizens. Just within few hours they got 96 ideas and the government organized 27 teams to work on those and launch moonshot ideas to address the pandemic. Moreover, Covid-19 has also led to the acceleration of digitalization in education, for example, the Department of Education of Australia launched digital strategy to aid pupils learn on their own terms via flexible and personalized programs (Stone, n.d.). Furthermore, in Canada, what were once just discussions regarding when the country would be entirely connected, have now turned into reality due to Covid-19 pandemic. From citizens' cloud adoption to digital identities and implementation of mobile workforce, all these changes are in progress and the delivery is soaring from coast to coast (Nova Scotia, 2020). Likewise, Azerbaijan has also grasped the opportunity to enhance its digital transformation. The country has launched a one-stop online platform for all of its e-services (UNDP, 2021b). In addition, the Taiwanese government has started utilizing QR code scan and online report of health symptoms of travelers to classify their infection risks. The introduction of QR code scan has been a breakthrough advancement in the country's digital transformation (Horgan et al., 2020).

Regarding Covid-19's contribution to health sector, the pandemic has highlighted the pre-pandemic deficiencies in health coverage as well as the failure to address the health gaps across the healthcare sector all over the world, undermining national and regional ability to move towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) (WHO, 2020a). The revelation of healthcare deficiencies due to Covid-19 resulted in some policy changes in the given sector. One of the examples of policy change is in the US health insurance policy. US' health insurance policy has been that those under the age of 65 should either pay their medical expenses by themselves or take private health insurance. Due to high costs of health insurance in the US, about 50 million Americans have lacked any health insurance (Bruenig, 2019) but because of the Covid-19 pandemic the US government altered its policy. President Biden with an executive order gave uninsured Americans access to health insurance under Affordable Care Act (Gordon, 2021). Furthermore, response to Covid-19 pandemic has significant ramifications for mental health system and its patients. Over the past decades, mental health has witnessed considerable under-investments. Globally, on average mental health comprises just 2% of health budgets (McCartan et al., 2021). The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the mental health issue among the population as a result of bereavement and social isolation. Consequently, many countries have started paying serious attention to the mental health. For instance, in China mental health has long been stigmatized and the topic has been ignored (Wang & Hernández, 2020). But due to surge in mental health problems in the Covid-19 pandemic era, China has adopted 19 new mental health policies to tackle the mental health issues rising as a consequence of Covid-19 pandemic (Qiu et al., 2020). One of the most significant contribution of Covid-19 to health sector has been the innovation in the development of vaccines. The mRNA and DNA based vaccines offered mammoth advantage over the conventional methods of developing vaccines, as the time to develop these vaccines are much shorter than the conventional ones. The use of gene-based vaccinations for Covid-19 has opened up the doors for the prevention of other diseases with the same technique in the future (Fuller et al., 2021).

With respect to the Covid-19 contribution to economy, trade and finance, one of the contributions of Covid-19 pandemic to financial sector is the introduction of the monetary policy. The European Central Bank (ECB) launched the Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP) as a policy response to stabilize market conditions amidst exceptional ambiguity and demand for safety. This policy acted as a circuit breaker to prevent a full-

blown financial crisis. In addition, it saved millions of businesses and jobs. This policy which was initially introduced to address the deteriorating market conditions caused by Covid-19 crisis, has turned to be a macroeconomic stabilization tool which will remain extremely important even post pandemic (ECB, 2020). Furthermore, trade policy adopted to address the pandemic has been used as an opportunity to advance required reforms in trade. The Trade Forward Southern Africa programme provides one such example (Shera, 2021). The programme usually focuses on medium-term planning and on finding ways to bring transformational change in trade policy. However, with the emergence of the pandemic the programme turned to recommend reforms at the national level to mitigate the damage created by the Covid-19 pandemic. By pivoting focus to high-impact reforms that can be quickly executed, the crisis produced an opportunity for the programme to acquire something that was otherwise challenging to achieve in normal times (Shera, 2021). Another reform opportunity that Covid-19 brought to the trade is the trade reform between Afghanistan and Pakistan. With the closure of border and the introduction of new standard operating procedures due to the emergence of the pandemic, trade between the two countries which was already experiencing problems in the last couple of years, got worse (Khan, 2019). The mounting backlog at the border and food security concerns exert political pressure for action which resulted in several key transit and trade reforms which were not possible otherwise (Shera, 2021). Furthermore, Covid-19 has proven to be 'investment accelerator' to Myanmar. The Covid-19 pandemic has made the operating environment quite challenging and has strongly impacted the foreign investment which was already shrinking due to Myanmar's slow economic growth (Li, 2020). Myanmar has proved that the pandemic can also act as an accelerator for the country's investment landscape. By reducing bureaucratic obstacles and alleviating the administrative burden not only the country made the firms' contribution to the production and delivery of goods and medical equipment more efficient (UNCTAD, 2020) but also attracted some long-term investments in infrastructure projects such as Ascent Capital invested USD 26 million in internet service provider (Li, 2020).

After reviewing the contribution of Covid-19 crisis to policy areas other than green crisis, in the next section, the literature on major advances in addressing the green crisis before the emergence of the Covid-19 will be reviewed.

2.3 Major Advances in Green Crisis Recovery

In this section, the literature on the major advances in addressing the green crisis before the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic will be reviewed to understand what efforts have been made in green crisis recovery prior to the perception of an opportunity in Covid-19 crisis to tackle the green crisis as well. Also, the emergence of the pandemic halted all major activities which also resulted in the postponement of the COP26 in 2020. Thus, there has been no major progress in addressing the green crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic except for the green recovery which this paper will discuss in detail in chapter 5.

In the subsequent sub-sections, the UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties which includes the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement will be discussed.

2.3.1 The UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties to Address Green Crisis

The human-induced green crisis was hypothesized by a Swedish scientist as early as 1890's, however, the phenomenon was not recognized as a global environmental issue until 1970's, when an American climatologist building upon the Swedish scientist's hypothesis declared that burning fossil fuels indeed have a heating impact on the earth (Abatzoglou et al., 2007). By 1990's, the problem made its way to the international political agenda when around 150 countries signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Pralle, 2009). The main objective of the UNFCCC is to stabilize the concentrations of greenhouse gases at a level that averts hazardous anthropogenic (human induced) interference with the earth's climate (UNFCCC, 2021e). Thenceforth, the parties of the UNFCCC have had annual conferences known as Conference of the Parties (COP) (UNFCCC, 2021b). The COP acts as a supreme decision-making body of the UNFCCC convention and its job is to review national emission inventories submitted by the member Parties (UNFCCC, 2021b). Among other decisions taken in COP conferences, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement have been breakthrough steps in addressing the green crisis. Although the Kyoto Protocol has not managed to reach its desired goal and the Paris Agreement is also striving to acquire its 2030 targets but still, they have had huge impact on the green crisis recovery (ACT Alliance EU, 2021; Rosen, 2015). In the next sub-sections, both will be reviewed in detail.

2.3.1.1 The Kyoto Protocol and its Impact on Green Crisis Recovery

In the third Conference of the Parties (COP 3) held in Japan in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was the first international agreement signed by 150 signatories including many industrial nations to address the green crisis (EPA, 2021). The Protocol was adopted by the Parties later in 2005. The Protocol set legally binding emissions targets for six major greenhouse gases for 37 industrialized countries, growing economies and the European Union (EESI, n.d.; UNFCCC, 2021c). The Parties committed to dimmish the emission of the greenhouse gases on average by 5.2% between 2008 and 2012 (the first commitment period), including 4.7% reduction in carbon dioxide (UNFCCC, 2021c). The prevailing opinion was that the Protocol was insufficient to address the pressing problem of the global warming. Nonetheless, many viewed it as a 'reasonable first step'. Moreover, climate activists argued that at least there was a legally binding agreement to tackle the problem (Rosen, 2015). By 2012, the Parties to the Protocol reduced their carbon dioxide emissions by 12.5% which was well beyond the target of 4.7% for CO2 emissions. Chavez (2009) argues that the protocol brought the world together to combat the crisis, leading to international collaborative efforts. He further asserts that many countries, notably the European Union, have managed to cut their greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the content of each participating country was voluntary, they could choose to reduce their emissions as much or as little they liked (Olivier & Peters, 2019). According to Seres (2013), the flexible and economically justifiable mechanisms have facilitated the compliance with the emission reductions. For instance, the Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) has monetized the market for the reduction of the greenhouse gases and has mobilized around US$200 billion investments to the private sector. In addition, the CDM has contributed to the reduction of pollution and promotion of renewable and reliable energy sources (Seres, 2013). In 2012, the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period was adopted, starting from 2013 until 2020 (UNFCCC, 2021c). Europe managed to achieve 15% reduction in its emissions which was well beyond the 8% target set for the group, which was possible due to burden sharing agreement among member states. Only 8 out of 15 members managed to meet their individual goals. Whereas France, Finland, Greece, Germany, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Sweden met their targets, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Luxembourg, Spain and Italy lagged behind in achieving their emission reduction goals (European Commission, 2013). Although these countries lagged behind to meet their targets, the progress has still been made towards green

crisis recovery. In addition, under the Kyoto Protocol 36 developed countries have managed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions significantly (UNEP, 2012).
In a nutshell, the Protocol contributed to major advances in addressing green crisis. Firstly, the Protocol united the world to collaboratively address the green crisis which was not the case prior to the Protocol. Secondly, it has encouraged countries to set emission reduction targets. Finally, the 36 countries that were committed to reduce their emissions by 4% from the 1990 level, between 2008-2012 they managed to lower it to 24.2% which was well below the 1990 level (Rosen, 2015; Shishlov et al., 2016).

2.3.1.2 The Paris Agreement

In COP 21 held in 2015, the Paris Agreement was adopted by196 Parties. It is a legally binding international treaty aiming to contain global warming to well below 2°C, preferably to 1.5 °C, in comparison with the pre-industrial levels (UNFCCC, 2021d). The agreement even aims for global net-zero emissions (Maizland, 2021). While Kyoto Protocol set top-down legally binding greenhouse gas reduction targets only for developed countries, this agreement requires all nations; developed, developing, rich and poor to play their roles in recovering from the green crisis. Moreover, the Paris agreement offers national ownership and greater flexibility to the Parties (NRDC, 2021). Parties can set their own emission targets in relation to their own level of growth and technological advancements. The Paris agreement provides a robust system of reporting, monitoring, and reassessing individual and collective national targets of the Parties over time (NRDC, 2021). In addition, it provides a corridor for the developed countries to assist the developing ones in their efforts to mitigate the crisis and adapt to the adverse effects of the green crisis (Korwin, 2016). It establishes a framework for the transparent reporting, monitoring, and increasing the Parties' individual and collective emission reduction goals (NRDC, 2021). Furthermore, the implementation of the agreement requires social and economic transformation built on best available science. The agreement operates on a five-year cycle of climate action plan known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) submitted by the Parties. In the NDCs, each country has to communicate the actions it will take to decrease its greenhouse gas emissions in order to achieve the Paris Agreement goals (UNFCCC, 2021d). Moreover, in their NDCs countries have to also declare the programs that they will pursuit in order to build resilience to adapt to

the consequences of the rising temperatures. In addition, to frame the efforts of the agreement towards the long-standing goal, the Parties are also required to submit their long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LT-LEDS) (UNFCCC, 2021d). Since there are no explicit requirements regarding how and how much Parties should lower their emissions, the national plans differ greatly in ambition and scope, largely mirroring a country's level of development, its capabilities and its contribution to emissions in due course (NRDC, 2021).

Under the agreement, China has committed to reach its carbon dioxide levelling-off by 2030. Correspondingly, India set to reduce its emissions' intensity by 35% below 2005 level and is committed to produce 40% of its electricity from non-fossil means by 2030 (NRDC, 2021). In addition, all the Parties in their NDCs, except for Argentina, have listed the transition from the fossil fuel to renewable energy as their primary goal. The World Energy Outlook 2017 predicted that if the Parties actually translate their commitments into practice, the renewable energy will constitute 40% of the world energy mix by 2030, exceeding the share of coal in electricity production (F. Khan, 2019). Moreover, in order to tackle the green crisis and recover from it, the Paris agreement provides a framework for technical, financial and capacity building support to Parties who require them (UNFCCC, 2021d). The Agreement calls on developed nations to take lead in offering financial assistance to those nations that are more vulnerable and less endowed. Climate finance is not only important for large-scale investments to significantly slash emissions but also equally essential for adaptation, as substantial financial resources are required to adapt to the adverse consequences and to mitigate the impacts of the green crisis (UNFCCC, 2021d). In terms of technical support, the agreement creates a technology framework that promotes technology development and transfer, to ameliorate resilience to the changes caused by the green crisis and to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. With respect to capacity building, not all developing nations have adequate capacities to address the green crisis' challenges. Thus, the agreement put great stress on climate-related capacity building for developing nations with the assistance of the developed ones (UNFCCC, 2021d).

Despite all the efforts underway to recover from the catastrophic green crisis, some argue that there is still gap that tends to prevent nations from achieving the Paris Agreement goal by 2030 (UNFCCC, 2021a). According to PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, national implementation of Parties' climate policies is not sufficient to acquire the overall

Paris Agreement goal and would lead to just 5.5% decline by 2030 (Roelfsema & Van de Vijsel, 2020). Notwithstanding that, the agreement itself is a major advance in addressing the green crisis, in a sense that it is universal and applicable to all countries, not just the biggest emitters. It also establishes a new international climate regime (ACT Alliance EU, 2021). Although the pledges are not ambitious enough to acquire the agreement's goals, but the advancement has been made in nearly every front. From investors moving away from coal to support net-zero targets to over 1000 big companies' commitments to shift from high-carbon to low-carbon economy. Furthermore, about 400 cities worldwide have committed to acquire net-zero emissions by 2050. In addition, 130 private banks comprising one-third of all the banks in the world have signed a framework to align their practices with the Paris Agreement (Bergen & Mountford, 2020). In addition, many countries pledged to chase net-zero emissions within a couple of decades and ameliorate their renewable energy utilization. For instance, Japan, the European Union and South Korea are planning to become climate neutral by 2050 while the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, China is aiming to reach its goal by 2060 (Maizland, 2021).

In the subsequent section, after the identification of gap in the literature the contribution of this research to science and society will be discussed.

2.4 Contribution of This Study

From the above discussed literature, it has become evident that crisis can potentially open the window of opportunity for actors to push their pending solutions through the agenda-setting process of policy making (Van Nispen & Scholten, 2017). Furthermore, in the literature it is also discussed that crisis usually instigates contestation between frames and counter-frames vis-à-vis the asperity and nature of the crisis, its causes, its escalation and its future implications ('t Hart, 1993; De Vries, 2004; Brändström & Kuipers, 2003). In addition, actors strive to strengthen their positions to do away with the current policies (Boin et al., 2009). Besides, it has been also discussed that the crisis tends to unpredictably open the policy window so that actors dramatize the problem and push their solutions onto the agenda. However, by reviewing the literature a gap in the literature has become evident which is that very little is known regarding the causal black-box between the Covid-19 crisis and the policy measures related to the green crisis. When the Covid-19 crisis emerged, the green

crisis has already existed for a long time. Although the literature discussed above has shed light on the crisis situation that it tends to open up the window of opportunity for a policy change, this change of policy usually takes place in the policy areas that have been hit by the ramifications of the crisis. For instance, the Covid-19 crisis has impacted the health sector due to the overwhelming number of patients in hospitals, lack of preventive equipment and postponement of treatment for other diseases (Chriscaden, 2020; Sharma et al., 2020). Additionally, it has also affected education sector as schools and universities got closed and students have been obliged to study from home (Chandasiri, 2020). Also, it led to economic downturn due to closure of businesses (Ozili & Arun, 2020). Thus, policy change and advances in these areas are understandable but agenda-setting and policymaking regarding an area such as green crisis that has no link with this crisis is puzzling. Firstly, the literature has not explained how a crisis in one sector brings policy change in the other sector that has nothing to do with it. Secondly, the literature lacks the explanation that how a destructive crisis opens the window of opportunity for another devastating crisis that already exists for long. This research attempts to fill this gap by tracing the causal mechanism between these two; the vicious Covid-19 crisis and the recovery plan for the destructive green crisis.

In the light of the gap in the literature discussed in the above paragraph, from the scientific perspective, the findings of this research would contribute to the crisis policymaking literature on how a devastating crisis opens up the window of opportunity for another catastrophic crisis. From the societal perspective, in the past few decades the world has witnessed plethora of crises, besides, at present, the whole world is in the grip of Covid-19 crisis and according to the International Rescue Committee (2021), it has been predicted that in 2021 the world will witness 10 more crises ranging from humanitarian to political. Hence, the findings of this research would contribute to the knowledge on how a crisis opens up the window of opportunity so that policymakers not only tackle this newly emerged crisis but also address the other one which already exists.

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework will be discussed.

3. Theoretical Framework

This research will use the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to find the answer to the research question by analyzing the case of the EU in chapter 5. The ACF design suits well the complex intergovernmental and multi-level subsystems comprised of numerous actors. As the EU political system is attributed to have open-ended and fluid nature with wide range of actors operating at different levels, this framework fits the case well. The analysis of how Covid-19 crisis opened up the window of opportunity for the green crisis recovery investigates the assumptions of ACF in the case. Although other theories exist that recognize crisis as a key dimension of the policy change process, the ACF posits some comparative strengths underpinning its status as remarkable framework of analysis. Moreover, this framework offers coherent definitions of its main concepts such as advocacy coalition and policy change. In addition, it makes a well-defined distinction between major and minor policy changes on the basis of core policy beliefs while other frameworks do not address these issues explicitly. Furthermore, ACF explains the behavior of actors in policymaking. In addition, it also offers a thorough framework regarding political engagement.

In the subsequent sections, the Advocacy Coalition Framework will be discussed.

3.1 The Advocacy Coalition Framework

The advocacy coalition framework surfaced for the first time in the 1990s (Cairney, 2015). It describes the process of decision making through the study of coalitions comprised of diverse state and non-state actors engaged in contestation to transform their beliefs in to action (Kübler, 2001). Such approach to the policy-making process would pave the way for the study of the influence of various actors involved in the policy-making process (Cairney, 2015; Hirschi & Wimder, 2010). Most of the policy problems that were once being addressed by a small group of actors within the state bureaucracies have now turned to be highly controversial and politicized. Therefore, the framework's key focus is to explain such intricate and perplexing policy-making processes. It concerns hosts of actors in multiple levels of the government distinctly processing the policies (Cairney, 2015).

According to advocacy coalition framework, the policy process is a contestation between coalitions comprised of individuals advocating for their specific beliefs regarding the definition of the problems and their solutions (Kübler, 2001). This competition between coalitions takes place within the policy subsystem where actors with their concerned policy issues in the coalitions actively attempt to impact the public policy related to their concerned issues (Kübler, 2001). The framework claims that the world view and the way the information should be processed is discerned by cognitive biases of the individuals, who in convoluted circumstances provide probative guidance. Furthermore, such public policy guidance regarding the structure of the problem and the potential solution to it, is rooted in the belief systems of the individuals involved in the process (Kübler, 2001). Furthermore, the advocacy coalition framework is divided into three structural categories, the first one is the deep core belief which describes the normative beliefs and the world view and personal philosophy of the individuals. The second category is the policy core belief, this involves the basic policy strategies, policy positions, and the causal perceptions for attaining the deep core belief in a specific policy subsystem, and also to deliver policy goals and implement them. The third category refers to the set of secondary aspects presenting instruments on how to apply the policy core beliefs (Kübler, 2001; Cairney, 2015).

Furthermore, the advocacy coalition framework emanated from a positivist position places great significance in the role of scientific evidence in the decision-making process (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). However, advocacy coalition framework argues that the scientific evidence and research are not sufficient conditions on their own for a policy change to occur (Ritter et al, 2018). Rather it has to pass through the filter of belief systems, if the evidence contradicts with it, then that piece of research and evidence will be ignored (Ritter et al, 2018). However, the problem can revisit the agenda when the belief system gradually changes either via policy learning or external shock (Weible, 2008).

In the following section, crisis and policy change dynamics from the framework's perspective will be explained.

3.2 Advocacy Coalition Framework, Crisis and Policy Change Dynamics

The advocacy coalition framework views crisis as a key causal driver in the policy change process and strives to identify causal mechanisms that elucidate this policy change

(Nohrstedt, 2007). Based on the concept of policy change, the advocacy coalition framework distinguishes between minor and major policy change. While the minor policy change is perceived as changes in the secondary features of a public program, the major policy change is conceived as alteration in the policy core beliefs. Hence, it is the focus and scope of policy change that defines whether the change should be considered as minor or major (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). Based on the assumption that policy core beliefs are hard to alter, it is established that major policy changes are rare events such as external perturbation. Furthermore, according to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999), "perturbations provide an opportunity for major policy change, but such change will not occur unless that opportunity is skillfully exploited by proponents of change, that is, the heretofore minority coalitions" (p. 148). Hence, it is understood that the impact of a crisis on a policy is dependent on the crisis' influence on the behavior and strategies of the coalitions (Schlager, 1995).

With regard to the advocacy coalition model, since individuals are deemed as being rational, it is anticipated that in the wake of a crisis coalitions would seek to maximize their resources in order to advance their policy beliefs (Lantis, 2019). Moreover, individuals may exploit various venues for the sake of political influence. In addition, they would also utilize different framing tactics to persuade policymakers to downplay or magnify the salience of the crisis contingent on their beliefs (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). The framework indicates that these activities may induce a change in the balance of power in the policy subsystem. It actually views the policy change brought about by the crisis as a consequence of changed power relationships within a policy subsystem (John, 2003). Sabatier and Weible (2007) assert that change in policy is possible, however, the pre-requisite for such policy change is the extent to which change in the actors' beliefs occurs. Thus, change in beliefs occurs either by policy-oriented learning or external shocks. The external shock for a policy change could be a regime change, socioeconomic changes, a disaster, or a crisis, in which shift in agendas, change in policy venues and redistribution of resources generate opportunities for change in core policy beliefs (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Policy learning is a relatively persistent change in the behavioral intentions and thoughts due to experiences or the emergence of new evidence and information concerned with the revision of the policy objectives (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Moreover, Weible (2008) states that changes in policy beliefs within the coalitions are promoted through the use of expert knowledge. Furthermore, the expert-based information has incremental and indirect impact on the alteration of actors' beliefs in the process of policy-oriented learning.

In the next section, the policy continuation and change model of the Advocacy Coalition Framework will be discussed.

3.3 A Policy Continuation and Change Model of Advocacy Coalition Framework

The Advocacy Coalition Framework regarding crisis-induced policy change suggests that the external shock's most significant impact is on the redistribution of resources or closing and opening up of the venues regarding a policy change or continuation within the subsystem (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Hereby, the framework adheres to the apparently general assumption in the crisis policymaking literature that the tendency for major policy change is associated with the 'disturbance' and openness of policy subsystem (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003; Baumgartner & Jones, 2010). The selection of policy subsystem as the main unit of analysis allows a broader understanding of the array of actors in a coalition and their involvement in contestation and discourses to influence the crisis policy decisions (Kübler, 2001). Lantis (2019) introduces a three-stage process model to understand policy-making through the advocacy coalition framework; coalition formation, rivalry for dominance, and policy decision making process. All these three stages will be discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

3.3.1 Coalition Formation

In the advocacy coalition framework, it is assumed that coalitions are formed concerning an emerging event or condition like policy dilemma or a policy opportunity (Lantis, 2019). Moreover, actors involved in this process strive to transform their belief system into policy before their adversaries thrive in doing so (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Furthermore, in this model, an advocacy coalition is described as a group or network of actors from both inside and outside of the government with great authority to seek government resources and form allies within the decision-making apparatus of the government as well as to draw individuals from outside whose concerns regarding a specific policy issue matches with the beliefs of the coalition (Lantis, 2019).

As mentioned earlier, individuals may possess their own perceptions with respect to the parts of a problem and the causal factors, but their policy core beliefs are so firm that holds them united around a policy problem with a unitary policy belief (Lantis, 2019).The congregation of diverse actors in a coalition can be understood as a result of problem definition. Thus, the vital factor that holds the coalition together is embedded in the policy core belief regarding a specific issue. Such advocacy coalitions contain individuals from a diverse set of policy subsystem like elected politicians, non-elected agents, think tanks, interest groups, researchers and so on and so forth. These actors share a common problem definition, basic values in a belief system, common cause and effect factors, and they also display a series of essential and coordinated actions over a period of time (Kukkonen et al., 2017). In addition, they may use issue framing to rally support and seek alliance around a particular definition of the policy problem as well as to challenge the existing beliefs, norms and stances of the rival coalitions. Hence, the formation of a coalition is informed by the principals of bounded rationality (Lantis, 2019). It is more apparent in the democracies where power-sharing and transparency necessitates constructive deliberation and discourses of ideas among policymakers (Risse, 2000).

According to Weible (2008), "experts will become members of a coalition based on shared beliefs and because their information will likely buttress a coalition's arguments" (p. 627). Experts may join coalitions to ensure that their information is not being neglected (Weible, 2008). Moreover, coalitions seek experts in order to legitimize their crisis decision-making and its implementation. Furthermore, experts in a coalition can be intermediaries between the beliefs of scientists and the beliefs of other members, to aid them in recognizing allies and coordinating partners and resources (Weible & Sabatier, 2005).

Subsequently, the second stage which is the competition for dominance among coalitions will be discussed.

3.3.2 Coalition Competition for Dominance

The advocacy coalition framework acknowledges the formation of coalition around a particular policy issue with a specific policy belief and recognizes their strive for dominance to convey their perception of the problem and desired solution to the policy decision (Sabatier

& Weible, 2007; Weible & Sabatier, 2005; Sabatier, 1988). Moreover, swaying powerful actors to a coalition would assist them in the process of policy contestation to dominate the policy decision making (Sabatier, 1978; Pierce 2011). Moreover, coalitions install their members in formal and authoritative positions in order to induce competition. Besides, coalitions are also associated with some powerful actors from within the government or outside of it (Pralle, 2006). Hence, once the coalition is formed and the role of actors within the coalition is specified, policy processes and the role of actors within would witness different dynamics (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Thus, the advocacy coalitions play crucial role in the policy design, negotiation, interaction, implementation and policy learning. These are the main motives of the policy change in the crisis policy-making processes (Weible et al., 2009). In competitive coalitions, actors have influence over various venues and access to sufficient resources of decision-making to challenge their opponent and to frame the policy image (Pralle, 2006).

Sabatier and Weible (2007) claim that coalitions require to have an intermediate level of expert information to partake in discourse and struggle for the policy domination. Instrumental use of expert knowledge follows a rational approach to issues. To find the most congruous and science-based solution to a policy problem, research is conducted to inform decision-makers with the research findings. Such instrumental use of expert knowledge in advocacy coalitions usually takes place in professional forums where coalitions operate in close collaboration with scientists (Weible, 2008).

Moreover, Weible et al. (2010) argue that in adversarial subsystems synchronization of policy beliefs among coalitions is in its lowest level given that competing coalitions demonstrate competing attitudes for a counterargument. Moreover, the adversarial subsystem may utilize frames as a contestation strategy. As Entman (1993) states “frames may be metaphors or symbols raised in political discourse to” present the audience with an issue definition (p. 53). In addition, frames also assist the actors to deduce cause-and-effect arguments and refer to their preferred solutions. Thus, strategies of issue framing assist coalitions to invade perspectives of rival coalitions and to gain macro-political and grassroots support (Frantzich, 2016).

The third stage is regarding the policy decision making which will be elucidated in the following sub-section.

3.3.3 Policy Decision-Making

The final stage of the model acknowledges that the formation of coalitions and the competition among them can add to the outcome of the policy decision making. To accomplish and influence policy goals, coalitions tend to amass formal authority and resources regarding the policy issue (Sabatier & Pelkey, 1987). Sabatier and Weible (2007) argue that one of the prominent attributes of a dominant coalition is that it has more of its members in formal authority positions as compared to minority coalitions (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Thus, policymakers work together with other individuals from the policy subsystem who possesses the same policy beliefs. They probe for allies, share resources and develop strategies for acquiring their preferred policy goals (Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014).

This suggests that rivalry among coalitions would give rise to a dominant coalition whose policy belief tends to dominate the policy decision-making. Furthermore, the dominance is considered as both means and end. Moreover, dominant coalitions would seek assistance from governmental and non-governmental actors who have authority and access to venues and allocation of resources, hence, leading to a policy change (Sabatier & Pelkey, 1987).

This research will use these three stages in chapter 5 to unfold the causal mechanism between Covid-19 crisis and the green crisis recovery.

In the subsequent chapter the methodology of the research will be discussed.

4. Methodology

This study will ensue a positive, empirical and explanatory research objective with a deductive logic of small-N, Within-Case analysis through the lens of advocacy coalition framework. The study seeks to address the research question which is how Covid-19 crisis has opened up the window of opportunity for green crisis recovery focusing on the case of the EU. Moreover, this Within-Case analysis begins with the theory and development of expectations to find out the effect of main explanatory variable (X) on the outcome variable (Y).

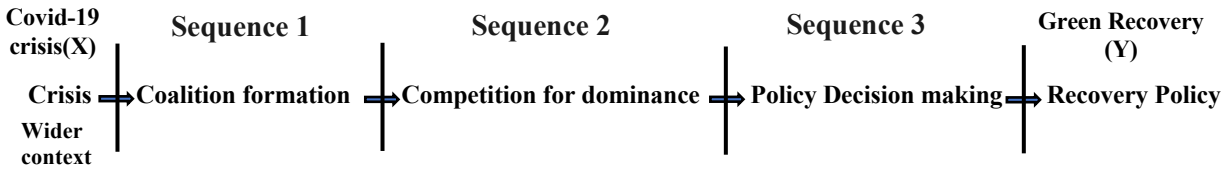
In the subsequent section, explanatory, small-N, Within-Case Analysis will be illustrated.

4.1 Explanatory, small-N, Within-Case Analysis

The single-case approach analyzes rich data to explain the outcome of a single case. Moreover, it provides possibilities to analyze a case at a greater depth and at a much higher resolution. Accordingly, it not only makes the covariation between the variables visible but also the detailed causal mechanism (Toshkov, 2016). In addition, within-case design investigates the proposed causal paths, the analytical story proposed by the theory and the imagined explanatory logic that connects a set of variables that are supposed to covary in expected ways. Moreover, in the Single-Case study the researcher focuses on a puzzling case where the value of both main explanatory variable (X) and the outcome variable (Y) are known (Toshkov, 2016). The focus of this research is to study the intervening variables on the causal path from the Covid-19 crisis (X) to the opening up of the window of opportunity for green crisis recovery (Y). Since the research question already assumes that there is a causal link, the research will shed light on its mechanism by tracing the process of how actors have seen a window of opportunity in Covid-19 crisis and how they framed and presented the Covid-19 crisis response to tackle the green crisis as well. The independent variable (X) is the Covid-19 crisis, and the dependent variable (Y) is the green crisis recovery.
Moreover, the generic causal mechanism consists of three sequences as depicted in graph 1 below. The mechanism has been created on the basis of the three stages suggested by the three-stage process model of the advocacy coalition framework, which are expected to take

place in three consecutive sequences. Moreover, according to ACF, it is expected that actors with the same deep core beliefs come together and form coalitions to turn a crisis into an opportunity for a major policy change. In addition, it is also anticipated that the diverse actors with the similar core beliefs in a coalition may use problem definition and issue framing to rally support and seek alliance around a particular definition of the policy problem as well as to challenge the existing beliefs, norms and stances of the rival coalitions in competition for dominance to acquire policy change (Lantis, 2019). Furthermore, actors may also have influence over various venues and access to sufficient resources of decision-making to challenge their opponents and to alter the policy image, ultimately result in policy change (Pralle, 2006).

Graph 1: The Generic Causal Mechanism



Regarding the generic causal mechanism, the independent variable (X) triggers the formation of coalition for or against the dependent variable in sequence 1. Consequently, in sequence 2 these coalitions compete for dominance based on their core policy beliefs and their definition of the problem. In sequence 3, the dominant coalition thrives in influencing the policy decision-making process. Ultimately, resulting in policy change (outcome variable (Y)).

Methodologically, process tracing is the most appropriate approach to analyze how the causal mechanism unfolds.

In the next sub-sections, process tracing, causal mechanism, Bayesian logic and types of evidence will be discussed in detail.

4.1.1 Process-Tracing

The paper will use process tracing which is a qualitative analysis approach and one of the key methods to capture causal mechanisms in action (Toshkov, 2016). Moreover, process tracing, as a research method, is used to make causal inferences from pieces of evidence. The evidence on which process tracing relies is the causal-process observations (Collier, 2011). Furthermore, process tracing is used to explain the more general and abstract social phenomena. Moreover, process tracing is an appropriate method for addressing how and why questions and it is outcome(Y)-oriented (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). This study uses theory-testing process tracing, it is a method that enables the researcher to make inferences vis-à-vis the presence or absence of a causal mechanism in a single case (Beach & Pedersen, 2011). Since this study focuses on a single case and the dependent and independent variables are already known and it seeks to unfold the causal mechanism, the theory-testing process tracing fits well the ambition of this research. In addition, searching for causal mechanisms in an in-depth, single case, qualitative research allows researcher to make strong inferences regarding how the outcomes took place or came into being (Beach & Pedersen, 2011). Moreover, process tracing identifies the intervening causal process which is the causal mechanism between the two variables, the independent (X) and the outcome or dependent variable (Y). Additionally, process tracing as a deductive tool is used by a researcher to test whether the causal mechanisms as theorized is present or not (Beach & Pedersen, 2011). Gerring (2007) explains process tracing as a two-stage deductive research where the researcher first elucidates the theoretical argument and then verify each stage of the theory empirically. Moreover, in theory-testing process tracing we are well aware of both independent (X) and dependent (Y) variables and we have either a) existing assumption regarding a plausible mechanism or b) deduce conjectures easily from the relative theorization (Beach & Pedersen, 2011).

Next, the causal mechanisms, Bayesian logic and the types of evidence used in this research will be discussed.

4.1.2 Causal Mechanisms, Bayesian Logic and the Types of Evidence

For the sake of theory-testing, the process-tracing method adopts a systematic understanding of causal mechanisms. This is defined by Bennett and Checkel (2015) as social,

psychological and physical processes by means of which agents within their causal aptitudes and under specific conditions and context operate, in order to transfer information, energy and matter to other entities. Moreover, the causal mechanisms are always placed between the main explanatory variable X and the outcome variable Y and are divided into temporal and analytical sequences consisting of entities, actors and activities. Regarding sequences, the later stages in the process are highly dependent on the prior ones (Bennett and Checkel, 2015). Furthermore, an *actor* in a sequence is the 'activity maker' who via *activities* directly exerts influence on the passive *entity* which is the 'activity taker'. This mechanistic explanation helps to distinguish between process tracing and mere storytelling (Bennett and Checkel, 2015). According to Bennett and Checkel (2015), defining causal mechanism ex ante is salient because it can then be systematically tested on cases. In addition, in order to avoid confirmation bias, one has to be extremely critical and look for alternative explanations. Therefore, it is crucial to look for a wide range of evidence that can prove or even more essentially to refute the mechanism (Beach & Pederson, 2011).

With respect to gathering evidence, in process tracing the Bayesian inferential logic is usually applied (Box-Steffensmeier, 2008). The Bayesian inferential logic is used to detect the empirical evidence, based on which we can make within-case inferences to update the level of confidence we possess in the absence or presence of causal mechanisms in a specific case (Beach & Pederson, 2011). The sequence evidence is concerned with the temporal and spatial events presumed by the generic causal mechanism and it is used to test one part of the causal mechanism. While trace evidence consists of official meeting minutes, reports, official letters and other documents and its presence proves the existence of the other parts of the mechanism (CDI, 2015). Thus, defining the types of evidence in advance allows systematic observation and enables the researcher to check whether the causal mechanism has been materialized in a case or not. The sequence and trace evidence will be tested during the data analysis to check the validity of claims resulting from the empirical material (Beach & Pederson, 2011).

The following section will shed some light on the case selection strategy for this research.

4.2 Case Selection

The method of case selection that this research follows is the logic of process tracing that aims at a case that possesses both independent (X) and dependent (Y) variables and its context lets the mechanism to operate. Such cases are known as typical cases. In principle, for such type of research design one case would be sufficient (Ruffing, 2015). To simplify and limit the geographical scope of the research, this research focuses on the European Union (EU) where both X (Covid-19) and Y (Green crisis recovery) variables are present. In order to investigate how causal mechanisms unfold, the paper focuses on the coalition of actors and the process of decision making at the EU level, since a minor change at the EU level may bring about a policy core change in its member states (Sabatier, 2011). Furthermore, legislations and policies adopted by the EU institutions have significant impact not only on its member states but across Europe and beyond (BirdLife International, 2021). Moreover, policy making at the EU level involves complicated bargaining, complex coalition formation and intricate consensus building, which is slightly distant from national institutional settings (Richardson, 2015). In addition, the EU represents almost a fifth of the world's economy and it is the world's third highest emitter of greenhouse gases. Also, it is committed to reach the net-zero emission by 2050 (BBC, 2020a). Therefore, the paper seeks to find out how the EU has seen an opportunity in addressing Covid-19 crisis to also tackle the green crisis and reach its net-zero emission goal.

4.3 Data Collection

This qualitative research focuses on how a devastating crisis led to addressing another crisis and the study draws on the secondary data sources. The analysis is based on evidence collected from official documents released by the European Commission, European Council and the European Parliament. In addition, the analysis also relies on the news articles related to the topic under research. In addition, the study has also utilized EU officials' briefings as evidence. Moreover, the think tank and expert reports from within and outside of the EU institutions are also used to increase confidence in the presence of the causal mechanism. Moreover, the research has also used the speech transcript of the European Commission's President as evidence to analyze the case. Furthermore, for the sake of finding evidence the study also utilized European Parliament, Council and Commission's databases and

observatories. In addition, reports and press releases of the European Parliament, Council and Commission are also used as evidence for the case.

The collected data will be examined for the process tracing by developing events on the policy issue to better understand the involved actors' arguments and counterarguments and framing of those arguments in a coalition to dominate the decision-making process and achieve the desired policy outcome.

In the subsequent chapter, first the generic causal mechanism will be presented and then it will be applied on the case of the EU. Furthermore, the data will be analyzed in the light of the Advocacy Coalition Framework and sequence and trace evidence.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 The Generic Causal Mechanism Per Sequence

The causal mechanism for this research consists of three sequences as depicted in Graph 1. The mechanism was created on the basis of the stages of the Advocacy Coalition Framework which are taking place in three consecutive sequences. Graph 2 below demonstrates the mechanism in a completely developed manner.

Graph 2

Generic Causal Mechanism (fully developed)

X Covid-19 crisis	Sequence 1	Sequence 2	Sequence 3	Y Green crisis Recovery
Wider context →	**Coalition formation** →	**Competition for dominance** →	**Policy Decision making** →	**Green Recovery**
Emergence of Covid-19 Pandemic and the already existing green crisis	**Actor**: Officials at national and supranational level, civil society and private sector. **Activity**: Formation of coalition for and against green recovery **Entity**: Government/ supranatural institutions	**Actor**: State leaders, government officials, civil society, epistemic community and private sector. **Activity**: Actors contesting for the domination of their policy belief **Entity**: Government/ supranatural institutions	**Actor**: State leaders, public officials, different branches of the government **Activity**: negotiation and agreement on MFF and Next Generation EU and increasing goal of emissions reduction from 40% to 55% by 2030 **Entity**: Government/ supranatural institutions	Multiannual Financial Framework and Next Generation EU recovery instrument with green conditions attached to it to tackle green crisis as well as increase in emissions reduction target by 55% by 2030
	Sequence Evidence The chronology of temporal events expected to occur in a particular order **Trace Evidence** - Official documents that proves the formation of coalitions - Official letters to the relevant officials advocating for or against green recovery	**Sequence Evidence** The efforts of pro-green recovery and subsequently the anti-green recovery coalitions to dominate policy decision-making **Trace Evidence** - Official documents proving coalitions' issue framing and changing policy image - Speeches and non-paper by officials - Expert report - List of official meetings between government officials and coalition members	**Sequence Evidence** The chronology of spatial and temporal events that took place **Trace Evidence** - Official documents and official reports proving the agreement - Press release by government - Adopted text by officials	

The first row of Graph 2 begins with the independent variable X and ends with the dependent variable Y, between these two are the three sequences corresponding to the causal mechanism. Each sequence represents one of the three stages of the advocacy coalition

model. Moreover, the second row of this graph indicates the actors, activities and entities that are likely to appear in each sequence of the causal mechanism while the third row illustrates the kinds of evidence which would attest or negate the materialization of the corresponding sequences of the causal mechanism. In the following section, the causal mechanism will be applied to the case of the EU to examine if the mechanisms have been materialized in this case.

5.2 Applying Causal Mechanism to the EU

The previous section has explicated how the generic causal mechanism unfolds per sequence. This section will seek to examine whether the causal mechanism has been materialized for the case of the European Union while testing the validity of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. The subsequent analysis will explain in detail the wider context and how each sequence unfolds for the EU. The time frame analyzed for the case is the year 2020, while the wider context will shed some light on the events that took place prior to this year.

5.2.1 The Wider Context

In the last hundred years, the green crisis in Europe has led to an increase of 1°C in temperature in the continent (Carter, 2011). The EU climate policy has been introduced as part of the environmental policy established by the Single European Act in 1987. Since then, there has been a wide range of EU legislations and policies to address the environmental protection of water, waste, air quality and biodiversity (Delbeke & Vis, 2015). In 1997, the EU signed the Kyoto Protocol under which it was committed to reduce the emission of its six greenhouse gases by 8% during its first commitment period, the EU has overachieved the target by reducing its emissions up to 15% mainly due to burden sharing agreement among member states, otherwise, only 8 out of 15 member states managed to achieve their individual goals (European Commission, 2013). In 2015, EU signed the Paris Agreement that sets out a framework to address green crisis and limit global warming to below 2°C and preferably to 1.5°C. The EU in its initial nationally determined contribution (NDC), committed to decrease its greenhouse gas emissions by about 40% by 2030 compared to pre-industrial level. Moreover, the EU promised to achieve its 40% goal by lessening its overall energy

consumption by 30% and to cover the remaining 27% with renewable energy (BBC, 2021). According to the European Environment Agency (EEA) report 2016, while the EU's greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 24%, the carbon dioxide emission from the transport vehicles have significantly increased, especially the carbon dioxide emission from aviation has seen a surge of 80% (EEA, 2016). According to Climate Action Tracker (CAT), the EU's target of achieving 40% emission reduction under Paris Agreement is not stringent and sufficient enough to limit the global warming to well below 2°C, let alone 1.5°C (CAT, 2020). In 2017, the environmentalists called that the EU has failed to fulfil its duties under the Paris Agreement, and it has abdicated its role as a climate leader. Moreover, the director of Climate Action Network Europe noted that regarding climate issues Europe has been so divided that it could not play the stewardship role anymore (Reuter & Russel, 2017). Furthermore, the European Commission was disinclined to focus on increasing climate protection because there was a strong resistance especially from the leadership of the European Commission. The leaders under the Jean-Claude Juncker's cabinet were not willing to address climate goals as it would increase tensions within the EU (Reuter & Russel, 2017). In May 2019's EU elections, Europe's Greens were the big winners in western Europe and they also won a couple of seats from central Europe but in eastern and southern Europe they could not succeed. Nonetheless, the Green's strong performance in the elections in western and central Europe sent a clear message to center-left and center-right policymakers that EU citizens want urgent action to tackle the green crisis (Henley, 2019).

In November 2019, the European Parliament declared climate and environment emergency. Furthermore, the EU Parliament called on the new Commission led by Von der Leyen to thoroughly assess the legislative and budgetary proposals and their impact on climate and environment (European Parliament, 2019). Also, asked the Commission to make sure that the legislatives and budget are aligned with the goal of limiting the temperature to under 1.5 °C and to make certain that they are not exacerbating the biodiversity loss. Moreover, the EU parliament insisted that the EU should increase its emissions cut from 40% to 55% by 2030 and by 2050 become climate neutral. In addition, the Parliament called for reduction of emissions from aviation and shipping (European Parliament, 2019). On 11 December 2019, in response to the European Parliament the European Commission led by newly elected president Von der Leyen proposed the European Green Deal to the European Parliament, the European Council, and to the committee of regions and the economic and social committee.

The aim of the EU Green Deal is to transform the EU into a resource-efficient, modern and competitive economy, and to protect the EU citizens from climate-related hazards (European Commission, 2019b). However, the European Green Deal failed its first test when the EU member states could not reach an agreement to slash greenhouse gas emissions and reach net-zero emission by 2050. The countries that relied on coal, especially Poland, wanted more time (Calma, 2019). They further argued that the Green Deal is too vague and lacks details on how to achieve it. Moreover, they also asserted that it is contrary to some EU principal strategies. For instance, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which is the EU's biggest subsidy program is based on the principle of maximizing productivity, it is in contradiction with the EU Green Deal's goal of utilization of more land for burying carbon (Politico, 2020c). Moreover, the confidence of member states in the EU Green Deal was patchy, while it was high in Scandinavian countries, in Italy, Spain, France and Eastern European countries it was low (Politico, 2020a). In addition, while climate campaigners viewed the EU Green Deal as a betrayal of their efforts to halt green crisis, some of the EU member states, companies and workforces were concerned about the swift change which tend to ruin the industries they rely on (Politico, 2020a). Moreover, many groups such as 'institute for European Environmental Policy', 'Greenpeace' and 'Friends of the Earth Europe' have analyzed the EU Green Deal's policies and called the Deal as not ambitious enough to tackle the green crisis (Calma, 2019).

The negotiation failure among member states over the details of the Green Deal as well as setting targets for the reduction of emissions by 2050 coincided with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. At the end of January 2020, first Covid-19 case was reported in Europe. By March 2020, all EU member states were in the grip of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic and since then the number of cases continued to rise (European Commission, n.d.-f). In order to contain the Covid-19 pandemic, countries declared partial or national lockdowns. In addition, schools, offices, restaurants and cinemas got closed, cultural institutions got shut and sports, cultural and recreational events got cancelled (BBC, 2020b). The Covid-19 pandemic has not only impacted human health but also accelerated an economic downturn (Blake & Wadhwa, 2020). According to IMF report, the protection measures taken by states has severely impacted the economic activity, it has been much worse than the financial crisis 2008-2009 (IMF, 2020). Thus, in the EU, the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic became the driving factor for deliberations and debates surrounding plans to recover from the impacts of this crisis.

In the following section, the first sequence of the causal mechanism will trace the process of how policy entrepreneurs came together and formed coalitions to take advantage of the Covid-19 crisis to push their preferred policies or to impede the undesired ones.

5.2.2 Sequence 1 – Coalition Formation

In order to tackle the Covid-19 crisis, the EU member states introduced strict measures such as closure of businesses and lockdowns. These measures led the economy of the member states to a drastic downturn. In addition to economic depression, on one hand these measures reduced tax receipts and on the other hand, they increased the governments' spending to support financially and economically hit citizens and businesses (European Parliament, 2020d). In the meanwhile, on 5 March 2020, the EU Environment Council members came together to submit the EU's long-term climate strategy to the UNFCCC in relation to its commitment to the Paris Agreement (European Council, 2021b). Subsequently, the Czech Prime Minister who earlier opposed the EU Green Deal called on the EU to forget about the environment and focus on the Covid-19 crisis.
Since March the number of Covid-19 infections increased in the EU and the focus of the EU got diverted from the Green Deal to the Covid-19 crisis. This shift in attention and in priority threatened the very survival of the EU's Green Deal, which was already subject to criticism for being too vague and lack details regarding how to achieve it (Gifford, 2020).

In order to recover from the severe impacts of the Covid-19 crisis, the EU leaders agreed to establish an EU recovery plan for Europe to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic (European Council, 2021a). On 18 March 2020, the European Central Bank introduced a recovery package worth €750 billion to address the economic ramifications of the Covid-19 crisis (Valero, 2020). Consequently, in April a French centrist MEP Pascal Canfin, who also chairs the European Parliament's environment and public health committee, initiated the green recovery alliance demanding that the recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis should also include green components to address the green crisis as well (Simon, 2020b). According to Advocacy Coalition Framework, coalitions are formed vis-à-vis a policy opportunity that emerge as a result of an external shock such as a crisis (Lantis, 2019). The Covid-19 crisis as an external shock opened up the window of opportunity for the actors who initiated the 'green recovery alliance' in the European Parliament and sought to utilize the Covid-19

recovery plan to also address the green crisis, since the EU Green Deal was already shaky and had come under heavy criticism for lacking details and action plan (Gifford, 2020).

Moreover, according to the advocacy coalition model, actors join a coalition when their particular policy interest matches with the core beliefs of that coalition (Lantis, 2019). In addition, these actors range from elected officials to non-elected actors, interest groups, internal and external experts, lobbying groups and NGOs (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). The 'green recovery alliance' was soon joined by 17 national environment ministers and 79 cross-party MEPs (Colli, 2020; Simon, 2020b). In addition, the coalition also brought together civil society groups including 27 business associations, the European trade union confederation, 6 think tanks, 7 NGOs, 37 CEOs from the private sector such as CEOs of Ikea, Unilever, H&M, E. ON and Danone (Simon, 2020b). Moreover, the coalition has also attracted around 50 CEOs from the insurance and banking sector like Allianz, BNP, Santander, AXA, Groupama Asset Management, Paribas Asset Management, PensionDanmakr, and Nordea Life & Pension (Simon, 2020a). The signatories to the coalition expressed their commitment to the EU's stimulus transformation plans which also seek to fight against green crisis and biodiversity loss. Moreover, they further stated that they would offer the essential investment solutions compatible with the EU's climate commitments to recover from the Covid-19 crisis (Simon, 2020b).

Furthermore, the advocacy coalition framework asserts that the constellation of diverse actors in a coalition can be comprehended as a result of problem definition and issue framing, to mobilize support and seek alliance around a specific definition of the policy problem as well as to challenge the existing stances, beliefs, and norms of the rival coalitions (Lantis, 2019). In accordance with the theory, another group of actors was also formed which included actors like Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, Poland's Deputy minister Kowalski, politicians from Romania and Hungary, and other eastern Europe and right-wing political leaders (Oroschakoff & Mathiesen, 2020). These actors (some of whom have already opposed the EU Green Deal) were of the opposing view with the 'green recovery alliance' as they were calling for the cancellation and even abolishment of the idea of green recovery because the Covid-19 crisis has already hurt their industries and businesses and implementing green recovery would slow down the economic development of their countries and businesses post-pandemic (Parnell, 2020; Neri, 2020). In addition, the coalition was also joined by the

opportunistic corporate lobbyist groups who sought to utilize the Covid-19 crisis to attack EU environmental policies (Lazarus, 2020). These lobbying groups include Agri lobby that called for delay of nature and farming strategies and the plastic lobby that asked for putting a halt on the ban of single-use plastics. Moreover, the chemicals lobby called for delay on toxic transparency and the car lobby asked for putting brakes on emissions and environmental rules. In addition, the Business Europe called for a delay for all impact assessments and consultations because the environmental and climate regulations are non-essential at the time of pandemic (Lazarus, 2020). All the actors in this alliance shared the same belief and problem definition, which is that addressing the green crisis now is not essential as we are still coping with the pandemic and its consequences. In addition, they sought to utilize the opportunity from the Covid-19 crisis to hinder any policy that includes green recovery by arguing that environmental and climate rules enshrined in the recovery plan would cause millions of people to lose their jobs as well as it would slow the growth of the economy while the economy needs to grow fast post-pandemic (Gifford, 2020; Neri, 2020; Oroschakoff & Mathiesen, 2020; Lazarus, 2020).

The empirical developments in the case resulted in the formation of coalitions. Next, the validity of evidence in this sequence will be examined.

Evidence

After providing the empirical base for the sequence one, the paper will now examine whether the evidence indicated by the generic causal mechanism was present or not. If the aforementioned sequence evidence or trace evidence is found in the case, this would increase the confidence that the sequence one of the causal mechanism and the coalition formation stage of the Advocacy Coalition Framework are valid. In this case, the sequence evidence to support the causal mechanism would be the chronology of temporal events that one may expect to happen in a specific order in sequence one of the causal mechanisms. As far as trace evidence is concerned, it refers to the official documents showing the stance of actors on the issue that led them to the formation of coalitions pro and contra green recovery.

Sequence Evidence

Concerning the presence of sequence evidence in the case, the events occurred in a chronological order as expected by the theory. When the European Central Bank declared the stimulus package to recover from the ramifications of the Covid-19 crisis, after that, coalitions were formed to seek opportunity from the Covid-19 crisis recovery to push their preferred solutions. On one hand, a coalition was formed that advocated for the inclusion of green component into the Covid-19 recovery and called for green recovery. On the other hand, a group of actors opposing the idea of green recovery came together. Thus, when a policy opportunity was evident, actors from various levels of policy subsystem with the similar belief came together in coalitions to rally for their own definition of a problem.

Trace Evidence

As far as trace evidence is concerned, the presence of the Green Recovery Alliance's letter signed by around 370 signatories calling for the green recovery proves the formation of a coalition based on the belief that green crisis needs to be tackled by making the Covid-19 recovery green (*See Appendix 1*) ("Greenrecovery reboot", n.d.). The trace evidence regarding those actors opposing the green recovery or asking for postponement of any environmental rule is the lobby group "Business Europe's" letter to Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for a European Green Deal, where the group asks for adjourning the consultation and impact assessment of climate and environmental regulations because it is not essential amid Covid-19 crisis (*See Appendix 2*) (Beyer, 2020). In addition, another trace evidence that shows the formation of two opposing alliances based on their beliefs is the European Policy Brief of May 2020 where the existence of these coalitions is clearly stated (*See Appendix 3*) (Colli, 2020).

In the light of theory and sequence and trace evidence, it became apparent that sequence one of the causal mechanism has been materialized in the case. Next, the paper will examine the sequence 2, which is the competition of coalitions for dominance.

5.2.3 Sequence 2 – Competition for Dominance

The second sequence of the causal mechanism is related to the second stage of the advocacy coalition model in which actors in coalitions compete to dominate the decision-making process regarding their specific beliefs vis-à-vis the definition of the problem and its solution (Kübler, 2001). Moreover, this contestation between coalitions takes place within the policy subsystem where actors in the coalitions actively attempt to impact the public policy related to the issue (Kübler, 2001). Regarding the discussions on EU's Covid-19 recovery, in the first few months of the Covid-19 outbreak in the EU, the focus of the EU was on a short-term 'economy first' recovery while the fossil-free and green recovery discussions were alluded to public debates away from the Brussels' negotiation rooms, with the exception of the European Commission who was a lone hand in advocating the urgency for addressing the green crisis through the EU growth strategy for 2019-2024 (Hofhuis, 2020). Consequently, on 23 April 2020, the European Commission introduced its first recovery roadmap called 'Towards a more resilient, sustainable and fair Europe' which was subsequently rejected by the European Council. The Council asked the Commission to analyze the urgent recovery needs and come up with a proposal that corresponds to the current challenge i.e., Covid-19 crisis. This disclosed that the EU member states could not succeed to unanimously agree on a long-term green recovery strategy for the EU. Hence, the Council threw the ball back into the European Commission's court in order to buy some more time to forge consensus and adjust its position (Hofhuis, 2020). Subsequently, on 27 May 2020, the European Commission issued a proposal on a recovery fund – Next Generation EU and the Multiannual Financial Framework. Correspondingly, the European Council's President Michel called on member states to discuss the proposed recovery plan (Council of the EU, 2020). On 21 July, the European Council President Michel announced that European leaders have reached an agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 which is the EU's long-term budget, in which €750 billion has been dedicated to the Covid-19 recovery instrument known as 'Next Generation EU' (Heilmann et al., 2020, p.4). In the meantime, coalitions were formed in favor and against of attaching green strings with the Covid-19 crisis recovery plan to also tackle the green crisis. This was in line with the theory which suggested that in competitive coalitions, actors with decision making power and authority are divided into coalitions (Pralle, 2006). Moreover, these coalitions competed with each other

within the policy subsystem to dominate the policy decision making. These two coalitions will be discussed separately in the following paragraphs.

Pro-green recovery

As mentioned in sequence one, a pro-green recovery, the 'green recovery alliance' was initiated by a French MEP which was later joined by more than 370 actors from different levels of the policy subsystem, advocating for greening the Covid-19 recovery to simultaneously mitigate the impacts of the green crisis as well (Colli, 2020; Simon, 2020b). Moreover, according to the theory, actors in a coalition develop particular standpoint towards a policy issue based on their core policy beliefs and compete for the domination of their perceived problem definition and their preferred solution. In addition, in this process some of the actors may possess more influence to sway influential allies based on their legal authority and political position as well as their skillful articulation and deliberation of causal factors and their solutions (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). The 'Next Generation EU' offered an opportunity for the European Commission to propose funding for tackling the green crisis along with the Covid-19 recovery. By April, the European Commission president Von der Leyen and senior lawmakers launched a campaign to endorse a green message that investing in green projects post-pandemic would strengthen the EU's growth strategy (Oroschakoff & Mathiesen, 2020). The pro-green recovery coalition was also joined by the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria and Sweden who traditionally belong to the environmentally friendly group of EU member states. In their position paper, they stated that they are in favor of a green transition that supports the climate agenda ("Non-paper EU", 2020). All these countries who came forward in support of linking green agenda with the Covid-19 recovery were countries who have great influence on the EU policy making (Vote Watch Europe, 2020). Moreover, France and Germany also supported the proposal as the voters in their respective countries were increasingly asking for the prioritization of the green agenda. In France, besides that Macron himself was interested in addressing the green crisis, he was also under pressure from the far left demanding for green agenda. As far as Germany is concerned, the issue of tackling the green crisis has been on the rise, it can be witnessed in the recent German election where Bündis 90/Die Grünen received enormous support from the public (Bürgin & Oppermann, 2020). In addition to the public demand, by supporting the above-mentioned proposal Germany also wanted to shape the EU in its own image and dominate it

since Germany has already focused on the transition of its energy resources to a greener direction (Dyson & Goetz, 2012). Furthermore, in July 2020, with the takeover of the EU Council's presidency Germany's position became even more strong to forward its climate agenda. As Merkel at the start of the Council's presidency declared that climate protection is one of her top priorities (European Parliament, 2020e). Even before the start of trialogue among the EU institutions over the multiannual financial framework and the Next Generation EU fund, Germany was already in contact with the parliamentary groups' budget spokespersons to exert influence on them. Also, after the budget summit, Germany established contact with the MEPs and extensively negotiated the budget with them to sway their support for the green crisis recovery as well (Pistorius & Grüll, 2020). In addition, on 14 July 2020, five MEPs from the green recovery alliance penned a letter to the President of the European Council, demanding the alignment of the recovery plan with the Paris Agreement. Moreover, they also asked for linking the Next Generation EU with the goal of climate neutrality by 2050. Besides, they also suggested that the recovery package should respect the 'do no significant harm' taxonomy (Canfin et al. 2020). Additionally, they framed the green recovery and built their arguments on the grounds of normative obligation while linking it to political leadership and also framing it as an economic opportunity (Wendler, 2021).

Furthermore, Sabatier and Weible (2007) assert that coalitions need to have some level of expert information in order to participate in policy debates and to struggle for the policy domination. Accordingly, the European Parliament's committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs requested the Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies to provide expertise on how the European Central Bank's primary goal of price stability interacts with regard to the climate crisis. Concerning the Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, it is a department that provides in-house and external expertise to the committees of the European Parliament to support them in shaping legislations (Lastra & Alexander, 2020). Further, in June 2020, the Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies released a document stating that the consequences of Covid-19 pandemic and green crisis pose risks for the economy, especially for the financial sector. Thus, the European Central Bank must take environmental sustainability into account since it can impact the price stability (Lastra & Alexander, 2020). In addition, in July, the European think tank Bruegel also joined the pro-green recovery coalition by recommending the EU institutions, via a policy brief, to support the stimulus package only when green strings are attached to it (McWilliams et al., 2020).

Moreover, the Advocacy Coalition Framework suggests that in competitive coalitions actors with decision making authority try to influence various venues and resources of decision-making to challenge their opponent and to change the policy image (Pralle, 2006). In order to influence and dominate the decision-making process, the EU sought to change the policy image by connecting the green crisis with the Covid-19 pandemic by using its authority. Accordingly, the EU requested HERA to do a research on the interactions between the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, environment and climate (Barouki et al., 2021). HERA is a project that aims to set priorities for health and environment research agenda in the European Union. It includes 24 partner institutes, and hundreds of community stakeholders and collaborating researchers from all over the Europe and is funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 research programme (HERA, n.d.). Consequently, HERA based on its research concluded that the unsustainable behavior of humans such as intensive livestock farming, habitat destruction, decreased biodiversity and deforestation have contributed to the frequent emergence of zoonotic diseases caused by viruses, such as 'SARS-CoV' and MERS-CoV. Thus, HERA recommended that the recovery plans and funds should go beyond the economic crisis and support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Green Deal to avoid future crisis (Barouki et al., 2021).

Anti-green recovery

According to the Advocacy Coalition Framework, in adversarial subsystems harmonization of policy core belief is weak given that contesting coalitions would present competing approaches for a counterargument (Weible et al., 2010). In April 2020, the Czech Prime Minister urged EU to forget about tackling green crisis and instead focus on the novel coronavirus (EURACTIV, 2020a). Moreover, the Visegrád group of countries, especially Poland, have been critical regarding the green dimension of the Covid-19 recovery plan since they are heavily dependent on coal (De la Porte & Jensen, 2021). Furthermore, Poland's Climate Ministry argued that post-pandemic economies will be weak, and businesses will not have enough money to invest, in addition, the completion of some energy projects may be postponed. On top of all these, achieving climate goals would not be possible (Neri, 2020). This was supported by the IMF's report regarding transition to cleaner energy resources. In its report IMF stated that during energy transition the economic growth would get slow,

especially in countries that are heavily reliant on fossil fuels. Hence, Bulgaria, Poland and Czech all fall in this category, coal is still the backbone of their energy resources and supports the livelihood of myriad of families (Neri, 2020). Even Poland and Hungary threatened the EU that they would derail the Multiannual Financial Framework and Next Generation EU negotiations arguing that they both are designed in a way to favor the European Union and its other members (Mendel-Nykorowycz, 2021). Moreover, the nationalist right parties framed the green recovery as a threat to political freedom and the very way of life of citizens (Wendler, 2021).

In June, Poland, Hungary, Estonia and the Czech Republic opposed the European Commission's strategy to address the green crisis by decreasing the emissions to a net-zero level by 2050. All these four countries acknowledged the costs of the energy transition as the reason for not being able to reach an agreement. The Polish energy minister called the Commission's plan a 'fantasy' arguing that Poland alone requires €900 bn to get rid of coal plants, clean its building sector and construct its renewable energy capacity (Morgan, 2019). Moreover, Hungary and Czech Republic asked the EU that if it wants them to get rid of fossil fuels, it should increase the transition fund to €100 billion (Parnell, 2020).

In addition to the EU leaders, in anti-green recovery coalition lobbyist groups were also striving for dominance to convey their common perception of the problem and offer their desired solution to the policymakers. During the 'Covid-19 recovery plan' negotiations, business interests representatives held 151 times meetings with a number of EU actors ranging from the European Commission's President to European Green Deal Commissioner Timmermans, Energy Commissioner Simon, to the director-general of Energy and Clima. This makes about 11 meetings a week (Politico, 2020b). In addition, in the race for the dominance, some of the biggest gas and oil companies paid a huge amount of money to lobby consultancies, either directly or via trade groups. For instance, IOGP, FuelsEurope, PGE, ENTSO-G and Cefic, together they paid around €1million to the Fleishman Hillard lobby consultancy for the year 2020-2021 (Corporate Europe Observatory, 2020). Furthermore, the BusinessEurope in two separate letters to the European Council President and Commissioner Timmermans asked for the postponement of environmental regulation and requested him to put hold on all the EU initiatives that are not associated with the health and the economy. Moreover, between 23 and 26 March 2020, fossil fuel lobbyists and the Commissioners responsible for climate and energy policymaking had 25 meetings. These lobbyists lobbied

for big polluters such as Shell, FuelsEurope, Total and Hydrogen Europe (Corporate Europe Observatory, 2020).

According to the Advocacy Coalition Framework, swaying powerful actors to a coalition would aid its members to dominate in the process of policy contestation (Sabatier, 1978; Pierce 2011). Although the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSO-G) was created to bring Europe's gas pipeline companies together and provide advice to the Commission on energy infrastructure, the ENTSO-G under the influence of the anti-green recovery coalition acted as an institutional lobby by exploiting its advisory role to defend the interests of the gas transport industry (Douo & Kieninger, 2020).

Evidence

Sequence evidence that verifies the presence of the sequence 2 of the causal mechanism as well as the validity of the 'competition for dominance' stage of the Advocacy Coalition Framework can be observed in the efforts of both coalitions to influence the decision makers and the decision-making process. While the trace evidence can be the documents, official letters and transcript of speeches by concerned officials.

Sequence Evidence

The sequence evidence that proves the materialization of causal mechanism in sequence 2 are the efforts of pro- and subsequently anti-green recovery coalitions in a series of events to influence the Covid-19 recovery decision making. First, the European Commission President and senior lawmakers' campaign to gain support for EU's green agenda ("Non-paper EU", 2020). Second, Germany's takeover of European Council's Presidency and using its position and authority to gain support and dominate the Covid-19 recovery's agenda and push for green recovery (Pistorius & Grüll, 2020). Third, European Parliament's request for in-house expert advice to dominate the negotiations and think tank Bruegel's recommendation to decision makers to support green recovery (Lastra & Alexander, 2020; McWilliams et al., 2020). Fourth, EU's framing of the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic as a result of the green crisis (Barouki et al., 2021). Fifth, opposition of Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic to the green dimension of the recovery plan (De la Porte & Jensen, 2021). Sixth, Poland and Hungary's threatening EU to disrupt the Multiannual Financial Framework and Next

Generation EU negotiations to dominate the negotiations and halt the greening of the recovery plan (Mendel-Nykorowycz, 2021). And last but not the least, the anti-green recovery lobbyists' efforts to dominate the recovery agenda in favor of the anti-green recovery coalition.

Trace Evidence

With respect to the trace evidence, the speech of President Von der Leyen on 27 May 2020, at the European Parliament Plenary on the EU recovery fund proves the Commission President's campaign for the green recovery (*See Appendix 4*) (Von der Leyen, 2020). Additionally, the letter from five MEPs coming from different parties, to the President of the European Council demanding for the Covid-19 recovery plan to be aligned with the Paris Agreement is another evidence showing the efforts of the pro-green recovery coalition to dominate the decision making (*See Appendix 5*) (Canfin et al. 2020). Another evidence is the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and Denmark's non-paper stating their support for the green recovery (*See Appendix 6*) ("Non-paper EU", 2020). The next trace evidence is the 'Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies' report on the European Central Bank's price stability's connection with the green crisis, to support the position of the pro-green recovery coalition (*See Appendix 7*) (Lastra & Alexander, 2020). In addition, the list of BusinessEurope meetings with Commissioners, cabinet members and Director-Generals proves the lobbying of this group in favor of the anti-green recovery coalition (See Appendix 8) (Transparency Register, 2021).

The sequence and trace evidence as well as the theory discussed above, increases the confidence that sequence 2 of the causal mechanism has been materialized. In the subsequent section, sequence 3 will be examined which corresponds to the stage 3 of the Advocacy Coalition model.

5.2.4 Sequence 3 – Policy Decision Making

The third and final sequence of the causal mechanism refers to the policy decision making stage of the Advocacy Coalition Framework. According to the theory, competition among the coalitions gives rise to a dominant coalition whose policy core beliefs tend to dominate the policy decision making (Sabatier & Pelkey, 1987). The process of deciding on a long-term EU budget started with the Commission's proposal in May 2018. After the Covid-19 pandemic hit Europe, a second proposal was required to make sure that the budget can better buttress Europe's recovery (European Commission, n.d.-c). Thus, on 27 May 2020, in response to the Covid-19 crisis, the European Commission proposed a €750 billion temporary recovery instrument along with the long-term EU budget 2021-2027. In the meanwhile, the proponents and opponents of the EU Green Deal which was declared just before the emergence of the pandemic, began to form coalitions and campaigned for their policy core beliefs (European Parliament, 2020d; Colli, 2020; Simon, 2020b). In addition to the earlier criticism on the EU Green Deal for lacking details and action plan, those opposing the green recovery called on the EU to forget about the green crisis and focus on the pandemic while on the other hand, the pro-green recovery actors called on the EU to build the Covid-19 recovery plan on the basis of the Green Deal so that it can also address the green crisis (Gifford, 2020; Simon, 2020b). On 19 June, EU leaders came together to discuss the €750 billion rescue package so that it not only supports the member states to revive their economies but also help them to acquire the EU's climate goal. Consequently, on 21 July 2020, after a five-day summit which was one of the longest summits in the EU history, EU leaders reached a political agreement on the recovery fund composed of €360 billion in loans and €390 billion in grants which is attached to the €1.82 trillion budget 2021-2027, the Multiannual Financial Framework (Herszenhorn & Bayer, 2020). From the EU long-term budget, €672 bn has been allocated to the Next Generation EU recovery instrument. From the Next Generation EU recovery fund, €265 billion which makes up 37% of the total recovery budget, has been dedicated to the green projects to tackle the green crisis, making it the largest amount of money that EU has ever channeled towards its green ambitions (Abnett & Green, 2020; Taylor, 2021). In addition, the EU leaders also acknowledged that the remaining money which is not specifically earmarked for green projects must be invested on projects that "do no harm" to the EU's climate goals. Hence, making the EU's recovery package as the world's biggest green recovery pledge (Abnett & Green, 2020). Thus, in the competition among the

coalitions, the dominant coalition has been the pro-green recovery coalition whose policy core belief has dominated the policy decision making regarding the inclusion of green conditions to the Covid-19 recovery package. Further, most of the actors who were opposing the green recovery like Czech Republic, Hungary and Estonia changed their position and agreed to support the agreement due to increased pressure from their pro-green citizens as well as due to opponent coalitions' framing of the green recovery on the grounds of normative obligation and linking it to the political leadership. Also, framing it as an economic opportunity (Simon, 2020c; Petrov, 2020; Wendler, 2021; Morgan, 2019). This is in line with Sabatier's (1988) argument that changes in socioeconomic conditions tend to alter the actor's belief. Moreover, the political agreement of EU member states on the budget increased the Commission's confidence that it can push further for the EU's emission reduction goal for 2030. Therefore, on 17 September 2020, the European Commission proposed a 55% reduction in the greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels. Whereas Poland and Czech Republic agreed on the EU-long term budget and the green recovery, they opposed the proposal for the 55% emissions reduction by 2030 (Zachová & Simon, 2020). In the meanwhile, the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the climate law to enshrine the EU's net-zero goal by 2050 in the EU legislation and they called for setting the emissions reduction goal to 60% by 2030 (European Parliament, 2020c). While Czech dropped its opposition to 55% emission reduction goal just before the EU summit, Poland remained steadfast on its decision (Zachová & Simon, 2020; Boffey, 2021). Ultimately, in October, in the EU summit member states agreed to reduce the emissions to 55% by 2030 (BBC, 2020a). On 10 November, the European Council and the European Parliament reached an agreement on the recovery package. On 10 December, the EU member states in the Council decided on the adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework at the Council level (European Commission, n.d.-e). Furthermore, on 16 December, the European Parliament approved the Multiannual Financial Framework with a significant majority. The last step of adoption was on 17 December when the Council of the European Union agreed on the adoption of the EU long-term budget for 2021-2027 which not only supports economic revival but also aims to address the green crisis (European Commission, n.d.-c). Thus, resulting in major policy change which is a change in the policy core beliefs (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999).

Evidence

The final set of evidence will examine whether sequence 3 of the generic causal mechanism has been materialized for the case or not. Simultaneously, the validity of the 'policy decision making' stage of the Advocacy Coalition Framework will also be tested. Sequence evidence is the temporal and spatial chronology of the events that has taken place (Beach & Pederson, 2011). Sequence 3 is regarding the adoption of the EU long-term budget 2021-2027 which also includes the green recovery fund. The sequence evidence (to check if this sequence of causal mechanism has been materialized for the case) must follow the EU budget approval procedure which begins with the European Commission's submission of the budget proposal to the Council and then to the Parliament. Consequently, the Council first adopts its position on the budget draft followed by the European Parliament (European Commission, n.d.-b).

Sequence Evidence

In sequence 3, it has been observed that in May 2020, the European Commission proposed the EU long-term budget 2021-2027 along with the Next Generation EU. Later, in July, the EU leaders reached an agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework and Next Generation EU (Herszenhorn & Bayer, 2020). Consequently, on 10 December, the European Council decided to adopt the EU long-term budget. Subsequently, on 16 December, the European Parliament agreed on the adoption of the long-term budget followed by the approval of the Council of the European Union (European Commission, n.d.-c).

Trace Evidence

Regarding trace evidence, the final conclusion report regarding five days EU leaders' budget negotiations and agreement, released by the General Secretariat of the Council to the delegations proves the EU leaders' agreement on the EU long-term budget and green recovery on 21 July 2020 *(See Appendix 9)* (European Council, 2020b). The European Commission's proposal document as well as the Commission's press release prove that in May 2020, the Commission presented the second EU long-term budget proposal in order to include the Covid-19 recovery fund in it as well (*See Appendix 10 & 11*) (European Parliament, 2020d; European Commission, 2020b). The European Council's press release

urging all the member states to examine the European Commission's proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework and Recovery Fund proves that after the Commission's proposal the European Council considered the adoption of the Budget and Recovery Fund (*See Appendix 12*) (European Commission, n.d.-c; Council of the EU, 2020). Another trace evidence that proves the Commission's proposal for the increase of emissions cut by 2030 is the European Commission's 17 September 2020 press release (*See Appendix 13*) (European Commission, 2020c). Moreover, the other trace evidence is the document released by the European Council regarding its adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework and Next Generation EU which is a proof of the European Council's approval of the EU's long-term budget and recovery fund on 10 December 2020 (*See Appendix 14*) (European Council, 2020a). The last trace evidence that proves the European Parliament's agreement on the EU's long-term budget and Next Generation EU recovery fund is the Parliament's adopted text on the Parliament's legislative resolution of 16 December 2020 (*See Appendix 15*) (European Parliament, 2020b).

The sequence and trace evidence discussed above, increases the confidence that sequence 3 of the causal mechanism has been materialized.

In the subsequent section, the mechanism of green recovery fund allocation and the required commitments of the member states to recover from the green crisis will be discussed.

5.2.5 Green Recovery

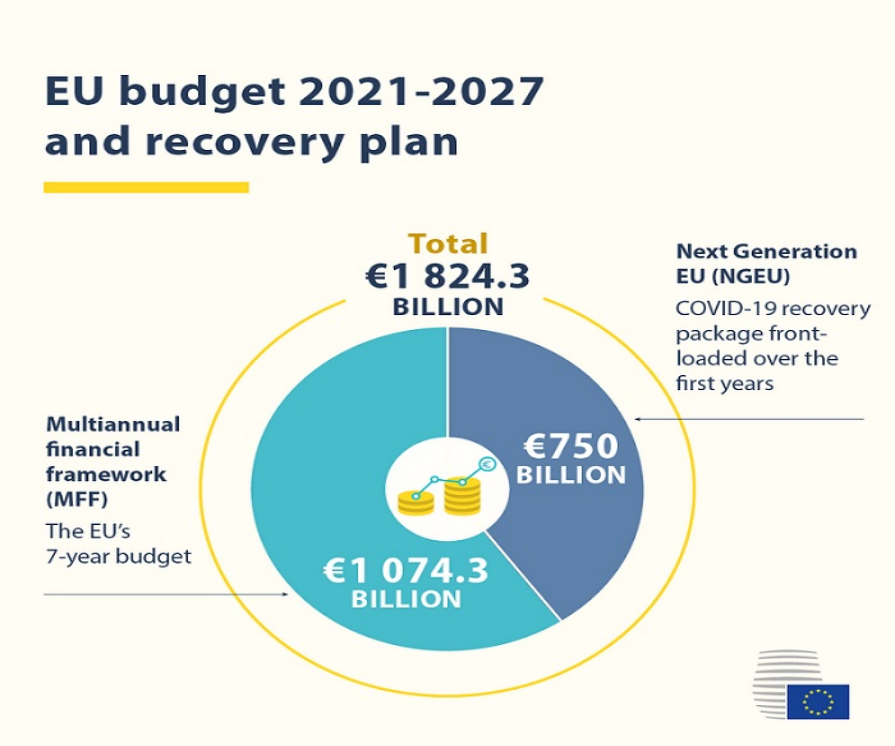
While the Covid-19 pandemic has served as a warning regarding human's frail relationship with the planet, it has also provided the rocket fuel to launch negotiations, allocate budget and reach an agreement on the recovery fund to tackle the green crisis as well (Bloomfield & Steward, 2020). After the formation of coalitions for and against the green recovery and their competition for dominance over decision making, in the previous section it became clear that policy decision favored the recovery fund that comes with green conditions to also address the green crisis. Moreover, there are mechanisms for providing funds to the member states and conditions for receiving it, to make sure that the EU reach its climate goal by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050 (Marty, 2020). The EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

is the main recovery mechanism imbedded in the heart of the Next Generation EU recovery instrument. Moreover, the 37% of the RRF is allocated to finance climate actions. Further, under the RRF around €40 billion is assigned to 'Just Transition Mechanism' to assist member states in their transition from unsustainable behavior to a sustainable and green behavior, in order to recover from green crisis (Marty, 2020). In addition, €15 billion is allocated to reinforce European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and to support the necessary structural changes to make it in line with the European Green Deal and to achieve the climate targets (European Commission, 2020a). Moreover, under the EU budget 2021-2027, the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund would assist farmers and support market in their green transition. Additionally, the European maritime & Fisheries Fund would support coastal economies, fishermen and sustainable aquaculture (Runkel et al., 2019).

The Recovery and Resilience Facility will facilitate grants and loans to member states on the basis of their recovery plan which some have already submitted by 30 April 2021 and others will submit soon (European Commission, 2021; Neves, 2021). Moreover, in their plan they should explain how their action plan is coherent with the European Green Deal and how it supports EU's climate and environment actions as well as the EU's 'do no significant harm' principle. Moreover, they should also demonstrate that to what extent their recovery plan will contribute to acquiring climate target by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. In addition, the European Commission urges the member states to propose reforms and flagship investments that accelerate the progress and use of renewables and sustainable transport and, proliferate the energy and resource efficiency of private and public buildings (Eupportunity, 2020). Furthermore, in order to address green crisis, under the green recovery agreement member states whose gross national income ratio is equal or more than 100%, they should assign at least 85% of their total European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to green objectives. Moreover, those member states whose gross national income ratio is around 75%, they should earmark at least 30% of their ERDF to green projects (European Council, 2020b).

Besides mechanisms for providing funds and contingencies for receiving it, to pursue recovery from green crisis, the EU under the green recovery plan is committed to shift energy infrastructure from fossil fuels including gas to electricity grid. In addition, it is committed to modernize heating and electricity services, and to support solar installations in private homes (EURACTIV, 2020b). The recovery fund would also contribute to transition from steel and coal to a carbon-free economy (Reuters, 2021).

In addition, in parallel with the agreement and adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework and Next Generation EU instrument for green recovery, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has been transformed into EU Climate Bank or Green Bank to help EU in green crisis recovery and to deliver the EU's climate neutrality goal (Vernoit et al., 2020). Moreover, the bank would also support the EU's flagship environmental policies and the €1 trillion climate and environmental investments by 2030 (European Council, 2020a). So, the EU long-term budget 2021-2017 and the Next Generation EU recovery instrument with the above-mentioned mechanisms and plans would address the green crisis through green recovery.



EU Long-term Budget 2021-2027 and EU Recovery Plan (European Committee of the Regions, 2020).

In the light of the above mentioned, what was defined at the beginning of this research regarding the causal mechanism has become apparent. The Covid-19 crisis has opened up the window of opportunity for actors to push their core policy beliefs regarding green crisis by

forming coalitions. These coalitions contested with each other for the dominance of their core policy beliefs in the policy decision-making process, for and against the green recovery. Ultimately, the pro-green recovery coalition dominated the policy decision making process and the Covid-19 recovery became the green recovery to not only address the ramifications of the Covid-19 crisis but also tackle the green crisis and aid the EU to reach its emissions reduction target by 2030 and to net-zero emissions by 2050. Thus, resulting in major policy change.

In the next chapter, the findings from the research will be discussed in the light of the theory.

6. Discussion

The aim of this research was to find out how Covid-19 crisis with such devastating consequences has become an opportunity for countering another destructive crisis, the green crisis. While a crisis tends to open up the window of opportunity for a policy change, this change of policy usually occurs in the policy areas that have been affected by the consequences of the crisis, thus, how Covid-19 crisis led to the green crisis recovery while Covid-19 pose no consequences for the green crisis. This research has sought to address this gap in the literature and solve this puzzle by studying the case of the European Union.

The pieces of evidence provided to buttress this research has supported the arguments made by the theory that actors with the same deep core beliefs come together and form coalitions to turn a crisis into an opportunity for a major policy change even if the policy problem is not related to the causes and effects of the crisis itself (Lantis, 2019). From the study it has become apparent that in the wake of a crisis actors form coalitions in order to maximize their resources to advance their policy beliefs. Since crisis usually provides the environment for agenda setting and tends to open up the window of opportunity for the introduction of new policy or change of the earlier one (Van Nispen & Scholten, 2017).

In the EU, before the emergence of the Covid-19 crisis the European Commission proposed a Green Deal to transform the EU into a competitive, resource-efficient and modern economy and at the same time protect its citizens from the consequences of the green crisis (European Commission, 2019b). However, the Green Deal faced many oppositions and rejections (De la Porte & Jensen, 2021). With the emergence of the Covid-19 crisis and its devastating ramifications, the EU proposed Covid-19 recovery plan. Thus, the Covid-19 crisis opened the policy window and actors who were advocating for the Green Deal and green crisis recovery envisioned an opportunity in it and began forming coalitions based on their core policy beliefs to maximize their resources to advance their common beliefs. Subsequently, actors who were against the Green Deal because it would hurt their development and economy, came together and formed another coalition opposing the pro-green recovery coalition (De la Porte & Jensen, 2021; Neri, 2020).

In addition, diverse actors with the similar core beliefs in a coalition may use problem definition and issue framing to rally support and seek alliance around a particular definition of the policy problem. Also, to challenge the existing beliefs and stances of the rival coalitions to obtain policy change (Lantis, 2019). In addition, framing of earlier events derives policymakers' definition of the current event and they would scan their horizons for problems to endorse their pre-packaged solutions (Howlett et al., 2009).

While Covid-19 crisis poses no consequences to the green crisis as it impacted health, education and economy, a diverse array of actors ranging from elected and non-elected officials to civil society, private sector and epistemic community with the common problem definition and policy belief made extensive use of frames to rally support for green crisis recovery (Chriscaden, 2020; Chandasiri, 2020; Ozili & Arun, 2020; Wendler, 2021). The pro-green recovery coalition framed the green recovery as normative obligation and economic opportunity. Opponents of green recovery framed it as threat to political freedom and risk to the economy and people's livelihood (Wendler, 2021). The proponents of green recovery built their arguments on the basis of existential threat to life while linking it to degradation of biodiversity and emergence of new diseases. As the theory suggests that actors would use their authority and position to sway support in their favor and dominate the decision-making process (Lantis, 2019). The pro-green recovery coalition changed the policy image by linking the Covid-19 crisis with the green crisis by using its authority. The EU requested HERA (a project that set priorities for health and environment research agenda in the European Union and is funded by the EU) to do a research on the interactions between the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, environment and climate (Barouki et al., 2021). Consequently, HERA based on its research concluded that the unsustainable behavior of humans such as habitat destruction, intensive livestock farming, and decreased biodiversity have contributed to the frequent emergence of zoonotic diseases such as 'SARS-CoV' and MERS-CoV (HERA, n.d.). Thus, the pro-green recovery coalition with opening of policy window as a result of Covid-19 crisis used frames to endorse and push its pre-packaged solution by asking green recovery from Covid-19 crisis.

Moreover, policymakers and politicians view crisis as a mechanism that requires expeditious innovations and inventions, leading to rapid progress in policy and procedures (Langen-Riekhof et al., 2017). The Covid-19 crisis has disrupted many infrastructure developments and the global economy (The World Bank, 2020), thus,

post-pandemic there is a huge requirement for new investments, new types of businesses and new jobs so that future economies withstand such shocks and be more resilient. Therefore, the idea of green recovery provided that ground for the decision-makers where they could employ such expeditious innovations.

To recapitulate, Covid-19 crisis has no consequences for the green crisis to divert the attention of policymakers to address it, however, the issue of green crisis has been a matter of concern for the proponents of the green crisis recovery for long, especially, when the EU Green Deal faced skepticism from many actors just before the emergence of the Covid-19 (Simon, 2019; Maizland, 2021; European Commission, 2013). As Howlett et al. (2009) assert that framing of former events derives policymakers' definition of the present event and they would scan their horizons for problems to put forward their pre-packaged solutions (Howlett et al., 2009). Thus, Covid-19 crisis has opened up the window of opportunity for green crisis recovery in spite of having no such consequences for the green crisis the way it has disrupted health, education and economy (Chandasiri, 2020; Ozili & Arun, 2020). It is due to policymakers' prepackaged solution, they were looking for a problem to attach their solution to it and they found the problem in the form of Covid-19 crisis. Subsequently, they made extensive use of issue framing and changed the policy image with support of expert reports to attach green strings to Covid-19 recovery and eventually they succeeded (Wendler, 2021). Thus, all these efforts facilitated that a devastating crisis like Covid-19 opens the window of opportunity for countering another destructive crisis such as green crisis.

In the subsequent chapter, the findings will be placed into a larger context and research limitations and impetus for future work will be discussed.

7. Conclusion

Before the emergence of the Covid-19 crisis, with the election of the new European Commission President, the European Parliament announced the climate emergency. Consequently, in December 2019, the Commission's President Von der Leyen proposed the European Green Deal. The aim of this Deal was to transform the EU into a modern, competitive and resource-efficient economy while safeguarding the people from the hazards of the green crisis (European Commission, 2019b). However, the EU leaders viewed the Green Deal with skepticism and criticized the Deal for being too vague, lacking details and having no action plan to achieve it. Subsequently, the EU leaders failed to reach an agreement on the Green Deal. In the meantime, in January 2020, Europe registered its first Covid-19 case and since then the number of infections continued to rise (European Commission, n.d.-f). In order to contain the infections rate, governments of the member states announced lockdowns and closures of almost every private and public entity. Thus, the ramifications of containing Covid-19 crisis led to the economic downturn. To boost the economy, the EU suggested Covid-19 recovery packages (European Parliament, 2020d). Soon, the actors from different levels of the policy subsystem who were concerned regarding the green crisis came together and formed coalition and demanded for attaching green strings to the Covid-19 crisis recovery to also address green crisis. They also offered their prepackaged solution by calling on the EU to make the Covid-19 recovery plan based on the Green Deal (Simon, 2020b). At the same time, actors who were opposing the green recovery came together and both coalitions contested to dominate the policy decision-making by lobbying, providing expert reports, framing and changing the policy image. Eventually, after several rounds of negotiations the EU leaders reached an agreement to make the Covid-19 recovery 'green' as well as to increase the emissions reduction target for 2030 from 40% to 55% and to reach climate neutrality by 2050 (BBC, 2020a). Thus, the Covid-19 crisis opened up the window of opportunity for actors concerned about the green crisis to push their pending solution through the agenda-setting and promote it via various means, resulting in recovery plan with green conditions to address the green crisis as well.

With respect to the academic implications of this research, it has illustrated the merits of using process tracing as an effective method to comprehend how an external shock such as a crisis provides opportunity for actors to form coalitions based on their common policy beliefs and problem definition and push their preferred and pending solution through the policy window which has been opened up as a result of the crisis. Moreover, the sequence-wise design of this research based on the three stages suggested by the advocacy coalition model allowed for a meticulous analysis to figure out the complex nature of policymaking in crisis and seeing an opportunity in a crisis to address another crisis.

Besides academic implications, the findings of this research point out to two aspects of the crisis policymaking that are vital for policymakers as well as other actors in the policy subsystem to consider. Firstly, an external perturbation like a crisis tends to unpredictably open up the policy window. Thus, those politicians or policymakers with their prepackaged solutions who have been long waiting for the opening of the policy window, with the emergence of a crisis they can push their solutions through that opened window. On one hand, crisis creates a high degree of uncertainty and threat and requires urgent response, therefore, leading to rapid progress in policy negotiations, procedures and reaching an agreement. As it was evident in the case of EU, if it was not for the Covid-19 crisis recovery, reaching to an agreement regarding green crisis would have taken very long. Covid-19 crisis has accelerated the climate action (Holbrook, 2021). On the other hand, in crisis, policymaking requires swift innovations and inventions to tackle it, so it is most likely that the newly proposed policy solution get policymakers' approval (Rosenthal et al., 1989).
Secondly, in crisis, framing the policy definition and policy problem assist policymakers to dominate the decision-making process. Moreover, in order to obtain supranational cooperation in favor or against a crisis policy, policymakers should frame the crisis in political discourse to offer new narratives to it. Furthermore, altering problem frame at the supranational level empower contending constituencies and build changing patterns of political participation (Daviter, 2018). As it is manifested in this research, in the EU both pro- and anti-green recovery coalitions used frames to influence the decisionmakers and dominate the decision-making process. The proponents of green recovery established their arguments on the basis of existential threat to life while linking it to degradation of biodiversity and emergence of new diseases. Additionally, they also framed the green recovery as normative

obligation and economic opportunity. Opponents of green recovery framed it as threat to political freedom and risk to the economy and people's livelihood (Wendler, 2021; Gifford, 2020; Neri, 2020; Oroschakoff & Mathiesen, 2020; Lazarus, 2020).

As any other research, this research is also not immune from limitations. Based on the academic and policy implications, there are at least two most noteworthy limitations that need to be mentioned. The first one is regarding the external validity of the research findings and the theory. Regarding generalizability of research findings, since this research has investigated the research question of how a crisis opened up the window of opportunity for the recovery of another crisis in a single case and at a supranational level, it makes the application of this finding to a broader population difficult. Likewise, the use of Advocacy Coalition Framework for a single case study such as the case of EU cannot be applied to all cases. The degree of openness of a political system and access to venues of influence and deliberation varies across time and over policy subsystems. For instance, while this theory better suits the mode of policymaking in supranational democracies or polyarchies, the application of this framework would not be valid to democratic corporatist systems due to their centralized administrative and political settings which tend to narrow the scope of influence and participation of several actors from the policy subsystem (Schmidt, 2004). Thus, for future research, I recommend that the findings of this research to be tested for a larger number of cases, at national level. Moreover, for future research it is also recommended to find out how policymakers in other political systems or ideologies such as authoritarianism or corporatism, where the degree of openness and participation varies, perceive opportunity in a crisis to tackle another crisis.

Besides, this research has focused on the rivalry between the pro and anti-green recovery coalition of actors within the EU while there is also a possibility of influence of rivalry between the EU and China that could have also induced the green recovery policy. The competition between Europe and China in emission-free hydrogen technologies and China's recent pledge to reach climate neutrality before 2060 could have also influenced the green recovery decision making (Amelang, 2021). Since Europe might have also been encouraged to reach an agreement in a bid to outcompete its rival and reach its climate-neutrality ambition. Thus, this could be a good topic for future research to find out if there was also the factor of China rivalry involved in the green recovery policy agreement because such research requires collecting primary data like conducting interviews. However, this research has relied on the secondary data like documents, published speeches of EU actors and the

limited number of interviews published in news, which refers to the second limitation of this research. With respect to conducting interview of actors involved in the green recovery decision-making process, for the scope of this research it was neither feasible due to the Corona situation nor possible due to the time limit of this research to interview diverse and large number of actors involved in the process.

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