

Governing after Crisis

The Politics of Investigation, Accountability and Learning

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The constant threat of crises such as disasters, riots and terrorist attacks poses a frightening challenge to Western societies and governments. While the causes and dynamics of these events have been widely studied, we know little about what happens following their containment and the restoration of stability. This volume explores 'post-crisis politics,' examining how crises give birth to longer term dynamic processes of accountability and learning which are characterised by official investigations, blame games, political manoeuvring, media scrutiny and crisis exploitation. Drawing from a wide range of contemporary crises, including Hurricane Katrina, 9/11, the Madrid train bombings, the Walkerton water contamination, Space Shuttles Challenger and Columbia and the Boxing Day Asian tsunami, this is a ground-breaking volume which addresses the longer term impact of crisis-induced politics. Competing pressures for stability and change mean that policies, institutions and leaders may occasionally be uprooted, but often survive largely intact.

- An analysis of what happens 'after' crisis to policies, institutions and political leaders
- The contributors provide a unique multidisciplinary perspective on crisis management drawing from political science, social psychology, public administration, public policy, international relations, organisation theory and disaster sociology
- Contains detailed case studies of some of the most devastating and high-profile crises in recent years, including 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and the Space Shuttle Challenger and Columbia disasters

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Reviews

'Too many are unprepared to handle crisis; still more are ignorant of post-crisis dynamics. This book allows us to understand the issues involved and to choose the appropriate roadmaps in the post-event phase. Do not miss these illuminating case studies: they could – tonight or tomorrow – tip the balance between fiasco and success.' Patrick Lagadec Director of Research, Ecole Polytechnique, Paris

'This volume laudably focuses on a relatively neglected topic, the specifically political dimensions of crises and disasters. The authors also make a good case that political elites and organizations more than citizens have to be held accountable for their behavior, since they are the locus of pre-crisis policy decisions. Another worthwhile emphasis is on the differential effects of crisis management on politicians and public officials.' E. L. Quarantelli Professor Emeritus, Disaster Research Center, University of Delaware

Contributors

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