

GOVERNING THE PANDEMIC: A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE \$4.1T STRATEGY

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*We also see that the most honored capacities – for example, generalship, household management, rhetoric – fall under the **political art**. Because it makes use of the remaining sciences and, further, because it **legislates** what one ought to do and what to abstain from, its end would encompass those of the others, with the result that this would be the human good. For even if this is the same thing for an individual and a city, to secure and preserve the good of the city appears to be something greater and more complete: **the good** of the individual by himself is certainly desirable enough, but that of a **nation and of cities** is nobler and more divine.*

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 1.1 1094a

ABSTRACT

*From January 2020 to March 2021, the U.S. Government implemented **five laws** to marshal the federal response to the December 2019 outbreak of the Coronavirus. For context, past federal emergency policies include the New Deal \$1T, World War II \$4T, Hurricane Katrina \$120B, AIDS \$100B, \$2.4T Iraq War, \$90B Ukraine War, \$44B Climate Change, Covid Vaccines \$30B and, the largest emergency spending allocation in U.S. history, Covid-19 \$4.1T. An evaluation of the government's **strategy** to confront the pandemic is framed into two segments: legislative function – how the Congress mobilizes emergency legislation; and, executive function – how the administration manages implementation. The methodological approach follows a traditional public policy analysis investigation of policy design, implementation, and evaluation.*

Keywords: Public Policy Analysis; Strategy; Corona Virus; Covid-19; Cares Act

1. INTRODUCTION – PUBIC POLICY AS STRATEGY

This paper is a study in **public policy analysis** from policy design (the politics), implementation (the management), to evaluation (the governance) of the American response to the global coronavirus pandemic. Traditional policy analysis is client-based where a decision-maker, such as a legislator, requires advice to solve a public problem. The advice comes in the form of strategic alternatives measured by variables including political feasibility, resource capacity, implementation capabilities, and all variations of benefits and costs. One of the policy alternatives includes the *status quo* meaning that all potential ways to solve the problem might not be as effective as maintaining the current position whereby the problem can't be solved now or ever and that the present situation, even though problematic, remains the best way forward. Woven throughout the paper are policy analysis terms that best define the Covid crisis from the problem-resolution and probability-outcome viewpoint. Key words in the *Covid policy lexicon* include market failure, social economic welfare, externalities (negative and positive), collective action, moral hazard, exogenous and endogenous shocks, rent-seeking, and creative destruction.

At the heart of the American political system is the U.S. Constitution – the framework of the government's accountability and operational structure. No matter the threat to the nation, the Constitution gives Congress the exclusive power to make law, that is, the decisive, non-negotiable adherence to the will of the government to solve problems. Indeed, the executive branch holds emergency powers, but granted by Congress. In other words, the United States governs under the **rule of law**, or more directly, by an *Act of Congress*. **Public policy**, therefore, is the result of problem resolution specific to the public domain where the government is the natural origin, and often the final resort, for solving problems that escalate