HOW DID THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AVOID BLAME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

This poster and it's connecting research was composed by William Nyss and supervised by Dr Daniel Keith in the Department of politics and kindly funded by the Laidlaw Foundation

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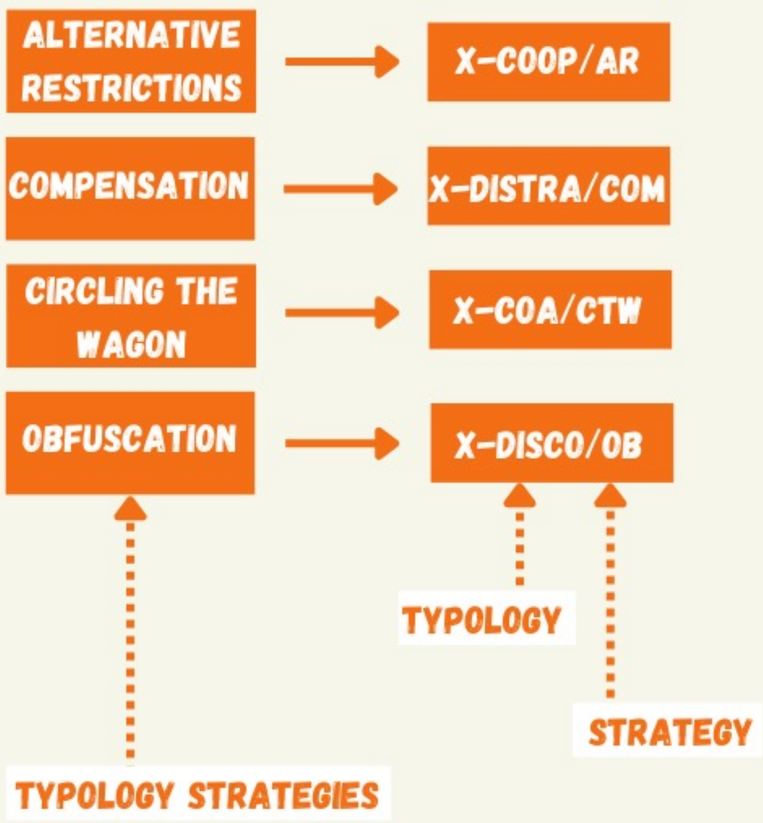
OBJECTIVES

In this project I will draw on the most comprehensive attempt to theorise the blame avoidance strategies pursued by governments found in Giger and Nelson's study of welfare retrenchment (Giger, N., & Nelson, M. 2011) and categorised by Hering (Hering, 2008). Utilising their framework this research will analyse the techniques governments used to avoid blame during the Covid-19 pandemic. Building upon past workings of the typologies of blame avoidance through the use of coding schemes to understand and analyse avoidance strategies used by the British government.

METHODOLOGY

Using discourse analysis this projected coded a sample of common chamber debates related to the Covid-19 pandemic. To be categorised into the typologies of blame avoidance in addition to Issue removal with a corresponding letter code. after all sentences had be coded a percentage of discourse was established. A sample of the coding scheme is shown below.

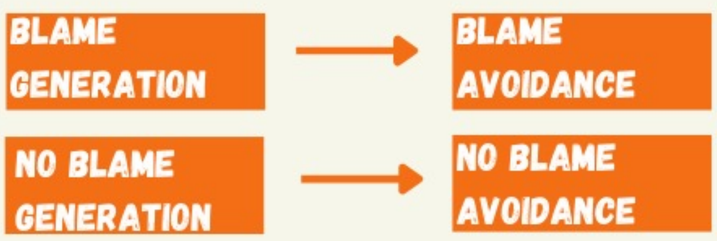
EXAMPLES OF CODING SCHEME



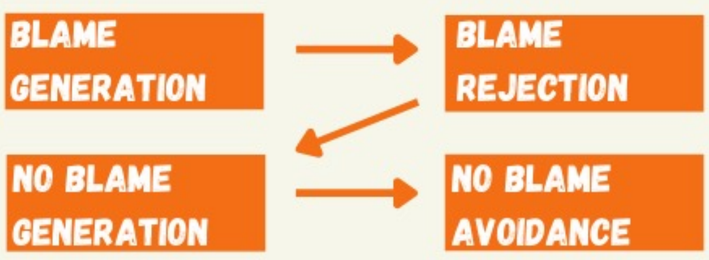
CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD

As it appears that previous studies solely focused on the constructed of blame avoidance with limited attributes to blame generation. Without which no typology was created that fulfils the function of denial towards blame generation. to fulfill this gap the typology 'Issue Rejection' was created.

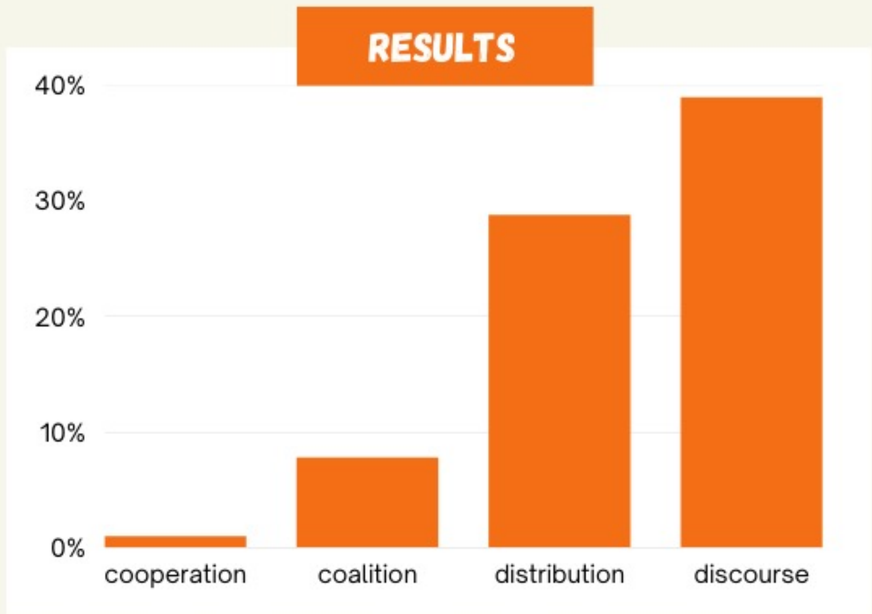
STANDARD TYPOLOGIES



ISSUE REJECTION



RESULTS



percentages of typologies occrung in blame worthy sentences

the dialogue analysis showed that 8.48% of total sampled sentences held blame avoidance strategies. and the blame worthy sentences are broken down into the typologies above

CONCLUSION

Through the data and analysis shown above Hering's (2008) revised typologies of blame avoidance are as relevant as ever in the modern world to ensure transparency and scrutiny over how our nations are governed.

By utilising these typologies (as well as Issue rejection) into a coding scheme has allowed a duologue analysis to occur over parliamentarian actions. Highlighting the high proportion of discourse used and reviled the dominant British strategy of electoral mobilisation. While also demonstrating the ability for government to shift its values to ensure its prolongation in power. Whilst it's limited use of cooperative strategies discloses the cultural factors of blame avoidance and the electoral factors. Overall demonstrating the lack of transparency and effective scrutiny of the British government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic while consequently showing their effective ability at using BAS.

Related literature

Hering.M (2008) Welfare State Restructuring without Grand Coalitions: The Role of Informal Cooperation in Blame Avoidance, German Politics, 17:2, 165-183, DOI: 10.1080/09644000802075757

Giger, N., & Nelson, M. (2011). The electoral consequences of welfare state retrenchment: Blame avoidance or credit claiming in the era of permanent austerity?. European Journal of Political Research, 50(1), 1-23.