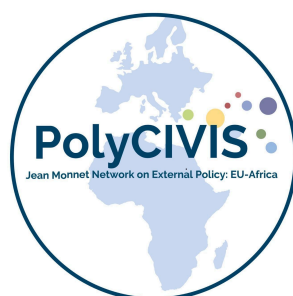


DATABASE: AIM, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

AS PART OF THE REPORT: THE POLYCRISIS DATABASE

BY POLYCIVIS RESEARCH WORK PACKAGE

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Table of Contents

<i>Database: Aim, Scope and Methodology</i>	3
1) Why a database on polycrisis ?	3
Description and aim of the database	3
For the project	3
For the WP research	3
For researchers, teachers and students and policymakers	4
For a broader audience	4
2) Identifying the scope of the database: methodological bootcamp and consultation	5
Language and terminology	5
Type of literature	5
Disciplines and fields	5
Related notions	6
3) Gathering the data: research and monitoring new literature	6
4) Ordering the data using Zotero, by creating folders, adding labels and exporting the result	6
Create a shared library on Zotero and clean the entries	7
Allow to navigate the database	7
Export and publish the database	7
5) Completing the database	8
Report	8
Create further tools	8
Specification: identify tools that facilitate the navigation in the database	9
6) Next step: create a user's guide to facilitate the navigation in the database	11

DATABASE: AIM, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

As part of WP2 Research, we aimed at building a Polycrisis database. To do so, we proceeded through the following steps:

1) Why a database on polycrisis ?

Description and aim of the database

The PolyCIVIS database was developed to include between 300 and 500 entries of publications related to the concept of polycrisis from a Euro-African perspective. Initially, no restrictions were placed on publication types or dates, and the database aimed to encompass titles in all languages represented within the consortium. However, collaborative efforts within the network led to a more structured approach, refining the database's design to better align with the project's objectives while ensuring its accessibility and relevance for diverse audiences, including policymakers, researchers, and students.

Furthermore, discussions were conducted regarding the database's format (see below) to ensure its adaptability to future research and policy needs. These considerations aimed to create a resource that is not only comprehensive and dynamic but also serves as a strategic tool for knowledge dissemination, engagement, and decision-making across various sectors.

For the PolyCIVIS project

Within the Project, the database serves as a valuable resource across all work packages, as it consolidates both academic and grey literature on the concept of polycrisis. It can be consulted at any stage of the project, whether to refine our conceptual understanding of polycrisis, support the development of the BIP, identify key topics for policy engagement, or deepen our knowledge of polycrisis and its evolving discourse within both scholarly literature and the public sphere.

For the Research WP

The discussions surrounding the creation and management of this database have been instrumental in identifying key research directions for the work package. By deepening our understanding of how polycrisis is analyzed within the scientific community, addressed by international organizations, and presented to the broader public through the media, we have been able to reflect on the following aspects:

Conceptual understanding of polycrisis – The database has enabled a critical examination of our own interpretation of polycrisis and the ways in which it can be refined through further research. This includes exploring specific perspectives, such as how scholars from the Global South conceptualize polycrisis and why there exist three distinct yet parallel definitions: one rooted in Edgar Morin's intellectual legacy, another shaped by concerns in international relations, and a third, more loosely defined, variant.

Academic approaches to polycrisis – Mapping the dominant scholarly perspectives on polycrisis provides valuable insights for structuring the final book and shaping the concluding conference. By identifying the key themes addressed in existing literature, we can

refine and extend the analytical framework, integrating new perspectives to advance scholarly debates on polycrisis.

For researchers, teachers and students and policymakers

This database serves as a valuable resource for researchers, educators, students, policymakers, and a broader range of stakeholders, including journalists, civil society organizations, and think tanks. It facilitates a deeper engagement with the concept of polycrisis by offering a multidisciplinary and multilingual repository of global literature. Its added value lies not only in the breadth of its coverage—encompassing academic research, policy reports, and grey literature—but also in its capacity to bridge different epistemological and regional perspectives.

For researchers, the database provides a tool to explore the thematic intersections of polycrisis with various critical fields, such as environmental studies, migration, security, governance, and economic crises. Educators and students can integrate it into Blended Intensive Programs (BIPs) and academic curricula to examine both conceptual and empirical dimensions of polycrisis. Policymakers can leverage it to compare how different organizations define and address polycrisis, thereby informing evidence-based decision-making. Journalists and media professionals may find it useful for contextualizing crises within a broader analytical framework, while civil society actors can use it to develop advocacy strategies and interventions grounded in scholarly and policy debates.

A key strength of this database is its attempt to identify **Euro-African perspective**, which helped incorporate analyses from both European and African contexts and identifying the current bias in polycrisis research. This consideration highlights the need to enhance research identifying differences due to historical trajectories, socio-economic structures, and geopolitical realities. This perspective would allow for a more nuanced understanding of polycrisis, moving beyond Eurocentric frameworks to include voices, methodologies, and knowledge production from the Global South. As a result, the database fosters a more inclusive and critical dialogue on global crises, offering new avenues for collaboration between European and African scholars, institutions, and policymakers.

For a broader audience

A broader audience, who has interest in the topic of polycrisis, can also use this database to get knowledge around it: whether it is scientific knowledge, political knowledge on what international institutions publish on polycrisis, or general knowledge on how global newspapers present it. Using the labels, they can also navigate the database through their topics of interest (tourism, housing, energy, etc.).

2) Identifying the scope of the database: methodological bootcamp and consultation

The objectives of the workshop “Methodological bootcamp: Framing the Polycrisis” with the project’s team (31.01.2024) were to identify research priorities, themes and partners’ expertise to shape the Polycrisis database.

Thanks to the presentations and discussions during the bootcamp, we came out with a few questions that could guide us and help shaping the research work package:

Language and terminology

To build on a good research agenda, it is important to agree on the use of “polycrisis”: should it be singular? Plural? Is it one word or could it be written poly-crisis? (as in some papers).

During the first workshop of PolyCIVIS, it was identified that polycrisis describes one phenomenon, the entanglement of multiple crises, and should therefore be referred to as the singular. However, the bibliography highlights that this rule is not always observed, in different languages. Therefore, to make sure to have a unified research agenda, we proposed to reference the translation of polycrisis in the network’s languages.

Type of literature

Throughout the project, it is important to keep in mind the existence of both grey literature and academic literature on the topic of polycrisis. While the first is linked to the policy-making field (WP3), there are different ways to address it.

The two types of literature can be analyzed separately, considering that there are too many differences between the academic field and the other types of publications. They can also be analyzed together, to spot common points and differences. Eventually, they can serve each other in providing the policy-making field and academic field with other tools and lenses (for example: “grey literature” can be the object of an academic research).

The bibliographical work highlighted that altogether, the publications from think tanks or international organizations that directly address the topic of polycrisis comprehend a wide range of topics, but they often highlight its link to the “ecosocial”, the environmental and political issues, while academia looks at polycrisis in different ways and fields, going beyond these interests.

Disciplines and fields

At the different steps of inquiring how to build a research agenda, a problem came out: how to shape research, when fields might contradict each other on certain definitions / principles / ideas? One of the main disagreements between disciplines, that arose many times, is the question of uniqueness in the polycrisis. While international relations insist on the fact that polycrisis is new, other disciplines disagree, or even see this affirmation as a problem, since it

goes against the principles of their disciplines. Indeed, historians affirm that the notion of “crisis” generally leads to proposals for short-term, emergency solutions.

Moreover, polycrisis is not a new concept in history (e.g. the interlinkage of economic, political and social crisis in North America and Western Europe that unfolded over several years following the 1929 Wall street stock market crash), and thinking in terms of its “exceptionality” leads to a presentist analysis that poses numerous limitations: this idea should be replaced by “the normality of crisis” or everyday life in crisis. Therefore, the network decided to include all disciplines and fields that address the polycrisis or related issues in the database, and conduct work on the differences later.

A consultation was conducted among the network: emails were sent to the primary and secondary contacts (a total of around 100 persons based in the 21 universities), inviting them to share the call around them. Through the consultation, we started gathering some data and identified a new objective to include to the database construction:

Related notions

In order to build on an exhaustive bibliography, we suggest to include a broader literature than the one focusing on polycrisis. Indeed, our partners suggested that topics such as states of fragility or multiple crises can contribute to the study of the polycrisis as well, or provide meaningful tools to do so. Therefore, we decided to look at the different disciplines represented in the network to list the terms that can be interesting in the building of the research agenda and bibliography.

3) Gathering the data: research and monitoring new literature

We then conducted research, to start building the database. To do so, we used research tools and academic catalogues, including Google Scholar, Summon (Aix-Marseille Université) and Sofia (Université du Québec à Montréal).

We also used Google to include grey literature, and especially to conduct a press review and identify publications in the news that mention the polycrisis.

4) Ordering the data using Zotero, by creating folders, adding labels and exporting the result

As we aimed at proposing a database that can be navigated easily, and offers various possibilities (being included on a website, being exported as a bibliography, etc.) we decided to use Zotero to work on the data, and then write a descriptive report on what has been done.

It was decided to use Zotero to work on the data, since the software offers many advantages:

- It is easy to navigate a substantial list of publications and to use it for further projects (such as importing the data on a website).
- It is possible to share the database with further users once it is completed.

- It provides numerous options to label the data, and therefore conduct research on it (such as: who writes about what? How can we divide the literature on polycrisis? What trends emerge?).

Therefore, we proceeded as following:

Create a shared library on Zotero and clean the entries

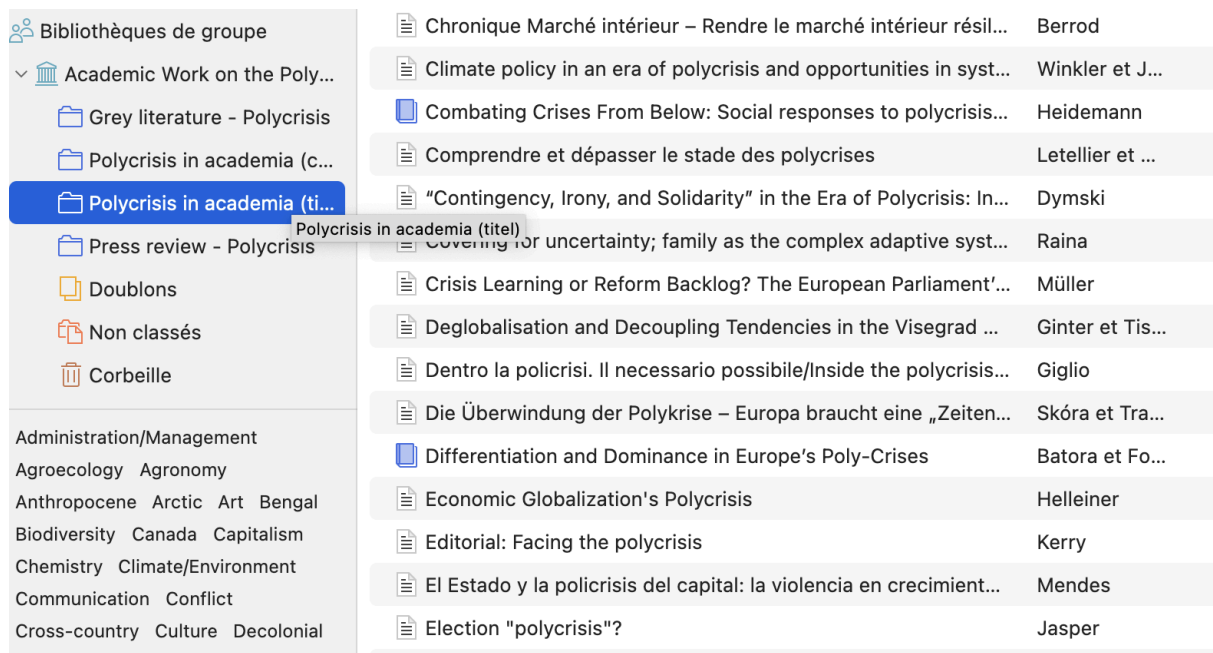
The library remained unpublished while we were working on it. We upload the already existing bibliography in the software, and then use it to add publications. We then verified the authors names, the type of documents, and further information, avoiding double entries.

Allow to navigate the database

The goal was then to make sure that we can navigate the database, and identify easily the type of publications, the topics, the disciplines, etc. Therefore, we created “collections” in the library, which allow us to separate academic/non-academic literature but also order the academic and non-academic in different groups. For the academic literature that focuses on polycrisis, we also uploaded the abstracts of the articles and created labels for each entry. Finally, we labeled the documents (see below).

Export and publish the database

Zotero’s library will, eventually, be published to the audience and the bibliographical lists were exported, to be included in the present documents and to be referred to in further analysis.



5) Completing the database

Report

Eventually, the last step for the realization of the database is completing it with a report that helps navigating the database and gives further useful information on the general research on polycrisis. This is the aim of this document, that helps understanding the methodology that underpinned the building the database, and gives further insights in the polycrisis research.

Specification: identify tools that facilitate the navigation in the database

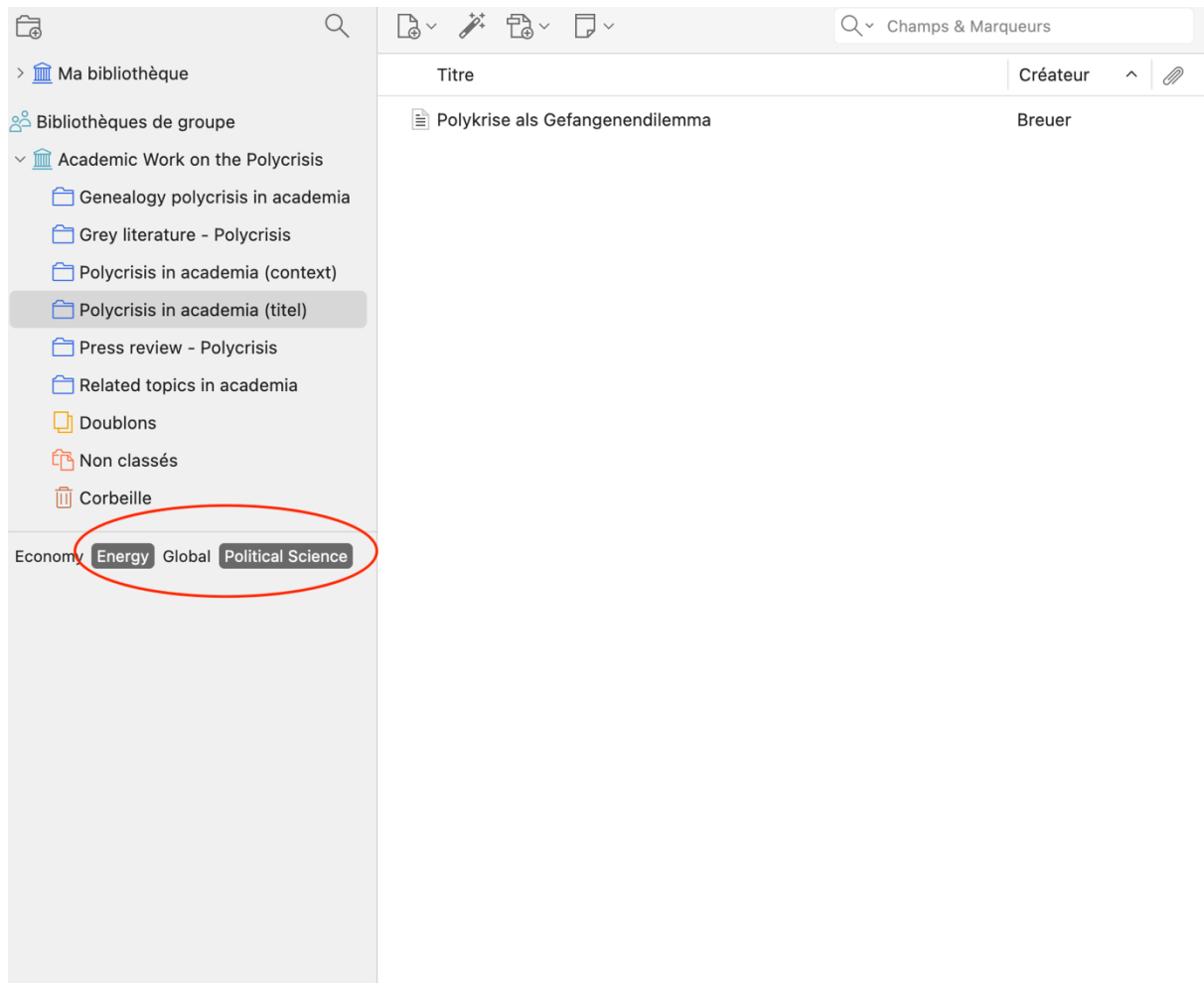
These tools should allow the navigation for any type of users (see in 1) who could find this database useful) and replicate some of the navigation options that are allowed in Zotero.

For example, a student in political science, who wants to identify publications from researchers in this discipline should be able to easily access the publications. In Zotero, this corresponds to selecting the “political science” label:

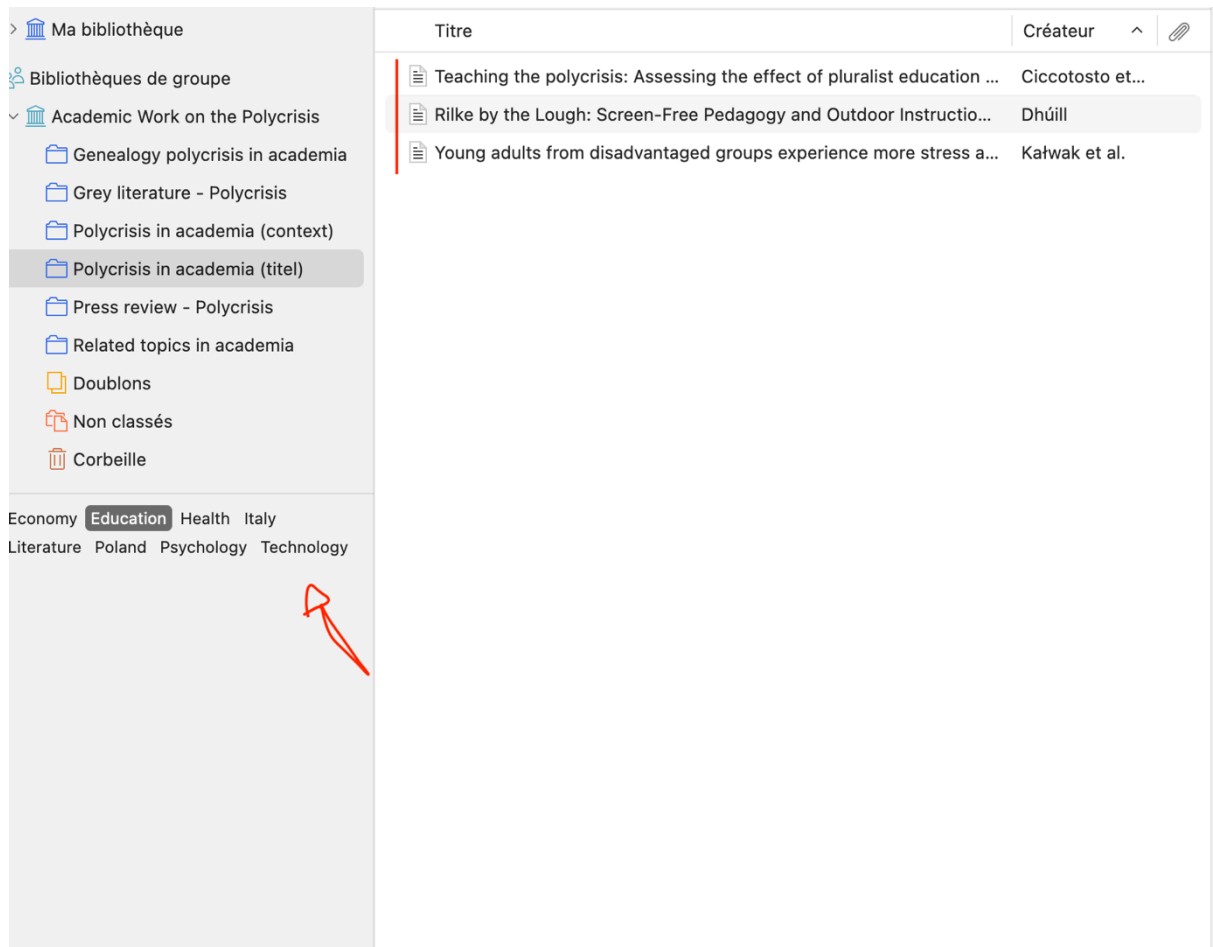
The screenshot shows the Zotero library interface. On the left, the sidebar displays a tree view of the library structure. Under 'Academic Work on the Polycrisis', the 'Polycrisis in academia (titel)' folder is selected. Below this, a list of labels is shown, with 'Political Science' highlighted. The main pane on the right displays a list of publications, each with a title, a document icon, and a creator name.

Titre	Créateur
The EU polycrisis and hard populism in East -Central Europe: From...	Ágh
Navigating the polycrisis: mapping the futures of capitalism and th...	Albert
Differentiation and Dominance in Europe's Poly-Crises	Batora et Fos...
Tracking SDG Achievements in the Age of Polycrisis	Beltramo et al.
Liban: Polycrise et Menaces Existentielles	Berthelot
Setting the European agenda in hard times: the commission, the E...	Bocquillon
Tested by the Polycrisis: Reforming or Transforming the EU?	Bressanelli et...
Polykrise als Gefangenendilemma	Breuer
Towards eco-social transition: Community Regeneration Indicators...	Ciampa et Bo...
Southern Madagascar, polycrisis and project failures: A scoping re...	Delpy et al.
How useful is the concept of polycrisis? Lessons from the Develop...	Dinan et al.
Exploring food system resilience to the global polycrisis in six Asia...	Favas et al.
Existential themes of the 2020s syndemic polycrisis	Field et Ghos...
Putting Global Public Goods Back in the Context of a Polycrisis	Gardes-Land...
Remplacer les biens publics mondiaux dans un contexte de polycrise	Gardes-Land...
The Never-Ending Poly-Crisis: European Union Governance and Le...	Georgiev
La politique budgétaire de l'Allemagne à l'heure de la polycrise: En...	Germain
Dentro la policrisi. Il necessario possibile/Inside the polycrisis. The ...	Giglio
Internet en el contexto de policrisis global	Gómez
Combating Crises From Below: Social responses to polycrisis in Eu...	Heidemann
The socialization relevance of digital media practices in adolescen...	Hoffmann
Prerequisites for Business Development in South-Eastern Europe i...	Hristozov et ...
In the Shadow of Global Polycrisis: Consensus and Polarization in t...	Jakobson et ...
Election "polycrisis"?	Janner

If the student wants to explore what kind of research conducted in political science, regarding energy issues, he could also select the “energy” label:



Likewise, a psychologist who wants to know what labels are associated with polycrisis' research in the field of psychology could select psychology, and then navigate the rest of the labels:



6) Next step: create a user's guide to facilitate the navigation in the database

Once the database is online and can be navigated by a broad audience, we plan to publish a user's guide that can help understand the database and use it. The guide will be explaining why we created this database, will give brief insights on how we did it, and will illustrate the way it can be used through concrete examples. We will run a series of tests within the network to improve the guide, before sharing it to the community.

PolyCIVIS: Confronting the polycrisis in Europe and Africa

PolyCIVIS is a Euro - African collaboration that brings to the forefront the global polycrisis, allowing a better understanding of the impacts of several concurrent major societal crises challenging the world in the form of a polycrisis.

In the wake of the global polycrisis, urgent challenges have emerged, prompting PolyCIVIS to take action. Our initiative is dedicated to addressing these pressing global issues and their interconnected consequences.

Contact information

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