

Pufendorf Institute Advanced Study Group
CRISIS: Critical Explorations of Crisis
2017-2018

This newly launched Pufendorf Institute Advanced Study Group on CRISIS revolves around critical explorations of crisis. The Group's work focuses on the alarming reports about crises such as hurricanes and floods; political instability and unpredictability; soaring civilian casualties due to armed conflict; scenes of desperate refugees and migrants; persisting poverty; and outbreaks of aggressive diseases. Such discourses, images and practices weave our world together and this trend is sustained by global media narratives reporting on crisis across the world.

Yet, crisis also refers to the pressing realities that those affected by experience, many of which cause societal rupture and destruction. A crisis, materialized or perceived, provides for rapid shifts in the socio-political and economic landscapes of the world and brings to the surface the inherently gendered dimensions of any given crisis. Gender, masculinity, power and socioeconomic privileges are critical factors to take into account when studying crisis, not only to understand the ramifications of a crisis, but also to unfold definitions of a crisis and attempts of resolving it.

The new advanced study group asks a set of questions pertaining to critical explorations of crisis; what does crisis mean for the security, precariousness, rights, and social justice of particular individuals and groups in specific contexts? Urgent calls for political action and ethical calls for more inclusive and efficient models for crisis prevention, mitigation and restoration all indicate the importance of critically exploring crisis from an interdisciplinary perspective. Hence, the new group is undertaking interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary examinations of the conceptualization of crisis, the reciprocity between various types of crises, and the gender dynamics by which a crisis is configured.

Four intimately intertwined areas are particularly central: (1) climate change; (2) conflict; (3) migration; and (4) global health. These transnational challenges are co-constitutive, and as such impact upon one another. Moreover, they are embedded within multiple spatio-temporal processes. Most crises emerge out of an abrupt incident of emergency, such as climate disaster or war, but might move on to take shape of a state of permanency. As such, crisis becomes a chronic condition which frames beliefs, hopes, and individual and collective agency as well as possible solutions to the crisis at hand.

The CRISIS group asks; how can we critically explore, understand, and cope with various kinds of societal crisis?

Activities In autumn 2017 and spring 2018, the Advanced Study Group is organizing symposia at the Pufendorf Institute. The symposia and conference are intended to generate debate, discussions, and publications on critical explorations of CRISIS.

**SYMPOSIUM ON CRISIS:
“Gender Asymmetries, Climate Changes, and Precariousness”
October 26, 2017, Room 224M (LU)**

Symposium Abstract

Gender is a key not only to understand the ramifications of a crisis but also to identify the reasons behind a crisis and how it might be resolved (Aolain 2011; Walby 2015). With this theme, we address a tendency in current crisis studies to bypass the inherently gendered character of a crisis; as a phenomenon and reality composed of modalities and temporalities with divergent impact on the lives of women, men, girls, boys, and further gender identities (de Alwis 2016; Runyan and Peterson 2010). While gender offers a lens for grasping how local worlds are asymmetrically ordered and pinpoint disproportional possibilities for female and male populations, an explicit focus on men and masculinity/ies provides an analytical prism for unfolding how male powers and privileges interlock with the emergence and definition of a crisis; the development and sensitivity of coping strategies; and the gender-specific precariousness, despair, and hope experienced in times of crisis (Connell 2016; Hearn et.al. 2013; Ruspini et.al. 2011).

It is critical to bring “masculinity” into the fore in the study of crisis (Enarson and Pease 2016; Hearn 2015) as an analytical entry point in examining the ways in which male powers and privileges inform definitions of risks (Beck 1992), injustice (Fraser 2000), vulnerability (Butler 2004; Fineman 2008), and ontological security (Giddens 1991; Kinnvall 2017). Masculinity hence takes shape as an influential mechanism, which holds power to fuel and exacerbate established gender imbalances (Buchbinder 2012; Rydstrom 2017). A critical perspective on masculinity therefore is not a matter of studying only men, but rather of paying attention to the relational position of men in the gender order, how men obtain and assert control over women and marginalized masculinities, and how men’s position may not only be justified but also perpetuated before, during, and after a crisis (Bergman-Rosamond et.al. 2016; Connell 2016; Pease 2016).

These tendencies are observable across many issues and arenas, for example, in relation to environmental and climate changes. Social life is altered radically in connection with catastrophes, deforestation, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, and resource scarcity (Archer and Rahmstorf 2010). Marginalization of poor communities, inability to and failure of autonomous resilience and adaptation lead to increased pressure on livelihoods and can provoke a crisis of gendered inequalities such as observed in the aftermath of hurricanes (Ramasar 2015; True 2013). Increasing resource competition between ethnic, national, or religious groups aligning with competition over diminishing environmental resources could intensify social cleavages and heighten, for instance, masculine identity as a response to climate crisis. Uncertainty of food supply could lead to tipping fragile or unstable situations into risk of conflict (Kahl 2006; Smith and Vivekananda 2009). The effects of a deteriorating environment by large-scale adaptation measures (e.g. dams), austerity, and cuts in expenditure on basic services might cause tensions both at the state level and in daily life (Buhaug et al. 2008; Hamza and Corendea 2012). People might migrate when all else fails leading to encroachment on other groups’ resources, increasing tension, violence, and conflict (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen 2013). This includes focus on gender-specific coping and resilience strategies when life is drastically altered by climate ruptures (Rushton and Youde 2015; Warner 2011).

CRISIS Activities, Fall 2017-Spring 2018

26 Oct. 2017: Symposium 1

“Crisis, Gender Asymmetries, Climate Changes, and Precariousness”.

Organizers: Helle Rydström, Jeff Hearn, Core Group.

Business Meeting (Core Group).

Venue: M224, M House, Lund University.

9 Feb. 2018: Symposium 2

“Crisis, Economy, and Global Health”.

Organizers: Annika Bergman Rosamond, Vasna Ramasar, Core Group.

Business Meeting (Core Group).

Venue: Stora hörsalen, Pufendorf Institute, Lund University.

25 Apr., 2018: Symposium 3

“Crisis, Conflict, and Migration and Displacement”.

Mo Hamza, Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, Core Group.

Business Meeting (Core Group).

Venue: Videokonferensrummet, Pufendorf Institute, Lund University.

18 May, 2018: Conference on CRISIS

Organizers: Core Group

Business Meeting (Core Group).

Venue: Stora hörsalen, Pufendorf Institute, Lund University.



Lund Sept., 2017

Pufendorf Institute Advanced Study Group on CRISIS

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Involved Scholars

The Advanced Study Group includes a large number of scholars from within and outside Lund University as well as representatives of various agencies and organizations