

Theme CRISIS

‘Crisis’ seems to weave our world together as threads of a transnational crisis narrative. Sometimes crisis rhetoric appears in populist and apocalyptic ways, sometimes as a variable in political strategies to justify social exclusion and economic austerity measures. Yet, crisis also refers to abrupt incidents that shatter the foundation of daily life and to prolonged suffering that ruptures lifeworlds, livelihoods, and communities.

The CRISIS Theme explores the social asymmetries imbued in a crisis due to parameters such as gender, ethnicity, and class. However, these are only rarely recognized in respect to crisis interpretation; the many-layered impacts of a crisis; and the policies implemented to cope with a crisis and its aftermath. Common approaches to crisis have not kept pace with the increasing complexity in the socio-economic and political systems dealing with a crisis and how a crisis kaleidoscopically is taking new shapes when bouncing between the global and local levels. The temporalities of a crisis are rarely analyzed and the differences between crisis as emergency, crisis as a path to renewal, and crisis as chronicity; as a new normalcy of prolonged difficulties tend to be overlooked.

These conditions call for novel and critical perspectives to the study of crisis. While carefully exploring the conceptualization of ‘crisis’, the CRISIS Theme also carries out inter- and multidisciplinary examinations of the interconnectedness between various types of crises, the economic, political, and ideological aspects of a crisis, and the socially differentiated impacts and unequal ramifications of a crisis. Four focal areas are carefully studied by the CRISIS Theme to understand the complexities of urgent events, namely: (1) climate change; (2) conflicts; (3) population movement; and (4) global health. Even though each area is not uncommonly analyzed as a siloed event, these areas tend to interlock and in doing so configure the politics, realities, and experiences of crisis.

The Theme continues work initiated in the Pufendorf Institute Advanced Study Group on Crisis 2017-2018

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