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Introduction

This Issue of the Interdisciplinary Journal of International Studies (IJIS) discusses the topic ‘Crisis’. The idea of focusing an Issue on ‘Crisis’ came as a result of extensive discussions among the editing team and colleagues from the Department of Politics and Society. Currently, we are experiencing crises in different forms and situations. Alan McConnell (2020) refers to “the politics of crisis” as follows:

“Crisis is an “umbrella”, under which resides a multitude of terms such as accidents, emergencies, fiascos, disasters, and catastrophes, as well as variations such as natural disasters, transboundary crises, and mega-crises.”

In this Issue, we explore the concept of crisis, which does not have a commonly accepted definition even if it is a widespread term (Acuto, 2011). The term could refer to specific events and situations, such as conflicts, population displacement, poverty etc. However, it also refers to more abstract concepts, such as gender inequality and democracy failure. Therefore, we believe that this topic cannot be conceptualised by a single discipline.

There have been many scholars who have investigated the concept of ‘crisis’. It has been studied both as an emergency, but also “as a notion, condition and experience [that] refers to and operates at various societal levels” (Bergman-Rosamond et al, 2020). At the same time, scholars like Roitman (2013, 2020) have criticized the use of crisis and connected it with proliferation, power and structural intervention. Roitman in her work asks: “how do we account for the world – or for specific situations and practices – in terms of crisis?” and “What are the effects of the claim to crisis?” (Roitman et al, 2020). It is true that both in the media and in the academic environment, one can encounter the term crisis multiple times. Is it a political decision to use this term or a specific characteristic that makes this term acceptable?

We acknowledge that the word crisis has a negative connotation and a provoking sound which connects to alarming emergencies. Nevertheless, this term has been popularized by the media and is still the expression most often used to refer to current events. The term is also used to refer to so-called crises, such as the 2015 so-called refugee crisis. Since then, the vast majority of stakeholders, including politicians, NGOs, international organizations, journalists and academics have used the expression.

We also acknowledge that positionality plays an important role when investigating crises. As Jensen and Schneidermann (Forthcoming) problematize, “how can we take seriously that what for some appears like a crisis, is hardly relevant to others, when faced with multiple kinds of emergencies at once?” (Jensen and Schneidermann, forthcoming: 4). In fact, there are some cases where one could argue that there is a crisis within a crisis, and what is experienced as a crisis could be both a temporary or a long-term situation. We may understand this argument better by analysing the so-called refugee crisis. Although it was repeatedly referred in the media and by politicians as a refugee crisis based on the ‘unprecedented number’ of arrivals on the Greek islands (Greussing and Boomgaarden, 2017), it has also been referred to as a ‘crisis of Europe’, a ‘crisis in Europe’ or more generally ‘the crisis’ (Tazzioli and de Genova, 2016).

As in every Issue, we welcome contributions from different disciplines. IJIS hosts contributions from Gender Studies, Global Refugee Studies, Development and International Relations Studies. This Issue is benefitted in particular by this interdisciplinarity, as the concept of crisis is relevant for political scientists, migration scholars, economists, and scholars of gender studies, psychology and development studies.

Although each of this Issue’s contributions tackle a different perspective and discipline, they all have in common the exploration of ‘crisis’. Understanding the problem referred to as ‘crisis’ is one thing, but some contributions go a step further and analyse solutions to these problems by the state. Heimstad (2022) explores the policy of ‘sustainable immigration’ as a solution to the 2015 so-called refugee crisis in Norway. Throughout the article, it is argued

that the solution offered by the Norwegian immigration policy is not sustainable and the term is lacking value.

Gadrezi and Ahmad Hassan (2022) offer a political contribution on the junction between PPP and financial inclusion through the lens of a case-study between the Pakistani state and the micro-finance organisation. The contribution raises important questions regarding poverty and economic crises, and provides practical policy prescriptions and solutions.

Our aim with this Issue is to also look deeper than the words and investigate the way that these situations are used in the political agendas and discourses. Berzins (2022) in his contribution uses the theory of ‘Hybrid Warfare’ to explore the situation in Eastern Europe and more specifically in Belarus. The crisis he is exploring has to do with the increasing number of refugees crossing the Belarussian border to the EU and the politicization of this crisis by the Belarussian government. His contribution also shows how this incident could destabilize the EU once more and he criticizes the EU’s preparedness for another so-called refugee crisis. On that note, the essay by Berg (2022) discusses the way that a crisis can become a political debate by using the case of the Syrian conflict and the Responsibility to Protect.

The contribution of Vinter (2022) focuses on a subject of the crisis, the refugee woman. By using an intersectional lens and the notion of women’s agency, she argues that “women fleeing on their own are likely to have a vastly different experience of the journey than women travelling with a man” (Vinter, 2022). Sierra Fernandez (2022) also writes on the subject of crisis from the gender perspective. In her essay, she discusses the LGBT + group of refugees and how the vocabulary we use to describe their situation may affect their identity. She argues that there is a need to allow a reconsideration of the identities, interests, and needs of specific categories of refugees, such as LGBT+ refugees.

On the topic of so-called crises or ‘imagined crises’ contributes the article by Christensen (2022). Zooming in on the Danish context, and developments within the Danish counter

terrorism policy, the contribution analyses the way that specific groups of people are being falsely portrayed as the reason for a crisis and how this affects policy-makers.

Notes on Editors

Ariadni Stavroula Zormpa was a Research Assistant at the Global Refugee Studies research group, Department of Politics and Society, Aalborg University. She was part of the AfricaLics project for two years. She is a graduate of the MSc in Global Refugee Studies (Aalborg University) and MA in European Studies (University of Leuven). Her research interests are forced displacement, the state responses to that and the way that it is researched.

Maria Sierro Fernandez was a Global Refugee Studies intern from September 2021 - January 2022. She is also a Master's student in Global Refugee Studies at Aalborg University Copenhagen. She graduated in 2016 from a Double Degree Programme in Translation and Interpreting and Language Mediation and Intercultural Communication, awarded by the University of Valladolid (Spain) and the University of Milan (Italy).

Kristian Jensen is a Master's student in Global Refugee Studies at Aalborg University Copenhagen. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from University of Copenhagen. He is currently employed at Divérs, an NGO working with equal rights for everyone. Kristian has previous editor experience from Videnskab.dk and is also engaged in the documentary community Other Story.

Eveliina Viivi Lepistö is also a Master's student in Global Refugee Studies at Aalborg University Copenhagen, and the latest addition to the editorial board of IJIS. She graduated in 2017 with a BA in Human Rights from Malmö University. Her research interests are focused around migration, human rights, sustainability and the European wine industry.

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