

Thinking Crisis Beyond Decision-Making

Convenors

Nadine Klopf, Kiel University, Germany (klopf@ips.uni-kiel.de)

Dirk Nabers, Kiel University, Germany (nabers@ips.uni-kiel.de)

Workshop Description

This workshop seeks to explore the potential for thinking 'crisis' beyond decision-making and crisis management. We invite participants to rethink its theoretical foundations, question strict distinctions between crisis and recovery and reflect on the ethical implications for approaching crisis in the context of hybridity rather than binarity.

A brief glimpse into the International Relations (IR) literature on crisis suffices to reveal that the concept is at the same time ubiquitous and perpetually elusive. However, it is essential for understanding societal disruption and transformation, revealing underlying power dynamics and vulnerabilities. The notion of crisis has been employed to designate various phenomena, covering virtually everything from military conflicts, institutional instabilities and economic recessions to health emergencies, norm contestations and identity struggles. Most of contemporary work on crisis focuses either on decision-making or crisis management, which is important in itself but largely overlooks conceptual questions. There is an urgent need for a more thoroughgoing exploration, which questions the very concept of crisis, rethinks its theoretical foundations, explicates its conceptual specificity and addresses the ethical implications for rethinking crisis in the context of hybridity.

To this end, the workshop has three primary objectives: (1) It provides an in-depth conceptual critique of existing social science scholarship on crisis; (2) it discusses a more systematic and coherent theoretical account of crisis; and (3) it addresses the ethical implications of understanding crisis beyond crisis-recovery cycles.

We invite contributions engaging with the following themes and questions:

- **Rethinking Crisis in IR and Beyond:** What are the limitations of existing crisis management scholarship, and how might it be re-envisioned to embrace a broader theoretical scope? In what ways can interdisciplinary approaches enrich our understanding of crisis?
- **Crisis and Temporality – Navigating the 'In-between':** How does a hybrid or liminal lens reshape our understanding of crisis and recovery? How can we move beyond conventional crisis-recovery cycles to grasp crisis as a dynamic process rather than a singular event?
- **Ethical Implications of Rethinking Crisis:** What ethical considerations arise from extending crisis beyond decision-making? How can this reconceptualization foster more equitable responses to global challenges and reveal overlooked vulnerabilities and marginalization?