

HAS CRISIS RUN OUT OF STEAM?: EXAMINING THE AFFECTIVE, TEMPORAL AND AESTHETICS FEATURES OF CRISIS TALK

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Abstract:

Diseases, finance, wars, and the environment have generated in contemporary societies a proliferation of crisis talk. Crisis has become the main interpretative frame of social changes even if historically the past might have witnessed more violent manifestations of these phenomena. Rather than seeing crisis as an isolated period of time, some scholars have proposed to examine crisis as a context, recognizing that in many places of the world the experience of crisis is endemic rather than episodic (e.g. Vigh 2008). Other scholars have questioned the transformative effects of moments of crises pointing to their conservative effect through seeking to stabilise existing structures in a contingent flow of events. Such a proliferation might make crisis an “analytically crippled term” (Bryant, 2016) and with Janet Roitman (2014) one could argue for an anti-crisis approach. Hence, the need to critically examine crisis talk as an affect-generating idiom with a specific aesthetic and with broad implications on the experience of present and the future. In this panel, we wish to examine what such chronization of crisis talk implies for the way people evaluate various kinds of macro-crises, whether environmental, political or economic. We invite paper proposals addressing questions such as:

How do people contest the various discourses of crises, especially those that are claimed to be “global”, and might conflict with their lived experiences and feelings of urgency?

How do people evaluate claims of crisis in a sensationalist media environment, drawing from their own experiences?

What do experiences of chronic crises imply to efforts to mobilize action? When there seems to be too much “crisis” or a crisis saturation?

How is authoritative epistemic and moral guidance represented in crisis talk and how people navigate between different knowledge claims?

What are the temporal dimensions made more salient in crisis talk and how various imaginations of the future become persuasive?

What type of communicative styles are used in crisis talk and with what effects?

Key words:

crisis, temporality, affect