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INTRODUCTION:

GEOMETRIES OF CRISIS AND SOCIAL ACTION 'FROM BELOW'

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This is a book about crisis. More specifically, it is a book about people's responses to experiences of social suffering and insecurity generated by the onset of intersecting crisis realties. Clearly, a book about crisis is nothing new. Indeed, from today's vantage point, fresh on the heels of the 2020-21 global COVID pandemic, the topic of crisis seems hotter and more prominent than ever. Themes of 'crisis' underlie a vast and varied bounty of penetrating scholarship across many domains in the contemporary social and political sciences. The topics and insights are seemingly endless. Unstable economies and crumbling public institutions. Deficient democracies and rising fascism. Entrenched violence and escalating geo-political conflicts. Extreme poverty and intensifying precarity. Pervasive pollution and toxifying ecosystems. Deadly diseases and bourgeoning morbidity. Unfettered surveillance and sweeping social distrust. Endless streams of misinformation and unremitting conspiracies. The list goes on. While the specific themes and angles of inquiry diverge widely, problems of human suffering and hardship are constant themes in the crisis literature.[1] Despite the apparent freshness of this theme, however, it is important to recall that scholarly concerns with 'crisis' have been with the social and political sciences for a long time.

From the eruption of the democratic, scientific and industrial revolutions in the early modern era to the more recent rise of the digital society and the Anthropocene, the social and political sciences have consistently sought to make sense of the dramatic shocks, strains and ruptures that shape the twisting currents of human history. In the political sciences, for example, Tocqueville's path-blazing studies of governance were shaped by deep-seated concerns about the ever-lurking crises of despotism and tyranny that threatened to undermine the newly democratized nation-states of the early modern era (Schneider and Jordan 2016). Similarly, the classical sociological

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[1] It is important to note that the field of 'crisis management' studies represents somewhat of an exception to this claim. This literature stems predominantly from the domains of organizational studies and leadership studies on the one hand, and development economics and business management on the other (for an overview see, Gilpin and Murphy 2008 or Kovoor-Misra 2019). A principal preoccupation with 'crisis' in this literature is rooted in understanding the managerial and administrative actions of commercial or governmental agencies under conditions of socio-structural instability and uncertainty. Scholars in this context often explore the question of how best to manage 'risk' and 'uncertainty' in times of crisis in order to ensure effective profit margins or stable governance. Given the distinctively managerialst orientation of this scholarship, it generally does not have a strong societal focus or concern with humanitarian issues of social suffering. Consequently, this book does not engage with the 'crisis management' literature.

works of Durkheim on anomie, Marx on alienation, and Weber on disenchantment were all similarly driven by forebodings about the social crises triggered by the ascendance of industrial capitalism (Giddens 1971). In anthropology, the innovative ethnographic works of scholars such as Franz Boas and Max Gluckman in the early 20th century sought to understand the crises of cultural 'decline' affecting indigenous and aboriginal societies as a result of their violent encounters with Western modernity and imperialism (Knauft 1996). Subsequently, in the decades following the horrifying devastations of World War II and the commencement of the Cold War era, increased vigour was brought to the study of 'crisis' as new generations of social and political thinkers worked to make sense of dramatic new realities. These included Frantz Fanon (1970 [1952]) on racism and the crisis of colonialism, William Kornhauser (1959) on mass media and the crisis of democracy, Hannah Arendt (1960) on freedom and the crisis of totalitarianism, Rachel Carson (1962) on industrialized agriculture and the environmental crisis, Betty Friedan (1963) on domestic labour and the crisis of sexism, Herbert Marcuse (1964) on consumer capitalism and the crisis of social control, and Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward (1971) on welfare and the crisis of poverty.

Later, toward the end of the 20th century, crisis research received yet another boost by a global wave of critical events, such as the onset of the global AIDS epidemic in the 1980s and the dramatic collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Such events triggered many provocative new discussions of 'crisis' linked to topics that ranged from post-modernity (Lyotard 1984), post-colonialism (Escobar 1995) and globalization (Ritzer 1993) to ambivalence (Bauman 1991), trust (Fukuyama 1995), and risk (Beck 1992). By the 2000s, the study of crisis in the social and political sciences was energized once again by a series of destabilizing events, notably the global 'war on terror' after 2001, the massive Great Recession of 2007-8 as well as the advent of an information technology revolution and the intensified existential threats posed by climate change. The unfolding of such dramatic happenings introduced a slew of fresh themes to scholarly discussions of crisis. These include 'resilience' (Chandler, Grove and Wakefield 2020), 'sustainability' (McKibben 2006), 'neoliberalism' (Harvey 2007) 'forced migration' (Castles 2003), 'Anthropocene' (Angus 2016), 'fear' (Altheide 2002), 'care' (Dowling 2022), 'surveillance capitalism' (Zuboff 2019), 'austerity' (Konzelmann 2019), 'precarity' (Standing 2014) and 'post-truth' (McIntyre 2018). Certainly, this list could go on and on to include many other discussions, such as gun violence, toxic masculinity, opioid addiction, narco-trafficking, rising sea levels, displaced refugees, etc, etc.. Whether we are looking at literature from the past or present, there is no scarcity of topics that could be placed under the umbrella label of 'crisis studies' in the social and political sciences. Given that this book thus finds itself in a rather crowded and heterogeneous landscape of scholarly activity, it is necessary to consider some of the key traits that define this terrain.

Persistent themes in the crisis literature

Despite the sheer expanse and diversity of output, it is clear that studies of crisis in the social and political sciences have some key underlying commonalities. In particular, there is a consistent fundamental concern with how dramatic processes of macro-structural rupture engender intensified experiences of societal misery, adversity and trauma. Of course, the underlying message of the crisis literature is not simply that large-scale social changes always induce experiences of social suffering. Rather, what this scholarship generally shows is that 'crises' are emerging from particular types of changes; those which produce stark disruptions to established social orders. Whether it is the crashing of a financial currency that wipes out people's savings, the ascendance of an autocratic government that crushes democratic institutions or episodes of severe flooding that destroy people's homes, scholarly studies of 'crisis' tend to be driven by a desire to understand problems of social instability, uncertainty and insecurity. This book certainly fits within that profile.

But, what are scholars talking about when they talk about 'crises'? There is no single clear-cut definition of this term in the social and political sciences. Different scholars operate with different theoretical lenses and focus on different kinds of crises as they play out across many distinctive institutional, historical and geographical settings. Nonetheless, there are some basic commonalities in how the term 'crisis' is used across the literature. In her overview discussion of the topic, for instance, Sylvia Walby (2015) offers a parsimonious working definition. She writes that a crisis is "an event that has the potential to cause a large and detrimental change to the social system and in which there is lack of proportionality between cause and consequence" (2015:14). Walby's definition highlights three important points: [i] crises are event-based and linked to critical occurrences or trigger points, [ii] crises induce 'negative' or destructive changes to social systems, and [iii] the scale of social harms experienced under conditions of crises are widespread and severe. In a similar vein, Janet Roitman (2008) also provides a useful perspective on the term, which is based on a critical meta-level analysis of the crisis discourses articulated by a variety of academics as well as pundits, politicians and societal elites. Through her narrative investigation, Roitman (2008:14) observes that: "[t]oday, crisis is posited as a protracted and potentially persistent state of ailment and demise". She distinguishes this longitudinal notion of 'crisis-as-extended suffering' in the contemporary public sphere, from an older synchronic formulation of the term rooted in classical medicine. In this earlier context, 'crisis' usually referred to a "singular moment of decisive judgement" (ibid) whereby an important choice is to be made under exigent life or death circumstances. Echoing key elements of Walby's definition, Roitman (2014:16) also observes that contemporary evocations of the term 'crisis' tend to accentuate forms of suffering brought about by radical changes to the social order. She shows that declarations of 'crisis' usually entail references to a previous state of relative

'normalcy' because the labelling of a given social reality as a crisis always "requires a comparative state for judgement". Drawing on Koselleck's (1988 [1959]) historiographical explorations of crisis narratives, Roitman shows that there is usually always a historicizing aspect to discussions of crisis because the term is used to distinguish a 'before' moment from an 'after' moment. More often than not, the marking of a temporal transition between 'before' and 'after' is event-based, as also mentioned by Walby, and thus linked to efforts by scholars to identify the specific precipitating moments or critical occurrences that unleashed disruptive new realities of crisis.

In addition, both Walby's (2015) and Roitman's (2014) overview discussions of crisis raise important questions of how certain moments of dramatic social change and volatility become declared as a 'crisis'. Indeed, both argue that subjective perceptions and meaning-making processes are an essential aspect of any crisis. By highlighting the need to understand how distinctive sets of actors generate societal definitions of 'crisis', they draw attention to the centrality of agency and power. In this light, crises are not detached objective realities that descend upon people's lives 'from above', but inter-subjective realities, which are actively generated through social actions. For example, what makes climate change a 'crisis' has less to do with the planetary reality of rising sea levels, fresh water shortages and extreme weather, and more to do with how social actors- ranging from individuals and local communities to nation-states and transnational organizations- perceive and respond to these phenomena in more or less purposeful ways. A key question in this regard relates to how and why the crisis claims and narratives of some actors gain wide levels of acceptance and resonance in society, while the voices of other groups may struggle to be heard, let alone legitimated or accepted in the public sphere. The narratives that ultimately prevail have consequence for how a crisis plays out. As Dorothea Hilhorst (2013:5) observes: "Apart from the often controversial questions about whether there is indeed a crisis, what its causes are and what can be done about it, a most pertinent question is: *whose* crisis is it". In this light, Hilhorst joins Walby and Roitman along with other scholars such as Alexander (2019) and Touraine (2014) to highlight a need in crisis scholarship to investigate the social construction of crisis realities 'from below'. As Gigliotti (2020:567) remarks: "Crises lie in the eye of the beholder, and a social constructionist vantage point provides an anchor through which to make sense of the many events and situations that are subject to multiple- and often competing- perceptions". Adopting such a vantage point entails understanding the social experiences, identities, interests and actions that shape people's responses to crisis realities. This book places questions of agency and action at the centre of attention by dialing into the ways in which distinctive social groups and communities purposefully engage with to complex multi-dimensional crises.

Despite a common fundamental concern with how dramatic social ruptures cause protracted forms of human suffering, it is perhaps surprising to observe that the crisis

literature tends to have a fairly atomized and fragmented character . In short, studies of crisis in the social and political sciences tend to reflect the geographic, thematic, (sub)disciplinary or theoretical specializations of individual scholars. Consequently, the crisis literature often pulls in many different directions and points to many disparate kinds of realities, which may or may not be connected to one another. In many instances, studies of crisis seem to focus their energy on understanding the characteristics, causes, and consequences of specific types of crises (economic meltdowns, political upheavals, natural disasters, epistemological rifts, etc.) or particular aspects of a given crisis event (austerity, forced migration, populism, flooding, fake news, etc.). Even works that strive to analyse linkages between disparate kinds of crises often end up discussing how one particular type of crisis (e.g. capitalist) shapes or determines another distinctive type of crisis (e.g. ecological). Only rarely, and until quite recently, have social and political scientists sought to more holistically contemplate the tumultuous social realities generated by the convergence of multiple interacting crises, also increasingly referred to as a 'polycrisis'.

Polycrisis: The social geometry of crises within crises

While the term polycrisis is relatively new and largely limited to institutionalist studies of leadership and governance in the European Union (Schramm 2020; Zeitlin and Nicoli 2020), it has clear relevance for pulling together the many strands of crisis research in the social and political sciences.

What is a polycrisis? As noted in parsimonious terms by Tooze (2022): "A polycrisis is not just a situation where you face multiple crises. It is a situation…where the whole is even more dangerous than the sum of the parts." In a similar vein, polycrisis is defined in a report by Lawrence, Janzwood and Homer-Dixon (2022:2) as occurring when multiple crises "become causally entangled in ways that significantly degrade humanity's prospects. These interacting crises produce harms greater than the sum of those the crises would produce in isolation". In other words, a polycrisis can be recognized by the forms of social insecurity and suffering that are created when several different, but yet interacting, crises are experienced simultaneously across particular sectors of society. Under conditions of polycrisis, the disparate effects of individual crises, harmful in their own ways, become altered and augmented when they converge to produce the broader cumulative reality of a unified 'geometry' of interacting crises. For example, in writing about the multiplicity of "perpetual crises" at play across the globe, Nancy Fraser (2022) argues that what many parts of the world are facing today is "a general crisis of the entire societal order" whereby a "convergence of calamities" is "exacerbating one another and threating to swallow us

whole" (xv). Moreover, as indicated in recent works by Tooze (2021) and others (Zeitlin and Nicoli 2020), polycrises are not merely temporary moments of large-scale societal disorder. Rather, scholars must address polycrises in terms of their societal entrenchment and the severe problems of social insecurity that such entrenchment produces. Stated otherwise, polycrises are stabilized structures of instability that wreak havoc on people's lives.

The notion of polycrisis can help bring more cohesion and focus to the domain of crisis research in the social and political sciences. As one team of scholars has recently observed: "[t]here is a challenge to studying crisis due to the ways in which crisis as a notion, condition and experience refers to and operates at various societal levels. Further, different kinds of crisis can overlap and intersect with each other, and act as precursors or consequences of other crises, in what can be thought of as inter-crisis relations or chains of crises." (Berman-Rosamond, Gammeltoft-Hansen, Hamza, Hearn, Ramasar, and Rydstrom 2022:465). It is thus essential to scrutinize and dissect the distinctive kinds of crisis realities that intersect and interact with one another to create a larger polycrisis. This relates to analysing the geometry of specific crises that intersect and interact with one another in ways that generate a larger seemingly intractable reality of polycrisis. However, without a good holistic perspective on the new social realities produced by a sustained interwoven ensemble of 'crises within crises', the individual parts of the polycrisis do not fully make sense on their own. As proclaimed in an intellectual 'call to arms' by an interdisciplinary group of scholars: "we need a broader intellectual framework to understand and analyse crisis, one that does not approach crises as mere temporary injunctions or atomistic events, but rather appreciates the socio-material entanglement through which crisis seems to weave our world together…" (Gammelt-Hansen, Rydstrom, Hamza and Berggren 2022: 456, emphasis added). Drawing inspiration from this call, the essays and case studies that comprise the chapters of this book seek to help carry a new generation of crisis scholarship onwards and upwards with greater clarity and purpose.

Moving scholarship forward: An overview of this book

The works compiled in this book draw on two fundamental insights. On the one hand, the authors all speak to the importance of examining the theme of crisis from a 'geometric' or intersectional perspective that highlights situations of polycrisis, albeit from different angles and in disparate settings. The notion of 'geometry' at work here is a heuristic metaphor. It has very little to do with that branch of formal mathematics that is devoted to the study of lines, points, planes and shapes. Rather, geometry in

this context relates to carrying out intersectional studies of crisis that focus on the social problems generated by an interface of multiple different kinds of crises within particular social spaces and places. Stated otherwise, the term 'geometries of crisis' refers to understanding how different kinds of crises converge in particular places and points in time to form the larger reality of a polycrisis. For example, when the brutal effects of the COVID health pandemic in the United Kingdom merged with an already existing economic crisis of austerity and precarity on the one hand, and a long-running crisis of institutional trust in political authorities and scientific experts on the other, this collision of crises generated a larger societal polycrisis. Under such conditions, it was the combined effects of multiple concurrent crises (bio-medical, socio-economic, epistemological, political, etc.) that combined to produce widespread experiences of anguish, insecurity and suffering across so many sectors of British society. The adversities experienced in the U.K. during the COVID pandemic were thus never 'simply' about the health hazards posed by the deadly spread of the COVID-19 virus, even though this particular crisis played an absolutely essential part in triggering the larger polycrisis (Delanty 2021)

On the other hand, an important goal of this book is to move crisis scholarship forward by highlighting questions of social action and agency. This relates to understanding how particular groups and communities of people respond to the disruptive realities generated under conditions of polycrisis. A second key insight yielded through this book thus entails approaching the intersectional study of polycrises 'from below'. To be clear, the focus in this book is not simply to document experiences of insecurity and suffering under dramatic conditions of crisis. Rather, the aim is to understand how people engage in actions that constitute purposeful responses to situations of polycrisis. As Hilhorst (2013:5) writes: "Crisis response often appears to be a matter of science, technology and the appropriate resources. However, under the surface we find that crisis response is social and highly political. It is shaped by the people, institutions and history of the context in which crises happen." As shown through the case studies in this book, important insights on crisis realities are obtained when researchers look carefully at the ways in which particular sets of actors in particular settings respond to crises and undertake purposeful acts of 'crisis work'. The term 'crisis work' refers to the forms of practice that people deploy, not merely in order to makes sense of and deal with harmful crisis realities, but the practices they deploy in order to actively combat crises from below.

The kind of 'bottom up', actor-centred and practice-based approach to the study of crisis and crisis work that is promoted in this book is, of course, not entirely new. It has roots within a larger domain of crisis research that stems from traditions of qualitative sociology, socio-cultural anthropology and ethnography (e.g. Auyero and Swistun 2009; Caldararo 2017; Dowling 2021) as well as established legacies of pragmatist (Gross, Reed and Winship 2022), phenomenological (Ferguson 2006) and constructionist (Burr 2006) inquiry in social and political theory. Despite some notable

epistemological variations, these intellectual domains all basically stress the importance of rooting crisis research in an understanding of human experience, agency, (inter)subjectivity and the lifeworld. As gleaned from these different traditions, the analytical pay-off of a 'bottom up' approach begins with the act of putting aside a priori or etic conceptualizations of crisis in order to understand how crisis realities materialize in and through people's lived experiences. This subjective 'on the ground' perspective offers an important alternative viewpoint to the rather larger body of 'big picture' studies of crisis in the social and political sciences, which tend to privilege macro-institutional theories, systems-level thinking and structuralist explanations of crises as they unfold 'from above'. While useful and full of insights, such macroscopic scholarship usually draws analytic attention to the dysfunctions, tensions, conflicts and contradictions at play in large-scale societal processes and institutional arrangements (e.g. Alexander 2019; Mingione 1991; Touraine 2014). Although invaluable, this kind of research needs to be complemented by more 'micro-logical' forms of inquiry that more carefully scrutinize how specific sets of people respond to highly localized and situational aspects of polycrisis in specific ways. This is important because people's agentive social responses to the particular crisis realities that they face form an integral part of the reality of the larger polycrisis. Without an account of how people seek to navigate and combat polycrises 'from below', our analyses of crisis will also be limited and partial. The chapters compiled in this book seek to take the next generation of crisis scholarship forward. They offer an in-depth look at how different kinds of social responses to polycrisis have emerged from within different settings across Europe and the United Kingdom.

Overview of book chapters

As mentioned by Katherine Benson in the foreword, the chapters compiled in this book are the outcome of a series of workshops and mini-conferences that took place during 2019-2021 amongst an interdisciplinary group of scholars based at the University of York (UK) and Maastricht University (NL). These activities unfolded in several phases and were generously sponsored by the York-Maastricht Partnership Fund. During the first phase, scholars gathered in Maastricht to discuss ideas and deliberate on questions concerning the intersectional study of different kinds of crisis responses. In the second phase, everyone gathered for an on-line mini-conference and formed panels in order to discuss the first draft of their working papers. In the next phase, a group of authors met in York to present and discuss the more polished version of their papers. During these gatherings, the group placed an emphasis on critical contemplation of one another's work, thus ensuring quality control and peer review of the chapters. Following this step, a back-and-forth series of communicative exchanges occurred between the editor (myself) and the authors in order to ensure

greater depth, clarity and cohesion for the book project. The chapters in this book are thus a product of these scholarly interactions and peer reviews. By way of conclusion to this introduction, a brief synopsis of the nine proceeding chapters is provided in order to highlight some key points and contributions.

The first chapter by Alejandro Milceades Peña (University of York, UK) argues that different perceptions of political insecurity, a generalised feeling of threat resulting from a lack of trust in the capabilities and/or convictions of political authorities to protect or recognise pressing collective interests or vulnerabilities, shape how different groups structure their responses to crisis. Drawing from the sociology of collective action and trust and departing from the premise that political insecurity needs to be framed in order to generate a mobilisational response, the chapter offers a typological argument that specifies different types of responses to political insecurity on the basis of how they reconcile generalized and particularized dimensions of social and political trust – that is, trust in other people and groups, and trust in elites and governance arrangements. This typology informs a discussion of four analytical responses to political insecurity, respectively, local governance, segmented politics, transnational governance, and hegemonic politics, considering different empirical manifestations and the political and normative dilemmas that follow from security visions that privilege tight community bonds and shared norms or universalistic principles and rationalities. At a time when social and political securities appear to be in crisis, and when divergence in political visions and identities inaugurate a more segmented global order, this chapter invites a reflection about the implications this can have for the structuring of global and domestic politics and for how we manage coexistence with each other.

The second chapter by René Gabriëls (Maastricht University, NL) takes some of the themes raised by Milceades Peña further by looking at issues of agency and resistance under conditions of neoliberal polycrisis. His aim is to explore the relations between these crises as well as the possibilities of political resistance to this geometry of crises. From the perspective of a critical theory of the world society the possibilities and limitations of resistance through collective action are examined. To this end, Gabriëls' focus is first of all on what a geometry of crises and criticism entails if one takes into account the sense of justice that is a driver of collective action. At the intersection of philosophy and social sciences, some key concepts are presented to foster understanding of crises and the response to them by social movements. Then the manifestations of crises in the EU and the way in which citizens through collective actions respond to them are analyzed. As a political experiment in transnational cooperation, the EU offers an interesting case to explore how crises can be challenged by social movements. Finally a critique of a nationalist perspective on crises is presented and juxtaposed to a cosmopolitan perspective. It is argued that in order to effectively combat the transnational geometry of crises in Europe, social movements must contribute to a decolonization of the European Union.

In the third chapter by Vicki Dabrowski (Liverpool Hope University, UK) the book moves from critical reflection and conceptualization of crisis to place-based case studies of crises responses. Rooted in pragmatist traditions of sociological inquiry and drawing on extensive empirical research, Dabrowski explores how single working-class mothers in various urban areas of England navigate a complex polycrisis rooted in British austerity policies. Dabrowski's insightful use of the concept of "mood" allows her to highlight how the mothers in her study cope with intersecting problems of employment and housing insecurity as well as experiences of regional disparity, class prejudice and racism. Most importantly, her investigation shows how the agency underlying people's purposeful responses to crisis do not always manifest through organized forms of protest and activism. Rather, the women in Dabrowski's study navigate the insecurities of polycrisis by deploying a "pragmatic politics of coping", which allows them to have hope and carry on.

In the fourth chapter, Jeroen Moes and Janna Boreas (both Maastricht University, NL) offer a case study that explores the geometry of crises unfolding in the southern Dutch city of Maastricht. Focusing on issues of urban planning and gentrification, Moes and Boreas deconstruct how major changes to the city in recent years have created a geometry of tensions among residents, how such tensions are experienced as 'crisis', and in which cases these tensions have led to forms of collective action as well as (apparent) non-actions.

In a similar vein, the fifth chapter by Thomas O'Brien and Sara de Jong (University of York, UK) examines social responses to a dizzyingly complex geometry of intersecting crises that have been generated by processes of urban transformation and decline in the post-industrial city of Doncaster, England. Through their investigation, O'Brien and de Jong examine not only how harsh crisis realities are experienced and viewed by residents of 'hazardscapes', but how enduring crisis conditions are actively challenged by a variety of community members who proudly call Doncaster home. Echoing some of the insights of Dabrowki's chapter, their work does well to show how "shared experiences of parallel and intersecting crises created the potential to bridge differences between otherwise divided communities" (p. 142).

In chapter six, Dave Vliegenthart (Maastricht University, NL) offers a captivating case study that explores issues of spirituality and religiosity in times of polycrisis. He examines how a growing number of spiritual seekers within modern western cultures derive meaning in life from the non-dualist teachings of so-called 'satsang' teachers, who claim that life has no meaning. His chapter unfolds in three parts. The first part introduces the satsang network, with a focus on recurrent themes in the question-and-answer dialogues between these satsang teachers and their students. The second part explores how the meaningless spirituality that is expressed in these dialogues, paradoxically, can still provide a source of meaning in life, by relating their recurrent themes to a philosophical definition of meaning and a psychological

explanation of the search for meaning, against a broader socio-historical background of the modern crisis of meaning. The third part concludes that this crisis of meaning has been pivotal for both the appearance and the appeal of meaningless spirituality within modern western cultures.

The seventh chapter by Sara de Jong (University of York, UK) explores the ways in which the lives of Afghan migrants expose a geometry of crises in European institutions and values. Her chapter launches off with a powerful critique of the prevailing notion of a 'migrant crisis' in Europe. Rather, she critically re-positions the notion of crisis so as to place the focus on Europe itself. Drawing on the voices and experiences of migrant actors from Afghanistan, she highlights the variety of challenges faced by migrant actors for developing effective social responses to polycrisis when the consensuses behind the institutions that warrant social and political security appear to be increasingly fragile and open to contestation.

The eighth chapter by Inge Melchior and Jeroen Moes (both Maastricht University, NL) takes us to Estonia to examine a polycrisis rooted in intersecting issues of populism, protest and democracy on the one hand, and post-Soviet history, national identity and Europeanization on the other. The case study looks at how the sudden growth of a radical right-wing populist political party generated widespread perceptions of impending crisis among Estonians who feared for the future of their democracy. This triggered the orchestration of one of the largest protests ever organized in the country since restoration of national independence in 1991, and fundamentally shaped a radically different and competing framing of Estonian national identity. Melchior and Moes scrutinize the voices behind this protest as a way to understand how notions of civic (versus ethnic) patriotism were deployed as a collective response to a national crisis.

The final chapter by Peter Gardner (University of York, UK) and Tiago Carvalho (University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal) takes a look at the crisis narratives and claims of climate justice activists in the United Kingdom affiliated with the Extinction Rebellion (XR) network. Through a discursive analysis, they show how activists construct a notion of 'catastrophe' that rooted in a multitude of intersecting planes of crises (temporal, psychological, democratic, informational, political economic). They argue that this notion of catastrophe "emerges as a point of no return, whereby agency or the 'return to normality' usually implicit in a crisis is rendered impossible due to the lack of alternatives" (p. 224). In relying on a radical and seemingly nihilistic notion of catastrophe, argue Gardner and Cavalho, XR activists have generated a subsequent crisis of representation for the broader climate justice movement, which renders their capacity to respond to the climate crisis more limited and challenging, but nonetheless impactful.

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