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Call for Papers

socialpolicy.ch (ISSN: 2297-8224)

Special Issue: Crises!?

Editors

Dr. Daniel KÜNZLER, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

Dr. Marek WINKEL, University of Fribourg, Switzerland

Submission of Abstracts: 19 September 2025

Submission of Full Papers: 30 June 2026

Publication of the Issue: Spring 2027

Many recent sociology and social policy debates revolve around notions of social, economic or ecologic crisis. Terms such as “old age crisis”, “care crisis” or “financial crisis” are used in the academic literature, but also in policy papers by international organizations. Currently, the term “polycrisis” is also increasingly popular. The term implies that the contemporary world is characterized by the intertwining and reshaping of multiple social problems that include growing social inequalities and poverty, climate change, economic problems (e.g., stagnation and inflation), pandemics, (refugee) migration, and political challenges such as war and polarization. This confluence of crisis poses greater and longer-lasting challenges for welfare regimes than earlier crisis and at the same time undermines the potential of welfare regimes to respond. However, there is anything but a consensus on what would be appropriate responses. Crisis are also narrative devices that enable and foreclose analytical work. Calling a social problem a crisis frequently involves a structured narrative with several elements. The existence and magnitude of something that went or still goes wrong is elaborated, the origins of this condition are revealed, and a certain type of action is demanded to avoid that a condition becomes worse and creates other social problems. Claims of a crisis also function as moral vocabularies that attribute moral competence to the claimant and thus also authority to speak.

For this special issue, we welcome papers that address a particular crisis or an entangled “polycrisis”. Papers can have a global, world regional, national, subnational, and/or local perspective. Especially welcome are theoretically grounded empirical papers (qualitative and/or quantitative). We particularly aim for papers that highlight challenges for welfare regimes and social policy responses. Papers in this special issue can also step back and critically examine the use of the crisis term by other actors as part of social problems' claims making.

Timeline and Guidelines

19 September 2025: Please submit an abstract (English or German accepted) of 500 words including thematic background, theory, methods, (preliminary) results and conclusion, accompanied by your affiliation and contact information.

October 2025: We will notify you if your abstract has been accepted. Selected papers will be invited to present their work in the University of Fribourg lecture series “Crisis!?” between February - May 2026.

31 March 2026: Submission deadline for selected full papers. Guidelines on how to submit a paper can be found on: <https://www.sozialpolitik.ch/en/guidelines>. All contributions will be subject to the standard blind peer review process of socialpolicy.ch.

Spring 2027: Publication on socialpolicy.ch

socialpolicy.ch is an open access, peer-reviewed online-journal, founded in 2016 at the Department of Sociology, Social Policy, and Global Development, University of Fribourg (CH). The journal publishes contributions from various fields of sociology, social policy, and welfare regime research. A special focus of the journal is the interlinkages between theory and practice.

Contact and abstract submission

[Daniel KÜNZLER](#), University of Fribourg, Switzerland, Mail: daniel.kuenzler@unifr.ch
[Marek WINKEL](#), University of Fribourg, Switzerland, Mail: marek.winkel@unifr.ch