



Crisis Narratives and the Pandemic



International academic conference of
the Regensburg Center for International and
Transnational Area Studies (CITAS) and
the Leibniz ScienceCampus Europe and America
in the Modern World



Regensburg
and hybrid
via Zoom,
19–21 May 2022



www.go.ur.de/crna22

Crisis Narratives and the Pandemic

A variety of crisis narratives have emerged relating to the symbolic representation and management of the COVID-19 pandemic: functional and scientific narratives, heroic epics about dedicated medical staff, victim narratives, populist conspiracy narratives or even apocalyptic visions of divine punishment, and many more. Each type of narrative attributes responsibility to different groups and actors while suggesting a variety of remedies.


The conference examines these different narratives and their intersections from an area studies perspective. It considers connections between narrative and spatialization, exploring how such conjunctions configure, divide, delineate, or expand crisis spaces. Recognizing the complexity of the interconnected world, the discussions here set pandemic narratives in the context of ongoing and parallel crises. Indeed, the postmodern age has been marked by a sense that narratives struggle to make sense of the world. The global and indeed planetary scale of economic, ecological and now military and pandemic crises manages to disrupt even 'grand narratives'. Hence, there are not only narratives of crisis but narrative itself seems to be experiencing crisis. While the COVID-19 pandemic has further fragmented narratives, deepening spatial, social and cultural divides, we might also be witnessing the emergence of new senses of shared meaning as the current conjunction of crises engenders significant regional, global and planetary reconfigurations.

Drawing on a multi-scalar perspective, the discussions here treat the worldwide pandemic as a starting point for recognizing both the global reach as well as the temporally and space-bound particularities and family resemblances of crisis narratives. We look to understand how the various pandemic narratives affect the formation (or dissolution) of global, national and community remedial actions, solidarities and divisions. How do narratives cross or draw boundaries, for example, between nations or large- and small-scale regions or social groups? How do the spaces of the pandemic crisis relate to other crisis spaces and their determinants, such as poverty, socio-economic standing, development, and (medical) infrastructure? The keynote lecture will also trace the significance of social and historical legacies, such as post-socialist transformation, for attempts to remedy the pandemic's impact.


Ultimately, the conference asks: could the pandemic crisis engender not only further global and regional frictions, but also reveal a productive moment for a revival of global collaborations across multiple scales and actors?

Thursday 19 May


 **Lecture Theatre H44, University of Regensburg**

 1200–1215

Udo Hebel (President of the University of Regensburg):
Welcome Address

 1215–1245

Jochen Mecke (Speaker of the Board of the Centre for International and Transnational Area Studies, Member of the Board of Leibniz ScienceCampus, University of Regensburg) – Introduction: Crisis – Narratives – Pandemics – Area Studies

 1245–1415


Panel A: Expert Discourses and Counter-Narratives



1. **Anelia Kassabova** (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) – “The Kingdom of the Anti-Vaxxers”, “Fortress of the Anti-NATO”: Debates on Covid-19 Vaccination and the Putin Regime’s War Against Ukraine in Bulgaria
2. **Önder Küçükural & Merve Aktar** (Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul) – Dynamics of Vaccine Skepticism Among Turkish Youth
3. **Rahmi Oruç** (Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul) – Swinging Between Two Pending Narratives: The Reception of Covid-19 Narratives Among Freshmen Students in Turkey


Chair: **Robert Austin** (University of Toronto)

 **Coffee break**

 1430–1600


Panel B: Reframing State-Citizen Relations

1. **Christopher Ankersen** (New York University) – This Means War! The Ramifications of Framing the Response to Covid19

2. **Owen Kohl** (Indiana University, Bloomington / University of Chicago) – News of “Shitlibs” and Other Dramatis Personae in American Crisis Storytelling
3. **Iymon Abdul Majid** (University of Kashmir) –
 The Covid-19 Pandemic as a Weapon of the State against the Citizen

Chair: **Gerlinde Groitl** (University of Regensburg)

Coffee break

 1615–1745

Keynote lecture via [Zoom \(ID: 659 9675 8151\)](#)


– webinar with public viewing in H44

Kristen Ghodsee and **Mitchell Orenstein** (University of Pennsylvania) – Taking Stock of Shock: Social Consequences of the 1989 Revolutions.

Coffee break

 1800–1930

Panel C: Dis/located Narrative Spaces

1. **Alexander Pittman** (Ohio State University) – The Power of Same Race Mentoring: Creating Space at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) for Students of Color to Speak Their Truth During the Dual-Pandemics of Covid-19 and Racism

2. **Yamini Agarwal** (Max Weber Forum for South Asian Studies, New Delhi) – Gender and Education: Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic in an Unauthorized Colony in New Delhi
3. **Avishek Ray** (IFK International Research Center for Cultural Studies, Linz / National Institute of Technology, Silchar) – Walking as a Metaphor: COVID Pandemic and the Politics of Mobility

Chair: **Jean-Marc Moura** (Paris Nanterre / Leibniz Science-Campus Visiting Professor)





**Dinner in “Weltenburger am Dom”
beer garden – self pay**

Friday 20 May

 **Lecture Theatre H2, University of Regensburg**


 0900–1045

Panel D: Everyday Crisis Narratives

1. **Jelena Markovic** (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies, Zagreb) – Homo Narrans and the “Indescribability” of the Post-Covid Syndrome: Fear, Pain and Convalescents in Croatia

2. **Milos Jovanovic** (University in Niš) – Narratives on Holy Communion in Serbia During the Pandemic

3. **Galina Gostrer** (Munich University of Applied Sciences) – “I’m in a really bad mood today.”: Covid Talk at Work as a Relational Super-Strategy
4. **Katrin Herms** (CNRS/Centre Marc Bloch) – An empirical Case Study on Crisis Narratives within Social Media during 2020

Chair: **Ger Duijzings** (University of Regensburg)

 **Coffee break**

 1115–1300

Panel E: Transregional Narrative Spaces

1. **Nina Pilz** (University of Greifswald) – Regions as Pandemic Actors: Narratives on the Baltic Sea Region in Times of the Pandemic
2. **Martina Drescher** (University of Bayreuth) – A discourse analytical perspective on Covid-19 narratives from Cameroon
3. **Lorella Viola** (University of Luxembourg) – “Italy, for example, is just incredibly stupid now” – European crisis narrations in relation to Italy’s response to COVID-19
4. **Jana Sverdljuk** (University of Agder) & **Bastiaan Bruinsma** (Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg) – COVID-19 vaccine narratives on Twitter: Discrepancies between the Global North and the Global South?

Chair: **Paul Vickers** (University of Regensburg / Leibniz ScienceCampus)



Lunch in the University Mensa (canteen) – provided by the organizers for panelists and chairs

🕒 1445–1615

Panel F: Refiguring Europe

1. **Gábor Egry** (Institute of Political History, Budapest) – Swimming against the current of history? The relative failure of anti-Western official Hungarian Covid-19 narratives
2. **Matthias Morys** (University of York, UK) – Can a new Covid-narrative make the euro more sustainable?
3. **Lukas Novotny** (UJEP, Usti nad Labem) – Difficulties for tight-knit border communities during the COVID-19 pandemic: The case of cross-border commuters

Chair: **Ulf Brunnbauer** (IOS Regensburg / University of Regensburg)

☕ **Coffee break**

🕒 1645–1830

Panel G: Cultural Crisis Narratives

1. **Anne Brüske** (University of Regensburg) – Spatializing the Pandemic: Graphic Narratives of Crisis in Latin America
2. **Oleksandr Zabirko** (University of Regensburg) – Post-Soviet “Zombification”: Between Literary Trope and Media Cliché
3. **Jochen Mecke** (University of Regensburg) – Re-Making and Re-Spatializing Narratives of Crisis, Catastrophe and Everyday Life

Chair: **Tamara Heger** (University of Regensburg)


★ **Reception and buffet**

Saturday 21 May

📍 Lecture Theatre H2, University of Regensburg

🕒 0915–1045

Panel H: Pandemics, Biopolitics and Posthumanism

1. **Raul Cârstocea** (Maynooth University) – Othering a Pandemic: The Scapegoating of Jews and Roma during Epidemics
2. **Romana Radlwimmer** (Tübingen University) –
 Biopolitics and the Narrative of Colonial Illness
3. **Minerva Peinador-Perez** (University of Regensburg) – A Feral Matter: Attempting to figure out the paradigm of Anthropocene through its strange creatures

Chair: **Anna Steigemann** (TU Berlin)

☕ **Coffee break**

🕒 1115–1300

Panel I: Apocalypse, Atrocity or Utopia? Prospects beyond the Pandemic

1. **Richard Newell** (Sarajevo) – COVID-19 and the Global Threats of Genocide and Mass Atrocity
2. **Thomas Lynch** (University of Chichester) – Crisis and Apocalypse: Narrating the Pandemic
3. **Danielle Heberle Viegas** (LMU, Munich) – COVID-19, utopia and socio-spatial dynamics in Brazil

Chair: **Jochen Mecke** (University of Regensburg)





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Please register via info@europeamerica.de to attend the panels in person or via Zoom. The keynote lecture is open to all in person and via the link/ Zoom-ID in the program.



indicates online participants in the conference.

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