

# INTERPRETIVE POLICY ANALYSIS CONFERENCE 2021

**Panel Title:**

*P28 - Performative Space of Crises and Democracy*

**Convenor:**

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This panel aims to discuss the performative space that crises create. While the world remains in the middle of global pandemic it is only an addition to the global crises we face. Climate change, water and food shortages, the surge of extremisms, international and domestic terrorism, police brutality, the rise of populism, and soaring inequality are shaking the foundations of democratic political institutions. The performative space that these crises bring about means possibilities that are neither positive nor negative by themselves. Rather, what it opens up is a chance to reinterpret, reappropriate, and reenact the narratives of crisis.

In policy studies, the narratives of crisis have long operated as a justification of the necessity of decisionism. National security threats such as war, for example, institutes emergency powers that cease normal politics, and in this state of exception the executive power makes political decisions. This traditional view of political decision leads to the search for one solution by the calculations of options for the best choice under uncertainty. The possibilities of performative space are reduced to calculable, quantifiable, and measurable factors that sum up risks and benefits.

The problem of quantification of possibilities is not in its digitization but in its inability to reflect the values that are essential to democracy. Measuring the values of equality, freedom, and justice is destined to raise questions about the object of measuring. Admittedly, the reflection of these values into the calculation of decision-making lags behind more instant quantifiable matters. For example, policy measures to address Covid-19 emphasize the emergency of security concerns hinting that privacy and individual freedom may be a less urgent issue compared to survival. The problem of this frame is to display these values as a matter of choice. What it actually does is to serve decisionism, foreclosing the performative space of democracy. According to Victor Turner, the moment of crisis has a character of performance in which social rules and conventional practices of everyday life are shaken and reagggregated. This panel welcomes papers which discuss various aspects of this performance in crisis.