

Axis 7 - Health and global crises

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Whether it is on the environmental or sanitary level, our planet is now exposed to dangers that have no equivalent in the past. Epidemics have the capacity to spread throughout the world, as shown by the Covid-19 epidemic; global warming exposes us to increasingly frequent and violent climatic disturbances and phenomena; pollution and the depletion of natural resources cause disease, famine and profound imbalances within natural biotopes. This set of phenomena, combined with uncontrolled demography, may lead to massive population movements, as well as major conflicts for the control of resources.

It is to these systemic risks that the "Health and Global Crisis" research axis is interested in trying to identify the major risks and their consequences and to offer both analytical tools and possible solutions.

It proceeds from a triple movement, following the genesis of global crises. The appearance of a crisis is characterized by a deviation from the normal state of affairs in a particular field; a certain number of difficulties then manifest themselves, often originating from a deeper failure, present in the very matrix of the system. By a domino effect, the crisis then spreads to most sectors of society. Thus, the economic, financial, climatic, security, cyber and military domains can enter into crisis in a systemic way; we then speak of a "total crisis" (Bauer, 2020). In this context, technology can be both an amplifier of crisis and a facilitator of progress of all kinds. It can thus supplant local and/or national powers through the interplay of global interconnections and interdependencies by generating or aggravating criminal phenomena; just as it can provide solutions to the crisis, ranging from diagnosis to therapy and including prognosis. This was observed during the Covid-19 pandemic, during which it amplified the impact of fake news, but also allowed for better communication within the populations by facilitating the dissemination of vaccines and by alleviating their fears.

To understand these global crises, we can study them in terms of the concept of emergence: new problems that were previously difficult to define involve the invention of new words (in a constructivist approach to reality), the development of new methodological tools and the construction of new paradigms. A real cognitive challenge, the emergence of global crises requires an upstream effort of anticipation, whether through the use of forecasting models (demographic, economic, climatic, biological, cybernetic, etc.) or through techniques for preparing the future, such as strategic foresight, which combines reason and intuition, and which combines science, technology and humanities in the identification of major trends and the detection of "weak signals", often precursors of ruptures. Strategic foresight does not aim to predict the future, but to prepare for it by transforming the subject in depth, to make it more resilient in the face of the unforeseen nature of crises. Downstream, the treatment of global crises calls for systemic diagnoses as well as adapted crisis management, mobilizing the appropriate actors and a "tailor-made" approach to leadership.

This line of research is currently reflected in the integration of the concept of resilience in the work of institutions such as the French National Research Agency (ANR) and the European Commission (EC). Indeed, the ANR places its calls for projects in line with the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP). For example, the Agency encourages anticipation of the major transitions of the century, such as digital technology. Moreover, in an effort by the EC to make Europe more resilient, strategic foresight has gained in importance in Brussels since the Covid-19 crisis. The latest European report on the issue, covering the social, economic, geopolitical, ecological and digital dimensions of the crises,

shows both the relevance of this axis and the multidisciplinary positioning of the SDRT-I3C. Thus, the team of the axis is ready to respond to calls for projects from the Commission, particularly in the perspective of the next strategic foresight report.

Firmly committed to a "top-down" approach to crises, the team favors a positive approach. Indeed, while global crises put our civilization models to a severe test, they also offer many opportunities for decision-makers. As a factor of uncertainty, they should not be synonymous with a "strategic vacuum", but on the contrary, they should fertilize collective reflection and encourage the exploitation of sometimes unsuspected margins for maneuver, in order to formulate effective and original responses resulting from multi-disciplinary research. This is the primary vocation of this research axis.

<https://esd-en.cnam.fr/axis-7-health-and-global-crises-1223798.kjsp?RH=1576512148977>