RESEARCH SEMINAR

IÉSEG
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

'INHABITING A GLOBAL CRISIS – AN INSTITUTIONAL LENS'

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ABSTRACT

Current understandings of global crises are limited to the extent that we retain a conceptualization of "crisis" as an event or process in its own right, which is triggered by a series of occurrences while being disconnected from institutional dynamics. Instead, we suggest that crises should be seen as the failure of institutions to offer up adequate material and cultural resources to apprehend and address a societal threat. We develop a novel micro-foundational theory for understanding the relationship between institutions and global crises that centers on lived experience. First, we contribute to the literature on crises. We conceptualize global crises as disruptive chains of events that call an established social order into question, put multiple institutions to test, and affect the lived experience of institutional inhabitants. This conceptualization, in turn, helps to articulate a novel theory of how global crises are constructed as such, and how people and organizations develop responses to these constructions. Second, the paper contributes to the research on jurisdictions by expanding the analysis beyond traditional focus on professions. Instead, our theory illustrates a more fluid and contested dynamics in the construction of relevant expertise, as different actors seek to utilize their respective institutional toolkits to influence how a particular disruptive event is interpreted, and how it is collectively dealt with by a community. Third, we contribute to the research on micro-foundations of institutions by helping to re-establish a stronger connection between institutional theory and people's lived experience, including the societal systems of privilege and inequality that are implicated with the dynamics of collective interpretation of disruptive events.

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