

## Call for Papers for a Special Issue in Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management

### **Imagining Futures: Interstices and the Immateriality of Disasters**

Guest Editors: Jörgen Sparf<sup>1</sup>\*, Evangelia Petridou<sup>1</sup>, Lena-Maria Öberg<sup>1</sup>, Mikael Linnell<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Mid Sweden University, Risk and Crisis Research Centre ([www.miun.se/rcr](http://www.miun.se/rcr))

\*Corresponding editor, [jorgen.sparf@miun.se](mailto:jorgen.sparf@miun.se)

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How do we imagine, visualize, and construct possible alternatives of the future? This proposed special issue aims to shed light on interstices, the in-between-disaster spaces in which our imagining of the future occurs. The objects of study of the papers hosted in this special issue are emergencies, crises, and disasters that have not yet occurred, what Calhoun (2008) referred to as the “emergency imaginary”. Images of catastrophe and its aftermath have largely taken hold of today’s popular imagination of the future. The apocalyptic zeitgeist of the 1980s has been revived in a wide variety of media and genres: in film (from Roland Emmerich to Lars von Trier), in literature (from Cormac McCarthy and Paolo Bacigalupi to Michel Houellebecq), in popular works of nonfiction, in computer games, in sociological and philosophical discussions (from Ulrich Beck and Peter Sloterdijk to Timothy Morton and Bruno Latour), in the natural sciences (from geology to climatology), and even in the notoriously optimistic and growth-oriented field of economics (Horn, 2018). The broad conceptualization of future and catastrophe, and its ubiquitous application in virtually every social sphere, seem to haunt the modern idea of a future that can be anticipated and planned. Much of the current discourses of the Anthropocene, the Capitalocene (Malm 2013), and Chthulucene (Haraway 2015), for example, seem to be occupied with the idea of the world rushing towards a tipping point of no return and chaos for the human race and, indeed, the earth as a functioning ecological system.

The question that arises refers to how we, as individuals, communities, polity, and society, may anticipate, manage, and prepare for such future conditions. Indeed, “[i]magination is not a gift usually associated with bureaucracies” (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 2004, p.344), and foresight is based on creative analysis (in the present) of the understanding of the past. Imagined catastrophes and disasters offer us intellectual tools that can render a future affectively, epistemologically, and politically accessible. In this sense, the theme of this special issue is aligned with the broad, interdisciplinary scope of the *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*.

The theme of this special issue comes out of the 5th Northern European Emergency and Disaster Studies conference ([www.needs2021.com](http://www.needs2021.com)) though conference participation is not required to publish in the special issue. We welcome papers on three themes:

(i) *drawing from experience*, (ii) *playing with realities*, and (iii) *imagining futures*.

- i. *Drawing from experience* aims at investigating the individual and collective experience in memory, cultural reproductions, and recovery technologies in the aftermath of disasters. This theme focuses on interrogating the past, not necessarily premised on a dystopian future.
- ii. *Playing with realities* is about how we creatively conceptualize and enact, with training, exercises, or simulation, imagined future catastrophic events, indeed, how we institutionalize methods and ways of imagination.
- iii. For *imagining futures*, we ask: what do future catastrophes look like? What do(es) the future(s) look like? This theme concerns ideas, visions, dreams, fantasies and visualizations of possible alternatives, utopias and dystopias. It may include ideas about and perspectives of the future, expressed in film, literature and other art forms as well as in politics and bureaucracy.

The papers in this proposed special issue aim to provide a counterweight to mainstream research in emergency and disaster studies by highlighting how we imagine, visualize, and enact future events rather than focusing solely on the managerial aspects preventing, mitigating, or responding to them. We especially welcome papers with innovative theoretical and methodological approaches.

### **Submission**

Manuscripts should be submitted in ScholarOne: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jccm>. Please select that your submission is for a Special Issue, and include the Special Issue title 'Imagining Futures: Interstices and the Immateriality of Disasters'.

Submission deadline: **15<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

### **References**

- Calhoun, C. (2008). A World of Emergencies: Fear, Intervention, and the Limits of Cosmopolitan Order\*. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie*, 41(4), 373-395.
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Horn, E. (2018). *The Future as Catastrophe: Imagining Disaster in the Modern Age*. Columbia University Press.

Malm, A. (2013). Steaming into the Capitalocene. In *Institute of British Geographers Conference, London*.

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States. (2004). The 9/11 Commission report. <https://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf>

