Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy

ISSN: 1369-8230 (Print) 1743-8772 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/fcri20

Taking advantage of crises

Matthew Adams & Fay Niker

To cite this article: Matthew Adams & Fay Niker (05 Oct 2025): Taking advantage of crises, Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, DOI: 10.1080/13698230.2025.2568287

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2025.2568287

Published online: 05 Oct 2025.

CRITICAL REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
https://doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2025.2568287

Taking advantage of crises

Matthew Adams[a] and Fay Niker[b]

[a]Department of Philosophy, Indiana University, Bloomington, USA; [b]Department of Philosophy, University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland

ABSTRACT

Crises furnish opportunities for political change. This fact raises neglected normative questions. How should the various possible ways of taking advantage of crises be evaluated? And should such an evaluation be 'special?' Namely, should strategies that take advantage of crises, like deliberately playing on people's fears or rushing through policy changes, be evaluated differently from when essentially the same strategies are used independent of any crisis? To clarify the terrain, we provide an analysis of the concept of taking advantage of a crisis. We then set out an evaluative framework that specifies the different respects in which various strategies that take advantage of crises are pro tanto good and bad. Finally, we argue that strategies that take advantage of crises are normatively special. For they are worse across certain normative dimensions – in virtue of the additional vulnerabilities that crises induce – than essentially the same strategies used independent of any crisis.

KEYWORDS Covid-19; crises; political change; shock doctrine; vulnerability

Introduction

> Never let a good crisis go to waste.
> —Churchill

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the humanitarian crisis that it brought about, Milton Friedman wrote an influential op-ed article in the *Wall Street Journal* that campaigned for a school voucher system to be established in New Orleans. He wrote, 'This is a tragedy. It is also an opportunity to radically reform the educational system' (Friedman, 2005). Rather than rebuilding the existing public school system in New Orleans, Friedman advocated for it to be replaced by privately run charter schools. And his advocacy was successful: as

CONTACT Fay Niker fay.niker@stir.ac.uk

Naomi Klein notes, within 18 months of the storm hitting the School Board went from running 123 public schools to running only 4 (Klein, 2007, p. 6).

The actions that Friedman inspired are a paradigm example of what Klein calls 'the shock doctrine' or 'disaster capitalism:' using the shock induced by a crisis as an opportunity to push through free market reforms (Klein, 2007, pp. 5–9). But the basic strategy of trying to somehow take advantage of crises isn't merely endorsed by proponents of free market reforms. Figures from an array of ideological orientations including Winston Churchill and Arundhati Roy (2020) also talk about the opportunities furnished by crises. Furthermore, they suggest that there are ways of taking advantage of certain crises that are good – perhaps even, as the opening epigraph suggests, obligatory.

Such claims raise the normative question of how the various possible ways of taking advantage of crises should be evaluated.

Klein suggests that the answer to this question can be flatfooted. Actions that take advantage of crises by bringing about good (or at least better) ends are good; conversely, actions that take advantage of crises by bringing about bad (or at least worse) ends are bad. Thus, she concludes that it is bad for Friedmanite elites to take advantage of crises by privatizing public goods. But it would be good to take advantage of the climate change crisis to solve broader economic problems, for instance, through the creation of more high-quality jobs. Indeed, this is a possibility that she describes as a 'reverse shock doctrine' because it advances good rather than bad ends (Klein, 2015).

But even if we assume that Klein's left-leaning orientation to politics is correct, this response elides important normative nuance. For instance, it doesn't capture the ways in which taking advantage of crises to realize good ends can also be pro tanto bad – in virtue of how such good ends can be realized by problematic strategies such as cognitive distortion or violating standard democratic procedures. Furthermore, it doesn't address the deeper theoretical issue of whether the evaluation of actions that take advantage of crises should be 'special.' Namely, whether strategies that take advantage of crises should be evaluated differently from when essentially the same strategies are used independent of any crisis. This question is pressing because, as we will argue, many strategies for taking advantage of crises aren't unique to this art – rather they are widespread in actual political practice.

Such normative nuance has been remarkably underexplored by political theorists and analytic philosophers.[1] One reason for this neglect seems to be that we don't have a sufficiently clear and comprehensive account of how actors can take advantage of crises which is required to frame the various normative nuances of how they should act in such a context. Klein's metaphor of a shock is evocative but insufficiently precise.[2] In political science, some argue that taking advantage of crises is primarily about engaging in 'framing contests:' crises allow actors to offer competing conceptualizations

of the causes and lessons of crises to try to affect certain types of political change (Boin, t'Hart, and McConnell, 2009; Ulmer et al., 2011). But the concept of framing contests, as we will argue further below, is limited insofar as it is unable to capture some important ways in which actors take advantage of crises.

In this paper we aim to make progress, by providing a clearer theory of how actors can take advantage of crises in order to expose and tackle the core normative issues.

Our paper takes the following structure. We begin by presenting an analysis of the concept of 'taking advantage of a crisis' and a taxonomy of some important ways in which this concept can be realized in practice in the form of various strategies. We then set out a normative framework that specifies the different respects in which these various strategies are pro tanto good and bad. Finally, we argue that strategies that take advantage of crises are 'special.' For they are worse across certain normative dimensions – in virtue of the additional vulnerabilities that crises induce – than essentially the same strategies used independent of any crisis.

We clarify the scope of our inquiry before getting started. First, we address social and political crises rather than personal crises.[3] Second, we focus on broadly liberal and democratic political regimes, remaining agnostic about the degree to which the normative framework that we develop can be applied to more authoritarian regimes. Third, many theorists have studied crises in relation to a particular set of ideological commitments. In Marxist economics, 'crisis theory' studies the causes and consequences of the tendency for the rate of profit to fall in capitalist economies (see Grossman, 2017). And Klein's work focuses on how people take advantage of crises in order to advance a free market agenda (Klein, 2007). In contrast, we provide a more comprehensive map and evaluation of the different ways in which it's possible to take advantage of crises, while remaining neutral (as far as possible) about the content of ideology. Fourth, we focus exclusively on taking advantage of crises during and after they occur. Consequently, we don't address questions concerning the possibility or desirability of preparing to take advantage of crises before they occur.[4]

The concept of taking advantage of a crisis

In actual political practice the concept of a crisis is notoriously hard to pin down. It's used by folk to describe events that range from severe political threats like the Cuban Missile Crisis to developments that are merely mildly bad like a small dip in the stock market.

Given our present purposes, we conceptualize a crisis as a term of art that we will clarify below. The value of our approach, we contend, is that this term of art can be used to illuminate some paradigm crises

and some core normative questions that crises raise. One consequence of our approach is that it doesn't capture all the ways that the term *crisis* is used in actual political practice. In particular, we don't classify an event like a small dip in the stock market as a crisis. We take this to be plausible. As Michael Freeden has argued, when the term crisis is used to describe a merely minor disturbance, it seems as if its meaning is being twisted for rhetorically dramatic effect (Freeden, 2017).[5]

A necessary condition for a crisis, in the sense that concerns us, is that it's a period of at least relatively intense difficulty or danger. This necessary condition isn't sufficient for an event to be a crisis. One reason for this is that it doesn't distinguish a crisis from the more general phenomenon of something that's relatively bad. An additional necessary condition for a crisis is that this period is a temporary rupture from the conditions that constitute the status quo. Consequently, if a country has always been in extreme poverty throughout its long history, for instance, it hasn't always been in a state of crisis – even though that country certainly faces intense difficulties.[6]

These two necessary conditions illuminate why the concept of a crisis is indeterminate. For it isn't clear what precise thresholds of either 'relatively intense difficulty or danger' or 'degree of rupture from the status quo' an event must reach in order to be a crisis.[7] Even if such theoretical obscurity is unavoidable, paradigm instances of crises are ones in which it is clear-cut that the appropriate thresholds have been reached.[8]

A further common characteristic of many crises is that they are a period in which difficult or important decisions must be made. This captures the tight connection between crises and the opportunities that they can provide, in the sense that a crisis can bring things to a head and require certain forms of decisive action.[9] But although this feature is characteristic of many crises, it isn't a necessary condition for a crisis. This is because it's possible for something to be a crisis even though no difficult or important decision must be made. Most obviously, there are cases in which political actors aren't capable – because they are completely overwhelmed by a crisis or are politically powerless – of making such decisions.

Actual crises come in varying degrees of intensity. The severity of any given crisis is determined by the following variables: the scope of its impact on people and institutions, the time it lasts, the value of the interests that it threatens, and (most subtly) the degree to which it is unexpected and, thus, hard to deal with. The Covid-19 pandemic was a particularly severe crisis because its scope was global, it lasted over a year, it threatened lives, and it was unexpected by most people.

Analyzing the concept of taking advantage of a crisis

We argue that an actor somehow takes advantage of a crisis if and only if the following conditions are satisfied:

> *Intentional Condition*: An actor acts to bring about an outcome that is intended to advance a particular social or political end, which is separate (at least to some degree) from the end of directly responding to the crisis.
>
> *Counterfactual Condition*: This social or political end isn't achievable absent this crisis (or a similar type of crisis) to at least the same degree of probable realization (holding all other relevant features of the status quo constant).
>
> *Success Condition*: The actor at least partially succeeds in achieving their intended end.

An actor can refer to a single individual or a group of actors whose actions are coordinated in some way – either by informal social norms or by political institutions.[10] It's possible that several different actors can take advantage of a crisis (at any particular time) in different ways.

In order for an actor to take advantage of a crisis it isn't sufficient for a crisis to ultimately bring about an actor's goal independent of their intentional actions; for instance, via an unexpected chain of events. Rather, it's necessary for the *Intentional Condition* to be true and thus for the effects of a crisis to be mediated by intentional action.[11]

If an actor merely solves a problem directly caused by a crisis, for instance by inventing a Covid-19 vaccine, this is an instance of 'responding to a crisis' rather than 'taking advantage of a crisis.' Consequently, it's necessary for the end that the actor intends to be somehow separate from a problem that is directly and uniquely caused by the crisis itself.

As the *Counterfactual Condition* captures, the outcome that the actor intends to bring about must be achievable to a greater degree of probable realization given the crisis than absent the crisis. In identifying the relevant counterfactuals, it's necessary to hold features of the status quo constant because the way in which a given crisis makes certain outcomes more probable is highly contingent. Imagine, by way of illustration, that it's possible to take advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic in order to make the implementation of universal basic income (UBI) more likely in the US. If this is true, it's not as if the pandemic is necessary to make such an outcome more likely in any metaphysically robust sense: there are an infinite number of possible social worlds in which UBI is implemented in the US, independent of Covid-19. Rather, the salient point is that given the particular set of institutions, social attitudes, etc., in the contemporary US it may be more likely that UBI will be implemented if people take advantage of Covid-19 in certain ways than it would have been if Covid-19 had not occurred.

The *Counterfactual Condition* captures *what* must occur in order for an actor to take advantage of a crisis. But this raises the question of *why* the *Counterfactual Condition* might be true. Or, in other words, why crises are things that can (at least sometimes) be taken advantage of in a way that events independent of a crisis cannot.[12] As the two necessary conditions for a crisis capture, crises are episodes of relatively intense difficulty or danger that constitute a temporary rupture from the status quo. Because of their very nature, actors can present such unusual dangers as a justification – or at least pretext – for engaging in exceptional courses of action that might not have sufficient social uptake independent of a crisis.

Particularly if the crisis in question requires actors to take difficult or important decisions, these decisions (at least typically) will take place under conditions of lower accountability and scrutiny. After all, during a crisis many people are reeling from the effects of the crisis. Thus, they might be more receptive to courses of action that are presented as an expedient way of dealing with the crisis and, relatedly, perhaps less focused on critically scrutinizing the actions of political actors. There is robust psychological evidence that people who are more vulnerable because of events like crises are more susceptible to cognitive or emotional manipulation (see Jacquet et al., 2018; Sinclair & Wallston, 1999). (We catalogue these types of cognitive and emotional manipulation below, in 'A normative evaluation of the different forms of taking advantage of a crisis'). This is one major reason why societies that are in a state of vulnerability because of a crisis are also especially vulnerable to further exploitation of the situation by political actors: the unusually dangerous conditions that crises involve are ripe with opportunities for potential abuse. (We explore the normative significance of this vulnerability in 'Are crises special?').

The *Success Condition* doesn't presuppose that the actual intention needs to be fully achieved in order for an actor to succeed in taking advantage of a crisis. It's possible that a particular intention is only partially achieved and other unintended consequences are also realized. There is some indeterminacy about how fully an intention has to be achieved in order for an action to count as taking advantage of a crisis. But clearly, if a particular intention is completely unrealized then this isn't an instance of taking advantage of a crisis.

Different forms of taking advantage of a crisis

The *Intentional, Counterfactual,* and *Success* conditions constitute an abstract conceptual analysis of 'taking advantage of a crisis.' We distinguish and analytically characterize five forms in which the concept can be realized in actual modern democracies. These forms are significant because, as we will show in the next section, they can be used to frame some core normative

dimensions. We remain neutral about whether there are other forms in which the concept can be realized in practice.

The first three are related to Klein's metaphorical idea of 'the shock doctrine:'

(1) *Fear Factor*: Framing issues in ways that deliberately play on or exacerbate people's fears relating to a particular crisis, so that they are more likely to support actions that they wouldn't do in the absence of this fear.
   - Example: The 'weapons of mass destruction' framing of why it was necessary for the UK to join the US in waging war with Iraq in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack (UK Government, 2002).[13]

(2) *Rush Through*: Using an atmosphere surrounding a crisis as the necessary pretext for pushing through policy changes in ways that circumvent or suspend standard procedures.
   - Example: In 1861, during the American Civil War, President Lincoln suspended the writ of habeas corpus between Washington D.C. and Philadelphia, thereby giving military authorities the necessary power to silence dissenters and rebels. As a fundamental right, its suspension is a power granted only to Congress; but Lincoln invoked this power when Congress was not in session.[14]

(3) *Smuggling*: Presenting something in relation to a crisis in a way that somehow covertly advances an independent ideological agenda. This can occur in two different forms:
   (3.1) *Omnibussing*: A particular policy that advances an independent agenda is appended onto a suite of policies that are directly responsive to a crisis.
      - Example: The Green New Deal contains a number of policies that directly tackle climate change (e.g. by reducing greenhouse gas omissions). But critics argue that the unrelated left-wing policy of a living wage is also included (Cox, 2019).
   (3.2) *Over-extending*: Instituting a measure that is at least partially responsive to the crisis, but that primarily advances an independent ideological agenda.
      - Example: After Hurricane Katrina, Friedmanites successfully introduced a school voucher system in New Orleans which led de facto to the privatization of much of the public school system. This did work towards re-building the education system, but it also advanced the end of privatizing the public sector.

These strategies are interrelated in various significant ways. Perhaps most importantly, *Fear Factor* could facilitate *Rush Through*: if a politician is able to play on people's fear, this could also aid them in acting in ways that

circumvent standard procedures. Nonetheless, *Fear Factor* and *Rush Through* are conceptually distinct. *Rush Through* isn't essentially dependent on *Fear Factor*. It's possible that a crisis could allow a politician like Lincoln to push through certain policies without framing issues in a way that exacerbates people's fears. For instance, independently of any political actor instigating *Rush Through*, people could simply be afraid because of the crisis itself rather than because of how the crisis is framed in a political context. Alternatively, a crisis could have the effect of increasing the de facto power of someone like President Lincoln because other important political actors are crying out for strong leadership in the face of the crisis. Consequently, Lincoln might be able to take advantage of a crisis because such actors are willing to implement his decree institutionally – in a way that they would not be prepared to do absent the crisis.

There are two other ways of taking advantage of a crisis that go beyond the metaphor of shock. Instead, these strategies are associated in various ways with the concepts of learning and transformation:

(4) *Salience Raising*: Drawing attention to certain features or lessons of a crisis in relation to some social or political end. This may aim to galvanize support among those who are already disposed to see the features or lessons in this way or, more ambitiously, to persuade others to think differently about politics post-crisis.
   - Example: The Black Panther Party used their opposition to the conscription of Black men to the Vietnam war to highlight to others (e.g. those who also opposed the war but not for racial reasons) the broader issue of racism in US society and policy.

(5) *Surfing the Wave*: Seizing a 'radical mood' to push through more ambitious measures than would have been possible absent the crisis, where this action is carried out via standard democratic means.
   - Example: In 1945, Labour achieved a shock election victory in Britain, having run on a manifesto that drew heavily on the Beveridge Report – a report commissioned to advise on how Britain should respond to the social and economic crises experienced due to the Second World War (Beveridge, 1942).

Again, there may be interrelations between these categories. Successful *Salience Raising* may causally contribute to *Surfing the Wave*. The Beveridge Report raised the salience of certain policy options; this causally contributed to Labour's subsequent ability to surf the wave to election victory. But they are distinct in the sense that *Surfing the Wave* takes advantage of people's actual sentiments, whereas *Salience Raising* modifies such sentiments.

Although (1)-(5) are conceptually distinct, actual examples can fall under more than one of these categories. For instance, on one interpretation, the

USA Patriot Act 2001 – introduced shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks – would fall under *Smuggling*, *Surfing the Wave*, and *Fear Factor*. The Act smuggled certain laws that restricted ordinary citizens' liberties into a broader set of policies that were designed to combat terrorism. And, it did so by simultaneously seizing and amplifying the radical, fear-based mood which allowed political actors to push through more ambitious measures than would have been possible if the attacks had not taken place.[15] This multiplicity is not surprising. Often the best way of taking advantage of a crisis in actual political practice will involve acting in ways that utilize a number of the different strategies captured by (1)-(5).

But our taxonomy does show that it's impossible for an actual policy simultaneously to realize some of categories (1)-(5). For example, as we characterize them, *Rush Through* is incompatible with both *Surfing the Wave* and *Smuggling* because *Rush Through* necessarily involves circumventing or suspending standard procedures, whereas *Surfing the Wave* and *Smuggling* occur within standard procedures. Although there is a real conceptual incompatibility between these strategies, there can still be dispute about how to classify actual cases. There are, for instance, competing legal interpretations of the Patriot Act: some argue that it should be classified as an instance of *Rush Through* rather than *Smuggling* (Wong, 2006). In such complex real-world cases, there can be legal disagreement about whether the relevant procedures were or weren't respected – or, indeed, which precise procedures must be respected.[16]

Our taxonomy unpacks some metaphors and concepts that have been provided by others, such as Klein's notion of a shock doctrine and the social scientific theory of a framing contest. But it also illuminates the limits of such metaphors and concepts. The metaphor of a shock doctrine encapsulates (1)-(3) but not (4)-(5). *Fear Factor and Salience Raising* can be categorized as types of framing contest. More subtly, perhaps even *Surfing the Wave* can be construed as a type of framing contest, insofar as a crisis and set of policy options are framed in response to a pre-existing social mood. But *Smuggling* and *Rush Through* can't be categorized as framing contests, not at least without artificially straining the concept of framing: if concealment or circumvention is one's political tactic then one isn't using a crisis explicitly to frame anything.

A normative evaluation of the different forms of taking advantage of a crisis

We now shift our attention to the normative question of how to evaluate these strategies. It might be tempting to think that something as simple as the following is the appropriate evaluative standard:

a strategy that takes advantage of a crisis is pro tanto good (as opposed to pro tanto bad) if the relevant actors are acting for just as opposed to unjust ends.[17]

This view has some intuitive appeal. If one has left-leaning political inclinations one might think that it is good if a minimum wage policy is smuggled into the Green New Deal, but that it would be bad if certain other, non-left-leaning policies or exemptions were hidden within it. Perhaps, all that is required to explain this distinction (assuming that such a left-leaning agenda is correct) is that the former scenario advances the cause of justice, whereas the latter sets it back. Furthermore, such an approach has the deeper theoretical appeal of parsimony: the question of how it is permissible to take advantage of a crisis essentially reduces to the familiar question of what is just.

It may be true that this kind of justice-based explanation can yield all-things-considered judgements about what is good in certain cases. But such an approach fails to provide a complete theoretical account for at least two reasons. First, it's possible that a particular policy is all-things-considered good for justice-based reasons, but pro tanto bad in certain respects. For example, even if it's good that certain minimum wage policies are included in the Green New Deal because this helps to promote justice, it would be better if people strongly supported such policies in the form of freestanding measures that were transparently represented. Consequently, the fact that such policies have to be effectively hidden within the Green New Deal is pro tanto bad, in the sense that it is worse than other options that would make such underhand tactics unnecessary. Second, even if the justice-based explanation is sufficient to reach an all-things-considered judgement in certain cases, it probably isn't sufficient in all cases. Suppose, for instance, that it's possible to take advantage of a crisis in order to rush through a policy that advances a peripheral cause of justice to a minute degree. It seems very plausible to think that this isn't justifiable because the value of respecting democratic procedures can (at the very minimum) trump the marginal short-term advancement of justice.

Moving beyond this too simple justice-based approach, we contend that the following framework captures the core ways in which the strategies that we distinguished in the previous section can be pro tanto good and bad:

	Pro Tanto Good	Pro Tanto Bad
Cognitive dimension	Improves understanding, i.e. influences or responds to cognitive processes and states appropriately	Involves cognitive deception or distortion
Affective dimension	Influences or responds to affective states appropriately (e.g. feelings, emotions, moods)	Influences or responds to affective states inappropriately
Procedural dimension	Doesn't violate standard democratic procedures	Violates standard democratic procedures
Effects dimension	Leads to good short- or long-term effects against a salient set of metrics (e.g. stability, democratic participation, justice)	Leads to bad short- or long-term effects against a salient set of metrics

What is being isolated for evaluation across the first three dimensions – cognitive, affective, and procedural – is how the various strategies that take advantage of crises operate. This is distinct from the effects that actors bring about in employing particular strategies. The final dimension, the effects dimension, evaluates the downstream causal effects of strategies in both the short- and long-term.

Our distinction between the cognitive and affective dimensions allows for the possibility of certain relations between these dimensions. Some recent work in philosophy and cognitive science, for instance, argues that emotions – instead of being opposed to reason – play an important (causal) role in rationality (De Sousa, 1997; Railton, 2017). Given our present purposes, the salient point is that even if relations such as this exist, it's illuminating to distinguish between the cognitive and affective in order to identify the primary sense in which certain strategies are good and bad.

Applying the framework

Our analysis of how this evaluative framework maps on to the taxonomy of strategies is summarized in the following table:

	Pro Tanto Good	Pro Tanto Bad
Cognitive dimension	*Salience Raising*	*Smuggling*, *Salience Raising*
Affective dimension	*Salience Raising*, *Surfing the Wave*	*Fear Factor*, *Salience Raising*, *Surfing the Wave*
Procedural dimension	*Fear Factor*, *Smuggling*, *Salience Raising*, *Surfing the Wave*	*Rush Through*
Effects dimension	All of the strategies	All of the strategies

The evaluative framework maps neatly onto some components of the taxonomy presented above (see 'Different forms of taking advantage of a crisis'). In these cases, certain essential features of the strategies are always pro tanto good or bad in particular respects. *Fear Factor* is bad in virtue of the fact that it manipulates people's emotions. The badness of *Smuggling* consists in the fact that concealing a policy within a raft of other measures or misrepresenting the main purpose of a policy constitute a type of cognitive deception or distortion.[18] Finally, *Rush Through* is bad because by its very nature it violates standard democratic procedures.

On the other hand, *Fear Factor*, *Smuggling*, *Salience Raising*, and *Surfing the Wave* are all good insofar as they don't directly violate democratic procedures, albeit in somewhat different ways. *Fear Factor*, *Salience Raising*, and *Surfing the Wave* don't violate democratic procedures simply in virtue of the fact that they take place outside of democratic procedures: they seek to change people's affective states. This can,

of course, in turn affect the outcomes of particular democratic procedures. But it doesn't directly bypass standard democratic procedures. *Smuggling* takes place within democratic procedures. But even though, for instance, it involves hiding certain policies within a broader set of policy proposals, this doesn't violate democratic procedures if the policies are introduced via democratic procedures. Indeed, perhaps somewhat ironically, *Smuggling* depends on the constraint of respecting democratic procedures: for the purpose of this tactic is to sneak a controversial policy through standard procedures.

Note that this conclusion is compatible with acknowledging that even though certain strategies don't directly violate democratic procedures they are still in tension with other plausible ideals. While *Fear Factor* and *Smuggling*, for example, don't violate democratic procedures in the different senses described above, they are clearly in tension with certain ideals of deliberative democracy (see, for example, Cohen, 2003). As we explain below, there could also be reasons connected to the effects of such strategies (e.g. pertaining to democratic stability and participation) that affect the evaluation of these strategies.

Other types of actions can't be mapped so neatly onto this framework. Actions that would be classified as the same type of strategy in our taxonomy can be both pro tanto good and bad in different respects. This is because whether an action is in fact pro tanto good or bad depends on a more nuanced understanding of the empirical details of the particular action.

The first strategy that fits into multiple evaluative categories is *Surfing the Wave*. It might appear that *Surfing the Wave* will always be pro tanto good in an affective sense: if a crisis has changed people's feelings or the societal mood such that it becomes possible, for instance, to introduce a new policy, then introducing such a policy will always be a paradigm case of being appropriately responsive to people's affective states.

We argue, however, that this is false. For there are certain instances of *Surfing the Wave* that can be classified as being inappropriately responsive to people's affective states. Suppose, for instance, that a crisis has induced a mood characterized by a radically defective set of affective states, such as hatred towards a particular racial group. Then actions that reflect such hatred should be classified as inappropriately responsive to people's affective states, hence, pro tanto bad in an affective sense.

This conclusion may seem to invite a natural objection: it is the racial hatred, which is constitutive of the general mood that an actor is trying to seize, that is bad. Yet, this isn't sufficient to show that actions that are supported by these affective states are wrong or inappropriate *per se*. Essentially, the wrongness is to be located in people's defective affective states rather than in any action that is directly supported by such affective states.

How this objection should be answered depends on one's broader normative commitments. Robert Goodin (1995, pp. 132–148) argues, from a consequentialist perspective, that sometimes it's appropriate for the state to 'launder' people's preferences. Namely, to act in ways that try to alter people's preferences rather than to act in ways that directly reflect such preferences. Given our present purposes, consider the subset of preferences that are directly generated by defective affective states such as racial hatred: such preferences should plausibly be laundered. And, from a deontological perspective, plausible principles would condemn implementing at least sufficiently bad actions regardless of people's actual preferences. Therefore, on both perspectives, actions that directly reflect (at least) sufficiently defective affective states are, themselves, wrong in a way that doesn't reduce to the wrongness of people's underlying affective states.

Salience Raising is the most complex strategy. Depending on the particular details of cases, it can be both pro tanto good and bad across cognitive and affective dimensions. Many instances of *Salience Raising* will be good because an intervention that makes the lessons of a crisis more salient aims to achieve an improved cognitive understanding. Pointing to data on the racial disparities of Covid-19's negative effects, for example, aims to help others better understand the underlying racial injustice and inequality in their societies (for related discussion, see Adams & Niker, 2021; Wolff & De Shalit, 2021).

Nonetheless, there are also instances of *Salience Raising* that are bad in virtue of involving cognitive distortion. More specifically, such efforts could misrepresent, and thus aim to distort people's understanding of, the salient features of a situation or issue. For example, particular media sources repeatedly spotlighted the European immigration crisis in the lead up to the Brexit referendum. Generally, these efforts aimed to distort the public debate by misrepresenting the facts and effects of EU immigration – by both propagating misinformation, and by biasing and concealing accurate information (Watson, 2018).

Other instances of *Salience Raising* must be evaluated along the affective dimension. Some instances will be pro tanto good in virtue of the fact that they aim to achieve an appropriate emotional response to a crisis. For instance, by drawing people's attention to the plight of those in the midst of a humanitarian crisis, charity advertisements often aim to generate in their viewers (increased) feelings of compassion or empathy (Cockrill & Parsonage, 2016). On the other hand, *Salience Raising* might be used in emotionally manipulative ways, making it pro tanto bad in such cases. For example, Nigel Farage's 'Breaking Point' poster took advantage of the European immigration crisis by eliciting particular affective states – namely, by aiming to play on some people's fears about job security, as well as states of xenophobia, mistrust, and suspicion (Faulkner et al., 2021). As such, it aimed to inappropriately influence and respond to people's affective states.

The effects dimension applies to all of the strategies. We remain neutral about whether the normatively salient effects are the actual or expected effects (for related discussion, see Railton, 1984). This dimension is one of the primary reasons why an action can be pro tanto bad in a certain respect, but all-things-considered good (or vice versa). For example, *Smuggling* might be bad because it involves cognitive deception but good all-things-considered because it prevents serious political instability. The effects dimension can outweigh other countervailing considerations. But if there is a tension – because an action has good effects but is pro tanto bad in another respect – then it is necessary for an action to realize these good effects in some fairly robust way. At a minimum, an action *A* will not be all-things-considered good if there is an alternative action *B* that could achieve at least as good effects as *A* without the pro tanto badness of *A*.[19]

The framework we've laid out can accommodate a variety of substantive normative commitments. These commitments – whether consequentialist, liberal, Kantian, etc. – will flesh out these pro tanto good and bad features in different ways. In this context, it may be helpful to clarify that consequentialists need not think that the evaluation of actions that take advantage of a crisis exclusively consist in the effects dimension. This is because many consequentialists will want to distinguish the evaluation of how a strategy operates (e.g. whether it violates procedures) from the effects that are contingently conjoined with taking advantage of a crisis. This is the case even if the general justification of the cognitive, affective, and procedural dimensions is consequentialist.[20]

Are crises special?

The strategies categorized in 'Different forms of taking advantage of a crisis'may not seem unique to the art of taking advantage of crises. *Fear Factor* and *Salience Raising*, for instance, are ubiquitous in actual political practice. They have a slightly different form when used in regular political practice from the strategies that we've classified, as these are explicitly conceptualized in relation to crises. But for all intents and purposes they may seem to be essentially the same. Similarly, the evaluative criteria that we identified in 'A normative evaluation of the different ways of taking advantage of a crisis' are fairly generic: they can be used not merely to assess actions that take advantage of crises, but also features of everyday political practice. This raises the question of whether any particular strategy that takes advantage of a crisis is normatively 'special' in the following sense:

> *Specialness*: a strategy that takes advantage of a crisis should be evaluated differently from when essentially the same strategy is used independent of

any crisis. This difference in evaluation doesn't merely consist in facts about the downstream causal effects of the respective strategies.

One possibility is that *Specialness* is false. We call this position 'Invariantism.'[21] Invariantism requires that actions undertaken by, for example, the Executive branch of the US Federal Government should be evaluated in the same basic way regardless of whether they are or aren't taking advantage of any crisis. Suppose that the Executive branch takes advantage of a crisis using the strategy of *Smuggling*. This strategy, as we've argued, is pro tanto bad in the sense that it involves cognitive deception. If essentially the same strategy were used by the Executive branch independent of any crisis it would also be pro tanto bad in the sense that it involves cognitive deception. Furthermore, suppose that the Executive branch's use of essentially the same strategy of smuggling – absent any crisis – was analogous to their use of *Smuggling* to take advantage of a crisis in all relevant respects: it has precisely the same cognitively distorting form and affects the same population. It would, therefore, be pro tanto bad to precisely the same degree.

But Invariantism can accommodate one sense in which a strategy that takes advantage of a crisis may have to be evaluated differently from essentially the same strategy that is used independent of any crisis. As the *Counterfactual Condition* captures, actions that take advantage of a crisis exploit the modal fact that the crisis provides opportunities that wouldn't be possible – at least to the same degree of probable realization – absent the crisis.[22] Thus a strategy that takes advantage of a crisis (standardly) produces different downstream causal effects from when essentially the same strategy is used independent of any crisis. For the strategy realizes the opportunities provided by the crisis and, thereby, allows actors to do different things – standardly more – than they would have been able to do absent any crisis.

This has implications for how all-things-considered judgements about a strategy that takes advantage of a crisis may be normatively different from regular political actions. Perhaps, for example, the strategy of *Rush Through* is sometimes all-things-considered justifiable in the context of certain crises. For it has the potential to bring about sufficiently good effects even though it is pro tanto bad in the sense that it violates standard procedures. But a strategy that is essentially like *Rush Through* – but which occurs independent of any crisis – may be deemed all-things-considered justifiable much more rarely (if ever). For it brings about less-good effects; therefore, such effects will rarely (if ever) outweigh the pro tanto badness of violating standard procedures.[23]

Although Invariantism can accommodate this difference, it is a difference that is theoretically anodyne. It boils down to the fact that any difference in how strategies that take advantage of a crisis should be evaluated can be explained by the mundane fact that the effects of such strategies are

different. In other words, any difference is explained solely along the effects dimension of our evaluative framework. Thus, strategies that take advantage of crises aren't normatively distinctive in the more robust sense captured by *Specialness*. For if it is in general true that the consequences matter, then it is necessary to be attentive to the actual empirical content of the consequences in particular cases – whether in relation to a crisis or independent of any crisis.

Invariantism has the theoretical virtue of parsimony: it doesn't require developing a special normative account for actions that take advantage of crises. But it does have the implication that the topic of how to evaluate strategies that take advantage of crises isn't all that normatively interesting – anything distinctive can be explained in terms of facts about the downstream causal effects.

We argue that Invariantism should be rejected. Rejecting Invariantism requires defending a plausible sense in which crises are normatively special that cannot merely be explained in terms of facts about the downstream causal effects. We elaborate and defend what we take to be the most plausible version of *Specialness*:

> *Weight Variantism*: The pro tanto bad features of a strategy that takes advantage of a crisis across the cognitive, affective, or procedural dimensions (of our evaluative framework) are worse other things being equal than when essentially the same strategy is used independent of any crisis.

The foundation of our argument for *Weight Variantism* is some core conceptual features of both a crisis and actions that take advantage of a crisis. Recall, as we elaborated above (see 'Analyzing the concept of taking advantage of a crisis'), that there are two necessary conditions for a crisis. First, there is a relatively intense difficulty or danger. Second, there is a temporary rupture from conditions that constitute the status quo. Further, as the *Counterfactual Condition* captures, actions that take advantage of a crisis exploit the modal fact that the crisis provides opportunities that wouldn't be possible absent the crisis. We argue that these core conceptual features induce and compound vulnerabilities. Most obviously, crises increase the degree to which people are vulnerable in virtue of their shared corporeal, affective, and social nature (Fineman, 2008; MacIntyre, 1999). In general, all people are vulnerable to disease. But a health crisis like Covid-19 made people vulnerable to a dangerous new virus, and thus increased people's degree of corporeal vulnerability. Even if something like a financial crisis doesn't threaten people's health in such a direct way, it still exposes them to vulnerabilities that take the form of things like fear, uncertainty, and dependence.

Although people face vulnerabilities in virtue of their shared nature, the additional vulnerabilities that crises induce aren't (at least standardly) distributed evenly. Rather crises are so troubling because they compound many inequalities that existed prior to the crisis. First, members of comparatively

advantaged groups are in a better position to deal with the additional vulnerabilities that crises induce than members of comparatively disadvantaged groups. Covid-19 threatened everyone, but wealthy people were in a better position to deal with this threat by paying for better quality healthcare or by at least partially compensating themselves for this additional vulnerability by sheltering in relative luxury (Weinstock, 2020). Second, and relatedly, crises can increase inequalities of power that render members of comparatively disadvantaged groups more vulnerable to social exploitation by members of comparatively advantaged groups. As previously explained, crises like Covid-19 compound inequalities across salient metrics like wealth or health. Therefore, members of comparatively disadvantaged social groups, such as low skilled workers or marginalized racial groups, aren't merely vulnerable to the effects of the crisis. During and after the crisis they are also more vulnerable to greater social exploitation by members of comparatively advantaged groups – who are in an *even more* comparatively advantaged or powerful position because of the crisis (for related discussion see: Goodin, 1985, p. 112; Wolff & De Shalit, 2021).

More subtly, consider implications of the modal fact that a crisis provides opportunities that wouldn't be possible absent the crisis. Actions that succeed in taking advantage of a crisis exploit this modal fact. But independent of such actions, a crisis opens up new possible ways in which actors could take advantage of the crisis for bad political ends. These new mere possibilities – independent of their actualization – expose people to additional vulnerabilities.

At first glance, this claim might seem suspicious: how, one might press, can mere possibilities expose people to additional vulnerabilities? But this concern can be assuaged by appreciating the nature of vulnerability. In general, vulnerability is about being exposed to potential harm. Occurrent vulnerabilities are potential harms that people face in virtue of their actual situation. Dispositional vulnerabilities are potential harms that people face in virtue of possible situations that they could (relatively easily) be placed into because of their actual situation. For example, all fertile women of childbearing age are dispositionally vulnerable to life-threatening complications in childbirth – even if they aren't pregnant (Mackenzie, Rogers & Dodds, 2014, p. 8). Analogously, everyone in a crisis is vulnerable to the various possible ways in which actors could take advantage of the crisis for bad political ends – even if none of these possible ends are currently or indeed ever actualized. Thus, the modal fact that a crisis provides opportunities that wouldn't be possible absent the crisis increases people's dispositional vulnerability to the various possible ways in which a crisis could be exploited for bad political ends.

The way in which people experience emotions like unease, fear and anxiety that are associated with vulnerabilities in actual crises will depend on many contingencies and be affected by each person's psychological

make-up and personal experiences. Some very sensitive people may experience feelings of anxiety during a crisis that are disproportionate to the threat posed to them by the crisis. But given our present purposes this is irrelevant. Our argument doesn't depend on a psychological or sociological claim about how people will actually experience vulnerabilities in the context of a crisis. Rather it is grounded in the objective conditions that constitute their vulnerability.

We are now in a position to offer a statement of our core argument:

> *Additional Vulnerability*: The additional vulnerabilities that people face in a crisis (in virtue of both the core conceptual features of a crisis and actions that could take advantage of a crisis) justify adopting *Weight Variantism* as the right evaluative principle.

In order to defend *Additional Vulnerability*, we return to the Friedmanite example of taking advantage of Hurricane Katrina to replace the existing public school system with privately run charter schools. We classified this as an instance of *Over-extending* (a form of *Smuggling*): instituting a measure that is at least partially responsive to the crisis, but that primarily advances an independent ideological agenda (see 'Different forms of taking advantage of a crisis'). This strategy is pro tanto bad because it involves cognitive deception or distortion (see 'A normative evaluation of the different forms of taking advantage of a crisis').

Imagine a case that is parallel to this Friedmanite example in all salient respects but that doesn't take advantage of any crisis. This counterfactual parallel case uses essentially the same cognitively distorting strategy of over-extension: independent of any actual crisis, it advocates for the New Orleans school system to be reformed in order to improve the quality of education. But the real – covert – motive is to advance the independent ideological agenda of free market reforms. This counterfactual parallel case affects the same population of people and ultimately achieves the same degree of privatization as the actual Friedmanite example.

Ex hypothesis, the actual and counterfactual parallel cases have the same downstream consequences of privatization; thus, they should be evaluated in the same way across the effects dimension. The counterfactual parallel case – like the actual Friedmanite example – is pro tanto bad because it involves cognitive distortion.[24]

But crucially we contend that the cognitive distortion involved in the actual Friedmanite example is worse than the cognitive distortion involved the counterfactual parallel case. In the actual case people face additional vulnerabilities, of the kinds we identify above, because of the crisis. To elaborate, the hurricane and widespread flooding across New Orleans greatly increased residents' corporeal vulnerability to threats such as death, infectious disease, loss of medical care, and homelessness. And

these vulnerabilities weren't distributed evenly. For example, those most vulnerable to these threats were those in the city's lowest-lying and poorest neighbourhoods, with predominantly black and single-mother populations (Frank, 2020). Relatedly, the crisis increased inequalities of power that rendered members of disadvantaged groups in New Orleans more vulnerable to social exploitation. This inequality is illustrated by the fact that many of the contracts to rebuild were given to comparatively advantaged white businessmen. These businessmen invested comparatively little money in public housing for disadvantaged groups, which contributed to even greater ghettoization of poor minorities and population loss among these groups (Deitz & Barber, 2015). As if this wasn't bad enough, residents of New Orleans were also dispositionally vulnerable to the myriad of possible ways – independent of their actualization – in which actors could have taken advantage of the crisis for bad political ends.

Other things being equal, it is thus worse to use a strategy that is cognitively deceptive or distorting in relation to a population of people who face such additional vulnerabilities because of something like the humanitarian crisis in New Orleans, than it would be to use essentially the same strategy independent of a crisis. For it is worse to cognitively deceive or distort people who are burdened with such additional vulnerabilities.

The caveat 'other things being equal' is crucial. Its importance can be illustrated using the following simplified example of how crises involve additional vulnerabilities. In this example, vulnerability is measured on a 10-point scale: 1 is not at all vulnerable and 10 is maximally vulnerable:

	Independent of a crisis	In a crisis
Most advantaged group	2	3
Least advantaged group	6	9

All our argument requires is that crises induce and compound existing vulnerabilities; thus, people face more vulnerabilities in the context of a crisis than they would independent of a crisis. It doesn't require the implausible claim that every group faces more vulnerability in the context of a crisis than every group independent of a crisis. Indeed, as the example illustrates, it's possible – and standardly will be the case – that comparatively advantaged people in a crisis will face lower absolute levels of vulnerability than comparatively disadvantaged people independent of a crisis. Our claim that crises compound background inequalities is thus compatible with acknowledging that the background inequalities often remain in effect.

This core argument generalizes not merely to the cognitive dimension but also to the affective and procedural dimensions. Other things being equal, it is worse to use a strategy like *Fear Factor* – which influences or responds to

people's affective states inappropriately – in the context of a crisis than independent of a crisis because it is worse to affectively manipulate people who face deeper vulnerabilities. Similarly, it is worse to violate standard democratic procedures when people are more vulnerable.[25]

Actual crises, as we argued above (see 'The concept of taking advantage of a crisis'), come in various degrees of severity. The degree to which a crisis is severe should be correlated with the degree to which the normative weighting changes: the pro tanto bad features are worse to a greater degree – than they would be absent any crisis – the more severe the crisis. As is alas all too familiar, we live in an age that is permeated with many – sometimes overlapping – crises. *Weight Variantism* provides a way of comparing not merely crises to the status quo but also different crises to one another. If Covid-19 is a worse crisis than Hurricane Katrina, then the degree to which the weighting changes should be greater in the context of Covid-19 than Hurricane Katrina.

Additional Vulnerability is a sufficient theoretical motivation for rejecting Invariantism. Given the modal fact that a crisis provides opportunities that wouldn't be possible absent the crisis, strategies that take advantage of crises won't (standardly) have the same downstream causal effects as when essentially the same strategies are used absent a crisis. But even if we suppose, perhaps *per impossible*, that they did have exactly the same downstream causal effects they would still have to be evaluated differently. The additional vulnerability that people are exposed to because of the crisis and possible actions that could take advantage of the crisis changes the normative evaluation of the various strategies that take advantage of crises across the cognitive, affective, and procedural dimensions. And, it does so independent of the downstream effects that these strategies generate.[26]

Notes

1. In the tradition of critical theory, Rahel Jaeggi (2018) argues that crises can function as a mechanism that facilitates moral progress and that the moral claims of a society should be evaluated in terms of how well the society adapts to crises.
2. Similar concerns apply to Roy's claim that crises like Covid-19 provide 'a portal, a gate between one world and the next' (Roy, 2020, p. 214).
3. Some of the social and political crises that concern us are rooted in problems relating to the economy, the environment, public health, etc.
4. Certain Marxist revolutionaries, most famously Mao Tse-tung, prepared to take advantage of crises before they occurred in the most radical sense: they actively brought about and perpetuated crises (Schram, 1971). A less extreme way of preparing to take advantage of crises before they occur is to plan for them in advance. Klein (2007) discusses this strategy with respect to 'disaster capitalists.'
5. Given our background understanding of a crisis, some theoretical questions fall outside the scope of our present inquiry. John Kingdon, for instance, examines crises through the prism of political agenda-setting. Consequently, he analyses

how events that are perceived as crises function as mechanisms that get things on the political agenda – irrespective of whether such events should be classified as crises by theorists (Kingdon, 2002, pp. 94–98).

6. We remain neutral on the question – discussed by scholars working on 'critical junctures' in empirical settings (e.g. Collier & Collier, 1991) – of whether it's the response that brings a crisis to an end, or a crisis ends because of something temporary about the rupture itself.
7. There are some further reasons for such indeterminacy. For example, there is obscurity about how long a single crisis can endure whilst remaining the same crisis, as well as about how crises should be individuated.
8. This has implications for the question of whether political crises are socially constructed. Namely, whether crises are merely objective events or also partially constituted by contingent political facts like the representation of an event as a crisis by political leaders (Rubenstein, 2015; Spector, 2019). Our analysis can accommodate a degree of social constructivism. We reject only the extreme view that crises are *purely* constituted by contingent political facts. For this extreme view has the implausible implication that there are no objective conditions concerning the 'intense difficulty or danger' or 'rupture from the status quo' that must be satisfied in order for something to be a crisis (at least in the sense that concerns us).
9. This sense is captured by a specialized way in which the term is used in medicine: a turning point of a disease when an important change takes place, indicating either recovery or death.
10. If it's possible for institutions to act in a way that can't be reduced to the actions of particular individuals then the term 'actor' also refers to this type of action (List & Pettit, 2011).
11. This intention does not need to precede the crisis, though in practice it often will. This is because, in some cases, the crisis itself will bring about a transformation in an actor's beliefs or values that triggers or shapes their intention.
12. We thank an anonymous reviewer for pressing us to consider this point.
13. This refers to the so-called 'September Dossier,' which was later critiqued by the independent Iraq Inquiry.
14. The writ of habeas corpus is the constitutional-legal procedure that prevents the government from holding an individual indefinitely without showing cause (following Martin, 1974).
15. The kind of *Smuggling* in play was, it seems, primarily an instance of *Over-extending*; though it's conceptually and practically possible that a full analysis would conclude that both *Omnibussing* and *Over-extending* were used.
16. For a discussion of the legal complexities of this case, see Doyle (2002).
17. As we noted above, Klein (2015) seems to tacitly endorse this view through the advocation of an 'inverted shock doctrine.'
18. Note that this claim is compatible with acknowledging that it isn't concealed from everyone. Some political elites, for instance, openly discussed how the Hurricane Katrina crisis could be used to advance their political agenda (Friedman, 2005). But even if such discussions exist, the policies can still function as concealments that constitute a type of cognitive deception or distortion at some levels of political discourse. This isn't a unique feature of taking advantage of crises; it simply reflects how political discourse functions. The purpose of political propaganda, for

instance, may be openly disclosed in some circles whilst still functioning as a type of deception in the public political arena. Appreciating the fact that Friedman is addressing political elites rather than the whole population – particularly those most directly affected by the crisis – also helps to illuminate why *Smuggling* involves cognitive deception rather than trying to influence people's affective states inappropriately. *Smuggling* doesn't involve manipulating people's emotions to get them to support charter schools. Rather, it is a covert effort to conceal the true purpose of policies from people who may be reeling from the effects of a crisis. We thank an anonymous reviewer for helping us to clarify this point.

19. We won't try to resolve the theoretical question of the degree to which a policy that is pro tanto bad in certain respects has to achieve good effects in order to be all-things-considered good.
20. Such a general justification could be provided, for instance, by a version of rule consequentialism that requires that moral rules be publicly known (Gert, 2005).
21. Rebecca Lowe (2021) defends an invariantist analysis of the state's duty of transparency during crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic.
22. Holding, as we clarified above (see 'Analyzing the concept of taking advantage of a crisis'), all relevant features of the status quo constant.
23. This type of argument could be developed further by drawing on Robert Higgs' claim that one of the special consequences of crises is a ratchet effect: (roughly) once policies and institutions are put in place during a crisis they become sticky (Higgs, 1987).
24. Some Friedmanites might argue that free market reforms are the best way of improving the quality of education. But even if this is true, we are assuming that in this counterfactual parallel case free market reforms aren't explicitly presented as the best means of improving educational standards. As such, cognitive distortion is involved because there is a disparity between the professed aims of the reforms and the actual undisclosed aims.
25. It is only pro tanto worse across the procedural dimension in virtue of such vulnerabilities. Thus, our argument is compatible with the conclusion that it is sometimes all-things-considered justifiable to violate standard democratic procedures in a crisis because it brings about sufficiently good consequences. Indeed, the previously discussed example of Lincoln's temporary suspension of habeas corpus might fit into this category. For related discussion, see Mittiga (2022).
26. This rejection of Invariantism is compatible with consequentialism. The theoretical justification for the normative significance of the cognitive, affective, and procedural dimensions may be consequentialist. But even if this is the case, such dimensions have a different weighting in crises irrespective of the downstream causal effects of actions that take advantage of crises.

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank Aveek Bhattacharya, Rowan Cruft, David Estlund, Harrison Frye, Johannes Himmelreich, Ricky Mouser, and Allen Wood for their feedback on earlier drafts.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Matthew Adams is an Assistant Professor of philosophy at Indiana University Bloomington, USA. His research interests focus on issues such as justice, nonideal theory, and ideology. He has also published in *Journal of Moral Philosophy*, *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, *Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, *The European Journal of Political Theory*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, and *The Monist* amongst other venues.

Fay Niker is a Lecturer of philosophy at the University of Stirling in Scotland, UK. Her research interests focus on the ethics of influence, both interpersonal and political, and include work on nudging, trust, friendship, relational autonomy, and care. Fay edited *Political Philosophy in a Pandemic: Routes to a More Just Future* (Bloomsbury 2021) and has published in journals such as *Journal of the American Philosophical Association, Ethical Theory and Moral Practice, The Political Quarterly*, *Neuroethics*, and *The American Journal of Bioethics*.

ORCID

Fay Niker http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5597-7068

References

Adams, M. R., & Niker, F. (2021). Harnessing the epistemic value of crises for just ends. In F. Niker & A. Bhattacharya (Eds.), *Political philosophy in a pandemic: Routes to a more just future* (pp. 219–232). Bloomsbury Academic.

Beveridge, W. (1942). *Social insurance and allied services*. The Stationery Office.

Boin, A., 't Hart, P., & McConnell, A. (2009). Crisis exploitation: Political and policy impacts of framing contests. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *16*(1), 81–106. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760802453221

Cockrill, A., & Parsonage, I. (2016). Shocking people into action: Does it still work? An empirical analysis of emotional appeals in charity advertising. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *56*(4), 401–413. https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-2016-045

Cohen, J. (2003). Deliberation and democratic legitimacy. In D. Matravers & J. Pike (Eds.), *Debates in contemporary political philosophy* (pp. 342–360). Routledge.

Collier, D., & Collier, R. B. (1991). *Shaping the political arena: Critical junctures, the labor movement, and regime dynamics in Latin America*. Princeton University Press.

Cox, J. (2019, February 9). Ocasio-Cortez's Green New Deal offers 'economic security' for those 'unwilling to work'. *CNBC*.

Deitz, S. L., & Barber, K. M. (2015). Geographies of inequality: Urban renewal and the race, gender, and class of post-Katrina New Orleans. *Race, Gender & Class*, 134–159. https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/soc_articles/1/

De Sousa, R. (1997). *The rationality of emotion*. The MIT Press.

Doyle, C. (2002). The USA PATRIOT act: A legal analysis. *CRS report for Congress* RL31377, April 15.

Faulkner S., Guy H., & Vis, F. (2021). Right-wing populism, visual disinformation, and Brexit: From the UKIP 'Breaking Point' poster to the aftermath of the London Westminster bridge attack. In H. Tumber & S. Waisbord (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media Disinformation and Populism* (pp. 198–208). Routledge.

Fineman, M. A. (2008). The vulnerable subject: Anchoring equality in the human condition. *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*, *20*(1), 1–23.

Frank, T. (2020). Flooding disproportionately harms Black neighborhoods. *Scientific American*. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/flooding-disproportionately-harms-black-neighborhoods/

Freeden, M. (2017). Crisis? How is that a crisis!? *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, *12*(2), 12–28. https://doi.org/10.3167/choc.2017.120202

Friedman, M. (2005, December 5). The promise of vouchers. *The Wall Street Journal*.

Gert, B. (2005). *Morality: It's nature and justification*. Oxford University Press.

Goodin, R. E. (1985). *Protecting the vulnerable: A reanalysis of our social responsibilities*. University of Chicago Press.

Goodin, R. E. (1995). *Utilitarianism as a public philosophy*. Cambridge University Press.

Grossman, H. (2017). *Capitalism's contradictions: Studies of economic thought before and after Marx*. Haymarket Books.

Higgs, R. (1987). *Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of American Government*. Oxford University Press.

Jacquet, P. O., Wyart, V., Desantis, A., Hsu, Y.-F., Granjon, L., Sergent, C., & Waszak, F. (2018). Human susceptibility to social influence and its neural correlates are related to perceived vulnerability to extrinsic morbidity risks. *Scientific Reports*, *8*(1), 13347. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-018-31619-8

Jaeggi, R. (2018). *Critique of forms of life*. Belknap Press.

Kingdon, J. W. (2002). *Agendas, alternatives and public policies* (2nd ed.). Longman.

Klein, N. (2007). *The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism*. Picador.

Klein, N. (2015). *This changes everything*. Penguin.

List, C., & Pettit, P. (2011). *Group agency: The possibility, design, and status of corporate agents*. Oxford University Press.

Lowe,R. (2021). What is the democratic state's obligation of transparency in times of crisis? In F.Niker & A.Bhattacharya (Eds.), *Political philosophy in a pandemic: Routes to a more just future* (pp. 177–189). Bloomsbury Academic.

MacIntyre, A. (1999). *Dependent rational animals: Why human beings need the virtues*. Open Court.

Mackenzie, C. Rogers, W., & Dodds, S. (2014). Introduction. In C. Mackenzie, W. Rogers, & S. Dodds (Eds.), *Vulnerability: New essays in ethics and feminist philosophy* (pp. 1–29). Oxford University Press.

Martin, D. L. (1974). When Lincoln suspended habeas corpus. *American Bar Association Journal*, *60*(1), 99–102. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25726554

Mittiga, R. (2022). Political legitimacy, authoritarianism, and climate change. *The American Political Science Review*, *116*(3), 998–1011. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421001301

Railton, P. (1984). Alienation, consequentialism, and the demands of morality. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, *13*(2), 134–171. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2265273

Railton, P. (2017). At the core of our capacity to act for a reason: The affective system and evaluative model-based learning and control. *Emotion Review*, *9*(4), 335–342. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073916670021

Roy, A. (2020). The pandemic is a portal. In *Azadi: Freedom, Fascism, Fiction* (pp. 203–214). Penguin.

Rubenstein, J. C. (2015). Emergency claims and democratic action. *Social Philosophy & Policy*, *32*(1), 101–126. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265052515000096

Schram, S. R. (1971). Mao Tse-tung and the theory of the permanent revolution, 1958–69. *China Quarterly*, *46*, 221–244. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741000010675

Sinclair, V. G., & Wallston, K. A. (1999). The development and validation of the psychological vulnerability scale. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *23*(2), 119–129. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1018770926615

Spector, B. (2019). There is no such thing as a crisis: A critique of and alternative to the dominant crisis management model. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, *27*(3), 274–279. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12268

UK Government. (2002, September 24). *Iraq's weapons of mass destruction: The assessment of the British government*. Cabinet Office.

Ulmer, R. R., Sellnow T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2011). *Effective crisis communication: Moving from crisis to opportunity* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Watson, L. (2018). Systematic epistemic rights violations in the media: A Brexit case study. *Social Epistemology*, *32*(2), 88–102. https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2018.1440022

Weinstock, D. (2020). A harm reduction approach to physical distancing. In M. Schwartz (Ed.), *The ethics of pandemics* (pp. 127–130). Broadview Press.

Wolff, J., & De Shalit, A. (2021). Risk, disadvantage and the COVID-19 crisis. In F. Niker & A. Bhattacharya (Eds.), *Political philosophy in a pandemic: Routes to a more just future* (pp. 13–28). Bloomsbury Academic.

Wong, K. C. (2006). The making of the USA PATRIOT Act I: The legislative process and dynamics. *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, *34*(3), 179–219. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijsl.2006.09.001