

Review of: "State crisis theory: A systematization of institutional, socio-ecological, demographic-structural, world-systems, and revolutions research"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I need to forestall I am not a political scientist, nor a political economist, but I have worked on crises from a management perspective and am familiar with the key building blocks of the theories you use.

The article is very well written and articulated. As opposed to other commentators, I do not think you cover too much, especially given your focus on making this actionable for empirical research. In agreement with others, I think what you present is a little overwhelming, and I would argue in part not reflexive enough.

So, I am mainly going to focus on how you could improve the overview and separate core points and contributions from more detailed explanation as well as how you could increase your ambition as to the use of the article.

Definitions and foundational steps

1. My first point in relation to this section, but really also more generally, is that I would like to encourage you to think about how you can leverage the comparative dimension more and uphold it throughout. The definitions you provide from the different perspectives are succinct, but could you not organize them, or complement them, through a table right away, so that we immediately spot differences and commonalities?
2. I really like Figure 2, but I wonder how could you build this out and make it richer, including interpretations on interrelations? Would a network analysis of cross-references be helpful here? This would enable us to see where there are bridges and where they are missing entirely (or in other words, where they are weaker or stronger)? Also, what is your interpretation of the figure? You describe how the different strands relate, but what does this mean? Which of the theories are the core ones? Are some to be seen as derivatives of others, or did these develop independently, maybe even in opposition? Why? I am not only talking about the historical dimension here, which is more obvious, but about the power dynamics between fields and communities and their influence on the explanation of crises.
3. Table 1 is very rich, but I think we need more information for it to be useful. 1-2 bullets per each of the papers (What do they say? How do they compare?) would be very useful.

Systemization

4. I am not sure you are doing yourself and the readers a favour by first referring to frameworks others have developed. At this point we want to see what the overarching framework is (see also my point below). I suggest you move this

inspiration into an appendix. Yes, it is important to build on others' work, but you distract the reader's mind by illustrating different approaches, without us knowing where this will lead to.

5. **This is my main point and overall critique:** Building on the previous point and asking provocatively: What is your framework? Yes, you systemize previous work and as you state in your conclusion summarize 10 factors for sufficiency crises, 11 factors triggering responses to these etc. But I do not yet see how these are organized and interconnected. In the introduction you present a figure that you call your framework, but it is merely a stage by stage list of your individual sections and tables without much additional value. Can you not try and establish connections visually, similar to the previous work you simply recite and show, but going beyond it, as the complexity of what you cover is greater (whereas now your illustration is much simpler than most of those that you draw inspiration from)? What I was longing for are different levels, interconnections, dynamics, reinforcing or oppositional relations etc. Maybe even more ambitiously: now that you have reviewed all this terrain, what is your overarching theory (or a set of smaller-scale theories) that could be tested empirically? You may want to maintain what you have in the introduction as a teaser, but then you need a more elaborate organizing framework or theory that is then fleshed out in the sections you already have.
6. I really like the difference between sufficiency and scarcity crises. I have myself proposed a concept of "moral crises" as something that might lie in between. Actors are not themselves affected and therefore do not feel immediate pressure to act, which may lead to inertia. But indirect factors can spur collective action and the acceptance of moral responsibility. Now that said, I think you need to better motivate your own distinction. Where does it come from? Why this separation (and wording) and not another? Again: I think I am pushing you to establish and justify your own angle rather than merely review and summarize.
7. As per Table 1, I think the same refers to Tables 2-6 that are summarizing causes and reactions of crises. We need a bit more detail on the perspective, settings and arguments of previous work to better understand what that work implies.

Overall use

8. I concur with others that this, at present, is mainly a review with a summative function, which is worthwhile and very well done. However, if you have the ambition to inform empirical research, I would encourage you to go further and think about a more engaging framework, a pitch of theory, or propositions to be tested in the future.

A minor, yet important point:

I suggest you reconsider your use of the term "hypotheses". It seems to me that what you are talking about is quite rarely a hypothesis in a stricter sense, which can be problematic, as you also talk about the need for more empirical investigation. In many instances what would be more accurate is "supposition", "assumption" or something similar.