

**Metaphor, nation and (perma)crisis:  
Conceptualizing nationhood and group belonging in the ‘new normal’ Europe**  
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Economic and social crises have long been associated with a rise in nationalism and national reconceptualization (Bergmann 2020). While the realities of the third decade of the 21st century seem to bring a change in conceptualizing crisis itself, as captured by the recent neologism of *permacrisis* – a time of multiple and parallel crises, marked by a transnational pandemic, longstanding global climate crisis, and disturbing new waves of conflict – permacrisis as a ‘new normal’ has strongly resonated with politics of nationhood. In the case of Europe, in parallel with waning popular support for integration (Daniele et al. 2020), a revival of nationalism has interlocked with a major populist backsliding, in what scholars now variously dub a new nationalist, neo-nationalist and ‘coronationalist’ era (Bouckaert 2020).

Scholarship on metaphor, as the key conceptual tool of framing the unknown, has a critical role in tracing these shifting conceptions of collectivity, nationhood, nationalism and solidarity in times of intensifying crises. Since the Covid-19 onset to this moment, we have seen that these are far from uniform or predictable across space and time; take the Eurosceptic ‘vaccine nationalism’ in the UK (Caliendo 2022), or the conspiracist nationalism in militarizing Russia (Leitenberg 2020), all of which are profoundly entangled in conceptions of multiple ‘outside’ threats and crises. Above all, discourses of crisis have also highlighted alternative imaginations of society, illustrated by metaphors like *resetting the world*, *bringing down fortress Europe*, or *quarantening certain fathers of the nation*. Today, as the perspective of permacrisis captures a continual time of turbulence and conflict, national conceptualization unavoidably gains new shapes through a whole prism of discourses of conspiracy, authority, truth, and (anti-)science, where metaphors carry the key potential to re-imagine collectivity in the coming times.

The present book aims to contribute to the scholarly investigation of metaphor, nationhood and nationalism, by specifically focusing on metaphorical constructions of nationhood in different parts of Europe in relation to the permacrisis as seen from 2020 onwards. The work will thus expand the rich line of research on metaphor and nation(alism) that has long formed a core of discursive approaches to metaphor (Musolff 2016, 2021; Šarić & Stanojević 2019), but will bring it together with crisis discourse scholarship. The contributions will zoom in on the shifting conceptions of nationhood in various forms of crisis discourse, while also looking at how the multiple crises of our day interrelate in shaping the contexts and consequences of nationalism. At the same time, we hope to expand our perspectives on the role of language in constructing national division, cohesion and solidarity in times of crisis more broadly.

## Call for contributions:

We invite submissions that explore the use of metaphors in crisis discourses across Europe, with a focus on nationhood, nationalism, and related constructions of group belonging. On one hand, this may involve *metaphorical representations of nations, nationhood* and other forms of collectivity within particular crisis contexts. On the other, analyses of *metaphorical representations of the crises themselves* (climate, conflict, pandemic, ‘migration’ crisis, etc.) more broadly, where representations of collectivity and nationhood are observed in overarching narratives, metaphor scenarios, prominent topoi, or other aspects of discourse, are equally appropriate.

Possible topics include, but are by no means limited to, the following:

- BODY/PERSON/FAMILY etc. metaphors for the nation and their implications in different types of crisis discourse
- WAR metaphors and national representation
- WAR metaphors in areas of current war or earlier / looming conflict
- COMPETITION of nations metaphors in political/media discourse or citizens’ responses
- representations of nationhood and collectivity in a diachronic perspective: changes in metaphor use and national(ist) discourse over time
- crisis intersections in discourse: nationhood as shaped by multiple crises (e.g. Brexit, Ukraine war and other military conflicts, financial crisis, narratives of migration, etc.)
- conspiracy discourses and metaphors of national defense
- metaphors of national defense and legitimization of conflict
- metaphor and crisis utopias: imaging a new world and transnational solidarity
- resistance to metaphor, metaphor negotiation, contestation, subversion, irony: contesting/rethinking perceptions of collectivity and polarization.

Overall, via context-based analysis, the papers should contribute to understanding what particular metaphors may reveal about the conceptualization of national divisions and transnational solidarity in times of (multiple) crises, how these representations change, get negotiated, or established via discourse. The approach of Critical Metaphor Analysis (Charteris-Black 2004) is expected to be particularly suited to this aim, but other discursive and interdisciplinary critical approaches to metaphor are also fitting.

**Please submit your abstract proposals (approx. 500 words) to [kzenija@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:kzenija@zrc-sazu.si) by March 12, 2025.** Notification of acceptance will be sent within three weeks after the deadline.

The expected length of the full chapters will be between 6,000 and 8,500 words. Upon acceptance of the abstract, authors will have a minimum of eight months to complete their paper. All other details will be sent following the abstract evaluations.