

to the crisis. Leaders can easily point out to exogenous causes, to the surprise and their lack of anticipation in order to eventually (re)assure their own legitimacy and that of state institutions and the state more generally. By focusing on the risk event, the goal of crisis management is to return as quickly as possible to the prevailing order without addressing the root causes of the failures, while compensating the victims for their losses. Thus, crisis management helps to reaffirm the legitimacy of the state at exactly the time when it is put into question.

Although crisis management purports to manage a range of events, it does not help to make sense of these situations by focusing solely on their consequences. For example, after the recent terrorist attacks in France, executive leaders implemented exactly that kind of strategy: the use of emergency management and laws served to maintain the legitimacy of the executive power, but did not at all address the social, cultural and political crises that formed the background to these events. The problem with such strategy is that tackling the root causes of the events lies not within the realm of the agencies, departments or units in charge of crisis management, but befalls upon other organizations. These have little incentive or interest in trying to figure out what could actually go wrong in the policies they pursue.

By investing in crisis management, European authorities erect barriers against questioning the policy decisions that lie behind the crisis. This is not just a blame prevention strategy; it avoids suggesting that certain policies have led to failures and crises that could have been avoided, or at least anticipated. Thus, it prevents the questioning of those political reforms that have sought to reduce the welfare state by advocating self-regulation by individuals and markets. This appears clearly, for instance, in the promotion of preparedness and resilience discourses in lieu of actual risk prevention and reduction policies. Furthermore, crisis management itself adopts the language of budgetary orthodoxy in

order to suggest that public authorities have to be ready to face a wide range of threats, on the one hand, but that, given budgetary constraints, they need to make informed choices on their priorities and allocate

resources accordingly, on the other. This is all the more so the case since budget deficits have become a source of vulnerability as they provide major lenders (sovereign, interna-

