

Call for Abstracts for Issue 19 (Autumn 2025)

Disruption

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Derived from the Latin *disrumpere*, meaning “to burst apart,” a disruption is “[t]he action of rending or bursting asunder; violent dissolution of continuity; forcible severance” (OED 2023). It is a crack causing instability, often resulting in a shifting, changing, even bursting and crumbling of reality. From a sociological perspective, disruption can be conceptualized as a complex phenomenon comprising a multitude of interrelated events that challenge the established order, potentially giving rise to significant shifts in social structures and collective behavior (Vollmer 2013), and bringing forth new forms of cultural expression. But disruptions also operate on an individual level: in(tro)ducing changes in a person’s life (Martindale and Fisher 2019). Hence, *disruption* relates to *discontinuity*: even if the disruption does not result in immediate change to a given order, it marks its instability, after which, at the very least, it is difficult to regain the previous stability’s confidence. The before and after, the pre- and the post-, are precisely held together by the disruption, the event that divides a social phenomenon into a kind of arrival and departure. And as Koch and Nanz remind us: “disruptions are by no means solely destructive but rather productive consequences [...] which provoke critical reflections” (2014:94).

The synchronicity of destructive and productive processes Koch and Nanz attribute to disruptions, forms—despite the discontinuities—connection points between past, present, and future. Therefore, the prefix ‘post-’ is used in various contexts to denote a period or condition that follows disruptions. ‘Post-’ concepts signal a new phase that is often characterized by different dynamics, norms, and realities from the preceding period. Although ‘post-’ concepts and disruptive events are conceptually distinct—not every disruption brings with it the introduction of ‘post-’ concepts—the two are closely related. Within the discursive articulation of identities, for example, the use of ‘post-’ concepts denotes a new form of being that cannot be defined without referencing the old or the previous. Thus, they point to the ‘pre-’ of the disrupted that forms the ‘post-’. As Ulrich Beck writes: “*Past plus post* – that is the basic recipe with which we confront a reality that is out of joint” (1992 [1986]:9). Historian Herman Paul warns us on the other hand that the practice of adding “post-” to proper nouns has been used since the beginning of the last century—a century marked by plethora of disruptions (2021:3). Thus, he declares “‘the age of the post,’ as a history of how people began to conceive of themselves, their societies or their understanding of the world as moving beyond something that no longer met demands of the time” (ibid.:4). Indeed, a century on, the influence of ‘post-’ concepts does not seem to have decreased. Peruvian author Gustavo Gutiérrez describes the 21st century as an era of “post-everything” (Gutiérrez, cited in Paul 2021:2), a notion that Beck had already expressed back in the 20th century: “Everything is post” (1992 [1986]:9). In light of the numerous disruptions that have taken place in the 20th century—two world wars, various ecological and economic crises, the formation and dissolution of states, empires, and societies—it seems only logical to turn to ‘post-’ concepts to make sense of the world, the environment, and those around us. Thus, ‘post-’ concepts are used in the formation of (new) identity constructs after disruption has rendered old forms unstable without entirely removing them. In this sense, disruption and ‘post-’ concepts are related, as they both draw on the old or previous, but at once also distinguishing themselves from it.

For the 19th issue of *On_Culture*, our focus is on the intersection of disruptions, identity and 'post-' concepts. We would like to ask in which way and to what extent do disruptive events both push societies and individuals towards new identities and formations, while also harkening back to what came before? Following Stuart Hall, we understand identity formation as a process "[that] operates across difference, it entails discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of 'frontier effects'" (1996:3). How might such formation take place in the face of or across disruptions? How does 'post-' conceptualization change or affirm Hall's binding and marking of symbolic boundaries?

We are interested in theoretical and empirical contributions that discuss different dimensions of the intersection between disruptions, identity and 'post-' concepts. This connection raises a number of questions, chief among them: Which concrete historical events are regarded as disruptive and what effects do these events have on the articulation of identity and on the establishment of 'post-' concepts? What is the interplay between disruptions, identity articulations, and 'post-' concepts? Who has the power to declare something a disruption and to articulate identities with a 'post-' concept?

Contributions can address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Disruption and identity formations
- Intersectional identities post disruption
- Disruptive forces of identity politics
- Post-isms in nation-building processes
- Disruption and heritage studies
- Interplay of human and more-than-human agents in disruptions
- Ecological and economic crises as forms of disruption
- Disruptions and social justice, human rights, global governance
- Collective vs. individual experiences of disruption
- Remembering disruptions
- Disruptions as markers of temporal/societal/cultural/geopolitical shifts
- Disruption and linguistic change
- Disruption as a form of protest
- Disruption as cause for physical and cognitive shifts/traumas
- Post-isms, trans-isms, and anti-isms as disruptive concepts in the humanities

If you are interested in having a peer reviewed academic article featured in this issue of *On_Culture*, please submit an abstract of 300 words with the article title, 5–6 keywords, a short biographical note, and your email address to content@on-culture.org (subject line "Abstract Submission") no later than **October 15, 2024**. You will be notified by **November 1, 2024** whether your paper proposal has been accepted. The final date for full paper submissions is **January 31, 2025** and the issue will be published in **October 2025**.

Please note: *On_Culture* also features *_Perspectives*, a section devoted to shorter, creative pieces pertaining to each issue topic. These can be interviews, essays, opinion pieces, reviews of exhibitions, analyses of cultural artifacts and events, photo galleries, videos, works of art... and more! These contributions are uploaded on a rolling basis and can be connected to every one of *On_Culture's* issues. Interested in contributing? Send your ideas to the Editorial Team at any time: content@on-culture.org

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On_Culture: The Open Journal for the Study of Culture (ISSN: 2366-4142) is a biannual, Open Access peer-reviewed scholar-led journal edited by doctoral researchers, postdocs, and professors working at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) at Justus Liebig University Giessen. It provides a forum for reflecting on the study of culture. It investigates, problematizes, and develops key concepts and methods in the field by means of a collaborative and collective process. *On_Culture* is dedicated to fostering such engagements as well as the cultural dynamics at work in thinking about and reflecting on culture.

The journal consists of three sections: peer-reviewed academic *_Articles*, as well as *_Essays*, and the aforementioned *_Perspectives*. *On_Culture* brings new approaches and emerging topics in the (trans)national study of culture 'on the line' and, in so doing, fills the gap__ between 'on' and 'culture.' There are numerous ways of filling the gap, and a plurality of approaches is something for which the journal strives with each new issue.

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