

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Coping with crisis: labour markets, institutional changes and household economies. An introduction

Manuela Martini¹ and Cristina Borderías²

¹University of Lyon 2-LARHRA and ²University of Barcelona
Corresponding author. Email: manuela.martini@univ-lyon2.fr

Today as in the past, most often crises take people by surprise. This fact has recently provoked strong criticism of the ability of an economic theory to predict crises, to understand their course and to establish solutions to mitigate their effects. History can thus serve as a reservoir of facts and experiences, and the use of a broad chronological perspective has been recently highlighted as essential to providing a wider, comparative knowledge of past crises.¹ Recent economic historiography has highlighted the importance of studying financial and commercial crises alongside agrarian and demographic crises, as well as questioning specific aspects of these shocks.² Another important dimension stressed by recent historical studies is the importance of recognising that crises in the past occurred against a background in which uncertainty was the norm. In societies that experienced various forms of ordinary uncertainty (linked for example to the ‘dead’ season in food or textile production), crises constitute peaks of exceptional uncertainty.³

In this special issue, our focus is not on causes or types of crisis, but on ‘coping with crisis’, which can be defined as ‘the short-term behaviours adopted in response to economic stress’.⁴ This short-term focus does not mean, however, that we do not take into account the adaptation process over the longer term. The short-term responses to unexpected ‘economic stress’ nevertheless imply a significant change in the usual modes of economic functioning, changes that can be transformed into long-term practices. These responses are significant insofar as the economic or technological shocks in question entail the need for the actors involved to change their habitual choices and behaviour. The working definition of crisis that we use is inspired by a classical debate involving Immanuel Wallerstein and Eric Hobsbawm.⁵ This debate addressed the causes of significant ruptures and their economic consequences for the modern world. Since then, research has also shown the importance of studying smaller-scale, more localised crises, capable of shedding light on aspects that are invisible at the macroscopic scale. In this special issue, we take into account not only major crises but also local crises.

The changes provoked by crises can affect men and women in similar ways, for example, when there is a decrease in the price of some commodities; but most often they affect men and women differently. Moreover, crises can modify gender relations. Recent work, such as that by Sylvia Walby, emphasises the importance of

the gender dimension, and the disruptive effect of crises on gender dynamics. Studies that have taken care to adopt a gendered perspective reveal entire areas of the functioning of past economies that have previously remained largely unexplored; especially when we look at regions or periods in which the family economy is or has been important and in which small- and medium-sized family businesses constitute or constituted a significant part of the industrial structure.⁶ One of the most significant contributions of these pioneering studies is the simultaneous consideration of the individual point of view of those affected by the shock of the crisis and the collective point of view of the changing relationships within the family.

Most studies on the historical evolution of living standards have recorded fluctuations in individual incomes but have not addressed in a systematic way the issue of how the contributions of different family members to the household might be reconfigured in times of crisis.⁷ Because of the intensification of family dynamics that it can entail, crisis seems to us to be a key moment to decipher the mechanisms that govern the inner functioning of the family economy. The break with the usual rhythms that it generates imposes a revision of habitual practices, forcing individuals to rethink the ordinary ways of dealing with the environment around them. Admittedly, even in normal times, the possible choices are always multiple, but crisis accelerates decision-making and forces the actors to reflect on alternative paths and unexplored avenues.

If it has been observed that in times of crisis, responses to intertwined shocks involve behaviours that are broadly similar to those of everyday poverty,⁸ although more dramatic; the articles collected here also allow us to highlight some drastically new strategies. This is the case when the intensification or transformation of practices due to the crisis translate into a sustainable shift towards other economic systems, including diversification of economic activities, adaptation to new institutional constraints, or implementation of illegal or informal trades to circumvent the crisis. This shift may happen in the context of individual redeployment or professional retraining or in the framework of family co-operation to achieve certain goals, for example, activities using unpaid or low-paid work of family members.⁹

While it is true that, in general, economists and sociologists interested in crisis have tended to focus on prominent economic subjects or institutions, such as the regulatory state, national authorities, entrepreneurs and economic leaders, in recent years in-depth studies have begun to burrow into the core of the family economy. The 'black box' Jane Humphries described a few years ago, referring to the family economy in the British Industrial Revolution, has now been illuminated to some extent.¹⁰ What is less clear is the extent to which family economies in different historical contexts shared common characteristics, such as the gendered division of roles or the use of child labour in working-class households, or had distinctive, specific features. Northern Europe has been relatively well researched in recent historiography, but other areas are much less well known. Hence, the challenge of comparing Southern Europe and the Mediterranean with Central America in this special issue in the conviction that this unusual comparison will provide us with original keys to understanding the common patterns and specific paths followed by the societies in question in reacting to particular crises. The restructuring of Mexican tortilla production in a context of major technological transformation that affected small manufacturers has parallels in the changes affecting family

economies engaged in very different types of production, such as silk production in Lyon or in Barcelona and Manresa, or trafficking in a peripheral but very relevant area for maritime traffic in the Mediterranean such as the Aeolian Islands.

1. Changing roles and the place of women

In the framework of this approach to changing gender relations in family economies, the study of women's experiences in situations of sudden upheaval has an important place because of their pivotal role in times of crisis. In development economics, women's resilience has been perceived as a defensive strategy for adjusting to short-term shocks, particularly in studies based on qualitative analysis that allow in-depth insights into specific experiences of crises in specific economic contexts.¹¹

The concept of 'resilience' originates in geography and ecology, but has taken on a socio-economic dimension in development studies, to become a key term in discussions of recent, twenty-first century crises.¹² While we acknowledge the usefulness of this analytical category for understanding the experiences of women in the past, we adopt a critical perspective in using it.¹³ Resilience here means not just a passive way to counter the crisis, to provide a shield against it, but also one that requires commitment, energy, and the capacity to be proactive and to adapt quickly. The risk otherwise is of narrowing the 'coping' scope, by reducing it to a simple form of resistance: 'coping is easily misclassified as "resilience", when in fact it costs (mainly women's) time, effort, health, and wellbeing'.¹⁴ Two recent studies of intra-household redistributions during economic crises have shown marked similarities between areas as far apart as southern Spain and Indonesia, but with at least one point in common, that is, a lack of public social welfare.¹⁵ In combination with the decrease in consumption, and the help coming from loans by relatives, in both contexts, there is an increase in women's working hours or in their economic and extra-economic activities. From this point of view, women appear to act as shock absorbers, and they play this role at the forefront of the scene.¹⁶

It is noticeable that, in times of crisis, women do not withdraw into the domestic sphere, nor do they display a passive attitude towards events.¹⁷ This gendered resilience, accompanied by its high costs, goes hand in hand with a persistent presence of women in the labour market. As Walby explains, a crisis is supposed to push women from the productive to the reproductive sphere (according to the classical dual sphere dichotomy), but this was not the case during the 2008 crisis. Even if the increase in unemployment was very high among women and cuts in public welfare affected them particularly both as workers and as careers, this did not translate into 'staying at home'.¹⁸ This persistent presence in the labour market can be seen as a 'buffer' effect, resulting from the use of precarious work by companies (including part-time and self-employment).¹⁹

In the past, similar dynamics can be observed in contexts where public social services were nearly absent. All the articles in the special issue clearly show this constant presence of women in the formal and informal labour market in very different contexts, whether in the textile industry, food production or salt smuggling. This, of course, does not exclude the fact that forms of occupational segregation may increase, quite the contrary. Although informal trade and smuggling were a

major resource for the whole society, in the Aeolian Islands studied by Fazio, large-scale trafficking was monopolised by men, while small-scale trafficking was the prerogative of women. Similarly, the ‘feminisation’ of traditional productive sectors in times of crisis was due to a reallocation of labour. According to Solà et al.’s article, the male workforce of the Manresa silk industry specialised after the crisis in the production of cotton belts and ribbons, while women were mainly employed in spinning and weaving cotton work in more concentrated manufactures. This kind of restructuring entails a cost: structurally difficult working conditions generally worsen in contexts where care work is entirely in the charge of women.²⁰

We can also acknowledge as historians that crisis analysis requires a more complex ‘gender relations model’ than the dichotomy between production and reproduction or between market and home. To an extent, the separate spheres dichotomy is useful because it takes into account observable situations, particularly within the family, the central unit of analysis for studying gender relations. Proper historical understanding or explanation, however, requires a more sophisticated analytical framework.²¹ This means, according to Walby, studying the interconnections between the institutions of society and thinking of society as a system. In this perspective, crises can alter gendered patterns in intra-household relations as well as in labour markets or welfare policies, thus blurring the boundaries between separate spheres.

Similar social and economic processes can be seen at work in the past. Interconnected transformations changed the socio-economic system in Manresa and Barcelona, where Solà et al. observed an industrial and social redeployment of male and female workers, and also in Mexico, where Gómez Galvarriato shows how the introduction of mechanisation permanently altered the intra-sector dynamics of tortilla production.

Studies of the past as well as of more recent crises have also alerted us to the fact that, far from being always a winning process, ‘coping’ can mean a lasting loss of living standards and a worsening in terms of more restrictive working conditions that more or less gradually become permanent over time.²² This was the case in eighteenth-century Lyon, according to Anne Montenach, where the increase in ‘*piquage d’onces*’, the workers’ silk stealing, reveals a temporary situation that became chronic, or in the Aeolian Islands, where Fazio explains how smuggling became a common way of dealing with changing institutional assets. Governing bodies can show unexpected forbearance during these transformational phases involving heavy social consequences. The local community can set up forms of social assistance or may be more tolerant of infringements of the usual rules governing economic behaviour, such as the toleration by the Lyon authorities of the removal of silk threads to a greater extent than usual. However, as pointed out recently for more contemporary societies, ‘the traditional informal safety nets of the poor became depleted as the crisis deepened, pointing to the need for better formal systems for coping with future shocks’.²³ Everyday labour conflicts can undoubtedly reveal much, and the fact that women were able to justify illegal practices in eighteenth-century Barcelona and Lyon by using arguments connected to short-term and long-term economic stress is significant from this point of view.

Indeed, in the case studies collected in this special issue, there are many types of exceptional uncertainty, both economic and institutional.²⁴ The studies collected here describe not only situations of economic stress due to structural change but

also the disruptive effects of socio-institutional changes, including revolutions (Aurora Gómez Galvarriato) and continental blockade during the Napoleonic period (Ida Fazio). Moreover, political and institutional changes are not immune to generating economic upheavals. We have chosen to focus on economic responses, even if they were never the sole form of response. Forms of economic resilience can be effectively carried on through the mobilisation of social relations or the implementation of political lobbying or trade union movements.

2. Reaction to crisis, varieties of responses

The variety of responses to economic crises or exceptional moments of institutional breakdown presented here shed light on two main points highlighted by the recent social science literature on crises: on the one hand, the relative rapidity of responses (coping must be prompt to be effective); and on the other, the complex interaction between the individual and the family in the formulation of these responses. These points hold true for past and contemporary times. The study of economies such as that of the Aeolian Islands at the beginning of the nineteenth century or the silk industry in eighteenth-century Lyon, where the artisanal dimension was predominant, illustrates the complementary nature of the multiple activities engaged in by households. In the first case, pluriactivity was complemented by new forms of illicit trafficking, while in the second case, family micro-activities compensated for decreasing incomes through illicit recycling of silk threads. The approach adopted in both cases by the authors is resolutely micro-historical.

Among the numerous studies that have addressed the issue of coping with crisis in economics, sociology and history, the macro-analytical level is largely predominant. The impact of crises at the micro-analytical scale is much less known. The focus in some of the case studies we present is on the household and on collective responses in regions with different levels of industrialisation and go, as far as possible, in depth into the economic activities of the household. From this perspective, the main goal of the articles is to go inside the family economy 'black box' and to observe the choices and organised responses of adaptive families when faced with a radical change in their economic and institutional environment.²⁵ Even the contributions that adopt a broader scale, namely those by Gómez Galvarriato and Solà et al., still bring in the micro-level, whether through examples or comparisons with other research.

Why this focus on family production units in specific and localised areas? If we consider crisis not as a simple reversal of the economic cycle, but as a moment of systemic change, the importance of a micro-analytical approach in the study of this phenomenon becomes evident.²⁶ Normal compensation mechanisms and usual forms of redistribution become inadequate in times of crisis, forcing actors to rethink economic assets and adapt or develop new economic activities in the face of huge changes to economic and social systems. From this micro-level perspective, the analysis of reactions to crisis covers the whole range of actors, including the ability of those at the bottom of the social ladder to cope with crisis. The activities analysed by Ida Fazio for Lipari in Sicily, Aurora Gómez Galvarriato in Mexico, Angels Solà et al. in Manresa and Barcelona or Anne Montenach in Lyon are often those at the lowest rung of the productive and social ladder. In this way, it is possible to closely observe women in particular as individuals with

entrepreneurial agency in the family systems in which they operate. The gender perspective in observing the consequences of crisis helps to pay a renewed attention to the inner workings of household-based economies. The ability of both individuals and families to adapt to economic and systemic changes is under scrutiny. This perspective does not, however, imply a return to the notion of separate spheres, quite the contrary. Households are at the heart of the analysis because family businesses lie at the core of the local economies studied here. Of course, macro-economic dynamics affect these micro-level socio-economic contexts. For this reason, this special issue takes a long-term perspective by studying crises over a period from the second half of the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. It includes articles which deal with issues related to the globalisation of trade and exchange, as with smuggling in the Mediterranean, or the technological changes affecting tortilla production in Mexico. It also aims, however, to study the micro-systemic crises due to changes in technology, energy sources, communication routes and more in specific economies and local labour markets, as in the case of Manresa, for example.

The questions this special issue aims to address thus connect the individual, family and socio-economic environment levels at which actors operate. What is the impact of these crises on localised household economies? How do their dynamics contribute to constructing, and deconstructing, labour relations in the economies in which they occur? In what ways do the social dynamics that crises create affect the relationships between men and women in the labour market, and within families?

The articles provide fresh answers to these questions, thanks to the wide comparative framework we have adopted, and open up other unforeseen questions about different changes in economic activities or labour organisation, innovation in the forms of remuneration, the emergence of social conflicts such as everyday resistance to guilds and general institutional rules. By taking as case studies a very wide range of urban, rural and island economic spaces, we are able to focus both on institutional responses and the agency of different social groups in coping with crisis. In some ways, we could say that crisis could also be conceived by some actors as an opportunity. To an extent, this was the case in Manresa and Barcelona. While the silk crisis led to an intensification of women's work, it could also be argued that women took advantage of this market opportunity.

Finally, it should be noted that adaptive strategies, showing active resilience, were implemented by large enterprises, but also by small employers and self-employed workers whose independence increased during crises. The emergence of new activities implies a reframing of labour markets due to new supply and demand at different productive scales. The decrease in the number of occupied workers or the dislocation of silk industrial and commercial networks in Catalonia generated multiple and different responses depending on the initial context: large-scale cotton production in Barcelona or niche small-scale ribbon manufactures in Manresa. While in other contexts individual, family or collective migration has been a form of response to crisis, in the articles presented here, other forms of adaptation to breakdown are evident. Illicit practices during crisis introduce a form of flexibility into highly regulated economies. In Mexico, responses to crises involved the adaptation of the family economy and the mobilisation of new resources, but at considerable cost in terms of working time and family exploitation in the small-scale production of tortillas.

While it is clear that actors' responses to these crises varied according to the local institutional framework and economic development (but also according to human capital and education; personal qualifications and skills, age, marital status, individual and family income levels), it is also clear that family and parental networks have played a crucial counterbalancing function. Significantly, even today in developing countries, it has been noted that 'crises' impacts and coping responses impose severe hardship, and the main safety nets for most people are relatives, friends and mutual solidarity groups.²⁷ Not only do parents or relatives help in economic activities, but they can also provide care support for women who continue to be active and are forced to work longer hours or even to leave for long-distance migrations.²⁸ Assistance from spouses or children, especially girls, was crucial in silk and tortilla family workshops in response to institutional upheaval and in a phase of technological transition that was slow in being implemented effectively. What is clear is that the changes induced by the crises, including illicit coping activities, could have a long existence and eventually transform themselves into established economic practices, albeit in ways that were not always predictable.

Endnotes

1 The term crisis has been used in a very broad sense by social and economic historians, both from a chronological and thematic point of view, ranging from financial crises to agrarian famines, from effects of trade disputes to war. See A. T. Brown, Andy Burn and Rob Doherty eds., *Crises in economic and social history: a comparative perspective* (Woodbridge, 2015), 1–2.

2 Youssef Cassis, *Crises and opportunities, the shaping of modern finance* (Oxford, 2011); Nadine Vivier, 'Pour un réexamen des crises économiques du XIX^e siècle en France', *Histoire & Mesure* 26, 1 (2011), 135–56; Catherine Rollet, 'L'effet des crises économiques du début du XIX^e siècle sur la population', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 17, 3 (1970), 391–410; Eugene H. White, 'Was there a solution to the Ancien Régime financial dilemma?', *Journal of Economic History* 49, 3 (1989), 545–68; Marie-Laure Legay, Joël Félix and Eugene White, 'Retour sur les origines financières de la Révolution française', *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 356, 2 (2009), 183–201, including extensive bibliographical references.

3 Laurence Fontaine and Jürgen Schlumbohm, 'Household strategies for survival: an introduction', *International Review of Social History* 45, 8 (2000), 1–17, 12.

4 Rasmus Heltberg, Naomi Hossain, Anna Reva and Carolyn Turk, 'Coping and resilience during the food, fuel, and financial crises', *The Journal of Development Studies* 49, 5 (2013), 705–718, 706.

5 Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Y a-t-il une crise du XVII^e siècle?', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 34, 1 (1979), 126–44, <https://doi.org/10.3406/ahess.1979.294028>, « La crise désignerait alors ces rares moments historiques où les mécanismes de compensation qui jouent habituellement à l'intérieur d'un système social s'avèrent si inefficaces du point de vue d'un si grand nombre d'acteurs sociaux que devient nécessaire une restructuration d'ensemble du système économique et pas seulement une redistribution des avantages intérieurs du système » ('The crisis would then refer to those rare historical moments when the compensation mechanisms that usually operate within a social system are so ineffective from the point of view of so many social actors that an overall restructuring of the economic system, and not only a redistribution of the internal benefits of the system, becomes necessary'), 127. In this article, he was dealing with the debate on the 17th century crises opened by a famous double article published several years before by Eric Hobsbawm, 'The general crisis of the European economy in the 17th century: I', *Past & Present* 5 (1954), 33–53; and 'The crisis of the 17th century: II', 6 (1954), 44–65.

6 Efi Avdela, 'Le genre dans la crise, ou ce qui arrive aux "femmes" dans les temps difficiles', *Nouvelles questions féministes: Revue internationale francophone* 34, 2 (2015), 23. More generally see Cristina Borderías and Lina Gálvez Muñoz, 'Cambios y continuidades en las desigualdades de género: Notas para una agenda de investigación', *Areas: revista de ciencias sociales* 33 (2014), 7–15; Manuela Martini

and Leda Papastefanaki, 'Des économies familiales adaptatives dans l'Europe méditerranéenne (fin XIXe-milieu du XXe siècle). Introduction', *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique* 15 (2018), 9–18.

7 See, for example, Robert C. Allen, Tommy Bengtsson and Martin Dribe eds., *Living standards in the past. New perspectives on well-being in Asia and Europe* (Oxford, 2005). For Northern Europe, see Mats Morell, 'Subsistence crises during the Ancien and Nouveau Régime in Sweden? An interpretative review', *Histoire & Mesure* 26, 1 (2011), 105–134.

8 Fontaine and Schlumbohm, 'Household strategies', 11.

9 Raffaella Sarti, Anna Bellavitis and Manuela Martini eds., *What is work? Gender at the crossroads of home, family, and business from the early modern era to the present* (New York, Oxford, 2018).

10 Jane Humphries, *Childhood and child labour in the British industrial revolution* (Cambridge, 2010), 49.

11 Heltberg, Hossain, Reva and Turk, 'Coping and resilience', 708.

12 Fiona Miller et al., 'Resilience and vulnerability: complementary or conflicting concepts?', *Ecology and Society* 15, 3 (2010), 11.

13 Heltberg, Hossain, Reva and Turk, 'Coping and resilience', 708.

14 Ibid., 708. See also Maria S. Floro, 'Economic restructuring, gender and the allocation of time', *World Development* 23, 1 (1995), 1913–1929.

15 Lina Gálvez Muñoz and Paula Rodríguez Modroño, 'La desigualdad de género en las crisis económicas', *Investigaciones Feministas* 2 (2011), 113–132; Sarah Xue Dong, 'Does economic crisis have a different impact on husbands and wives? Evidence from the Asian financial crisis in Indonesia', *Review of Development Economics* 22 (2018), 1489–1512.

16 Diane Elson, 'Gender and the global economic crisis in developing countries: a framework for analysis', *Gender and Development* 18, 2 (2010), 201–212.

17 Xue Dong, 'Does economic crisis have different impact on husbands and wives?'

18 Walby, *Crisis*, 11 and chap. 7 "Crisis in the Gender Regime", 144.

19 Walby, *Crisis*, 11 and 144. The changes in gender systems due to crises she points out are linked to the fluctuations between neoliberalism and social democracy in the policies of different states. Here, we focus on societies that had only partial forms of assistance which were very far from the current welfare systems in the Western world. However, this book can offer useful suggestions when talking about gender relationships in crisis contexts where state intervention is minimal, particularly in terms of service provision as a substitute for care. See also for Southern Europe, Roberta Carlini, *Come siamo cambiati: Gli italiani e la crisi* (Roma-Bari, 2015).

20 See, for example, Gálvez Muñoz and Rodríguez Modroño, 'La desigualdad de género'.

21 A good example here is the categories of de-familiarization or re-familiarization used for this purpose in Gosta Espin-Andersen, *Incomplete revolution. Adapting welfare state to women's new roles* (Cambridge, 2009), cf. Walby, *Crisis*, 146–147. See also Margarita Estevez-Abe, 'Gendering the varieties of capitalism. A study of occupational segregation by sex in advanced industrial societies', *World Politics* 59, 1 (2006), 142–75. Historians have long recognised this; see, for example, Laura Lee Downs, *Manufacturing inequality: gender division in the French and British metalworking industries, 1914–1939* (Ithaca, 1995); Laura Lee Downs, 'Can we construct a holistic approach to women's labor history over the *longue durée*?', in Sarti, Bellavitis and Martini eds., *What is work?*, 349–67.

22 Brown, Burn and Doherty, *Crises in economic and social history*; Fontaine and Schlumbohm, 'Household strategies', 12; Heltberg, Hossain, Reva and Turk, 'Coping and resilience', write: 'Instead of seeing coping as functional and (mainly) successful adaptive processes, our work tells us that at the local level, the coping responses on which people customarily lean during tough times can be fundamentally overwhelmed by protracted systemic shocks', 708.

23 Ibid.

24 Brown, Burn and Doherty eds., *Crises in economic and social history*.

25 Humphries, *Childhood and child labour*, 14; Richard Wall, 'Characteristics of European family and household systems', *Historical Social Research* 23, 1–2 (1998), 44–66.

26 Wallerstein, 'Y a-t-il une crise?'

27 Heltberg, Hossain, Reva and Turk, 'Coping and resilience', 716.

28 Manuela Martini, *Bâtiment en famille. Migrations et petite entreprise du bâtiment en banlieue parisienne au XX^e siècle* (Paris, 2016), 291–6.

French Abstract**Introduction. Faire face à la crise: marchés du travail, changements institutionnels et économie des ménages**

Malgré nombre de recherches récentes sur la nature et l'impact des crises, leur effet au niveau microéconomique et la nature genrée des réponses qu'elles susciteront sont encore peu étudiés. Ce numéro spécial présente différentes crises à cette échelle, à savoir au niveau de la famille et des ménages, en portant une attention toute particulière au genre. Les articles examinent les multiples manières dont les ménages ont réagi aux crises au sein de régions en voie d'industrialisation, hommes et femmes offrant leur main d'oeuvre de mille façons, leur adaptation pouvant par exemple les mener à exercer des activités illégales, à migrer ou à toute autre réaction. Le numéro spécial adopte une perspective à long terme, proposant des études de cas du XVIIIe au XXe siècle, centrées sur l'Europe méditerranéenne et l'Amérique latine, des zones traditionnellement moins explorées par les historiens.

German Abstract**Einführung zu 'Krisenbewältigung'**

Trotz beachtlicher neuerer Forschungen über Wesen und Wirkungen von Krisen sind deren Einflüsse auf der Mikroebene ebenso wie die genderbedingten Reaktionen darauf nach wie vor ein Desiderat. Dieses Sonderheft widmet sich der Erforschung unterschiedlicher Krisen auf der Mikroebene der Familie und der Haushaltsökonomie und legt dabei besonderes Augenmerk auf Genderfragen. Die Beiträge untersuchen, auf welche unterschiedliche Weise sich Haushalte in Industrialisierungsregionen auf Krisen einstellen - durch unterschiedliche Formen der Erwerbsbeteiligung von Männern und Frauen, den Rückgriff auf illegale Tätigkeiten, Migration und andere Anpassungsformen. Das Sonderheft nimmt eine langfristige Perspektive ein, versammelt Fallstudien vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert und widmet sich mit dem mittelmittelmeerischen Europa und Lateinamerika zwei Räumen, die herkömmlicherweise weniger Aufmerksamkeit von Historikern erhalten haben.