Editorial

Were you there when finance married the concept of crisis? Economists, financial journalists, politicians, regulators, social activists and academics all bore witness to the nuptial. Alan Greenspan gave the bride away on 23 October 2008 when he admitted before US Congress that he'd found a flaw in his governing ideology. All financial crisis analyses pursue a single question – What went wrong in the financial system?

In her book *Anti-crisis* (Duke University Press, 2013) anthropologist **Janet Roitman** examines the stakes of thinking in terms of crisis. She points out that diagnosing "what went wrong" assumes strong basic knowledge of how things operate, in practice. And yet, when the markets seized up half a decade ago, we were shocked to find out how little we understood about the global system of finance. From no income no asset loans to collateralized derivative obligations, from Lehman's infamous Repo 105 to the mechanics of the shadow banking sector – it is only as a result of the global choke up that we discovered this incredible network of financial mechanisms.

There is no denying that crisis is a productive concept. If anything, that's Roitman's major observation. Her concern is that crisis-thinking might be a false friend to researchers because it neutralizes curiosity while percolating endless conversation. It seems to me this point is worth considering, especially in the field of risk and regulation. Everywhere we turn, the world seems to be in a state of exception. Is it possible we're saturated by a single concept? Could there be other ways of confronting discomforts in contemporary living? (I have had to learn that rain in London is not a crisis, even though it feels like one every time I get caught in a downpour!)

This issue of *Risk & Regulation* is dedicated to exploring non-crisis research on finance. After a brief preview of *Anti-crisis*, each essay examines a case where a financial mechanism develops from a positive project even if the reader disagrees with the way the innovation reconfigures social life. In the first essay, **Benjamin Lemoine** discusses why inflation-index sovereign bonds were developed and how they have affected countries like France since the late 1990s. We then move to the US, where **Natasha Dow Schüll** outlines the fiscal benefit accruing to state governments from increasingly addictive digital gaming technologies. **Claire Loussourn** follows by turning gambling on its head. She explains why consumers in the UK and elsewhere (but not the US) can take out spread betting contracts as a legitimate investment strategy.

Having explored how we came to live in world where governments self-discipline to please creditors and citizens gamble to support themselves and their communities, this issue then asks – What can we foresee for ourselves in the future? In the remaining essays, **Sabine Montagne** unravels the legal underpinning of our enduring trust in pension funds, while special contributor **Helaine Olen** reports on the growing gap between the expectations of American workers and the actual performance of their defined contribution plans. **Kim Soin** and **Christian Huber** remind us of an episode of pension mis-selling in the 1980s, in the UK.

Financial innovation changes the work life of financial professionals, just as it does social experience. Last but not least, you will find the executive summary of **Mike Power**, **Simon Ashby** and **Tommaso Palermo's** research report, *Risk culture in financial organisations*. The full 103-page document, available on CARR's website, examines the organisational position of the risk function inside financial institutions.

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