Call for Contributions:

Struggles for Hope
Negotiating the Future in Times of Global Crises

The workshop invites to explore the diversity of visions and practices of future-making in the global, multifaceted crisis of capitalist modernity. We seek to illuminate social contestations over collective futures: What kind of future is likely, what is desirable, what are possible ways to shape tomorrow’s society? What are people’s hopes, fears, ideas and strategies for a social transformation? The workshop promotes the exchange between research on everyday future-relations of non-activist populations and utopian thinking and prefigurative practices of social movements.

Confronted with capitalist crises, climate change, pandemics, political violence, oppression, or war, people all over the world reflect on and struggle for a different future. On the one hand, a sense of rising threats and uncertainty spurs anxieties and apocalyptic visions. On the other, moments of crisis may open the space to renegotiate social change and to (re)create diverse hopes for the future. Against this background, research on the future gains new momentum in sociology and anthropology (Bryant and Knight 2019; Kleist and Jansen 2016). How people relate to the future in the here and now (Hage 2016) is a crucial lens to make sense of political practices, to understand who is struggling for what, who remains silent, and how people understand their own role in bringing about the future.

We invite to explore how diverse future-making practices and collective imaginations are created and negotiated in social struggles over the future of economic relations and political power, of human-nature relations and the use of resources, of the production and distribution of wealth, of conviviality, diversity and belongings. To account for the empirical variety of future imaginations (cf. Jansen 2016), we are not only interested in research on progressive visions of a ‘social-ecological transformation’ (cf Brand et. al 2020), but also on exclusivist and reactionary ideas or hopes for the comforting continuation of a well-known social world.

We are also planning a publication that will take up the workshop discussions. If interested, participants will be invited to propose an article.
Questions to be addressed may include, but not be limited to:

1. Power over the future: Resource repertoires and the distribution of imaginations

- How do collective future imaginations emerge and develop at the crossroads of hope and anxieties in times of global crises? What kind of visions are convincing (or not) and why?
- What are the “repositories” of societal hope (Kleist 2017): how is hope distributed and shaped by the (capitalist) state, public culture, religion and spirituality, social movements and other social networks?
- How do capitalist models of development and modernity, (post)colonial structures and experiences shape future visions (cf Hage and Papadopoulos 2004)?
- What kind of alternatives are able to challenge hegemonic narratives? What is the role of decolonial or postcapitalist perspectives that frame global capitalism and neoliberal globalisation as deeply colonial and as triggering exclusion, inequality and oppression (Lugones 2008; Mignolo 2007/2020; Quijano 2000)? How do the hopes and disappointments of grand alternatives reverberate after the demise of socialism?
- How does belonging intersect with future visions: Who is in- or excluded, what kind of imagined community is addressed by alternative or hegemonic visions – the nation, the world, or any other we-group?
- In how far do intersecting dimensions of inequality and difference shape future imaginations and people’s ability to struggle over the future?


- How do future imaginations and practices interrelate? What inspires different kinds of political action ranging from ostensibly passive forms such as waiting to transformative practices? How do actors interpret their own agency and ability to shape the near or long-term future?
- If utopias are inherently about social change through their critical and transformative nature (see Goodwin, Taylor 2009; Levitas 2013; Sargisson 2012), how are ‘everyday utopias’ (Cooper 2014), and ‘real utopias’ (Olin Wright 2010) built in the present?
- What prefigurative and transformative practices, policies, and strategies are being developed as a way to achieve social change (Jeffrey & Dyson 2020; Franks 2003; Raekstad & Gradin 2020; Yates 2015)?
- How are future-making practices shaped by such opposing experiences as solidarity and competition, togetherness and difference?

Please feel free to bring in new puzzles and perspectives that relate to the broader issue. Our interest is open-ended and we hope for an inspiring conversation across research fields, disciplines, and analytical approaches. We welcome empirical as well as theoretical contributions.
A Space for Exchange: Our Aims

The workshop provides a space of exchange for early career researchers who are working on these or related questions or who would like to have a first glimpse on current debates on collective future imaginations and societal hopes.

We invite you
- to get to know other junior scholars working on similar issues.
- to present your project and discuss your ideas in a constructive and cooperative atmosphere.
- to give & get feedback on work-in-progress and to collectively find solutions for current challenges.

How to participate

Presenting your own work: Those who would like to participate actively and contribute an oral presentation (up to 25 minutes) are very welcome to submit a proposal to corinna.land@sk.hs-fulda.de and anja-julia.habersang@sk.hs-fulda.de.

- Extended Deadline for submissions: 30 November 2021.
- Title, abstract and keywords should not exceed 300 words.
- Please, also provide a short bio (education, current affiliation)
- It would be a great support for the preparation process if you could add some sentences on your motivation to participate and your main interests.

Until 15 December 2021, we will notify you whether your proposal has been accepted. Please notice that presenters will be asked to prepare a handout (presentation slides or something equivalent) that includes your main arguments until 15 March 2022. It will be distributed two weeks before the workshop (either to selected discussants or all participants) in order to qualify the discussion of your project.

Attending the workshop: If you prefer not to present, but would like to attend the workshop and participate in our exchange, you are more than welcome! Please, register via e-mail - first comes-first-served. We would appreciate if you could tell us about your motivation and specific interests in the workshop, as well.