

## **Futures (in) Civic Education**

**June 12-14, 2025, Justus Liebig University Giessen**

Futures are contingent and open. In democratic and pluralistic societies, they are necessarily the subject of public debate. Futures are socially and individually associated with optimism, uncertainty, and risk (Beck 1986). They evoke emotions such as hope, fear, or anxiety and can inspire transformation. Conversely, pseudo-emotions (Rosenberg 2016, Fromm 1941) blame others for one's situation. The degradation of vulnerable groups is linked to anti-democratic and authoritarian tendencies (Zick et al. 2023, Decker et al. 2022). Futures thus equally enable progress and regression (Jaeggi 2023), as well as stagnation and the preservation of the status quo.

In civic education, futures are increasingly addressed and discussed (e.g., Eicker/Eis et al. 2020; Friedrichs 2024; Bap/Journal für politische Bildung 2024; Forum kritische politische Bildung Conference 2025). Futures are linked to multiple crises, described as “polycrises” (DVPW Congress 2024) or “multiple crises” (Demirović et al. 2011). In civic education, futures play multiple roles: they are content areas, objects, and central questions of civic education—how do we want to live together, and what conflicts and problems must we solve? These questions cannot be separated from ideas about futures and their design. Futures are also closely connected to societal, national, and global conflicts regarding current drafts—for example, about the future of the planet, the economy and care, democracy, and social cohesion—and to related crisis and future narratives. For learners, these topics are relevant, not only for navigating and coping with the present but also for shaping their future (Klami 1985/2007). Crisis phenomena and uncertainty about the future currently weigh heavily on young people (BMFSFJ 2024; Schnetzer et al. 2024; Calmbach et al. 2024). These issues significantly affect their future living conditions, their ability to act individually and politically, and therefore require educational, learning, and teaching arrangements that address futures.

Against this background, the GPJE Annual Conference 2025 focuses on the relevance of futures (in) civic education and aims to facilitate an exchange on the following key topics:

### **Key Topic 1: (Interdisciplinary) Research on Futures**

- How are futures, corresponding discourses, and ideas currently addressed in research on civic education? How are they becoming the subject of (subject-specific didactic) research?
- What requirements and opportunities arise for subject-didactic research on futures? What starting points already exist? What suggestions can other (reference) disciplines and subject didactics offer for future research in civic education?
- Which scientific methods are suitable for researching future discourses, images, ideas, educational processes, and more?

## **Key Topic 2: Future-Related Goals and Content of Civic Education**

- What conceptual connections already exist in civic education, social-science-didactics, and related subject didactics for addressing futures (e.g., Henkenborg 1999, Negt 1999, Weinbrenner 1992)? How should these be updated in light of current multiple crisis phenomena?
- What role do goals such as emancipation or autonomy play in futures—for example, in light of calls for resilience (Bröckling 2017), sustainability (Kaufmann 2024), military readiness, or a focus on factuality under conditions of disinformation? How can civic education promote the ability to commemorate and to think in an utopian way (Negt)?
- What content is particularly relevant for learning about futures, and how can it be justified? Which futures are being (controversially) discussed in society? What starting points emerge from this for civic education? How has civic education addressed questions about the future in the past?
- What societal or contemporary diagnoses provide suitable substantive connections for addressing futures in civic education?

## **Key Topic 3: Future-Related Formats, Methods/Media, and Places of Civic Education**

- What formats, methods, and media can make futures a subject of civic education? Which methodological approaches are particularly suitable for addressing futures in educational processes? What empirical research exists on the use, processes, and effects of future workshops, scenario techniques, real-world laboratories, etc.?
- How can processes of imagination and the development of plans, visions, dreams, designs, utopias, and visions be initiated and researched?
- How can socially (controversially) addressed futures be analyzed? How can, for example, the supposed power of the factual be analyzed and potentially deconstructed as a narrative?
- How can the futures of civic education as a profession in school and out-of-school political youth and adult education, as well as in social movements, be described amid financial marginalization, de-/re-professionalization, reinterpretation, and attempts to prevent or dismantle civic education? What approaches exist to strengthen civic education? What historical experiences can civic education as a discipline draw on, and what lessons can it learn?

## **Key Topic 4: Futures from the Perspective of Children and Youth and in the Context of Teacher Professionalization**

- What plans, future drafts/images, emotions, and orientation needs do young people have in light of their own and socially contingent futures? What do they need to become politically capable of acting and intervening, to participate in democracy, and to further develop it?
- How can processes of subjectivation in light of the societal invocations and frameworks described above be reflected upon, self- and external exclusions from the political field

overcome, and the appeal of simplistic worldviews regarding the design of futures addressed and deconstructed?

- What subject-specific, didactic, and pedagogical competencies do teachers and educators in civic education need to meet learners' orientation needs regarding future design and to support them accordingly?

**Contribution Formats:** Participation in the GPJE Annual Conference 2025 is possible with the following contributions:

- Presentations (20 minutes) with subsequent discussion **on one of the key topics**
- Workshops (90 minutes) **on one of the key topics**
- Posters on a **current qualification or research project** in civic education

In addition to contributions from research in social-science-didactics and scientifically reflective contributions from practice, interdisciplinary, topic-oriented contributions from other subject didactics, educational and social sciences, and other disciplines are also welcome. We also encourage the submission of contributions on the results of completed doctoral projects. Contributions presenting ongoing projects should at least include interim results.

Please submit your abstract (1,500 to 2,000 characters, including spaces) and 5-8 references for a presentation or workshop, specifying the key topic, in German or English, by **January 31, 2025**, at <https://forms.office.com/e/StnmwEAhEc>. The abstract should include the following information, which will serve as evaluation criteria alongside thematic relevance to the key topics: title, problem and research question, theoretical/methodological approach, and results.

For participation in a poster presentation, please submit the title and an abstract of up to 1,000 characters (including spaces) and 3-5 references by **February 28, 2025**, at <https://forms.office.com/e/StnmwEAhEc>. If accepted, the abstracts will be published in the conference program.

## **Litratüre**

- Bap/Journal für politische Bildung (2024): Zukunft. Heft 1/2024. Frankfurt/M.
- Beck, Ulrich (1986): Risikogesellschaft. Frankfurt/M.
- BMFSFJ (2024): 17. Kinder- und Jugendbericht. Bericht über die Lage junger Menschen und die Bestrebungen und Leistungen der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe. Rostock.
- Bröckling, Ulrich (2017): Resilienz: Belastbar, flexibel, widerstandsfähig. In: Ders.: Gute Hirten führen sanft. Über Menschenregierungskünste. Berlin. S. 113-139.
- Calmbach et al. (2024): Wie ticken Jugendliche? SINUS-Jugendstudie 2024. Lebenswelten von Jugendlichen im Alter von 14 bis 17 Jahren in Deutschland. Bonn.
- Decker et al. (2022): Autoritäre Dynamiken in unsicheren Zeiten. Neue Herausforderungen – alte Reaktionen? Die Leipziger Autoritarismus-Studie 2022. Gießen.
- Demirović, Alex et al. (Hrsg.) (2011): VielfachKrise im finanzmarktdominierten Kapitalismus. Hamburg.
- Eicker, Jannis/Eis, Andreas et al. (Hrsg.) (2020): Bildung Macht Zukunft. Lernen für die sozial-ökologische Transformation? Frankfurt/M.
- Friedrichs, Werner (Hrsg.) (2024): Politische Bildung und Zukunft. Wie Herausforderungen im Anthropozän denken? Wiesbaden.
- Fromm, Erich (1941): Die Furcht vor der Freiheit. München
- Henkenborg, Peter (1999): Risikodidaktik. In: Weißeno, Georg (Hrsg.): Lexikon der politischen Bildung. Bd. 1 Didaktik und Schule. Schwalbach/Ts. S. 221.
- Jaeggi, Rahel (2023): Fortschritt und Regression. Berlin.
- Kaufmann, Stefan (2024): Nachhaltigkeit. In: Bröckling, Ulrich/Lemke, Thomas/Grassmann, Susanne (Hrsg.): Glossar der Gegenwart. 6. Aufl. Frankfurt/M., S. 174-181.
- Klafki, Wolfgang (1985/2007): Neue Studien zur Bildungstheorie und Didaktik. Zeitgemäße Allgemeinbildung und kritisch-konstruktive Didaktik. 6. Aufl. Weinheim, Basel.
- Negt, Oskar (1999): Was künftig gelernt werden sollte. Schlüsselqualifikationen für die Zukunft. Bildungs-Offensive, S. 58-70.
- Rosenberg, Marshall B. (2016): Gewaltfreie Kommunikation. Eine Sprache des Lebens. 12., überarbeitete Aufl. Paderborn.
- Schnetzer, Simon et al (2024): Trendstudie „Jugend in Deutschland. Verantwortung für die Zukunft? Ja, aber“. Kempten.
- Weinbrenner, Peter (1992): Lernen für die Zukunft - Plädoyer für ein neues Relevanzkriterium der Politischen Bildung. In: Sander, Wolfgang (Hrsg.): Konzepte der Politikdidaktik. Aktueller Stand, Neue Ansätze und Perspektiven. Stuttgart, S. 219 – 238.
- Zick, Andreas et al. (2023): Die distanzierte Mitte. Rechtsextreme und demokratiegefährdende Einstellungen in Deutschland 2022/23. Bonn.