

Global Youth, Global Futures

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The present age finds itself caught in a field of tension resulting from the ambivalence of acceleration as a phenomenon of supposedly modern societies. In this context, the future does not appear as a uniform, linear development, but rather as a contested arena of contradictory expectations and practices. The future brings both limitations and opportunities that people must navigate individually and collectively.

This dynamic acceleration is expressed in various dimensions. Faster transport and communication technologies not only facilitate mobility, but also cross-border communication. This gives rise to new forms of transnational community building on both an analog and digital level. At the same time, global networking means that local crises, conflicts, and even pandemics are broadcasted worldwide by the media, triggering immediate reactions within societies and social change. This global increase in density is accompanied by a temporal acceleration in everyday life: individuals are under pressure to be available at all times—both digitally and locally. Self-optimization has become a dictum of neoliberal society. The perception of uncertainties and disruptions, such as the climate crisis, wars, social inequalities, and fascist tendencies, is influenced by this and changes the everyday horizons of many people. This growing awareness of crisis has a lasting effect on the future prospects of (young) people, but it also opens up horizons for articulating hope and alternative future practices and implementing them in everyday life.

Research on, in, and from the Global South also highlights a number of other complex challenges that young people face in shaping their future. These are related to structural conditions, unequal access to resources, and a lack of future prospects. Various ethnographic studies emphasize that young people's everyday lives are often characterized by the search for maintaining and securing livelihoods or improving working or survival conditions. This gives the future horizon a further substantive, social, and structural character that is reflected in various practices and visions of the future. A clear sign of this at present are the worldwide protests of the so-called Generation Z.

In this way, global differences and asynchronies in the conception of the future become apparent. However, it also becomes clear that young people's shaping of the future is embedded in complex figurations that span structural inequalities, economic and social conditions and reforms, political dynamics, and cultural transformations. This creates both individual and societal/social spaces and horizons for young people to negotiate and navigate the future or futures. These aspects now have an impact not only at the local level, but also at the global level, and must be considered in the context of societal transformations.

Social science research already shows that futures are conceived with a strong focus on (social) change, which is articulated in concepts of "prefigurative politics" or "lived utopias." At the same time, futures can be strongly embedded in the past in the form of nostalgia or melancholy. However, the interdependence of visions of the future, power relations, structural conditions, and social change remains unmistakable.

Young people are not only at the center of current transformation processes, but their perspectives are also crucial for understanding and shaping future social developments. This is reflected in the fact that research on the future and youth is scattered across different disciplines. This issue is therefore dedicated to highlighting interdisciplinary approaches to youth and the future.

This booklet therefore aims to contribute to the production of knowledge about the future of society and to build disciplinary bridges.

Against this background, we welcome contributions on the following topics:

- Negotiating visions of the future at the interface of individual aspirations, collective ideas, and structural conditions.
- The future as a social construct in flux.
- The globalized futures of young people.
- Transformations in the everyday lives of young people and initiatives to shape paths to a (better) future.
- The influence of issues such as digitalization, the climate crisis, migration, social inequality, fascist tendencies, etc. on shaping the future.
- Religious and/or political participation and young people's visions of the future.
- Methodological and empirical approaches to researching youth and the future, as well as different epistemological perspectives on temporality and the future.

In addition, contributions that touch on other topics closely related to the focus of this call are also welcome. Both works with transnational perspectives and national case studies can be submitted. We also welcome studies based on transdisciplinary approaches. Last but not least, theoretical contributions dealing with the concept of temporality in relation to generations are also of interest.

*The editorial deadline for articles is
May 15, 2026.*

Please send manuscripts, inquiries about possible contributions, and other questions to info@zeitschrift-peripherie.de. Further information for authors is available for download on our website at <https://www.zeitschrift-peripherie.de>.