

Call for Papers – International Conference

fEUtures: trajectories and imaginaries of European integration



3-4 June 2019, Roskilde University

The future of the European Union (EU) has become a contested and contingent terrain. While the teleological assumption of an 'ever closer union' has been prevalent even during previous periods of difficulties and disagreements in the history of the EU, at the current conjuncture it appears that the EU might well be facing a perfect storm. Multiple crises engendered by, amongst other factors, the Eurozone architecture and a related social crisis aggravated by years of austerity governance across the EU, migration patterns and a refugee crisis that challenge the very normative foundations of the Union, the politics of Brexit, and an upsurge of far-right discourses and illiberal politics, have put into sharp relief that the future of European integration is in fact very much open-ended.

But just how do we think about these multiple, contingent futures? Which trajectories for European integration are thinkable; which ones have not yet been thought? Can fiction help us explore the horizon of the possible for Europe and the EU? Is the future of Europe irrevocably tied to the future of European integration? Which discursive and semiotic shifts do we see when disintegration rather than integration has become *de rigueur* in academic and public debates (e.g. Patomäki 2017)? Which pathways are there to think about the future when, as De Vries suggests (2018), integration might increasingly be rooted in the principle of flexibility? And at a time when even the European Commission dabbles in scenario-based futurism (European Commission 2017), just whose visions of future integration are being heard, contested and/or silenced?

This conference offers an international platform for critical and constructive engagement with these, and related questions. There has recently been a distinct turn towards an engagement with future expectations and imaginaries within the social sciences. Economic sociology highlights how fictional expectations drive modern economics and politics (Beckert 2016; Andersson 2018); political economy discusses the economy as a series of fictions and science fiction as a means of anticipating alternative economic futures (Davies 2018). Science fiction has fruitfully been employed side by side with social science as imaginaries for a post-capitalist future (Fraser 2016). While the European Union has long been curiously absent in speculative fiction, alternative history and science fiction (a few exceptions aside, mainly depicting a dystopian trajectory), we have in recent years witnessed a significant increase in fictional engagements with the future of the EU and Europe (e.g. Hutchinson; Porcaro; Hvorecký). It seems pertinent to bring the discussion of fictional future imaginaries out of the confines of space policy (e.g. Köpping Athanasopoulos 2017) into a broader debate of thinking about the shape of Europe and the EU to come.

Confirmed key speakers include [Catherine de Vries](#) (VU Amsterdam); [Ian Manners](#) (Copenhagen University), [Dave Hutchinson](#) (London), [Giuseppe Porcaro](#) (Brussels) and [Michal Hvorecký](#) (Bratislava).

The event seeks to bring together scholars and authors from a range of disciplinary backgrounds; *inter alia* European Studies, Political Economy, Economic Sociology, Literary Analysis, International Relations, Political Science, Cultural Studies...

Proposals and deadlines

Paper proposals of no more than 300-400 words should be sent to feuturesconference2019@gmail.com. Questions regarding the academic focus of the conference can also be sent to the conference convenor Laura Horn (lhorn@ruc.dk).

Deadline for abstract submissions is 15 February; notification of acceptance will be sent by 25 February.

Conference contributions (between 3000-5000 words) should be submitted by 26 May 2019.

Organisation

The event is taking place at Roskilde University (RUC), 3-4 June 2019. RUC is within easy reach of Copenhagen airport (ca 40mins by train), as well as direct train connections via Germany.

There is no conference fee. The conference venue will be wheelchair accessible; other forms of accessibility needs will be accommodated as far as possible. Children are welcome throughout the event; childcare will be provided on-site .



Early career researchers are very much encouraged to participate. There is a limited travel fund towards travel and accommodation costs; it will be distributed according to needs and availability for ECRs and scholars in precarious employment. Please indicate that you would require funding when sending your abstract.

The event is made possible with funding from the [Carlsberg Foundation](#) and the [Department of Social Science and Business](#) at Roskilde University.



References:

- Andersson, Jenny (2018) *The Future of the World. Futurology, Futurists, and the Struggle for the Post Cold War Imagination* (Oxford University Press).
- Beckert, Jens (2016) *Imagined Futures. Fictional Expectations and Capitalist Dynamics* (Harvard University Press).
- Davies, Will (2018) *Economic Science Fictions* (Goldsmiths Press).
- de Vries, Catherine (2018) *Eurocepticism and the Future of European Integration* (Oxford University Press).
- European Commission (2017) *White Paper on the Future of the EU* (COM(2017)2025), 1 March 2017
- Hutchinson, Dave – *Fractured Europe* series (London: Solaris) (*Europe in Autumn* (2014); *Europe at Midnight* (2015); *Europe in Winter* (Nov 2016)); multiple BFSA awards, nominated for Arthur C. Clarke award.
- Hvorecký, Michal – *Troll* (2018); available in Slovak and German.
- Frase, Peter (2016) *Four Futures: Life after Capitalism* (Verso).
- Köpping Athanasopoulos, Harald (2017) 'Where no European has gone before: Representations of Europe(an integration) in science fiction' *Space Policy* 41, pp. 60-64.
- Patomäki, Heikki (2017) 'Will the EU Disintegrate? What Does the Likely Possibility of Disintegration Tell About the Future of the World?' *Globalizations*, 14(1), pp. 168-177
- Porcaro, Giuseppe - *Disco Sour* (2018, London:Unbound)