



## Call for Papers: Microscopic Research on Grand Social Concepts – Crisis, Protest, and Transformation

23-24 November 2023, University of Applied Sciences Fulda

Organizers: Junior Research Group Human Rights and Social Justice

Current media reports and political as well as scientific debates convey that the world is facing increasing uncertainty and instability. However, instead of external disturbances to an otherwise stable system, we are experiencing complex structural dynamics of disruption and transformation originating from within the status quo. Various phenomena such as the authoritarian drift, new forms of democratic deliberation and protest, the degradation of the planetary ecology, advancements in technology (e.g. social media and AI), disappointment with Western promises in the Global South, and the crisis of neoliberalism do not merely constitute systemic macro-level threats but are intimately connected to and structure our daily lives. In this conjuncture, grand narratives and concepts have re-emerged in academia and beyond, ranging from a global polycrisis, the *Zeitenwende* in geopolitics to the widely pronounced crisis of liberal democracy, and debates about the Anthropocene. Within these discussions central concepts of liberal modernity are increasingly renegotiated (freedom, progress, democracy, culture/nature, etc.), challenging our knowledge and analytical grasp of these very concepts.

To scrutinize the aforementioned phenomena, the *Junior Research Group Human Rights and Social Justice* based at the Fulda Graduate Centre of Social Sciences invites emerging scholars across the political and social sciences to engage in critical analyses of concrete microscopic manifestations of crisis, protest, and transformation in order to explore their connections and contradictions across disciplines as well as micro- and macro-perspectives. We therefore welcome theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions that provide fresh insights, challenge existing paradigms, and propose novel ways of conceptualizing and studying these dynamic phenomena, with a special focus on:

- Methodological challenges posed by new types of relevant data (with regard to seemingly changing protest movements).
- The Anthropocene and related conceptual, methodological, and critical considerations in conducting (empirical) research after the Holocene.
- Justice, confrontation, struggle, experiences, and protest in the Global South under and following neoliberalism.
- Social sciences in times of crisis: contemporary challenges faced by public sociology and the relation to its various audiences.

The conference will take place at the University of Applied Sciences Fulda, November 23-24, 2023. The conference is an on-site event, however, hybrid participation may be possible for applicants based outside of Germany. Please submit your abstract (max. 300 words) to Christina Kurdum ([christina.kurdum@sk.hs-fulda.de](mailto:christina.kurdum@sk.hs-fulda.de)) by August 18, 2023. Applicants will be informed of the status of their submission by early September.