Imagining the Future
financial capitalism and the social imagination

July 11 2017 09:00 AM - 08:00 PM
Location: IAS Common Ground, Ground Floor, South Wing, Wilkins Building, University College London
Imagining the Future: Financial Capitalism & the Social Imagination

Conference Organisers: Aris Komporozos-Athanasiou (UCL) and Chiara Bottici (The New School)

Keynote Speakers: Ruth Levitas (Bristol) and Jens Beckert (Cologne)

How do the fictitious operations of markets shape our perception of the future? How do the worlds of fiction and reality coalesce to produce dominant valuations of the future? What are the implications of financial imagination for articulating radical alternatives to such dominant future projections? This one-day conference brings together theoretically-driven approaches from a range of disciplines to explore the various ‘intersections’ between political, economic and social imaginaries of financial capitalism.

Hosted by the UCL Department of Social Science, and the Social Theory Research Group at UCL, in association with the New School for Social Research in New York. With support from the Institute of Advanced Studies at UCL, and the IAS Planetary Futures research grant. Part of ‘The Radical Imagination’ research project, a collaboration between the Department of Social Science at UCL and the New School for Social Research in New York.

Aris Komporozos-Athanasiou is a political sociologist and Assistant Professor of Social Theory in the Department of Social Science at University College London. He completed his PhD at the University of Cambridge in 2013. His current projects include a book monograph on the Political Economy of Imagination, and a study of the intersections between financialisation and populism in Europe.

Chiara Bottici is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the New School for Social Research. She is the author, among others, of Imaginal Politics: Images beyond Imagination and The Imaginary (Columbia University Press 2014) A Philosophy of Political Myth (Cambridge University Press 2007) and Men and States (Palgrave 2009). With Benoit Challand, she also co-authored Imagining Europe: Myth, Memory, Identity (Cambridge University Press, 2013) and The Myth of the Clash of Civilizations (Routledge, 2010)

Ruth Levitas is Professor Emerita of Sociology at the University of Bristol, founding Chair of Utopian Studies Society Europe and former Chair of the William Morris Society. She has written widely on utopia, politics, policy and poverty. Her most recent book is Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society, Palgrave 2013.

9.00: Registration

(tea & coffee)

9.30-10.15: Keynote address

- Ruth Levitas (Bristol)
  Recovering Social Hope

10.15-11.45 Panel 1: Hope in Real (estate?) Utopias

  Chair: Aris Komporozos-Athanasiou (UCL)
  - Ana Dinerstein (Bath)
    Concrete utopias and the open veins of capital
  - Bilge Serin (Heriot-Watt)
    How Utopia Became a Real Estate Leaflet
  - Priscilla Alderson (UCL)
    Imagining Justice and Hope between Generations

Coffee break

12.00-13.00 Panel 2: Art & Horizons of Debt

  Chair: Chiara Bottici (The New School)
  - Joshua Simon (MoBY-Museums of Bat Yam)
    Speculation and counter-speculation
  - Stevphen Shukaitis (Leicester)
    Between the devil and the debt blue sea

Lunch break

14.15-15.45 Panel 3: Financialised Futures

  Chair: Will Davis (Goldsmiths)
  - Jan Dutkiewicz (The New School)
    Uncertain Hog Futures: Biocapitalist Crisis and Financialisation on the Factory Farm
  - Tobias Olofsson (Uppsala)
    Economic recoverability: The construction and justification of imagined futures in mineral exploration
  - Jay Wiggan (Edinburgh)
    Selling Financialised Welfare Futures
15.45-17.15 Panel 4: Imagination, Imaginary, Imaginal

Chair: Margarita Palacios (Birkbeck)

- Chiara Bottici (The New School)
  *Imaginal economies and feminist subversions*

- Tai Young-Taft (Bard College)
  *Marx’s Theory of Money and 21st-century Macrodynamics*

Aris Komporozos-Athanasiou (UCL)
*The Political Economy of Imagination*

Coffee break

17.30-18.15 Keynote address

- Jens Beckert (Max Plank Institute, Cologne)
  *The Exhausted Futures of Neoliberalism*

18.15-18.30: Closing Remarks

18.30-20.30: Reception