VolkswagenStiftung

Democratic Hope

Initiative: Freigeist-Fellowships

Bewilligung: 13.12.2020

Laufzeit: 5 Jahre

Projekt-Website: www.democratic-hope.net

While the vocabulary of hope continues to be ubiquitous in political life, it is increasingly associated with complacency, wishful thinking and empty rhetoric. This shift in public debate also highlights a blind spot in political philosophy: we lack the normative foundations and concepts to evaluate the growing skepticism about hope as a political attitude. The aim of the project is to fill this gap by developing a systematic framework that is sensitive both to the unavoidability of hope in democracy, and to its pitfalls. Existing philosophical work addresses the nature and rationality of hope in general but continues to neglect its political dimensions. In democratic politics, the role of hope is particularly complex and raises distinct questions concerning its value, appropriate objects and normativity. Moreover, we cannot limit ourselves to thinking of hope as an individual attitude but have to take into account its collective and institutional dimensions. In order to develop a theory of democratic hope, the project will combine resources from epistemology, philosophy of mind and moral psychology with the unique perspectives of political philosophy and democratic theory - including social scientific insights, for instance about the dynamics of social change and transformation, that allow us to link back our philosophical investigation to the concrete experiences of political agents and social movements.

Projektbeteiligte

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Open Access-Publikationen

Defying Democratic Despair: A Kantian Account of Hope in Politics
Looking back, looking forward: Progress, hope, and history
Hope from Despair
Reconciliation or Anticipation? Reasonable Hope beyond Rawls