

Back to the FutureS we want – Part 2: Visions - Reloaded –

“Creating a shared vision of a sustainable and desirable future is the most critical task facing humanity today. This vision must be of a world that we all want, a world that provides permanent prosperity within the Earth’s biophysical constraints in a fair and equitable way to all of humanity, to other species, and to future generations.”

Robert Costanza and Ida Kubiszewski

What could sustainable futures look like, according to you? In ‘Part 1: Visions’, you have developed four different visions of sustainable futures for a region/city of your choice for year 2067. Now, we ask for you to choose one vision, and rework this vision through critically examining it. Being critical of your own work is a crucial step in reaching a more complex image of what sustainability could and should look like. Through this process, we want you to reflect on what a *desirable* sustainable future is for you, and for other people. What could a sustainable and desirable future look like, according to you? *Who is included and privileged in your vision, and who is not represented or disadvantaged? Are you taking any technological assumptions? Does your region’s sustainability rely on the exploitation of other regions? Does your vision challenge the status quo, or reproduce it? Is it a controlled society or a democratic one?*

Choose one vision

Through the steps in Part 1: Visions, you have developed four quite different future scenarios based on two parameters you chose as the axis. We want you to choose one of your four visions now to continue working on it in more detail in Part 2 and Part 3 of the assignment. It could be a vision that you find especially interesting, one that you find unique, one that you think is most realistic or one that you feel most attached to.

So why did we want you to come up with four visions? This exercise was aimed for you to understand how the future could look radically different based on many different factors. There is no single vision that can represent what will happen - if we think about the future, we must think about pluralities of futures. What would happen, if you chose another set of parameters? There are endless possibilities! Also, it challenged you to think how each of those futures could be understood as “sustainable” - an authoritarian future could also be “sustainable”. But is it socially sustainable? In order to keep the assignment within the time limits of the course, we focus on one of your four visions now.

Five lenses to desir-/sustain-able futures

Based on Inayatullah (2005), we developed five areas for you to critically reflect on your vision, and to help you develop it further by incorporating these viewpoints. Remember the activities and discussions about privilege, and insights from the presentation and the Role Play during Workshop 2 (*Whose visions?*, Nov 7th).

1. **SOCIAL GROUPS:** Which social groups (age, gender, race/ethnicity, class) are privileged in the vision? Who gains at economic, social and other levels? Who is silenced - what social groups are not included in your vision?
→ How could you include those social groups in your vision and make it fairer?
2. **TECHNOLOGY:** What assumptions about technology are underlying in the vision? Is sustainability in your vision relying on technology that will maybe not exist by 2067?
→ How could you make the vision sustainable without relying solely on technology? (E.g. a different economic system, social structure, politics, etc.)

3. **GLOBAL JUSTICE:** How does your vision rely on the exploitation of people in other parts of the world? Where do your resources come from? Where and in which working conditions are the products people in your region consume made?
 - ➔ How could your vision reflect a world that is sustainable everywhere and not just in some privileged parts of the world, like your region?
4. **SYSTEM CHANGE:** Which vision of the future is used to maintain the present social norms, economic and political system (status quo)?
 - ➔ How could your vision challenge the status quo we have now? How could the culture and the norms in your region have changed by 2067?
5. **CONTROL:** Who makes political decisions in your vision? Who controls whether people live “sustainably” and follow these political decisions? Are automated technology or other hidden forces under control or is there a transparent legal system?
 - ➔ How could your vision give political power to more people and follow the rule of law?

Submission

Your submission should include the following points:

- State which vision you chose, and explain why you decided to redevelop that one out of the 4 visions you handed in.
- Describe: How do you think your vision became more sustainable through the reworking process? Critique your original vision using the ‘5 lenses to desir-/sustain-able futures’ and describe what you have changed since your first hand-in. Please go through all 5 steps, but you don’t need to focus on all of them in an equal amount - choose what you find most interesting to rework.
- Describe your redeveloped vision for your region in 2067.

If you decide to do your submission only as a text, it should be at least 500 words, max. 1000 words. Otherwise, you can include creative methods (such as interviews with actors in your vision, newspaper headlines, drawings, etc.), but overall please include at least 300 words that answer the points above. Submit on Studentportalen by latest **Monday, November 20th at 17:00** (5pm).

Further Resources

Revisit the Course Literature for *Workshop 1: Me, myself and futures (Oct 17)* and *Workshop 2: Whose vision is it? (Nov 17)*, especially:

- [Costanza, R., 1999. Four visions of the century ahead: will it be Star Trek, Ecotopia, Big Government or Mad Max? *Futurist*, 33\(2\), pp. 23–28.](#)
- [The Future We Want Visualizations](#) (website to explore different examples)
- [The World We Made: Incredible Edible Cities](#) (video)
- [Why Does Privilege Make People So Angry? | Decoded](#) (video)
- [Inayatullah, S., 2005. Causal Layered Analysis — Deepening the future. *Questioning the future: methods and tools for organizational and societal transformation*, \(7\), pp.1–22.](#)
- The rest of the book of Brodsky and R. Kauder-Nalebuff. 2015. The feminist utopia project: fifty-seven visions of a wildly better future. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2swg4NV> (E-book on UU Library). E.g. ‘Interview with Chloe Angyal’ is ‘What would rom-com look like in a feminist future?’

If you are interested in sharing your ideas about the future to a wider crowd, you could also submit your visions to a peer-reviewed popular science journal, *The Solutions Journal* (<https://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/for-authors/>). This could also be something you could do after you complete the course!