

This dissertation focusses on the communicative construction of dystopian visions of the future and the imaginations of identity creating processes in feature films since the 1950s. Films can be regarded as a contribution to social discourses or, respectively, as contemporary diagnosis of society and thus are part of a collective negotiation of and coping with problems. In order to systematize the dystopian films mixed methods of qualitative content analysis and a sociology of knowledge and hermeneutical approach to film analysis were used. This led to four different scenarios of crisis with subtopics, which are typically considered as threats in the future: Totalitarianism, Super-Gau (war and ecological disasters), Rivalry Between Man and Machine (reign of the machines, machines as image of man, simulation), Escalation of Violence (displacement and glorification of violence). Each setting of crisis and directly linked structural transformations of society are constructed in a typical way. These topics spread unevenly on a historical timeline, i.e. the fears of the future themselves change over time. Due to this interaction between imaginations in film and societal changes films are relevant for sociological research. As a result of the comparative analysis of the settings the fears of the future can be summed up by the dimension "Self-Caused Dehumanization". This dimension distinguishes between unbalanced societies with a surplus of rationality on the one hand and with a surplus on emotionality on the other. The scenarios also offer different possibilities to solve the specific crisis, so that a second dimension can be built, which divides dystopian from utopian imaginations, whereby pure dystopian imaginations are rare and otherwise utopian visions don't exist.