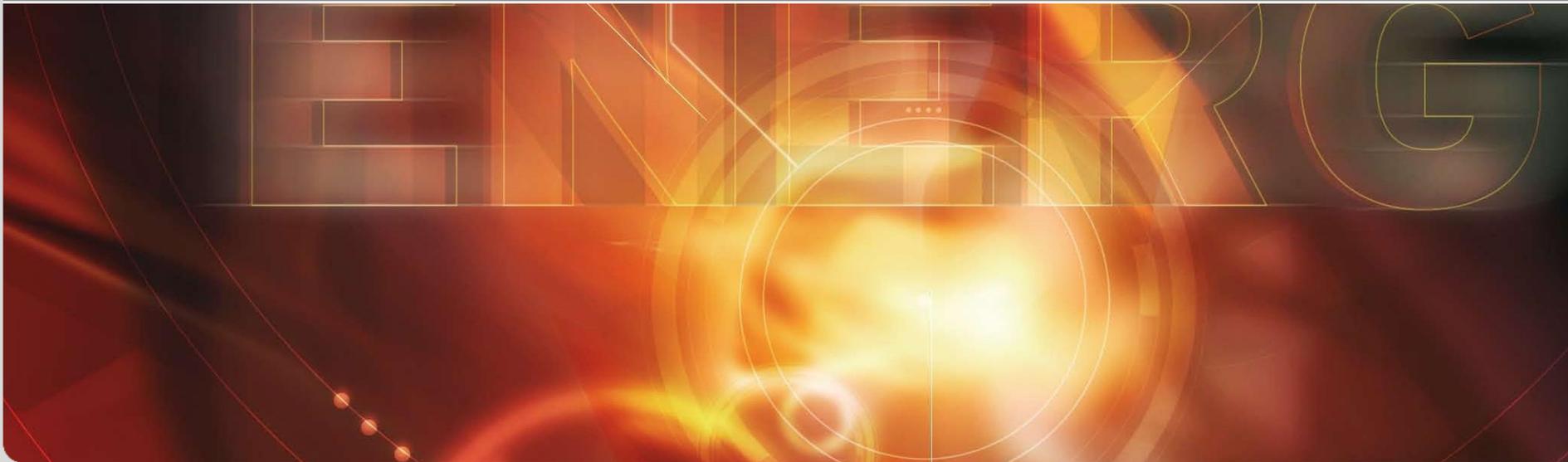


The hermeneutic analysis of visions applied to visions of TA

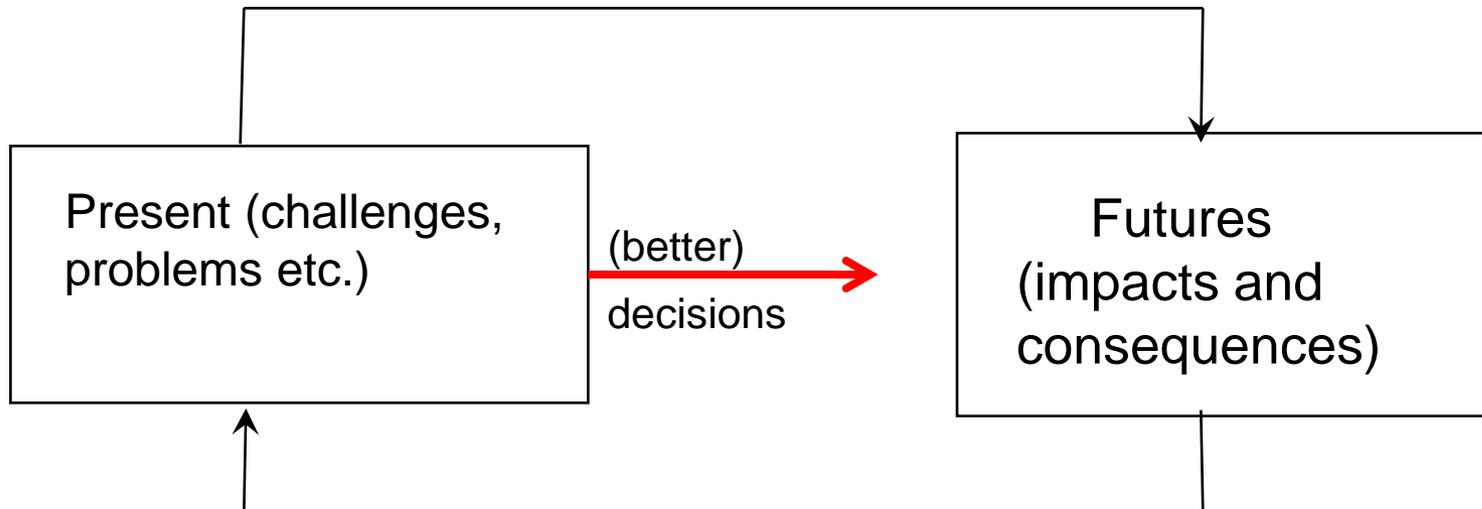
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The consequentialist expectation: providing orientation for the present by deliberating and assessing future „knowledge“

predictions, scenarios, expectations, fears, visions, etc.



orientations, modified problem perception, ideas about desirable and not desirable future societies, consequences for decisions to be made „today“

Modes of orientation (in the case of technology futures)

- ✓ **Mode 1: prognostic orientation**
- ✓ **Mode 2: scenario-based orientation**
- ? **Mode 3: hermeneutic orientation**

Tab1. Wesentliche Eigenschaften der Modi der Orientierung durch Zukunftswissen

	Prognostic	Scenario-based	Hermeneutic
Approach to the future	one future	corridor of sensible futures	open space of futures
Spectrum of futures	convergence as ideal	bounded diversity	unbounded divergence
Preferred methodology	quantitative, model-based	quantitative or qualitative; participatory	narrative
Knowledge used	causal and statistical knowledge	models, knowledge of stakeholders	associative knowledge, qualitative arguments
Role of normative issues	Low	depends on case	High
Orientation provided	decision-making support, optimization	robust action strategies	self-reflection and contemporary diagnostics

Quelle: Grunwald 2013, modifiziert

Hermeneutic analysis

- Subject: futures proposed, communicated, contested (visions, stories, narratives, diagrams, art, movies ...)
- Change of perspective: those futures are investigated not with respect to what they might us tell about future developments but with regard to the question what they might tell us about ourselves (in the sense of a contemporary diagnostics)
- Hermeneutic analysis consists of the analysis of the content of the futures, of their construction process and of the communication processes around them
- It includes the investigation of the diagnoses, underlying premises and intentions of the ‚constructing‘ actors and of actors in the field responding to them

Some visions of TA (?)

- To increase TA's feasibility of making good predictions by better modeling and computer technologies (1970ies/80ies – revival today?)
- To become able to design new technologies from the very beginning to match society's or consumer's needs and expectations (SCOT, 1987 – today)
- Upstream movement: take away the control over the advance of technology from engineers/experts/technocrats and give full control to 'the people'
- To help preventing technology conflicts (at least the more fundamentalistic ones) by early mediation and involvement of parties affected
- Participatory TA: to democratize the development of new technologies in the sense of a deliberative democracy (from the 1980ies on)

Hermeneutic analysis: questions to be dealt with

- What are the implications of the visionary developments proposed for TA for the present and future of man and society
- Which fundamental constellations (model of society, relation between the individual and society etc.) do they change, and “what is at stake?” e.g. in ethical, cultural, and social terms?
- How are challenges to TA and proposed responses presented?
- Why do we discuss TA visions in the way we do and with the respective attributions of meaning rather than in some other way?
- What extra-linguistic resources (e.g. movies, works of art) play a role in this context and what does their use reveal?
- What future concepts are being applied in the respective visions (the future as evolving from the present, as being planned and shaped in the present, as being determined by the present ...?)

Is hermeneutic analysis of TA visions fruitful?

- It is different from a hermeneutic analysis of techno-visionary futures by constellation: while the latter is a part of societal communication TA visions more or less belong to the internal business of the TA community
- Thus we will not learn about societal debates but only about ourselves
- This might further increase the reflectivity of TA: make the implicit explicit
- Though it has not been named ‚hermeneutic‘ this type of reflection has been part of the TA debate for decades

Thank you!

Paper based on:

- Grunwald, A. (2013): Modes of orientation provided by futures studies: making sense of diversity and divergence. *European Journal of Futures Studies* 15:30 DOI 10.1007/s40309-013-0030-5
- Grunwald, A. (2014): The Hermeneutic Side of Responsible Research and Innovation. *Journal of Responsible Innovation* 3/2014

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