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Abstract: Narrative gaming - gaming narratives

Narratives and games are - once again - strongly discussed issues in Futures Studies. And again, the current discussion seems to focus on their application for engaging workshop participants or addressees of the output of futures thinking, leaving further potentials to develop alternative futures aside. Thus, an experiential potential of games and narratives is assumed, but mostly lacks theoretical underpinning. Moreover, the systemic implications of both - narratives and games - as epistemologies are mostly neglected.

The presentation tries to enhance both approaches by providing theoretical underpinning as well as showing the potential of combining narrative analysis and gaming for the development of alternative futures. Based on poststructural theories, the contribution will, on the one hand, introduce analytical approaches from semiotics (R. Barthes) and discourse analysis (H. White) in order to show and analyse the narrative structures of futures thinking. As these form the base for constructing futures, narrative analysis aims at making the applied system explicit, thereby opening it for reframing. In effect, the emergent character of futures thinking is shown, which allows, literally speaking, to play with the foundations a future is built upon and thus enables the re-construction of alternative futures. That is why, on the other hand, the contribution shows a way to combine these narrative approaches with scenario techniques based on gaming, which allows for the experience of the conceived alternative futures as well as their reflection (educational effects). Playing with alternative futures by rearranging their conceptual basis thus allows the construction of futures that are resilient and flexible.

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