

Feeling Futures Anticipation : Re-connecting Interdependencies : Futurity Redeemed

Feeling and rethinking futures: opening up futures in energy transitions

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The Paris climate agreement renewed the ambition and the drive to realise a clean energy future. Reports and strategies at different levels and by different actors that envision clean energy futures bear witness to this development. Examples include the EU Energy roadmap 2050 (European Commission, 2012) and the Dutch ambition in the climate agreement. The format of these visionary reports seems diverse, ranging from formulating goals, proposing technical and policy pathways, and analyzing the efficiency and effectiveness of policy instruments (EEA, 2017).

However, looking at policy documents and within political processes, often one future dominates, generally of a 'ecomodernist' nature, conveniently blending economic development and environmental aims. Also in general, complex policy processes tend to foreground one future, as being separate from the present (Veenman and Leroy, 2016). This research adopts an innovative way of futuring starting in the present: the process of the 'making of futures' (Brown, 2003; Masini, 2006). While the idea of 'alternative futures that are lurking in the present' (Dinerstein, 2017, p.7) finds echo in recent literature (e.g. Van Asselt et al. 2010; Groves, 2017), there is little idea how to elaborate this in practice. This research meets this gap: design practices make alternative futures visible and audible providing experience within different alternative futures, enabling to use these experiences for intervention. How does a smart all-electric heating and lighting system look when it is applied in the standard rental flat of the 2030s?

Narratives form the bridge between the past, the present and the future (Holmes, 2009). Narratives about the future are constitutive or performative (Borup et al., 2006). They may lead to acceptance and empowerment. The strength of narratives has been proven in different disciplines, for example economics (Beckert, 2013; Holmes, 2009; Piotti, 2009) and in public administration (Van der Steen, 2009; Veenman, 2013). Nevertheless, there has been little attention for narrative projections about the energy-transition, its digitalization and impact.

What is key here; is who reaps the benefits and burdens of a much more responsive and flexible supply of electricity in an essentially fixed investment cost-based system. Yet there is a caveat. Because narratives are strongly intertwined with practices and the institutional contexts, they might lead to path dependency instead of alternative futures. We will use the social constructivist perspective of ‘framing’ (Benford and Snow, 2000) to target narratives that project alternative futures. Frames are cognitive schemata that allow actors to make sense of specific events and conditions (Goffman, 1974), operating at the level of the discursive/semiotic and focusing around sensemaking and valuation: the implicit societal process of meaning making in which actors articulate challenges. Because frames legitimize and support specific actions, they preselect certain futures while foreclosing others (see Groves, 2017). This connection between frames, futures, narratives and public and private values is scientifically and societally innovative.

We make use of fieldwork and interviews, archival materials and digital video, scientific data and speculative installation and ethics based on knowledge to reveal and articulate (micro) narratives, subjective perceptions surrounding the notion of ‘a CO₂-neutral society’ and to convey a multi-layered narrative of the future. These micro-narratives evolving around energy are set against current and planned implementations of adaptive designs engineered to deal with systems of traditional energy

use. The micronarratives give the possibilities to engage with emergent issues of ambivalence that underlie governance problems.

Connecting places and advanced methods of intervention at both the micro (people's daily live; see Hamers et al., 2017) and the system's level, may serve to nurture deep understanding and a lively imagination of what alternative futures feel like. Enabled by brand new stories, music, digitalization, relational adventures, and courageous myth busting, the making of future visible truths, and bringing into being new actualized futures and brand new terms for social change, art full processes, non-representation, new forms of communication of complexity, sustainability and resilience. To what extent, for example, will people accept (locally) standardized heating solutions and controlling devices curtailing private choice? And what are enabling factors for stakeholders to make their own choices and take responsibility?

Present Future (Adam & Groves 2007)

Its 2050 the future has been traded : there's 40% of the world's trees remaining, compared with 2019. Insects are on the brink of extinction. Scientists have proven there's only enough of the worlds natural resources left to keep the human race alive for another two generations at best. Sea levels have risen and land is at 70% compared with 2019. Alternative technologies and renewable energies have dominated and proven a great success. Humans have evolved their digestive systems enough to survive on a 60% non organic synthesized machine made protein that mimics all the nutrients the human body needs. However, the human spirit has plummeted into record numbers of depression due to its disconnect with the natural world and record numbers of species are rapidly becoming extinct due to coldness starvation also known as heat exhaustion. 85% of the worlds population are asking.....why, didn't Christiana close that window that day when her heating was on full in that little

apartment block near the market square in Hatert, Nijmegen, Netherlands on the 22/2/2022?

Future Present (Adam & Groves, 2007)

Its 2050 the future has been transformed : there's 140% more of the world's trees compared with 2019. Insects bred on organic farms are one of the main food sources. Scientists have proven, providing we progress at the same rate as the last 30 years there's enough of the worlds natural resources left to keep the human race alive for another 15 generations. Sea levels have remained relatively stable and land is at 93% compared with 2019. Alternative technologies and renewable energies have dominated and proven a great success. Obesity and high cholesterol are at record lows due to international governmental policies on nutrients levels being maintained in all 'produced' foods. Happiness in humans is at an all time high, depression is on the verge of extinction. 75% of the world's population are asking.....why, did Christiana close that window that day when her heating was on full in that little apartment block near the market square in Hatert, Nijmegen, Netherlands on the 22/2/2022