

Agnes Fesus
Risk and Incertitude

What I am going to investigate in Graz is the change of perspective from risk to “incertitude” (Stirling) in understanding phenomena. Investigation includes the turn from forecasting to foresight and the change in understanding what transition typically is. I concentrate on the extremely innovative (with radical innovations) and globalised world and the possibilities for sustainability. One of the very basic dimensions to get to realistic management and policy knowledge is to investigate how the recognition of the complex nature of the issues, lack of information and urgency of decisions around us requires a turn toward understanding “incertitude” in all of its dimensions and the effects this turn should have on our changing future perception. But “incertitude” around emerging technologies like nanotechnology or hydrogen – to focus on a bit more - and their accelerating development is typically accounted for by trend identification and roadmapping techniques, still, even when it requires to realise the necessary turn to the supremacy of foresight techniques. Dynamic, more qualitative than quantitative models, searching for new anticipation techniques, application of the precautionary principle are important elements of this turn. These should be integrated into a “sustainable foresight” exercise both to get opportunity to avoid irreversible disasters or invisible side-effects and utilise the emerging immense chances.