

Towards an automated (anti-)utopia?

A critical reflection of the contemporary discourses on automation

by Philipp Frey

What's the subject?

- ❖ My dissertation:
 - ❖ Research interest
 - ❖ Theoretical Framework
 - ❖ Structure
- ❖ Relation of research to TA?

Who am I doing research with?

- ❖ Member of ITAS-project “Visions as socio-epistemic practices”
- ❖ Member of ITAS-project “Work and Technology”
- ❖ Member of ITAS working group “Robotics TA”

What's my research interest?

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- ❖ Socioeconomic effect != specific technology
- ❖ Variety of technologies are mentioned (Robotics, AI, electric engines)

What's my research interest?

What sociotechnical futures dominate the **contemporary discourse** on technological unemployment and what is missing from this discourse?

- ❖ No original modelling
- ❖ Various actors (both sides of the industry, policy makers, public)
- ❖ Heated discussion
- ❖ Great interest in TA-expertise

What's my research interest?

What sociotechnical futures dominate the contemporary discourse on technological unemployment and what is missing from this discourse?

- ❖ Increased focus on sociotechnical futures in public / scientific debate
- ❖ NEST (e.g. Nanotechnology) → crisis of consequentialist modes of orientation
- ❖ Vision Assessment as enlightenment of today's discourse and society

What's my research interest?

What sociotechnical futures dominate the contemporary discourse on technological unemployment and **what is missing** from this discourse?

- ❖ Preliminary research: focus almost exclusively an economic growth/world market competition
- ❖ Something is missing in the debate
- ❖ Create awareness for societal alternatives

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- ❖ Technology Assessment
 - ❖ Vision Assessment
 - ❖ Work and Technology
 - ❖ Methodology

What's the structure of my dissertation?

- ❖ Overview over the scientific discussion (~20 pages)
- ❖ Analysis: The discourse on technological unemployment (~70 pages)
- ❖ Theoretical discussion: Automation and its societal implications (~70 pages)

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- ❖ Overview over the scientific discussion (~20 pages)
 - ❖ Set the stage and provide an information basis
 - ❖ Instructive for the discourse analysis
 - ❖ What types of studies are there?
 - ❖ Focus question: Prognosis or exploration of potentials?

“... What can merely be expected is itself a piece of societal activity, and is incommensurable with the goal of criticism.” (Adorno on Sociology and Empirical Research)

What's the structure of my dissertation?

- ❖ Analysis: The discourse on technological unemployment (~70 pages)
 - ❖ Trade Unions, Employers' association, Policy makers, selected media
 - ❖ International comparison (US/Germany)
 - ❖ Reconstruct the sociotechnical futures dominating the discourse and reflect them critically

What's the structure of my dissertation?

- ❖ Theoretical discussion: Automation and its societal implications (~70 pages)
 - ❖ Contribute to a better understanding of the roots of technological unemployment and of its societal implications
 - ❖ (Re-)construct tacit alternatives to the dominant sociotechnical futures
 - ❖ Develop said alternatives further by criticizing them

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- ❖ Connect ongoing discussions with critical social philosophy
- ❖ Help enlighten the discussion by reflecting hidden anticipatory assumptions, political, cultural content etc. of sociotechnical futures
- ❖ Contribute to the democratic pluralism of the debate by making alternatives visible

Thank you for your attention!

Please feel free to contact me at philipp.frey@partner.kit.edu