

Futures confusions and the five futures glasses[®] : How to see more of the future

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Abstract

This contribution deals with the problems in thinking and communicating about the future which are due to the variety and complexity of the types of futures, i.e. possible, potential, probable, desired, surprising, creatable future and the like. A set of resulting so called futures confusions is revealed, the goals confusion, the roles confusion and the methods confusion.

The types of futures used in practice and discussed in the academic literature are presented comprehensively in order to identify the reasons for the difficulties leaders and managers experience when dealing with long term futures.

The five futures glasses are presented and explained as a simplified model for thinking and communicating about the future. The five futures glasses are a part of the Eltville Model (Mičić, 2006) which has been developed and used in almost a thousand interactions with top management teams.

This contribution ends with recommendations how to apply the model for personal purposes as well as for corporate foresight.

Keywords

Future management, foresight, mental model, Eltville Model, futures glasses[®], scenarios, phenomenology, methods.

1 Introduction

How can we use knowledge about futures as a source of orientation, inspiration and innovation? How can we see more of the future in a meaningful and rational way?

Futurists have produced an enormous quantity of forecasts and scenarios about the future. The problem is that most leaders and managers have difficulty in making profitable use of this knowledge in order to perceive and seize opportunities before their competitors.

One of the major reasons for the difficulties people have with managing the future, is the fact that futures experts and their clients often speak different languages. Even futures experts do not understand each other. This leads to significant confusions about the goals, the roles and the methods for future management. It is the complex nature of the many types of futures and as a consequence the variety of mental models that causes the confusions and the problems.

The five futures glasses are a profound and practical model to resolve the futures confusions and to see more and understand more of the future.

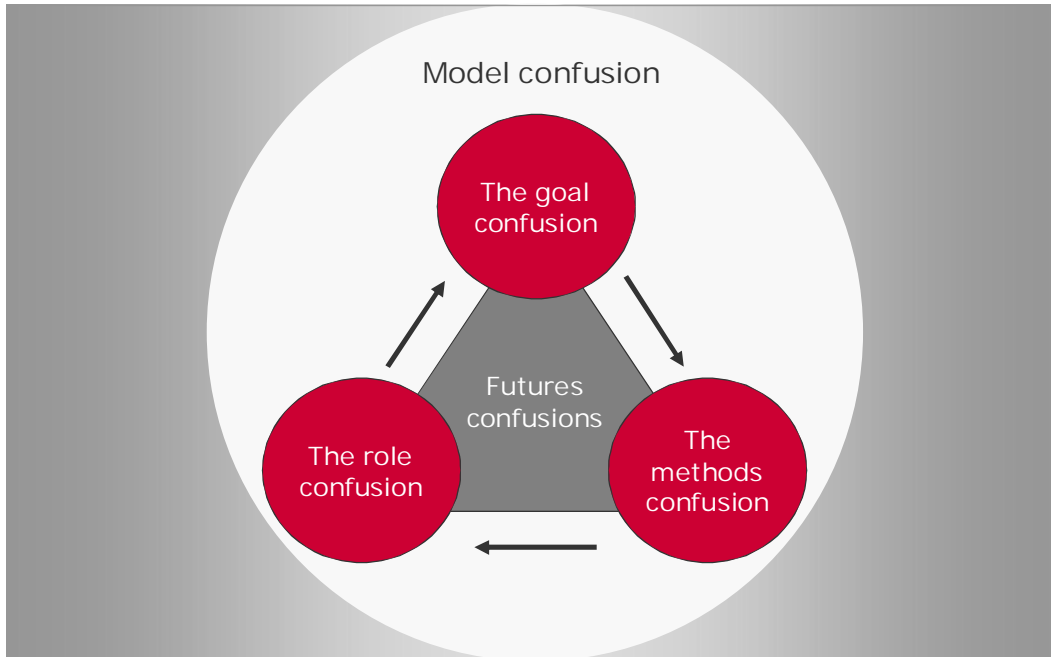
2 The futures confusions

Good future management is one of the most important success factors in private and in corporate life. Regardless of whether you are the chairman of a corporation or your own life enterprise, it is easier to build and maintain your success the better you are able to perceive and use future changes and the opportunities they conceal at an early stage. Future management is the missing link between futures research and business. And it is likely to be the only function leaders cannot and must not delegate.

But leaders and managers often lament and complain about their attempts to work with futures experts and with futures tools. In our work with several hundred management teams, we often heard the following statements that illustrate this point.

- We have looked at earlier forecasts and are very disappointed by the forecast quality of the future expert.
- We can't cope with all of these forecasts, scenarios and visions - we have no clear picture.
- We know the results of futures research, but haven't been able to translate this knowledge into our language, our concepts and practicable strategies.
- We have worked with scenarios, but it didn't meet our needs.
- We have listened to the futures researchers, but what they had to say didn't have enough new, helpful and reliable information for us specialists.

Figure 1: The futures confusions



Numerous projects and plans in future management practice fail due to such futures confusions. There are three kinds of futures confusions, the objectives confusion about what future management is for, the role confusion about what the futurist is aiming at and the methods confusion about which methods shall be applied for which task in future management (Mičić, 2007b). The following table summarizes the futures confusions.

Table 1: Futures confusions

Objectives confusion	<p>Forecast versus creation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The more strongly humans are able to form their own future, the less predictable the future becomes. ▪ Forecast and creating the future are opposing, mutually exclusive objectives. ▪ Since people can create their future to a large extent, the future cannot be predictable.
	<p>Forecast versus warning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scenarios of extreme and surprising futures are misunderstood as forecasts. ▪ They should however, serve exactly the opposite purpose, namely to prevent these futures.
	<p>Vision versus plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The description of a long-term future to be aimed for is understood as planning and rejected. ▪ Planning in the narrowest sense can nowadays only be done for a very short period. Vision is not planning.
	<p>Pragmatism versus science-fiction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many people understand the future as being only what is new, utopian and never imagined before. ▪ However, the future is usually already here. Most of its ingredients can already be seen today.
Role confusion	<p>Prophet or future manager?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The client usually sees the futures expert as a prophet or forecaster. ▪ The futures expert sees himself more as a future manager in most cases.
	<p>Prophet or inspirer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trend researchers' trend creations are understood as forecasts. ▪ In reality however, they provide inspiring ideas and thoughts rather than predicting the future.
	<p>Universal expert or innovator?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Futures experts are often assumed or expected to know the future better than the specialists. ▪ Their competence is much more their interdisciplinarity and their methodological knowledge.
Methods confusion	<p>Tool catalog without a construction drawing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The suitability of the methods and tools for various approaches to the future is hardly mentioned in the catalogs of methods. ▪ Hence, some methods are overused and misused for purposes which they were not aimed for.
	<p>Limitations of classic scenarios</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The classic scenario method does not cover many of the requirements for practice. ▪ As scenarios are considered to be state of the art, the result is often disappointed expectations.

Many of these futures confusions result from the different views on the future. People tend to the subconscious assumption that everyone understands the way they think and talk about the future in the same way they do. They assume that everyone is wearing the same futures glasses and thus form the premise for frustration, misunderstanding and failure.

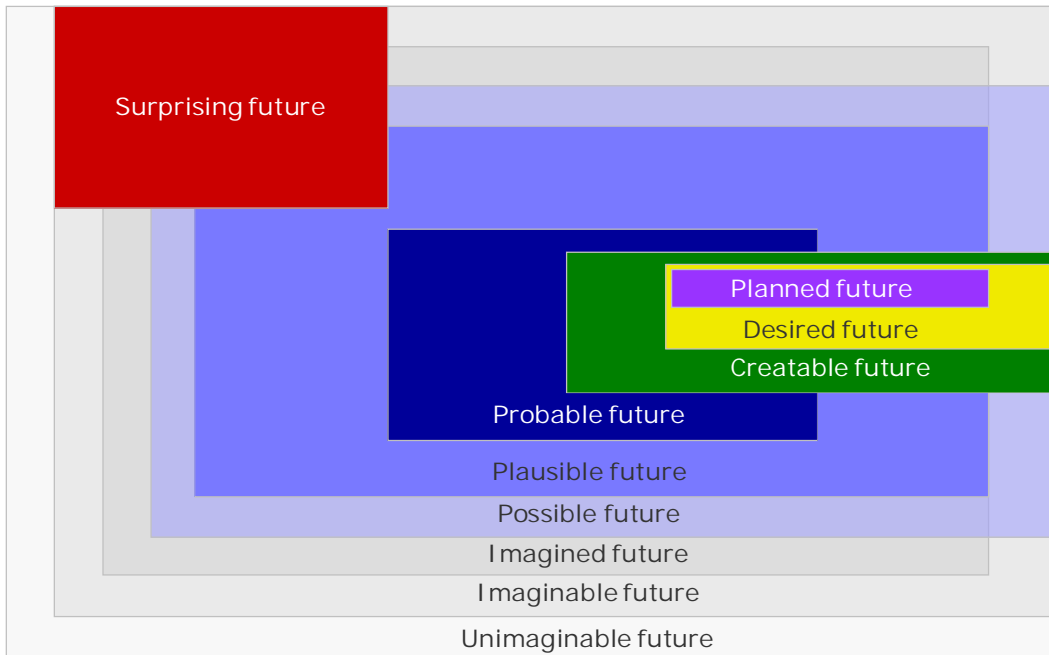
3 The complex nature of types of futures

The future. If all we mean with that is the time in front of us, then the definition of the future seems simple and any further inquiry superfluous. However, if we look at it more closely, then it quickly becomes clear that this initial unambiguous and exhaustive understanding of the future is often unsatisfactory and hardly does justice to the complexity of the future. Futures researchers try to categorize the future, using terms such as possible, probable and preferred. Yet this structure also remains unsatisfactory. As the future is a very complex thought object, it is dangerous to look at it with too radical a simplification. Complexity can only be understood and handled with complexity.

If we look through the relevant literature, we notice surprised and alienated, that hardly any futures thinker has ever attempted a comprehensive categorization of the future. The map presented here can be seen as such an attempt.

The figure below shows the types of futures from our viewpoint. The initial complex categorization enables appropriate simplification by bringing structure and a system into the term and the nature of the future. Let's therefore accept the temporary confusion initially in order to then develop a simple and practicable model. It is only possible to comprehend and understand why it is important and necessary to get to know and use the five futures glasses when you see how many different terms and definitions there are for the future.

Figure 2: Types of futures



The types of futures suggested here need to be regarded under the following assumptions:

1. The futures are defined from the perspective of an individual actor, meaning a person, a team or an organization. The content of every type of future is therefore subject to the subjectivity and the incomplete knowledge of each individual.
2. The definitions of the types of futures are dependent on the time at which they are considered. The contents of the categories change over time. A certain future, such as the contact with extraterrestrial life, can develop from the imaginable future to the possible future and plausible future to the probable future, before it falls out of the futures and into the present or the certain due to factual evidence.
3. The types of futures depend on the sequence in which they are looked at. If you begin with the planned future, you can come to a different categorization if well argued.

The table below describes systematically the different types of futures documented in the literature as well as used in our workshops and interactions with top management teams. The types of futures were identified by using the criteria number, knowability, probability, desirability and controllability which were developed by critical analysis of the literature. The same applies to the classes and the descriptions. The types of futures in bold print are used as generic. The other terms in standard print are viewed as synonymous with the generic terms to a great extent.

Table 2: Types of futures

Criterion	Class	Description	Sources
Knowability	Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future that is not yet imagined and not yet thought The potential future increases with the length of the time horizon forming a cone Assumed to be synonymous with possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fahey and Randall, 1998 Voros, 2003
	Imaginable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future could be imagined by someone The probability is somewhat over zero percent or more With increasing knowledge the possible future takes over the imaginable future in the course of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polak, 1973 Bell, 1997 Friedman, 1977
	Unimaginable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complementary set to imaginable 	
	Imagined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future that is actually imagined by someone "Feasible utopia" (Friedman, 1977) A subset of imaginable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polak, 1973 Friedman, 1977
	Thinkable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarded as synonymous with imaginable future Could be regarded as a subset of imaginable future as thinking requires more reasoning than imagining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anwander, 2002
	Knowable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarded as synonymous with thinkable future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loye, 1998
Probability	Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible in terms of physical laws but not necessarily plausible (like an asteroid hitting the earth by 2010) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell, 1997 De Jouvenel, 1967 Bishop, 2002 Slaughter, 2000 Lindgren and Bandhold, 2003 Voros, 2003 Godet, 1994 Selby, 1993 Nanus, 1990
	Plausible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible and in addition somewhat probable future A possible future that makes sense given what is known in the present A subset of possible Probability is notably higher than zero percent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bishop, 2002 Bezold, 2000 Hancock and Bezold, 1994 Voros, 2003

Table 2: Types of futures

Criterion	Class	Description	Sources
	▪ Probable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plausible future with a probability of more than 50 percent ▪ A subset of plausible ▪ "<i>The probable future is something that seems to be done to us, something over which we have little or no control</i>" Hancock and Bezold, 1994: 24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bishop, 2002 ▪ Loye, 1998 ▪ Bell, 1997 ▪ Garrett, 2000 ▪ Lindgren and Bandhold, 2003 ▪ Voros, 2003
	▪ Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A subset of probable ▪ Regarded as synonymous with probable to a certain extent ▪ Probability is notably higher than 50 percent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bishop, 2002
	▪ Realistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regarded as synonymous with probable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Razak, 2000
	▪ Most likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More likely than any other alternative future, though not necessarily probable or likely itself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bishop, 2002
	▪ Surprising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Future with a relatively low probability (wild card future) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bishop, 2002 ▪ Petersen, 1999 ▪ Steinmüller, 2003
Desirability	▪ Desired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Believed by the actor to be a very good state of the future ▪ Preferred to the term "desirable" as – tough sounding similar – describes a very different form of the future, namely a future that <i>could</i> be desired but does not need to be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bell, 1997 ▪ De Jouvenel, 1967 ▪ Bishop, 2002 ▪ Hicks, 2000 ▪ Bezold, 2000 ▪ Godet, 1994 ▪ Lindgren and Bandhold, 2003
	▪ Preferred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regarded as synonymous with desired ▪ Desired is preferred because it emotionally means much more than just prioritizing and choosing between more or less preferred alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loye, 1998 ▪ Bell, 1997 ▪ Helmer, 1983 ▪ Sandi, 2000 ▪ Voros, 2003
	▪ Normative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desired by somebody who recommends or imposes his desired future to others ▪ Regarded as synonymous with preferred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Henderson, 2000
	▪ Prescriptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assumed to be synonymous to normative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hancock and Bezold, 1994

Table 2: Types of futures

Criterion	Class	Description	Sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contrary of desired and preferred Future that threatens the present strategy Regarded as synonymous with surprising because strategy is built on expectations and non-expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops, 1993-2005 Petersen, 1999 Steinmüller, 2003
Controllability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creatable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future that can be influenced by the actor to a certain extent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops and Seminars, 1993-2005
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarded as synonymous with creatable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helmer, 1983 Friedman, 1977
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Realizable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarded as synonymous with creatable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Godet, 1994
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future that has been transformed into planned action A subset of creatable and preferred futures that individuals commit and work to achieve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gausemeier et al. 1995 Bishop, 2002 Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1999

4 A simplified model: the five futures glasses

Due to the complex character of the future shown in the types of futures, even the experts use a Babylonian confusion of language concerning the most important concepts and terms on the future. There is no conclusive language for the phenomenon of the future, much of the benefit of futures research and future management therefore remains hidden. We need a model that enables us to express exactly, or at least more exactly than usual, what we see and feel and what we think of with regard to the future. We need a map for futures terminology. A layman can only describe the taste of wine with a few words such as dry, mellow, sweet. The expert has a vocabulary of a thousand words. He has models and terms for the various occasions on which wine can be enjoyed and experienced and differentiates very clearly between the different impressions of the same wine in different situations. How much clearer and richer his perception of the world of wine must be!

The types of futures create a good understanding of the complexity of the seemingly simple and unambiguous term "future". This also gives us a reason to apply a portion of modesty and humility when wanting to manage the future. However, in order to be able to master the complexity shown in the map of the futures, we need a simplified model that helps us to understand the future without being oversimplified. The following table summarizes the types of futures into the considerably simpler model of the five futures glasses. This model has been developed in a comprehensive phenomenological analysis of workshops with top management teams (Mičić, 2007a).

Table 3: Types of futures and futures glasses

Types of future	Five futures glasses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Probable and improbable futures ▪ (Plausible futures) 	Blue futures glasses Assumption analysis: Knowing about the probable development of the environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creatable futures 	Green futures glasses Opportunity development: Knowing the possible courses of action for the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desired futures 	Yellow futures glasses Vision development: Determining the long-term orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Surprising futures 	Red futures glasses Surprise analysis: Knowing the possible surprises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planned futures 	Violet futures glasses Strategy development: Determining the action necessary for the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Imaginable futures ▪ Imagined futures ▪ Possible futures 	Futures unable to be clearly assigned to one pair of futures glasses

The colors are assigned to the futures glasses intuitively. Blue reminds us of clinical, reserved and logical analysis. We think of green as the color of creativity, opportunities and options. We understand yellow as the color for a decision in a certain direction, in the sense of a vision. Red is for surprise and (usually) for threats. Violet finally is considered as the color of planning and action.

The categories "imaginable futures", "imagined futures", and "possible futures" are so basic and relevant for every perspective that they cannot be clearly assigned to any pair of futures glasses. They can be included in all five perspectives and provide the mental raw material for different ways of looking at the future.

For a better understanding of the five futures glasses, let us look at five statements about the year 2020 that could appear in your daily newspaper today:

1. In a research report to the government by the Federal Statistics Office, a demographer writes that thirty percent of the population will be older than sixty in 2020.
2. A young engineer writes that virtual meetings will replace half of all business trips in 2020.
3. The Works Council writes that it will have enforced the thirty-hour week for all employees in its company in 2020.
4. A WTO virologist writes that there could be a pandemic by 2020, as a result of which several million people could die within a short period.
5. A multi-billionaire says in an interview that he will have donated most of his wealth by 2020.

What is the difference between all of these future statements about the year 2020? Is it their intentions? Is it the methods the statements are based on? Is it the verifiability of the statements? Is it the level of predictability of the subject area? It is a little bit of everything.

The difference quickly becomes clear very if we offer each of these future thinkers a bet. If we propose that they bet 10.000 Euro of their own personal taxed money that their statement will come true. If they are right, they stand to make a substantial profit, as the rate is 1:10. How will they react?

Will the demographer accept the bet? She is possibly more likely to agree than the others. Demography is, after all, one of the few areas in which the future can be estimated with at least some degree of certainty. The rate of 1:10 would probably convince her. The demographer has formulated a clear assumption on the future. She is looking into the probable future with the blue glasses.



How will the engineer react if we ask him to bet 10.000 Euro that fifty percent of all business travel really will be virtual in 2020? We can assume that he would qualify his statement. He didn't really mean it as a concrete forecast, he spoke about the possibility. It is simply an option, an opportunity we could already use today, if only we could get used to it. He looks through the green glasses and sees opportunities in the sense of possible courses of action and options.



What will the Works Council do? They will probably say that is their vision. Money and material things are not everything. In the 1970's, the union used the advertising slogan „Dad belongs to me on Saturdays“. Now it's time for the next step, despite globalization. There is value in spending more time with the kids and the family. It is, of course, not certain that this vision can be realized. Therefore, they won't bet on it. The Works Council is looking through the yellow glasses, for the desired future, for the vision.



What will we hear from the WTO expert if we offer her the bet? It is possible that she will insult us, show us the door. All she wanted to do was to warn people and to achieve a change in their attitudes towards hygiene, prevention and emergency planning. She will reject our offer for moral reasons alone and perhaps even add that she wouldn't bet on the very thing she is trying to prevent. She is looking through the red glasses for the surprising future. This doesn't have to be negative as in this example, it can also be positive.



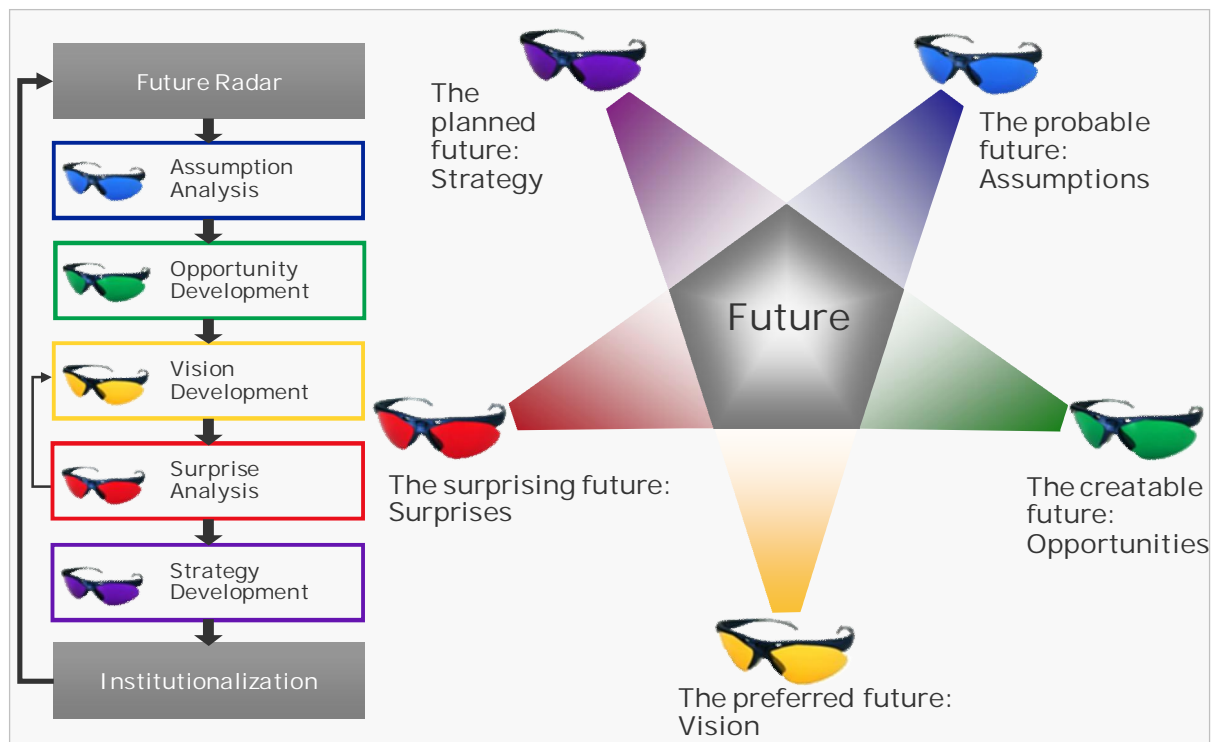
The multi-billionaire certainly won't be impressed by the 10.000 Euro, but a game is a game after all. Will he accept the bet? Almost certainly, because he has planned it and decided to do it. He has already announced it and no



one can prevent him from doing exactly that. He is looking at the future through the violet glasses of planning and action.

There is evidence of various perspectives on the future in the history of mankind. People have consciously occupied themselves with the future since Antiquity, and then more extensively since the Renaissance. People have always adopted all five perspectives on the future and therefore worn all five futures glasses, but those concerned with the long-term future of markets and the world on a professional basis, have had a focus.

Figure 3: The five futures glasses as a process model



5 The characteristics of the five futures glasses

The following table provides a comprehensive overview of the characters of the five futures glasses (Mičić, 2007a).

Table 4: Overview of the five futures glasses

Futures glasses	The blue futures glasses	The green futures glasses	The yellow futures glasses	The red futures glasses	The violet futures glasses
Primary objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To know the probable future developments in the environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To know the possible options for action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine the desired future and direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To know the possible surprises the future holds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine the necessary action to achieve the desired future
Secondary objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be on the right path To make better decisions To reduce risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the potential for success To increase the number and quality of ideas for the vision and the strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To follow a clear direction To use potential for success To coordinate activities To provide orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare for surprises To be less surprised by the future To secure existence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To link the futures strategy with the operating strategy To coordinate activities
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, one third of the population will be 60 or older. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We can increase our efficiency by using videoconferencing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will be the first provider of a conversational user interface for simple communication between man and computer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pandemic with an unknown virus could kill millions of people. September 11, 2001, November 9, 1989 (fall of the Berlin Wall) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will establish a cooperation with a software research institute to develop the conversational user interface.
Objects of thought concerned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumption questions Future factors (trends technologies, issues) Signals Future projections Future scenarios Assumptions about the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity questions Future opportunities Vision candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visions questions Mission (mission elements) Vision (Vision elements) Strategic guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surprise questions Surprises (event-based) Surprises (process-based) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy questions Objectives Projects Processes Systems Development opportunities Contingency strategies
Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macro perspective Outward orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Micro perspective Inward orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Micro perspective Inward orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macro perspective Outward orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Micro perspective Inward orientation

Table 4: Overview of the five futures glasses

Futures glasses	The blue futures glasses	The green futures glasses	The yellow futures glasses	The red futures glasses	The violet futures glasses
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detached ▪ Passive ▪ Observing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involved ▪ Active ▪ Intervening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involved ▪ Active ▪ Intervening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detached ▪ Passive ▪ Observing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involved ▪ Active ▪ Intervening
Mindset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Realistic ▪ Critical ▪ Analytical ▪ Experience based ▪ Conservative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optimistic ▪ Creative ▪ Intuitive ▪ Imaginative ▪ Progressive ▪ Transformative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Optimistic and realistic at the same time ▪ Intuitive and analytic at the same time ▪ Progressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calculatedly pessimistic ▪ Analytic ▪ Creative ▪ Imaginative ▪ Progressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Realistic ▪ Pragmatic ▪ Analytic ▪ Experience-based ▪ Progressive
Destructive factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wanting to creatively develop the future ▪ Wishful thinking ▪ Being too optimistic ▪ Being too pessimistic ▪ Including one's own action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Critical thinking ▪ Experience-based thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being too ambitious ▪ Not being ambitious enough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Probability thinking ▪ Underestimating the benefits ▪ Suppression and avoidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being too ambitious ▪ Not being ambitious enough ▪ Under or overestimating the importance of finance and resources
Typical methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forecasting ▪ Delphi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impact analysis ▪ Creativity techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decision techniques ▪ Conception techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scenario methods ▪ Wild Card analysis ▪ Creative techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning ▪ Project management

6 How to use the five futures glasses

The five futures glasses is a model simple enough to provide a complete framework for thinking and acting in practice. On the other hand, it is complex enough to fully portray the processes and results of future management while remaining neutral towards individual methods, techniques and tools.

The following applications relate to your personal life enterprise as well as the future management in your company or your organization.

Organize your thoughts and resolve futures confusions

The five futures glasses help to resolve and/or avoid the futures confusions. Who isn't confused when they think about the future? Your thoughts keep going around in a circle in an unpleasant way: what do I consider to be probable? Which future would I like to form? What is possible at all? What if something completely different happens? How can I form my future? These are the questions we frequently ask ourselves about the future. The solution appears obvious: Just read an advice book on the future or employ one of these futures researchers. However, after the latter has finished his work either in a book, a lecture or even a consultancy project, most people are more confused than they were before.

The five futures glasses support you through clear, interrelated definitions of the thought processes and the core concepts of future management unambiguously connected to them. You are now in a position to clearly differentiate the various futures and handle them in an experienced way.

Communicate with a better overview and more precision

The improved orderliness in your mind will enable you to talk and write about the future in a much more precise way. Experience and enjoy the confidence with which you use the processes, terms and concepts of future management. The holistic approach of the five futures glasses also provides you with a good overview of what you know and what you don't know.

Impress your business partners with the holistic approach and clarity of your thinking and your language. The five futures glasses will provide you with excellent support.

Help others to communicate better

Use the clarity of your thoughts and communication and your confidence to support other people's discussions. Knowledge of the five futures glasses makes you into a highly suitable facilitator in your organization. Resolve misunderstandings and conflicts with just a few words and examples. Refer to a few appropriate principles to possibly end year-old conflicts in a very short time. You can more or less eliminate the usual misunderstandings that lead to huge costs and often existence threatening wrong developments.

Gain more insight from newspapers, books, lectures and films

You learned how statements about the future can be literally “colored”. Now that you know the five futures glasses, their characteristics and principles, you can much better understand, evaluate and use texts, statistics, novels and films about the future. Your new knowledge on methodology will help in particular you to better use the “idea cathedrals” described by futures researchers and separate the wheat from the chaff. You can recognize the essential better and more quickly and immediately identify the less relevant and ignore it with a good conscience.

Use the futures glasses as a template for designing futures projects

The five futures glasses provide an ideal template for designing futures projects. Save time and money in developing a model for thinking and communicating about the future. Benefit from soundness of the model described achieved through hundreds of applications.

Whether you want to compile a study, give a talk, hold a seminar, carry out a workshop or organize and plan a complete strategy project for your company – the five futures glasses provide you with a tried and tested template for designing futures projects. Depending on the emphasis of the objectives, you can plan more or less time for the individual futures glasses.

Structure your futures strategy

The five futures glasses provide you with the structure for your future strategy and additionally interconnects the core concepts of future management in a semantic network. You save a lot of explanation due to the precise definitions and their interconnections. This model is a basis to put forward arguments to your employees, colleagues, supervisory boards, partners and other interested parties.

Organize your toolbox

The five futures glasses are deliberately neither method-specific nor tool-specific. You can use several different methods to work on the process steps and the core concepts. In this way, the futures glasses are an ideal structure for your toolbox. Each single pair of futures glasses becomes a “compartment” in your toolbox. In future, you can evaluate the unstructured method lists in the specialist literature in a way that suits you and use them to your advantage.

See more of the future than your competitors

Use your ability to look clearly at the future and communicate about it as a strategic advantage in the competition for foresight. We have experienced hundreds of times that even the most professional management teams can be totally helpless with regard to a clear structure and methodology for looking at the future. Since the turn of the millennium, a competition for foresight has developed between companies, organizations and even countries. Anyone who is better at handling the future than others will recognize the threats and, above all, opportunities which lie in it earlier and is therefore better able to use them to his advantage.

Make more of your future

In summary, the five futures glasses put you in a position to make more of your life, your company, your city, your country and thus of your future. Have a bright future!

7 Bibliography

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8 Biography

Dr. Pero Mičić (pronounced mitchitch) is the founder and chairman of FutureManagementGroup AG (www.FutureManagementGroup.com) whose mission it is to help top leaders in business, politics and administration to see more of the future than their competitors. Pero Mičić is consultant to the management teams and experts of many of the world's leading companies. He is keynote speaker on professional conferences and festivities in the US, Europe and Asia. Pero Mičić holds masters degree in business administration and earned his PhD with a work on "The Phenomenology of Future Management in Top Management Teams" in the UK. His latest books are "Die fünf ZukunftsBrillen" (The Five Futures Glasses) 2007; "Das ZukunftsRadar (The FutureRadar) 2006; "Der ZukunftsManager" (The FutureManager) (2003). Pero Mičić is lecturer at renowned universities and management academies, founding member of the Association of Professional Futurists in the USA, president of the advisory board to the European Futurists Conference in Lucerne, Switzerland, and president of the conference on International Trend- and Future Management.

