REPRODUTOPIA: STUDYING LAY ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FUTURE REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

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BACKGROUND

- Future Reproductive
 Technologies (FRT) are
 innovations such as the artificial
 womb and gene editing
- Their impact on society remains uncertain and ambiguous
- There is a need for inclusivity and reflection in the societal discussion on FRT
- Lay people's ethical perspectives on FRT are important for responsible innovation

RESEARCH AIM

To contribute to the inclusive and reflective qualities of Next Nature Network's interactive Reprodutopia expo by investigating public perspectives on future

reproductive technologies in lay ethics discussions.

THEORY AND CONCEPTS

- People use frames of meaning to make sense of complex issues
- Reflection on frames of meaning occurs on four different levels
- Each level of reflection is influenced by the level below it

First-order discourse

Technical
Effectiveness
Side effects

Situational

Problem definitions Preferred solutions

Second-order discourse

Systems

Initial normative framing of problems

Social order

Basal preferences about society

METHODS

- Five focus groups
- 25 participants: different ages, parents and non-parents
- Three discussion rounds

Outcomes of one round serve as input for the next

Round 1: First associations

Round 2: Reflection on fictional profiles

Round 3: Narrative co-creation

 Combination of open and selective coding; horizontal and vertical analysis

KEY RESULTS

FRT as a **double-edged sword**:

It will be designed to solve issues, but may create new ones

Unforeseen side effects
Class divides
Overpopulation
Bad intentions

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 Co-created narratives reflected the themes and levels of discussion

DISCUSSION

- Different themes co-occurred on the same level of reflection
- Strength: focus group design with creative dialogue elements
- Limitation: diversity of participant sample
- Implication: efforts to enrich the societal discussion on FRT (e.g. Reprodutopia) can be made more inclusive and reflective by incorporating lay people's doublesided views on FRT

Key references: Edelenbosch, R. (2014). Deliberating Neurotechnologies for Education: Facilitating Frame Reflection. Grin, J., & Graaf, H. Van De. (1996). Technology, & Human Values, 21(1), 72–99. Stilgoe, J., Owen, R., & Macnaghten, P. (2013). Developing a framework for responsible innovation. Research Policy, 42(9), 1568–1580.