


## REPORT

# Materialities and temporalities in STS

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dem Kapitel anders benannt. Es geht u. a. um „prevision“, „fore-sight“, „forecasting“ oder „prediction“ – und das sind nicht etwa nur anderslautende Bezeichnungen für in etwa dasselbe. Entsprechend variieren bei den Autor\*innen dieses Teils die Verständnisweisen sowohl von Wissen/Wissenschaft als auch von Zukunft/zukunftsorientierten Aussagen – das aber ist konsistent, denn beide Begriffe sind nur in ihrer Bezogenheit aufeinander angemessen bestimmbar. Die Beitragenden entwickeln eigene in sich je konsistente Begrifflichkeiten hinsichtlich des Bezugs von Wissen und Zukunft und somit mit Gewinn zu lesende Studien. Eine konsistente Überblicksdarstellung dieser Diversität wird von den Herausgeber\*innen aber nicht geleistet.

Derselbe Befund gilt für die sieben Fallstudien aus Teil III (Empirical perspectives across policy fields). Der Sachhorizont geht da weit über das Militärische und im engeren Sinne Sicher-

## *In welchem Sinne sind Aussagen der politikberatenden Wissenschaft zur Zukunft Teil eines Wissens?*

heitspolitische hinaus, da geht es u. a. auch um Risiken aufgrund des Klimawandels, im Bereich öffentlicher Gesundheit oder im Finanzsystem.

Umso beeindruckender ist die Leistung der Herausgeber\*innen in ihrer abschließenden „Conclusion“ (IV. Teil). Unter der Überschrift „The politics and science of the future. Assembling future knowledge and integrating it into public policy and governance“ zeigen sie, dass nach ihrem Verständnis der beiden Schlüsselbegriffe Wissen und Zukunft sowohl Politik als auch Wissenschaft Ko-Produzenten der Zukunft sind. Ausführlich entwickeln und erläutern sie einen Schematismus dieses Ko-Produzententums, der mit seinen Rückkopplungsschleifen an den klassischen *Learning Loop* erinnert (Abb. 14.1) und schließlich von den Herausgeber\*innen auch kulturell eingebettet wird. Das ist alles eindrücklich gelesen und gelehrt – und vermutlich auch richtig, denn im Kern wird gesagt: Diversität ist zu erwarten und legitim.

Doch spezifisch für *Sicherheitspolitik* ist das alles offenkundig nicht.

### Literatur

Luhmann, Hans-Jochen (2013): Schätze aus der reichen Geschichte umweltpolitischen Scheiterns. Rezension von: European Environment Agency (EEA): Late lessons from early warnings. Science, precaution, innovation. EEA-Report Nr. 1/2013. In: Technikfolgenabschätzung – Theorie und Praxis 22 (3), S. 65–68. DOI: 10.14512/tatup.22.3.65.

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Every four years the European Association for Science and Technology Studies (EASST) and the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) hold their joint conference. Although originally planned to take place in Prague, this year’s conference was held in a virtual form due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, the organizers from the Czech Academy of Sciences had to move 435 sessions and 1777 presentations from all over the world into digital space – a unique experiment and very much in line with the conference’s overall concern for “Locating and Timing Matters: Significance and Agency of STS in Emerging Worlds”. The call highlighted the rapidity of societal change that evokes feelings of urgency, unease and confusion and asked for contributions that address continuities and discontinuities with a view to global geopolitical and economic differences.

The opening lectures by Ulrike Felt (Univ. of Vienna, President of EASST) and Joan Fujimura (Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, President of 4S) discussed these issues in the context of the present Covid-19 pandemic: Who gets to decide over measures against the pandemic? What is the role of technologies? And how does the focus on the pandemic affect dealings of STS scholars with previous or newly arising global and local challenges, like climate change. Indeed, a number of individual presentations as well as two out of six sub-plenaries analyzed the pandemic through the lenses of “political ecologies and inequalities” as well as “Big Data and datafication”.

Conference presentations covered case studies from the fields of biotechnology, medicine, energy use, or urban research, among others, as well as conceptual approaches and theoretic reflections related to global and local knowledge, intra- and transdisciplinarity, Responsible Research Innovation (RRI) and much more. Exchange across disciplinary boundaries was particularly fruitful where the same issues were addressed from dif-

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ferent angles. For example, Technology Assessment (TA), which also deals with scientific visioning, can learn from the experiences in-house anthropologists have gained by intervening in the work of their own colleagues.

Two panels focused particularly on TA issues. Contributions to the panel Prototyping Urban Futures, organized by S. Dickel and M. Woznica (both JGA), K. Weller and A. Schikowitz (both MCTS/TUM), discussed prototyping and comparable concepts as techno-social practices in the urban context: robot buses, city models and maps, the Vienna Baugruppen, or the Smart City. Beyond the presentation of concrete prototypes, panel participants also underscored the need for a critical theory of the so-

colleagues, Lancaster Univ.; S. Low and M. Boettcher, IASS). In this sense futures (in the plural!) are negotiable (P. Dobroć, ITAS/KIT; E. Araujo, Univ. do Minho). Additionally, the politicization of futures may be supported by the implementation of concepts and artifacts such as prototypes for the purpose of demonstrating or illustrating the future (M. Woznica, JGU; J. Bareis, ITAS/KIT; Th. Bächle, HIIG). Also, the processes of de- and repoliticization (G. Bouleau/INRAE, Ch. Pavenstädt and S. Rödder, Univ. of Hamburg) were strongly reflected in the presentations. Of particular interest in this context was the presentation by G. Bouleau in which the future was described as a place of repoliticization that can be used to (re)create space for

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of the future.*

cio-technical impact of prototypes and processes of prototyping. Prototypes in this analysis are not innocent and neutral, but own subjectivity and agency to promote certain kinds of socio-technical transformation whose goals and biases are not unanimously shared and should therefore be part of public and political debate (H. Mittal, IIMA; A. Baliga, LSE and M. Roßmann, ITAS/KIT). The participants of the panel also showed that prototypes do not guarantee the materialization of the future, but can play an important role as initiators of developments quite different from the ones first suggested (M. Jalonen and S. Yli-Kauhaluoma, Aalto Univ. School of Business; Carlos Cuevas-Garcia and Federica Peponi, MCTS/TUM). They can also make the future capable of action (A. Schikowitz, MCTS/TUM). The interesting point about prototypes as elements in dispositifs is also that they highlight different materialities of the future in contrast to future discourses. In this context Sabrina Huizenga (Erasmus Univ. Rotterdam) and colleagues raised the question of how the future is made actionable through prototypes. Daniela Peukert (Leuphana Univ. of Lueneburg) and colleagues highlighted the values of prototypes, whose visuality and spatial situatedness provide an addition to written text and spoken word.

Participants in the panel Politicization of Socio-technical Futures, stretching over three sessions organized by M. Roßmann, A. Lösch and P. Dobroć (all from ITAS/KIT), presented case studies and theoretical reflections on the politicization of socio-technical futures. With reference to various case studies such as Climate Governance, Greenhouse Gas Removal, Air Taxis, or 3D Printing, presenters illustrated how politicization through narratives (M. Eggert and A. Zweck, RWTH Aachen; Ch. Pavenstädt and S. Rödder, Univ. of Hamburg), visions of the future (A. Kazakova, Bauman MSTU) and promises in the discourses immerse, unfold and eventually become influential in present-day political rationalities (N. Markusson, D. McLaren and

debate when a critical topic should be an object of social negotiation but has fallen out of consideration. This point is particularly interesting for TA, since in scientific visioning and transformative action (A. Lösch, ITAS/KIT) TA is also called upon to initiate debates and coordinate re-politicization.

The simultaneity of the conference's virtual organization, imposed by the pandemic, and the pandemic as object of STS research turned this meeting itself into an experiment with the new spatio-temporal realities of the Covid-19 world. This fact was noticed by the participants as soon as they selected their time zone upon entering the platform. There also was an extended conference temporality as recorded sessions remained accessible for two months – another benefit of this special socio-technical reality. Despite the usual technical issues with online meetings and the obvious downside of not being able to enjoy random on site interaction, there were many benefits: climate-friendly, resource-efficient avoidance of flying, flexible participation from home, to name just a few. As is usual with EASST/4S meetings, this virtual conference, too, offered breakout sessions for more intimate discussions among participants, featured a virtual exhibition and facilitated exchange with practitioners, e. g. from the field of gardening by asking “How social are the seeds?”. EASST/S4 has shown that a virtual conference is not necessarily impersonal but may find its own ways of interaction and sociability.

Conference program, abstracts and  
welcome speeches

<https://www.easst4s2020prague.org/program/>