

Rethinking planning with STS: research and practice intervening in a material world

CfP 4S/EASST Conference (from August 28 to September 3, 2016 in Barcelona, Spain)

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Abstract

Planners sketch, portray and map out spatial arrangements and the built environment. In these activities they work with plans, codes and other 'things' to set conditions for interventions in the material world. The challenge for planners is to mediate between the existing materiality of the city they face and the prospective outcome in urban territories they contemplate. This marks a moment of disruption of the already-there and the yet-to-come, and bears an uncertainty in the opening up multiple trajectories and hybrid arenas for emerging practices, knowledges and negotiations, often entangled, distributed and enacted at the intersection of expert-driven narratives and political discourses.

Similar to the way STS has opened up the world-making practices in science to sociological inquiry, this track proposes to inquire the city-making practices in planning and their effects across territories. The track considers cities, the object and not simply the loci of science and technology studies through investigation of the knowledge, tools and politics of planning. Adopting the hybrid lens of STS in the study of planning practices underlines the complexity and uncertainty in the planning project and makes observable the interrelation between planning techniques, expertise, cultures and politics.

We particularly welcome contributions that not only seek to open up the black boxes of planning but aim to engage a discussion into its re-assembling to include more diverse and reflexive ways of doing planning. It focuses on the various displacements, arrangements and framings of the planning exercise. Therefore, this track invites to explore and further develop theoretical, methodological and empirical implications in a discussion of the specific hybrid practices through which planning understands, governs and shapes cities, built environments and territories. We welcome contributions that aim:

- To investigate the nexus between the built and social environment by studying how planning technologies come to shape and are being shaped by the city.
- To consider how planning is translated into a technical or a deliberative process by addressing some of the tensions between governance and democracy.
- To account for the role of artefacts in framing and performing the planning dialogue by drawing on both the social and material specificity of the city.
- To trace the trajectories of planning issues looking beyond the ready-made plan or the planned territory.

- To enquire into the socio-material and situated practices of planning as a technical and political project of city-making.

If you have any questions concerning the submission of your abstract, please, feel free to contact directly Julio Paulos (julio.paulos@arch.ethz.ch) and Marko Marskamp (marko.marskamp@unil.ch)

To submit a paper to this open track, please go to http://www.nomadit.co.uk/easst/easst_4s2016/panels.php5?PanelID=3846

For more information on how to submit a paper, please check the conference's call for papers: <http://www.sts2016bcn.org/call-for-papers/>

Deadline for abstract submissions: February 21, 2016