

Urban Techno-Politics: CFP for *Science as Culture*

Guest Editors: Thaddeus R. Miller and Rider W. Foley

Deadline: August 31, 2016

Submission guidelines: http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/cSaC_Edit_Guidelines.pdf

Urban centers are home to more than half of the world's population; they have long served as vibrant centers of social, political and economic life alongside technoscientific innovation (Glaeser 2011; Hall 1998; Mumford 1961). The city is often the grand stage for competing visions of democracy and the good life. These contests have ranged from the social discipline of Aristotle's Republic to the social contract inscribed in Hobbes' Leviathan to the Occupy movement's recent democracy experiments. For thousands of years, cities have sought to be exemplars of societal visions and expectations associated with new technologies. They serve as hubs for innovation activities and their incorporation into the built environment and everyday life.

STS scholars conceptualize the city as a place where boundaries, intermediaries, and overlaps between the societal and technical afford new expressions of techno-politics. Knowledge and power expressed through the urban environment both shape and are shaped by technoscience, as a locus for politics and policy (Aibar and Bijker 1997; Livingstone 2003). Recently, cities have emerged as critical sites for STS scholars to explore the relationship between knowledge, technology, power and politics (Dierig et al. 2003; Gieryn 2006; Hommels 2005). Yet this work remains fragmented. Since the works of Jane Jacobs and Lewis Mumford put cities on the STS map, the importance of urban place continues to be underrepresented.

We call for papers for this special issue that bring together STS work that critically engages with the co-production of technoscience, socio-political order and the city. The goal is to enhance the ability of STS to make a significant contribution to understanding of how techno-politics shapes urban life. The papers will focus on how theoretical, empirical, and methodological advances in STS can open-up techno-politics through engagements and interventions in the city.

This special issue will interrogate how technologies and infrastructures, both old and new, are being re-imagined and re-formed in response to a series of economic, political, and environmental problems, including climate change, concerns for economic security and rapid urbanization. STS scholarship is vital to articulate the rich complexity of these conceptual spaces and there is a need to critically engage the discourses and visions for the city and explore how they shape knowledge production, technology, and social order to strive for those desired futures. Plans for new infrastructures and urban design carry embedded assumptions about knowledge production, technological risks, public engagement and the good life (Winner 1986). As such, they are techno-political: they "constitute, embody, or enact political goals" (Hecht 2009[1998]:15).

From a historical perspective, cities were shaped by architectural standards and building codes. Lewis Mumford's discussions on the ascendance of big data was prescient as the "smart cities" agenda seeks to connect with direct public experiences that embrace certain ways of knowing and seeing "big data", thereby embracing both crowds and their intimates. Yet the city maintains its reliance on civic organizations to identify and indemnify private property with sweat equity and experiential knowledge, while financial capital continues to underwrite the city.

Emerging techno-political regimes around resilience and sustainability are re-shaping cities around the globe with investments in transportation infrastructure, energy systems and ecological design. Cities draft master plans that alternatively create and respond to alternate future visions of the sustainable city. However, the goals and visions of sustainability are contested. How do these techno-politics promote notions of sustainability, risk and vulnerability? For whom?

We will aim to publish papers that will: i) revisit the historical roots of STS and the city; ii) call attention to contemporary moments of techno-politics; iii) address how scientific and technological knowledge shapes and is shaped by the city's socio-political order, and iv) reflect upon instances of scholars' engagement and intervention in urban settings. Each article will substantively engage with and move forward understanding of techno-politics.

Please submit your paper to both Thaddeus Miller (thaddeus.miller@pdx.edu) and Rider Foley (rider@virginia.edu) on or before the deadline of Wednesday, August 31, 2016. The submission should be a maximum of 7000 words including all text; this length will allow for additional text to be added after the peer-review, if needed. All submissions must follow the *Science as Culture* editorial [guidelines](#) for research papers, especially the structural and conceptual points on the first page; otherwise the paper will be returned to the author.

Please contact the guest editors with any questions or share abstracts of proposed papers for advice.

References

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