

**STS conference "Critical Issues in Science and Technology Studies"
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Session 7 " The politics of ICTs"

Translating Governmentality

An ANT-Informed Analysis of the Digitization of Governmental Information Flows

Using a co-productionist stance when looking at processes of digitization which entail the redesign of extant information flows means assuming that the whole actor-network is re-assembled. If we apply this assumption to the formal political system and its bureaucracies, this implies that far from simply dragging actors and processes into the virtual domain, the digitization of governmental information flows and procedures is challenging the modernist institutional order as we know it. It is triggering emergent actors, divergent information-policy orders and procedures of legitimacy, ultimately novel subjects of authority.

For instance, how are hierarchies among institutions at different scales (i.e. ministries, regions, municipalities) changing because of the digitization of their information flows and procedures? which scale benefits the most from the re-design of data flows? how are the boundaries between the Private and the Public changing because of the introduction in the ganglia of the Public of hyper-specific ICT knowledge held mainly by firms? how does the massive import of technical expertise due to the digitization of internal procedures cope with the expected supremacy of legislative knowledge in a governmental context? do hybrid actors emerge to mediate frictions? ultimately, how are functions and authority redistributed in the nascent actor-network?

Drawing upon on-field case studies, this presentation shows how an STS- and ANT-informed approach can reveal the dynamics along which the formal political system is being unnoticeably transformed by micro-processes of digitization of its information flows and procedures.

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