

Call for Abstracts:

“Normativity in Technology Assessment”

TATuP-topic for the issue 1/2019

Extended deadline for submission until 16 July 2018!

Within the technology assessment (TA) community, attention for considerations on aims and practices of TA is rising again. Recently, two special issues covered theoretical foundations (Bösch and Dewald 2018a) of TA as well as reflections on its ‘politics’ (Hennen and Nierling 2018, forthcoming). Subjects included conceptual questions of democratic legitimisation (Grunwald 2018), neutrality (Torgersen 2018, forthcoming), political positioning (Delvenne and Parotte forthcoming), outreach and alternatives (Dobroć et al. 2018), ambivalence (Liebert and Schmidt 2018) and reflexivity (Bösch and Dewald 2018b). At the same time, concrete practices have been analysed with regard to TA’s self understandings and paradigms in the interaction between science, society and politics (e.g. Bauer and Kastenhofer forthcoming).

The TATuP-topic for the issue 1/2019 intends to carry the reflection on TA and its practices one step further and to address, under the umbrella of normativity and TA, the often hidden assumptions and preconditions in TA that the above contributions explicitly or implicitly address.

Since its beginnings in the 1970s, claims for neutrality and impartiality have been considered an almost self-evident trade mark of TA. On a closer look, however, both theory and practice of TA draw on normative references on different levels. This does not only pertain to the choice of the technologies analysed but also to the way of processing research results and the analytic perspectives applied in their evaluation. Influencing factors that play a role when formulating options for decisions, such as the involved actors’ interests, are not always reflected on or even laid open. Often, institutional or personal preferences remain hidden while founding norms on different levels.

Laying open and discussing the normative basis of TA entail many further questions: Which theories, concepts, values, perspectives, aims or visions guide the heuristics or plans for actions? Can we identify a ‘stable nucleus’ consisting of certain norms? Which concepts (such as sustainability, social compatibility, basic rights, justice, orientation at the common good) have provided normative input to TA (in part for a long time already), and under which conditions? How, if at all, can we break down certain normative reference points such as international treaties or democratic procedures into applicable pieces of guidance for concrete TA relevant cases?

Finally, a normative perspective on TA must also consider the change in value orientations, which throws up questions regarding the relation to, and the integration of, societal diagnoses of the respective zeitgeist. After all, they influence public debates and thus, the societal assessment of new technologies and are therefore relevant for TA as well. Thus, the (often implicit) implications of normativity in TA appear manifold; therefore, we explicitly put them to discussion with this TATuP-topic.

References

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- Böschen, Stefan; Dewald, Ulrich (2018b): TA als Kontextualisierungsexpertise. Zwischen einfachem und reflexivem Modus. *TATuP* 27(1), S. 34-39.
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- Grunwald, Armin (2018): Technikfolgenabschätzung und Demokratie. Notwendige oder kontingente Verbindung? In: *TATuP* 27(1), S. 40-45.
- Hennen, Leonhard; Nierling, Linda (2018, i.E.): The politics of Technology Assessment. Introduction to the special Issue of "Technological Forecasting and Social Change". In: *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*.
- Liebert, Wolfgang; Schmidt, Jan Cornelius (2018): Ambivalenzen im Kern der wissenschaftlich-technischen Dynamik. Ergänzende Anforderungen an einer Theorie der Technikfolgenabschätzung. In: *TATuP* 27(1), S. 52-58.
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Expected contributions

For this TATuP-topic, we invite authors to reflect on the normative concepts underlying TA:

- In which way is TA born by normative orientations, i.e. value orientations, political convictions, etc., how are they communicated or, respectively, where and why do they remain hidden?
- Which values and norms are at the basis of TA today? What significance do various aims and concepts have for TA, such as growth and innovation, sustainability, social justice, responsibility or the common good?
- How have these elements changed over time? Which ones have gained or lost importance, respectively? Is there a 'stable nucleus'?

In addition, contributions are welcome which describe concrete *normative implications in TA practice*, for example in projects for research and policy advice or with regard to popular TA methods such as participation. Here, questions regarding normative assessments pose themselves in a very concrete way, for example when integrating stakeholder interests, in taking into account implicit value orientations in expert statements or when processing citizens' perspectives.

- How does TA deal in practice with diverging value orientations and interests? Are there different principles for research and advice giving, respectively?
- Which normative implications arise from escorting technological innovation processes (e.g. the creation of acceptance vs. the assessment of acceptability)?
- How does TA deal with normative differences arising from different cultures of knowledge (for example in the natural vs. the social sciences)?

- What would be a concrete approach for adequately explicating and addressing value relations and orientations (i.e. normativity) in TA projects?

Finally, we invite authors to position themselves with regard to *future conceptual requirements* that relate to normative implications in TA. This refers to approaches on how TA can accommodate to changing external requirements, for example to a different political climate or to the changed reputation and authority of scientific expertise ('fake news'). For this task we explicitly invite authors from areas related to TA such as the philosophy or sociology of technology and from Science and Technology Studies. From an external perspective, contributions may help to understand, and to shape more consciously, the conditional relation between normativity and TA. Pertinent fields may be critical social theory, ethical approaches, Values in Design, gender studies or RRI. Relevant questions are:

- How does TA deal with interests and aims of political parties? In which way should implicit value orientations be laid open? What are the hazards from being too heavily guided by interests? How universal, or how relative, respectively, can the normative references be in TA?
- In the light of the increasing international integration of TA, how can values be commonly developed and integrated? Can there be such a thing as a shared 'ethos of TA'?
- What can be learned for TA (positively or negatively) from approaches such as Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI), where societal values have been placed centre-stage and linked to the innovation system?

Editors of this TATuP-topic

Linda Nierling (ITAS/KIT); Helge Torgersen (ITA/ OeAW)

Submission

Please send your abstract via email to redaktion@tatup.de by 16 of July (**extended deadline**), at the very latest. Please respect the following directions: max. 3000 signs incl. blanks; the editorial office will correspond with the author submitting the abstract; name all authors with full names, email addresses and institutional affiliations.

Time schedule

16 July, 2018: deadline for submitting abstracts.

August, 2018: decisions on inviting authors to submit a full manuscript.

November, 2018: deadline for the submission of a full manuscript.

from December, 2018 on: feedback from the reviewers and revisions by the authors.

April, 2019: publication.