SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES AT THE AIRPORT

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Abstract:
Title: Science and technology studies at the airport

Airports have long been a topic of inquiry for social scientists and scholars of science and technology in society. They are an interesting and valuable topic of research because they allow to address manifold questions in a relatively well-defined space. Airports are often testing grounds and early adopters of new technologies, specifically for managing the flow of large amounts of people, immigration management, and security. This makes them exemplary places of automation work, where the logic, conditions and consequences of the design of the human-machine division of functions can be explored. They are also highly paradoxical places where border management and consumer culture overlap and where anonymity of the crowd exists parallel to a control and identification practice that people have to pass in order to get access.
Airports are also relevant for scholars who are interested in multispecies studies for example "encounters of animals and technology in airport operations" (Bauer et al. 2019). Most recently, they have become a relevant field of enquiry for questions regarding environmental factors, sustainability and waste management. So far, those investigations are largely isolated and often do not relate to one another e.g. questions of security and human animal encounters are rarely discussed together despite the fact that there is significant overlap.
This panel aims to bring together scholars who use the airport as a space of inquiry with the goal to explore the value of STS perspectives in this context. We invite contributions from scholars who are interested in or work on the movement of people, goods, and animals, borders and migration, surveillance and security, questions of sustainability, as well as other topics as they relate to STS at the airport. We welcome theoretical and conceptual research as well as empirical analysis at the airport that utilize or further develop an STS perspective.

Key words:
Airport, STS perspectives