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ANNUAL REPORT OF STS-CH, 2007 (JANUARY – DECEMBER)

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The report is a collaborative product. Section 1.1 was written by Michael Bürgi, section 1.2 by Christoph Müller, section 1.3 by Myriam Spörri, sections 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1 by Sibylle Obrecht, section 3.2 in parts and 4.3 by Priska Gisler, section 3.3 by Michael Guggenheim, and the remainder of the report was written by Regula Valérie Burri and Martina Merz.

1. COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING

1.1 WEBPAGE

Throughout 2007, we have effected primarily technical changes to the website.

Last year's redesign of our site has been completed by the installation of a database allowing for a simple way to organize our member data. Members are invited to communicate their data by email (<http://www.sts.unibas.ch/members.php>) or via the online form that we installed last year (www.sts.unibas.ch/formular.html).

The STS-CH website in general still provides updated information about the association, including all the events and activities. The objective of the website is to facilitate the circulation of information among members, and, more generally, to increase the visibility of the association and of STS in Switzerland.

URL: www.sts.unige.ch

Contact: michael.buergi@bluewin.ch

1.2 MAILING LIST

The mailing list is a vital tool for building a web of STS scholars in Switzerland. Established in 1999,

its main purposes are (a) to exchange information and distribute announcements, (b) to discuss STS issues, and (c) to establish connections between different STS research projects, especially in Switzerland. In addition, it serves as the main medium for the STS-CH association to announce information to and among its members. In 2007, the list could welcome 13 new subscribers with a total of 239 subscribers at the end of 2007. STS_L is a "low traffic" list, with an average of about seven messages per month, most of them announcing conferences (Call for Papers) or job offers. The list is thus mainly used for broadcasting.

The STS list welcomes new members and submissions concerning news, events, research projects, abstracts, book reviews, calls for papers, conference information and discussions about issues related to Science and Technology Studies (STS). To subscribe (i.e. add yourself to) the STS_L list, send a message to majordomo@id.uzh.ch, with the body of the mail saying: subscribe STS_L youremail@address (e.g. subscribe STS_L Jim.Knopf@univevey.ch). The list runs on a majordomo program, kindly hosted by the central informatics service of the University of Zurich (id.uzh.ch), and is maintained by Christoph Müller.

Contact: Christoph Müller (owner-sts_l@id.uzh.ch)

1.3 NEWSLETTER

Since January 2003 the board (editor: Myriam Spoerri) publishes a regular newsletter usually twice a year. It contains important information in the field of STS in Switzerland. It announces a) activities and meetings of STS-CH, b) recent developments in the field of science and technology studies in Switzerland, c) national events and lecture series, d) calls for papers and job openings, e) information about recently published books relevant to STS and is open for further information related to the field.

Newsletter no. 10 was sent out by way of the STS-CH mailing list in September 2007. The newsletters are also available online at <http://www.sts.unige.ch>. Please submit any information to be included to Myriam Spörri, spoerri@fsw.uzh.ch.

Contact: Myriam Spörri (spoerri@fsw.uzh.ch).

1.4 NETWORKING

Regular exchange and consultation takes place between the board members of STS-CH and of the following associations and organizations in Switzerland and abroad:

- Committee for sociology of science and technology, Swiss Sociological Association
- Swiss Society for Cultural Studies (SSCS)
- Sektion Wissenschafts- und Technikforschung, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie
- Gesellschaft für Wissenschafts- und Technikforschung (GWTF)
- 4S – The Society for Social Studies of Science
- EASST – The European Association for the Study of Science and Technology

The presidency of the German *Gesellschaft für Wissenschafts- und Technikforschung* (GWTF) has recently proposed to co-organize a joint Meeting with STS-CH in 2009, an option which STS-CH will seriously explore throughout the next year.

2. MEMBERS AND ACCOUNTS

2.1 MEMBERS

STS-CH is a predominantly (with exceptions) academic association with members from various disciplinary backgrounds (social sciences, humanities, natural sciences). In 2001, STS-CH has started out with 53 members. By the end of 2007, STS-CH had 98 members. 5 persons joined the association in 2007, two person left it.

2.2 ACCOUNTS

The financial report will be completed in January 2008 and distributed as a handout at the General Assembly 2008.

3. EVENTS OF STS-CH IN 2007

3.1 "VERMITTLUNG VON WISSENSCHAFT IN AUSSTELLUNGEN", LECTURE BY SILKE BELLANGER (BASEL, JANUARY 2007)

Silke Bellanger, M.A., sociologist and historian, gave a lecture in Basel on January 25th, 2007, entitled „Beobachtungen und/oder Praktiken: Zur Vermittlung von Wissenschaft in Ausstellungen“. The event was organized by Sibylle Obrecht for STS-CH and the Seminar für Kulturwissenschaft und Europäische Ethnologie. In her lecture, Silke Bellanger analyzed the dynamics of the representation of science in exhibitions in the last forty years, focusing on the changing conceptualizations of the relationship between objects and visitors of Science Centers. Her inspiring presentation, being of particular interest to a mixed audience including Social Anthropologists and STS-Scholars, was followed by a lively discussion.

3.2 "SCIENTIFIC FUTURES - PUBLIC AFFAIRS?" COLLOQUIUM SERIES (ZURICH, JANUARY – DECEMBER 2007)

The colloquium series “Scientific Futures, Public Affairs? Negotiating Challenges of the 21st Century in Science, Media and Politics”, organized by STS-CH with the support of Collegium Helveticum (University Zurich and ETH Zurich) started in fall 2006 and continued throughout 2007. In the context of the series, issues of scientific and public perceptions and imaginations of future technologies are discussed.

- June 22, 2007, 16.00 – 17.30
PD Dr. Martin Lengwiler, Universität Zürich
"Safety First: Conditions of Risk Conflicts in the History of Swiss Accident Insurance"

In this workshop talk, historian Martin Lengwiler gave an interesting presentation on his recent book (and habilitation project) on the politics of Swiss accident insurances. Taking the Swiss case as an example and considering it in a European and transatlantic context, he showed how risk policies have been transformed over time.

- November 19, 2007, 18.00 – 20.00
Prof. Dr. Silke Schicktanz, Universität Göttingen
"Frauen geben, Männer nehmen? Geschlechterdifferenzen in der Praxis und bei soziomoralischen Einstellungen bezüglich der Spende von Organen"

Silke Schicktanz gave a thought-provoking talk about gender differences and ethical decision

making in organ donation. She presented the results of a pilot study, for which she had gathered people in so called focus groups. The results displayed the different ethical approaches of men and women towards organ donation but also confirmed the necessity to root individual attitudes in analyses taking into consideration the social backgrounds and socio-economics contexts in which these opinions are formed.

- December 17, 2007, 18.00 – 20.00
Prof. Dr. Peter Weingart, Universität Bielefeld
"Wissenschaftliche Politikberatung zwischen Vogelgrippe und Klimawandel"

In his presentation, renowned sociologist Peter Weingart analyzed the current state of scientific advice to policymaking. Taking the cases of environmental change and avian influenza as examples and questioning policymakers' instrumental use of scientific knowledge and advice, Weingart pointed to some fundamental and inherent problems in scientific advice to policymakers and discussed international efforts to develop respective guidelines aimed at defining "good advice".

Location: Collegium Helveticum, Schmelzbergstr. 25, 8006 Zürich

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3.3 "NOTES TOWARDS A (HISTORICAL) SOCIOLOGY OF BUILDING TYPES", LECTURE BY PROF. ANTHONY KING (NEUCHÂTEL, JUNE 2007)

Michael Guggenheim (University of Zurich) and Ola Söderström (University of Neuchâtel) were the organizers of a two-day interdisciplinary workshop "Urban Artefacts: Types, Practices, Circulations", which took place June 14-15, 2007 at the University of Neuchâtel.

The association STS-CH co-organized (and sponsored) the invited evening lecture at the first evening of the event.

- June 14, 2007, 18.15 – 20.00
Prof. Dr. Anthony King, State University of New York, Binghamton, US
"Notes towards a (Historical) Sociology of Building Types (or Spatial Artifacts)"

Anthony King took first steps at building a theory of the circulation of building types. Building on his own research on the history of the bungalow and the villa, he started from the question of chicken and egg: which is first, building form or social practices? And how do these two intertwine. He furthermore analysed the role of power, language and scale. He concluded by asking several pertinent questions such as: How do building types insert time into space as well as space into time? How can building types be incorporated into the understanding of different modes of production (Asiatic, slave, feudal, capitalist, communist)?

4. PROJECTED EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

4.1 SWISS STS MEETING 2008: SCIENCEFUTURES (ZURICH, FEBRUARY 2008)

The "Swiss STS Meeting 2008" is jointly organized by STS-CH and the Centre for the History of Knowledge (ETH Zurich and University of Zurich). It will take place February 6-9, 2008 at the ETH Zurich. This academic event tailored to the interests of (junior) STS scholars from both Switzerland and abroad is the fourth of its kind (1999 in Zurich, 2001 in Lausanne, 2004 in Basel).

By way of the theme "ScienceFutures" the meeting encourages scholars to engage with science futures, including social, cultural, political, and economic implications in a cross-disciplinary as well as syn- and diachronic fashion.

The program has been finalized. It comprises the following events:

- Seven plenary talks, by Professors Sabine Maasen, Mary Morgan, Naomi Oreskes, Claus Pias, Paul Rabinow, Susan Squier, Alison Wylie
- Public evening lecture at the Collegium Helveticum (University and ETH Zurich) by Prof. Thomas Macho
- Cultural event "ScienceFutures": Movie Shorts presented by Prof. Suzanne Buchan and a Concert with the Weltraumforscher, location: Cabaret Voltaire
- Approximately 80 presentations in (three or four) parallel sessions.

The program and further information is available at <http://www.zgw.ethz.ch/sts/index.html>. The registration deadline is December 15, 2007.

Program and organization committee: Kijan Espahangizi, Michael Hagner, Martina Merz, Marianne Sommer, Daniel Speich, Elisabeth Strowick, Jakob Tanner, Magaly Tornay

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4.2 STS GOES NANO, WORKSHOP (LUCERNE, APRIL 2008)

The Workshop "STS Goes Nano: Social, Cultural, and Historical Perspectives on an Emergent Technology" was originally scheduled for December 2007. However, due to an unforeseen scheduling problem (late discovery that the envisioned date coincided with that of a major scientific conference at the same location) the workshop had to be postponed to April 2008.

The Workshop will bring together scholars that investigate nanotechnology in STS and related perspectives to foster intense discussion of work in progress. The lectures of two invited keynote speakers will be combined with shorter presentations from Swiss researchers.

Keynote speakers:

- Prof. Dr. Dominique Vinck, Université P. Mendès-France, Grenoble
- Dr. Petra Schaper-Rinkel, Freie Universität Berlin

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4.3 WITH A DISTANCE FROM WITHIN? SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AS TACIT AGENDA-MAKERS IN PUBLIC DIALOGUES, WORKSHOP (COLLEGIUM HELVETICUM, UNIV./ETH ZURICH, JUNE 2008)

The planned workshop aims at discussing the increase in public participation processes in modern democracies. Its focus will be based on the interplay of the social and the natural sciences as well as the humanities in contributing to a "politics of dialogue". The workshop will be organized around a double set of questions: On the one hand it asks for the *tools and instruments* invented for enhancing public participation, and it discusses the role of the social sciences in contributing to their construction. On the other hand it analyses the *various roles and backgrounds of actors* in this policy field, their legitimacy and authority, considering especially the part of the social scientists as more or less mute actors in the game.

The workshop will last one and a half days. Each day will start with a keynote lecture discussing one of the aspects mentioned above. The rest of the time will be divided up in two streams – followed by a plenary discussion – dedicated to the two topics a) biological materials and b) ageing. A call for papers will be sent out towards the end of January 2008.

Organized by Priska Gisler (Collegium Helveticum, Uni/ETH Zurich) and Silke Schicktanz (Universität Göttingen)

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