Workshop objectives

A multitude of new objects, technological innovations and knowledge practices came to populate international and European security politics. The workshop participants will present diverse and quite unique objects. Be they killer robots or geoengineering projects, biometrics or financial intelligence, portable cameras or fake news—these research objects offer us diverse perspectives on the entanglements of science, technology and security. Many (critical) IR scholars are borrowing the theoretical resources of Science and Technology Studies (STS) to make sense of things as diverse as drones, Big Data, satellite systems or climate change models. The first wave of research was concerned with the question of whether STS can be translated into IR. The focus is now shifting to the questions of what specific concepts and ideas are valuable for IR and cognate disciplines, of how these resources can be mobilized, and of how this affects critical approaches.

As workshop conveners, we suggest thinking the encounter between STS and IR in terms of trouble, a notion we borrow from Donna Haraway’s recent work. Our underlying assumption is that the traffic between these disciplines is far from unproblematic. We want to ask: What is the trouble when we bring STS to bear on the study of international and European security politics? What is it the value of taking the trouble to study science and technology in security practice? Using troubles as they were vantage points, this workshop submits three propositions for discussion. First, we invite IR scholarship to appreciate the richness and complexity of the conceptual resources found in the vast field of STS. To put it bluntly, there is more than Bruno Latour’s work in STS. Second, we propose IR scholars to think about how to translate STS concepts that have their own baggage of history, defining controversies and blind spots. In particular, what kinds of politics do they bring to our attention? Third, we ask participants to make explicit how trafficking between STS and IR gives them a critical edge in studying security practices. What kind of critical scholarship are we able and willing to embrace when it comes to security?

Workshop program

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2019 | COMMON ROOM, POLITICAL SCIENCE, REC B.9.22

12:30-14:00 Arrival, welcome and lunch

14:00-14:30 Opening presentation
What’s the value of troubles? | ROCCO BELLANOVA (UvA) & Katja LINDSKOV JACOBSEN (University of Copenhagen)

14:30-16:15 Panel 1: Political objects and political situations
The Security Captor – Captured | Rune SAUGMANN (University of Tampere)
‘A War Against Truth’ - Fake News as a Threat for Democratic Society? | Linda MONSEES (Goethe University Frankfurt/Main)
Discussant: Huub DJISTELBLOEM (UvA)
17:00-19:00    Public roundtable: *Algorithms of Violence* [@Spui25] [1]
Speakers: Lucy SUCHMAN (Lancaster University), Rune SAUGMANN (University of Tampere), Rocco BELLANOVA (UvA), Francesco RAGAZZI (Leiden University), Kristina IRION (UvA)
Chair: Linda MONSEES (Goethe University Frankfurt/Main)

19:30-21:00    Workshop dinner

Tuesday, October 29, 2019 | Common Room, Political Science, REC B.9.22

09:00-09:30    Welcome and coffee

09:30-10:45    Panel 2: Global Politics of & STS
Jellyfish encounters: Visuality, technology and security in the Anthropocene | Delf ROTHÉ (IFSH Hamburg)
Flattening the International: Producing Financial Intelligence via a Platform | Pieter LAGERWAARD (UvA)
Discussant: Stefania MILAN (UvA)

10:45-11:00    Coffee and tea break

11:00-12:45    Panel 3: From trouble to critique?
Algorithmic Warfare and the Reinvention of Accuracy | Lucy SUCHMAN (Lancaster University)
Critique without Judgment | Marieke DE GOEDE (UvA)
Discussant: Emily GILBERT (University of Toronto)

12:45-13:45    Final remarks and lunch

*Taking the Trouble - Inquiries into Science and Technology in Security Practice* is organized by Rocco Bellanova (UvA), Linda Monsees (Goethe University Frankfurt/Main) and Katja Lindskov Jacobsen (University of Copenhagen). The workshop is part of ERC Consolidator Grant project FOLLOW: Following the Money from Transaction to Trial (CoG—682317 | www.projectfollow.org) and of the Research Theme ‘Europe in the World’ of the Amsterdam Centre for European Studies - ACES (www.aces.uva.nl).
Public roundtable: *Algorithms of Violence*

We are growing familiar with the use of algorithmic systems in the field of security. Security is increasingly practiced through state-of-the-art visual technologies, such as face recognition, autonomous weapons, and situational awareness displays. These technologies affect how public and private actors understand, justify and define violence. No longer confined to the realm of computer science, these technologies are at the core of many discussions about surveillance in our digital societies. In particular, many questions are raised about their use for law enforcement, border controls and warfare. As many of these technologies operate out of sight, how can we grasp and contest their politics? This roundtable brings together researchers working on the use of algorithms and visual technologies in the field of security. Coming from different disciplinary backgrounds – international relations, law and science-and-technology studies – they will discuss how algorithmic systems become technologies of violence, and they will think together about how to counter their violent politics.

Speakers: Lucy SUCHMAN, Francesco RAGAZZI, Kristina IRION, Rune SAUGMANN, Rocco BELLANOVA
Chair: Linda MONSEES