

Unlocking participation

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Propositions

belonging to the dissertation

Unlocking participation

The dynamics of opening up and closing down in emerging technologies

by Daniela Fuchs

1. Fostering new and emerging technologies in ways that are just, transparent, and equitable remains an enduring challenge for STI governance.
2. To engage stakeholders and the wider public is a necessary but not sufficient means to better align technologies with societal values, and to address and counter democratic deficits in technological development.
3. Participation and societal engagement are often either neglected or uncritically embraced as default strategies in technology policy, STI governance, and innovation.
4. Opening up and closing down are crucial yet complex processes whose dynamics can be studied empirically by attending to the social, epistemic and normative dimensions of participation.
5. Processes of opening up and closing down occur through different mechanisms: besides public dialogue, they also take place through public sense-making and technological affordances.
6. More than the diversity of actors, normative assumptions define whether matters can be opened or closed.
7. As a final closure is impossible, any societal compromise on a technological future is inevitably fragile and any closure remains temporary.
8. Consequently, practices of STI governance, including participation and societal engagement, need to be re-enacted constantly to ensure that they are conducted in desirable ways.
9. Thinking of opening up and closing down as multi-dimensional and temporary aids more systematic reflection on the organization of participation and societal engagement in STI governance.
10. Time is a fluid concept, in particular when opening up and closing down a PhD project.