

SPT 2017: The Grammar of Things (Darmstadt, Germany, June 14-17, 2017)

**Track: Technology and the City**

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*Call for abstracts*

Technology is no stranger to the city. Cities are designed, built, maintained, and destroyed by technological means. Technologies shape our cities and are in turn shaped by city life. However, until recently, cities have been given relatively little attention by philosophers of technology.”

In line with the overall theme of the conference, we would like to invite papers that reflect on cities, which themselves can be viewed as complex, larger scale technological artefacts made up of various lower level artefacts (e.g., buildings, streets, and parks). While the city can't be reduced to just material artefacts, we encourage perspectives that explore the material aspect of the city.

Initial work on this theme suggests specific topics, such as overcoming the “urban dualism” (Kingwell 2008) reinforcing the split between public space and public sphere. We also invite scholars to look into the backstage of the city and explore the political and ethical implications of infrastructures (Easterling 2016). Questions of aesthetics, equity, privacy, and sustainability (to name but a few values) are pertinent to our moral appraisals of cities. Contributions may address these or other issues by looking at the “urban machinery” (Hård and Misa 2008) of communication, energy, industrial, or transportation systems. This, in turn, invites reflections on the methodologies needed to understand the interplay between these technologies, which operate in the background, and the ways in which human beings act in and perceive the world. This can also include critical reflections on how such city infrastructures constitute perceptions and experiences of the natural world (Stefanovic and Scharper 2012). Finally, we welcome contributions from the perspective of political philosophy on urban justice and urban coexistence (including coexistence with non-human animals). This may include contributions on the role of technology in urban governance as well as contributions on how to govern technological developments in the city.

*Further suggested topics are:*

- Ontology of urban technological artefacts
- Axiological dimensions of urban technological artefacts
- Interplay between the built environment and human behaviour
- Interplay between built and natural environments
- The role of infrastructures in city life
- Transition towards smart environments (ambient intelligence, smart cities)
- Non-human agency
- Urban justice and quality of life
- Dwelling the city: women, LGBT, minorities, and under-represented groups
- The politics of enabling and disabling environments

- Architectural design and social movements, political and artistic interventions
- Urban coexistence
- Emotional, corporal, cognitive, and symbolic dimensions of the city
- Relevant research methodologies or theoretical frameworks

The track is supported by the Philosophy of the City Research Group. Selected contributions of the track will be published in an edited volume on “Cities and technologies” to be published in book series Philosophy of Engineering and Technology (Springer).

Proposals for contributions to this track can be made by sending abstracts of about 350 words by Dec 5 via <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=spt2017>. Please make sure to submit to the special track “Technology and the City”.

Further information about the SPT conference and its venue can be found at [www.philosophie.tu-darmstadt.de/spt2017](http://www.philosophie.tu-darmstadt.de/spt2017).

### *References*

Easterling, Keller (2016): Extrastatecraft. London and New York City: Verso.

Hård, Mikael, and Thomas J. Misa (2008): Urban machinery: inside modern European cities. MIT Press.

Kingwell, Mark (2008): Concrete Reveries: Consciousness and the City. Toronto: Penguin.

Stefanovic, Ingrid L., and Stephen B. Scharper (2012): The Natural City: Re-envisioning the Built Environment. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.