AGING TECHNOFUTURES: FUTURING OLD AGE IN TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETIES

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Abstract:
The technoscientific capacity to make ageing futures knowable and actionable in the present is key in the governance of aging (Moreira 2016). In the midst of the crisis usually associated with aging societies, namely a 'care crisis', an 'environmental crisis' and a 'socio-economic and cultural crisis', technoscientific developments are usually placed both as the necessary responses for the prevention or mitigation of their harmful consequences and as a source of multiple uncertainties, risks and dangers also for the most aged (especially for disabled or racially or socio-economically minoritized older people).

At the intersection of STS and Age Studies (Peine, Marshall, Martin & Neven, 2021), this panel welcomes contributions that foreground and critically assess the aging futures that technoscientific developments materialise and that aim to explore ways for STS scholars to intervene in the making of these techno-futures. We know from STS literature that futures are made through expectations (Van Lente 2012), imaginaries (Jasanoff and Kim 2015), visions (Konrad et al 2017), and sometimes hypes (van Lente et al. 2013) that shape discourses about the future, define what is thinkable and drive investment, government policy and legislative frameworks. We also know that futures play an important role in technoscientific developments, both in biomedical research (Moreira, 2005)and technological innovation (Callon, 1989). Moreover, tracing which futures of aging are opened up and which are closed down (Stirling, 2008) or who or what is able to claim the future raises questions of social justice in aging future imaginaries (Urry, 2016). Aging technofutures are largely driven by powerful actors such as nation states, technology companies and technocratic elites (McCray, 2013) that determine how problems are framed and the kinds of 'solutions' that are imagined. But these 'big' technofutures also depend on 'little' futures (Michael, 2017) that happen in everyday lives of diverse groups of people who experience, perform and negotiate these futures from different socio-cultural positions.

In this panel, we welcome theoretical and/or empirical papers, or interactive, hands-on, or performative activities and workshops exploring questions such as:

- What aging futures are materialized in gero-technological developments and in the science of aging?
- How are these aging futures shaped and shape the problems and solutions usually associated with the challenge of aging: for instance, the transformation of the social and health care sector, the development of age-friendly environments or the inclusion of older people in the digital society?
- Whose aging futures are included or excluded in these developments? What normativities of good aging are enacted in these futures, and for whom these are good or bad futures?
- How might we imagine or (co)-design alternative aging futures?