



WTMC

Netherlands Graduate Research School
of Science, Technology and Modern Culture

Field Notes January 2021

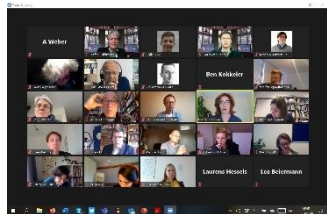
- **WTMC Annual Meeting 2020**
- **Dealing with Covid-19: changes in the PhD training programme**
- **Winter School 2021**
- **Spring Workshop 2021**
- **Summer Schools 2021 and 2022**
- **New member on WTMC Board**
- **Congratulations**

Follow WTMC at https://twitter.com/wtmc_net

and <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/119434/>

WTMC Annual Meeting 2020

For those who missed it: on December 11 we held our Annual Meeting 2020 as an online event. Some 70 colleagues logged on and experienced a programme shorter and more condensed than in previous years. After an update on initiatives taken by WTMC to cope with the Covid-19 conditions, the guiding theme was 'STS and Method'.



A panel of colleagues reflected on and discussed questions like: Is STS research in need of explicit "methods"? Does STS research practice represent a method in its own right? What are strengths and weaknesses of currently used methods in STS? This discussion was followed by a panel of WTMC PhD researchers debating "*Crossing/pushing boundaries of methodology*" in STS. Each panellist had prepared a short video illustration of their respective take on issues of method, exciting stuff that triggered a lively debate. 'STS and Method' will stay on WTMC's agenda.

In Autumn 2020, after six years of successful work as Training Coordinator, *Bernike Pasveer* (UM) had retired from this position. The chairman of the WTMC Board, the Director and the participants of the Annual Meeting thanked her for her excellent work. Bernike is now member of the WTMC Training Committee.

Save the date: the *Annual Meeting 2021* will take place on *10 December*.

Dealing with Covid-19: changes in the PhD training programme

Since Spring 2020 the Training Coordinators, the Director and the secretariat, in close consultation with the WTMC Board, the Education Committee, and the PhD representatives, had explored and have decided on short and medium-term measures to cope with the continuing pandemic, preventing us from running physical meetings.

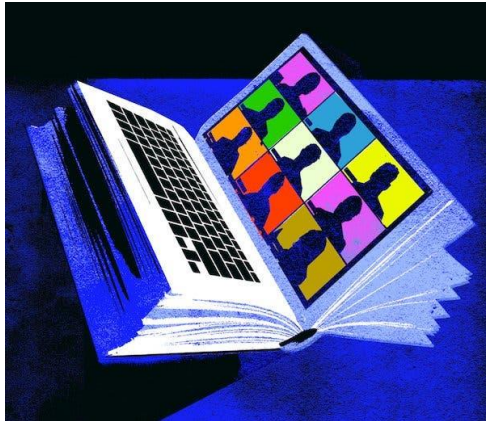


Figure 1: NYT April 2020

The cancellation of a workshop and a summer school in 2020 has made it difficult for some WTMC PhDs to finish their WTMC training program in time. In order to create more flexibility, WTMC has designed Virtual Electives for up to 3 ECs that are open to all WTMC students of the present cohort. The Virtual Electives replace one WTMC workshop with 3 ECs. PhD students of the present cohort can therefore finish their training program with 5 training events (Workshops and Winter/Summer schools) plus the new WTMC Virtual Electives. The new WTMC Virtual Electives consist of two types of activities: reading group (1 EC) and methodology track (1 EC). Each track is led by a senior WTMC scholar; themes covered include in first instance ethnography, bibliometrics, computational methods and modelling (offered

by CWTS, Leiden). Next tracks could cover network analysis and discourse analysis.

Upon a successful evaluation, and if there is a long-term need, we are prepared to prolong it and potentially open it up to external PhD students.

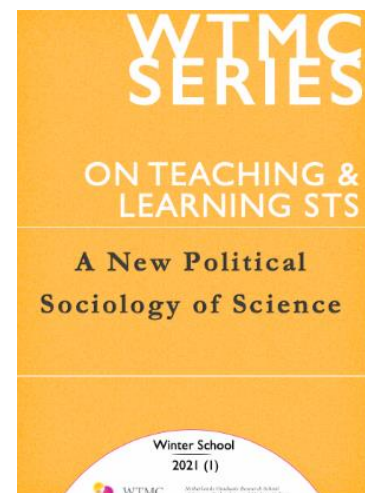
On 30 October an *online Writeshop* took place, with Tsjalling Swierstra (UM) as discussant.

Winter School 2021

Since the Summer School 2020 had to be cancelled WTMC is running a Winter School “New Political Sociology of Science” on January 10-14, as fully online event. We are very happy that [Pierre-Benoit Joly](#) is acting as anchor teacher. Why is it necessary to (re)politicize STS? What does it mean? What are the implications from a methodological and epistemological standpoint? The Winter School is dedicated to such questions and invites participants to travel through a reflexive journey.

Other teachers are Ismael Rafols (UL, CWTS), Melanie Peters (Rathenau Institute), Soraya Boudia (Univ. of Paris) and Johan Schot (UU).

The school works with videoconferencing, Vimeo, email, plenary sessions, group work, and online social events and informal contacts. It also includes a skills track on “digital leadership”.



Spring Workshop 2021 (21-23 April)



The workshop will deal with “Datafying non-humans”. Over the last forty years, scientific endeavours and related policy initiatives have been strongly shaped by datafication. Many of these current endeavours, whether space exploration, genomics or addressing climate change rely on complex digital objects, formed by global networks of data flow. By approaching related datafication practices from an STS perspective, this workshop will examine social, cultural and political aspects that have shaped the digital production of knowledge related to scientific research since the second half of the twentieth century.

Depending on the pandemic’s development the workshop will be offered as physical event at Soeterbeek, or as hybrid or fully online event.

Summer Schools 2021 and 2022

As reported in the WTMC Field Notes of Summer 2020, the anchor teacher for the [Summer School 2021](#) will be [Sergio Sismondo](#). The school (August 23 - 27, 2021) will focus on ‘Epistemic Corruption’. Knowledge production is associated with particular values and standards (truth, objectivity, impartiality, etc), and failure to conform to these are often prominently condemned as corruption of the scientific endeavour. In the summer school, we will examine epistemic corruption as closely related to issues of social order, especially social order within knowledge-producing communities, but also social order in knowledge-consuming communities.



At the **Summer School 2022** we will work with [Sabina Leonelli](#) as anchor teacher. Sabina works at University of Exeter.

New member on WTMC Board



In Autumn 2020 Professor Valerie Frissen (UL) entered the WTMC Board as representative of civil society organizations. Valerie is CEO of the [SIDN Fund](#). The Fund gives money “for projects that make the internet stronger or use the internet in an innovative way.” (<https://www.sidnfonds.nl/>)

Congratulations

See also overview at [WTMC website](#).

Athena Institute wins a 2020 Making and doing award: Nicole Goedhart, Teun Zuiderent-Jerak, Jacqueline Broerse (Athena Instituut, Vrije Universiteit) and Christine Deding (Metamedica, Amsterdam)

UMC) have been awarded one of the three 2020 STS making and doing prizes for their project 'Learning while doing: vlogs about digital inequality'. In this project, in cooperation with the city of Amsterdam and multiple community centers, vlogs were co-created with women living in disadvantaged neighborhoods of Amsterdam to unravel the complex interactions between ICT use and socio-demographics. The vlogs give deep insights into (online) difficulties the involved women experienced in the digitized society and emphasize the complexity of digital inequality and urgency for action. With the making and doing award, the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) acknowledges researchers who have demonstrated scholarly excellence in not only formulating and enacting but also sharing theoretically-informed engagement practices beyond the academic paper and book. The project 'learning while doing: vlogs about digital inequality' is awarded especially for: *"working with materialities and developing capabilities oriented to the resolution of interrelated social problems: digital, gender and income inequalities. The doing is in the making with others."* Learn more about the project at: <https://www.4sonline.org/prizes/makingdoing>

ERC Synergy Grant for WTMC scholars: Willem Halfman, Institute for Science in Society, Radboud University Nijmegen, and chairman of the WTMC education committee, and **Cyrus Mody**, Maastricht University, have been awarded an ERC Synergy Grant for their project "NanoBubbles: How, when and why does science not correct itself?" (October 2020). Co-winners of the grant are Raphaël Lévy (project coordinator, Université Paris Sorbonne Nord) and Cyril Labbé (Université Grenoble Alpes). Scientific research is based on the idea that any errors made must constantly be corrected. But in practice, it can be difficult to undo mistakes or exaggerated claims made in the past. This can lead to an erosion of trust in science. In the NanoBubbles project, data scientists, nano scientists and science researchers will investigate how erroneous claims in nanobiology can be rectified. Learn more about the project at: <https://www.ru.nl/science/news-agenda/news/vm/items/erc-synergy-grants-two-radboud-researchers/>

Stefan Kuhlmann, January 2021