Sociotechnical imaginaries of the border

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The talk seeks to situate the rising popularity of digital technologies in concepts of border making/security within a wider socio-cultural context. It is argued that these new technologies of control – as with any technology-in-the-making – remain highly speculative and uncertain; they are not simply the result of scientific advancements but embedded in current hegemonic *sociotechnical imaginaries* i.e. "collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desirable futures, animated by shared understandings of forms of social life and social order" (Jasanoff/Kim 2015: 4). Thus, they are not just a means to an end, but have a significant impact on the formation of social processes and vice versa.

From this perspective the 'digitalization' of borders is linked to a fundamental shift in the broader discourse about security and society: Over the course of the last two decades policy makers and security experts have envisioned the 'globalized' world as a complex and highly adaptive system. This fragile social order is determined by a threatening level of uncertainty insofar as spontaneous and nonlinear processes of change and adaptation are always possible through the linking of contingent chains of events, which can hardly be predicted. New data based instruments of surveillance address this epistemological problem by claiming to provide the means for allowing a calculation of these very unknown possibilities and unknown futures.

The talk closes by considering some political and ethical implications of this new techno-rationality in which traditional concepts of rationalistic causality are being replaced in favor of very peculiar techniques of knowledge production about unknown futures.