Science, Technology & Innovation Studies
Vol. 3, No. 2, December 2007

ISSN: 1861-3675

STI Studies
www.sti-studies.de

Editorial

With the present issue, the *Science, Technology & Innovation Studies* are online for three years. Born at a coffee table in Munich during the 2004 conference of the German Sociological Association, it was an experiment with uncertain outcome at first. Some three years later, the *STI Studies* did not only survive but are about to become a more and more well-known journal. A particular aim of this project has been – and still is –to enhance the international visibility of German social research on issues of science, technology and innovation, by using the advantages of an open access journal and by encouraging colleagues to publish in English. Feedbacks from all over the world and international requests for reprinting STI-articles suggest that this was not too bad an idea.

Up to now, in five regular issues and one special issue a total of 23 articles have been published. It is time to thank our pioneering authors for taking the risk of submitting their papers to a journal which still had to gain scientific reputation. As well, we want to thank all those colleagues who carefully and thoughtfully wrote the reviews which further enhanced the quality of our papers. Special thanks go to the student tutors of Johannes Weyer for language editing, formatting, and technical support.

The present issue of the *STI Studies* provides three papers: Grit Laudel and Jochen Gläser present a methodological approach that deals with the problem of interviewing scientists. In their contribution they answer the question: "To what extent do we have to understand scientists' work *scientifically* in order to explain their behaviour *sociologically*?" Rüdiger Mautz argues "that the expansion of the renewable energies in Germany is not only the result of technical innovations, but also the outcome of specific social and institutional innovation processes." In his analysis the relationship between the "competing paradigms" of "the 'renewables' and the traditional industry of power generation" turns out to be the crucial factor for explaining the innovation process. Simon Fink finally questions "the frequently heard thesis that strict embryo research laws can hinder innovation in embryo and stem cell research, and thereby impede the innovative ability of the medical biotech sector." He provides empirical evidence suggesting that long-term structural differences of the national innovation systems rather than short-term political steering efforts explain the national differences in the innovativeness of the respective biotech sectors.

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