because I think that Tecnoscienza readers may find it relevant. The introduction to this book states that "authors of this book accepted the challenge of thinking in creative ways and of exploring novel strategies to help solving the problems that digital poverty creates in Latin America and the Caribbean" (p. 10). I have done quite some work in Latin America and the problem I pinpoint here is that poor people are depicted -or simply assumed- to be in lack of something. I do not deny it, but I find this a narrow view. The consequences are that homogenizing the problems results in homogenizing solutions. The risk is of what I call here "Engineering the other". Are all poor the same? Not always, not necessarily. ICT are not a panacea. Therefore, 'Where can ICT help?' "in which sectors?", "with what applications?", "in what kinds of organizations?" are among the discriminatory questions to ask.

I now take a different angle on the same problem. Is being connected via ICT good? It depends on who and what one connects to. For sure ICT allow novel organizational forms, but this does not mean that they are all good. There are plenty of services that are failures or a waste of time and resource, at least. Brazilian ex-president Lula stated, about the still unfolding economic crisis that "it has blue eyes", meaning that western experts had no idea of the risks of what they were doing promoting tight interconnections of markets. So, how to learn from mistakes? How to discriminate?

By assuming acritically that ICT are good, we would miss to realize how the digital divide is in the eye of the beholder also.

In conclusion I invite to reconsider the ageing notion of 'digital divide' (and a recent re-incarnation in 'digital poverty') without scrutinizing general concepts which showed limits, already. The consequences of a more open-ended approach can be far-fetched, but at the end of the day, this is what social studies of technologies are about.

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Kristin Asdal

Politikkens natur. Naturens politikk

(*The Nature of Politics. The Politics of Nature*)

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The title "Politikkens natur. Naturens politick" can be translated as "The Nature of Politics. The Politics of Nature", and reflects the dual ambition of the book. Kristin Asdal intends to say something about what politics is and how it gets done by analyzing the origin and later development of environmental politics in Norway. The book is in large part based on her doctoral thesis from 2004, which has been remolded to match a somewhat broader but still mainly academic Norwegian audience. It consists in six main chapters, which traces the development of Norwegian environmental politics by analyzing six defining cases in its history after world war two. Simultaneously, each chapter investigates the nature of politics by examining one political technology at the core of its analysis.

In developing her main approach for studying politics and more specifically the politics of nature, Asdal draws on Max Weber's studies of bureaucracy, Foucault's lectures on 'gouvernementalité', and actor-network theory. Weber treated bureaucracy as a tool for politics, and Asdal has found inspiration in his emphasis on the importance of technical devices and material arrangements in making the conduct of both bureaucracy and politics possible. Further, she has drawn on Foucault's insistence on studying government as practice, and his focus on governmental technologies and programs of government. In its treatment of the origin and development of a politics of nature in Norway, the book has gained much from Foucault's argument that governmental practices creates new realities that in turn shapes society. Finally, Asdal mentions actor-network theory as an important inspiration, mainly because of its importance in making the fields of material technologies and the natural sciences relevant and accepted as fields of inquiry for the humanities. By drawing on these inspirations, Asdal examines how the politics of nature has been done by making what she has coined 'the technologies of politics' the center of her analysis. Asdal defines this term as the different ways in which scientific knowledge partakes in politics, and the technical arrangements and procedures that enables and shapes politics.

In tracing the history of environmental politics in Norway, Asdal's main focus is to examine how nature has been made relevant for politics by different political technologies. The origin of environmental politics it often assumed to lie in the so-called green revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, and the establishment of the Ministry of the environment in 1972. However, Asdal shows that controversy concerning pollution goes back to the early postwar years and the establishment of an extensive aluminum industry in a number of rural communities. At this point of time, however, the pollution controversy was not a matter of vulnerable nature or the environment – it was treated as a conflict between the business interests of industry and

the local farmers whose domestic animals got fluoride poisoning from the smoke emissions. A national board of smoke damage (røyk-skaderådet) was established in the aftermath of this controversy, and pollution was made an object of national management and regulation. The board was, however, closely tied to industry interests. This organization of the board quickly turned the pollution issue into an industrial issue, and distanced the issue from the damages of pollution on livestock, woods and the agricultural landscape. The measurement and control of smoke emissions, not smoke damage, became the main regulatory strategy of the board. Emission numbers were easier to measure and control, but the disengagement of the issue from the damages made the emission level negotiable and hence the regulation weak.

Asdal argues that nature and the environment as relevant objects of government were created in the second half of the 20th century, and that they were formed in relation to industry and economic reasoning. The environment as a political issue, as well as an influential public opinion speaking on its behalf, originated in a controversy concerning an application to establish an oil-fueled power plant around 1970. This was not a controversial matter at first, but intense work by a few antagonists established relations between the potential power plant and the ongoing international negotiations concerning acid rain. This relation made evident the damages the plant could cause in Norwegian landscapes, and the reinforced relation between pollution and damage engaged a larger public in the issue. Hence, the pollution issue as an industrial issue was challenged by an effort to make it an environmental issue. The effort paid off, as the plant was never built. The issue of acid rain was, however, not put to rest as the recently established Norwegian environment continued to take damage from other countries' emissions of sulfur dioxides. Asdal shows how a vulnerable Norwegian nature was created by the Ministry of the environment and scientists in the 1980s and 1990s, in an effort to ensure the prominence of ecology over economy and to make progress in the acid rain issue. As in the case of smoke emissions, the political technology that was created to attain this goal consisted in the measurement and control of numbers and levels. However, this time it was the damage that got measured, and the technology of the critical levels of nature was quite successful in generating a vulnerable nature as an opposition to economic growth, and in persuading other countries to commit to reducing emissions. The downside of this political technology of numbers was nevertheless that it was compatible with the economic reasoning of cost-efficiency, and soon economists were arguing that pollution levels should be raised enough to match the critical levels of nature as long as they did not exceed them. Further, Asdal argues that the

environmental issue became a full economic issue as the controversy of climate change replaced that of acid rain in the end of the 1980s. The vulnerable nature at the heart of the issue was transformed from national to global, and the political technology advocated by Norway in the international negotiations was a system of climate quotas based on marked economy.

In examining the history of Norwegian environmental politics, the book represents a new way of construing 20th century Norwegian history. By employing the term of political technologies to trace the history of environmental politics, Asdal investigates into the more general history of Norwegian politics. This relation to more traditional historical literature is important for her approach in that it not only involves the transportation of ideas from science and technology studies and the field of governmentality studies into the field of Norwegian history – it brings something back as well. Most importantly, and this is one of the definite strengths of the book, Asdal approaches the origin and development of environmental politics by studying its history in empirical detail. By doing this, she nuances and criticizes some of the more theorizing and philosophical work on politics and its relations to nature and science within both science and technology studies and the field of governmentality studies. By reference to Bruno Latour's argument that Nature by way of scientists short-circuits the political process, Asdal argues instead that it takes a great deal of effort to make nature a relevant object of government. Further, she argues that nature, once established as a political object, is rather unstable and that it might very well get ignored in favor of for example economic considerations. Additionally, she shows empirically how nature and science can open a political process to new actors and even democratize a formerly closed process, rather than short-circuit it. Considering the political technologies of numbers, Asdal nuances the weight put by Peter Miller and much of the governmentality literature on the power of numbers as a powerful tool for government. She shows empirically how it might take a great deal of effort to establish such a political technology of numbers, and that it might not work as planned or work at all.

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Michel Callon, Pierre Lascoumes and Yannick Barthe

Acting in an Uncertain World: an Essay on Technical Democracy

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When I started reading the book by Michel Callon, Pierre Lascoumes and