

# Technology and Anticipation in Egyptian Film Production

## Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between technology and the future in search of another productive path out of the classical opposition between technological determinism and technological possibilism (Ingold, 1997). The opposition, briefly, is between a perspective on Technology as an asocial force that drives Society 'forward' and a perspective where technology matters little given the indefinite plasticity of cultural forms. Both positions have long been criticized by the anthropology of technology (see Lemonnier, 1992; Ingold, 1997) and STS (see Latour, 1988; Akrich, 1993), with the outcome that the cultural and the technical are no longer seen as divided realms but as two co-evolving aspects in complex socio-technical processes. What has been overlooked in this discussion is the anticipatory quality of technology, not just with respect to remote futures bordering on science-fiction (see Collins, 2008), but also in incoming futures envisaged by social actors engaged in situated socio-technical processes. Based on extensive fieldwork in the Egyptian film industry, this paper examines how filmmakers use technology to execute their daily tasks and, in so doing, to anticipate certain problems in the near-future of the film production process. This anticipation is common both to creative crew members seeking to anticipate what the film product will look like and the executive workers seeking to anticipate the logistics of film production. Since it cannot be predicted in deterministic fashion or indefinitely manipulated by social actors, the incoming future provides an interesting case to explore the use of technology beyond determinism and possibilism.

## References

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