

**ELECTRIFYING VISIONS
The Technopolitics of Electric Cars
in California and Sweden
During the 1990's**

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Abstract

This thesis analyses two technical 'projects' of building an artefact and a market for the electric automobile in the 1990's, one in California and one in Sweden. By drawing on two constructivist strands within technology studies, the social construction of technology (SCOT) and actor-network theory (ANT), technical projects are analysed as negotiations of the boundary between 'technology' and 'politics', affecting what are conceived as appropriate and possible measures in technical development and in policy. Both the Californian and the Swedish electric automobiles were in this way constructed as 'technopolitical' artefacts, based on the idea that a 'politicisation' of the artefact would impel the technical development of the electric automobile forward, leading it from a technical vision to an artefact on a market. While these contextualisations on the one hand exemplify activities that were a prerequisite for the rapid developments in electric car technology in the 1990's, they on the other hand made these particular projects disintegrate, eventually losing control over the developments they themselves had helped to set in motion.

Keywords: electric car, sociology of technology, social construction of technology, actor-network theory, policy.