

NEWSLETTER – October 2020



This is the quarterly Newsletter from AsSIST-UK. The Newsletter is sent to all registered members of the Association. Please ensure your contact details are up to date, and if they have changed, contact the Executive Secretary, Andrew Webster at andrew.webster@york.ac.uk

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For all ongoing news about the Association visit the website at www.assist-uk.com

Executive Committee News

The AsSIST-UK Executive Committee met on October 5th and discussed a number of items. Key issues that were explored included:

- RRI – following the Association’s virtual workshop on responsible research and innovation, we will be following with up those attending to explore the possibility of a national network in this area. We will report back on this in our next Newsletter

- We are discussing ways in which the Association can facilitate fellowships/exchange visits between STIS centres, at the UK and wider level. While considerable informal exchange can be seen (though now constrained by CV-19), we hope to be able to foster and support a more formalised programme of activity. We will be contacting centres/Members soon on this.
- The AsSIST-UK Annual Conference 2021: we have begun initial planning for our 2020/21 annual conference, which we hope will be face-to-face. We will be contacting members very soon about the location and dates.
- REF 2021: AsSIST-UK has nominated three members for the Sociology UoA with strengths in STS, innovation and the environment. The final panel members are likely to be announced at the end of the year.
- Helping ECR careers: following the survey of members, undertaken by EC member Julia Kasmire, we will be contacting centres with various recommendations relating to helping give ECRs more security/career opportunities.

New Grants/Projects and research post opportunities at STIS centres

Manchester

The National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) has begun a new project exploring methodological adaptations in social research in light of the dynamic Covid-19 social restrictions. The Economic and Social Research Council has funded Melanie Nind (PI, University of Southampton), Robert Meckin (CoI, University of Manchester) and Andy Coverdale (University of Southampton) to do a 6 month project to engage the social research community and review literature, which will involve a series of online knowledge exchange workshops and a rapid review of methodological evidence, respectively. If you are interested in participating in a knowledge exchange workshop on this theme please contact Robert Meckin (robert.meckin@manchester.ac.uk).

Edinburgh

UKRI-NSFC Joint Call: 'Transforming Primary Care in Scotland and China to Meet the Needs of an Ageing Population - Are Health Inequalities Being Tackled?' (£1 107 933; UKRI contribution £832 923) Co-I. With Stewart Mercer (U. Edinburgh) (PI) and Bruce Guthrie, Ellen Stewart and Andrew Thompson (U. Edinburgh) and Harry Haoxiang Wang (Sun Yat-Sen U.) (Co-Is) (Aug 2020-Aug 2023) [ES/T014164/1].

Wellcome Trust Discretionary Award: 'ScotPEN Wellcome Engagement Award: Phase 2' (£499 579) Co-I. With Becky Hothersall (U. Glasgow) (PI), Alison Caldecott (U. Glasgow), Barbara Gorgoni (U. Aberdeen), Erin Hardee (U. Dundee), Heather Rea (U. Edinburgh), Mhairi Stewart (U. St. Andrews) (Co-PIs), Carlos Galan-Diaz (U. St. Andrews), Kevin O'Dell (U. Glasgow), Jonathan Pettitt (U. Aberdeen), and Nicola Stanley-Wall (U. Dundee) (Co-Is) (July 2020-Jan 2022) [217078/Z/19/A].

Sheffield

Recruitment of three 4-year postdocs to work on new £1M Wellcome grant

Professor Paul Martin (Sociological Studies and co-director of iHuman, University of Sheffield) has been awarded a Wellcome Trust Investigator Award: Orphan drugs: high prices, access to medicines and the transformation of biopharmaceutical innovation

"Orphan drugs" are a class of medicines that treat rare diseases. Their development has been incentivised to address the needs of neglected patient groups. They are growing rapidly, highly profitable and stimulating new business models based on high cost products for niche markets. However, the very high price of some orphan drugs has led countries, including the UK, to refuse to pay for them. This has provoked growing political concern that patients are being denied access to lifesaving therapies. A major international debate on how to improve access is ongoing, raising important questions about the value of these medicines and the ethics of resource allocation. Patient organisations have responded by sponsoring more sustainable, lower cost orphan drug development.

This project will look systemically at the coproduction of industrial and technological change, the politics and governance of orphan drugs, and new forms of collaborative knowledge production. It is innovative in developing a new concept, "orphanisation", to understand contemporary change in the biopharmaceutical sector. Specifically, it will ask to what extent is orphanisation occurring in the UK and USA, how is it being shaped by different technologies, institutions and actors, and what are the implications for industry, health policy and patients?

The posts:

Research Fellow: Quantitative Analysis of Industrial Innovation in the Biopharmaceutical Industry - <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/job/CBN865/research-fellow-quantitative-analysis-of-industrial-innovation-in-the-biopharmaceutical-industry>

Research Associate: Policy, Social Media and the Politics of High Pharmaceutical Drug Prices - <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/job/CBO333/research-associate-policy-social-media-and-the-politics-of-high-pharmaceutical-drug-prices>

Research Associate: Patient Groups and New Models of Drug Innovation - <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/job/CBN864/research-associate-patient-groups-and-new-models-of-drug-innovation>

Closing date: **15th October**. If you have any queries contact: paul.martin@sheffield.ac.uk

University of Aix/Marseille

Aurélie Mahalatchimy (University of Aix-Marseille, France) and a team composed of SHS and biomedical sciences researchers have been awarded funding from the French National Research Agency to explore the processes of fragmentation (division or segmentation) and defragmentation (gathering together, connecting or 'harmonising') of the European law on biomedical innovations (BI- mainly gene therapy, regenerative medicine, and nanomedicine). The project's objectives are to explore and explain these legal processes and provide genealogies of both processes in European law on BI. Building on the works linked to legal oversight of complex BI, law temporality and law fragmentation phenomenon, I-BioLex uses comparative and interdisciplinary approaches and combines theoretical and empirical elements to determine how the law on BI can serve diverse societal objectives.

This I-BioLex research project involves 5 French Labs, 2 UK labs and 1 Australian Lab, including notably several members of ASSiST-UK: John Gardner (Monash University, Australia), Michael Morrison (Oxford University, UK), as well as Alex Faulkner (University of Sussex, UK) and Andrew Webster (University of York, UK) in the Scientific Advisory Group.

Position available:

The research centre, UMR 7318 International, Comparative and European Laws (DICE- CERIC, Aix-en-Provence, FRANCE) is looking for a postdoctoral researcher in law for 24 months from 1st April 2021 to work on the research Project I-BioLex "Fragmentation and defragmentation of law on biomedical innovations", funded by the French National Research Agency.

This position is open to current post-graduate researchers (with a completed PhD) in Social and Human Sciences, preferably in Law, Political Sciences, or Science and Technology Studies, with strong knowledge in law/regulation. It is necessary to be fluent in English (written, read, and spoken).

See here for the particulars of the post and to apply: <https://dice.univ-amu.fr/fr/dice/ceric/anr-i-biolex-recrutement-dun-post-doctorant-droit-deux-ans>

Closing date: 30 November 2020

The full application shall be sent by email to Aurélie Mahalatchimy (aurelie.mahalatchimy@univ-amu.fr, coordinator of the I-BioLex project) and to Pascal Gauttier (pascal.gauttier@univ-amu.fr, manager of the I-BioLex project)

Please get in touch if you would like to discuss the post and do not hesitate to spread the offer in your networks.

Aurélie Mahalatchimy (PI: I-BioLex)

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(aurelie.mahalatchimy@univ-amu.fr)

University of Wellington, NZ

New project: Courtney Addison and Associate Professor Rebecca Priestley (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand) have been funded by the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment for a project on 'Communicating Risk and Uncertainty about Covid-19' in Aotearoa New Zealand. This project is currently collecting data through (1) an analysis of how Covid-19 was represented and communicated through government press briefings and the media, and (2) interviews with New Zealand residents about where they went for information, how they interpreted evidentiary claims and information about risk, and how they put this information to use in the context of their own lives. This project is part of a broader MBIE-funded research undertaking into Covid-19 in New Zealand, which is led by Kate Hannah (University of Auckland).

Research and Policy related publications

Michael Morrison, Oxford, PI on the ESRC-funded Biomodifying Technologies project, has produced two new Policy Briefs based on extensive fieldwork in the fields of gene editing, IPS cells and 3D bio-printing. The Policy Briefs are freely available at:

PB1

<https://www.regmednet.com/esrc-biomodifying-technologies-policy-briefing-1/>

PB2

https://www.regmednet.com/esrc-biomodifying-technologies-policy-briefing-2/?utm_source=biomodteam&utm_medium=email

Sara Bea, KCL, has just published a paper in SH&I that analyses organ donation policy and practice through an STS lens:

'Assembling organ donation: situating organ donation in hospital practice.'

Bea, S., 27 Aug 2020, In : *Sociology of Health & Illness*. DOIs: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.13177>

Open access paper from the Business School, Manchester

Ribeiro, B., Shapira, P., Benneworth, P., Bengtsson, L., Bühner, S., Castro-Martínez, E., Hansen, M., Jarmai, K., Lindner, R., Olmos-Peñuela, J., Ott, C. Considering the dilemma of societal alignment: A response. SocArXiv, 28 Aug. 2020.
<http://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/ayd6c>.

Abstract: The publication of our article "Introducing the dilemma of societal alignment for inclusive and responsible research and innovation" (Ribeiro et al., 2018) was accompanied

by three commentaries (Guston, 2018; Nordmann, 2018; and Kuzma and Roberts, 2018). In the original article, we invoked Collingridge's dilemma of the social control of technology to introduce a complementary dilemma of "societal alignment" in the governance of science, technology and innovation. Thoughtful and challenging critiques were presented in the three commentaries. In this just posted SocArXiv open access paper, we respond to those critiques and, in so doing, seek to further clarify and extend our arguments.

Papers from Edinburgh-based Members

Dr Mark Winskel and Dr Michael Kattirtzi recently had a paper published on energy transitions which I think has resonance across STS / AsSIST communities – it considers whether academic researchers and other experts are 'committed revolutionaries' or 'pragmatic problem solvers'. (It draws lightly on the sociotechnical imaginaries literature).

We presented our research at the AsSIST conference in Manchester last year – so we've already benefitted from the community on its development. There's a blogpost and link to the paper at:

<https://ukerc.ac.uk/news/transitions-and-revolutions/>

Martyn Pickersgill and colleagues have published:

1. Pickersgill, M. (2020) 'Pandemic sociology', *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society*, 6, 347-350.
2. Rose, N., Manning, N., Bentall, R., Bhui, K., Burgess, R., Carr, S., Cornish, F., Devakumar, D., Dowd, J., Ecks, S., Faulkner, A., Kirkbride, J., Knapp, M., Lovell, A., Martin, P., Moncrieff, J., Parr, H., Pickersgill, M., Richardson, G., Ruck Keene, A., and Sheard, S. (2020) 'The social underpinnings of mental distress in the time of COVID-19 – time for urgent action', Wellcome Open Research, <https://doi.org/10.12688/wellcomeopenres.16123.1>.
3. Pickersgill, M. (2020) 'Uncertainty work as ontological negotiation: adjudicating access to therapy in clinical psychology', *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 42, S1, 84-98 (special issue: 'Managing Uncertainty in Healthcare').

Johan Schot and colleagues based at **Utrecht** recently published:

A formative approach to the evaluation of transformative innovation policy

Available at <http://www.tipconsortium.net/publication/a-formative-approach-to-the-evaluation-of-transformative-innovation-policy/>

University of Wellington, NZ: Courtney Addison and colleagues recently published the following two papers:

- Appleton, Nayantara., & Addison, Courtney. (2020). Harding, Sandra. In P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, A. Cernat, J.W. Sakshaug, & R.A. Williams (Eds.), SAGE Research Methods Foundations. doi: 10.4135/9781526421036931798
- Warren, Narelle, & Addison, Courtney (2020) 'Post-cure' (Position piece), *Medical Anthropology Theory* 7(2).

Social Media/Podcasts

Jack Stilgoe (UCL) send news of his recent podcasts:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-received-wisdom/id1476334065>.

Occupational mobility

Sara Bea has recently joined King's College London, Biotechnology and Society research group, to work on Amy Hinterberger's Wellcome Trust-funded project 'Biomedical research and the politics of the human' and conducting research on the development of stem cell-based biotechnologies, organoids and interspecies chimeras, for human therapeutic applications.

A-UK Annual PhD Prize for 2021

A reminder that applications are open for the 2021 A-UK Annual PhD Prize. See details at:

<https://assist-uk.com/assist-uk-phd-prize/>