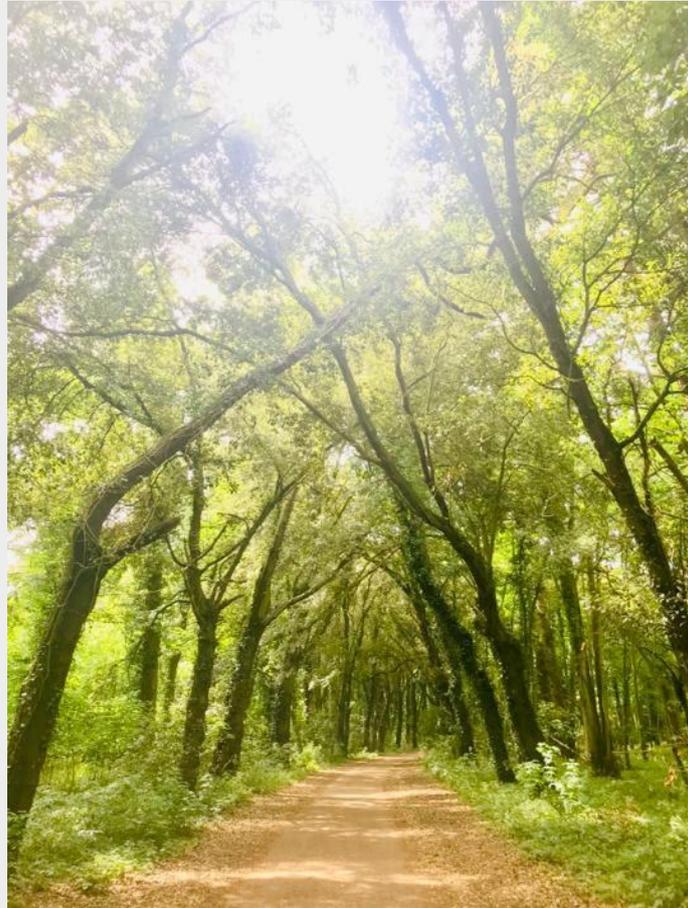


**AsSIST-uk**

**Association for Studies in Innovation Science and Technology-UK**

## **NEWSLETTER – April 2021**



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](mailto:andrew.webster@york.ac.uk)

**Issue Number 13**

For all ongoing news about the Association visit the website at [www.assist-uk.com](http://www.assist-uk.com)

### Executive Committee News

The AsSIST-UK Executive Committee has met four times so far since the start of 2021. The main items under discussion have been:

- Planning the Association's Annual Conference 2021: established a Coordinating Committee, a Scientific Committee, discussed digital platforms for the virtual meeting, securing Keynote speakers, determining the schedule of deadlines and programme structure.
- REF 2021: AsSIST-UK's nominations for the REF were very successful with two members of the Association joining the UoA Sociology Panel in response to the Panel chair's call for expertise in STS and environmental studies. Professor Nortje Marres (Warwick) and Professor Andy Stirling (SPRU, Sussex) were invited to join the Panel.
- Confirming key issues for further development including:
  - Increase A-UK membership
  - Develop additional resources for Members
  - Develop proposals that improve ECR members' careers
  - Support and strengthen the STIS community
  - Develop new and build on current links with the S&T policy community

## New Members

The Association is pleased to announce the following new Members:

**Dr Silvia Casini**, Lecturer in Film and Visual Culture, University of Aberdeen. Research interests: *cultural analysis of science; history and philosophy of science; health and medicine*

**Kelly-Ann Coulter**, Doctoral Student, University of Essex. Research interests: *digital systems, social media, communication; innovation studies; cultural analysis of science.*

**Francesca Froy**, Lecturer, Bartlett Institute, UCL. Research interests: *knowledge systems; environment; food and agriculture.*

**Philip Garnett**, SL, University of York. Philip's recent work has included a co-authored report for the Royal Society of Engineering - *Engineering X on how we address safety of complex systems*. The University of York was commissioned to undertake an initial review of safety in the design, management and governance of complex systems. The report (which will be available soon) has made several recommendations to the Safer Complex Systems programme and produced an initial framework that enables people in different sectors and disciplines to talk about, analyse and manage safety in different contexts. Research interests: *knowledge systems; organisation and management.*

**Sofie Illemann Jaeger**, Doctoral Student. Science, Technology & Innovation Studies, University of Edinburgh. Research interests: *civil/public engagement; cultural analysis of science; environment*

**Andrew Mkwashi**, Doctoral Student, Open University. Research interests: *governance/ethics; innovation studies; S&T policy.*

**Lina Pinto-García**, Postdoc RF, School of Anthropology and InSIS University of Oxford and Postdoc at the Interdisciplinary Centre of Development Studies (Cider), Uniandes (Colombia). Research interests: *bio/life sciences; military/security systems; health and medicine*

**Katerina Psarikidou**, L, SPRU, University of Sussex. Research interests: *food and agriculture; innovation studies; political economy.* Katerina also became a member of the AsSIST-UK Executive Committee on January 1 2021.

## New Grants/Projects and research post opportunities at STIS centres

**Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Sarah Chan, Martyn Pickersgill, and Steve Sturdy** have secured an additional award of **£844 510** from the Wellcome Trust to continue the work of the Centre for Biomedicine, Self and Society (CBSS) until 2024. This will enable CBSS to build on its research themes of Beyond Bodies, Beyond Disease, Beyond Global, Beyond Legal, Beyond Data and Beyond Engagement - and also to further a new thematic focus: Beyond Sex. There may be future opportunities to join the Centre in these areas.

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Advanced technologies that can process complex biological data have transformed the human sciences, and are now being used to conduct studies and generate new knowledge in the field of education. The [Leverhulme Trust](#) has recently awarded a research project grant (**£151 516**) to study the rise of data-intensive, computational biology in education to [Ben Williamson](#) (Edinburgh), [Jessica Pykett](#) (Birmingham) and [Martyn Pickersgill](#) (Edinburgh). Aside from the empirical work itself, this project also represents an opportunity to extend conceptual conversations between education, geography, and science and technology studies.

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Gabby Samuel at [the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, KCL](#) has been awarded a Wellcome Trust Fellowship, to examine the environmental sustainability of data-driven health research: a case-study of genomics and digital phenotyping in the UK (**£246,365**)

## Research and Policy related publications by Members

**Alberto Aparicio (Alexander von Humboldt, Colombia)**. 'That would break the containment': the co-production of responsibility and safety-by-design in xenobiology. *Journal of Responsible Innovation*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23299460.2021.1877479> Postdoctoral research fellow at the Instituto de Investigación de Recursos Biológicos

**Datta Burton S (UCL), Kieslich K (Vienna), Paul K (Vienna), Samuel G (UCL), and B. Prainsack (Vienna)**. Rethinking value construction in biomedicine and healthcare. *Biosocieties*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41292-020-00220-6>

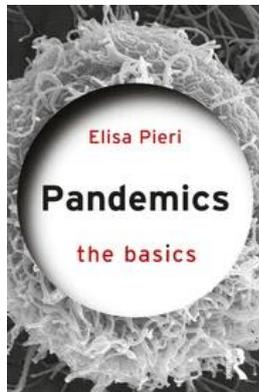
**Michael Morrison, (HeLEX Oxford)**. PI on the ESRC-funded Biomodifying Technologies project, has, with colleagues, produced a third Policy Briefs based on extensive fieldwork in the fields of gene editing, IPS cells and 3D bio-printing. This third Policy Briefing looks at the potential for 'customization' and 'personalization' in the clinical translation of therapies based on [gene editing](#), [induced pluripotent stem cells \(iPSCs\)](#) and [3D bioprinting](#). Customization and personalization involve tailoring some part of a product or process to a specific situation and context, which in medicine is often done to meet the requirements of an individual patient.

While scope for personalized 'one-off' therapies remains limited, a variety of forms of 'mass customization', at the level of both therapeutic products and manufacturing processes, could complement mass-produced cell and gene therapies.

Future policy developments need to evaluate whether to support one or several forms of manufacturing within the UK healthcare sector, as each requires different forms of support, skill sets from the workforce and logistical and regulatory hurdles to viability.

The Briefing is available at: [Policy briefing: Personalized medicine & advanced therapies - RegMedNet](#)

**Michael Morrison, Miranda Mourby, Heather Gowans, Sarah Coy and Jane Kaye (Oxford),** Governance of research consortia: challenges of implementing Responsible Research and Innovation within Europe, *Life Sciences, Society and Policy* 2020 16:13



**Elisa Pieri (Manchester).** *Pandemics. The Basics.* London: Routledge. NEW BOOK OUT 12 MARCH 2021

<https://www.routledge.com/Pandemics-The-Basics/Pieri/p/book/9780367610135>

This book provides an engaging, jargon-free introduction to the threat of global pandemics, offering an overview of the many origins and triggers of pandemic events. It covers the impacts generated by novel infectious disease outbreaks across various dimensions – from social and ethical to medical and political, from media to economic and legal implications. The author discusses the preparedness strategies developed globally, the lessons learned from various outbreaks and the mitigation measures deployed – from quarantine and social distancing to data sharing and surveillance systems – including their unintended impacts. While the risk of global pandemics is certainly intensely debated by the scientific community, and increasingly by policy makers at various levels, the threat is hardly discussed in the public domain. It only permeates the media during crisis events, such as during the SARS outbreak in 2003, the West African Ebola outbreak in 2014–15, and most notably the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic crisis. This book is thus highly timely and topical. It has a global scope, whilst at times zooming in on the implications of pandemic risk and mitigation for the Global North or the Global South.

**Broer, T. Pickersgill, M. and Cunningham-Burley, S. (Edinburgh)** ‘Neurobiological limits and the somatic significance of love: care-givers’ engagements with neuroscience in Scottish parenting programmes’, *History of the Human Sciences*, (2020) 33, 5, 85-109 (special issue: ‘Contested Narratives of the Mind and the Brain: Neuro/psychological Knowledge in Popular Debates and Everyday Life’).

**Cloatre, E. and Pickersgill, M. (Edinburgh)** ‘Sociology of law and science’, in: Přibáň, J. (ed.) *Research Handbook on Sociology of Law*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 81-92. 2020.



**RESPONSIBILITY  
BEYOND GROWTH**  
A CASE FOR RESPONSIBLE STAGNATION



**Stevie de Saille (Sheffield)** and colleagues have recently published their book on ‘responsible stagnation; Critically assessing growth-based models of innovation policy, this study sparks new debate on the role and nature of responsible innovation. Drawing on insights from ecological and steady state economics as well as science and technology studies, it proposes the concept of ‘responsible stagnation’ as an alternative. This is an important scholarly intervention that explores real-world relationships between the political economy, innovation policy and concepts of responsibility and an invaluable resource for readers, scholars and civil society organisations who seek to promote responsible innovation.

**Samuel G. (UCL) Lucivero F (Oxford)**. Responsible open science: moving towards an ethics of environmental sustainability. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3677365](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3677365)

**Samuel G. (UCL), Diedericks H. (KCL) and G. Derrick (Lancaster)** (2020). Public portrayal of AI in the health context: UK and Canada news media representation compared to AI researcher perceptions. *Public Understanding of Science*. In press.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0963662520965490>

**Vezyridis, P. and Timmons, S. (Nottingham)** (2021). E-Infrastructures and the divergent assetization of public health data: Expectations, uncertainties, and asymmetries. *Social Studies of Science*,  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312721989818>

## People

**Professor Martyn Pickersgill**, Personal Chair of the Sociology of Science and Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, has been elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences

**Dr Pete Winter** has been appointed to a 3.5 year research fellowship led by John Downer on the UKRI *Trustworthy autonomous systems* project in Bristol. [UKRI Trustworthy Autonomous Systems Node In Evolving Functionality — University of Bristol](#)

## Recently awarded PhD theses

**Emmanuel Nsiah Amoako** has been awarded a PhD for this thesis: *The Regulation of Forensic Science in England and Wales*.  
Undertaken at Northumbria University, School of Law, supervised by Professor Carole McCartney.

**Abstract** Recommendations aimed at preventing criminal justice failings caused by forensic science errors and quality failures have led to the creation of the Forensic Science Regulator's (FSR) role in England and Wales. The FSR role ensures that the provision of forensic science services across the criminal justice system (CJS) is subject to an appropriate regime of scientific quality standards. Despite reports of an increasing framework of quality standards overseen by the FSR, knowledge about the impact of regulation on the quality of forensic services is lacking. The aim of this study was to understand the fitness of the FSR role in improving the quality of forensic service provision from the crime scene to court. Stakeholder reports about the FSR role were analysed and supplemented with 18 semi-structured interviews with participants purposefully sampled from public and private sector Forensic Science Providers (FSPs). The experiences and views of the participants were analysed to interpret the extent to which the FSR role has been impacting the provision of forensic services that reflects the needs of the CJS.

**Fadi Shayya (Manchester)** has been awarded a PhD for his thesis on the *Politics of Survivability: How Military Technology Scripts Urban Relations*  
Supervisors: Prof Albena Yaneva and Dr Leandro Minuchin

**Abstract.** This thesis scrutinises the spatialisation of contemporary urban warfare and its potential to script urban relations. Rather than embracing the grand narratives that explain established power structures and social systems, we embrace a symmetric perspective to the study of technology and

emphasise the need to study the spatialisation of urban warfare as a process that can be better unpacked at the level of the daily functioning of military technical objects. At that level, what becomes a vital matter of concern, a disputed issue is survivability. Such survivability, we show, is a hybrid of the technical concretization of armour and the sociotechnical associations between soldiers and armoured vehicles. We analyse the former in utility patents and the latter in military publications, governmental policy documents, and secondary sources. The thesis makes three contributions to debates in urban studies, architectural humanities, and STS: 1) It advances the epistemological position that survivability is intrinsically connected to the functioning of military technical objects; 2) it expands on the relational theory of the architectural and the urban as a way of connecting, where armoured vehicles extend the scope of architectural and urban research beyond the figure of the static building; 3) it answers a methodological question about employing technical objects to study the spatialisation of urban warfare and the reduction of the landscape into terrain. All three contributions advance a pragmatist perspective on a relational politics of survivability through human-nonhuman interdependence.

## Conferences/Lecture Series

The Research Institute for the History of Science and Technology at the Deutsches Museum, the European New School of Digital Studies, European University Viadrina, and the Philosophy of Computing group, ICFO, Warsaw University of Technology are organising a free interdisciplinary lecture series on "Thinking Machines. History, Present and Future of AI".

All events will take place online between April and July 2021 and start at 16:30 CEST (UTC +2). For more information and to register, please see <https://thinking-machines.online/>

### **Programme overview**

Mon 19 April: Pamela McCorduck, Journalist, California, USA: "Early AI in the United States".

Mon 3 May: Stephanie A. Dick, University of Pennsylvania, USA: "Making Up Minds".

Mon 17 May: Shannon Vallor, University of Edinburgh, UK: "The Digital Basanos: AI and the Virtue and Violence of Truth-Telling".

Mon 31 May: Wolfgang Bibel, TU Darmstadt: "Über die Entwicklung der KI in Deutschland". In German.

Mon 14 June: Harry Collins, Cardiff University, UK: "Must Intelligent Machines Be Social Machines?".

Mon 28 June: Vincent Müller, Technical University of Eindhoven, NL: "Where are we going? Future progress in AI".

Mon 12 July: Panel discussion "Algorithms, Trust and Regulation", with Virginia Dignum, Umeå universitet, SE, Kristian Kersting, TU Darmstadt, and N.N., AlgorithmWatch. Location: Deutsches Museum "Ehrensaal" (in hybrid format if Covid-19 situation allows by then, otherwise online).

## A-UK Annual PhD Prize for 2020/2021

The award for the annual £250 prize will be announced in May 2021.