

CALL FOR PAPERS

12th Conference of the European Sociological Association *Differences, inequalities and sociological imagination*, Prague, 25-28 August 2015

Research Network 24 – Sociology of Science and Technology Network (SSTNET)
Inequalities in and through science and technology as challenges for sociological research

Increasing social inequalities, exacerbated by neoliberal policies and international economic crisis, have been an issue of science and technology studies (STS) even prior to the crisis. Instead of normative claims about the socially beneficial or harmful role of science and technology, a more complex sociological perspective has been promoted. This perspective, postulating that S&T impacts are closely interrelated to social context and circumstances has the potential to be more productive in studying the relationship between techno-scientific development and social inequalities. The global economy, with its increasing role of S&T, seems to increase inequalities within contemporary societies, as well as between them. Therefore, it has become crucial and urgent to not only understand how science and technology influence the increase in and different forms of inequality, but also how these factors can help to mitigate inequality, primarily through S&T policies.

A tension has been recognized between the dominant concept of the knowledge economy paradigm (focused on science-based industries and profitable knowledge) and broader social objectives already built into the EU's Lisbon Agenda. Such conflicting economic and social approaches have been reflected in recent ERA (European Research Area) policy. For example, the aim of achieving European competitiveness in S&T which stresses research *excellence* is accompanied by some re-distributive goals of the ERA, such as networking and collaboration, gender equality and greater European research cohesion at both regional and local levels. The meritocratic recruitment of researchers, professional competition and mobility all support achieving excellence, but can also undermine some social objectives like gender equity or more equal national and regional techno-scientific development.

Conflicting economic and social paradigms and objectives of understanding, as well as dealing with inequalities in and through science and technology, require the mobilization of the attention and imagination of sociologists and other social scientists.

Thus, the Sociology of Science and Technology Network (SSTNET) invites papers to its sessions on S&T inequalities and differences, their structural, representational and distributional

forms, (re)production, their reflections on S&T policy, human resources, science governance and accountability mechanisms, as well as the socio-economic impacts of established and emerging technologies. Papers may also touch on any of the following general issues by raising conceptual and/or empirical questions:

- Inequalities through science and technology
- Scientific controversies regarding the forms and origins of inequality
- Studies of science, technology and inequality across countries and groups
- Differences and tensions regarding knowledge production and social organization between public and private S&T sectors
- Socio-economic implications of new technologies and social inequalities
- S&T policies in the face of global inequalities
- NIS (national innovation systems) approaches and the mobilization of S&T against inequality
- Differences and inequalities in S&T capacities and resources
- Innovation agendas – global economic competitiveness vs. social sustainability and cohesion
- Distribution of power, decision-making about S&T and public participation
- Inter-university and intra-university differences in performance and excellence
- Research excellence, cumulative advantage and professional differentiation
- Researchers' mobility in terms of international circulation and inequality
- Gender inequality in S&T
- Measure or metrics of inequalities within the scientific community

Papers addressing these and other STS topics from a sociological, other social or interdisciplinary perspective are welcome. PhD students' submissions are especially encouraged. Authors are invited to submit their abstracts to the **general session**. Specific sessions will be created a posteriori. Abstracts should not exceed 250 words. The deadline for abstract submission is **01 February 2015**. Abstracts must be submitted online to the submission platform: www.esa12thconference.eu. Abstracts will be peer-reviewed and selected for presentation by the SSTNET organizing committee and the letter of notification will be sent by the conference software system in early **April 2015**.

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RN 24 / SSTNET Chair & Co-chair