Research Network 24 /SSTNET - Sociology of Science and Technology Network
Biennial (2017-2019) report to the ESA

12/02/2018

1. SSTNET boards' members: past term
SSTNET coordination board members 2017 – 2019:
Coordinator: Harald Rohracher – Sweden; harald.rohracher@liu.se
Co-coordinator: Fabienne Crettaz von Roten – Switzerland;
fabienne.crettazvonroten@unil.ch
Inge van der Weijden – the Netherlands; i.c.m.van.der.weijden@cwts.leidenuniv.nl
Katarina Prpić – Croatia; katarina@idi.hr
Aaro Tupasela – Denmark; aatu@sund.ku.dk
Ana Delicado – Portugal; ana.delicado@ics.ulisboa.pt
Marcela Linkova – Czech Republic; marcela.linkova@soc.cas.cz
Bernhard Wieser – Austria; bernhard.wieser@tugraz.at
Heta Tarkkala (coopted PhD representative & RN24 secretary) – Finland;
heta.tarkkala@helsinki.fi

SSTNET advisory board members 2017 – 2019:
Luisa Oliveira – Portugal; luisa.oliveira@iscte.pt
Franc Mali – Slovenia; franc.Mali@fdv.uni-lj.si
Ulrike Felt – Austria; ulrike.felt@univie.ac.at
Nadia Asheulova – Russia; simar@bk.ru
Ulrich Dolata – Germany; ulrich.dolata@sowi.uni-stuttgart.de
Michel Dubois – France; mdubois@msh-paris.fr
Laura Cruz-Castro – Spain; Laura.Cruz@csic.es

2. SSTNET boards' members: new term

SSTNET coordination board members elected for the 2019 – 2021 period:
Coordinator: Ana Delicado, Institute of Social Sciences – ICS, University of Lisbon (Portugal)
Co-coordinator: Bernhard Wieser, Graz University of Technology (Austria)
Fabienne Crettaz von Roten, University of Lausanne, Switzerland
Marcela Linkova, Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences
Jennie Olofsson, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Vera Raivola, University of Eastern Finland (PhD representative)
Harald Rohracher, Linköping University, Sweden
Heta Tarkkala, University of Helsinki, Finland
Aaro Tupasela, University of Helsinki, Finland
Paraskevas Vezyridis, Nottingham University Business School, UK

SSTNET advisory board members elected for the 2017 – 2019 period:
Nadia Asheulova, RC23/ISA board member (Russia)
Laura Cruz-Castro, Spanish National Research Council – CSIC (Spain)
Ulrich Dolata, University of Stuttgart (Germany)

Michel Dubois, National Centre for Scientific Research – CNRS (France)
Franc Mali, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)
Katarina Prpic, independent researcher (Croatia)

3. RN24/SSTNET activities during the past two-year term

3. a) SSTNET/RN24 mid-term workshop/conference: Critical engagement vs. technophobia: The risks of emerging technologies. Ljubljana, 11th - 12th October 2018.
The 2018 interim workshop of SSTNET took place at the beginning of the winter semester, at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana, under the title "Critical engagement vs. technophobia: The risks of emerging technologies". The workshop's duration was limited to two days – more accurately, it was limited to 11th and 12th of October. The workshop addressed the general subject of risk and technology: dozens of sociologists of science and other STS scholars gathered together to present their works on diverse issues of the risk and ethical issues of emerging technologies such as the problem of online data transparency, the hazard of developing robotics, the ambiguous nature of e-waste management, the outline of risks derived from synthetic biology and genome editing products etc.
The event held two keynote lectures: the head of the ITAS Karlsruhe (Institute for Technology Assessment and System Analysis) and also professor of philosophy of technology at KIT (Karlsruhe Institute of Technology), Armin Grunwald, performed as keynote speaker on the first day of the workshop, while Joost van Loon, professor at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, presented on the second day.
Out of 30 abstract submissions, 24 were selected for presentation, but the final programme comprised only 16 papers. The participants came from different countries (Austria, Sweden, Switzerland Croatia, Germany, Italy, Russia, Israel, Canada, Italy, Croatia, UK and Slovenia). The papers were organised into 5 sessions that all lasted an hour and a half. In any case, there have never been more than 4 papers per session in order to provide adequate time for discussions.
The sessions brought together papers that addressed common issues of the technological integration with health sciences, the AI emerging technologies, the digitization of our personal relationships, - most of the papers regarded risk as a relationship between scientific fields and its publics, which is already interwoven with political and economic expectations. The papers mostly covered one form of constructivist approaches or another, though quite a significant amount of papers was also trying to expose the polemical value of social constructivism which gave way to more critical theoretical positions. The presentations were also based on an ample diversity of methods, from scientific surveys to discursive analysis of policy documents, from digital space ethnography to more specific social media analysis, from case studies to attempts to model the participatory design or negotiating processes around certain emerging technologies.
The publication of the presentation articles is under preparation in the form of a special issue of the Teorija in praksa journal (the Faculty of social sciences' official publication).

3. b) SSTNET activities at the ESA 14th Conference, Manchester 2019
RN24 call for papers was disseminated via the conference website but also via related international organizations (ISA RC23 and EASST) as well as through several national sociological and/or STS associations and email lists. After thorough reviewing (8 evaluators)

65 presentations (all paper presentations incl. 7 short presentations) were accepted and finally presented. They were organized in 16 sessions. The sessions were thematically structured around the most relevant topics in science & technology studies (STS). SSTNET sessions were highly successful with active participation and engaged discussions. Moreover, one joint session was organised together with RN05 on "Digitalization, data and everyday life".

The SSTNET business meeting was also well visited and successful. A detailed report of RN24 activities in 2017-2019 with future activities was prepared, presented and discussed at the meeting. Elections of members to coordination board and advisory board to RN 24 also took place at the meeting.

3. c) Newsletter. RN24 does not have a formal newsletter but operates since its beginnings a mailing list (SSTNET list) which includes all RN24 members and further researchers interested in the sociology of science and technology and RN24 activities. The mailing list has been moderated by Heta Tarkkala, University of Helsinki and secretary to RN24, and is used to spread information on RN24 activities but also for relevant job announcements, conferences and workshops.

3. d) Website. RN24 has updated its presentation on the sub-page at the website of ESA and does not run a separate website for the research network. We are content with the support provided by ESA and the ability to make our own changes on the website.
Social media. A Twitter account was created in September 2018. It currently has 91 followers.

3. e) Publications related to RN sessions and/or midterm meetings. No separate publications have been prepared based on the contributions to the ESA conference in Athens. However, a book publication of the RN24 midterm conference 2016 has been accepted for publication by Springer, with the working title of "Science and society relations today: a sociological gaze". The book is expected to come out in mid-2020.

3. f) Actions taken to improve participation of PhD students and early career researchers: RN24 had a good participation of PhD students at the conference in Athens. Moreover, a representative of PhD students has been co-opted to the ESA board for many years. We do not feel that PhD students are a neglected group in our network.

3. g) Expanding SSTNET membership. SSTNET membership has been continuously expanding from an interim peek of 78 members in 2015 to a slight backing to 67 in 2017 to a new peek of 97 RN24 members at the time of writing this report. SSTNET membership policy has been oriented to motivating new (formal) members but is also open to wider membership.

3. **h) Any collaboration within ESA with other RNs.** RN24 is open to cooperation with other research networks but this is not an urgent policy. A closer cooperation with RN05, Sociology of Consumption, has been started during the conference 2019.
Moreover, RN24 is cooperating with other research networks and associations which share a focus on Science and Technology, such as the European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST) and ISA Research Committee 23 - Sociology of science and technology. Thus: a) The EASST President and the President of RC 23 board are included in

the SSTNET advisory board; b) SSTNET calls for papers for midterm workshops and session streams at ESA conferences are spread through the EASST- Eurograd mailing list and on the ISA RC 23 site.

3.i. Future plans. The plan of immediate SSTNET activities includes: a) organizing the next midterm SSTNET workshop; b) increasing the use of social media to publicise the activities of SSTNET and its members; c) explore further collaborations with other ESA RN, such as RN12 Environment and Society and RN16 Sociology of Health and Illness; d) explore further collaborations with other associations of science and technology studies, such as EASST and 4S; e) continuously expanding SSTNET membership yet having an open membership policy.