

Call for papers

The sociological gaze on science and society relations

Workshop

Organized by Research Network 24 - Sociology of Science and Technology Network (SSTNET) of the European Sociological Association (ESA) and the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon, Portugal

**Keynote speakers**

Massimiano Bucchi (University of Trento) and Maja Horst (University of Copenhagen)

20-21 June 2016, Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon

Over the past few decades, the (lack of) connections between science and society have often been seen as a ‘social problem’ that needs to be addressed, given rise to specific public policies and the emergence of a new field of scientific enquiry. Under labels as different in meanings and implications as “scientific literacy”, “public understanding of science”, “public engagement with science” or “science with and for society”, the way citizens relate to science and scientists engage with society has been seen as problematic. Scientists tend to see citizens as lacking in scientific knowledge and showing little support for science. The public tends to see science as distant from their interests and concerns. A wide array of undertakings has been developed for bridging this gap, compelling scientists into adding yet another range of skills and activities to an already increasingly demanding profession. Conversely, the expectations of what citizens need to know and have an opinion about are also on the rise, deferring to them in part the responsibility to prevent scientific development with undesirable consequences.

Though this field has attracted the attention of scholars from different disciplines, sociology can offer a unique perspective, based on a plurality of theoretical and methodological approaches. Sociological insights may prove particularly useful for examining the construction of science-society relations as a ‘social problem’ and how this construction depends on changing roles of science in contemporary societies and broader socio-economic and political-ideological contexts, such as neo-liberal governance discourses. Sociological approaches may analyse the plurality of actors involved in science-society relations and the networks they establish, the role of power elites from the political and economic sphere, the impact of such demands on the organisation of research institutions and career development, the particular ways different disciplines engage with the public, or the power relations that underlie encounters between scientists and citizens.

We particularly encourage contributions that critically reflect on science and society relationships and the ways in which these relationships are expected to change.

Key dates:

An abstract of up to 500 words, containing an outline of the paper, including methodology as well as the expected contribution of the paper, should be submitted by e-mail to Ana Delicado: [ana.delicado@ics.ulisboa.pt](mailto:ana.delicado@ics.ulisboa.pt)

31 March 2016: Deadline for submission

15 April 2016: Notification of acceptance

**Workshop Organizing Committee:**

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No fees are charged for participation and no funds are available to SSTNET to cover travel or accommodation expenses. Further information about the workshop venue, accommodation and useful details about host-city will be provided later.