

Editorial Preface

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Dear readers,

The first issue of our journal for 1007 presents four papers applying ANT methodology or critically discussing it. Two of the papers analyze biotechnologies – STS approach to genetic research in India and patients' activism in Bulgaria related with application and spread of assisted reproductive technologies. They are followed by a theoretical paper discussing the recent forms of entrepreneurial activity and the need of new basic metaphors for their apprehension. The volume ends with a 'classical' STS paper applying ANT approach to professional and amateur astronomy. With this the journal continues to expand the scope of ANT related research and to provide further insights for ANT community.

The article of Manoj Vitai offers an interesting theoretical account of a young researcher who is striving to conceptualize the gene and genetic engineering as subject of ANT research. It develops a frame of analysis focusing on issues that are of particular interest for the development of genomics research in India and possible ANT studies of it, and which aims at 'providing sufficient room to bring in non-human actors such as gene, machines (PCR, microarrays, NGS sequencers), bio-banks' and their enrollment as actants in building of actor-network.

The article of Ina Dimitrova analyses the interesting case of the activities of newly emerged patient organizations in Eastern Europe, result of simultaneous process of democratization and the introduction of new biotechnologies. She focuses on the case of Bulgaria and technologies of assisted reproduction, applying the conceptual apparatus of ANT, developed by M. Callon, V. Rabearisoa and other researchers at Paris Center of Sociology of Innovation in studying French association of patients with muscular dystrophy (AFM) and new patient organizations that promoted and helped application of medical technologies. Ina has identified a unique constellation of motives, scenario and roles invented by the studied health movements in Bulgaria that during the decades of post-communism and that made them an 'obligatory passage point when key biopolitical policies are enacted'.

The IJANTTI readers know Russian political economist, Alexey Baryshev, from his publication in previous issue where he offered a network approach to the economic category of value, blending A. Barabasi's theory of complex networks with ANT approach. Now in his new article he develops his ideas, providing an interesting critique of the existing theoretical approaches to entrepreneurship and framing it under the triplet of 'where', 'what' and 'how' metaphors the main approaches to entrepreneurs' activity is based upon. He claims they are little prepared to account for the newer spheres of entrepreneurial activity related to social innovations, social networks, or offering solution for corporate management and people's wellbeing because their underlying metaphorical base relevant to early and classical modern capitalism rather than to the late modern forms of entrepreneurial activity. Stressing the importance of 'how'-metaphors, Baryshev claims that metaphors relevant to the new forms of entrepreneurial action in contemporary knowledge societies should go beyond the concept of utility adding an axiological dimension to it. A careful reader could find interesting resonance of author's ideas with those developed by M. Callon and his colleagues within the framework of economy of qualities.

The last paper of Ivan Tchalakov and Irina Popravko falls under the rubric of ‘materiality’ in STS. It provides an analysis of the practices in professional and amateur astronomy influenced by ongoing process of digitalization. Based on qualitative methodology (participant observations and in-depth interviews), they made a surprising discovery that the role of personal involvement and deep acquaintance with materiality of research instruments increases with the process of digitalization. To account for this process, they use ANT notion of heterogeneous community, and following Julian Orr claim that presence or not of ‘inter-corporeal’ relationships with telescopes and other research instruments, as well as with studied celestial objects are crucial in establishing the identity of professional and amateur astronomers. To account to this process they propose to go beyond the classical ANT framing of science as agonistic field of dispute and ‘trial of strength’, offering an interesting dialogue with Antoine Hennion’s sociology of attachment and Luck Boltanski’s non-agonistic regime of love as agape.

I would like to end this introduction with a call to IJANNTI community to be more active and to continue to submit the results of their research to our journal – this is only way to keep ANT community informed about the newest developments in science and technology studies.

Ivan Tchalakov
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