

Analysis of Health Controversies in a Global Context

Argument-Purpose:

The analysis of sociotechnical and health controversies emerged during the 1970s and 1980s as a dynamic subfield of the new sociology of science. It was promoted in France through the works of the Actor Network Theory (Latour 1987), in England through the Social Studies of Knowledge (Shapin, Schaffer 1985) and in the USA by researchers of Science and Technology Studies (STS) (Nelkin, Pollak 1981). The central focus of such analysis is on debates and conflicts raised by scientific and medical issues.

Since the 1980s, works such as those of the Centre for Sociology of Innovation à the École de Mines or those of the Group of Political and Moral Sociology (GSPM) (Boltanski, Thévenot 2006) reinforced the methodological bases and broadened the theoretical scope of this approach. Multiple researches have thus been developed to study health controversies, whether they be related to HIV/AIDS (Epstein 1996; Fassin 2007; Biehler 2009; Nguyen 2010), to clinical trials (Petryna 2009), to the influence of globalpharma in shaping psychiatric knowledge (Lakoff 2006), to the sanitary issues related to genetically modified organisms (Jasanoff 2005), to nuclear energy or nanotechnologies (Chateauraynaud 2011) and so forth.

The analysis of scientific and health-related controversies occupies a strategic position within the social sciences, as it studies crucial contemporary issues while using innovative methodological approaches. These include discourse and media analysis, networks analysis, the sociology of social movements, the anthropology of laboratory life and public health studies. Such analysis encourages multi-sited approaches to a broad range of field sites among which scientific labs, transnational social movements, regulatory authorities, and public policy administrations occupy a prominent position. In other words, the analysis of health-related controversies fosters a multidisciplinary approach, involving various academic disciplines (sociology, anthropology, political sciences, law studies, communication sciences), complex objects of study and ground-breaking methodologies and theoretical work.

This workshop will provide an introduction to the main theories and issues associated with the analysis of controversies and with the broader field of science and technology studies. It will provide conceptual and methodological tools for the conception of appropriate research objects and fieldwork. Special attention will be given to global health issues.

Provisional Workshop Schedule:

DAY 1	
Introduction	Opening speech Introduction and objectives of the workshop Presentation of participants
Session 1	Major theories and works of the STS field; Focus on STS theories regarding Global Health
Session 2	Historical framing upon the emergence of social movements and the multiplication of controversies in a global context
DAY 2	
Session 3	Methods and tools: Multi-sited fieldwork
Session 4	Methods and tools: Tools for discourse analysis (qualitative and computer assisted)
Session 5	Methods and tools: Specificities of Media analysis (qualitative and computer assisted)
DAY 3	
Session 6	Methods and tools: Analysis of networks of actors (qualitative and computer assisted)
Session 7&8	<i>Examples</i> Two examples of controversies in a global context, focusing on India and Africa: Fake medicines, Global eHealth Networks
DAY 4	
Session 9	Group work restitution

Team:

Coordinators:

- **Mathieu Quet**
(Communication Sciences, IRD, Paris)
- **Sumeet Jain**
(Social Work, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh)

Invited Tutors:

- **Marine AL Dahdah**
(Sociologist/Information technologies, IRD-CEPED, Paris)
- **Vincent Duclos-Belanger**
(Anthropologist, University of Montreal, Visiting Fellow at College d'Etudes Mondiales, Paris)