

## Editorial

It is not long to go now until the official funding period of the UK's ESRC Genomics Network draws to a close. Although the different centres which make up the network will have varying futures it is hoped that the sizable research capacity and international repute that has built up during the last 10 years will continue in new forms. Not surprisingly, I do not subscribe to the view that the need for humanities and social science research on genomics is less important now than it was at the start of the century. If anything it is even more important, and will continue to be for the foreseeable future – I am sure we are only just beginning to see the various ways in which the sequencing of human and nonhuman genomes may come to shape future societies.

The latest issue of *Genomics, Society and Policy* comprises four papers as well as a variety of review papers. Martin Weiss' paper returns us to the interesting topic of the use of DNA tests in cases of family reunification, itself part of a broader emergence of DNA applications within familial biosociality. His theoretically informed paper covers a range of important issues including definitions of the family and privacy, issues of fairness in immigration and questions around the biologisation of family life.

Then we have Sá and Tamtik's paper, which centres on issues related to the privatisation of knowledge and tensions with the openness of scientific inquiry. They draw upon the field of structural genomics which employs what they call an open science approach in order to explore these questions. Their paper will be of interest to anyone concerned with knowledge ownership and control and the practical doings of research.

The third paper in this volume, by Wallace and Knoppers, also pertains to the research process, albeit in a somewhat different way. They focus on one problem in working as part of an international research consortium often likely to represent several different countries, cultures, disciplines and scientific methodologies. Specifically the authors focus on the practical difficulties of working to a harmonised consent protocol and draw upon consent materials used by members of the International Cancer Genome Consortium (ICGC) to outline some of the challenges. This paper will be of special interest to those with experience of international consortia and to those with an interest in bioethics debates on consent.

Finally, Lauss *et al* focus on a popular topic in GSP, namely biobanks. The authors provide a very useful analysis of previous frameworks for constructing the social and ethical value of biobanks with reference to the often discussed issues of collecting, storing and distributing human biological material and information. The authors suggest that a third order of ELSA research around biobanks is now emerging which seeks to promote learning processes and critical reflexivity. They argue that this new framework is best placed to identify the needs of different stakeholders and to encourage critical scrutiny of existing practices.

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