

Editorial

In May 2010 the Centre for Society & Genomics, in collaboration with the ESRC Genomics Network and Valgen (Canada), held its biannual Conference on Society and Genomics in Amsterdam. The objective of the conference was to assess how the societal landscape of genomics had evolved since the sequencing of the human genome.

On June 26 2000 President Bill Clinton, together with Francis Collins and Craig Venter, solemnly announced, in no less a setting than the White House, that the effort to sequence the human genome was rapidly nearing completion. During this press conference, a whole series of metaphors was used to indicate what the human sequence means. Our genome was baptised as the “language of life”, our “genetic code”, “the working blueprint of mankind”, the “book of life”, our “instruction book”, our “common inheritance”, our “essence”. Thus, a whole train of metaphors, each with its own history of rise and decline, was presented.

Yet, the dominant metaphor, introduced with remarkable emphasis right at the beginning of the ceremony, was the “map” metaphor. As President Clinton phrased it: “We are here to celebrate the completion of the first survey of the entire human genome. Without a doubt, this is the most important, most wondrous map ever produced by humankind.”

The 2010 CSG conference was likewise designed as a collective mapping effort. How had the societal landscape evolved “Ten Years After”? Colleagues from humanities, social science, genomics research, policy, and the media were invited to join in a collective effort to determine how the genomics landscape had become populated, inhabited, organised and governed, and for this purpose, a number of “zones” were identified, such as the urban, the global, the industrial and the environmental.

CSG and the EGN are, of course, the publishers of *Genomics, Society and Politics*. The ideas explored in the conference are reflected in this special issue. The articles are devoted to analysing the societal impact of genomics across the agricultural, the environmental, the urban and the industrial zones.

Professor Hub Zwart, Scientific Director of CSG, is one of the editors-in-chief of *Genomics, Society and Policy* and he is also the editor of this special issue. We are grateful to him, and to our authors. The editors welcome proposals for future special issues.

Ruth Chadwick

Centre For Economic and Social Aspects of Genomics (Cesagen), Cardiff University, UK