SKATOLOGY

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASA SECTION ON SCIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, & TECHNOLOGY

APRIL 2015 SPRING EDITION

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Chair's Column:

"On the Importance of History," or "OOPS!"

Steve Epstein, Northwestern University

As scholars we are all committed to getting the chronology right in the stories that we tell, even as we understand the slipperiness of the concept of historical truth. I've been devoting much thought to these matters in recent days, ever since an encounter with the slipperiness of history made me feel like a cartoon character who has a run-in with a banana peel. Or perhaps the better food-related metaphor would be the one about having egg on one's face!

Here's what happened: As all of you know, we have been busily planning a celebration of the section's history in the form of our pre-conference to be held on August 21, dubbed "SKAT 25." The idea for the event came to me while I was still chair-elect, when I was looking at the list of section officers on our website and noticed that the list went back to 1990. On the basis of that evidence—a bit flimsy, in retrospect, but supported by the fact that our section's first annual report to the ASA also dates back to 1990—I naturally assumed that the section would be celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2015. "Aha!," I thought, "the stars have aligned." As it turns out, 2015 is also the year that SKAT's section day happens to fall on the first day of the ASA meeting, making it the perfect year for the section to hold a pre-conference and celebrate a major anniversary!

Once I became chair, I came across some references to SKAT section activities that took place in the late 1980s. I assumed these must have been from the period when SKAT was still a section "in formation" and not yet an official section. But such assumptions had their feet kicked out from under them by the rather more scrupulous sleuthing in the archives just performed by our publications committee chair, Elizabeth Sweeney. In preparing an article for this issue (see p. 4), Elizabeth discovered a—shall we say—alternative historical truth. As an early SKAT newsletter reveals and as ASA's Program Coordinator, Justin Lini, confirmed, we became a section-in-formation in 1987, rapidly acquired the requisite number of members, and were promoted to the status of official section in 1988, two years earlier than I had been led to believe.

So, folks, what can I say? Can we please just agree to speak loosely about our quarter-century-or-so of accomplishments? And shall we celebrate the unexpected good news that our 30th anniversary is just three years away? Oh, and while we're at it, let's not forget that time itself is a cultural construct! (It's interesting to note that when I first

contacted SKAT section founders to inform them of the pre-conference plan, many of them responded with some version of: "Really? Has it been 25 years already?" No one said, "Only 25? Are you sure it isn't more?")

And the good news is that, by any telling of our history, the event itself is shaping up to be a key moment in the life of the section: an important opportunity to reflect on the past, present, and future of science, knowledge, and technology studies, and a welcome chance to reaffirm our sense of community. The planning committee that has assisted me (including Mathieu Albert, Daniel Breslau, Claire Decoteau, James Evans, Anne Figert, Marion Fourcade, Kelly Moore, Casey Oberlin, Elise Paradis, and Janet Vertesi) has done a terrific job of organizing the event. We have a stellar list of panelists for our two plenary sessions, and as I write this, we're in the final days of receiving abstracts from presenters in our parallel sessions. If you haven't yet checked out our website (http://skat25.com), I encourage you to do so—and don't forget to register! (Registration is free for section members who are paid up by the end of July; it is limited, however, to the total number that can be accommodated in the auditorium.)

By the way, in case you need further evidence of the upward trajectory of science, knowledge, and technology studies, I want to report that as of the end of February, our section membership was up 7.1% compared to the same time last year. **That's the highest percentage increase of any section in the ASA!** In fact, for the ASA overall, sections were *down* 7.6% compared to the same time last year. I'm hopeful that our recent growth means we will cross the 600-member threshold this year and acquire an additional session slot at future ASA meetings.

One timely reminder before I close: Please cast your ballot when the ASA election opens! We have a superb slate of candidates running for Chair-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, and Council. Many thanks to the nominations committee (Mathieu Albert and Erin Leahey), and of course, special thanks to the candidates for agreeing to run for office.

Best wishes to all for a happy spring! My next Chair's Column will appear in the summer issue of the newsletter on August 1, soon before the pre-conference and the annual meeting. I look forward in the meantime to hearing from you by email with any thoughts or suggestions you might have about improving our section. (Alternative renderings of our section history will also be entertained.)

UPCOMING 2015 SKAT ELECTIONS

The 2015 round of ASA elections is just around the corner with ballots being sent out this month. SKAT members will be electing a new chair-elect and four council members, two of whom are student representatives, for terms to begin immediately following the 2015 meeting. Remember to get out there, or get online, that is, and vote!

Following is the list of candidates running for these offices:

Chair-Elect:
Alondra Nelson, Columbia University
Laurel Smith-Doerr, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Council Members (2 Seats):
Ruha Benjamin, Princeton University
Janet Shim, University of California, San Francisco
Catherine Bliss, University of California, San Francisco
Logan Williams, Michigan State University

Student Representative (2-Year Term):
Michael Halpin, University of Wisconsin at Madison

Student Representative (3-Year Term):
Katelin Albert, University of Toronto
Alka Menon, Northwestern University

NEW DIRECTIONS AFTER A QUARTER-CENTURY OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF SCIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, AND TECHNOLOGY

A mini-conference organized by the Science, Knowledge, and Technology Section of the American Sociological Association

August 21, 2015, 9:00 am to 7:00 pm
Northwestern University's Downtown Campus

On August 21, 2015—in our section's 25th anniversary year, and on the eve of the American Sociological Association's annual meeting in Chicago—the SKAT Section will hold a one-day mini-conference on the downtown Chicago campus of Northwestern University. The mini-conference is open to SKAT members and all others interested in social and cultural studies of science, knowledge, and technology. The mini-conference will include recognition of founders, pioneers, and past chairs; two plenary sessions; two break-out sessions with multiple panels of paper presentations running in parallel; lunchtime workgroup informal discussions; a poster presentation; and a closing reception.

We are grateful for generous support from Northwestern University (the Department of Sociology, the Science in Human Culture Program, the Medical Humanities & Bioethics Program, and the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences); the Morris Fishbein Center for the History of Science and Medicine at the University of Chicago; Loyola University, Chicago (the Department of Sociology and the College of Arts and Sciences); the University of Illinois at Chicago (the Department of Sociology and the Institute for the Humanities); and the Vanderbilt Program in Medicine, Health, & Society.

Preliminary Conference Program:

Plenary 1: Looking Backward and Forward
Chair: Steve Epstein
Confirmed Speakers: Adele Clarke, Tom Gieryn, Amit Prasad, and Ruha Benjamin

Plenary 2: Looking Outward and Inward
Chair: Scott Frickel
Confirmed Speakers: Monica Casper, Sheila Jasanoff, Janet Vertesi, and Michael Rodríguez-Muñiz

For complete information: http://skat25.com

SKAT 25 Planning Committee: Steve Epstein (Chair), Mathieu Albert, Daniel Breslau, Claire Decoteau, James Evans, Anne Figert, Marion Fourcade, Kelly Moore, Casey Oberlin, Elise Paradis, and Janet Vertesi

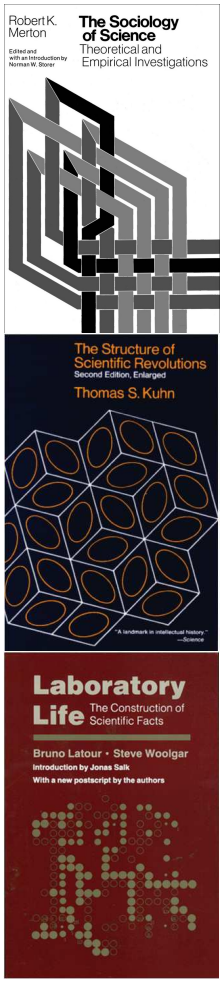
SKAT 25 Local Host Committee: Kellie Owens (Chair), Robin Bartram, Danielle Giffort, Jaimie Morse, Christopher Robertson, Ari Tolman, and Kelly Underman

SHIFTING PARADIGMS ON THE VERGE OF A REVOLUTION: THE EVOLUTION OF THE ASA SECTION ON SCIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, AND TECHNOLOGY

ELIZABETH SWEENEY, UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI

It was the summer of 1986 in New York City, the location of that year's American Sociological Association (ASA) annual meeting, when a group of innovative scholars in attendance met at a nearby apartment to discuss the formation of a new ASA section. The subject of this new section was, at the time, a relatively underrepresented topic in the wide-ranging scope of those under sociological study, a fact that seemed particularly inconsistent with the current state of the world and society at that time, if not at all times. However, the scholars at this gathering represented a new generation of sociologists on the leading edge of a fundamental, paradigmatic shift, in effect a transformation in the ways in which the study of science is approached.

Both the catalyst and consequence of this new approach was recognition of the previously undervalued yet critical need for sociologists to assess, analyze, and, ultimately, better understand the profound effects of science, knowledge, and technology on individuals and the societies in which they live. The previous approach to the sociological study of science, in the form of what was deemed the "sociology of science," had been dominated by its founder, Robert K. Merton, a seminal and pioneering sociologist who studied under Talcott Parsons. Working from the theoretical foundation of viewing science in an idealist form, Merton's functionalist approach to the sociology of science focused on the institutions of science and the structures associated with those institutions, such as the scientists and the norms associated with their work. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, scholars of science began to challenge this Mertonian sociology of science for what it failed to study – the actual *content* of science and how that content is both influenced by and itself influences social conditions. Spurred by Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* ([1962]1970), these challenges generated an intellectual shift towards a critical, sociological approach to science, an approach that was further advanced by the cultural and social constructionist frameworks emerging from the sociology of knowledge. One of the first practical outcomes of this transformation was the founding of the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) in 1975, demonstrating an early recognition of the utility and relevance, as well as the multidisciplinary nature of this new approach.



This intellectual shift towards an epistemic study of science was further signified by Latour and Woolgar's 1979 study, *Laboratory Life*, which, in the following decade, generated a series of similar ethnographic studies by scholars such as Karin Knorr-Cetina (1981), Michael Lynch (1985), and Sharon Traweek (1988), in addition to other empirically-based research such as case studies and discourse analysis (Clarke and Star 2003). As evidence of the unbounded nature of this new era, symbolic interactionists situated in the sociology of work subfield expanded the scope of this new approach to include their own work, subsequently becoming active participants in its progression (Clarke and Star 2003).

With this new approach to work with, it was then particularly evident that the revolutionary changes in technology just beginning to make a discernible presence, not to mention an almost unavoidable impact in the ways in which individuals live their daily lives, were exceedingly ripe for sociological analysis. In fact, 1986 also marked the launch

SKAT founders Susan Cozzens, Tom Gieryn, and Adele Clarke.

year of NSFNET, the platform developed and funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to provide interconnectivity to several national supercomputing centers at universities. NSFNET served as the core communication service for the Internet until restrictions against commercial Internet providers establishing private connections were removed. Indeed, by 1988, as the Internet was just beginning to enter into the offices and schools of the U.S., the first official SKAT section newsletter, published that spring, noted the option to send announcements "through electronic mail," indicating the need for users of BITNET (a cooperative computer network linking IBM mainframes in universities across the U.S.) to "check at your computer center to determine how you link up with Internet."

The sociologists who met that summer were a veritable "who's who" of sociologists of science, knowledge, and technology, demonstrating that not only were these scholars responding to this fundamental transformation in the social study of science, many of them were also included in the cadre of scholars responsible for it. Susan Cozzens, who at the time was an assistant professor in the Department of Science and Technology Studies at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, would less than 10 years later assume the title of Director of the Office of Policy Support at the NSF. She currently holds the titles of Professor of Public Policy, Director of the Technology Policy and Assessment Center, and Vice Provost at Georgia Tech. Sal Restivo, who like Cozzens was a Professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, was also a founding member and future president of 4S, as well as a founding member of the Association for Humanist Sociology, established in 1976. Tom Gieryn, Professor of Sociology at Indiana University, studied under Robert K. Merton at Columbia University, graduating in 1979. By 1986, he was already known for developing the concept of "boundary-work," a term used in science studies to describe how the delineation of boundaries between fields of knowledge is essentially an ideological endeavor in which scientists have a vested interest in distinguishing their science from non-science, an interest manifesting Merton's idealized model of science (Gieryn 1983). Also invited to this meeting was Adele Clarke, who at the time had just finished her PhD at University of California, San Francisco. Clarke would soon become a pioneer in the social and cultural study of science, technology, medicine, as well as women's health and qualitative research, for which she is responsible for developing the method of situational analysis. In addition to her many other awards, Professor Clarke was awarded the 2012 J. D. Bernal Prize for Outstanding Contributions from 4S.

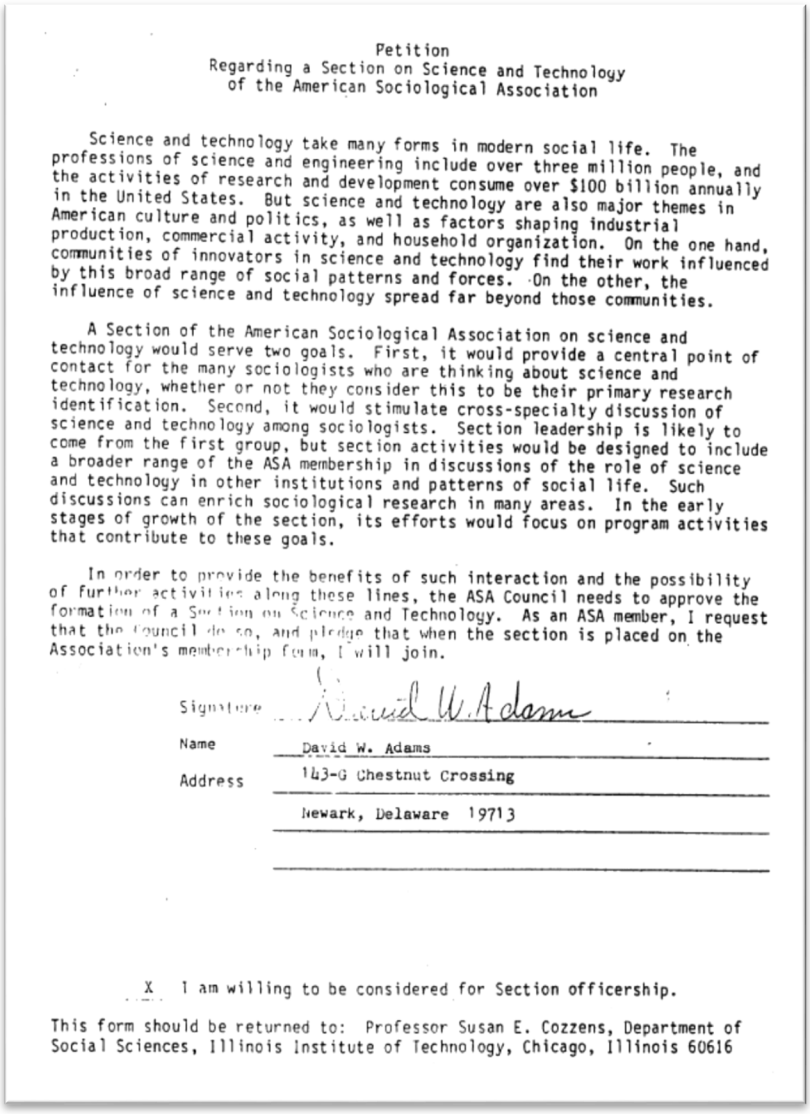
One of the key points of discussion at this meeting in 1986 concerned the potential name of the section, an important decision considering the extent to which the social study of science of science has shifted in focus, form, and scope to produce a number of new variations of the original field. Because the sociology of science, broadly speaking, was the field of study that had originally brought them together, it was a name considered. However, it quickly became evident for these scholars that the need to distinguish this section's subject from a Mertonian sociology of science was a priority. The inclusion of the term, "technology," became a viable and promising option as a way not only to ensure that those who specialize in the burgeoning field of science and technology studies (STS), which included most of them, would be represented, but also to capture the fact that this paradigmatic shift was one of the catalysts for the development of STS in the first place. In addition, considering the range of social problems beginning to emerge with the ever advancing field of technology, the dawning of the age of the World Wide Web, and the impending revolution in the way the world communicates and interacts with each other, the inclusion of technology as a component of this section was even more significant. As for the third term, "knowledge," in spite of the importance of the sociology of knowledge for the intellectual shift that had served as a platform for the work of many of these scholars and for the move to form this section, for unknown reasons, "knowledge" was not initially included in the name of the section as it was proposed to ASA.

The first SKAT chair: Henry Etzkowitz

From this first meeting, those attending worked for the next several months to generate interest in forming a section, which would later translate into signatures on

the petition required by ASA to form a new section. By that December, the petition had been written and was circulated by Cozzens to gather the required number of signatures needed for submission to the ASA Committee on Sections. Once the petition was approved, the committee then referred it the ASA Council, recommending its approval. Grounds for approval of a section include the assurance that the "proposed section represents a sub-field that has intellectual merit and that the vision for the section will benefit the profession" (ASA 2013). By the following annual meeting in Chicago in 1987, the founding members' petition effort was met with success as the ASA Council gave their approval and granted it the status of section-in-formation. At the time, this section-in-formation consisted of approximately 60 members, several of whom were elected to positions on the "interim" council. The first chairperson of that council was Henry Etzkowitz, an Associate Professor of Sociology at State University of New York, whose postdoctoral work at Columbia University was mentored by Merton, and who would go on to formulate the models of "Entrepreneurial University" and "Triple Helix," linking the university with both industry and government with the potential of enhancing innovation in knowledge-based societies (Etzkowitz and Leydesdorrf 1995). Etzkowitz would also serve as the first official chair of the section from 1989 until 1991, when Susan Cozzens was elected chair for the 1991-1992 calendar year. Other members of the interim council included Jim Beniger, Adele Clarke, Susan Cozzens, Robert McGinnis, Nicholas Mullins, and H. Gil Peach.

As described above, the term, "knowledge," was not included in the proposed name of the section found in the petition. However, the term did find its way into the section's final name, most likely due to the realization of its importance and integral place in the focus of their section. The event that might have led to that realization can perhaps be explained by one of ASA records supplied by its Program Coordinator for Governance and Information Systems, Justin Lini. According to a memo dated August 5, 1987, from George Maddox, the chair of the ASA Committee on Sections, sent to the committee's members concerning the agenda for their August 20th meeting, one of the items up for discussion was a "jurisdictional dispute" between a proposed change to the name of the section on Environment to the name, "Environment and Technology," and the proposal to create the Science and Technology Section. Concerned that this would create an "unproductive competition for membership," the committee member handling this issue indicated that she had discussed this with leadership from both sections, who had then spoken with each other about "some kind of accommodation," although she had not yet been notified of its outcome. The Committee on Sections, Annual Report, dated August 20, 1987, indicated that this accommodation must have been the inclusion of the word, "knowledge," to the section's name, given the statement,



Petition
Regarding a Section on Science and Technology
of the American Sociological Association

Science and technology take many forms in modern social life. The professions of science and engineering include over three million people, and the activities of research and development consume over $100 billion annually in the United States. But science and technology are also major themes in American culture and politics, as well as factors shaping industrial production, commercial activity, and household organization. On the one hand, communities of innovators in science and technology find their work influenced by this broad range of social patterns and forces. On the other, the influence of science and technology spread far beyond those communities.

A Section of the American Sociological Association on science and technology would serve two goals. First, it would provide a central point of contact for the many sociologists who are thinking about science and technology, whether or not they consider this to be their primary research identification. Second, it would stimulate cross-specialty discussion of science and technology among sociologists. Section leadership is likely to come from the first group, but section activities would be designed to include a broader range of the ASA membership in discussions of the role of science and technology in other institutions and patterns of social life. Such discussions can enrich sociological research in many areas. In the early stages of growth of the section, its efforts would focus on program activities that contribute to these goals.

In order to provide the benefits of such interaction and the possibility of further activities along these lines, the ASA Council needs to approve the formation of a Section on Science and Technology. As an ASA member, I request that the Council do so, and pledge that when the section is placed on the Association's membership form, I will join.

Signature David W. Adams

Name David W. Adams

Address 143-G Chestnut Crossing

Newark, Delaware 19713

X I am willing to be considered for Section officership.

This form should be returned to: Professor Susan E. Cozzens, Department of Social Sciences, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago, Illinois 60616

Petition to form the ASA Section on Science and Technology.

"New Section recommended. The Committee recommended to Council the authorization to organize a new Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology."

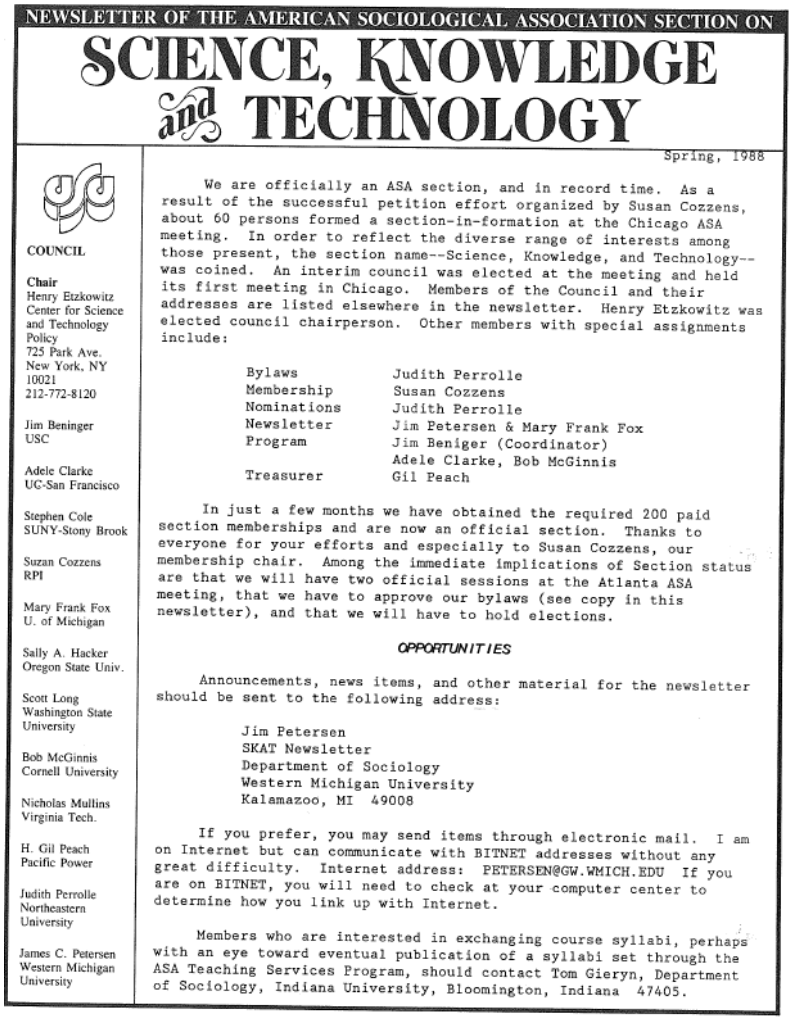
A noteworthy feature of the petition is its articulation of the ideas and goals that drove the efforts to form a new section. The petition highlights the societal impact of science and technology in statistical terms, as indicated by the following statement: "The professions of science and engineering include over three million people, and the activities of research and development consume over $100 billion annually in the United States." Beyond these more quantitative measures, the petition also points to the significance of science and technology in political and cultural arenas as well as their roles in "shaping industrial production, commercial activity, and household organization." In addition, it emphasizes the interactive relationship between social forces and the influences of science and technology.

By the following spring of 1988, membership in the section had skyrocketed to the 200 members required to become an official ASA section. The opening sentence of the section's spring 1988 newsletter, in fact its first newsletter, announced this achievement along with the notice that this status required several actions by the section, including the preparation for the two official sessions allocated each section of that size at the upcoming annual meeting in Atlanta, the approval of bylaws, and the holding of elections. Subsequently, the first official election of SKAT officers was held in 1989 and resulted in the following officers and council members: Henry Etzkowitz as Chair, Susan E. Cozzens as Chair-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, H. Gil Peach, and Council members, Mary Frank Fox, Tom Gieryn, Willie Pearson, Jr., Judith A. Perrolle, James C. Petersen, William A. Snizek, and student member, Kathy Slobin.

> ***"The professions of science and engineering include over three million people, and the activities of research and development consume over $100 billion annually in the United States."***
>
> **— From the petition to form SKAT**

Also within that newsletter was what could be considered the first "Chair's Column" by the section's interim council chair, Henry Etzkowitz. In his first column as chair, Etzkowitz wrote of a paradox of the discipline – that in spite of the observable fact that science, knowledge, and technology are constitutive elements of our society, directly influencing so many areas of our lives in significant ways, they, at the time, had been the subject of "relatively little" study. Recounting the statement of a fellow sociologist who said that "too much attention has been paid to such 'dependent variables,'" Etzkowitz countered that the recruitment of over 200 members in such a short period of time served as an excellent rebuttal, effectively demonstrating the insular, misguided nature of such sentiments and a naiveté about what the future held for the world and society at that time. As this successful recruitment demonstrated, however, at least one sector in the profession of sociology recognized the imminent shifts in the domains of science, knowledge, and technology on the verge of initiating transformative social change in the U.S. and around the world. Citing as examples of these imminent or ongoing shifts in social life, Etzkowitz noted the significance of the "World War II alliance of science with the military" and its "profound" effects on the "social structure of science," which have had a lasting impression in the postwar era; the seemingly breakneck speed at which the movement towards universal use of personal computers, just beginning at that time, was sweeping the nation; the emergence of the "information" age, in which the proliferation of "universities, think tanks, and the media" have increased the production of knowledge and its dissemination to the public, subsequently increasing the "salience of academics"; and the "present and expected future economic impact of high tech (science based)" economic development. All of these examples, as Etzkowitz made the case, implicated the increasing salience of science, knowledge, and technology in the everyday social lives of those in the larger society, and as such, reinforced the growing realization of a critical need for a new, organized field of sociology of science and technology based in a social constructionist perspective, to examine and promote a greater understanding of its impact in our lives.

This successful movement to form the section on science, knowledge, and technology represented the final outcome of a series of paradigmatic shifts emerging from the introduction of a constructionist approach to the study of science. Daryl Chubin, one of the founding members of 4S, and at the time, a senior analyst in the Science, Education, and Transportation Program in the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress, champions this shift in the social study of science with the following from his "Candidate's Statement," written to support his run for the 1989 Chair-Elect position: "I see the fledgling Section of Science, Knowledge, and Technology as an affirmation that a new generation of sociologists recognizes science and technology as problem-creating as well as problem-solving. This is one legacy of the multidisciplinary 4S… It is time to redefine the social study of knowledge, science, and technology as an underpinning of modern sociology, not an arcane research and teaching specialty."



NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION SECTION ON

SCIENCE, KNOWLEDGE and TECHNOLOGY

Spring, 1988

COUNCIL

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Nicholas Mullins
Virginia Tech.

H. Gil Peach
Pacific Power

Judith Perrolle
Northeastern University

James C. Petersen
Western Michigan University

We are officially an ASA section, and in record time. As a result of the successful petition effort organized by Susan Cozzens, about 60 persons formed a section-in-formation at the Chicago ASA meeting. In order to reflect the diverse range of interests among those present, the section name--Science, Knowledge, and Technology--was coined. An interim council was elected at the meeting and held its first meeting in Chicago. Members of the Council and their addresses are listed elsewhere in the newsletter. Henry Etzkowitz was elected council chairperson. Other members with special assignments include:

Bylaws	Judith Perrolle
Membership	Susan Cozzens
Nominations	Judith Perrolle
Newsletter	Jim Petersen & Mary Frank Fox
Program	Jim Beniger (Coordinator) Adele Clarke, Bob McGinnis
Treasurer	Gil Peach

In just a few months we have obtained the required 200 paid section memberships and are now an official section. Thanks to everyone for your efforts and especially to Susan Cozzens, our membership chair. Among the immediate implications of Section status are that we will have two official sessions at the Atlanta ASA meeting, that we have to approve our bylaws (see copy in this newsletter), and that we will have to hold elections.

OPPORTUNITIES

Announcements, news items, and other material for the newsletter should be sent to the following address:

Jim Petersen
SKAT Newsletter
Department of Sociology
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008

If you prefer, you may send items through electronic mail. I am on Internet but can communicate with BITNET addresses without any great difficulty. Internet address: PETERSEN@GW.WMICH.EDU If you are on BITNET, you will need to check at your computer center to determine how you link up with Internet.

Members who are interested in exchanging course syllabi, perhaps with an eye toward eventual publication of a syllabi set through the ASA Teaching Services Program, should contact Tom Gieryn, Department of Sociology, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405.

The front cover of the first SKAT newsletter, published in Spring 1988.

For scholars studying the burgeoning evolution and rapid-fire progression of scientific and technological advances in the late twentieth century and now into the twenty-first century, the section on science, knowledge, and technology has promised to serve as a central site within which to discuss research interests and to develop knowledge across specialties. It further promises to promote discourse on "the role of science and technology in other institutions and patterns of social life," in order to further develop sociological research and, ultimately, a greater understanding of the complex, ever-emerging, and various ways in which science, knowledge, and technology interact with, shape, and, in turn, are shaped by social forces (ASA 1987). As the following synopsis of the size of section membership indicates, these promises have not remained unfulfilled.

Continuing its swift escalation in growth, the section had grown to almost 300 members by the fall of 1988 and close to 400 members by the fall of 1989. With overall data indicating the section has grown steadily in membership, the average number of members annually has been 427, ranging from a low of 292 in its inaugural year of 1988, to a high of 582 in 2014, with the promise of an added session at the annual ASA meeting if the section meets the 600 members required. For reference purposes, in 2014, the average section size was 543, and the three largest ASA sections were the sections of Sociology of Culture with 1,219 members, Sex and Gender at 1,135 members, and Medical Sociology, with 1,070 members.

In the current era of smartphones, social media, 24-hour news channels, and now virtually instantaneous and universal access to an ever-increasing array of news and other information sources, the salience of science, knowledge, and technology studies has reached a new level of importance in society and sociology. In fact, simply refer back to Steve Epstein's report on new section membership data and statistical trends on

> ***"It is time to redefine the social study of knowledge, science, and technology as an underpinning of modern sociology, not an arcane research and teaching specialty."***
>
> **—Daryl Chubin, writing in the inaugural SKAT newsletter**

page two of this newsletter for confirmation of this ever-increasing salience. In a statement reminiscent of the founding members' celebration of the achievement of official section status and its implications for the importance of the field, Epstein emphasizes the section's 7.1% increase in membership from the same time last year as further "evidence of the upward trajectory of science, knowledge, and technology studies." As Henry Etzkowitz presciently observed in the first "Chair's Column" in 1988, 27 years ago: "As the action moves to science, knowledge, and technology, so will sociologists."

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Elizabeth M. Sweeney is a PhD candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Cincinnati. Her dissertation research examines the moral complexities of treating chronic pain. She is currently one of the SKAT graduate student representatives and the chair of the SKAT Publications Committee.

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. Aneesh, Associate Professor of Sociology and Global Studies, assumed the position of the Director of the Institute of World Affairs at University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

NEW ARTICLES

Johnson, David R., Christopher P. Scheitle, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. 2015. "Individual Religiosity and Orientation towards Science: Reformulating Relationships." *Sociological Science* 2: 106-124.

Rodríguez-Muñiz, Michael. 2015. "Intellectual Inheritances: Cultural Diagnostics and the State of Poverty Knowledge." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 3: 89-122.

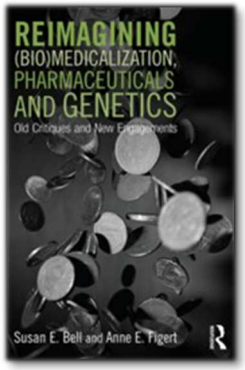
NEW BOOK SERIES

***FEMINIST TECHNOSCIENCES* from University of Washington Press**

Series Editors: Rebecca Herzig (Bates College) and **Banu Subramaniam** (University of Massachusetts, Amherst)

FEMINIST TECHNOSCIENCES seeks to publish intersectional, cutting-edge feminist work in science and technology studies. The series will foreground insights from queer studies, critical race studies, disability studies, animal studies, postcolonial theory, and other critical approaches that reframe and reignite longstanding questions in feminist science and technology studies.

NEW BOOKS

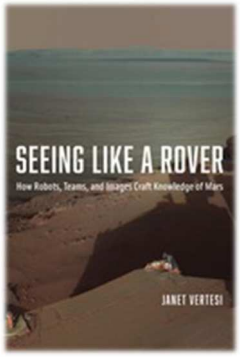


Bell, Susan E., and Anne E. Figert. 2015. *Reimagining (Bio)Medicalization, Pharmaceuticals, and Genetics: Old Critiques and New Engagements*. Routledge.

In recent years medicalization, the process of making something medical, has gained considerable ground and a position in everyday discourse. In this multidisciplinary collection of original essays, the authors consider how issues around medicalization have developed, ways in which it is changing, and the potential shapes it will take in the future. They develop a unique argument that medicalization, biomedicalization, pharmaceuticalization, and geneticization are related and co-evolving processes, present throughout the globe. For this volume, the editors sought out a multidisciplinary array of scholars and work that is located within and outside the United States, hoping to expand the field of medical sociology further in a global and transnational direction.

Hilgartner, Stephen, Clark Miller, and Rob Hagendijk (eds). 2015. *Science and Democracy: Making Knowledge and Making Power in the Biosciences and Beyond*. Routledge.

Science and Democracy advances a systematic, yet detailed, co-productionist understanding of how emerging modes of making knowledge in genomics and other fields (e.g., nanotechnology, informatics, climate research) are simultaneously and reciprocally remaking social order, empowering and disempowering groups of citizens, creating new forms of legitimate expertise, and redistributing wealth and power. For a more detailed description and table of contents, visit http://www.routledgementalhealth.com/books/details/9780415821346 (Enter code FLR40 at checkout for a 20% discount.)



Vertesi, Janet. 2015. *Seeing Like a Rover: How Robots, Teams, and Images Craft Knowledge of Mars.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

With *Seeing Like a Rover*, Janet Vertesi takes us behind the scenes to reveal the work that goes into creating our knowledge of Mars. Every photograph that the Rovers take, she shows, must be processed, manipulated, and interpreted—and all that comes *after* team members negotiate with each other about what they should even be taking photographs of in the first place. Vertesi's account of the inspiringly successful Rover project reveals science in action, a world where digital processing uncovers scientific truths, where images are used to craft consensus, and where team members develop an uncanny intimacy with the sensory apparatus of a robot that is millions of miles away. Ultimately, Vertesi shows, every image taken by the Mars Rovers is not merely a picture of Mars—it's a portrait of the whole Rover team, as well.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Social Science-Environmental Health Interdisciplinary Collaborations Conference

Northeastern University | May 21-22, 2015

The Social Science Environmental Health Research Institute, with co-sponsorship from the Puerto Rico Test Site for Exploring Contamination Threats (PROTECT - Superfund Research Program) will hold a first-ever conference at Northeastern University on "Social Science-Environmental Health Interdisciplinary Collaborations," funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. This conference will bring together scholars, government agency professionals, and community-based organizations working at the intersections of social science and environmental health. Case studies will include scholars and government agency professionals collaborating on: biomonitoring, fracking, the BP oil spill, and reproductive outcomes of contamination. Government regulatory and research agencies will also talk about the role of social science in their work. There will be workshops on practical applications of social science/environmental health collaborations, on working with environmental justice groups, and on developing curriculums for cross-training. Alternatives for Community and Environment (Boston) and the Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island are partnering in the conference. Our keynote speaker will be Katsi Cook, director of Running Strong for Native American Youth, and a leader in the community-based participatory research on contamination at the Akwesasne Mohawk community.

The following speakers are confirmed:
Gwen Collman, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Julia Brody, Silent Spring Institute
Linda Layne, National Science Foundation
Shobha Srinivasan, National Cancer Institute
Symma Finn, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Brian Mayer, University of Arizona
Andrew Kane, University of Florida
Akram Alshawabkeh, Northeastern University
Carmen Milagros Velez Vega, University of Puerto Rico
Sharyle Patton, Commonweal
Cecile Wendling, CNRS-Sciences Po Paris
Ludwine Casteleyn University of Leuven (Belgium)
Penn Loh, Tufts University
Kalila Barnett, Alternatives for Community and Environment
Sara Wylie, Northeastern University
Lynn Carroll, The Endocrine Disruption Exchange
Phil Brown, Northeastern University

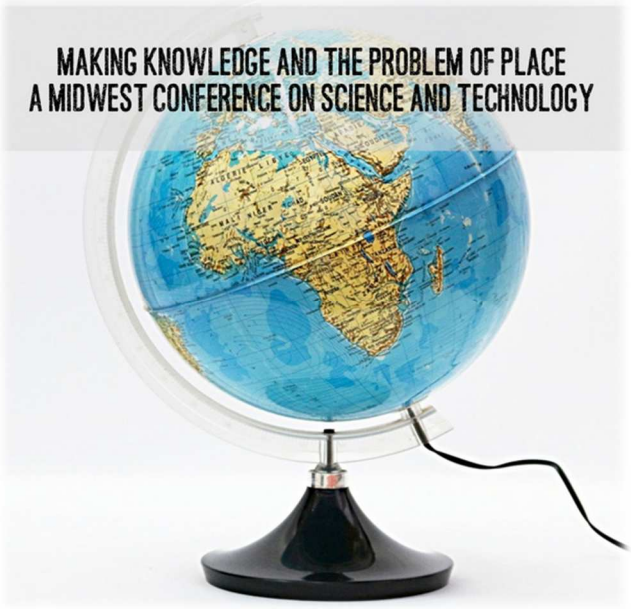
In addition to regular speakers, there will be workshops and discussion groups, some of which will be set up in response to desires indicated by attendees in the months leading up to the conference.

There will be no cost for registration, but participants are asked to pay $50 in advance for breakfast and lunch on both days, by check to Northeastern University. Registration details are available at the Social Science Environmental Health Research Institute website: http://www.northeastern.edu/environmentalhealth/

The Colonnade Hotel, a short walk away, has a block of rooms available at $289. Reservations can be made at: NEU Social Sciences Environmental Health Reservation Booking Link for May 20th to 22nd 2015

MAKING KNOWLEDGE AND THE PROBLEM OF PLACE: A MIDWEST CONFERENCE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY | MAY 8-9, 2015



REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Registration is free but requested:
http://www.shc.northwestern.edu/events/2015%20conference/may2015conference.html

Keynote Speaker on Friday, May 8 at 4:30 pm:
Adriana Petryna, Anthropology Department, University of Pennsylvania
"What is a Horizon? Extinction and Borrowed Time Amid Climate Change."

Panelists and Chairs on Saturday, May 9, 9:00 am to 5:30 pm:
Samer Alatout, Ellen Amster, Anita Chan, Mariana Craciun, Tara Diener, Christopher Dunlap, Judith Farquhar, Thomas Gieryn, Eden Medina, Katya (Kai) Mishuris, Michelle Murphy, Pilar Ossorio, Eugene Raikhel, Margarita Rayzberg, Luciana de Souza Leao, and Daniel Stolz.

Meals are provided on May 9.

For the complete schedule of presentations, please go to our website:
http://www.shc.northwestern.edu/events/2015%20conference/may2015conference.html

A small number of hotel rooms are available for reservation through April 25th at a reduced rate of $149 at the Hilton Orrington Hotel, two blocks from campus. Please call 1-800-HILTONS and mention the "Science in Human Culture conference" to receive the group rate.

For additional information, please contact Aileen Robinson at shcmakingknowledge@gmail.com

SKAT SESSIONS AT ASA 2015

The Politics of Knowledge: Technoscientific Dimensions of Political Life

Session Organizer: Steven Epstein
Presider: Janet Shim
Presenters: Patrick Carroll, Alondra Nelson, Kelly Moore, Judy Wajcman
Discussant: Scott Frickel

Bodies & Sexualities in Science & Technology Studies

Co-Sponsored with the Section on Sociology of the Body and Embodiment
Session Organizers: Katie Hasson and Elise Paradis
Presider: Elise Paradis
Presenters: Shelley K. White, Krista Mary Smith Sigurdson, Martine Danielle Lappe, Jody Ahlm, Yu-Ling Huang

Topics in Science, Knowledge, and Technology Studies

Session Organizer and Presider: Jill A. Fisher
Presenters: Dilshani Sarathchandra, Claire Laurier Decoteau and Paige Lenore Sweet, Bryce J. Bartlett, Kellie Owens, Jaime McCauley

Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology Roundtables

Organizer: Catherine Bliss
Table 01. Structures of Science
Table 02. Science and Governance
Table 03. Classification Work
Table 04. Paradigms and People
Table 05. Constructing Nature
Table 06. Legitimizing Knowledge
Table 07. Mobilizing Expertise
Table 08. Interdisciplinary Research
Table 09. Metaphors in Science and Society

SKAT GRADUATE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

The SKAT Graduate Student Spotlight profiles graduate student research that has an emphasis on science, knowledge, and technology. This issue spotlights the work of eighteen grad students.

Natalie Aviles, Sociology and Science Studies, University of California, San Diego
Cancer Research *in Situ*: A Pragmatic Event-Based Theory of Organizational Culture in the National Cancer Institute

In my dissertation, I apply insights from cultural sociologists inspired by American pragmatism to extend process theories of organization, developing a framework for analyzing the importance of organizational culture to virus-cancer research in the US National Cancer Institute. I construct a single-case temporal comparison of two historical periods to show how local cultural idioms emergent from ongoing organizational practices help explain the shape of biomedical knowledge (by enabling stable interpretations of which viruses were most promising for study in the 1960s and 1970s), and technology (by shaping the possibilities for producing HPV vaccines in the 1990s and 2000s). My work contributes to the literature on cultural and historical sociology by offering a coherent theoretical framework that builds upon pragmatist social theory and event-based theories of organization, while also addressing a notable lacuna in social studies of science, technology, and medicine related to the role of organizations in biomedical knowledge production.

Sarah Brayne, Sociology and Social Policy, Princeton University
Stratified Surveillance: Policing in the Age of Big Data

My dissertation research analyzes the intersection of two structural forces: the growth in criminal justice surveillance and the rise of big data. In my dissertation, I examine surveillance practices within the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Specifically, it addresses two key sociological questions: First, how are the integration and analysis of large and diverse data sources transforming police practices? Second, what are the implications of new data-driven law enforcement surveillance practices for social inequality? To answer these questions, I conducted fieldwork within the LAPD, an agency on the front lines of data analytics. I conducted interviews and observations within various area and specialized divisions in the department, and on ride-alongs, to understand how officers deploy data in the field. My research within the LAPD is supplemented with fieldwork conducted at a technology firm and intelligence center. This study sheds light on the consequences of surveillance in the age of big data, changing the way we understand the relationship between data-driven policing, bias, and discrimination. Finally, it highlights a number of intended and unintended social consequences of new surveillance practices.

Drew Foster, Department of Sociology, University of Michigan

My dissertation is motivated by the revolutionary yet under-studied impact of the internet on the experience of illness. People can now access an ocean of information about their symptoms online; they can also collaborate and commiserate at unprecedented frequency and depth with others who share their health conditions. My dissertation focuses on one substantial yet little understood fixture in the universe of health information on the web: online health communities. These communities, such as WebMD and Health Cloud, are playing an increasingly vital role in providing knowledge and support to people with serious and chronic conditions but remain a conspicuously

under-researched area of the American health enterprise. I am conducting virtual ethnography, including offline interviews with members, of two independent online health communities to better understand how everyday people work together to acquire and appraise health information from the internet—which is of variable accuracy and quality. My core research question is "How do non-experts collaboratively produce expert-like knowledge?" Through comprehensive qualitative research methods, my dissertation seeks to explicate how lay people adjudicate the quality of health information they encounter online, dismantle physicians' long-held authority over diagnosis, and build medical knowledge about their illnesses communally in cyberspace.

Sam Haraway, Department of Sociology, University of California-Davis
The Tour de Technoscience: Lance Armstrong and the Sociology of the Techno-Athlete

This dissertation is a socio-historical study of the "techno-athlete" that treats Lance Armstrong's seven-consecutive Tour de France victories (1999-2005) and doping controversy as a case by which to reflect anew on questions concerning subjectivity, agency, and doping in sport. I first reconstruct sport as "trials of strength" (Latour 1988) between heterogeneous actor-networks. Far from competitions between human individuals or symbolic representations of the "pure" body, I anchor what I call "techno-sport" in the assemblage of laboratories, materials, bodies, knowledge, institutions, sponsorships, and so on, by which contemporary sport unfolds. I then explore Armstrong's training for the 1999-2005 Tours de France as a process of translation by which aerodynamic science, nutrition regimes, clothing and equipment designs, periodized training methods, and blood-boosting techniques (by PEDs and altitude training alike), generate a techno-athlete who is at once distributed and centered by a heterogeneous network (Mialet 2012). By understanding sport as a material and collective process we can escape the myth of the singularized, heroic athlete around which the biopolitics of anti-doping expands today. I ask, what becomes of individual performances, the subjectivity and agency of the contemporary athlete, in light of the heterogeneous collectivities through which contemporary sport unfolds?

Megan M. Henley, School of Sociology, University of Arizona
Science and Service: Doula Work and the Legitimacy of Alternative Knowledge Systems

My dissertation explores the forms of expertise that doulas use to legitimate their work to the medical community, and to clients. Doulas are women who provide other women with emotional support during labor and childbirth. Doulas serve as a case for exploring the importance of authoritative versus alternative forms of knowledge within the realm of childbirth. I used mixed methods research to assess the importance of certification and scientific evidence, versus alternative sources of knowledge for legitimating the doula role within the birth field. I collaborated with a team to develop the Maternity Support Survey, a survey of doulas, childbirth educators, and nurses in the United States and Canada. I analyzed data that I collected through this survey in addition to data from doula organization websites and data from interviews that I conducted with twenty-five doulas and twenty-five mothers. I found that certification and scientific evidence are important for legitimating doula work to the medical community. However, both doulas and mothers rely on alternative knowledge systems such as experience, beliefs about Western medicine, and feminism to explain their views on birth. Doulas appeal to, and have greater access to, women who subscribe to alternative knowledge regarding birth and medicine.

Shreeharsh Kelkar, Program in History, Anthropology, and STS, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

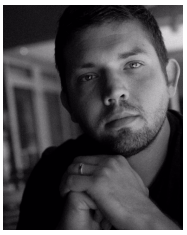
The New York Times declared 6456 as the "Year of the MOOC," referring to the proliferation of potentially transformative Massive Open Online Courses offered through platforms like edX and Coursera. My dissertation approaches MOOCs as a microcosm for understanding the relationship between technology, professional identities, and work practices in education more broadly. Focusing on edX, a non-profit online learning enterprise jointly founded by MIT and Harvard, I track the development of its MOOC computing infrastructure through multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork conducted between January 2014 and May 2015. My dissertation focuses on three groups—software engineers and computer scientists, ed-

ucators, and learning researchers—who are central to shaping this infrastructure. They are also key participants in edX's stated mission of reinventing higher education, as they produced this infrastructure through their respective (and complementary) work of coding software, making online course-ware and analyzing student activity. I use ethnographic examples to argue that MOOC infrastructures (or "platforms") are a step in what I call the "platformization" of higher education. More specifically, I show that the MOOC platform-builders draw self-conscious inspiration from the technical precedents and corporate practices of Internet platforms like Amazon and Google. I show how these software engineers and computer scientists transfer their expertise in building such platforms to the process of teaching and learning (for example, "peer grading" becomes a crowd-sourcing problem), subtly but fundamentally transforming not only the nature of work and the division of labor in higher education, but also redefining the meaning of learning itself.

Alka Menon, Department of Sociology, Northwestern University

Constructing the Ethnic Body: Race and Social Identity in Cosmetic Surgery in Multicultural Societies

This research examines the tailoring of surgical interventions to social identities within multicultural societies and the meanings of these interventions across two different societies – the U.S. and Malaysia – by a focused investigation of cosmetic surgery, an elective practice that changes patients' appearance through modification of physical markers. This research investigates the varying impact of cosmetic surgery on raced bodies and notions of race, taking an intersectional approach that incorporates attention to gender, sexuality, and class. Through systematic observations of clinical encounters in cosmetic surgery clinics and interviews with surgeons and patients in both countries, the study investigates how surgeons and patients relate specific physical features to group identities such as race and gender. In comparing surgeons and patients from the U.S. and Malaysia, this project attends to local and global manifestations and interpretations of bodies and race, noting what about each is considered "natural" and how this is related to the "social." The comparison between the two countries highlights the variable effects of markets and healthcare systems on medical practice and the body in an era of globalization and modernity, and how medicine in multicultural societies is affected by and re-shapes racial, cultural, national, and other identities.



David J. McBee, School of Sociology, University of Arizona

The Research Problem of Research Obstacles

How do scientific teams solve research obstacles? Science has become more specialized and team-based, bringing scientists with deep expertise together. Projects gain both depth and breadth of expertise, but suffer increased coordination costs. The pharmaceutical field is an ideal example; its innovation process relies on research teams that span several disciplines and several functional areas. Background interviews with pharmaceutical executives reveal the presence of research-related problems; no one I spoke with could recall a successful project not in serious jeopardy at some point. These interviews also confirm that scientists rely on advice from other scientists to overcome research obstacles. Each team scientist is primarily responsible for integrating advice from within his or her functional area. In contrast, project leaders integrate knowledge from all functional areas. I therefore argue that *teams with scientists who are better-connected in networks of advice within their respective functional areas will have higher problem-solving capabilities.* Additionally, *teams with project leaders who are better-connected in networks of advice across functional areas will have higher problem-solving capabilities*. To test these claims and demonstrate the relevance of team-based problem-solving, I survey and interview scientists associated with drug discovery and development research from three different pharmaceutical companies.

Jaimie Morse, Department of Sociology, Northwestern University

Morse's dissertation traces the historical emergence of sexual violence in war as a focus of global human rights advocacy and how medical evidence has been used to document sexual violence as a war crime and an instrument of genocide. Her research explores how global net-

works of human rights activists, doctors, and nurses have advocated for increased collection and use of medical forensic evidence in conflict zones to corroborate allegations of sexual violence in war, document patterns of war crimes, and facilitate prosecution in international and domestic courts. Such attempts are part of broader shifts in human rights advocacy to document human rights violations using rigorous, standardized methodologies. In this project Jaimie traces the *origins*, *purpose,* and *apparent effects* of recent attempts to develop and implement medico-legal interventions to document, characterize, and address gender-based violence in the context of war. Combining archival research with interviews of experts, healthcare practitioners, and activists, she argues that medical evidence collection techniques produce commemorative objects and function as tools of governance, influencing what comes to count as gender-based violence in war, which crimes are deemed justiciable, and ultimately how events come to be remembered.

Robert Osley-Thomas, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

A Double-Facing Theory of University Change: **Department Closures and Low-Enrollment Programs among the Liberal Arts, Practical Arts, and Biomedical Sciences (1975-2010)**

My dissertation examines the evolving organization of American universities, which are experiencing "a quiet academic revolution" in the face of political scrutiny, significant budget crises, controversies over student debt, and the growth of online education. I challenge the theoretical accounts of university change provided by *new institutionalism* and *academic capitalism*. Although starting from different positions, these theories each come to a similar conclusion: that university leaders are most likely to close liberal arts programs and their departments. I propose a *double-facing theory* of university change, which argues that university leaders look to different signals when dealing with different disciplines, and I examined the implications of this theory for the closing of liberal arts departments, biomedical sciences departments, and for low-enrollment undergraduate programs. Using event history analysis, I challenge the prevailing view that the liberal arts are the most vulnerable disciplines within the new "commercial university." Instead, universities are more likely to close practical arts departments than they are to close liberal arts departments, they are more likely to close biomedical departments than traditional science departments, and they are more comfortable with low enrollment liberal arts programs.

Kellie Owens, Department of Sociology, Northwestern University

Risk Perception and Practice Variation in Contemporary U.S. Childbirth

Managing risk is an increasingly pervasive goal of modern societies. In biomedicine, we treat risk of disease as an illness in itself–suitable for monitoring and intervention. In some cases, increased monitoring improves health outcomes by detecting problems early and providing treatment. Recently, however, researchers have noted that the diagnosis and treatment of risk can lead to unnecessary medical intervention and possible harm. Clinical guidelines now suggest that patients receive diagnostic testing like mammograms and prostate exams later and less often. Despite these guidelines, little has changed in practice. Childbirth in the U.S. serves as an illuminating case because it is one of the few areas where we can see two models of health risk operating simultaneously. In addition to the usually dominant model of risk which values early testing and intervention, there is another well-entrenched and competing discourse that seeks to mitigate risk by refusing medical surveillance. Based on interviews with birth providers in five states, this project uses the case of risk management in obstetrics to highlight how "intentional non-knowing" is used as a morally justifiable way to mitigate risk. Studying the success and limitations of this risk counterculture illuminates how risk societies are changing in response to data suggesting that more information can have hurtful effects.

Nathaniel D. Porter, Department of Sociology, Penn State University

My dissertation uses book co-purchasing networks from Amazon.com to study shared ideas and culture in US religious groups. Religion is chosen because of the centrality of popular expression and consumption to the ongoing development of ideas, and particularly of cross-group conversations and ideas, such as interfaith movements. The data are collected from Amazon's 'Customers who Bought this also Bought' feature, and resemble co-citation data in that books (the nodes) are

tied because they are consumed or used by similar groups of people. I use a combination of node and group level centrality measures with structural approaches such as block modeling to understand group similarity and difference, as well as the paths through which those ties are made. Early exploratory analysis has shown promise in distinguishing between nominal topic, as defined by the publisher or retailer, of books and the effective relationships of books to others, improving understanding of distinct types of irreligious individuals. I seek to help fill an overall gap between the sociology of formal knowledge and the qualitative study of everyday life by introducing this new type of data and research.

Elizabeth Roberto, Department of Sociology, Yale University

The Boundaries of Spatial Inequality: Three Essays on the Measurement and Analysis of Residential Segregation

Scholars have engaged in a longstanding debate about how best to measure residential segregation. In recent years, methods have been developed to capture the spatial features of segregation, such as geographic proximity and scale. However, existing approaches do not accurately represent the distance between locations or how segregation varies within cities. I introduce a new method that measures distance along a city's road network. Road distance is more realistic than straight line distance, because it captures the connectivity of roads and the excess distance imposed by spatial boundaries. I also develop a new measure of segregation: the divergence index. It measures how surprising a local area's composition is given the overall city population. I apply my new method and measure in an empirical analysis of racial and ethnic residential segregation in U.S. cities. Results demonstrate how spatial boundaries, such as rivers, highways, and municipal borders, structure segregation patterns, and reveal that the segregation within some cities is highly unequal: some residents live in completely segregated environments, while others live in areas that are a microcosm of the city's population. My approach provides deeper insight into the segregation of even the most studied U.S. cities, including Philadelphia, New York, and Milwaukee.

Joan Robinson, Department of Sociology, Columbia University

Diagnosing Technology: Bodies, Knowledge, and Control on the Maternal-Fetal Frontier

Robinson's dissertation explores the social ecology of the home pregnancy test in American life. First the project asks, how did the pregnancy test go home into the control of lay users, seemingly without contest? This historical research explores the legal, medical, and social position of the technology through archival research, legal research, and historical interviews. Next, interviews with contemporary users, partners, and medical professionals reveal the nuances of management of personal and medical information. How does the technology construct identity, and how does it interact with different categories of users and nonusers? How does the technology create a locus of responsibility and control, and who gets to occupy this locus? In the rapidly changing landscapes of reproductive technology, medical diagnosis, and information sharing, this research explores and advances our understandings of privacy, surveillance, and control. The dissertation was awarded a 2014 National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant from the Science, Technology, and Society division.

Steven J. Sacco, Department of Sociology, Loyola University Chicago

In recent decades, sweeping changes in both technology and organization have largely undermined the traditional understanding of the large, vertically integrated production firm. Products are now produced by a complex chain of firms in a process described as "vertical disintegration." However, for the most part, discussions of manufacturing itself have not been central to STS or to economic sociology. Nevertheless, existing work in the social construction of technology provides ground for examining manufacturing technology itself. Through several case studies, but especially with respect to the deeply troubled development of the Boeing 787 "Dreamliner" aircraft, I seek to show how fundamentally interdependent this new form of manufacturing is on a complex interplay of materiality, organizations, and society as a whole. Central to this work is the contention that the materiality of production is an important driver of how manufacturing is organized.

However, the 787 case illustrates what happens when an organizational technology is chosen without due regard to manufacturing considerations. Hence, through this work I seek to address the interaction between organizations and material reality. This work thus extends both economic sociology as well as the social construction of technology.

Krista Sigurdson, Department of Sociology, University of California, San Francisco

Sigurdson's dissertation is a multi-sited ethnography of human milk exchanges. Through in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations, she follows human milk through the social worlds of non-profit human milk banking, informal milk sharing (often facilitated by Facebook), and biomedical innovation in both corporate and academic domains. She explores how these worlds are distinctive economic forms that offer different types of "moral exchange," each of which incorporates the legacy of the feminized unpaid milk donor in their socio-technical network. For example, while non-profit human milk banks are experiencing unprecedented growth, they are simultaneously reluctant to incorporate a more industrial model or consider paying donors. Informal exchanges, also experiencing tremendous growth, often operationalize non-payment within their biosocial affective economies where milk becomes a form of support for women struggling to breastfeed and strengthens their overall "breastfeeding projects," integral parts of contemporary mothering. Sigurdson also follows newly emerging forms of biomedical innovation using breast milk, and considers how they might impact existing worlds of exchange.

Misha Teplitskly, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago

My research focuses on how experts evaluate scientific findings during peer review. I am particularly interested in understanding how reviewers' judgments vary with their cognitive and social distance to manuscripts and in assessing traditional peer review versus alternative evaluation methods. In one project, I study a sample of quantitative sociological manuscripts before and after review to understand how reviewers' criticisms affect what is ultimately published. Results from this project suggest that authors tend to respond to criticisms by adjusting the theoretical frames of their manuscripts while leaving the data analyses relatively intact. In a project with Von Bakanic, College of Charleston, we use peer review data from the *American Sociological Review* to assess how well reviewers' recommendations predict impact over the subsequent decades. Early results indicate that reviewers successfully identified many of the most-cited manuscripts; these manuscripts were often first round consensus-accept. On the other hand, consensus between reviewers failed to predict citation trajectories of articles published after 2 or more rounds of review. Lastly, I am engaged in a project with collaborators from Northwestern and University of Chicago designed to understand and measure biases in the review of neuroscience manuscripts at the journal *PLoS One.*

Nathalia Hernández Vidal, Department of Sociology, Loyola University Chicago

Seeds, Indigenous Knowledge, and (de) Colonization in Colombia: A Comparative Case Study

The incorporation of intellectual property rights over vegetable breeders has been analyzed in the last twenty years from different points of view, but it has been seen mainly as a problem threatening food security and food sustainability, or as a top down process in which communities are pictured in passive terms. However, little has been said about the articulation of multiple *indigeneities* when specific agendas for scientific research and policy are enacted and implemented. This situation requires an understanding of the production of knowledge as something done under specific circumstances embedded in a power structure that determines who produce it, how it is produced, who has access to it, and what kind of knowledge (not considered as such) is left in the margins. In my project I conduct a comparative case study of three communities in Colombia to analyze the role that so-called *indigenous* knowledge plays in the interwoven net of relationships between state institutions, public policy, and local communities. My preliminary findings show the different ways in which indigenous knowledge is understood and assimilated by the communities and its individuals, and the national and regional institutions.

ASA Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology

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Mary Frank Fox
Elise Paradis
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Steve Epstein (ex-officio)

SKAT 25 Mini-Conference Organizing Committee:
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