SKATOLOGY
Newsletter of the ASA Section on Science, Knowledge & Technology
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Table of Contents

1. Chair's Column
4. 2012 ASA Meeting Notes
SKAT Roundtable Notes
5. 2013 SKAT Sessions
7. Star-Nelkin Winners Interview
13. Sergio Sismondo Interview
15. Tom Medvetz Interview
20. Adele Clarke Wins Bernal Prize
21. New Books
22. New Articles
23. New Book Chapters
Professional Announcements
24. Events & Resources
25. Section Info & Credits

Chair's Column: "Structural Negligence"

Monica J. Casper

As I write this column, headlines continue to announce a severe meningitis outbreak affecting the United States. As of October 18th, more than 250 patients in 15 states have been identified as affected and 20 people have died. The CDC has named some 75 clinics across the country that received tainted steroid shots, often prescribed for back pain, and investigation into the source of contamination is ongoing. The only slender silver lining in the story is that this type of meningitis is not contagious. Yet the outbreak does point to issues stemming from both Big Pharma's and medical institutions' stepped-up production, and insistence on high rates of profits.

Many of you know that I recently lost my father. What you may not know is how he died. In late June, he underwent a routine knee replacement surgery, one of those operations designed to improve a person's quality of life. The day after he was released from the hospital, my mother and sister took him to the ER as he was in a great deal of pain, somewhat delusional, and feverish. My mom worried he had experienced a heart attack or an overdose of pain medication, and after consulting the knee surgeon, brought my dad to the ER. Hours later, after an array of tests, he was diagnosed with Clostridium difficile, a nasty bacterial infection that is sometimes treatable. And, unfortunately, sometimes not.

My dad, Dennis J. Struck, died on August 18th following multiple surgeries including removal of his colon and two weeks in the ICU, during which he was mostly but not always unconscious. It was neither a graceful nor a peaceful death. It was violent, unexpected, confusing, and unbelievably sad. He was 67 years old, generally healthy, and very active. My 65-year old mother is now a widow, far sooner than she (or we) ever imagined. And many of us in the family, especially my dad's 79-year old sister and her family who were

Chair's Column

Monica Casper

unable to be in attendance and thus witness each hourly change in my dad's status, have questions—including the ubiquitous entreaty: Why?

Let's face it. As a medical sociologist and STS scholar, I have occasionally found my expertise inadequate to the task. Perhaps some of you have experienced similar chasms between your professional status and your everyday lives? In August, as my father lay unconscious in Tucson's Northwest Medical Center day after day, I was more often than not just another frightened daughter standing vigil, and not in fact a published "expert" on the health care system and science-in-practice. This, despite my sense that I might know something that could help us better navigate the situation.

So in the past several weeks, while I have grieved both alone and with my family, I have also begun to research C. diff. Specifically, what do scientists know about it, and how quickly is this knowledge being translated into clinical care? My interest in the topic isn't likely to turn into a full-blown project, but the "questions" my family raised have prompted me to consider afresh the politics of health care, including the etiologies of infection. And while I have much gratitude to my dad's medical team (except the person responsible for releasing him from the hospital following his knee surgery, when he clearly wasn't well), I have developed a seething fury at what Adele Clarke and I, in a recent tearful phone conversation, described as "structural negligence."

By this term, I do not mean the individual actions of ICU nurses, surgeons, and hospitalists, nor do I mean gross incompetence in skills, expertise, or ethics. What I do mean is the structural organization of health care from busy work routines to institutional practices to financial issues to inadequate governmental regulations to the fraught conversations about health care reform in the U.S. In using the term "structural negligence," I'm calling on the tools of sociology to help make sense of premature death, especially death from infection. And there is a politic here: premature death, more often than not, is preventable death.

During our time in the ICU with my dad, my family and I had several conversations with surgeons, infectious diseases specialists, critical care nurses, and others about C. diff, including rapidly escalating morbidity and mortality rates. We asked if this emergent infectious disease—a boundary object, to be sure—mirrors anything about the early days of HIV, when medical personnel had no idea how to deal with the new microbe. We inquired about the CDC's involvement, what new work routines had been put into place, how much information nurses and doctors are given. And I read articles in the clinical and scientific literature and canvassed infectious disease sites.

Chair's Column

Monica Casper

Here's what we learned: Not enough is being done about Clostridium difficile in U.S. hospitals, in large part because money and personnel to undertake prevention are both in short supply. And people are evermore vulnerable to infection because of our heavy use of antibiotics, which destroy "good" bacteria that then allows C. diff to flourish.

Two days before my dad died, *USA Today* ran a story on C. diff, reporting the following:

> C. diff is far more prevalent than federal reports suggest. The bacteria is linked in hospital records to more than 30,000 deaths a year in the United States — about twice federal estimates and rivaling the 32,000 killed in traffic accidents. It strikes about a half-million Americans a year. Yet despite a decade of rising C. diff rates, health care providers and the government agencies that oversee them have been slow to adopt proven strategies to reduce the infections, resulting in tens of thousands of deaths and illnesses that could have been prevented...Indeed, while the medical community has cut rates for virtually all other health care infections in recent years, C. diff hovers at all-time highs.

It has not escaped my attention that my father has become a statistic.

Importantly, scholars have begun to turn their attention to issues of structural competency. And while the corollary to this concept might better be termed structural incompetency, I prefer the term structural negligence. Where incompetence implies a kind of bumbling but well-meaning approach, negligence (like malpractice) denotes exactly what it sounds like: bad practice. Or, rather, systemic negligence and disregard in the name of profit and performance. Our health care system, unsurprisingly, operates on an actuarial register and not a human one. People get sick and die, and numbers are reported (or not).

USA Today again:

> [T]here are few other regulatory incentives for facilities to improve. The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has begun reducing reimbursement to hospitals for care tied to certain health care infections it deems preventable, such as those related to catheter use. But C. diff is not on that list. It's difficult to hold facilities accountable for C. diff because it can be impossible to know where a patient was infected...That hasn't been a roadblock in England, where hospitals must meet strict targets for reducing infection rates or face sanctions. In fiscal 2011-12 through March, the country had just 18,000 C. diff cases — 17 percent below the prior year. The British experience 'has shown that substantial reductions are possible,' says Don Goldmann, senior vice president at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and a professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. 'We can do better, and we really need to.'

Indeed.

Notes from SKAT Council & Business Meetings at ASA 2012

2012 ASA Meeting Notes

Steven Epstein, substituting for Section Chair Monica Casper, brought the business meeting to order with 49 persons in attendance.

The section began the year with a balance of $3653. We have received income of $3799, and have had expenses, through August 19, of $3494, leaving an ending balance of $3958.

Section membership numbers have increased by 5 compared to the numbers at the time of the 2011 annual meeting. Based on previous years' experience we can expect 20-30 additional memberships by the end of 2012. Though the section is growing steadily, it is not close to the six hundred members needed for an additional session at the ASA meeting.

For more details, see:

http://www2.asanet.org/sectionskat/documents.html

Notes on SKAT Roundtables at ASA 2012

2012 Roundtables

Elizabeth Sweeney

The 2012 SKAT roundtable session covered a range of engaging topics that sparked lively discussion at this year's annual ASA meeting. The organizers of the session, Elizabeth Sweeney and Miranda Waggoner, sorted through the more than 30 papers submitted to form 6 tables. As the titles for each table indicate, the papers at these tables addressed the broad areas of "Disciplinary Trajectories and Boundaries", "Innovation, Technology, and Meaning", "Interrogating and Contextualizing Science and Knowledge", "Medicine and Health", "Science, Culture, Publics, and Experts", and "Empirical Studies in the Production of Knowledge". The individual papers focused on such issues as disciplinary boundaries in anthropology, how creativity and rationality play roles in product design, the contributions of George Herbert Mead to science education, the "biomedicalization of mental illness", the online social networks of community college students, and the meanings of economic forecasts. The roundtable session provided a welcome opportunity for sociologists to share and discuss their respective research findings with like-minded scholars.

SKAT Sessions Announced for ASA 2013

2013 SKAT Sessions

Session 1 out of 4: Open Session

The "Normative" Turn in Sociology of Science?

Since at least Bloor's call for symmetrical analysis of knowledge production, sociologists have sought to approach science scientifically by explaining how knowledge is made and distinguishing between types of knowledge. But they have been reticent about distinguishing between "good" and "bad" science or "better" and "worse" knowledge. Public life is increasingly wracked by controversies over good and bad science—climate change, vaccination, evolution, chemical exposures, and the role of the university are just a few areas.

Beyond description and analysis, what tools does sociology offer for evaluating such controversies? Recent work on expertise, scientific participation and democratization, scientific responsibility and virtue, economic/institutional sociology of science, bioethics, and cognition points to a new willingness of sociologists to approach science with explicit or implicit normative aims. Can sociologists criticize science without undermining rational values? Can sociologists apply normative criteria without simply reinforcing old, discredited boundary work? This session invites theoretical and especially empirically informed papers on any aspect of normative issues in the sociology of science.

Session Organizer: Aaron Panofsky, UCLA, (apanofsky@socgen.ucla.edu).

Session 2 out of 4: Open Session

Climate Change: Constructing the Unknown Terrain

This session explores the multiple facets of how knowledge of climate change is constructed by multiple, diverse social actors. We will seek to address the shifting methods through which the future of the planet is being projected, the contests over this knowledge, and the social structural, normative, epistemological, and political elements that underlie them. In so doing, these panelists will help carve out a newly focused field of science and technology studies focused on climate change. We particularly welcome papers that explore climate change in relation to social inequality, including gender, race, and transnational relations.

Session Organizer: Sabrina McCormick, George Washington University, (sabmc@gwu.edu).

2013 SKAT Sessions

Session 3 out of 4: Open Session

Science, Technology, and Inequality

Science and technology are strategic sites for revealing and understanding social inequalities. This is because science and technology are marked by vast inequalities in types of positions held, rewards received, practices undertaken, discoveries made, benefits derived, and indeed, the structure of the broader societies in which they are embedded. Further, scientific practices and technologies transform the meanings of the categories around which social inequalities are structured and through which they are understood. This session addresses the range and depth of the ways in which science and technology both reflect and shape social inequalities in identities, organizations, institutions, and societies.

Session Organizer: Mary Frank Fox, Georgia Institute of Technology (mary.fox@gatech.edu).

Session 4 out of 4

Section on Science and Technology Roundtables; Business Meeting

Session Organizers: Laura Mamo, San Francisco State University (lmamo@sfsu.edu), Janet Shim, UC San Francisco (janet.shim@ucsf.edu), and Anne Figert, Loyola University Chicago (afigert@luc.edu).

The New Political Sociology of Science's Leading Scholars Speak!

An Interview with Star-Nelkin Paper Award Winners: Moore, Kleinman, Hess & Frickel

by Daniel Morrison

In 2006, Scott Frickel and Kelly Moore co-edited *The New Political Sociology of Science: Institutions, Networks, and Power*. In the Preface, they write, "we conceived the volume as an explicit attempt to infuse sociological and science studies scholarship with analyses of science policies and practices, the political and economic decisions behind them, and the ecological and social impacts that science continues to create downstream" (2006: vii). The book led to a series of conversations, events, research, and publications that are outlined in nine key events, below.

Today, scholars within this subfield undertake projects from multiple theoretical perspectives, such as field sociology, governmentality, neo-institutionalism, and social movement theory. Even among this diversity, there is considerable common ground. The subfield most commonly includes the study of science in its broad institutional context of relations with the political, industrial, and civil society fields, and it includes attention to issues of power and inequality. Like all subfields, the political sociology of science has a long history that goes back to Stuart Blume (1974) and other studies of the science-industry-state relationship.

To provide some background on this area of inquiry and broaden the visibility of this work, I asked each of them to consent to an e-mail interview about the origins, impacts, and future directions for the New Political Sociology of Science (NPSS) or Political Sociology of Science and Technology (PSST). As many section members know, Frickel and Moore, along with coauthors David Hess and Daniel Kleinman, recently won the Star-Nelkin Paper Award for their 2011 paper, "Science and Neoliberal Globalization: A Political Sociological Approach," published in *Theory and Society*. Excerpts from our conversation follow.

Question: What social, political, or economic trends is the new sociology of science responding to?

Moore: NPSS was originally a way to frame and theorize a growing body of work that explicitly addressed why science worked better for some groups than others, and how science and technology-related inequalities had or had not been redressed.

More explicitly, NPSS offers ways of examining some of the major trends in scientific and technological systems as they intersect with politics and economy. These trends include the privatization of scientific research, neoliberal forms of governance, public political debates over science, inequalities in access to socio-technical decision making, scientific work and work that intersects with science (including factory workers, test subjects, farm workers), the meanings that are given to science and its constituent elements, and the ways that science and technology produce and undermine biological and social meanings of race, gender, and sexuality. NPSS can offer tools for explaining how ideas like politics, economy, neoliberalism, science, or

technology are defined and deployed, and how they intersect. It also allows for analyses of phenomena at different scales.

One of the most important elements of NPSS is that it examines not only problems, but ways that problems have been or might be successfully redressed. In that sense, I think of it as reconstructive.

Frickel: A specific answer to this question is "neoliberal globalization." In our article in *Theory and Society* (Moore et al. 2011), we cast the political sociology of science and technology as a response to changes occurring since the 1970s that have elevated market logics in the domains of politics/policy, the academy, and in civil society more broadly. In that sense, PSST is a contemporary historical project that seeks to understand and explain the changing nature and organization of science and its broader social and ecological impacts.

In another sense, PSST emerges from a growing concern within STS that the family of intellectual projects that have dominated the field since the 1980s (constructivism generally and its tendency to approach the problem of knowledge as one that is strictly or predominantly epistemological) are not well-equipped to confront problems associated with broader questions of power and inequality in science and society. Some see constructivism itself as a neoliberal project insofar as it diverts attention from these larger questions. While I think the current era of neoliberalism is an important test bed for PSST research and theory-building, there is also an important intellectual agenda that extends beyond the current neoliberal period.

Hess: Above all, the trend is neoliberalization. There was some hope that the financial crisis of 2008 would spell the end of neoliberalism, but it has merely provided the occasion for a new wave of neoliberalization under the banner of austerity. The PSST responds to pervasive issues of inequality that have been exacerbated by neoliberal globalization and climate change.

Kleinman: The group of scholars who can now be grouped under the political sociology of science is now rather broad, so I cannot speak for all of them. I believe that Frickel, Hess, Moore, and I share a commitment to a politically engaged sociology of science. We are concerned with the relationship between technoscience and social and economic inequality. The four of us are concerned about what neoliberalism means for the practice of technoscience and how this is related to issues of social (in)justice. Speaking for myself, I am concerned about what the institutionalization of various forms of technoscientific expertise means for the opportunities for lay citizens to participate in democratic decision-making. I am also worried about how commercial pressures and fiscal crises are reshaping higher education in the US and across the globe.

Question: Aside from other scholars of science, technology and knowledge, to what audiences is this work speaking?

Kleinman: David, Kelly, and Scott can certainly speak for themselves, but my sense is that their work has drawn the attention of scholars who study social movements. Scott's and David's work is of interest to schol-

ars in environment studies, and Kelly's most recent research is drawing attention of people who do work in the social studies of health and medicine. My work, with Steve Vallas, on "asymmetrical convergence" (2008) has prompted discussion among sociologists of organizations, and my work on the commercialization of higher education had led me to have discussions with scholars who study higher education. I hope our *Theory and Society* paper (Moore et al. 2011) will garner the attention of political sociologists and political scientists.

Moore: Over the past five years, sociologists of science have found the framework valuable, and so have people who work primarily in geography, gender and sexuality, race, law and science, and public health. The original statement was US-centric, but the work is now being taken up and expanded by science scholars in France, Japan, Australia, India, South Korea, Brazil, Mexico, and Great Britain.

Frickel: Science, technology, and expert systems infuse virtually every domain of contemporary social life. As such, questions of import to PSST are in principle broadly relevant to all social and policy sciences, as well as legal scholars and business management scholars. I would also like to believe that the work undertaken in the spirit of PSST has direct relevance for policy makers and others engaged in matters of governance, and for social movements – the rank and file as well as organizers.

Hess: Each researcher would have a different answer to the question. Increasingly, I have divided my research portfolio into what the PSST scholar Mathieu Albert, following Bourdieu, calls a producer and consumer pole of research. I have done some very policy-oriented work that has been picked up among green-transition coalitions and sustainable localist movements.

Question: What "black boxes" or blind spots are yet to be explored in this area?

Kleinman: By definition, "blind spots" are things you cannot see, so its hard to know exactly what our blind spots are. Speaking for me, my attention over the years has been directed toward structures and the ways in which they constrain action. Such a focus has sometimes led me to pay insufficient attention to the contexts (and characteristics of the contexts) in which actors have room to maneuver. Recently, I've been thinking more about instability and contradiction, and I expect that will lead me to a greater understanding of agency. Beyond this, troubled by the political implications of the early Foucault's orientation toward power, I've not paid enough attention to the later Foucault's work on governmentality. His later work is on my reading list.

Hess: At the workshop last summer the diversity within the PSST became evident. There are people drawing on governmentality studies, field sociology, neo-institutionalism, and social movement theory, and I think this theoretical diversity is very healthy. Within the diversity there is also a common recognition of what several of us refer to as the "obduracy" of social structure, that is, the view that there is a need to rebalance STS research, especially its European forms, from the heavy focus on actor-networks and performativity.

Frickel: If you look back at all the work in STS that's been conducted over the last 3 decades or so, you see that the vast majority of it examines scientific success, in one form or another. We study the winners. Empiri-

cally and theoretically, that's a huge problem. Because we don't study losers, we not only don't understand the social processes that result in failure, but we really can't claim to understand what winning is all about either – it's a relational process, but we only study one side of the dynamic. So I think STS would do well to pay more attention to processes of marginalization, disempowerment, etc. This is something that I think PSST can specifically offer the larger field. But then these are precisely the kinds of projects that have difficulty attracting funding...

Moore: See Scott and David's work on agnatology for the problems with understanding what's undone! The geographic scope of STS is expanding beyond the EU and US, and I think that's extremely valuable. Extant frameworks and problems that we address may not work or be important in all places, so I'm excited to see that scholars from around the world are engaging and debating it.

Newer work, particularly by younger scholars, is making explicit how neoliberal governmentality and political economy intersect with science to shape conceptions of race, sexuality, gender, personhood, and citizenship; this is an extremely important trend that I'm excited about.

Other, newer work (including David Hess') is concerned with how science and technology intersect with forms of polycentric governance that include multiple groups, types of rules, and types of organizations. Tracing how science and technology is produced and flows through these systems is critical; older styles of governance are still important to understand, but these new systems are likely to create and deploy science in new ways.

Some early critics thought that the book *NPSS* did not take"culture" into account. I disagree with that assertion: NPSS took into account the origins, workings and effects of packages of language, meaning, symbol, assumption and routine ways of doing things (though ritual was notably lacking). What was missing was a focus on the concept "culture," which I have been wary of using in my own work because it can black box more than it unpacks. My work has always been concerned with meanings and practices, but in situations and settings where it is contested, or has changed. I'm enthusiastic about how bundles of the components of what sociologists call culture matter, but less concerned with forms of cultural analysis that are not tied to relations of science and power, or with using culture as an overarching framework. Others who work within the political sociology of science surely have different views, but this is the approach I've always taken in my own work, and will continue to do so, even as I write a book that examines the intersections of neoliberalism, science, mass media, and embodiment.

Question: What project(s) are you currently working on in this area?

Moore: With Daniel L. Kleinman, I'm editing the *Handbook of Science, Technology and Society*. I'm working on a project on how everyday people think about scientific claims related to their bodies. These kinds

of claims are endlessly produced and disseminated, but are taken up unevenly by different kinds of people. Third, I'm working on a monograph about embodiment, mass media, neoliberalism and science.

Kleinman: I have three projects underway: With Sai Suryanarayanan, I am seeking to understand the politics of ignorance and expertise in the case of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), the epidemic associated with massive honey bee death. Our work—forthcoming in *Science, Technology, and Human Values and Social Studies of Science*—shows how historically institutionalized norms and practices have shaped what we know about CCD and who is viewed as having legitimate knowledge about the phenomena. With Bob Thomas, I am exploring the commercialization of US higher education across the fifty years from 1960 through 2010. Finally, with Greg Downey and Noah Feinstein, I am using a case study of a single research institute to explore the factors (re)shaping academic science and the extent to which this emerging organization of science looks like what Gibbons and his colleagues have called "mode two science."

Frickel: Two broad topics currently hold a lot of interest for me. One is the social production of non-knowledge (or ignorance). I am interested in how non-knowledge becomes institutionalized as it travels through science and policy domains and into civil society. Another related area of interest is the knowledge politics that accompany disaster. Anthropologist Kim Fortun and I have argued for a "Disaster STS" that not only studies the relationship between science, technology and catastrophe, but mobilizes STS expertise in order to make an actual difference in social and political responses to catastrophe.

Hess: I am continuing to work on the sociology of technological transitions, especially the problem of the politics of sustainability transitions. A political sociological approach provides more insight than does the current multi-level systems approach into why the transitions fail in some cases. I am also working broadly on the issue of science, technology policy, and the "ideological field" as part of a general project that attempts to synthesize conflict and culturalist approaches to neoliberalism.

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Nine Key Events in the Development of the New Political Sociology of Science

1. 2006: *The New Political Sociology of Science: Institutions, Networks, and Power* edited by Scott Frickel and Kelly Moore.

2. Sessions with NPSS themes organized at the Society for the Social Studies of Science and the American Sociological Association. One session, on "undone science," led to a multi-authored article in *Science, Technology and Human Values* with Frickel as the lead author (Frickel et al. 2010).

3. 2011: David J. Hess organizes a conference on Political Sociology of Science and Technology, with about 40 attendees.

4. 2011: A special volume of *Minerva* on Bourdieu and STS (2011), is edited by Daniel Kleinman and Mathieu Albert.

6. 2011: Science and Neoliberal Globalization (Moore, Kleinman, Hess and Frickel) appears in *Theory and Society*.

7. 2012; Political Sociology of Science Workshop in Madison, Wisconsin, organized by Daniel Kleinman. Papers from that conference will appear in a special issue of *Political Power and Social Theory*, edited by Scott Frickel and David Hess.

8. Daniel Kleinman recently published an excellent review essay in *Contemporary Sociology* (Kleinman 2012).

9. Daniel Kleinman and Kelly Moore are currently editing *The Handbook of Science, Technology and Society* (Routledge 2014).

Interview with *Social Studies of Science* Editor Sergio Sismondo

Logan D. A. Williams

What attracted you to the editorship of SSS?

I was interested in mathematics and philosophy as an undergraduate and pursued both simultaneously. Then I took a course by Ian Hacking at the University of Toronto; he introduced me to history and philosophy of science. I stayed there and was introduced to STS or science studies later on in the late 1980s to early 1990s. I found working in this new field really exciting and in a sense have been in this field all of my adult life.

I enjoy working with authors and reviewers, it is intellectually challenging for me...I have been involved with SSS for a long time; I was a collaborating editor from 1999 onwards. This is a title that other journals call associate editor. As an associate editor you have full responsibility for a small subset of manuscripts that come in; not a large number, but you are responsible to shepherd those through the review process. Additionally, associate editors are part of the advice network for the editor. It was pretty straightforward for me to assume the editorship.

What is puzzling or interesting about your role as the newest editor of this (relatively) old journal as compared to your previous publishing efforts (i.e your introductory text to STS)?

In some ways my role is pretty continuous... Since I started in STS I have tried to have a pretty broad view of the field. I know that will be really useful to me as an editor.

It is exciting to look at all these manuscripts and many of them (and in a sense they should be) are doing novel work; they are trying out new ideas and often exploring new empirical material...Many of these manuscripts are at stages where they really can use additional thought...The contribution of good editors isn't so much about decisions to accept or reject papers but instead it is about improving papers [I saw this with my predecessors David Edge and Michael Lynch].

What is exciting and unique about SSS as an academic journal?

I actually feel in a way really privileged to be working in STS. It just seems to me one of the most exciting fields in humanities and social sciences...What is not in our purview? Very little is out of bounds.

SSS has been concerned about the field of STS long before the field existed. In an editorial that I wrote a few months ago, I noted that the very first editorial that was written in the journal really identified this incipient almost-field. They did not discuss it as a field, but they saw an upswing of interest in science and technology and its implications. The journal has been at the center of a lot of excitement in the field. Historically it has had an association with the Edinburgh school – it is important to remember just how radical that school was. SSS continues to publish important debates...Another thing I like about the journal (and maybe this applies to

all good journals), if you are looking at articles published in it, many have been published by very junior scholars in the field. New PhDs will send central chapters of their dissertations. Key chapters make for excellent articles because of the time and iteration graduate students invest in their work, unlike the pieces by more senior faculty. Pieces by senior faculty often have the advantage of skills and experience but are often done on a much shorter time frame.

The ideal article for SSS is both making a theoretical contribution and grounded in empirical material...These are the kinds of articles moving the field forward in two directions at once. That is bit different from some other journals that might emphasize one side or the other.

What is your vision for new directions in SSS?

One of my key goals is accessibility with two dimensions: (1) keeping the field lively for outsiders to enter; (2) exploring options for open-access to journal articles.

"STS is discussing a lot of the areas that almost anyone would recognize as really important right now in the 21st century. As STS matures as an academic field it has initiated and will continue to develop increasing numbers of conversations that are entirely internal and require real investment to enter...I would like to make sure that people that are in the adjacent areas can participate. That means keeping the field lively in a way that outsiders and newcomers can immediately appreciate. One way that I hope that what I've done and what I will do are continuous.

Some of the things that I am going to try to do is to introduce more review essays in the journal; essays that are not necessarily focused on books as much as topics. This would allow dialogues on the page among senior scholars in the field and new perspectives. We'll see how this works...Also, publishing interviews is not something that SSS has done before. This is something that came up under Mike Lynch's editorship. That sort of thing I think there are opportunities for imagining academic scholarship as taking more different forms than just the standard scholarly article that we are used to.

"Open access is an ideal that we need to keep in our sights at all times. SSS is a commercially owned journal that is published by Sage which has a mandate to make material accessible but it also has to fund all of its operations. I would like to see back issues of the journal available on a more open-access basis. An increasing number of our authors are willing to pay to make their articles open-access. They are doing that because the granting agencies who are supporting their work are requiring open access (i.e. in the US the NIH; other funding agencies in Europe and Britain have similar requirements). This is happening and it is a really good thing.

Interview of *Think Tanks in America* author Tom Medvetz

Elizabeth Popp Berman

Elizabeth Popp Berman: Thanks for agreeing to talk to SKAT about your brand new book, *Think Tanks* in America. The main argument of *Think Tanks* is that over the past forty years, think tanks have become the main institutions linking intellectual life and politics in the United States. The book also claims that, by creating a new space of action at the intersection of politics, academia, the media, and business, think tanks derive much of their power from their ability to mediate between the forms of "capital" used in different fields, not from having a distinct form of "capital" (to use Bourdieu's language, which the book draws upon). Yet in doing this—in juggling the competing demands of research, PR skill, business connections, and political savvy—think tanks have made themselves indispensable for anyone who wants to use ideas to shape policy. Furthermore, other kinds of intellectuals are required to engage with the "space of think tanks" in order to participate in political life.

So why think tanks? What led you to this topic in the first place?

Tom Medvetz: This is a great question to open with, first, because you offer a nice summary of the book's argument, and second, because the process of choosing the topic undoubtedly shaped my focus on certain aspects of the "think tank phenomenon" over others. Broadly speaking, the opposition between inductive and deductive approaches is relevant here: Whereas some scholars set out from an interest in a specific case (and then have to figure out exactly what it's a case of), others start with a more abstract query (and then must locate an efficient empirical anchor for the study). With respect to this opposition, I took the latter approach. In classic "Berkeley" fashion, I started with some big theoretical questions about the political role of intellectuals, which led to even broader questions such as, "What does it mean to be an 'intellectual' in the first place?" I was also interested in symbolic power—or the capacity to impose meaning—and its role in politics. Finally, once I'd decided to focus on the United States (which was largely for pragmatic reasons), it became impossible to ignore major questions about the role of money in politics and the complex workings of the media.

I landed on the topic of think tanks, then, because they seemed like a good linchpin for addressing all of these concerns at once. At the same time, it quickly became clear that think tanks had been sorely neglected by other scholars. (In the book, I suggest an explanation for this pattern of omission.) Given the overall direction of my reasoning, I was sometimes tempted to joke with people that I didn't really care about think tanks per se—only the power relations in which they were embedded. This is indeed the book's main concern, but ultimately I realized it would be a mistake to "miss the trees for the forest" by neglecting the uniqueness and specificity of think tanks.

Interview with Tom Medvetz, cont.

Elizabeth Popp Berman

EPB: The book opens with the story of Charles Murray—of *Losing Ground and The Bell Curve* fame—whose career mirrors and illustrates the rise of think tanks. You did some 45 interviews as part of your research, and have some great quotes from figures like Murray, Alice Rivlin, and Grover Norquist. Do any of the interviews stand out as particularly memorable for you?

TM: Certainly, and for various reasons. First, some interviews sensitized me to an important point about intellectuals. Put simply, it was the respondents with the most colorful personalities (e.g. Murray, Clyde Prestowitz, Fred Smith, Jr., Dean Baker, Eric Alterman) who allowed me to shed my commonsense view of "intellectuals" as lofty, ethereal beings whose ideas emerged pristinely, almost out of nowhere. Against my first impulses, I became determined to portray my research subjects as real, flesh-and-blood human beings, rather than give them the privilege normally granted intellectuals, which is to be depicted as unearthly creatures. Concretely, this meant using a quasi-journalistic mode of writing and quoting them extensively to capture the flavor of their speech (and without deleting the "ums," "likes" and "you knows").

Second, some of the interviews—particularly those with Paul Weyrich (who has since passed away), Grover Norquist, Charles Murray, and Josh Marshall—stood out for the sheer irreplaceability of the subjects. As you point out in reference to Murray, however, even the most historically unique people represent social forces and relations beyond themselves. Third, a few of the interviews stand out vividly in my mind because of the magnanimousness of the respondents themselves. On this count, Steve Clemons, Karlyn Bowman, and Bruce Stokes deserve special mention. And finally, some—and here I'll decline to name names—functioned as reminders that there are norms of courtesy and respect that transcend, or in any case operate separately from, political attitudes. This is my euphemistic way of saying that some of my "favorite" interview subjects were people with whom I disagreed the most politically, and vice versa. I make this point with an analogous analytic idea in mind: Just as it's possible to separate political from personal judgments, it's also possible to separate political from social scientific judgments. This is why I'd insist that the study—although one could imagine it being used as a "weapon" in the political field—has no political bias per se. Put simply, it's built out of social scientific rather than political "materials."

EPB: Probably the most provocative claim you make is that the rise of think tanks has relegated intellectuals who are independent of think tanks—by which you primarily, though not exclusively, mean academics—to the margins of political life. As someone who studies universities, I see academics as anything but independent, although they have an entirely different set of constraints than think tank folks. Can you speak a bit more about what you think academics might bring to the world of policy if think tanks were less dominant?

TM: Yes, but first there's a tricky conceptual issue embedded in this question because there are at least two meanings of the word independent—and it's important not to conflate them. On the one side, there's the everyday term, meaning "detached from" (often with the implication that the separation in question is total

or absolute). However, this isn't what I mean by the term. Instead, I use the term independent in a relational sense to mean "obeying a distinctive logic or principle." Clearly, this is a Bourdieu-inspired usage.

A sharp reader might point out that "distinctiveness" is itself always relative. (I'm thinking of an article by Michael Schudson about Bourdieu's concept of autonomy called "Autonomy From What?") But typically, when we speak about intellectuals, the forms of "relative independence" that are the most pertinent are independence from economic, political, and cultural constraints. That is to say, to be independent is to be able to reach conclusions that aren't driven by material considerations (e.g. subsistence needs, the lust for profit, etc.); fear of state repression or coercion from powerful groups; or popular customs, conventions, or tastes. So when I say that the rise of think tanks over the last four decades has marginalized more "autonomous" intellectuals from political life, I make no assumption that academic scholars are immune from this process or inherently more autonomous. Instead, I think these questions have to be treated as empirical ones.

A key argument in the book—and, admittedly, one I would have liked to develop further—is that the rise of think tanks has introduced new pressures on social researchers, including academic scholars, to subordinate their work to political, economic, and cultural demands. Yet these pressures don't have uniform effects, and many social scientists remain relatively insulated from them. However—and this is the key twist—my point is that research carried out under conditions of high autonomy is increasingly relegated to the margins of public debate. The counterfactual you raised was what if think tanks simply didn't exist? The answer, I think, is that because the competitors vying to shape political debate would be fewer, more autonomous intellectuals would likely have a greater ability to influence those debates.

EPB: One theoretical aim of the book is to explore the workings of a field of action—the "space of think tanks"—that is defined by its relation to other fields more than by an internal logic of its own. Do you think this is one example of a more general phenomenon, or is there something unique about the space of think tanks?

TM: Doubtless it's not a unique phenomenon. I think the best way to illustrate this is simply by citing some of the impressive social scientific work being done about other "interstitial" spaces (although many of them do not use this terminology). Off the top of my head, I would cite Gil Eyal, both on the cultural meaning of autism and the history of Israeli expertise in "Arab affairs" (not to mention his theoretical paper, "The Spaces Between Fields"); S.M. Amadae on the history of "systems analysis"; Sarah Babb on multilateral development banks; Stephanie Mudge on the history of the European Union; Lisa Stampnitzky on the growth of "terrorism expertise"; Aaron Panofsky on genetic testing; Charles Camic on Bourdieu's "two sociologies of knowledge"; and John Levi Martin on field theory. All of these scholars—and certainly others I haven't mentioned—have written insightfully about hybrid, overlapping, or interstitial spaces of action.

Interview with Tom Medvetz, cont.

Elizabeth Popp Berman

EPB: Your book speaks most directly to the "K" in SKAT (i.e. knowledge), but I wonder if you think it also has things to say to section members who are primarily oriented toward the sociology of science.

TM: Yes, I hope the book contains some ideas that will be of interest to sociologists of science. One of the most important involves the tricky concept of "independence." I would like the book to help clarify the distinction between scientific autonomy—by which I mean the ability of scientists to enforce positive standards of rigor and competence within their own ranks—and detachment from the civic sphere. I don't believe autonomy implies civic disengagement, even if this assumption often finds its way into conversations on the topic. Doubtless autonomy and civic engagement exist in a delicate tension, and certainly any group of scientists who want to protect their autonomy and remain engaged in public debate will have a difficult balancing act on their hands. (Incidentally, a case study of the Union of Concerned Scientists would make for an interesting study.) But I don't believe either point implies that autonomy and civic engagement are mutually exclusive.

In sociology, I would argue that this distinction has generally been neglected or mishandled in the debate about "public sociology." On the one side, some of the most vocal critics of the idea seem to assume—falsely, I believe—that more public engagement among sociologists would necessarily lead to a loss of autonomy (via "politicization"), and in turn to a loss of authority. On the other side, some of public sociology's main proponents don't seem to appreciate that the idea itself implies the need for a more inward looking focus on the origins and uses of our analytic categories. This is a point I take largely from my adviser, Loïc Wacquant. Put simply, sociologists cannot truly influence public debate, no matter how "public" their work becomes, without first subjecting their own categories to relentless self-scrutiny. Otherwise, they end up unwittingly lending the stamp of scientific authority to ways of thinking that originate among other participants in the "struggle for the power to impose the legitimate vision of the social world."

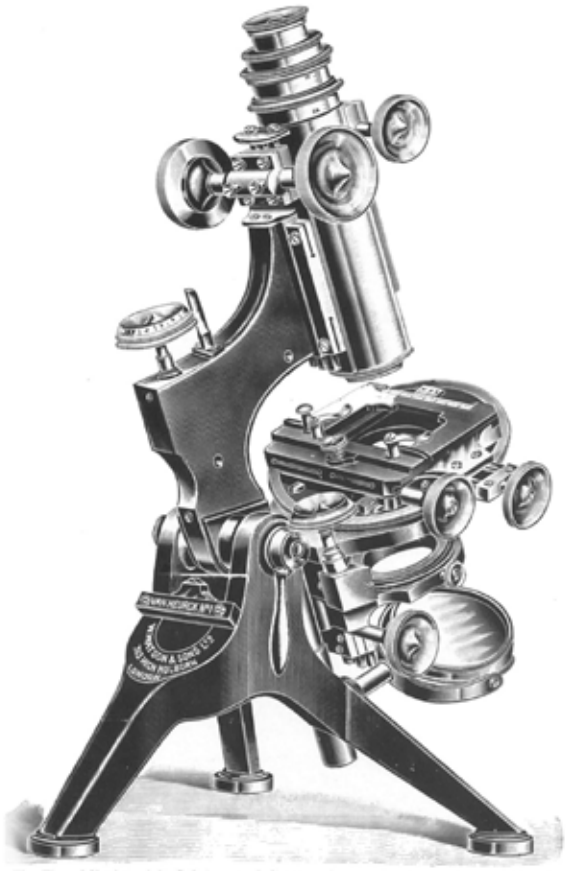
EPB: This book began as your dissertation at Berkeley. Do you have any advice for graduate students who are currently working on their dissertations and would like to see them eventually turn into books?

TM: When I was a graduate student, I was always puzzled by the common phrase "converting one's dissertation into a book." (My naïve thought was always, "Why don't you just write it as a book to begin with?") Having just published my first book, I'd offer a double-sided piece of advice. First, to the degree that your advisers will let you, use one or two scholarly books that you admire as formal and substantive models for your thesis. However, second, be prepared to rewrite the book almost from scratch afterwards. Once you get some distance from it, you'll inevitably see the dissertation in a new light. (And if you don't, this might be a warning sign that the resulting book won't be very good.) For me, this process was simultaneously exciting and, quite frankly, horrifying. On the one side, the period immediately after grad school was one of tremendous intellectual growth. On the other side, every new idea required me to delete, revise, or rearrange most of what I'd written before. Each change implied a cascading series of other changes, such that "converting my disserta-

tion into a book" felt like playing an Alice in Wonderland-style game in which each step forward also moved me two steps backwards. Eventually you have to just let go of it.

EPB: Now that the book is out, what do we have to look forward to next from you? Will you be building on any of the themes you address in *Think Tanks*?

TM: Yes, albeit in tangential ways. I'm starting two projects now, the first of which aims to address two of the book's obvious limitations: first, its narrow focus on the United States, and second, its high level of generality, or the fact that rarely do I get to engage with the nitty-gritty of specific policy battles. (The latter choice, I would argue, was driven by necessity. Given the dearth of sociological writing on the topic, some of the most basic questions about think tanks had yet to be answered.) The new study will not be about think tanks; instead, it will focus on the structure, reach, and functioning of transnational intellectual networks concerned with policy towards Iran. Aside from its inherent importance, the topic interests me because I think the sociology of foreign policy making remains underdeveloped even within political sociology. I'm also starting a new project about the cultural meaning of "genius"—although at the moment I can say even less about that one. Even so, it will remain connected to the main themes of my research so far: namely, the social organization of knowledge and expertise.



Adele Clarke Wins 2012 4S Bernal Prize

Congratulations to longtime SKAT member Adele Clarke (University of California, San Francisco) on being honored with the J. D. Bernal Award for Distinguished Contribution to the Field by the Society for Social Studies of Science. We quote here from Brian Wynne's statement presenting her with the award at the 4S annual meeting in Copenhagen in October:

> Adele is a figure in STS who spans some of the fissures between sub-fields and conventional disciplinary cultures in not only a productive way, but one which enriches all of us with her generosity, commitment, and grace. Her first attendance at a 4S conference was in 1982, so a 30-year sustained and distinguished contribution to the field, and one which we hope will continue into the future. But even from a current perspective, Adele has in her time already laid a lasting and distinguished legacy for the future. She has worked to combine many important disciplinary resources which enrich her STS work, in research, and in teaching: originally sociology and the symbolic interactionism of Anselm Strauss and others; feminist theory – and practice; grounded theory, and associated methodology; history of biomedical sciences, cultural studies, and anthropology. Reproductive studies, which is that for which Adele is rightly probably most well-known, has almost become a field in its own right, and if it can be so called, then Adele must rank as one of its foremost original creators. Moreover Adele has managed to teach and give her own witness to this scholarly commitment as she has also led its development, as a leading, and continually dynamic part of STS as a whole, but also as an important presence in those other separate disciplinary domains....Adele Clarke, the 2012 Bernal Prize: for distinguished contribution to the field.

New Books

Bliss, Catherine. 2012. *Race Decoded: The Genomic Fight for Social Justice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

In 2000, with the success of the Human Genome Project, scientists declared the death of race in biology and medicine. But within five years, many of these same scientists had reversed course and embarked upon a new hunt for the biological meaning of race. Drawing on personal interviews and life stories, *Race Decoded* takes us into the world of elite genome scientists—including Francis Collins, director of the NIH; Craig Venter, the first person to create a synthetic genome; and Spencer Wells, National Geographic Society explorer-in-residence, among others—to show how and why they are formulating new ways of thinking about race.

Gilliom, John and Torin Monahan. 2013. *SuperVision: An Introduction to the Surveillance Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

We live in a surveillance society. Anyone who uses a credit card, cell phone, or even search engines to navigate the Web is being monitored and assessed—and often in ways that are imperceptible to us. The first general introduction to the growing field of surveillance studies, *SuperVision* uses examples drawn from everyday technologies to show how surveillance is used, who is using it, and how it affects our world.

Hess, David. 2012. *Good Green Jobs in a Global Economy*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Good Green Jobs in a Global Economy is the first book to explore the broad implications of the convergence of industrial and environnmental policy in the United States. Under the banner of "green jobs," clean energy industries and labor, environmental, and antipoverty organizations have forged "blue-green" alliances and achieved some policy victories, most notably at the state and local levels. In this book, David Hess explores the politics of green energy and green jobs, linking the prospect of a green transition to tectonic shifts in the global economy. He argues that the relative decline in U.S. economic power sets the stage for an ideological shift, away from neoliberalism and toward "developmentalism," an ideology characterized by a more defensive posture with respect to trade and a more active industrial policy.

Kinchy, Abby. 2012. *Seeds, Science, and Struggle: The Global Politics of Transgenic Crops*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Genetic engineering has a wide range of cultural, economic, and ethical implications, yet it has become almost an article of faith that regulatory decisions about biotechnology be based only on evidence of specific quantifiable risks; to consider anything else is said to "politicize" regulation. In this study of social protest against genetically engineered food, Abby Kinchy turns the conventional argument on its head. Rather than consider politicization of the regulatory system, she takes a close look at the scientization of public debate about the "contamination" of crops resulting from pollen drift and seed mixing. Advocates of alternative agriculture confront the scientization of this debate by calling on international experts, carrying out their own research, questioning regulatory science in court, building alternative markets, and demanding that their governments consider the social and economic impacts of the new technologies.

New Books

Medvetz, Thomas. 2012. *Think Tanks in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Over the past half-century, think tanks have become fixtures of American politics, supplying advice to presidents and policymakers, expert testimony on Capitol Hill, and convenient facts and figures to journalists and media specialists. But what are think tanks? Who funds them? And just how influential have they become? In *Think Tanks in America*, Thomas Medvetz argues that the unsettling ambiguity of the think tank is less an accidental feature of its existence than the very key to its impact.

National Research Council, Committee on Himalayan Glaciers, Hydrology, Climate Change, and Implications for Water Security. 2012. *Himalayan Glaciers: Climate Change, Water Resources, and Water Security*. [Note: Elizabeth L. Malone (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory) was a member of the authoring committee.]

Pollock, Anne. 2012. *Medicating Race: Heart Disease and Durable Preoccupations with Difference*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

In Medicating Race, Anne Pollock traces the intersecting discourses of race, pharmaceuticals, and heart disease in the United States over the past century, from the founding of cardiology through the FDA's approval of BiDil, the first drug sanctioned for use in a specific race. Pollock insists that those grappling with the meaning of racialized medical technologies must consider not only the troubled history of race and biomedicine but also its fraught yet vital present. Medical treatment should be seen as a site of, rather than an alternative to, political and social contestation. The aim of scholarly analysis should not be to settle matters of race and genetics, but to hold medicine more broadly accountable to truth and justice.

New Articles

Bauchspies, W.K. 2012. "The Community Water Jar: Gender and Technology in Guinea." *Journal of Asian and African Studies*. 47:392-403.

Berman, Elizabeth Popp. 2012. "Explaining the Move toward the Market in U.S. Academic Science: How Institutional Logics Can Change without Institutional Entrepreneurs." *Theory and Society* 41:261-299.

Coley, Jonathan and David Hess. 2012. "Green Energy Laws and Republican Legislators in the United States." *Energy Policy* 48: 576-583.

Hamilton, L.C. 2012. "Did the Arctic Ice Recover? Demographics of True and False Climate Facts." *Weather, Climate, and Society* 4: 236–249.

Hess, David and Jonathan Coley. 2012. "Wireless Smart Meters and Public Acceptance: The Environment, Limited Choices, and Precautionary Politics." *Public Understanding of Science*.

Rajagopalan, Ramya and Joan H. Fujimura. 2012. "Medicine and Society: Will Personalized Medicine Challenge or Reify Categories of Race and Ethnicity?" *American Medical Association Journal of Ethics* 14: 657-663.

New Chapters

Benjamin, Ruha. 2012. "Organized Ambivalence: When Stem Cell Research and Sickle Cell Disease Converge." Ch. 11 in *Genetics and Global Public Health: Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia*, edited by Simon Dyson and Karl Atkin. New York: Routledge.

Hess, David. 2012. "The Green Transition, Neoliberalism, and the Technosciences." Pp. 209-230 in *Neoliberalism and Technosciences: Critical Assessments*, edited by Luigi Pellozzoni and Marja Ylönen. New York: Edward Elgar.

Rajagopalan, Ramya and Joan H. Fujimura. 2012. "Making History via DNA, Making DNA From History: Deconstructing the Race-Disease Connection in Admixture Mapping." Pp. 143-163 in *Genetics and the Unsettled Past: The Collision of DNA, Race, and History*. Edited by Keith Wailoo et al. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Professional Announcements

Mary Frank Fox (Georgia Institute of Technology) is co-chair of the Social Science Advisory Board of the National Center for Women & Information Technology.

Danny Breznitz (Georgia Institute of Technology) and **Michael Murphree** (Georgia Institute of Technology) have been awarded the British International Studies Association Susan Strange Best Book Award for 2012 for their book, *Run of the Red Queen: Government, Innovation, Globalization, and Economic Growth in China* (Yale University Press, 2011).

Sociological Reflections on the Neurosciences (Emerald, 2011) was shortlisted for the 2012 British Sociological Association Sociology of Health and Illness Book Prize for its contribution to medical sociology. It is edited by Martyn Pickersgill (University of Edinburgh) and Ira van Keulen (Rathneu Institute), and contains chapters from Kelly Joyce, Stephen Katz, Paul Martin, Rayna Rapp, and Simon Williams. The volume is now available in paperback.

Martyn Pickersgill (University of Edinburgh) has recently published or has forthcoming papers on the social dimensions of neuroscience and mental health in *Sociology of Health & Illness*, *Social Studies of Science, and Science, Technology & Human Values*. He has also been awarded (with Emilie Cloatre, Kent Law School) funding from the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council to develop a Research Network around "Technoscience, Law and Society: Interrogating the Nexus."

Elizabeth L. Malone (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory) has been appointed Associate Deputy Editor for the journal *Climactic Change*..

Professional Announcements

Adele Clarke (University of California, San Francisco) won the 2012 J. D. Bernal Award for Significant Contribution from the Society for Social Studies of Science, presented in Copenhagen.

Gayle Sulik recently published the paperback edition (Oxford, 2012) of *Pink Ribbon Blues: How Breast Cancer Culture Undermines Women's Health*, with a new introduction. Sulik also founded the Breast Cancer Consortium this October. For more information go to: www.breastcancerconsortium.net.

Events & Resources

The third annual Arizona Methods Workshops will be held January 3-8, 2013, by the Department of Sociology at the University of Arizona. Workshop topics include: Managing Research Projects and Teams, Introduction to Survey Design, Social Network Analysis, Introduction to R, Advanced R, Geographic Information Systems, Modeling Emergence: Computer Simulation in Sociology. For general information, including schedule, and links to registration and lodging, see http://sociology.arizona.edu/methods. For questions, contact organizer Professor Erin Leahey at methods@email.arizona.edu.

The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) has created the Pre-health iCollaborative repository at www.mededportal.org/icollaborative/pre-health. The online site supports sharing of free undergraduate teaching resources that address pre-health competencies, including topics from sociology. In addition to using and rating resources already online, faculty may submit resources that they have authored or refer publicly available resources for inclusion in the collection.

SKAT is reviving its mentoring program. The program will be structured as follows: Faculty and students will meet once at the ASA and then connect twice (by phone or email) during the academic year. During these conversations, faculty and students can discuss how to negotiate the job market, publications, and literatures/ideas related to their research. A first round of pairing has been completed for the current year.

Newletter Info

Have items for the next issue of the SKAT newsletter? Please send them to: skatpubcomm@gmail.com. Also, be sure to follow the SKAT-ASA listserve for all the latest announcements: SKAT-ANNOUNCE@listserv.asanet.org.

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