SKATOLOGY

Spring 2025 Issue

Newsletter of the ASA Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology

INSIDE

Chicago's coast on a sunny day (Flickr via Nick M)

Chair's Report

Dear Section Members,

The scope and depth of the changes of the past few weeks cannot be understated, and should not be diminished. Across the sciences, grants are canceled, experts are dismissed, budgets are slashed, data is denied. In my fieldsite, at NASA, I am watching the dismantling of a world-renowned institution before my very eyes. It is the same for many of you. The scientists and engineers we study in the public sector where the cuts are colossal are reeling from the uncertainty and inability to conduct their work. Those of us working with the private sector are observing unstable markets, skyrocketing technical unemployment, and plummeting research dollars. And seemingly everywhere, ill-equipped AI systems wait in the wings to replace experts.

SKAT researchers are not immune, of course. Our own grants are frozen or canceled. A fierce battle for academic freedom is raging even as university overheads and endowments are targeted and national agencies that fund our scholarship are being dismantled. Graduate students' positions are being slashed to make room for cuts or because the grants that fund them have evaporated. This morning I learned that at a top university, tenure track lines are being pulled - jobs already filled with hard-working assistant professors.

We are SKAT. We study this! That doesn't mean we should watch it occur with scholarly disinterest. That means we have all the tools we need to confront it.

We know all about the social construction of knowledge; the institutional pillars across government, academia and industry that fuel innovation; trust and distrust in experts; the conflicted science-and-the-state divide the debates over policy. We have sought out a front-line view of these issues in the past, and we are getting a front-row seat to a rapid suite of changes now. This is the moment where our expertise is needed most.

We also know about futuring and imaginaries, we know about world-making and building, we know how knowledge is made and threats to its continuity when communities crumble. We are alert to the inequities that are already with us and those which are promised. *We are SKAT,* and what we know can give us power in analysing, anticipating, and intervening.

Second, we know that knowledge work is social work, requiring communities, infrastructures, and resources. When those communities are disrupted, the infrastructures unfunded, the resources pulled, where does that leave the knowledge-making enterprise? In shock at first, yes–but what comes next must be mutual support, restructuring around alternative resources, and assistance. We know that these kinds of cuts tend to favor the few, and despite nods to innovation and meritocracy they do not favor the most innovative or worthy. We can and should rebuild along the hopeful lines that our SKAT scholarship suggests is possible.

Third, in destruction there is opportunity. What would a more equitable, just, responsible, ethical, innovative (insert your preferred optimistic adjective here!) science or technology look like? In this moment of sweeping change we need your voice. After all, we are the very experts in the crossings between society, knowledge, and technological systems! SKAT scholars are also well practiced at navigating how institutions of power unleash narratives in the name of science or technological progress that are untethered to reality. We are well-versed in countering old stories like determinism in all their novel yet all-too-familiar forms (AI accelerationism, anyone?). While everyone's heads are reeling, this is our wheelhouse.

There is even, dare I say it, opportunity here to advance our scholarship and our practice. Observing a moment where so many underlying assumptions, developed in a more stable time, are troubled at once, offers a fertile opportunity to revisit classic work, and shift conceptual frames (as a Garfinkel grand-advisee, I just can't resist a natural breaching experiment!). Theory aside, there is more pressingly a bold opportunity in this moment to roll up our sleeves and get to work, try new approaches, get our hands dirty. This is no time to shy away from action.

Your Council is well aware of these changes and their effects on SKAT scholars and scholarship. We are already working on developing a response to support our academic freedom, scholars at risk, and student members. If you have ideas you would like to contribute we welcome them to skatchairasa@gmail.com. Our upcoming ASA business meeting promises an opportunity to discuss their impacts on our community and

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2024-2025

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our scholarship, and to consider proactive ways to proceed and meet the moment. I look forward to hearing from you.

Coincidentally, too, I have just wrapped up a book manuscript about funding shocks to big science, and there are many lessons learned that apply to us too. The primary one is, in true SKAT fashion, that funding is really about relationships and people. Despite the impetus to divide or struggle over small trickles of funding, our response must be to stand together instead of apart. Pooling resources through the exchange of many kinds of currencies–not always fiscal–make a difference as they keep a community alive in moments of funding distress. They also support the group's most vulnerable members in the process.

Our Section Logo

That means, for one thing, getting creative with alternative currencies and forms of support. Do you have summer research opportunities to offer a graduate student at another institution? Are there ways to pool resources across universities or departments, to donate time or labor, to fund scholarships or bursaries? Do you have datasets to download and share, a spare room near a university, a couch or spare bed to crash on during ASA, or other ways to help other SKATtites out in this difficult time? Survival cannot be just a question of assumed "good fortune" or merit achieved merely through network effects –it must be a community effort.

For this reason, too, we hope you will consider the proposal on our SAKT election ballot to raise section dues carefully. We recognize it is a difficult and precarious time economically, and this is why we only ask a small raise for those members who can afford it. We are hopeful that having a stronger base of resources to work from will help us to support the section and our activities going forward to maintain the intellectual work of SKAT.

Meanwhile, we hope to see you at the vibrant ASA activities we have planned at the August meeting in Chicago. Come in time for our SKAT reception on August 11 at the Emerald Loop Bar and Grill (with massive thanks to our Events committee, Santiago Molina and Natalie Aviles), and stay for the conference activities on Monday August 12. We will have thought-provoking papers about these moments of political and economic change, about alternative perspectives, and fringe sciences. The roundtables will be a fascinating and exciting opportunity to develop ideas in community and in conversation with other SKATtites. A hearty high five to our Program Committee: Dan Morrison, Martine Lappe, Ben Shestakovky, Kate Burrows, and Mariana Craciun. Thanks to them, it will be action packed, back-to-back. We hope to see you there!

We recognize that this is a difficult time to cross borders, so if you must be with us in spirit, that is understandable. If you must withdraw from the conference program, please write to me to let me know. In coming years, I hope we can figure out how to scaffold SKAT activities at a distance to keep our community connected, powerful, and inspired.

Colleagues, we are SKAT, and we have all the tools we need for this current crisis–and the tools the world needs too. Keep your eyes open and your heads up high. We've got this.

Janet

SKAT Committees (2024-2025)

We thank the following members for volunteering and serving on the following committees. If you are interested in serving in a SKAT Section Committee in the future, please reach out to the Section Chair.

Anti-Racism in SKAT: Melanie Jeske (Chair), Ni'Shele Jackson, Emily Vasquez, Jennifer Carrera, Grace Poudrier, Mary Shi, Nicholas Wilson, Jill Fisher (sits with), Janet Vertesi (sits with)

Communications: Larry Au (Chair), Molly Clark-Barol, Hayden Fulton, Jorge Ochoa

Events: Natalie Aviles (Chair), Santiago Molina

Fundraising: Jill Fisher (Chair), Catherine Lee, Likun Cao

Hacker-Mullins Award: Alexandra Vinson (Chair), Chuncheng Liu, Carolina Mayes, Torin Monahan, Rich Welsh

Membership: Sharla Alegria (Chair), Wanheng Hu, Madeleine Pape

Mentorship: Claire Decoteau (Chair), Mira Vale, Jina Lee, Alyson Spurgas

Merton Award: Joan Robinson (Chair), Sarah Brothers, Yawen Lei, Torsten Voigt

Star-Nelkin Award: Michael Stambolis-Ruhstorfer (Chair), Taylor Cruz, Liora Goldensher, Zach Griffen, Chris Hanssman

Program Committee: Dan Morrison (Chair), Martine Lappe, Ben Shestakovky, Kate Burrows, Mariana Craciun, Santiago Molina (sits with as local events chair), Janet Vertesi (sits with)

Check out our **website**:
http://asaskat.com

We are also on **BlueSky**:
@asaskat.bsky.social

A note from the newsletter team

We hope you enjoy this issue of the SKAT newsletter! The newsletter team would like to thank SKAT members who contributed this issue.

If you have any announcements (new publications, events, activities) that you would like us to share, please feel free to tag us on social media or reach out to lau1@ccny.cuny.edu.

We also accept pitches for short articles about your research, teaching, and community engagement work. If you would like to write for us, please be in touch.

- Larry, Molly, Hayden, and Jorge

SKAT Sessions @ ASA 2025

Skyline of Chicago (History Channel)

Here are the planned SKAT Section Sessions at ASA 2025 in Chicago at a glance. More details about each session will be published in the next newsletter issue before ASA.

Monday, August 11, 2025

4 to 5:30 pm: Sociology of Neuroscience and Neurotechnology

6 to 7 pm: SKAT Mentoring Event

7 to 9 pm: SKAT Reception

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

8 to 9:30 am: New Directions and Emerging Studies of Politics in Science and Technology: Changes in Governance, Political Economy, Labor, and Work (Co-Sponsored by Section on Political Sociology)

10 to 11 am: SKAT Roundtables

11 to 11:30 am: SKAT Business Meeting (all are welcome!)

2 to 3:30 pm: Liberating, decolonizing, and queering science, knowledge, and technology

Save the Date: SKAT Reception

Emerald Loop Bar and Grill (via Google Maps)

Join us for the annual SKAT reception at ASA 2025 on **Monday, August 11** from **7 to 9 pm** at the **Emerald Loop Bar and Grill** (216 N Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60601). The venue is centrally located off-site and just two blocks away from the conference hotels.

All are welcome at the reception, so come mingle and meet other members of the SKAT Section!

We would like to extend thanks to our Events Committee, Santiago Molina and Natalie Aviles, who are helping plan this event.

"Revisiting Biomedicalization" Conference

Participants of the Conference at Yale University

On February 28 and March 1, Alka Menon (Yale) and Melanie Jeske (Baylor College of Medicine) led a convening at Yale University titled "Revisiting Biomedicalization: Toward a Technology-Focused Approach." Under the rubric of medicalization and biomedicalization, substantially developed by Peter Conrad and Adele Clarke, medical sociologists and STS scholars have characterized shifts in the landscape of biomedicine in the late 20th century.

The convening invited participants to further elucidate and contextualize recent developments in medicine and health, in particular the proliferation of technology and technological promise, using empirical cases including health wearables, genetic/genomic tests, diagnostic screening, and AI applications in medicine. Together, scholars worked toward an understanding of the processes and mechanisms through which technology is shaping health and medicine—their constitution, social relations, and power dynamics, taking the recent passing of Conrad and Clarke as an opportune moment to revisit their core insights and to propose an updated agenda for future research on the growing linkages between medicine, science, and technology, against the backdrop of the increasing cultural authority of health.

The workshop brought together an international group of scholars across career stages examining 21st century medical and health technologies, taking a broad view on "technology" from the mundane and familiar to high-tech, state of the art, and on "health," both inside and outside medicine.

Theory and Analysis in Science, Knowledge, and Society (TASKS) Workshop

Shepard Hall at City College (Wikimedia via Su & Soe)

Theory and Analysis in Science, Knowledge, and Society (TASKS) is a workshop based at City College, CUNY for CUNY and New York City researchers.

We discuss working papers circulated by members and visitors and provide feedback. Topics of interest amongst TASKS members include: technologies and reproductive health, state-expert relations, the use of scientific evidence in legal proceedings, how geopolitics shape scientific norms and priorities, organizational dynamics of biotechnology innovation, the politics of genetic knowledge, social media platforms, and more. We welcome disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches from sociology, political science, anthropology, sociolegal studies, science and technology studies, gender studies, and more.

TASKS is co-organized by Joan Robinson (jrobinson1@ccny.cuny.edu) and Larry Au (lau1@ccny.cuny.edu). To join or participate, please email.

To learn more about the group: https://tasks.commons.gc.cuny.edu/

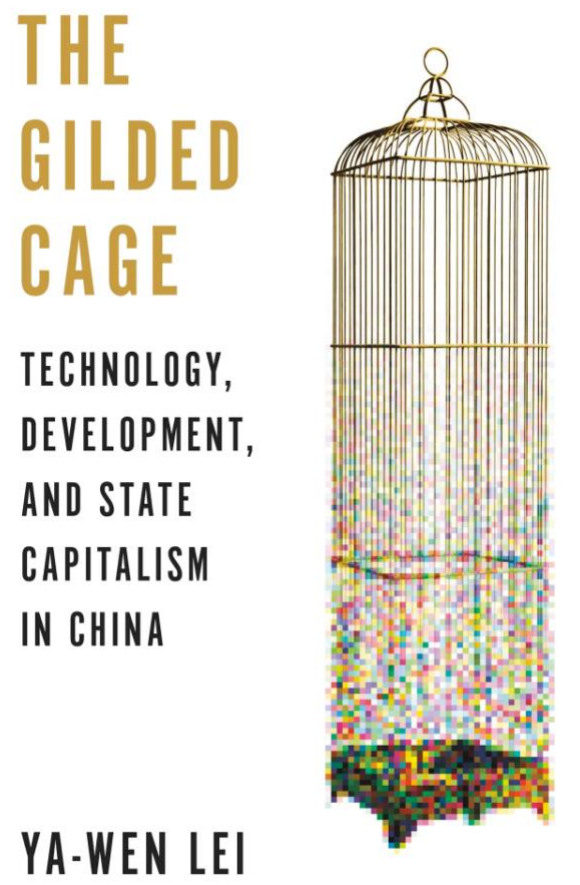
New Books Q&A with Ya-Wen Lei, author of *The Gilded Cage*

Interviewed by Jorge Ochoa on March 7, 2025

Ya-Wen Lei is Professor in the Department of Sociology at Harvard University, and is also affiliated with the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. She is the author of *The Gilded Cage: Techno-State Capitalism in China* (Princeton University Press, 2003) and *The Contentious Public Sphere: Law, Media, and Authoritarian Rule in China* (Princeton University Press, 2018). She is the recipient of the 2024 Robert K. Merton Book Award.

Jorge Ochoa: First, congratulations on receiving the 2024 Robert K. Merton Book Award from the SKAT section of ASA for The Gilded Cage. And thank you for taking the time for this interview. How did you come to be interested in the core questions addressed in The Gilded Cage? And relatedly, how did your research trajectory for this book relate to your earlier book project, The Contentious Public Sphere?

Ya-Wen Lei: Thank you so much for the question. I was really fascinated by the rapid economic development in China. As a graduate student at Michigan, I had two interests. One was related to the political consequences of technology, especially the Internet, and also the concept of the public sphere. Then my second area of interest is the study of development. But usually in sociology, people who study the US don't really consider that there is a development issue in the US and people study that in the context of developing country. For my first book, I focused on my first interest. Then after I finished my first book, I pursued the other interest on development. The Gilded Cage book, was related to the rapid shift from a more developmental model based on labor intensive manufacturing, to an economic development model based on technological development. I began to do fieldwork in China, when I was working on my JSD dissertation as a law student at Yale Law School after the 2008 financial crisis. Over time—within just a decade—I saw that China became really a very futuristic place. Technology came to play such a central role in the everyday life, and in terms of social-economic development.



Book Cover (Courtesy of Princeton University Press)

People were fascinated by technology, and I was quite skeptical and puzzled by people's uncritical views on technology. Regardless of a person's political view, everyone thought that technology can solve all of the problems in society. There's this technological thinking. The tech sectors also began to prosper really rapidly in that area. Everyone was looking at the positive side of this development, but I began to worry about what would happen to groups that could be left behind in this process. For people in the US or in Europe, we know that there is a process of

deindustrialization that could influence a lot of people in this rapid transformation. When people move from one mode of production to the other model of production, people and businesses could be left behind. I'm interested in how that actual process influenced different social groups in society in this very rapid transformation. That's how I shifted from my first book to the second book. Both books are related to technology: the first book was about the rise of the Internet and its political effects; the second book looks at how the development of the Internet led to the development of the digital economy in China and the platform sector.

Jorge Ochoa: One thing I really like about the book is your effective and multi-layered use of metaphor. You take up the idea of a bird cage economy, a frame that Chinese state actors themselves use, and then you reformulate it as the gilded cage, evoking both the Gilded Age and even Max Weber's idea of the iron cage. You talk about the new and old birds in relation to Joseph Schumpeter's notion of creative destruction. What is your process of developing the metaphors offered in the Gilded Cage and how they relate to the core arguments of your book?

Ya-Wen Lei: When I was finishing the book, I didn't really realize that these metaphors would become so important in my book. I knew about the way in which the Chinese government talk about like a bird and cage. And then perhaps in a different chapter, I wrote about new birds and old birds, and the way they use different kinds of legal and technical instruments to guide the economy. I just want to thank a lot of scholars who read my book. I organized a book workshop, and many people who read the first version of my book manuscript, they told me, "Ya-Wen, you know what? You should really make the metaphor central because what connects different chapters is really the idea of bird cage, bird and the cage." So, a lot of people helped me in this process. They had different opinions on how I should actually revise my book manuscript, but all of them agreed that these metaphors should be central. I wouldn't really credit myself. I should give credit to the scholars who helped me. In sociology, there are just so many scholars who are so generous, and I learned a lot from the process. I feel that when I was writing my first book, it's easier because of the mentoring of my professors. But then for this one, it's really difficult, especially the theoretical framing and how I should really abstract the empirical findings. In the end, my book workshop participants helped me to understand that the book is really about Weber's process of rationalization—albeit a very extreme case of rationalization.

This also connects to my first book. We have a lot of debates about, in classical sociology especially, in certain traditions there are questions about how humans can be free from this rationalization process, and communicative rationality, proposed by Habermas, is a way to handle the problem of instrumental rationalization. The first book was actually about public sphere, communicative rationality. So, under certain political conditions, China had a public sphere. Then in the second book, it's when this rationality, communicative rationality, declined. And then there is a really crazy pursuit of instrumental rationality, Weber's idea of instrumental rationality. I see this as a project in which I show the rapid rise of instrumental rationality. In the end, the metaphor of cage worked for me to describe this expansion of instruments and instrumental rationality.

Workers in a factor (Flickr via Steve Jurvetson)

Jorge Ochoa: It was really well done. And it's always nice to hear, and to be reminded, that it takes a village. Moving from metaphor to methodology, I appreciated how your approach is multi-scalar, bridging attention to macro-level changes and then more quotidian, everyday realities. It also moves across domains, so not only looking at the state, but also big tech, society, and their interplay. What insights does this multi-scalar, multi-domain approach enable? And were there any difficulties that stand out in studying such a vast terrain with various moving parts?

Ya-Wen Lei: Usually for people who don't study the US, they have to describe the context because a lot of readers don't have a lot of knowledge about the background. It's inevitable. In the Chinese case, the Chinese state plays a central role in economic development and in everyday life. There is a tradition of the planned economy, and even after the market transition, the government has still played a very important role. So it's impossible not to study the role of the state when you study anything about China. That means that I have to study the relationship between the state and business actors, as well as with labor and ordinary citizens. It's very difficult sometimes, because it operates at so many levels, as you mentioned, and across different sectors. Sometimes one could easily get lost. It's also possible that one writes analysis at macro-level without really linking how change or development at the highest level influences and interacts with changes that happen at another level. It's very difficult to write things at this scale and across so many different levels. Sometimes I have to really step back and think. What is this story about? How do I actually link different moving parts? It's really not easy. That's why the book is so thick.

Jorge Ochoa: It's well done. It's nice to have a model of how to go about doing that methodologically but then also narratively. Your research delves into, among many other things, the experiences of workers—including, on the one hand, coding elites, and, on the other hand, gig platform workers like food couriers. How are these two sets of workers embedded within China's technodevelopmental regime in similar or different ways? What are their different positions in the system?

Ya-Wen Lei: I began to work on the delivery workers because many of these people actually left factory jobs. In the US, we also have a lot of like Uber delivery workers. But in China this transformation happened so rapidly, so you see the direct movement of labor: factory workers who go to work in the platform economy. These are the people who really hate the factory jobs, but they feel that they could do well—many of them thought that they could do well in the newly developing platform economy. But in the end, they are really at the bottom of the digital economy. I wrote about their struggle. And with the coding elite, I was inspired by Marion Fourcade's writing on coding elites from her piece in *Annual Review of Sociology*.

Jorge Ochoa: "The Society of Algorithms"?

Ya-Wen Lei: Yes. In that piece, she lumps coding elites together, including both engineers and also CEOs and professors. But then I try to study the stratification within the coding elite. From Foucault's writing, one would assume that these coding elites are really elite, and they are the people who profit from digital capitalism or surveillance capitalism. But, in fact, they are still workers. They are still laborers in the capitalist system. They are positioned higher than the delivery workers. But I also show that there is a spectrum. Even among the coding elites, they are situated very differently within the digital economy. Even though they are considered as elites, they still don't really have a lot of leverage in terms of negotiating with the entrepreneurs and the capitalists. I tried to write about the stratification within them. In fact, at the bottom of the coding elites, that group is very similar to delivery worker in terms of their salary. We usually only focus on like labor movements or collective actions organized by delivery workers. In sociology, we don't really have a lot of studies on engineers, so I incorporate that part and also look at their tendency to organize collective actions. I'm also interested in how they think about their role in exploiting the delivery workers—because these engineers, many of them are the people

who design these platforms, and they also understand the daily struggle of delivery workers—in how these coding elites perceive the struggle and think about labor problems.

Jorge Ochoa: It's a great contribution. Throughout your book, you leverage various comparisons. Delving into that, how does the case of China compare to other cases of development? Or to other cases of state-tech relations, such as the relationship between big tech and the US government?

Delivery workers in China from Meituan and Ele.me (Wikimedia via TurnOn TheNight)

Ya-Wen Lei: I was also pushed by the participants of my book workshop to make this comparison more explicit. When I was finishing the book, I was really exhausted. I didn't want to be so ambitious. But everyone asked me to. I couldn't really do empirical research to compare, because the scale of the Chinese case is already so big, right? But all the senior scholars asked me to do some comparison based on literature. The US case, there are just so many similarities between the US case and the Chinese case. Although the US and China have very different political regimes. I try to make it clear that it's not only about the comparison, but also that the origin of China's digital economy is related to the contribution of US money, financial capital. China's digital economy rose in a global context of neoliberalism in which US and China actually work together. That's very different from the US-China relation today, that's the previous stage. The Chinese government allowed tech companies in China to go IPO in the US. Also, even though the Chinese government had a lot of restriction on foreign investment in China directly in the Internet sector, they allowed the Internet companies to get global financial capital from the US. So, there is really a link.

Additionally, the Chinese entrepreneurs were inspired by US tech firms, and many of them had experiences working in the US. There was a clear transnational movement of ideas and people, and also capital. The US financial market made this possible. Then in the process of building their digital economy, the Chinese government was also inspired by the US regulatory environment. If you compare EU and the US, US tech regulation—there are not a lot of regulations—the level of regulation is actually relatively much lower than the EU. A lot of scholars point out it's related to the fragmentation in political environment in the US. It's very fragmented, and the government is not that powerful, and then tech companies were able to lobby the government. There was this very tolerant regulatory environment in the US. And in China, the government is extremely powerful but then they intentionally wanted to keep the regulatory environment, in the beginning, very tolerant. They want to learn from the US regulatory model. When they compare US and EU, they think the fact that there is a low degree of regulation helped the tech sector in the US to prosper. And in comparison, EU has so many regulations, and they think European companies suffer as a result. You can see some parallels that are quite similar in the Chinese case and the US case.

But in the end, in the Chinese case, I make it clear that the Chinese government realized that this very tolerant approach led to the growth of tech companies in China, and they worried that this new bird actually got out of their control. In the end, they began to crack down. That's the US-China comparison. In the beginning, the Chinese government really wanted to learn from the regulatory environment approach from the US. I also compare China with the classical examples of developmental states in East Asia, especially

South Korea and Taiwan. South Korea and Taiwan are very advanced in terms of technological development, for example, in the semiconductor sector. And now there are three major semiconductor manufacturers in the world, Intel in the US, Samsung in South Korea, and TSMC in Taiwan. The similarity between Taiwan, South Korea, and China is that they went through a rapid economic development process, and then they all shift to a technodevelopmental model. But I show that in South Korea and then in Taiwan, this shift was accompanied by the process of democratization. They actually were able to create a welfare state that includes more people at the same time. That process didn't really create a huge proportion of left behind people or social groups. There was attention to equality, at least at that stage, and then there were like social protections for those groups. But in the process of development in China, they just sacrificed people who are at the bottom of society, and then they highly prioritize the talent who are perceived as having more contribution to technodevelopment. I try to show, perhaps because of the political regime, that this led to very different outcomes in terms of inequality and the inclusion of marginalized group and people who could be left behind.

Jorge Ochoa: The comparisons and then also the interconnections are super fascinating. In the conclusion of the book, you identify some contradictions that "have emerged in the process of China's compressed technodevelopment" (301). What are some of those contradictions? And how do they continue to play out, including in the time since you've completed the book?

Ya-Wen Lei: The first contradiction, like in James C. Scott's book, the Chinese government wants to use a lot of instruments to make things more legible. They want to see things and know things, and then use instruments to control things, to shape the development of things. But in the end, I try to show that a lot of people are playing the game. They just want to create better outcomes in terms of metrics. A lot of statistics, a lot of those classification outcomes, and the metric values are not really real. They actually deviate from reality. And the lower-level government officials know that. People realize that the way they do this wouldn't achieve the goal. But then they are caught. They see these instruments as like a purpose in themselves, and they don't really care too much about the difference between reality and appearance. When we talk about surveillance in China, a lot of descriptions, I don't know if you've heard about the Social Credit System in China. They give everyone a social credit score. But in reality, a lot of things actually deviate from its intentions. There is a utopian view about how to use technology instruments to create something, but, in reality, things don't really follow that. I show that there is a discrepancy between what they show and the reality. That's the contradiction. I don't think that has been changed a lot in China. In China, the government rely on those kinds of metrics, KPIs, and statistics so much. That's the most major way they use to evaluate a lot of things. In other countries there could be for example, elections or something, you can evaluate people in different ways. Or you have elections to decide how things can be done, and who should get what, right? But in China there's no elections and then this metric system became important in many spheres of life.

I also showed the contradiction between capital and the government. The government actually wanted to control the capital and then make things predictable. But in the process of developing their control, they actually almost lost control of the tech firms. On the one hand, they want to control. They want to structure things that every actor can follow. But on the other hand, they actually found that things went beyond their control. That's why in 2020 they began to crack down on the tech sector. Then I also show the contradiction between capital and labor. You see this in many other countries as well, like the workers in the digital sector and then the digital companies. I also show the contradiction between citizens, or conflict between citizen and government. Some citizens were not happy with the way in which the government allocated resources. They feel their children are abandoned by the government because the

government only appreciates people who are perceived as having higher value in the technodevelopmental model. There is a struggle between different actors.

Jorge Ochoa: Is there anything else you would like to highlight that you hope readers will take away from the book?

Ya-Wen Lei: For people who don't study China or who don't know a lot about China, I just want to make the transnational aspect clear, and to show that there is really a connection between the US case and the Chinese case. I want to highlight the transnational aspect of this story. This is one stage of globalization. But in recent years, we see new geopolitical tension. It is clear that we are at another stage of globalization. I also think sociologists tend to talk about neoliberalism, but we are at a different stage. I want to emphasize that my case happened under certain conditions, but that these macro, transnational conditions have been changing. And then it will be very interesting to see what new development happens at the new stage of globalization.

Jorge Ochoa: Thanks again for taking time to speak with me. The final question is, what are you working on next? Any exciting projects you'd like to preview for the SKAT newsletter readership?

Ya-Wen Lei: I just mentioned we are at a new stage of globalization that is characterized by intensified geopolitical tension. In the past, we take for granted the global division of labor. But now, there are different countries, different governments, including the Chinese government, the US government. You worked for the Biden administration. You know how they want to bring manufacturing back to the US? And it's not only the Biden administration, but also the Trump administration from his first term. In my new project, I'm studying this effort to bring manufacturing back to the US in the semiconductor sector. There is something in sociology called transplantation, meaning that you move factories from one context to another context, cross-borders. In the 80s, in the 90s, at that time, Japanese car makers began to build factories in the US because of the US-Japan trade imbalance. In order to avoid tariff and access local market, the Japanese car makers began to build things in the US. And now I'm studying actually one aspect of the CHIPS and Science Act. I'm studying how the Taiwanese semiconductor company called TSMC began to build a facility in Phoenix, Arizona and the difficulty they encountered in this process. The Biden administration emphasized industrial policy. It's learning from the successful example of the developmental state in East Asia. Under Biden's administration, the US government began to essentially make important the role of the government in changing economic structure. I'm studying what happened in the process. And a few days ago, Trump pressured the Taiwanese company to invest more in the US. In order to make this industrial policy work, the government in the US and the Taiwanese company have to overcome a lot of organizational and also labor market difficulties. So, I'm studying the organizational process and how the factories have been built and operated, and the conflicts in the process, in this stage of globalization.

Jorge Ochoa: That's great. I look forward to following your work. Thank you again.

Ya-Wen Lei: Thank you.

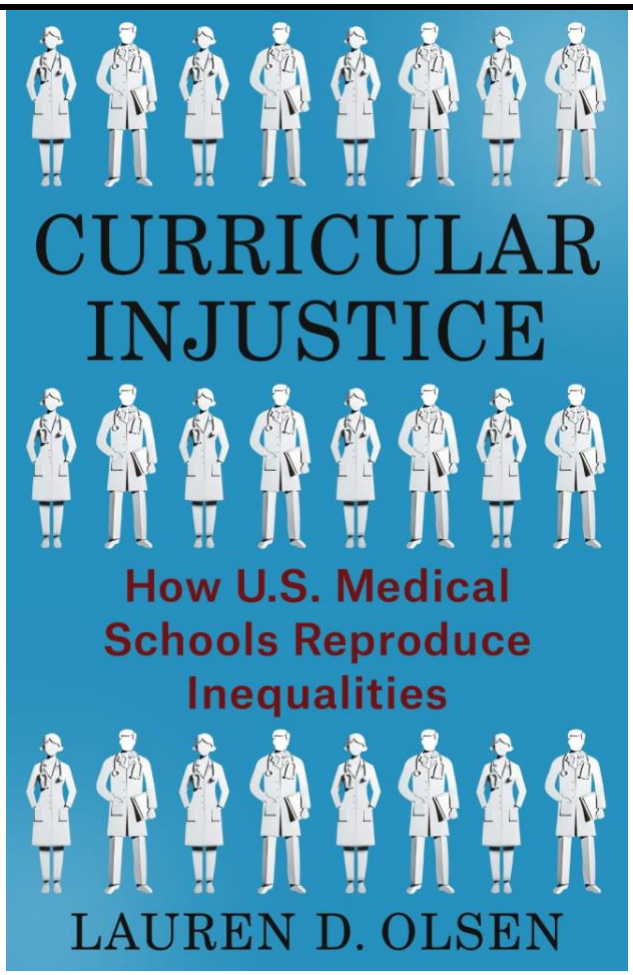
New Books Q&A with Lauren D. Olsen, Author of *Curricular Injustice*

Interviewed by Hayden J. Fulton on February 28, 2025

Lauren D. Olsen, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Temple University. She is the author of *Curricular Injustice: How U.S. Medical Schools Reproduce Inequalities* (Columbia University Press 2024).

Hayden: To start off, I was wondering if you'd be able to speak to how you ended up interested in medical education and this specific case of how the social science and humanities are included in the medical curriculum?

Lauren: Yeah, I love that question. I guess it kind of depends on where I want to start the biography or the way I got here. I think the moment where I got really intellectually interested in thinking about how physicians understood their patients was immediately after graduating from college. I was freshly minted with a humanities heavy religion degree, and I started working in social work with people who had major mental illness, like DSM IV time, Axis I diagnoses. I worked in housing, but a lot of what I practically did on a day-to-day basis was accompanying the folks that I got to work with to different physician appointments. Because I spent so much time with them, I was very struck by the disconnect between their really culturally rich and religiously infused understandings of the world and what they were experiencing– and the very cold, calculated medicine-calibration moments at the doctor's office, and the different ways in which they were dismissed. So sometimes it would be the physician just speaking to me rather than to them, even though they had a better understanding of their health history than I did. (especially as someone new to be working with them). Or, you know, just outright not listening to them, like, "OK, let's refocus the interview: how is this medication impacting you here today?"



Book Cover (Courtesy of Columbia University Press)

This is where it's it depends where the biography starts. As a 21-year-old, I had, up until then, received the opposite medical care by virtue of being a child of two physicians. And I played a sport in college and so I really had access to a lot of doctors because of how universities love student-athletes. I went from having very privileged experiences in healthcare to witnessing people have a totally different reality and that only underscores the immense privilege that I had to get to first witness that at, you know, in my 20s.

Especially in this current political moment, I still very much believe in the power of the social sciences and humanities to make people more equitable and make people more humane. I got

really interested in how the psychiatrist and other healthcare providers, in this particular case, were trained to work with patients from different backgrounds, and this was in New York City, so it was patients from all different backgrounds. I got really fascinated by how they learned to approach patients.

Hayden: In the preface you mentioned coming to this project through an interest in the "politics of knowledge application" or "the power struggles over whose voice counts in decisions over what knowledge is included (and excluded) in the values and practices of a professional workforce" (ix). I was wondering if you could speak to how thinking about medical education through this lens impacted how you approached the project?

Lauren: Yeah, I'm very indebted to Scott Frickel and Kelly Moore's *The New Political Sociology of Science: Institutions, Networks, and Power* (2006). Frickel and Moore are drawing upon a legacy within science studies that conceptualizes thinking about science from a political sociology lens, thinking about the power struggles that are involved in setting agendas, whether it's what new vaccines are produced or what doctors are learning. Thinking about the politics of knowledge application I was also drawing upon Janet Shim's work on the politics of knowledge production and epidemiology, most notably elaborated in her book *Heart Sick: The Politics of Risk, Inequality, and Heart Disease* (2014).

A lot of the work that had been done on medical education before, it's excellent and I love the work, but it often examines, especially in terms of curricula, the professional socialization that's happening, whether explicitly in the context of the classroom or peer socialization. So, whether it's top-down or bottom-up it tends to not necessarily focus on what is on the table to begin with regarding what students should be learning.

I have a particular bone to pick with this body of work with this one concept of the "hidden curriculum". It gets thrown around lot, even more so among practitioners of medical education who appropriate a lot of sociological terms and then misuse them. And, in fact, one of the main scholars who transported this concept of the hidden curriculum into medical education, Fred Hafferty (2015), has been critical of how hidden curriculum has been used to mean both everything and therefore nothing. The hidden curriculum, though, in its original formulation, is really about the politics of knowledge application. It's talking about the disconnect between how institutions show their values through where they put their financial resources, or what they signal with new buildings being constructed, or how they decorate their hallways, or the allocation of the budget, which may be disconnected from what they're explicitly teaching in the classroom. And in this whole hidden curriculum explains everything world they never talk about who's making these decisions. I have one of my committee members, Amy Binder, to thank for this insight. It was early on in grad school when she was reading one of my early proposals, and I said something like "Medical education is trying to incorporate the humanities and social sciences," and she was like, "Well, medical education like isn't doing that, medical *educators* are doing that." And so, "who are these people? Who are the actors behind this?" And that problem remains interesting to me.

The politics of knowledge application allowed me to really think about how decisions are being made at the professional level, at the level of the school, and in the classroom. I ended up organizing the book's chapters in a particular way to think about how decisions are being made at these different levels of analysis. So going from the profession, to the school as an organization,

Stethoscope, white coat, pens (Pixnio via DarkStojanovic)

to the classroom, to the clinical faculty that are in charge of the classroom. Then, actually thinking about students because students are the main voice of push back in this particular case, not just how they're impacted, but how they might think about resisting.

Hayden: You mentioned how this ability to move between levels of analysis impacted your findings. I was wondering if you have any thoughts on how your methods impacted your ability to do that, specifically thinking about how many of the classic studies we have of medical socialization are looking at a specific medical school. Do you have any thoughts of how doing something different methodologically informed your findings?

Lauren: Yeah, I appreciate you saying that. I sometimes wished I was able to do an in-depth ethnography so I could see the nuances and interactive moments of these processes really play out, but, I really loved doing these comparative interviews across dozens of schools. I loved attending the AAMC's (The Association of American Medical Colleges) annual conferences. I did that three years in a row. And I mean, talk about the politics of knowledge application. Seeing the panels and Q&A period was fascinating. I mean, one could do that at ASA too. You see different posturing or what topics get picked up or are like hot, and which ones weren't. And then I also looked at the curricular documents at every MD-granting medical school at the time that I was doing the data collection (2015-2017). The interviews that I did were also comparative, thinking of social sciences and humanities scholars, and then the more MD-type clinical faculty as well as students. Analytically speaking, to kind of organize everything and get my bearings at first, it took a while because I also wanted to do a little bit of a historical tracing approach.

In terms of what that methodologically allowed me to do, I think it allowed me to see how, and it's a little bit of an ironic point, but a lot of the folks that I spoke to at med schools talked about how every medical school was unique and had this unique culture. But a lot of that discussion was about how chaotic they were, and so many of the folks that I spoke to about medical education described this disorganized, chaotic working environment and had this feeling of, "Well, this must just be us," like "We're a, you know, crap show over here." That is something that I love about any sort of comparative work. That was my third chapter about the disorganization of medical schools and it was the hardest for me to write because for the longest time I was trying to impose order on it, and trying to analytically be able to explain what was going on, and it took me a while to be like, no, that's actually part of the point. There is a tremendous amount of flexibility for leaders when their organization is in disarray. And we know as well that in moments when things are in disarray that people with historical positions of privilege can easily just fall into positions of leadership. So, this methodological choice of interviewing folks from a bunch of different schools allowed for some breadth, but yeah, like I think you know that I always love the depth and the nuance of the detailed ethnographies, they are the most fun to read.

Hayden: I was wondering would you be able to speak a bit to the relationship between curricular dreams of the clinical faculty members you interviewed and the curricular injustices that you saw being played out in the medical schools?

Lauren: Yes. So in in terms of what I'm calling the "curricular dreams," it is something where it's almost like every idea is a good idea! All these ideas are on the table. Slices of the social sciences and humanities that are structural and critical, as if we as sociologists were like, "this is what I would love for medical students to learn," which could be something akin to an understanding of how racism is embedded in the medical profession and still operative in a lot of the algorithms today. Those types of topics were on the table. From a humanities perspective, it would be like a lot of rigorous literary analysis, or these deep histories of gynecology as a specialty in their racist origins. And other topics that had more of a superficial engagement with the social sciences and humanities were also on the table.

But again, these dreams were really big. I believe that some of the medical educators involved in these conversations were operating with good intentions. The current cohort of leadership within medical schools came of age, professionally speaking, without having to engage with the humanities or social sciences at all. The promise of biomedicine was so extreme. There is a part of me that's like if a pill could cure our social problems, that would be great. But we know, especially the SKAT section, that no such utopia will ever exist. But this cohort of leadership, without any actual academic background in these subfields, they're seeing in their clinics patients who are not able to fill their prescriptions or distrust their expertise. Not in an RFK sense, but in, you exploited my community sense. The medical educators, with their experience as clinicians, were using what I call "clinical witnessing." They're seeing all the wait times, they're seeing their visits be shortened, there are all of these things that they're witnessing, but because of their privileged position, they're not necessarily experiencing. I think that there was a real genuine desire behind their curricular dreams oriented around "what can we do to make this better?" So, I think that their end goal of wanting to cultivate humane and equitable doctors was legitimate.

But as I describe in terms of this process of knowledge application, at each step of going from these profession-wide curricular dreams, to incorporating them into standards by the accrediting body, to then getting to the level of school– of deciding OK when and who is teaching this? To then into the classroom, there are ways in which the social sciences and humanities get transformed, or distorted, or reduced, and those yield– to finally answer your question– curricular injustices, this idea of taking the social sciences at the curricular dreaming phase you could have this very robust understanding of how racism is embedded in the medical profession and medical knowledge itself, but what you end up teaching is essentially these stereotypes about racial or ethnic groups and their food preferences and how that would be important to know as doctors, because you need to counsel them on like how to eat properly or something like that. Or what's worse, a lot of students, in particular, spoke about how they learned about biological race in the context of their lectures, and this is where medical student groups have been instrumental in pushing back against this version of curricular injustice. In fact, it was a student-run group out of the University of Washington that was able to change the racial correction for measuring kidney function (Estimate Glomerular Filtration Rate). They were able to remove the racial correction, which is so pivotal in thinking about when people, Black people in particular, can access timely kidney care.

That's on the social sciences side. On the humanities side—and I think I mentioned this in the preface, but when I was transitioning from the dissertation into the book, I had to think a lot about how humanities fit into the story—one of the main ways that they fit into the story is that they essentially got transformed from these critical, reflective practices into therapeutic and celebratory practices. Like from, "How am I as a doctor contributing to inequalities?" or "What can I learn from this sustained engagement with a patient?" – they go from these really really big, very critical, very reflective ideas to what is essentially like a book club that is therapeutic for the students. And so again, how that's connected to this overall story of thinking about curricular injustices is that it essentially makes the student feel like, "Oh, I'm in charge of my own mental health." I mean, it's very neoliberal. And we see it, I don't know if your university does it, we just got access to the Calm app, and there's all the different wellness industry metrics, where it's like crap where you can, sometimes it's like linked up with your insurance, and you can maybe earn points. I haven't ever looked into it because I wouldn't perform well on those metrics to get any money back [laughter]. They haven't reached me yet. In this way the humanities end up getting transformed into placating the medical profession rather than challenging it or critiquing it. And again, thinking about the social sciences and humanities in concert, students are learning stereotypes, but then they're also learning that they should just put their heads down and take care of their own mental health.

Hayden: In the conclusion, you give some examples of schools that are doing things

differently. I was wondering if you would want to highlight these almost negative cases, what they look like, and how they're different.

Lauren: Yeah, so again, thinking about the politics involved. At individual schools that are able to teach more aligned with some of these original curricular dreams, they have what I term "intellectual infrastructure" in the sense that people with expertise in the social sciences and humanities, it's not just that they have a seat at the table, they're able to help decide– "OK, you know we don't want just half a day spent on race" Or "We don't want our one week panel where patients with minoritized gender or sexuality backgrounds come in and talk about their experiences with healthcare/ their health." They have people in positions of power to say, that the so-called sex week exoticizes and others gender and sexuality diversity *and* makes it feel like students conceptualize it as not the real curriculum, not what they actually had to learn (because otherwise they'd learn it from doctors). So, when people with legitimate expertise in these areas are looking at these curricular maps and are like "No, we need to be integrating discussions about heteronormativity throughout the curriculum." This is where some schools that are doing it in an incredible way. They're not just having, a social sciences thread that is like one to two days, a week… It's actually in the different organ blocks. They will do things like talking about regulating sex, you know? They would talk about the colonialist origins of endocrinology when they get to that block, or pulmonology or…. You name it. And it allows students to critically think and understand how this knowledge has been produced and ways that they can better understand what they're doing or what they're prescribing in ways that will allow them to give better patient care.

Honestly, the main thing is thinking about this process, how one of the main disconnects is between the profession and the school. So, going from curricular dreams to the disorganization of a medical school. I think medical school leaders, like deans of med schools, have to be very deliberate about how they hire. Most medical schools, because so many of their faculty... the stat is like 89% of faculty at med schools are clinical because of the reimbursement structure. In many ways, a clinical faculty member is incredibly exploitable to a med school dean because so much of their reimbursement is coming from the clinic, the seeing patients part of things. So they're like they can be in charge of the pre-clinical curriculum, regardless of their expertise, they expressed interest once... So in that sense, medical school deans need to be really deliberate about hiring social scientists and humanists to be involved in these types of conversations, as well as having the kind of power to say no, this is what the curriculum is going to be like.

Hayden: Throughout the text, you provide many examples of the really fraught position that humanities and social science educators are put in because of how their disciplines are conceptualized within the medical curriculum. While I haven't taught in medical school, a lot of their experiences still really resonated with me as someone who's taught pre-med students at the undergrad level. So, with that in mind, I was wondering, has this research in any way impacted your own pedagogy?

Lauren: It's so funny that you say that. I have been teaching intro to sociology for pre-med students since grad school, really, since the MCAT started to include sociology. And, I mean, this is where this really great work done by STS folks, I'm thinking of Ana Viseu (2015) in particular, who talks about the care work that the humanities and social sciences do for STEM fields. When teaching pre-meds, we do so much care work in the context of how we are in relationship to these other fields. I've had students on the first day of classes being like "I see that your midterm is scheduled for this day. I have an orgo exam that day. So, do you want to change the day of your midterms? For the more important one?" I mean my favorite remark that I get every time I teach this is, "Oh, this was *actually* interesting." Like it's always these backhanded compliments of, "Oh, I didn't realize that this was a legitimate field that would be relevant." I mean, so much of my angle now is to hammer home to them, "do you know how hospitals work? You're going to be

exchanging your labor for a wage and be employees, right?"

I mean this is this is in the before times before the recent Trump administration dismantled all of our research infrastructure, and I will say I am really curious in this moment to think about how biomedical researchers and physicians might actually realign their politics now that *their* science is under threat. Very, very curious how this is going to play out, both with like union organizing and resisting and protesting.

In terms of impacting my pedagogy, one of the main things that I have come to realize is that you can't bank on the med schools to teach them about racism. You can't bank on the med schools teaching them about heteronormativity. I feel very committed to doing that. One of my Trojan horse approaches to this is that I like to assign like *JAMA* or *New England Journal of Medicine* articles that are critical social sciencey or humanitiesy as a way to boost the legitimacy in their eyes of these ideas and say like look, other doctors say this is important to highlight some of the kinds of things that that sociologists have been talking about.

And another thing that I do is I say to them that I'm going to be very critical of the medical profession in the course, but I start the course being critical of the sociology profession too. I assign Aldon Morris' presidential address where he talks about how DuBois was excluded from the canon, and the recently published article by the historian Jenna Healey (2023) about Dr. Osler, who's one of the founding four folks of American professional medicine at Johns Hopkins (He started residency programs and he's noted for his humanism.) But she found he had an alter ego that would do a lot of hoaxes, and among them had a very anti indigenously racist piece that then circulated in these, private Osler Societies. But like anthropology and the social sciences are equally as implicated as medicine in terms of producing this racism. So, I try to be as critical of our field as well as the medical field to teach that as a practice.

Another thing that I do with the pedagogy is with hospitals and health care organizations I try to show them how they will be impacted, like it's not just about patient care, it's also that *your* lives will be impacted. So, I'll show things about how trans and nonbinary students are treated or how they witness and experience chronic misgendering in the context of their rounding with attendings or the way that medical students who present as women are described relative to men or those types of things. I try to get them in there like, "Oh God I didn't think that about that." Another thing that I've done increasingly regarding the humanities is assigning poems that speak to some of the themes to really highlight how something that might only be 100 words could really make you think and reflect.

To the conscripted curriculum point, I take it very seriously to teach students about structural inequality so students who have experienced marginalization don't feel like they have to be the ones to teach their peers about it. And that is something that I feel very committed to. That, and I designed the course to have this narrative arc where it's like, dehumanization can happen really easily. And then show how, both in like how human brains might work in that we create schemas and shortcuts in our brains which can lead to stereotyping, to how the structures can remove responsibility from things, to then, particularly for med students, thinking about cutting into cadavers and that sort of thing.

Hayden: Outside of our individual classrooms, I was wondering if there's anything else you'd like to add on how as social scientists we could advocate for the improvement of how our discipline is taught in medical education, especially right now in our current political climate?

Lauren: Yeah, this is something that I've been talking with, there's a group of us in the Sociology of Health Professions Education Collaborative and we have been talking about how we need to create some sort of document. We've had a lot of conversations about how that would be approached and what that might look like. Part of the inspiration even predating our awful political moment here in the US comes from the UK, where sociologists came together and created an organization and a report that then informed and continues to structure the way that sociology is

taught at the med schools there. And I say this a couple times in my book, but like, ASA has done nothing of the sort. And perhaps for good reason, as we were just talking about with the prior question, there is a lot of structural marginalization of social scientists, so who's to say that if we were to produce something like this, the medical profession would listen? But I do think that with a lot of the current crumbling of institutions and potential realignments that could happen, it would be great to at least try.

And there's this group that does health humanities stuff, and so I was talking to some folks in that group about potentially setting up a workshop style meeting between social scientists and humanists –where the end goal would to gain some consensus, or at least ideas on the table about what we would actually want to advocate for. And I have a dream of working with the realities of not just medical schools, but the realities of working people today. I'm imagining gradations, so if you can only do one thing, please just do this, and then if you are able to hire, this could be a thing that you could look into. And I think that doing something like that could again be incredibly practically relevant. Laura Hirshfield, she's this awesome scholar who works in a medical school, she and I've been talking probably the most about this, and she was saying how, there's going to just be so much strategic translation that needs to happen, and so I think there will be some challenges there, but this work is something that is needed and is possible. I actually really like the idea of thinking about going beyond the sociologists of health professions education and thinking about sociologists more broadly, I'd want to know: what would you want your doctor to know in terms of providing health care?

Hayden: Thank you so much for your work and taking the time to speak with me today. So, the last question is what are you working on now? What should the SKAT readers look out for?

Lauren: What I'm currently obsessed with is related to what we were talking about before with pre-med students. Specifically, pre-med stress. So, the pre-meds that I work with think that they're the most stressed group. I've not been able to find any data to support that claim, more in the sense that the data is sort of sparse. Even in one thing I was able to find from the Healthy Mind Study, it's actually arts majors that are more stressed in terms of the way that they measure it relative to pre-med students. Currently I am working on a project thinking about pre-med stress, I really want to do some sort of nationally comparative project thinking about school specific resources, working with a few other scholars at different types of institutions, like a small liberal arts school, private research university, or HBCU, in thinking about how an organization structures resources could impact students. And within that sort of domain, I'd like to think more about interdisciplinarity on campuses and how the different organizational forms and flavors that interdisciplinarity can take. Is it an interdisciplinary department versus do students need to actually just have a double major? Thinking again, what are the organizational barriers or constraints, on the one hand, or opportunities, on the other, that allow for students to come to medical school already with a better understanding of how the social world works? And to that end, I don't know if this is just because I'm annoyed by the amount of times I'm asked to move my midterms, but I am really interested in the care work that humanists and social scientists do on college campuses. So that's one project.

The other project that would be more ethnographic—and that I'm really excited to get off the ground—is about the student-run free clinic that a lot of medical schools have. I'm really fascinated by service learning, and again, the tremendous potential that it could have to how to have medical students do good work, but also the potential problems in terms of voyeurism, or revolving doors of care, or just another thing a doctor or a medical student might check off their CV. I feel like service learning could be done pretty poorly. I mean, one of my biggest limitations in my work is that patients' voices aren't a big part of it, and I really would like to hear what they think about some of this stuff.

Recent Publications from Section Members

New Articles

Laura Brandt, Larry Au, Clinton Castro, and Gabriel J. Odom. 2025. "Engaging an advisory board in discussions about the ethical relevance of algorithmic bias and fairness". *npj Digital Medicine* 8**,** 292. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41746-025-01711-1

Erbay Borabay and Kelly Joyce. 2025. "Opening the Black Box of AI: A Sociological Study of AI as a Network". *Journal of Economy, Culture and Society*. http://doi.org/10.26650/JECS2024-1467424

Jill A. Fisher. 2025. "Pursuing a "normal" life of food: Families' experiences of pediatric food allergy clinical trials". *Social Science & Medicine*, 378, 118085. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118085

Kathleen Griesbach. 2025. "Positioning Stories: Accounting for Insecure Work". *American Sociological Review*, *90*(3), 493-520. https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224251328393

Robert M. Kunovich. 2025. "Perspectives on Science and Religion at the Intersection of Political Ideology and Science Work". *The Sociological Quarterly*, 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/00380253.2025.2491447

Tyler Leeds. 2024. "The influencer-intellectual tactic and social media advertisements: How PragerU advances partisan knowledge". *New Media & Society*. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241294014

Timothy L. O'Brien and Shiri Noy. 2025. "Religion, Perceptions of Scientists' Moral Culture, and Support for Science in the United States". *American Sociological Review*, *90*(2), 257-290. https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224251316904

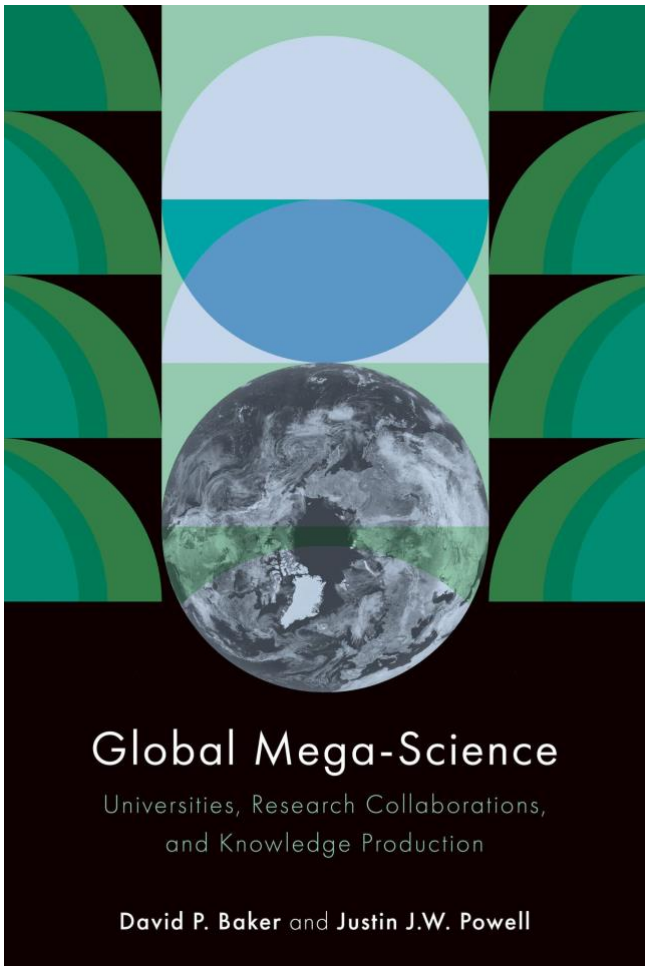
Joan H. Robinson. 2025. We Would Not Be Here: Reproduction, Scholarship, and the Rise of Techno-authoritarianism. *Sociologica*, 19(1), 175–178. https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1971-8853/20743

Ranjit Singh and Michael Lynch. 2024. "Proverbial economies of STS". *Social Studies of Science*, *55*(3), 327-349. https://doi.org/10.1177/03063127241294038

Janet A. Vertesi and Diana Enriquez. 2025. "The Ghost of Middle Management: Automation, Control, and Heterarchy in the Platform Firm". *Sociologica* 19(1), 13–35. https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.1971-8853/16415

New Books

David P. Baker and Justin J. W. Powell. 2024. *Global Mega-Science: Universities, Research Collaborations, and Knowledge Production*. Stanford University Press.
https://www.sup.org/books/sociology/global-mega-science



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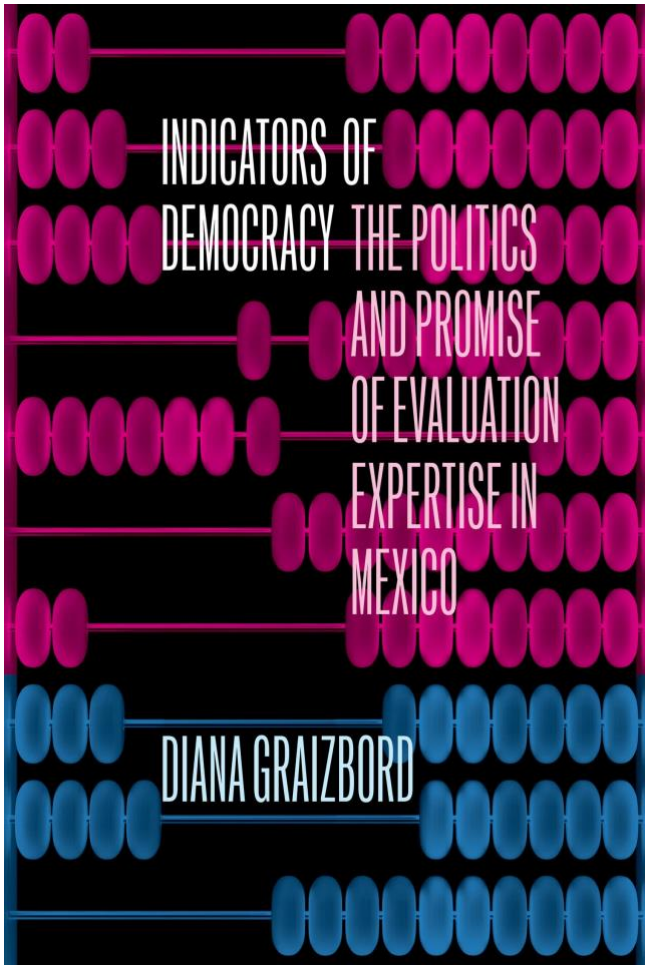
David P. Baker is Professor of Sociology, Education, and Demography at Pennsylvania State University and the 2023-24 George Sarton Chair for the History of Science at Ghent University, Belgium. He is the author of The Schooled Society (Stanford, 2014) and co-author of National Differences, Global Similarities (Stanford, 2005) and The Century of Science (2017).

Justin J.W. Powell is Professor of Sociology of Education at the University of Luxembourg. His (co-)authored books include Comparing Special Education (Stanford, 2011), Barriers to Inclusion (2016), and The Century of Science (2017).

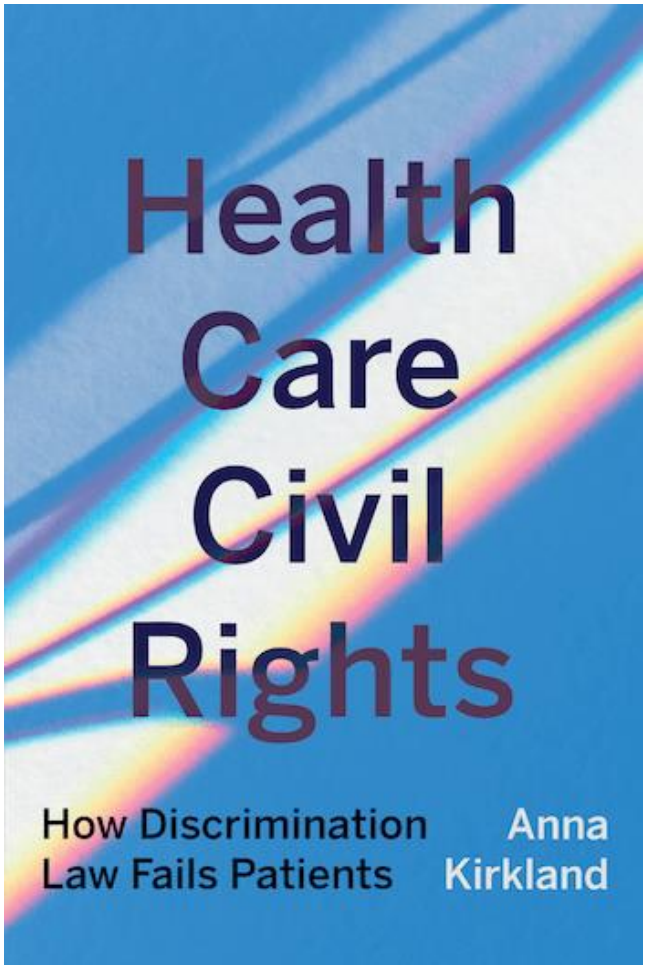
Diana Graizbord. 2024. *Indicators of Democracy: The Politics and Promise of Evaluation Expertise in Mexico*. Stanford University Press.
https://www.sup.org/books/sociology/indicators-democracy

"The spread of democracy across the Global South has taken many different forms, but certain features are consistent: implementing a system of elections and an overarching mission of serving the will and well-being of a country's citizens. But how do we hold politicians accountable for such a mission? How are we to understand the efficacy of the policies they put forth? In Indicators of Democracy Diana Graizbord exposes the complex, often-hidden world of the institutions that are meant to ensure democratic accountability and transparency. Taking the case of Mexico's National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), Graizbord provides a deep theory of what happens when democratic aspirations intersect with technocratic ambitions. Analyzing what it takes to establish and sustain monitoring and evaluation as a form of official state expertise, Graizbord is able to put forward the contours of technodemocracy—a democratic political project that hinges on the power of experts to shape politics in unexpected but profound ways."

Diana Graizbord is Assistant Professor of Sociology and Latin American and Caribbean Studies at the University of Georgia.



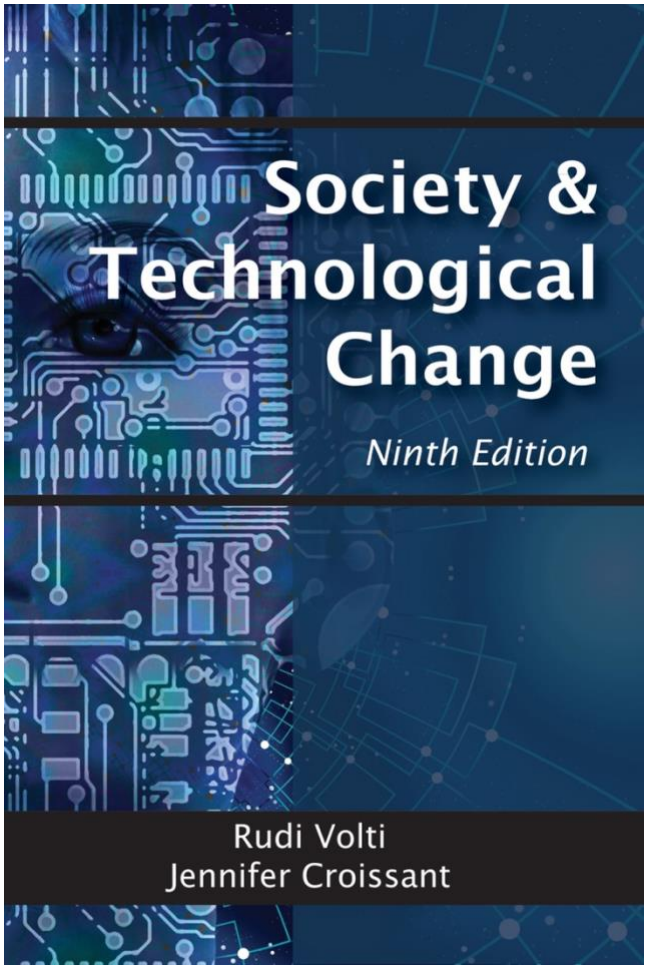
Anna Kirkland. 2025. *Health Care Civil Rights: How Discrimination Law Fails Patients*. University of California Press.
https://luminosoa.org/books/m/10.1525/luminos.226 [open access]



"Focusing on the provision of gender-affirming care, Health Care Civil Rights analyzes the difficulties and potential of discrimination law in healthcare settings. The application of civil rights law could be a powerful response to health inequalities in the US, but conservative challenges and the complex and fragmented nature of our health care system have limited the real-world success of this strategy. Revealing deep divides and competing interests that reverberate through patient experiences, insurance claims, and courtroom arguments, Anna Kirkland explains what health care civil rights are, how they work in theory and practice, and how to strengthen them."

Anna Kirkland is the Kim Lane Scheppele Collegiate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Michigan. She is author of Vaccine Court: The Law and Politics of Injury and Fat Rights: Dilemmas of Difference and Personhood.

Rudi Volti and Jennifer Croissant. 2024. *Society and Technological Change*. Waveland Press. [Ninth Edition]
https://waveland.com/browse.php?t=789



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Rudi Volti is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Pitzer College.

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