

INSIDE

SKAT @ ASA 2025

Section Sessions ([p. 4](#))

SKAT Awards ([p. 9](#))

Reception ([p. 15](#))

Congratulations!

50th Anniversary of

Vassar STS ([p. 16](#))

Inaugural Issue of TSI
([p. 17](#))

Meet Our SKAT Student Members

Profiles ([p. 18](#))

Perspectives

Computing, Co-
Creation, and the Well-
Informed Citizen by
Besnik Pula ([p. 23](#))

Announcements

New articles ([p. 25](#)),

New books ([p. 26](#))



SKAT Section Chair Janet Vertesi passing the baton to incoming Chair Claire Decoteau

Chair's Report

Friends and colleagues of SKAT,

What a momentous year! I'd like to thank our committee members for their hard work and congratulate us all on a terrific ASA - including the best section party in Chicago! The presentations at our sessions were excellent and thought-provoking, and the discussion was no less inspiring. It was wonderful to witness the vibrant conversations as we packed the Emerald Loop to the gills with old and new friends. I am grateful for wonderful colleagues across the section, and I'm glad to see that the intellectual life of our section is thriving. It gives me great hope for the future of SKAT.

With a new academic year comes a new slate of elected officers to the Section. Thank you to everyone who ran for office, and the care and attention of our membership in voting. Our incoming Chair Elect is Rene Almeling (Yale), new council members are Catherine Tan (Vassar), Luciana de Souza Leão (Michigan), and Alex Hanna (DAIR), with strong student representation from already-active SKAT members Mary Shi (Michigan) and Jorge Ochoa (Northwestern). Our outgoing roster includes the wonderful Catherine Lee (Rutgers), Natalie Aviles (Virginia), Larry Au (CCNY), Ni'Shele Jackson (UIC), Mira Vale (now WUSTL) and our past Chair Jill Fisher (UNC). Please join me in thanking them for their tireless contributions to Council!

We also appreciate your voting on the dues change proposal, which was passed this year and will go into effect ASAP. You'll see your section dues increase if you are a Regular Member, from \$12-15, to better support our section activities in this time of rapid change. If you see Emily Vasquez, our Secretary Treasurer, thank her for her tireless work assembling the accounts and projecting spending for our section. Please look out next year for a series of workshops specifically aimed at supporting our SKAT colleagues and juniors as we enter this next tumultuous era.

As I indicated in my last column, these are complex times. They demand our attention and action. They also demand we care for ourselves, our students, and our communities. It will not be easy, nor will the challenges be equally distributed. I still believe that SKAT scholars have precisely the toolkit we need to navigate the challenges ahead. And we have the community to do it, too. It is my fervent hope that we can continue our important work while extending our Section's intellectual energy, generosity, and support to others in the coming years.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as your Chair this year. Thank YOU, all our members, for making SKAT the incredible community it is. And now ... to work!

Janet



Our Section Logo

SKAT Officers

2024-2025

Chair

Janet Vertesi,
Princeton University

Chair-Elect

Claire Decoteau,
*University of Illinois
Chicago*

Past Chair

Jill Fisher,
*University of North
Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Section

Secretary/Treasurer

Emily Vasquez,
Wesleyan University

Council Members

Sharla Alegria,
University of Toronto
Larry Au,
City College, CUNY
Natalie B. Aviles,
University of Virginia
Martine Lappé,
*California Polytechnic
State University, San Luis
Obispo*
Catherine Lee,
Rutgers University
Benjamin Shestakofsky,
*University of
Pennsylvania*

Student Council Members

Ni'Shele Jackson,
*University of Illinois
Chicago*
Mira Vale,
University of Michigan

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)

A note from the newsletter team

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

We are also on **BlueSky:**
[@asaskat.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/asaskat.bsky.social)

As we transition to a new year at SKAT after ASA, please reach out to the incoming SKAT section Chair Claire Decoteau if you are interested in serving on the Communications Committee. If you would like to learn more about the role, please feel free to reach out to any of us on the current team!

The SKAT newsletter accepts pitches and announcements from section members. It aims to connect the SKAT community and celebrate the accomplishments of our members.

- Larry, Molly, Hayden, and Jorge

SKAT Sessions @ ASA 2025

The SKAT Section hosted several sessions at ASA 2025 in Chicago covering a wide range of issues.

Monday, August 11, 2025

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

West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, New Orleans

George H W Bush declared 1990 to 1999 the “Decade of the Brain” with the goal of enhancing “public awareness of the benefits to be derived from brain research”. However, nearly 35 years later, our understanding of the brain through neuroscience and neurotechnology remains elusive. At the same time the implications of the knowledge production and application of new innovations centered on the brain are impacting society from how we diagnose, treat, and experience conditions associated with the brain to the ways in which neuroscience and technology perpetuate social inequalities or define what constitutes normality and pathology.

The tools of sociology of science and technology offer opportunities to critically interrogate all matters related to the brain, neuroscience, and neurotechnology. We invite empirical and theoretical papers that investigate their social, political, economic, and cultural implications—ranging from institutions to neurons and spanning topics from medical therapeutics to surveillance.

Potential topics include but are not limited to: the political economy of neuroscience, neurotechnology, and innovation; studies of neurology, neuroscientists, and neurotherapies; classification and diagnosis; racism, sexism, and justice in research practice; sensors, monitoring, and social control in the neurosciences; social inequalities in relation to neuroscience; as well as neuroscience's role in mental health discourse. We particularly encourage submissions that explore how neurotechnologies impact marginalized communities, examine the influence of neuroscience on public policy, and discuss the intersections between neuroscience and contemporary discourses surrounding artificial intelligence.

Presider: Jennifer S. Singh

Discussant: Oliver E. Rollins

Session Organizers: Daniel Ray Morrison, Torsten H. Voigt, Janet Vertesi

Presenters:

- “Brain on chips? Novel Neuroscience and the Limits of Biomedical Models” – Melanie Jeske
- “Exploring neuronal subjectivity and perceptions of mental health treatment in a sample of psychedelic retreat-goers” – Logan Neitzke-Spruill
- “Failure as Perpetual Novelty and Promise: The Neuro-Fiction of Addiction Immunizations” – Kristin Kay Barker, Erin Fanning Madden, Katherine Rickers, Preston L. Lowe
- “Give me a Patch and I will Create a Market” – Yanze Yu

6 to 7 pm: Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology Mentoring Event

West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, Hong Kong

7 to 9 pm: Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology Reception

Offsite, Emerald Loop Bar & Grill

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

8 to 9:30am: 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)

West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, Toronto

Studies of political economy are experiencing a revival across sociology, with researchers shedding new light on interactions and contestations between capital, labor, and state actors. Broadly, this scholarship explains how social actors secure and institutionalize power over agendas, resources, and practices. While sociologists of science, knowledge, and technology have historically attended to such dynamics at the local, national, and global levels, recent research and events have revitalized our understanding of the interplay between science, technology, the economy, and the state across locales, scales, and historical periods.

This session builds on this renewed interest and invites work that bridges the study of political economy (broadly construed) with analyses of science, knowledge, and technology. Potential topics include, but are not limited to: how public and private actors shape the governance of science and technology; how structures of capital (e.g. public funding, venture capital, private equity) impact processes of scientific discovery or technological innovation; how labor movements influence technology development and change; and how workers reshape, resist, or adopt technologies of management.

Presider: Mariana Craciun

Session Organizers: Benjamin Shestakofsky, Janet Vertesi, Mariana Craciun

Presenters:

- "Carbon Time Machines: The Techno-politics of Carbon Capture and Silicon Valley's Climate Future" – Andrew Jaeger
- "Fair Use or Copyright? Navigating Sociological Discourses between AI Companies and Creative Workers" – Hayoung Seo, Jenny L. Davis
- "Knowledge and Power: The Political Economy of Postwar University Military Research" – Jasmine Cha Sausedo
- "Knowledge brokers in the gaps of globalization: the P-value politics of global health beyond the WHO" – Clay Davis
- "Do Moral Agency and Bureaucratic Discretion Survive Black-Box Algorithms? Evidence from Big Data Taxation in China" – Yingyao Wang

10 to 11am: Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology Roundtables

West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, Regency C

Session Organizers: Janet Vertesi, Martine Lappe, Benjamin Shestakofsky, Daniel Ray Morrison, Kate Elizabeth Burrows, Mariana Craciun

Roundtables:

- Table 1: SKAT approaches to AI
- Table 2: Masculinities in Science and Technology
- Table 3: LLMs, a SKAT perspective
- Table 4: Agriculture as a SKAT topic
- Table 5: Femininities
- Table 6: Labor
- Table 7: Organizations
- Table 8: Epistemologies
- Table 9: Colonial Legacies
- Table 10: SKAT and the State
- Table 11: Boundary Work
- Table 12: Trust and Uncertainty
- Table 13: Innovation and the Market
- Table 14: Medical Experiences
- Table 15: Knowledge-Making and Educational Institutions

11 to 11:30am: Section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology Business Meeting

West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, Regency C



SKAT Roundtable participants deep in discussion

12 to 1:30pm: Challenging epistemic institutions: Unruly knowledge, outlaw technology, and fringe-mainstream relations

West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, New Orleans

We live in epistemically challenged, and challenging, times. The status of various forms of knowledge continues to be contested, as many social actors compete for epistemic authority. Institutions of knowledge production are underfunded and under suspicion. Alternative institutions, peer-to-peer networks, conspiracy communities and counter-knowledges are rife. Even amongst public institutions, dissenting voices seek to trouble the status quo. Since its earliest days, SKAT inquiry has addressed questions of lay expertise, non-knowledges, pseudo-sciences, alternative knowledge systems, and other heterogeneous constitutions of social facts. Today's political context inspires a return to these core questions with fresh empirical and theoretical eyes. How do individual and collective actors manage the tension between mainstream and fringe ideas, ways of knowing, and other technoscientific constellations, and what can we learn through an examination of these practices?

This session invites empirically and theoretically engaged work that investigates defiant, oppositional, unruly forms of knowledge, undisciplined technologies, and their relation to more mainstream organizations and institutions. We also welcome work that contests these categories, tracking how powerful groups create or sustain unruly or deviant forms of knowledge and/or technologies. Projects may be contemporary or historical. Global, transnational, and comparative research is encouraged. Potential topics include but are not limited to: contested knowledges in science, technology, and/or medicine; evasive or alternative technologies; resistance to knowledge-making; creative forms of un-making knowledge and cultivating ignorance; citizen science/lay science; scientist-led movements of dissent maker and DIY communities of scientific and technological practice; open technology; democratic participation and inclusion; activism.

Presider: Daniel Ray Morrison

Discussant: Joanna Kempner

Session Organizers: Janet Vertesi, Daniel Ray Morrison

Presentations:

- "Armchair science and gut feelings: How citizens use epistemological autonomy to keep expertise at arm's lengths" - Lars Thorup Larsen, Luis Antonio-Vila-Henninger
- "Conspiracy-fueled Challenges to Expertise and the State: How Professional Planners Respond to Unruly Publics" - Steve G. Hoffman; Ellen Berrey
- "Pro-Life Professionals: How Anti-Abortion Medical Experts Cultivate Credibility in the United States" - Michael Stambolis-Ruhstorfer
- "Shapeshifters & Starseeds: Curated Evidence Collection, Generous Epistemology, and Disinformation on Conspiracy TikTok" - Alice Marwick, Courtlyn Pippert, Katherine Furl, Elaine Schnabel

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

West Tower, Hyatt Regency Chicago, Floor: Ballroom Level/Gold, New Orleans

The production and application of scientific knowledge and technology have long been shaped by dominant cultural, political, and economic forces. This session explores critical approaches that seek to liberate, decolonize, crip and queer science, knowledge, and technology. By challenging traditional power structures and epistemologies, these perspectives aim to create more inclusive, equitable, and diverse frameworks for understanding and engaging with the world around us. We invite empirical and theoretical papers that examine how marginalized voices, indigenous knowledge systems, disability theories and lived experiences, and queer perspectives can transform scientific and medical practices, technological innovations, and knowledge production.

Potential topics include but are not limited to: decolonial approaches to scientific research and education; the intersections of disability studies and SKAT; queer theory in STEM fields; Indigenous knowledge systems; feminist and intersectional critiques of technology design and implementation; the role of activism in shaping technoscientific agendas; alternative epistemologies and methodologies in knowledge production; challenging heteronormative, ableist, and cisnormative assumptions in science, technology, or medicine; the impact of colonialism on global scientific discourse; and strategies for creating more inclusive and diverse scientific communities.

Presiders: Kate Elizabeth Burrows, Martine Lappe

Session Organizer: Janet Vertesi

Presenters:

- "The Co-Becoming of a Native Cancer Clinic: Traditional Native Healing, Integrative Oncology, and Tribal Governance" - Ruby Ben
- "Inclusive Innovation in Global Science" - Larry Au
- "Into Women's Hands: A Decolonial Approach to Misoprostol Research in West Africa" - Siri Suh
- "Producing Populations: The Theoretical Potential of Queer Demography" - Avens Peters
- Evidence-based knowledge from the 'periphery of the periphery'" - Verdiana Domingos Cordeiro, Pedro Moisés

2025 SKAT Section Awards

Congratulations to all of our 2025 SKAT Section Award recipients! Thank you also to our nominators and to the award committee members for reviewing the many submissions this year. Below are the citations that were given by award committee chairs at our business meeting.

Hacker-Mullins Student Paper Prize

Winner: Xiaogao Zhou. 2025. "Care in Transition: Global Norms, Transnational Adaptation, and Family-Centered Gender-Affirming Care in China". *Social Science & Medicine* 334: 116658.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.116658>

Committee: Alexandra Vinson (chair), Carolina Mayes, Torin Monahan, Chuncheng Liu, and Rick Welsh

"We had many outstanding submissions this year and the committee enjoyed our "sneak peek" into the work of our graduate student and postdoctoral scholar colleagues—trust us when we say that the future of the field is bright.

On behalf of the committee, Alexandra Vinson was excited to present this year's Hacker-Mullins Student Paper Prize to Xiaogao Zhou for their article, "Care in Transition: Global Norms, Transnational Adaptation, and Family-Centered Gender-Affirming Care in China," published in *Social Science and Medicine*.

In this paper, Zhou takes up the case of gender-affirming care in China to explore how new global norms and clinical guidelines for gender-affirming care are incorporated into family-centered care practices in China. Drawing on observations of clinical encounters, professional conferences, and interviews with 30 healthcare providers, Zhou finds that access to transition care is dependent on providers' assessment of a person's ability to live a 'normal' life after transition, which is dependent to an extent on the openness of the person's family to the gender transition process. Zhou also shows how clinicians use psychological support and education about gender transition to help family members become supportive of their loved one's gender transition.

This important paper contributes to the emerging SKAT focus on trans medicine and medical knowledge production, and addresses an important tension in the relationship between global norms of medical expertise and local care provision. When reading this paper, I can guarantee that you will feel drawn in by Zhou's very good storytelling, as well."



Star-Nelkin Paper Prize

Committee: Michael Stambolis-Ruhstorfer (Chair), Taylor Cruz, Liora Goldensher, Zach Griffen, and Chris Hanssman



"We received 47 nominations (published in or since 2023), which is likely a record number, making it very difficult to choose. Together they provided a snapshot of the truly interesting, diverse, and strong work in our field. Given the quantity and high quality of the papers, we decided to recognize an honorable mention award two co-winners."

Co-Winner: Daniel Navon. 2024. "Re-Iterated Fact-Making: Explaining Transformation and Continuity in Scientific Facts". *American Sociological Review* 89(5): 849-875.

"Mobilizing comparative historical methods, a key strength that made the paper especially noteworthy to the committee, this article provides a novel and useful framework for explaining how scientific facts emerge, gain traction, and then change (or not) over time. Understanding scientific facts is one of the core endeavors of STS and yet before this paper, we lacked a unified, coherent, elegant, and portable way to analyze how they emerge and change.

This paper proposes just such a theorization, called reiterated fact-making, and the committee members were unanimous in their view that Navon's contribution will provide many of us who study scientific facts with a new way to look at them. And it will certainly start a lot of conversations. To demonstrate the utility of reiterated fact-making, he traces the divergent histories of three genetic variants, specifically their emergence, meaning, and use as scientific facts in diagnosing neurodevelopmental conditions. The historical details are compelling and reading the paper you will get a very clear sense of how precisely reiterated fact making allows Navon to account for the material and cultural conditions that make a scientific fact possible, reveal how people and groups coalesce around and against it, and how path dependencies and other dynamics shape its trajectory. A truly compelling work. Congrats!"

Co-Winner: Nicole Foti. 2025. "Beyond biomedical institutions: An ethnographic study of community science and the rise of alternative therapeutic imaginaries". *Social Science & Medicine* 367: 117377.

"In this moment of extreme inequality in the United States driven in large part by the capture of healthcare by capital, the withdrawal of the state from systems of care, and their consequent impact on communities across the country, attention to the way people organize collectively to overcome hurdles in accessing essential healthcare materials is more important than ever. In other words, "alternative therapeutic imaginaries" as Foti coins it, offer a way for people to envision a system in which citizen-scientists and DIYers can provide essential healthcare resources for themselves and those in need.

Foti's fascinating paper provides us with a rich ethnographic account of one community's attempt, through a practice of direct action, to develop a way to produce good-quality insulin outside the costly and often for-profit systems of medical and pharmaceutical institutions in the United States. She meticulously tells the story of Open Insulin. She explains how despite their stated goal and attempt at inclusion, the need for highly trained experts to navigate not only the technical aspects of insulin production, but also the legal and bureaucratic labyrinth of the US regulatory environment, forces Open Insulin's decision-makers to operate in ways that can go against its vision of community-produced and owned medicine.

Through the story of Open Insulin, Foti's paper makes an outstanding contribution to theoretical questions about knowledge infrastructures, citizen science, distrust in experts, and the risks of technolibertarian logics that emerge in the face of unmet healthcare needs. Many congrats on this fantastic paper."

Honorable Mention: Janet A. Vertesi and danah boyd. 2023. "The Resource Bind: System Failure and Legitimacy Threats in Sociotechnical Organizations." *Sociologica* 17 (3): 3.

"Drawing on rich data from their respective research at NASA and the Census Bureau, they show how sociotechnical organizations can face legitimacy crises that do not stem from technical failures but rather from political or managerial decisions that put these organizations into what they call a resource-bind wherein the resources of time and money are constrained in such a way that the organizations cannot fulfill their missions and as a result their legitimacy suffers. Their article is required reading in the age of DOGE."

Wells-Duster Junior Scholar Award

Winners: Shannon Malone Gonzalez and Yasmiyn Irizarry. "Investigating Invisible Encounters: Mapping the Margins of Police Violence against black women".

Committee: Melanie Jeske (Chair), Ni'Shele Jackson, Emily Vasquez, Mary Shi, Jennifer Carrera, Nicolas Wilson, and Grace Poudrier



"This paper examines the invisibility of data on police violence against Black women. The starting point for this work was the lack of data collected by the government on police violence outside of fatalities, specifically the lack of data on gender-based and sexual violence experiences by black women in encounters with police.

The committee was taken with this paper not only because of its in-depth analysis of this problem, and the authors' characterization of the politics of this invisibility, but because they also do something about it.

This paper stood out to the committee for its creative use of mixed methods. The authors conducted a study in-depth interviews and a local survey which were used to develop measures for a nationally representative survey.

Finally, this paper was particularly action oriented: uses the conceptual and theoretical insights of SKAT to inform study design and intervention."

Emancipatory Practice Award

Winner: Jennifer James

Committee: Melanie Jeske (Chair), Ni'Shele Jackson, Emily Vasquez, Mary Shi, Jennifer Carrera, Nicolas Wilson, and Grace Poudrier



"Jennifer James was nominated for her research and community-based work focused on incarceration and health, and the intersection of racism and structural violence in medicine and science. While Dr. James' was recognized for her wide-ranging work in these areas, specifically her nominators' recognized her emancipatory research and advocacy on forced sterilizations in California state prisons, and her engagement with the California Coalition for Women Prisoners (CCWP) over the last 6 years.

Professor James' research is exemplary of what community-based and *community-driven* research can look like. Her nominators focused not only on her research with CCWP, but also the grassroots organizing and translational work that she has done in order to share the experiences of her collaborators and people who have been incarcerated with academics, policy leaders, and the public.

Additionally, Dr. James worked in partnership with survivors of forced sterilization and a coalition of advocates to develop a memorial quilt about reproductive oppression and state violence. She raised funds to design and create an exhibition featuring the memorial quilts. The debut of this exhibit was in February 2025 and brought

together healthcare providers and the public to learn about the ongoing gender-based violence in prisons and jails. Moreover, she is a regular writer for *The Fire*, the longest published newsletter by and for, and about people in women's prisons in the US. She is currently finishing a Know Your Reproductive Rights in Prison booklet to be shared with incarcerated people in California. Professor James commitment to emancipatory practice is evident. As her collaborators from CCWP put it, 'Jen has consistently focused on making sure that her research is done in the service of advancing advocacy, impacting policy, and reaching those who need it most.' Congratulations to Jennifer James."

Honorable Mention: Policing in Chicago Research Group (PCRG), based at University of Illinois Chicago.

"The PCRG is lead by Led by faculty member Andy Clarno, this honorable mention recognizes the work of 6 students: Enrique Alvear Moreno, Janaé Bonsu-Love, Lydia Dana, Michael De Ando Muñoz, Ilā Ravichandran and Haly Volpintesta. It is a creative course-based research collective. That has worked in partnership with The Black Youth Project 100, Organized Communities Against Deportations, the Arab American Action Network, and Circles & Ciphers, to embark on a series of research projects to support organizing campaigns against high-tech surveillance, gang databases, predictive policing, and data sharing practices. PCRG provides research support for grassroots campaigns against policing, prioritizing research on behalf of the partners, and also shared their findings in scholarly communities, including the publication of their book, *Imperial Policing: Weaponized Data in Carceral Chicago*."

Merton Book Award

Winner: Catherine Tan. 2024. *Spaces on the Spectrum, How Autism Movements Resist Experts and Create Knowledge.* Columbia University Press,

Committee: Joan Robinson (Chair), Yawen Lei, Sarah Brothers, and Torsten Voight

"With wit, empathy, and deep engagement, Tan makes sometimes baffling decisions and worldviews seem reasonable. This beautifully written book provides deft insights into social movements and how people understand and navigate the world. Drawing on rich ethnographic research, Tan's book compellingly explores how communities contest dominant scientific and medical authority by producing alternative forms of knowledge that shape collective identities and practices. *Spaces on the Spectrum* by Catherine Tan is an exceptionally vivid ethnography that immerses the reader in two autism-focused movements—each pushing back against dominant scientific and medical authority. Based on more than three years of deeply engaged fieldwork, Tan's rich storytelling captures not just the ideas but the lived realities of those challenging conventional expertise, offering an intimate, nuanced portrait of how alternative frameworks for understanding autism take shape and endure."



Honorable Mention: Elizabeth Chiarello. 2024. *Policing Patients: Treatment and Surveillance on the Frontlines of the Opioid Crisis.* Princeton University Press.

"Chiarello offers a brutal and powerful analysis of how medical issues become increasingly criminalized and penalized both as a consequence and cause of the overdose crisis—transforming patients into criminals, health seekers into suspects, and pharmacists and physicians into arms of law enforcement rather than caregivers. In this meticulously researched and beautifully written work, she examines how new surveillance tools are turning healthcare punitive. Chiarello's *Policing Patients* brilliantly unpacks the contradictions faced by healthcare providers during the opioid crisis, as they navigate the tension between medical care and legal compliance. *Policing Patients* by Liz Chiarello is a gripping and meticulously researched account of how surveillance technologies have transformed the everyday practice of medicine, compelling providers to act as enforcers in the opioid crisis. Chiarello vividly captures the human and institutional tensions at the intersection of care and control, an analysis I deeply appreciate as a scholar of medical sociology and social control."

SKAT Reception



SKAT Reception attendees

The annual SKAT reception at ASA 2025 was held on **Monday, August 11** from **7 to 9 pm** at the **Emerald Loop Bar and Grill** (216 N Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60601). We would like to extend a special thanks to our Events Committee, Santiago Molina and Natalie Aviles, who helped secure the venue and plan this event!

50th Anniversary of STS at Vassar College



The STS program at Vassar College celebrated its 50th anniversary. To mark the occasion, we organized a conference on "Science and the Culture Wars," April 3-5, 2025 held at the Vassar Institute for the Liberal Arts.

Naomi Oreskes gave the keynote address, the Pauline Newman '47 Distinguished Lecture, "From Anti-Government to Anti-Science and Back Again".

Additionally, around 25 academics from different disciplines including STS, sociology, history, law and cultural studies joined for panels and discussions on a number of topics including "Politics of Medical and Public Health Controversies", "Science and Religion in Culture and the Courts", "Making Scientific Identities and Boundaries", "Critical Discourses in Medicine", and more.

The conference also featured a Vassar STS alumni panel, several faculty teach-ins on "AI, Algorithms, and Justice", "Reproductive Technologies and women's Health", and "Climate Change and the Anthropocene", as well as a documentary film screening of *Plan C* with a Q&A with Director Tracy Droz Tragos.



(Photos courtesy of Catherine Tan)

Inaugural Issue of *Theory and Social Inquiry*

Congratulations to the editors, reviewers, and authors of *Theory and Social Inquiry* for launching and publishing their inaugural issue.

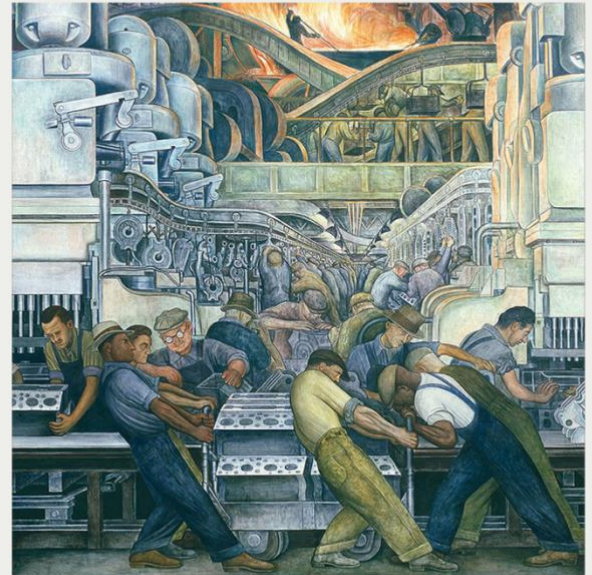
Access the issue here:

<https://www.theoryandsocialinquiry.org/issues/>

Content:

- "Editors' Introduction" - Greta R. Krippner and Monica Prasad
- "Enter Gouldner: The New Class Project in the Trumpian Vortex" - Jeff Manza
- "A Blizzard of Paperwork: IRBs and the Hazards of Decentered Accountability in American Regulation" - Sarah Louise Babb
- "Why is Coal Still Mined? Insights from Asbestos and the Structures of Risk Invisibilization" - Gabriel V. Lévesque
- "Gender Identity: The Career of a Category" - Rogers Brubaker

About TSI: "Theory and Social Inquiry is dedicated to analyzing all facets and dimensions of social life, from micro-level interactions between individuals to the durable institutions that organize societies at a macro level. Our modal article asks big questions, theorizes boldly, and draws on thorough empirical research to arrive at knowledge that often challenges conventional wisdom. We endorse the principle that a critical analysis of existing social structures and social processes is not divorced from – but an important source of – scientific discovery. The journal values rigorous humanistic inquiry as well as historical perspectives on continuity and change. We are open to the full range of social scientific methods, including scholarship that draws on new and innovative approaches under the rubric of problem-solving sociology and engaged research. Theory-inspired, theory-driven, and theory-relevant social science takes many forms. Theory and Social Inquiry is interested in all these modes."



OH Open Library
of Humanities

Meet Our SKAT Student Members



Jeba Humayra
Ph.D. Student,
George Mason
University

I am a PhD student in Sociology at George Mason University, specializing in Political Sociology with a concentration in Globalization. I hold both a bachelor's and a master's degree in International Relations from the University of Chittagong in Bangladesh. During my master's program, I interned and later worked full-time with various international NGOs focused on social justice and human rights advocacy. I also served as a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for the child protection project in the Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

My current research explores the intersection of technology, politics, and human rights in the Global South, particularly in post-authoritarian Bangladesh. I'm especially interested in how cyber laws, digital infrastructure, and artificial intelligence are reshaping state power, civic resistance, and global internet governance. I also study broader trends such as internet shutdowns and digital authoritarianism.

At GMU, I am also a graduate research assistant with the Movement Engaged Research Hub housed within the Center for Social Science Research (CSSR). Outside of research, I love indulging in desserts paired with a strong cup of coffee.

If you see me at ASA, ask me where to find the best dessert in NoVA



Ann Jiang
Ph.D. Student,
UC San Diego

Hi! My name is Ann Jiang. I am a Sociology PhD Student at UC San Diego. I study the intersection of culture, network, political sociology, and global sociology. Leveraging cases across domains, I am drawn to emerging, contested, and boundary-forming social relations. At the core of my research is a question: *How do relational contexts shape our understanding of social difference? When, and Why?* We often define social differences by drawing boundaries—between “us” and “them”—and attaching meanings to each. Sometimes, in conflicting ways. These boundaries can exacerbate or mitigate inequality. To unpack this, I connect external processes (group formation, networks, politics, markets) with internal ones (perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions). This lens helps me analyze how people conceptualize, contend with, and contest boundaries around those categories of social differences (related to, e.g., immigration status, nationality, and race). For example, I have examined boundaries through sexualities by linking network embeddedness to one's meaning-making strategies. My doctoral project focuses on the evolving social relations within immigration debates in the United States. It investigates a puzzle: why do some immigrants align with anti-immigration ideologies in a far-right era? By shifting the focus from immigrant-native dynamics to intra-immigrant interactions, I show how networks shape political attitudes and how exclusion operates within seemingly unified categories. Methodologically, I have developed projects using found surveys, computational text analysis, and interviews. My enthusiasm for sociological research methodology drives me to become a multi-methods researcher. Website: www.annjiang.org

If you see me at ASA, ask me about a Chicago food map. I lived in Chicago from 2022-2024!

Kurt W. Kuehne

Post-Doc,
NYU Abu Dhabi



Kurt W. Kuehne is a Sociologist and Postdoctoral Associate at New York University Abu Dhabi. With Anju Mary Paul and Bedoor AlShebli, he is studying the migrations of non-native scientists to emergent research hubs in the Middle East and East Asia. We explore how the global research landscape is shifting, and what this means for talent migration, geopolitical research competition, knowledge economies, and the development of science itself. Kurt's book project, based on an award-winning dissertation, examines politics and policy around the temporary/cyclical labor migrants who build and maintain the world's rising global cities. The project builds upon 18+ months of ethnographic fieldwork on South Asian construction workers and Southeast Asian domestic workers and has been supported by the US Departments of Education and State, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, SSRC, American Institute of Bangladesh Studies, and various research centers. A third major pipeline of research is currently engaging the employers of domestic workers to learn about their hiring motivations, managerial decision-making, and experiences employing outsiders in their own private home. Kurt has won several teaching awards and serves on the non-profit board of Princeton in Asia. He holds a PhD (Sociology) and MA (Southeast Asian Studies) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and an AB (Politics) from Princeton University.

If you see me at ASA, ask me about my lab scientist parents' many mind-boggling stories working with the world's deadliest pathogens (e.g., they're characters in Outbreak and The Hot Zone). Fun science stories for all of us SKATERinos!

Jorge Ochoa

Ph.D. Candidate,
Northwestern
University



Jorge Ochoa is a PhD candidate in the Dept. of Sociology at Northwestern University. His research examines science and technology, sexuality, and health, from the vantages of cultural and political sociology. In the first years of graduate study, Jorge completed a qualitative project about queer subcultural responses to health crises. Specifically, he studied how Chicago's kink scene confronted COVID-19 and Mpox by creatively reimagining safer sex, transforming sites of pleasure into sites of health mobilization, and more—often in ways that reactivated and reworked earlier strategies of community response to HIV/AIDS. Jorge's latest research examines contemporary U.S. disputes over the integrity of science and government in which various factions—from anti-vaccination activists to "Stand up for Science" demonstrators—make competing claims about how truth and democracy are being subverted, ultimately in a tug-of-war over the epistemic and normative foundations of our sociopolitical order. He previously worked in public health, bioethics, and science and technology policy roles at multiple government agencies including the New York City Department of Health, the National Institutes of Health, and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. Jorge received his B.A. from Columbia University in Neuroscience and Behavior from the Dept. of Biological Sciences and the Dept. of Psychology, with a second major from the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race.

If you see me at ASA, ask me about... my favorite sci-fi series (hint: it started as a super-hero comic book and is premised upon genetic mutation).



Garrett Ruley
Ph.D. Student,
Princeton University

My research interests include equity and belonging in math and science education, science and technology policy, and the liberatory potential of the STEM disciplines. I am particularly interested in exploring how political and economic power influence, benefit from, and/or are challenged by science and the narratives around it.

As research and academic infrastructure are attacked and dismantled under the current federal government, I am studying historical analogues to understand how researchers can best safeguard their communities, address public distrust of research and expertise, and rebuild scientific infrastructure to be more inclusive and resilient.

If you see me at ASA, ask me about dancing Argentine Tango.



Bijoyetri Samaddar
Ph.D. Student,
University of Wisconsin-
Madison

My academic interests are rooted in understanding how sociological phenomena, particularly social inequality and collective behavior, are shaped by the dynamic interplay of meaning, institutions, and emergent social structures. I am fascinated by the concept of "construct drift" or "fractured equilibrium," where the semantic meaning of core social constructs, such as "trust," "fairness," "empowerment," or even "accuracy", becomes unstable and context-dependent across diverse cultural, historical, and technological landscapes. My research explores how this interpretive instability can lead to a "fractured Nash equilibrium," where behavioral patterns persist not due to aligned incentives but because the conceptual scaffolding that makes action intelligible has splintered into divergent meaning systems.

Drawing on my experience with large-scale randomized controlled trials in India, I investigate how shifts in meaning undermine the validity of causal claims and policy interventions. I employ a mixed-methods approach, combining ethnographic insights from street-level bureaucracy, advanced quantitative methods like Multidimensional Item Response Theory (MIRT) to detect latent divergences in construct interpretation, and game-theoretic modeling to analyze the implications of these meaning shifts for strategic interactions and social outcomes. Ultimately, I bridge psychometric precision with sociological depth, ensuring that causal inferences are not only statistically robust but also semantically coherent and ethically grounded in the diverse social worlds we seek to understand.

If you see me at ASA, ask me about the most unexpected way a "lost in translation" moment led to a new research idea in rural India!



Carlo Sariego

Ph.D. Candidate,
Yale University

Carlo is a PhD candidate at Yale University in the joint program in Sociology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. They are an interdisciplinary sociologist whose research and teaching span gender and sexuality studies, transgender studies, medical sociology, feminist science and technology studies, and the racialized histories of medicine. They use qualitative, feminist, and queer methods to analyze how racialized and gendered social, cultural, and historical processes shape the politics of reproduction and family in the United States.

Their dissertation, *Transsexualizing Reproduction*, draws on legal cases, historical analysis, and interviews with transgender people to examine how trans reproduction and gender-affirming care are governed, imagined, and desired. Working at the intersection of sociological theory and speculative inquiry, Carlo explores how reproductive systems are navigated by those often excluded from their design.

Their work appears in *Feminist Theory*, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *Population Studies*, and the edited volume *Seminal: On Sperm, Health, and Politics* (NYU Press, 2025). They received their MPhil with distinction from the University of Cambridge as part of the Reproductive Sociology Research Group (ReproSoc), where they studied under Professor Sarah Franklin, and earned their BA from Sarah Lawrence College in 2017.

If you see me at ASA, ask me about knitting and fiber art/doll making! I love to knit and like to make creepy little objects



Yanze Yu

Ph.D. Student, Columbia
University

Hi! I'm Yanze Yu, a second-year Ph.D. student in Sociology at Columbia University, and a research fellow at The Trust Collaboratory and the Center on Organizational Innovation (COI). Starting this fall, I am also excited to serve as the student coordinator for the SKAT Workshop in our department. My research lies at the intersection of medicine, SKAT, and political economy. I am particularly interested in the relational making of pharmaceutical artifacts, expertise networks, embodiment, and valuation regimes within the broader process of "medicalization". My current work spans a diverse range of conditions. I am conducting two independent studies: (1) the pharmaceuticalization of tic disorders and ADHD in China, and (2) rare disease classification and orphan drug development in China. I am also involved in two collaborative projects: (1) the co-production of expertise surrounding Long COVID, and (2) the contagious spread of TikTok Tics during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. (More at yanze-yu.notion.site) I am the founder of the China Reading & innovation Lab (CRiL) at Columbia—an initiative that promotes scholarly exchange and facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration, especially in the medical field. We welcome colleagues and new friends to join future events (more at cril.notion.site).

Prior to Columbia, I earned an M.A. in Chinese Studies from the University of Michigan and completed my LL.B. in Sociology at Fudan University. Embracing life as both a New Yorker and a new Shanghaiese, I take pride in my roots in Michigan and Fujian :)

If you see me at ASA, ask me what would you like to do with CRiL~THRiL in NYC! (More at cril.notion.site)



Shira Zilberstein

Ph.D. Candidate, Harvard University

Shira Zilberstein is completing her PhD in sociology at Harvard University where she was also a former Science and Technology Studies Fellow. Her scholarship lies at the intersection of cultural sociology, science and technology studies, and organizational sociology. She uses qualitative methods to examine the moral, organizational, and social dimensions that shape the production of knowledge, science, and technology with particular attention to how knowledge gains authority across institutional boundaries.

Her current research investigates interdisciplinary collaborations in applied AI research and how knowledge is put into practice to define and address social problems. Focusing on researchers and labs developing machine learning models for healthcare, she draws on interviews, ethnography, and extensive document analysis to show how technical experts moralize AI innovation as central to solving societal problems, even amid uncertainty and contested outcomes. She examines how clinical and technical researchers determine which healthcare issues are appropriate for AI intervention, how they navigate organizational demands and resource constraints, and how they construct professional coalitions that frame them

as moral actors advancing responsible technological governance.

Her research contributes to broader debates about morality, legitimacy, organizations, science, and innovation. It explores how research communities grapple with the limits of technological solutions while sustaining enduring commitments to innovation as a mode of social intervention.

If you see me at ASA, ask me about my favorite place to visit in a new community.

Computing, Co-Creation, and the Well-Informed Citizen

By Bresnik Pula, Virginia Tech, bpula@vt.edu

In its landmark [2021 report on AI ethics](#), UNESCO cautions that a “digital and civic literacy deficit” could deepen divides between those who understand and shape computing technologies and those who remain excluded. This concern goes beyond issues of device ownership or software familiarity. It reflects how citizens, policymakers, and companies grapple with systems whose technical complexity makes meaningful engagement daunting. When the public lacks paths to gain relevant knowledge, a small coterie of experts and large corporate players end up directing the design, use, and regulation of emerging technologies—sometimes with little public scrutiny.

Many assume that the highly specialized nature of coding, data analytics, and AI development places these matters squarely into the realm of professional expertise. Yet [Alfred Schutz’s classic essay “The Well-Informed Citizen”](#) underscores a crucial point: knowledge in any society is socially distributed, and these distributions can perpetuate inequities in who ultimately participates in significant decisions. If entire communities are deemed too uninformed to weigh in, then laws, ethical guidelines, and technological priorities may reflect only a narrow slice of society’s interests.

Historically, computing’s evolution defies the notion that development and governance must remain the sole domain of experts. In the mid-20th century, military and corporate labs funded much early research, keeping most technology under institutional control. By the 1970s, however, the spread of micro- and personal

computers (PCs) signaled a turning point.

Instead of remaining hidden in government bureaus or university labs, computers began arriving in the (literal) workbenches of ordinary people—machines did not come pre-assembled but had to be creatively built out of component parts. Crucially, this shift did not happen by default: hobbyist communities such as the [People’s Computer Company](#) and similar groups fueled a grassroots movement to bring computing into everyday life. Their efforts laid the groundwork for the modular designs that allowed for open architectures and the open-source movement of our time.

Dismissing hobbyists of the past as mere enthusiasts overlooks their role as co-creators and informed citizens. Community-run user groups asked how computers might reshape culture, enhance communication, or threaten personal privacy, and this in turn informed their ways of thinking about circuitry and code. Such groups became sites of collaboration and debate, blending technical exploration with broader questions about technology’s purpose in society. Many became inspired by the work of [social critic Ivan Illich](#) who argued that technologies must become tools of conviviality rather than exploitation and control. With their hands-on knowledge, hobbyists bridged a gap between credentialed technologists working in labs and uninitiated laypersons for whom computers were entirely foreign; they actively questioned whether powerful institutions should solely determine technology’s fate.



Drawing from the first issue of the Menlo Park-based group People’s Computer Company Newsletter (October 1972).

Today, the AI revolution mirrors many of these historical dynamics. AI underpins everything from social media algorithms to automated hiring systems, but public understanding of its inner workings and broader implications remains uneven. As UNESCO warns, steep knowledge gaps risk leaving the people most affected by them on the sidelines, while corporations and governments forge ahead with powerful digital tools. Much like the hobbyists decades ago, critics note that AI can perpetuate biases, erode privacy, and transform economies in ways that benefit some groups over others. Governance thus demands more voices in the conversation—an expansion of Schutz’s ideal of the well-informed citizen.

The hobbyist legacy offers a template: grassroots knowledge-sharing can demystify computing and nurture a more publicly accessible critical discourse. In practical terms, this might include freely accessible AI tutorials, community-based workshops, and linking open-source collaborations with broader social movements seeking to limit the concentration of computational power. Although AI’s technical underpinnings appear daunting, the principle of collective engagement remains the same as in the early PC era—citizens who are encouraged to learn, experiment, and exchange ideas are often those most poised to question and improve new technologies.

Emerging solutions hinge on viewing knowledge not solely as an expert prerogative but as a shared resource. By recalling the hobbyists’ successes, we see that co-creation need not demand advanced credentials if communities can access transparent explanations of crucial design and partake in the making of policy choices. Fostering this ecosystem of informed citizens may help counter the current concentration of technological power in elite hands, ensuring that discussions of ethics, regulation, access, and rights take place in public arenas, not just behind closed corporate or government doors.

In the end, computing’s trajectory was never preordained. Far from being an irreversible path shaped by high-level experts and corporate



Joe Bernard putting together a personal computer at New York City’s “The Computer Mart” (undated). Source: Stan Veit’s History of the Personal Computer.

interests, it emerged through active engagements between diverse groups and competing visions. Today, by recognizing the public as a legitimate stakeholder—and by recalling Alfred Schutz’s emphasis on social distributions of knowledge—our task is to encourage broader participation in shaping technologies that increasingly influence every sphere of life.

Besnik Pula is Associate Professor and Director of International Studies at the Department of Political Science at Virginia Tech. His most recent book is *Alfred Schutz, Phenomenology, and the Renewal of Interpretive Social Science* (Routledge, 2024). He is currently working on a book project on computing and technology governance during and after the Cold War that builds on Schutz’s sociology of knowledge.

Recent Publications from Section Members



A group of smiling doctors. (DMValid on pxhere)

New Articles

Barbara Allen, Barbara Prainsack, and Lucy Suchman. 2025. "Re-Engaging Technoscience in and beyond Science and Technology Studies". *Technoscienza: Italian Journal of Science & Technology Studies* 16(1): 87-107. <https://tecnoscienza.unibo.it/article/view/22435>

Rene Almeling and Zahra Abba Omar. 2025. "Will Sex and Reproduction Remain Separable in Twenty-First-Century America? It's a Matter of Life and Death". *Sex and Sexualities* 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/3033371251329928>

Robert Dingwall and Carine Vassy. 2025. "Ethics regulation and sociology in France". *Research Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17470161251337511>

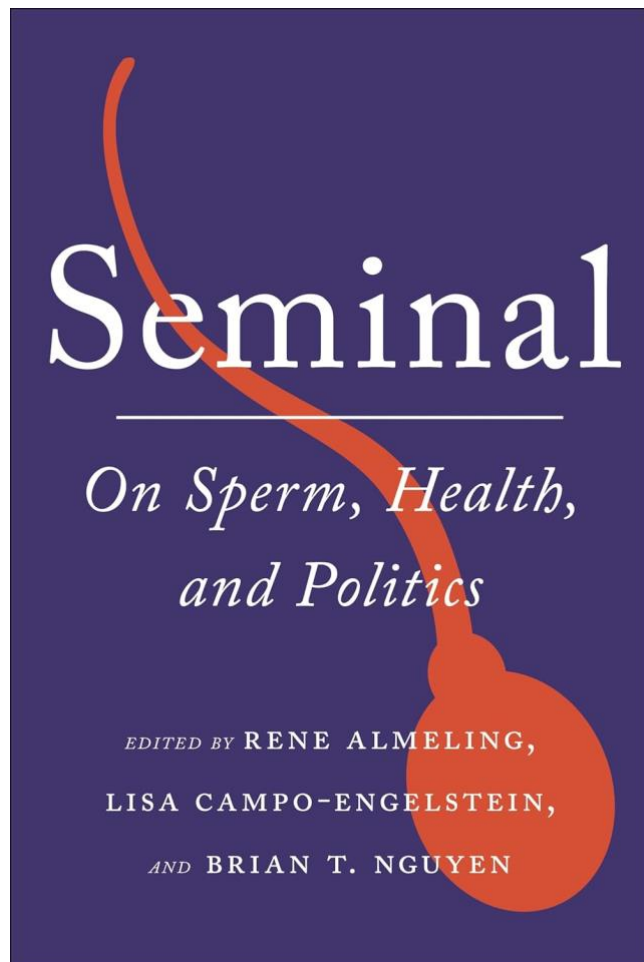
Rebecca A. Johnson and Simone Zhang. 2025. "Predictive Algorithms and Perceptions of Fairness: Parent Attitudes Toward Algorithmic Resource Allocation in K-12 Education". *Sociological Science* 12: 322-356. <https://sociologicalscience.com/articles-v12-15-322/>

Victoria Reyes. 2025. "my body". *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research* 14(2):37- 44. <https://doi.org/10.1525/dcqr.2025.14.2.37>

Jonathan D. Shaffer, Predrag Stojicic, Danny McCormick, Alanna Kate Cruz, Zobayer Ahmmad, Gaurab Basu, 2025. "Training clinicians to be organizers: Expanding professional identities through a year-long Climate Health Organizing Fellowship". *Social Science & Medicine* 381: 118278. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118278>

New Books

Rene Almeling, Lisa Campo-Engelstein, and Brian T. Nguyen (editors). 2025. *Seminal: On Sperm, Health, and Politics*. NYU Press. <https://nyupress.org/9781479834068/seminal/>



"In *Seminal*, experts from across the social sciences, humanities, law, and medicine offer a kaleidoscopic view of the relationship between sperm, health, and the intersecting politics of gender, race, and reproduction. Always insightful and often provocative, the essays in this unprecedented collection cover a broad range of issues related to male reproductive and sexual health—including the latest technological developments for creating sperm; the specter of eugenics in contemporary medical markets; emerging approaches to male contraceptive methods, male infertility, and trans healthcare; controversies surrounding sperm donors and sperm banking; disparities in sexual health education for teens—all the while attending to the enormous variation in how individuals and societies understand, embody, and experience sperm.

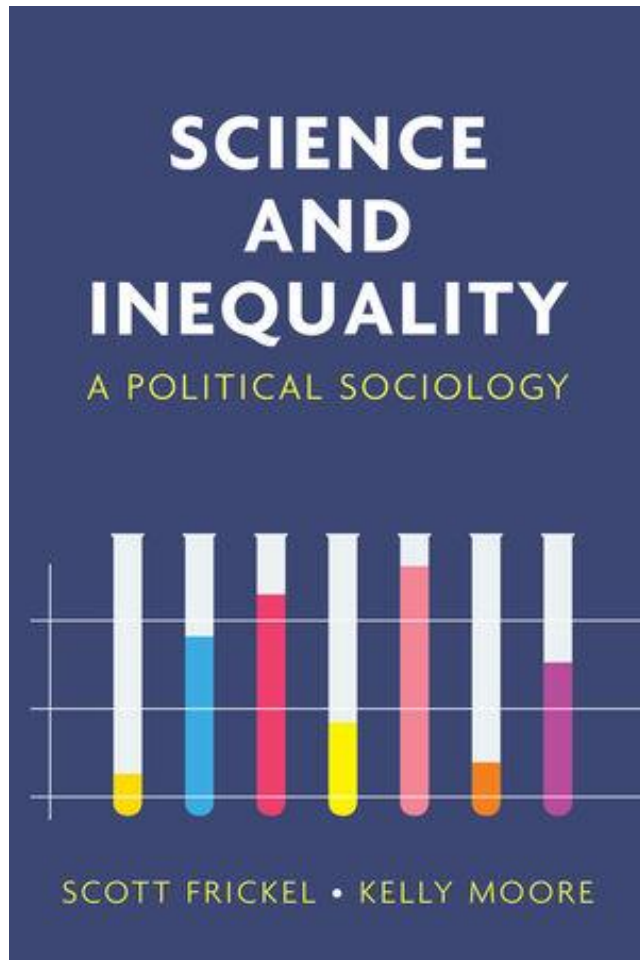
At a time when the most basic rights of reproductive autonomy are under severe threat, contributors to this volume argue this is precisely the moment to rethink and reimagine sperm from a variety of medical, political, and cultural perspectives. Ultimately, this volume aims to contribute to a more reproductively just society and broaden conversations around bodies, health and equity in the United States."

Rene Almeling is Professor of Sociology at Yale University. She is the award-winning author of *GYNecology: The Missing Science of Men's Reproductive Health* and *Sex Cells: The Medical Market for Eggs and Sperm*.

Lisa Campo-Engelstein is Professor and Chair of Bioethics & Health Humanities at the University of Texas Medical Branch.

Brian T. Nguyen is Associate Professor of Clinical Obstetrics & Gynecology at the University of Southern California, where he is also Program Director for the Fellowship in Complex Family Planning.

Scott Frickel and Kelly Moore. 2025. *Science and Inequality: A Political Sociology*. Polity.
https://www.politybooks.com/bookdetail?book_slug=science-and-inequality-a-political-sociology--9781509514793



"Science and technology produce a wide range of benefits in society but they also create harm, both of which are unequally distributed across social groups and geographic regions. This incisive book provides a set of analytical tools to understand how inequality relating to science and technology is produced, and how the field can be reorganized to make good on its promise to improve life for all.

Using a range of evidence and examples, Frickel and Moore show that science and technology are closely bound up with social inequalities, including linked problems of poor health, environmental degradation, racism, and sexism. They use the frame of "scientific inequality formations" to investigate the technoscientific sources of unequal power relations in society, examining issues such as the underdevelopment of non-profitable technologies, how laws and markets direct scientific advances, and the exclusion of certain social groups from the creation of knowledge and solutions relevant to their lives. This timely book illuminates interventions that redirect science and technology toward more equitable ends with the potential to be more widely distributed, charting a path to a more just future."

Scott Frickel is Professor of Sociology and Environment & Society at Brown University.

Kelly Moore is Associate Professor of Sociology at Loyola University Chicago.

Emily M. Bender and **Alex Hanna**. 2025. *The AI Con: How to Fight Big Tech's Hype and Create the Future We Want*. Harper. <https://thecon.ai/>



"Is artificial intelligence going to take over the world? Have big tech scientists created an artificial lifeform that can think on its own? Is it going to put authors, artists, and others out of business? Are we about to enter an age where computers are better than humans at everything?"

The answer to these questions, linguist Emily M. Bender and sociologist Alex Hanna make clear, are "no," "they wish," "LOL," and "definitely not." This kind of thinking is a symptom of a phenomenon known as "AI hype". Hype looks and smells fishy: It twists words and helps the rich get richer by justifying data theft, motivating surveillance capitalism, and devaluing human creativity in order to replace meaningful work with jobs that treat people like machines. In *The AI Con*, Bender and Hanna offer a sharp, witty, and wide-ranging take-down of AI hype across its many forms.

Bender and Hanna show you how to spot AI hype, how to deconstruct it, and how to expose the power grabs it aims to hide. Armed with these tools, you will be prepared to push back against AI hype at work, as a consumer in the marketplace, as a skeptical newsreader, and as a citizen holding policymakers to account. Together, Bender and Hanna expose AI hype for what it is: a mask for Big Tech's drive for profit, with little concern for who it affects."

Dr. Emily M. Bender is a Professor of Linguistics at the University of Washington where she is also the Faculty Director of the Computational Linguistics Master of Science program and affiliate faculty in the School of Computer Science and Engineering and the Information School. In 2023, she was included in the inaugural Time 100 list of the most influential people in AI. She is frequently consulted by policymakers, from municipal officials to the federal government to the United Nations, for insight into how to understand so-called AI technologies.

Dr. Alex Hanna is Director of Research at the Distributed AI Research Institute (DAIR) and a Lecturer in the School of Information at the University of California Berkeley. She is an outspoken critic of the tech industry, a proponent of community-based uses of technology, and a highly sought-after speaker and expert who has been featured across the media, including articles in the Washington Post, Financial Times, The Atlantic, and Time.

Bresnik Pula. 2025. *Alfred Schutz, Phenomenology, and the Renewal of Interpretive Social Science*. Routledge. <https://www.routledge.com/Alfred-Schutz-Phenomenology-and-the-Renewal-of-Interpretive-Social-Science/Pula/p/book/9781032609164>



ALFRED SCHUTZ, PHENOMENOLOGY, AND THE RENEWAL OF INTERPRETIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE

Besnik Pula



This book will appeal to readers with interests in social theory, phenomenology, and the methods of interpretive social science, including historical sociology, cultural sociology, science and technology studies, political economy, and international relations."

Besnik Pula is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Virginia Tech, USA, where he also serves as Director of the International Studies Program. He is the author of *Globalization Under and After Socialism: The Evolution of Transnational Capital in Central and Eastern Europe*.

"In recent decades, the historical social sciences have moved away from deterministic perspectives and increasingly embraced the interpretive analysis of historical process and social and political change. This shift has enriched the field but also led to a deadlock regarding the meaning and status of subjective knowledge. Cultural interpretivists struggle to incorporate subjective experience and the body into their understanding of social reality. In the early twentieth century, philosopher Alfred Schutz grappled with this very issue.

Drawing on Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and Max Weber's historical sociology, Schutz pioneered the interpretive analysis of social life from an embodied perspective. However, the recent interpretivist turn, influenced by linguistic philosophies, discourse theory, and poststructuralism, has overlooked the insights of Schutz and other phenomenologists.

This book revisits Schutz's phenomenology and social theory, positioning them against contemporary problems in social theory and interpretive social science research. The book extends Schutz's key concepts of relevance, symbol relations, theory of language, and lifeworld meaning structures. It outlines Schutz's critical approach to the social distribution of knowledge and develops his nascent sociology and political economy of knowledge.