SKATOLOGY

Spring 2026 Issue

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

INSIDE

Chair's Report

I study health crises and pandemics. I study crises because they expose social inequalities and states' uneven investment in people, and because they invite contestations over norms and taken-for-granted knowledge practices and claims. The genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza constitutes a health crisis of the most severe kind. The numbers are astounding but difficult to pinpoint, given the lack of local data and health infrastructure and ideological efforts to minimize claims about the devastation. Israel has killed over 75,000 Palestinians in Gaza since October 2023, potentially many times more, and over half of those deaths are women and children. Along with mass killings, tens of thousands of people have been permanently disabled, there is a maternal mortality crisis, hospitals have been obliterated and none are fully operational, and last summer, the UN reported widescale starvation and famine. Despite the ceasefire, people in Gaza today continue to live in constant fear, with lack of sustainable sanitation, water or food, not to mention healthcare or educational resources, and the toll on mental health is unfathomable. And yet, because of the US government's support for Israel, these ongoing horrors have been obscured, denied, and forgotten.

One of the main tenets of science and technology studies is to question what Donna Haraway calls the "god-trick," a purported claim to objectivity, a view from nowhere, an apolitical stance on scientific knowledge production. Often talking about the occupation in Palestine is considered too political – those of us who take a stance are charged with failing to employ the neutral methodologies of our discipline to analyze the situation objectively, which many consider to be a matter of understanding "both sides." And yet, as Haraway reminds us, all of our work is political, not just work that analyzes the apartheid conditions in Palestine. And, I have lived in the West Bank, and the realities of the occupation are brutal. Our efforts to expose atrocities, like those in Gaza or the West Bank, *are* political – necessarily so. So too are efforts to stifle debate in the name of professional neutrality. In my opinion, it is part of my job as a sociologist to critique systems of domination, to expose the everyday workings of ideology, and to question discourses that attempt to silence dissent.

Even when those forces are powerful, even when they emerge from within the leadership of my own professional organization.

The petition for the ASA to adopt an institutional boycott of Israeli universities is part of a broader movement opposing the genocide of the Palestinian people and the institutions that prop it up. Israeli educational institutions are complicit in scholasticide and in the military and surveillance infrastructure used to kill, imprison and torture Palestinians. As I learned when I conducted dissertation research in South Africa, boycott and divestment campaigns are essential to the struggle against apartheid. When the ASA leadership refused to put the petition to boycott Israeli institutions to a vote by the membership, they robbed us of

the right to shape the policies of our own organization and the ability to voice our dissent against Israeli occupation and genocide. And they did so by citing purportedly neutral bureaucratic and financial obligations, rather than moral and political ones.

Therefore, I will be boycotting the ASA meetings and hotels this year because the ASA president and executive director chose not to put the petition, which had been signed by the required 3% of the membership, on the ballot without consulting their own ASA Council. I am boycotting the ASA meetings because I care about the organization and seek to defend democracy within the ASA. But I am also boycotting so that our focus does not stray from the devastation and dehumanization happening in Gaza. The global inequities exposed by the Palestinian crisis must remain front and center in our scholarship and activism to combat the ideological gaslighting enacted by the media and current US governmental apparatus.

This is a complicated decision because I have been a dedicated member of the ASA for 21 years, and I have worked and organized within ASA, as chair of three sections, as council member in three sections, as session organizer and award reviewer and editorial board member of countless ASA sections and journals. And this year, I have worked tirelessly alongside so many SKAT members, to lift up our section and celebrate its diversity and intellectual brilliance by preparing award calls and committees and organizing an amazing preconference and many outstanding sessions for the ASA conference. I am committed to democracy so many of these sessions will continue apace, while others will be convened online, and we will celebrate the SKAT award winners multiple times across the weekend. I will join you at the pre-conference and the reception, where I look forward to continuing the important work of critique.

- Claire Decoteau
  SKAT Chair

Our Section Logo

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2025-2026

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SKAT Committees (2025-2026)

We thank the following members for serving on the section's committees this academic year.

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Pre-Conference Committee: Claire Decoteau (Chair), Larry Au, Emily Vasquez, Zach Griffin, Jorge Ochoa, Natalie Aviles, Mel Jeske, Santiago Molina

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

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

A note from the newsletter team

Thank you for reading this issue of the SKAT Newsletter!

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 jorge.ochoa@northwestern.edu.

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

- Jorge Ochoa, Vasundhara Kaul, Jeba Humayra Prithwi, Jian Meng, and Zahra Abba Omar

Fundraising for SKAT 2026 Pre-Conference

SKAT will be hosting a pre-conference in New York City on Friday, August 6, 2026 entitled, "Science, Knowledge, and Technology Today: Meeting the Moment, Engendering Just Futures." We hope that you will join us! Registration will open soon, and those who submitted abstracts will receive decisions by May 22.

Please consider supporting the pre-conference via a donation if you are able.

You can submit a payment through the ASA portal at this link. If your email is associated with an ASA profile, you will be asked to log into the Member Portal first and then click on the donation link. Please note that you may need to wait a few minutes to receive a receipt. Don't resubmit a payment more than once.

This conference draws attention to the many crises facing global citizens in this current moment. Technological advances and scientific inquiry have contributed to global inequities, but science and technology studies also offers theoretical tools for understanding and challenging the current conjuncture.

In sociology, some of our most enduring macro theories emerge out of moments of transition, which were often prompted or initiated by shifts in science, knowledge and technology. We are currently living through unprecedented shifts in global colonizing forces, governing and immigration regimes, military apparatuses, technologies of surveillance and artificial intelligence, with immense implications for new forms of exclusion and oppression. SKAT scholars are well-positioned to offer new theoretical insights to help explain the contemporary conjuncture, the transitions we are witnessing, and to imagine more just futures.

Plenary speakers include:

- Alondra Nelson, Institute for Advanced Study
- Steven Epstein, Northwestern University
- Janet Shim, University of California, San Francisco
- Scott Frickel, Brown University
- Marion Fourcade, University of California, Berkeley
- Siri Suh, Brandeis University
- Santiago Molina, Northwestern University
- Jon Shaffer, University of Vermont

Stay tuned for more information about the pre-conference on our webpage.

2026 SKAT Sessions

Please find information about the SKAT Sessions of the ASA 2026 annual meeting below. Presiders, panelists, and session descriptions as listed in the online program are outlined below. The meeting will be held in New York City from August 7-11.

Changing Science in Precarious Times (Invited Session) – will be held at ASA
Saturday, August 8 from 8:00 to 9:30am

This invited panel explores how science and technology studies (STS) can shed light on the current crisis of scientific norms, leadership, and accepted practices in the United States. While leaders in politics, public health, and biomedical research have been quick to call for a return to "normal" and to save and restore science, we consider the value of nuanced critique and reflection to rethink science-as-usual. We ask panelists to reflect on other times of tension within science and medicine, the value STS brings to analyzing and critiquing the current climate, and advice they may give to practitioners and publics.

Presider: Melanie Jeske, Baylor College of Medicine

Panelists:
Steven Epstein, Northwestern University
Oliver Rollins, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Jill Fisher, UNC Chapel Hill
Shobita Parthasarathy, University of Michigan Ann Arbor
Scott Frickel, Brown University

Session Organizers: Melanie Jeske, Baylor College of Medicine; Claire Decoteau, University of Illinois Chicago

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The Geopolitics of Technology and Innovation (Open Panel) – will be held at ASA
Saturday, August 8 from 10:00 to 11:30am

This is an open session sponsored by the section on Science, Knowledge, and Technology. During the Biden administration, initiatives such as the Green New Deal and CHIPS and Science Act signaled a turn away from market-led regulation of science and technology and the return of industrial policy. The Trump administration's aggressive use of tariffs in the name of restoring American manufacturing, securing access to rare earth minerals, and improving domestic resilience has consolidated this turn away from neoliberal governance. Today, from chip wars and AI to the green transition, it is increasingly common to understand scientific innovation as a strategic domain of international competition and a matter of national security. This session invites papers relating to the geopolitics of technology and innovation and the emerging political economy thereof. Papers of a wide variety of methods and substantive foci are welcome. Topics could include, for example, historical investigations of the entanglements between the military and research funding, analyses of contemporary trends in foreign policy discourse, international struggles over AI initiatives, or the impacts of recent immigration policies on scientific research.

Presider: Rene Almeling, Yale University

Panelists:
Abigail Coplin, Vassar College, "Biopolitical Entanglements: The Political Economy of China's Genetic Data Droves."

Soul Han, Cornell University, "Defense Innovation Reform and Bureaucratic Incumbency: Limits of DARPA Emulation in Korea."
Yanze Yu, Columbia University, "'Give me a Patch and I Will Create a Market': Pharmaceutical Innovation in Neuroscience in China."
Erez Maggor, Ben-Gurion University, "The Return of Industrial Policy and the No-longer Hidden Developmental State of the United States."

Discussant: Ya-Wen Lei, Harvard University

Session Organizer: Mary Shi, University of Michigan

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Decolonial Knowledge(s) (Open Panel) – will be held on Zoom or offsite
Details Forthcoming

Research in the sociology of empire and colonialism, and scholarship in science and technology studies has drawn attention to the relationship between the production of knowledge, processes of colonization, and colonization's enduring impact. This relationship has been proven to be enduring and powerful: from tracing the role of colonial experts in gathering information to guide the extractive and oppressive forces of global empires, to the development and testing of technologies of surveillance on colonized communities for their sale in global markets. In an effort to advance theoretical frameworks for analyzing this relationship, this panel will explore ongoing efforts to interrogate and challenge the colonial legacies that shape contemporary knowledge practices, institutions, and technologies. By situating science and technology in historical and contemporary processes of conquest, extraction, and domination, this panel aims to foster space for critical and creative reimaginings of practices of knowledge production, circulation, and valuation.

We invite papers that examine how coloniality continues to structure what is recognized as scientific or authoritative expertise, and how subjugated knowledge and expertise emerge, persist, or are suppressed. In addition to studies that address the relationship between practices of knowledge production and colonization, we are interested in case studies that highlight resistance and innovation–whether through Afro-diasporic epistemologies, crip, feminist and queer thought, or Indigenous ways of knowing–that challenge institutions of domination and propose new ways of relating to the world.

Potential topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Colonial legacies in classification, measurement, and standardization
- Indigenous knowledge practices and technologies in relation to environmental stewardship or health, data and knowledge acquisition, and scientific governance
- Decolonial critiques of global data regimes, AI, and digital infrastructures
- Medical and/or public health practices that challenge empire

Our goal is to examine what it means to do sociology of science, technology, and knowledge in a world marked by coloniality, and to imagine more just, equitable, and liberatory epistemic futures.

Presider: Santiago Molina, Northwestern University

Panelists:
Kiana Kristine Wilkins, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champagne, "An Indigenous Imagination? Illness and Meaning-Making Among Urban Indians."

Wei Zhou and Riko Kobayashi, University of Chicago, "Beyond the Color Line: Anti-White Japanese Empire and the Making of Minzoku in Manchukuo."
Hector Vera, UNAM, "Colonial Rulers and Unruly Masses: Global Measurement Regimes and Local Forms of Resistance."
Aryn Martin, York University, "Making Faces: Decolonizing 'Mongolian Idiocy'"
Kyanna Richard, University of California Irvine, "The Case of Black Study in Black Independent Book Spaces."

Session Organizers: Santiago Molina, Northwestern University; Alex Hanna, Distributed AI Research Institute

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Expertise in the Age of AI (Open Panel) – will be held at ASA
Sunday, August 9 from 10:00 to 11:30am

How is expertise being reconfigured and remade by the rollout of artificial intelligence? Experts in a host of key fields were already facing a range of threats to their status and authority in recent years. Now, AI confronts experts with a series of new challenges and opportunities, raising important questions for sociologists of knowledge studying everything from science and medicine through to education and lay mis/information consumption. This panel invites theoretical and empirical papers on the way AI is changing expert labor and knowledge production, how it is realigning networks of expertise, how publics engage with it in lieu of credentialed experts, how it can variously retrench and rework power and inequalities, or how it is being resisted and restrained.

Presider: Dan Navon, University of California San Diego

Panelists:
Anna Katharina Thieser, Jack LeViolette, and Gil Eyal, Columbia University, "'A World in which AI Evaluates AI': AI Safety as a Space Between Fields."
Haley Lepp, Stanford University, "Populist Science."
Ruishi Chen, Tianyu Du, and Daniel A. MacFarland, Stanford University, "Homogenization of Epistemic Pluralism: LLM-Generated Reviews in Scientific Peer Review."
David Peterson, Purdue University; Bernard Joseph Koch, University of Chicago; and Aaron Panofsky, University of California Los Angeles, "Remaking the landscape of scientific expertise: the emergent research program of total automation in science."

Session Organizers: Dan Navon and Caroline Petronis, University of California San Diego

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Science, Technology, and Global Knowledge in Uncertain Times (Open Panel) – will be held at ASA
Sunday, August 9 from 2:00 to 3:30pm

This panel examines how science, technology, and knowledge production are reconfigured under conditions of global uncertainty. We invite scholarship that explores how social, political, and economic uncertainties impact knowledge production globally. Papers may address a range of topics, including, but not limited to: contestation of climate knowledge, counter-expertise in vaccination and gender-affirming care debates; shifting institutional mandates and best practices on knowledge production; cuts to U.S. research funding, services, and foreign aid; visa regimes and scientific mobility/immobility; and AI infrastructures and development. This joint panel, co-sponsored by the Science, Knowledge, and Technology (SKAT) Section and the Global and Transnational Sociology (GATS) Section, welcomes submissions from diverse theoretical

and methodological perspectives, particularly those that consider knowledge production through a transnational lens.

Presider: Xiaogao Zhou, Bryn Mawr College

Panelists:
Amy Zhou, Barnard College, "Relational risk perceptions: How different stakeholders perceive the future of gene drive technologies."
Michael Stambolis-Ruhstofer, Université Toulouse - Jean Juarès, "Scholar Activism from the Right: Conservative Scientists Fighting Against Abortion and Environmentalism Within the Academy."
Ke Minh Lam and Andrew P. Davis, North Carolina State University, "Shared Risk and Institutional Alignment in the Global Structure of Scholarly Collaboration."
Xi Wang, Northwestern University, "Strategic Occidentalism: The Geopolitics of Relational Authority in Chinese Psychoanalysis."
Daniel Scott Smith, Duke University, "The epistemic origins of the nation-state."

Session Organizer: Xiaogao Zhou, Bryn Mawr College

Co-sponsored by Global and Transnational Sociology Section

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The Sociology of Climate Change (Open Panel) – will be held at ASA
Monday, August 10 from 8:00 to 9:30am

This open panel on "The Sociology of Climate Change" is jointly-sponsored by the ASA sections on Science, Knowledge, and Technology (SKAT) and Environmental Sociology. We aim for the panel to provide a forum for innovative sociological research on climate change, broadly defined. We welcome research using a wide range of sociological methods and focused on any aspect of climate change.

Presider: Kerry Ard, Ohio State University

Panelists:
Kevin Loughran, Temple University; James R. Elliot, Rice University; Caitlan Tickman, Temple and Rice Universities; Phylicia Xin Yi Lee Brown, Rice University; Anthony Alexander Priest, University of Alberta; and Stephen Joseph Brown, Rice University, "Colorblind Retreat: A Qualitative Study of Racial Ideologies in Climate Relocation."
Rachel Gurney, Michael M. Bell, Marisa Lanker, and Valerie Stull, University of Wisconsin Madison, "Cultivating Common Ground: An Identity Bias Approach to Trust, Knowledge, & the Rural Politics of Climate Change."
Jan Gilles, London School of Economics and Political Science, "The Politics of Carbon Dioxide Removal as Promissory Technology."
Janna Zou Huang, University of California Berkeley, "Making Climate Count: The Construction and Consequences of Climate Metrics in Corporate Climate Governance."
Benjamin Bradlow, Princeton University, "Energetic Affordances: Climate Projects and Industrial Transformation."

Session Organizers: Rene Almeling, Yale University; Kerry Ard, Ohio State University

Co-Sponsored with Environmental Sociology

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Reproductive Subversion Reconsidered: Contemporary Politics of Reproductive Knowledge (Open Panel) – will be held at ASA
Monday, August 10 from 10:00 to 11:30am

Across labs, clinics, classrooms, and courts, the production and circulation of reproductive knowledge is currently being reshaped by political, legal, and technological transformations. Laws governing abortion and fertility care and funding uncertainties constrain not only access to services but also the making and maintenance of expertise itself — what researchers and practitioners can teach, learn, and do. Meanwhile, shifting technologies alter the boundaries between professional, lay, and automated knowledge, generating new competencies, forms of resistance, and epistemic loss.

This session invites scholarship that examines how contemporary reproductive knowledge is organized, practiced, and contested across social, legal, and technological domains. We encourage papers that explore the transmission, erosion, or reconfiguration of reproductive skills and techniques; examine how law, policy, and politics shape what can be known, taught, or practiced; or assess how reproductive knowledge and practices circulate among medical professionals, activists, educators, and patients. Empirical papers and/or those that interrogate mainstream or popular narratives are especially welcome. We encourage submissions that address racial, class, and ability inequalities, including those focusing on the Global South.

Potential topics include but are not limited to**:** underground reproduction networks; funding for reproduction research; the governance of abortion knowledge; the de- or re-skilling of reproductive labor; the gain or loss of reproductive skills, techniques, or tools due to for-profit medicine and/or the fear of malpractice; lay knowledge circulation about reproduction; the political economy of reproductive technologies; and reproductive epistemologies fueled by backlash.

Presider: Joan Robinson, CUNY City College

Panelists:
Daniela Sanchez Lopez, University of Texas Austin, "Beyond 12 weeks: How Abortion Activists in Mexico Produce Subversive Later Abortion Expertise."
Liora O Goldensher, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, "Horseshoes and Maternalisms: Homebirth Midwifery and the Politics of Demedicalized Reproductive Expertise."
Melanie Jeske, Baylor College of Medicine and Jennifer Elyse James, University of California San Francisco, "Medical Fragility and Epistemic Injustice in Reproductive Knowledge and Care."
Emily S. Mann, University of South Carolina - Columbia, "Prenatal Testing at Advanced Maternal Age: Biomedical Routinization and Perceptions of Risk."
Cynthia Beavin, University of Cincinnati; Laetitia Miron, University of Cincinnati; Hillary Gyuras, University of Cincinnati; Danielle Bessett, University of Cincinnati; Jessica Sinclair, Mayo Clinic; Autumn Kirkendall, University of Cincinnati; and Michelle L McGowan, Mayo Clinic, "Reflexivity in the production of abortion knowledge through research."
Martine Lappé, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and Jennifer Denbow, California Polytechnic State University, "Reproductive Knowledge and the Politics of Parenting in Uncertain Times."

Session Organizer: Joan Robinson, CUNY City College

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Disrupting Racial Formations in Science and Technology (Open Panel) – will be held at ASA
Monday, August 10 from 4:00 to 5:00pm

Presider: Oliver Rollins, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

This session explores the entanglements of race and scientific knowledge production, highlighting how racial logics shape and are shaped by technological and epistemic practices. Technological infrastructures—such as biometric surveillance, predictive analytics, and border enforcement systems—have intensified in the current moment, fueling new and old modes of racialized terror, especially against migrants, refugees, and other minoritized populations. These systems not only help inscribe and fix certain hierarchized "truths" about racialized groups but also actively produce harm under the guise of scientific neutrality, public health, and national security. Thus, in a moment acutely marked by increasing political polarization, genocide, attacks on democratic institutions, and the resurgence of eugenic rhetoric, it is crucial that sociologists confront how science and technology contribute to the justification and weaponization of racial violence, even as political attacks seek to undermine such knowledges as a source of public good in other areas health, education, and law.

This session aims to investigate the role of epistemic authority in the reproduction or disruption of racialized (and ethnic) hierarchies. We especially welcome work that teaches us how to better understand the value of racial theory for STS studies, and/or papers that demonstrate the value of STS methods and tools for the sociology of race and ethnicity. For example, papers that illuminate how scientific and technological systems are embedded in broader structures of racial capitalism, settler colonialism, and global inequality—and how these systems can be reimagined through resistance and intervention. This co-sponsored session between SKAT and SREM reflects a timely and necessary dialogue across the sections, aiming to foster interdisciplinary engagement and critical reflection. In putting sociology to work, we center solution-oriented research, theoretically engaged scholarship, and interdisciplinary dialogue, with the goal of fostering a future sociological blueprint that dismantles racial and ethnic formations in science and technology.

Panelists:
Jorge Ochoa and Steven Epstein, Northwestern University, "Federal Science under Anti-DEI Governance: Contemporary Organizational Struggles over the Inclusion-and-Difference Paradigm at the NIH."
Margaret Schmits-Earley, University of Wisconsin Madison, "Fixing Inequality in the Biosocial Era."
Eyako Heh, Northwestern University, "Technologies of Immigration Enforcement: Understanding the Role of Private Industry."
Anupriya Pandey, State University of New York – Buffalo, "Technologies of Recognition: Making Up Caste People Through Toxic and Green Infrastructures."
Emily Vasquez, Wesleyan University, "Toxic Exposures: Resisting the Racialization of Latinidad in Precision Environmental Health Science."

Organizer: Oliver Rollins, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Co-Sponsored with Section on Race and Ethnic Minorities

Introducing Problem Convergence: The Case of Brain Injury

Research Brief by Daniel R. Morrison and Monica J. Casper

We have been studying the social worlds of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) for fifteen years. In this work, we examine the social and political lives of TBI and CTE as they have moved in and out of public consciousness and up and down the list of funding priorities from federal agencies, such as NSF and DOD. Along the way, we have noted meaningful patterns in scientific and popular discourse around brain injuries, including increased attention to how these injuries often result from racialized and gendered violence.

As sociologists of science, technology, and medicine, our investigation of this world led us to a striking insight: over the course of approximately three decades, previously highly separate communities of scientists, researchers, and activists converged around a shared understanding of brain injuries as a critical concern. We call this phenomenon *problem convergence*. For us, problem convergence is a non-linear social process characterized by active communication, interaction, and negotiation among separate collectives who, over time, turn their attention to a common problem. That problem then becomes a core concern for each collective.

Problem convergence is not interdisciplinarity. Interdisciplinary research groups, centers, and the like focus on one problem, generally addressing that problem with multiple methods, theoretical traditions, and multiple researchers from several academic disciplines. Often, interdisciplinary research focuses on "wicked problems" that are multi-pronged, result from distributed individual and collective actions, and are bound up in large, complex social systems that govern the lives of millions or even billions of people. A paradigmatic example here is global warming/climate change. In academic versions of climate change interdisciplinarity, researchers with training in earth sciences, meteorology, geology, environmental studies, sociology, and more address a common problem. This often entails creating research projects under the auspices of an interdisciplinary center, whether housed within a university, across universities, or as a private, often non-profit, organization. To use a common metaphor, each discipline addresses one part of a large elephant, understanding their piece as distinct. The language of global warming/climate change allows these researchers to see themselves as part of a larger, collective process that we label interdisciplinarity.

Photo by Vitaly Gariev on Unsplash

In problem convergence, previously separate research groups and thought collectives turn their attention to a shared concern. They come to share a work object, which Casper theorized as a material entity through which individuals and groups make meaning and organize their professional and social practices. Generally, however, each group retains their independence in publishing and organizational affiliation. In other words, when it comes to TBI and CTE, neuroscientists still publish in neuroscience journals and work with other neuroscientists. They may rely on samples of patients who experienced TBI from intimate partner violence (IPV), sports, or as a consequence of military service, but they do not often develop independent research centers that employ, for example, psychologists, trauma counselors, and sports medicine physicians. Centers that do exist often feature researchers from one discipline rather than many.

In future briefs for the SKATOLOGY newsletter, we will provide specific details on how problem convergence works, showing how diverse research and activist groups refocused their attention on TBI and CTE as shared concerns. These briefs will draw from our research on sports- and IPV-related TBI with attention to gendered and racialized aspects. TBI and CTE are not equally distributed in the U.S. For example, Black American men and women are over-represented in the US Army compared to their population in the civilian labor force, and thus are subject to increased exposure to TBI in training, live fire, and accidents. Such disparate impacts, as we will show, become an impetus for researchers and activists to converge and address the problem of brain injury.

Daniel R. Morrison is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Monica J. Casper is a Professor of Sociology and Dean of the College of Arts and Letters at Seattle University.

New Books Q&A with Yan Long, Author of *Authoritarian Absorption*

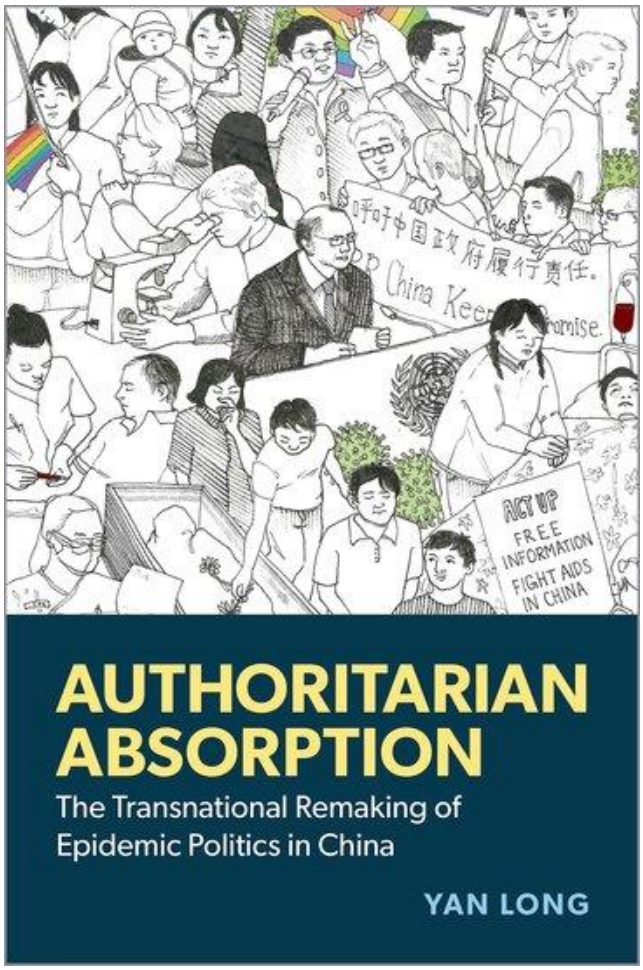
Interviewed by Jian Meng on January 19, 2026

Yan Long is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. She is a political and organizational sociologist studying the interactions between globalization and authoritarian politics across empirical areas such as public health, civic action, urban development, and digital technology with a geographic focus on China. Her first book, *Authoritarian Absorption: The Transnational Remaking of Epidemic Politics in China* was published by Oxford University Press in 2024.

Jian Meng: Thank you for taking the time for this interview. To begin with, how did you come to be interested in the core questions addressed in *Authoritarian Absorption*?

Yan Long: My interests emerged from a striking empirical puzzle when I first entered the field back in 2007. At the beginning, my motivation was just to understand the explosion of numbers in HIV/AIDS NGOs in China. At the time, given all the tightened control and repression, most social movement scholars would say that you want to take much more informal ways of mobilization rather than forming organizations. I was puzzled: Why? Why did they choose such a connected, formalized, organizational way of rebelling against the state?

But then when I started my fieldwork, I was also fascinated by what seemed like a very impossible contradiction—especially nowadays when we think about it. It's China as the world's strongest authoritarian regime actually coming to embrace foreigners and a lot of international organizations in HIV. They were embracing civil society participation and grassroots mobilization.



Book Cover (Courtesy of Oxford University Press)

In Beijing, I watched foreigners actually being able to sit in very deep, intense policy conversations in health ministries. That's very much unheard of, because the Chinese government—just like Russia—is very guarded against foreigners. For them to participate, to sit together, and to really work on applying for international funding? That was deeply puzzling. And then you can see that activists were sitting at the table at United Nations conferences along with ministry officials. I was like, what is going on here? So I wanted to understand that. That was the beginning of a historical puzzle. As I was tracing this process in the next 11 years, things were changing. The Chinese government became really strong.

The relationship, for example, between the Chinese CDC officials and the US CDC officials had completely changed. At the beginning, the

Chinese side was worshipping the US side, holding them in high esteem: "We should learn from them." The US was the golden standard. That was already puzzling. But then you would see a more equal kind of relationship, and China then began to teach other countries in the Global South using global health mandates: "We are the champion of global health, and you guys should learn from us." Health had really become a major area of international interventions for China to project its global power.

Another core piece of the puzzle crystallized around very specific ironies. For example, China is still nowadays a homophobic state, but gay activists—male gay activists in urban areas—became such a "golden child," favored by not only the Chinese government but also Westerners like the US Embassy. You would see they became the guests of both camps. One turning point was really in 2013, when Xi Jinping was coming into office. Li Keqiang actually held a meeting on TV, broadcasting for the first time ever a top senior leader shaking hands with gay leaders. It was supposed to be a meeting around HIV intervention, but the majority of the community leaders he met on TV were gay activists—HIV-negative gay activists.

I was like, wow, it's still a homophobic state. Why would it really embrace gay activists while sidelining farmers, infected farmers, who were supposedly foundational to communist society? And then why did HIV transform from a very invisible, actively erased epidemic in the 1980s and 1990s, to the cornerstone of China's revamped public health institutions? You must understand every meeting in China was carefully staged. For Li Keqiang to really do that on TV—they also invited UN representatives—it was staged for the whole world to watch. The core of that meeting was signaling its commitment to community participation and signaling that to the whole world.

That really means public health—and a very specific kind of liberal type of public health interventions—became a cornerstone of the authoritarian socialist state. It's part of this political identity in front of the world like, "We're really the world champion of liberalism in so many ways." If we associate certain things with liberalism—like anti-homophobia or community participation—how did they somehow become symbols of China's rising power? Those are the puzzles I wanted to tackle.

If I can summarize it in a more concise way, it is: if HIV was completely ignored and unseen back in the 1980s and 1990s, if public health was totally marginalized, why does the state suddenly become interested in epidemics? Throughout human history, most governments are either obsessed with certain epidemics or they ignore them. I want to understand how they make this kind of swift alteration between seeing epidemics versus unseen epidemics, and also to understand how they would choose to embrace or reject certain transnational practices.

Importantly, for political sociologists, we need to understand the global expansion of authoritarianism. The paradox here is: if we are seeing this global diffusion of liberalism—which in the Chinese case was very successful—then why did authoritarian control actually expand, as we can see during COVID-19? How do we understand the expansion of authoritarianism and the diffusion of liberalism together? They were actually not, as we imagine, contradictory or conflicting. It's not the case that if you have more liberalism, you have less authoritarianism. That is what I want to tackle.

Jian: In your book, you describe using a "multi-sited ethnographic approach to historicizing interventions." Could you tell us what it is and how you combined these two different approaches in your research?

Yan: The research design—the multi-sited ethnography—actually emerged in the 1990s. It was started by George Marcus, and that was my inspiration. Basically, you are talking about tracing people, tracing items, and so on. That was very typical of studying transnationalism. Transnationalism is essentially about interactions across different societies; the governments and the states are the center of internationalism, but for transnationalism, it's society.

That was my inspiration at the beginning: to really understand the relationships between transnational organizations, the Chinese government, and different community organizations. I was trying to follow people and follow conflict across sites—rural villages affected by blood contamination, urban gay men's organizations, urban sex workers' organizations, and different Chinese government agencies, from public health all the way to security and police. I also followed transnational agencies, mostly based in Beijing, and different transnational conferences.

One of the problems with typical ethnographies is that we tend to stay in one place and dig very deep. But then, while you can understand how even one village is embedded in global connections, what you don't see is the process—the concrete connections. I really wanted to trace across the space to see. On the one hand, you see how transnational connections tie different people and spaces together. The same vocabulary is invoked everywhere; whether in the US or China, activists and officials use identical terms like "knowledge production," "human rights," or "activism." You see that kind of global connectivity.

However, traveling across these spaces also shows how far apart the different worlds are. I remember finishing my ethnography in a rural area and then going back to Beijing to interview a representative of a foreign foundation. The contrast in just one day was huge. We were at lunch in Beijing eating noodle soup that cost about $20, which at the time could sustain someone in a rural area for two days. It wasn't just the money, but the interaction, the norms, and who I was. After that lunch, I just started bawling. You see this disjuncture where people live completely different lives. In Beijing, when they talk about life and death it is one thing, but it is completely different when you sit with somebody by their deathbed in a village.

Multi-sited ethnography really helps to understand these parallel worlds. To travel from Beijing to the US was just a flight, but for me to go from a village in Henan to Beijing, I had to take multiple forms of transportation—trains, bikes, and walking. It literally took longer. In globalization, you have connection but also disjuncture. Understanding that embodied experience is critical because it's no longer an abstraction; it has materialized. As an ethnographer, I had to adapt my outfit and my demeanor; my interactions with a farmer are completely different compared to a gay leader in Shanghai. Even for CDC officials, being in Beijing versus being in Henan, that's also drastically different.

That kind of ethnography provides much more depth, but the problem is it can be a snapshot. A typical way of studying international relations is to understand a snapshot of interventions: foreign organizations come, things happen, and that's it. Then history becomes just a background. In this book, I tried to trace the process of how interventions started to unfold to understand the unintended consequences that no one—neither the state, the organizations, nor the activists—could control.

The irony here is that the Chinese government became the biggest winner of this process. It's not because it was the smartest strategist, but because of a lot of unintended dynamics between different actors. International organizations were trying their best to do good and "teach" China, and activists were trying to fight for survival, but who wins or loses isn't necessarily decided from the beginning. US international development agencies actually did wonders in strengthening China's epidemic response over two decades. That historical process is important to know because there is a huge contribution there. The outcome might not be what you are anticipated unless you trace it.

Finally, there was a practical reason for this design: studying HIV interventions in China was extremely sensitive. I was constantly harassed, stalked, and I was even detained once. Practically speaking, it was very difficult for me to just stay in one place. I was literally running from one site to another to keep the research going—especially in

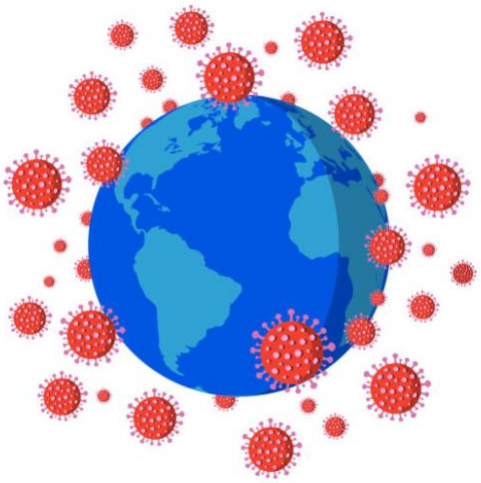
rural areas, where it is difficult to stay for a long time without implicating my research subjects.

Jian: How did SARS, as a historical event, influence the narrative presented in your book? In the Chapter 6, you mentioned the SARS, but provided few pages on that. I know another scholar, like Katherine Mason, her whole book *Infectious Change* mainly focused on the CDC during the time of SARS. How do you consider the impact brought by SARS?

Yan: I actually would argue: SARS in my book was not a turning point in itself, but it was a revealing interruption. As I mentioned earlier, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, China pretty much ignored public health, and the old Maoist Public Health system collapsed. China wasn't interested in building a modern epidemic response system, so infectious disease was just marginalized completely.

In many ways, SARS became a moment that exposed how fragile China's epidemic governance was already at the time. It revealed the possibility that international pressure actually could intensify. SARS drew that kind of attention not out of the blue, but because foreign governments and organizations had already been trying to pressure the Chinese government on HIV for a couple of years already. The problem was that China was not willing to make concessions, and foreign organizations were not strong enough to push the pressure in. In that battle, SARS happened and it really just exposed the whole epidemic response system. In that way, it was a very important event. But it was not the event itself that had produced all the results.

Mind you, the literature typically shows us that authoritarian states are very good at making window-dressing gestures after international interventions—after all, the naming, blaming, and shaming. That would have been the case with SARS without HIV. Because guess what? Political pressure and international attention eventually go away. What really matters in terms of AIDS is that HIV/AIDS was the first infectious disease put on the global political landscape around the turn of 2000. It was the only epidemic that had received



Planet earth surrounded by viruses (Getty Images)

not only political attention but also a huge amount of funding and institutional support because of UNAIDS and other organizations.

Regarding the institutional building process: HIV had a completely different status than SARS per se. In many ways, SARS produced the window of opportunity for HIV funding and pressure to come in. But exactly because of the institutional building around HIV, foreign organizations could actually sustain that pressure by providing money, specific organizational rules, and various policy designs. That's why rapid organizational expansion took place around HIV, not SARS.

Yes, SARS is important; it created political urgency and global attention. But it was HIV, through very sustained technocratic and transnational engagement, that slowly rebuilt China's epidemic infrastructure and modernized its responses. In that way, there is a very long post-SARS, but HIV-centered institutional formation. That's also an irony: HIV still has high mortality aside from COVID, yet its transmission is so low—it is a low-prevalence disease. Why did the state spend so much money on it? It is because HIV enjoyed such a global status. You can't really compare that with SARS.

Jian: In Chapter 8, you discuss the 2013 departure of the Global Fund as an important backdrop for the Chinese government to increase investment in HIV prevention. Could you tell us the global dynamics or domestic political shifts behind this withdrawal of Global funding?

Yan: The simple answer is that this is really the typical story of the rise of China. International organizations no longer consider China a low-income country; it has graduated towards being a middle-income country. That's the official reason, but there are others. Global health is a very typical example of international development. The typical funding model that started after the mid-1990s is that when international organizations or foreign governments provide funding, the idea is just to start the institutional building process. The domestic government would then start contributing funding, with the goal being that international funding eventually withdraws and the national government takes over.

That's always the model. However, many countries cannot graduate from that model and forge a dependence on foreign money. Before the Trump administration, foreign funding actually accounted for almost 50% of all the money dedicated to HIV in low-income and middle-income countries. It took a very long time, and even until very recently, many countries in the Global South still rely heavily on foreign money. But HIV also sustained many countries' public health infrastructure. China is actually a fascinating example of success in this regard.

Throughout the period before 2013, foreign funding accounted for between 30% to up to 60-70% of the funding dedicated to AIDS in China. It was a lifeline. HIV funding was sustaining a lot of other public health functions. But as the foreign funding was there, the Chinese government also drastically increased its own funding for HIV as well as public health. It was very successful. When the funding started to withdraw, the Chinese government stepped in. The central government continued to give more funding and completely took over.

In many ways, it's a fascinating success story. This is why China has become a champion in the eyes of the World Health Organization. It wasn't just about "accepting bribery"—China spent over a decade proving itself as a terrific student. It fulfilled the expectation: "Now we are a superpower; not only can we support our own public health, we can also support other countries' public health." Even nowadays, people ask if China should step in as the US leaves the global health leadership position. China has its own international development agency now. The US and UK international development agency models heavily affected China, again through HIV. China is now providing funding not just for African countries but also for Southeast Asian countries.

Even before the Global Fund left, China was already one of the most successful countries in getting international funding because it was a "good student," successfully producing the best numbers to get money. But the irony here—and a story that's not very clear in the book—is the decline of the "golden days" of international collaboration between China and the US in public health. This collaboration started to decline during Obama's second term and was shut down during Trump's first term. When COVID hit, there was nothing. And nowadays we are in a state of high conflict.

What I documented in the book was the very close-knit collaboration, but that relationship changed after 2013—obviously because of Xi, but also because of the US side as well. In many ways, international funding should leave at some point to allow for local ownership of the system. In that way, China has completely achieved that. The CDC model, everything.

Jian: What are you working on next?

Yan: During COVID I started my second book about epidemics and digital technology, studying COVID in China. It is still a transnational story, but it's tentatively called *Digital Chaos: The Bureaucratic Labors of the COVID-19 Smart City and Its Aftermath*. Basically, it looks at authoritarian

digitalization during the pandemic and the development that followed. Epidemic governance was a huge part of how authoritarian power and digitalization expanded. That's a major theme. I wanted to challenge the popular depiction of authoritarian digitalization as an automated, seamless apparatus of control—the cameras, the dashboards, the algorithms.

I want to place that in a long historical process of smart city building in China, which was actually a global idea. Digitalization during COVID was only one episode of it. I want to demonstrate that China's smart city expansion since the epidemic is a fragmented, labor-intensive, and fragile enterprise, enabled and constrained by existing bureaucratic dynamics. It's still a state bureaucratic story with a long historical perspective.

Ultimately, it is still about epidemic control, but in a very different direction. My first book argued how HIV molded the characteristics of this epidemic response system, and I want to see how some of those features persisted during COVID-19. For example, the obsession with testing. The US model of epidemic control is drug-centered; it's more about treatment than prevention. China came up with a different model: prevention through testing. That was experimented with and consolidated during the HIV era, then expanded during the COVID model. I remember a gay community leader in an interview said, "In the past the government only drew our blood; nowadays it is testing everybody."

That surveillance power persisted. Digitalization is a different feature—the smart city history and the epidemic control history came together to create a very bizarre kind of monster. The number of tests has been praised and projected as a sign of modernization: "China is a superpower; we can do one billion tests per day." That obsession with numbers is about the projection of state power and global status. All of that imagination was made possible and learned during the HIV era. International society values this kind of quantitative measurement, and you can do it fast. That is the historical precondition of what happened, and I want to continue tracing that.

Jian: It is very interesting. I am looking forward to reading your next book!

Recent Publications from Section Members

New Articles

Aviles, Natalie B., and Mark H. Histed. 2026. "How Congress Can Restore the Independence of US Science." *Nature* 651(8105):306–8. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-026-00703-9.

Brandt, Emma ES. 2025. "Environments of Disbelief: Serbian Youth, Conspiracy Theory, and Practices of Digital Distrust." *Qualitative Sociology* 48(4):637–63. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-025-09610-3.

Cai, Xiaomin. 2026. "Stratified Medicalization Rerouted: Lesbian Women's Turn to IVF As Pragmatic Overmedicalization Amid Stratified Reproduction." *Social Science & Medicine* 119160. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2026.119160.

Choi, Susanne Y. P., Tangi Puichi Yip, and Lynne Y. Nakano. 2026. "Out-of-Frame, Misframe, and Reframe: Challenges Faced by Victims in Identifying and Interpreting Online Sexual Harassment and Their Policy Implications." *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 23(1):592–605. doi:10.1007/s13178-025-01160-1.

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Larregue, Julien, and Alice Pavie. 2026a. "English or Perish? The Value of Linguistic Capital in the Social Sciences and Humanities." *Sociology* 00380385251406882. doi:10.1177/00380385251406882.

Larregue, Julien, and Alice Pavie. 2026b. "Prestige at Play: University Hierarchies and the Reproduction of Funding Inequalities." *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 63(1):e70012. doi:10.1111/cars.70012.

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Liu, Chuncheng, and Danah Boyd. 2026. "The State's Politics of 'Fake Data.'" Pp. 1–13 in *Proceedings of the 2026 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. Barcelona Spain: ACM.

Lusinchi, Dominic. 2026. "Chapter and Verse: From Variety to Uniformity in Scholarly Source Citation Practice." *KULA* 9(1):1–13. https://doi.org/10.18357/kula.304.

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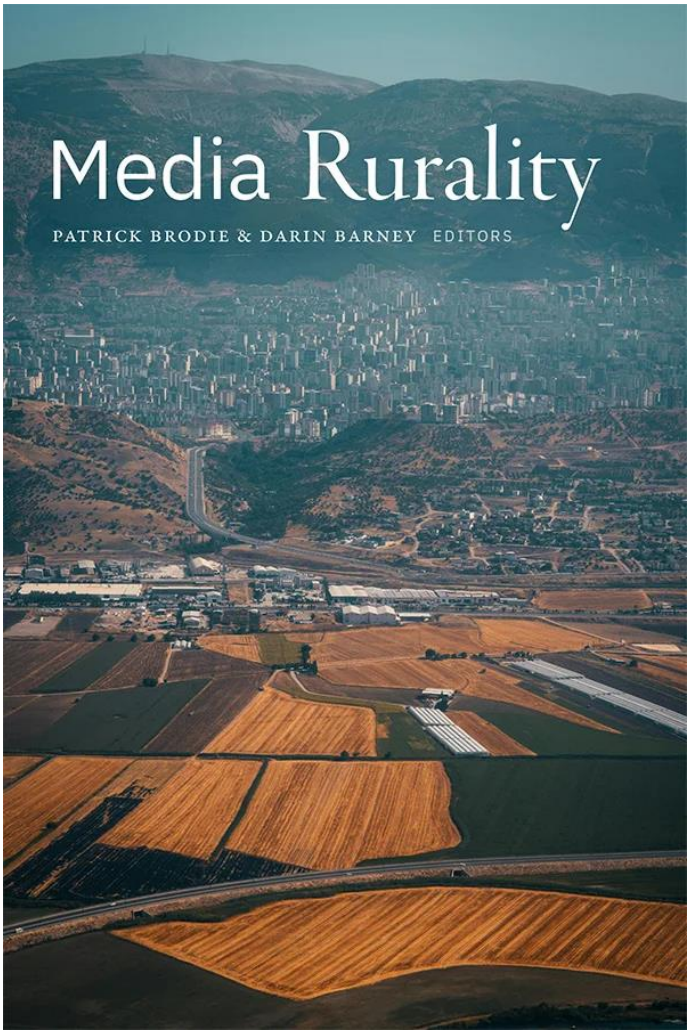
New Books

Brodie, Patrick and Darin Barry, Editors. 2026. *Media Rurality*. Duke University Press. https://dukeupress.edu/media-rurality



Book Cover (from Duke University Press)

"*Media Rurality* investigates the centrality of rural places and people within the media systems and technologies that shape daily life in and across rural and urban settings alike. From the boglands of Ireland to data centers in the Oregon countryside to the homemade media systems of rural Tanzania, the contributors to this volume show how rural territories are highly mediated, technologized spaces profoundly enmeshed with global capitalism and colonialism. Approaching the study of rurality through a materialist lens that foregrounds infrastructure, this collection shows how rural spaces often bear the environmental brunt of capitalist development while being relegated to the economic and cultural periphery.

Contributors. Christopher Ali, Patrick Bresnihan, Patrick Brodie, Darin Barney, Jenna Burrell, Jordan B. Kinder, Burç Köstem, Cindy Lin, Emily Ng, Lisa Parks, Anne Pasek, Esther Peeren, Nicole Starosielski, Ishita Tiwary, Hunter Vaughan, Ayesha Vemuri, Megan Wiessner, Assatu Wisseh."

Patrick Brodie is Assistant Professor in the School of Information and Communication Studies at University College Dublin.

Darin Barry is Professor of Communication Studies at McGill University.

Kim, Sunmin. 2026. *The Unruly Facts of Race: The Politics of Knowledge Production in the Early Twentieth-Century Immigration Debate*. University of Chicago Press.
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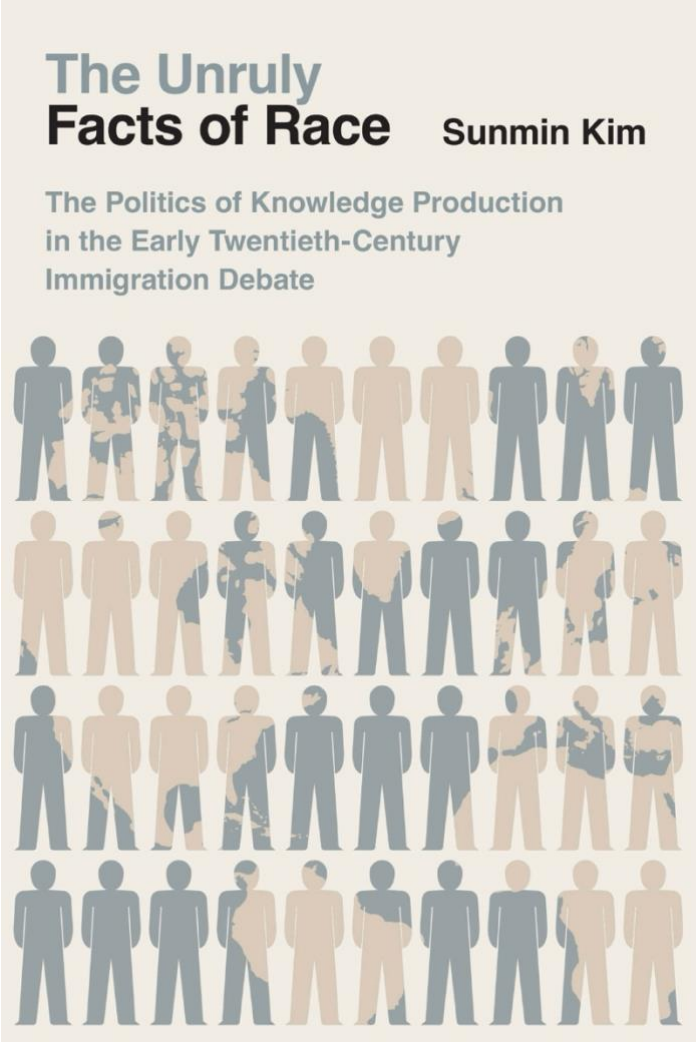


Book Cover (from University of Chicago Press)

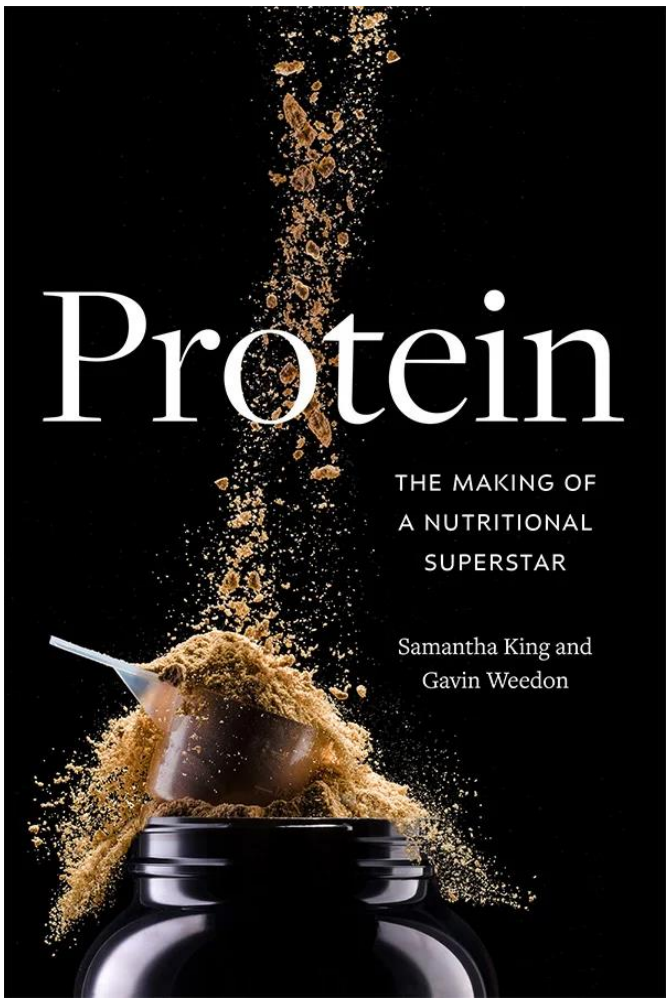
"Unfortunately, we're all too familiar with the US's legacy of maligning immigrants. Some Americans see immigrants as inherently threatening, a blank screen onto which the nation's worst fears are projected. But this phenomenon is neither timeless nor static. Instead, it arose and transformed alongside the unprecedented arrival of immigrants in the early twentieth century—and the federal government's response. In *The Unruly Facts of Race*, sociologist Sunmin Kim explains how American ideas about race and ethnicity were transformed in the early twentieth century as an unintended consequence of anti-immigrant mobilization.

Kim presents a wealth of archival evidence, including the proceedings of the 1907 Dillingham Commission, to reconstruct how competing racialized visions of nationhood evolved in the early twentieth-century immigration debate. Immigration restrictionist politicians believed that the United States should be a White, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant nation. However, when they mobilized researchers—some of whom were women and/or immigrants—to gather data at a massive scale to rationalize their aims, they were met with unruly facts that did not support their racial project. Newer European immigrants, as the data showed, were not much different from descendants of earlier immigrants from northern Europe. When facts failed to support the vilification of immigrants, exclusionist politicians instead turned to race as a marker of ineluctable difference to justify their aims. This led to a new principle of national belonging: the United States transitioned to a country that encompassed various European groups, including Catholics and Jews, but excluded non-White immigrants, as they were deemed too different to become a part of the nation.

Kim's analysis shows that throughout US history, the opportunity for belonging for some immigrants was predicated on the exclusion of others. His focus on the role of facts in the early twentieth century provides a refreshing take on why the so-called "nation of immigrants" has always demonized some immigrants while cherishing others, highlighting the selection and control of immigrants as the core principles of the American nation-building project. Amid a vitriolic explosion of American immigration discourse, Kim offers a needed corrective to and context for debates around who belongs in the United States.

Sunmin Kim is an assistant professor of sociology at Dartmouth College.

King, Samantha and Gavin Weedon. 2026. *Protein: The Making of a Nutritional Superstar*. Duke University Press. https://dukeupress.edu/medicines-that-feed-us



Book Cover (from Duke University Press)

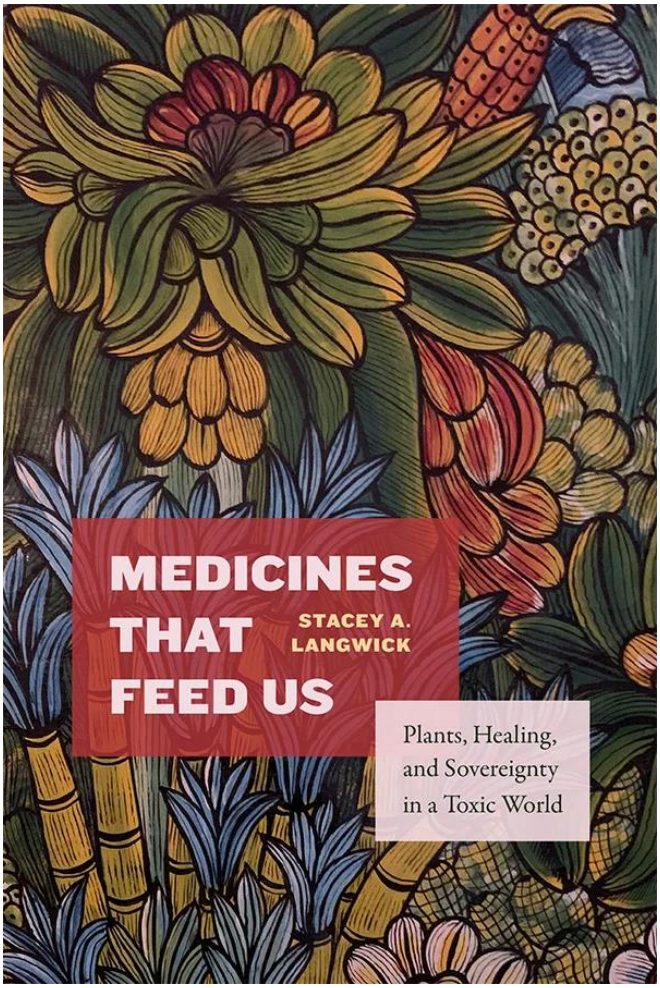
"*Protein* explores the contemporary obsession with a nutritional superstar, tracing how protein moves through food systems and fitness cultures, strengthening some bodies and environments at the expense of others.

Protein is everywhere—praised as a muscle builder, a weight-loss miracle, an anti-aging elixir, and the catch-all solution for everything from exercise recovery to global malnutrition. In *Protein*, Samantha King and Gavin Weedon argue that protein's rise to nutritional superstardom has less to do with human dietary needs and more to do with how its indeterminate, adhesive qualities are marshalled towards commercial, scientific, and social imperatives. Tracing its path from nineteenth-century biochemistry to the status it enjoys today, they expose how protein has been marketed as a cure for global hunger, repackaged as an eco-friendly meat alternative, and wielded as a symbol of masculinity in the fitness industry. From whey waste in industrial farming to longevity drugs for aging bodies, *Protein* unpacks the myths behind the macronutrient and challenges what we think we know about food, health, and the forces that shape our diets."

Samantha King is Professor in the School of Kinesiology & Health Studies at Queen's University and the author of *Messy Eating* and *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*

Gavin Weedon is Associate Professor of Sociology of Sport, Health and the Body at Nottingham Trent University.

Langwick, Stacey. 2026. *Medicines That Feed Us: Plants, Healing, and Sovereignty in a Toxic World*. Duke University Press. https://dukeupress.edu/medicines-that-feed-us

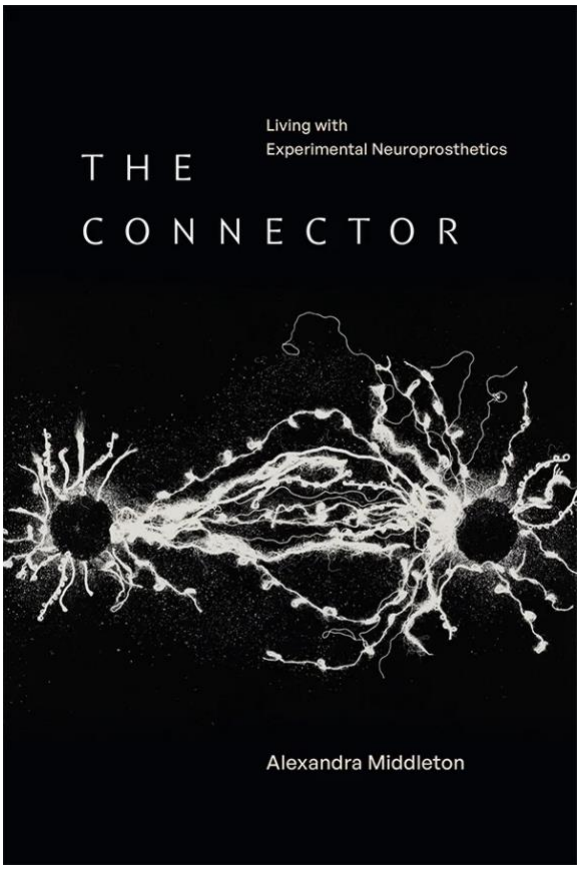


Book Cover (from Duke University Press)

"*Medicines That Feed Us* examines the relationship between toxicity and remedy in the face of the intertwined health and environmental crises that are shaping life in the twenty-first century. Through ethnographic work with organizations that use plant-based healing and sustainable farming practices in Tanzania, Stacey A. Langwick asks what it means to heal in a toxic world. Expanding on the Kiswahili phrase *dawa lishe*, or medicines that feed us, Langwick describes the potency of plant medicines in therapeutic projects that address bodies and environments together. These efforts challenge biomedicine's intense focus on the internal dynamics of biological bodies and its externalization of the modern agricultural, industrial, and land management practices that impact it. *Dawa lishe* is not a call to return to the traditional, but an invitation to join contemporary experiments in how we know, use, and govern therapeutic plants. *Medicines That Feed Us* offers alternative ways of living and dying, growing and decaying, composing and decomposing which acknowledge the interdependence of bodily and ecological health."

Stacey A. Langwick is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University, author of *Bodies, Politics, and African Healing: The Matter of Maladies in Tanzania*, and co-editor of *Medicine, Mobility, and Power in Global Africa: Transnational Health and Healing*.

Middleton, Alexandra. 2026. *The Connector: Living with Experimental Neuroprosthetics*. Duke University Press. https://dukeupress.edu/the-connector

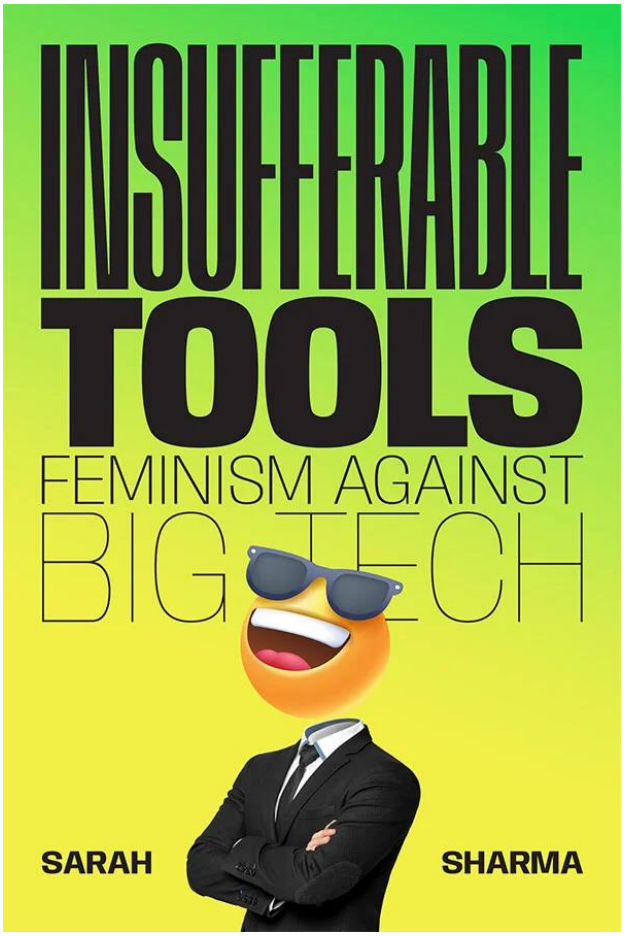


Book Cover (from Duke University Press)

"In *The Connector*, Alexandra Middleton examines how the frontiers of experimental medical science are always the everyday lived experiences for patients and their families and communities. Drawing on fieldwork and interviews conducted in Swedish labs and clinics that develop neuromusculoskeletal protheses, as well as in the homes of patients enrolled in clinical trials as they live with these new forms of prosthetics, Middleton shows how patients' sensory experiences and domestic worlds become key spaces of scientific knowledge production that extend well beyond their visits to the lab. Through storytelling that centers the patients' embodied knowledge and labor, along with the scientists who work closely with them, Middleton depicts how 'connection' entails inhabiting the liminal space between ideation and materialization, a space punctuated not only by breakthroughs and breakdowns, but the slow work of the everyday. The Connector critically examines where biomedical innovation, scientific discovery, and the 'cutting edge' come from in ways that foreground the importance of the domestic spaces in which experimental science takes place."

Alexandra Middleton is Assistant Professor of Medical Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen.

Sharma, Sarah. 2026. *Insufferable Tools: Feminism Against Big Tech*. Duke University Press. https://dukeupress.edu/insufferable-tools



Book Cover (from Duke University Press)

"In a world seemingly run by the whims and power plays of Musks and Zucks, *Insufferable Tools* cuts to the core of modern technology's gendered politics. Sarah Sharma challenges the idea that the Big Tech broligarchs are neutral utilitarians who view technology as mere tools. She shows instead how these tech giants have turned the internet, and, increasingly, 'real life' into a set of environments which they cultivate and manipulate to wield the real tools: us, the users. Sharma critiques a popular system of inclusion she calls 'Big Tech Feminism' that attempts to incorporate and make useful people of color, queer people, and others who are seen as broken machines in the current gendered power structures. Deconstructing Big Tech's patriarchal deployment of media theory to gain and maintain power, Sharma proposes a feminist techno-politics that can forge new futures free from the grip of the truly insufferable tools."

Sarah Sharma is Professor of Media Theory and Director of the Institute for Communication, Culture, Information and Technology at the University of Toronto. She is author of *In the Meantime: Temporality and Cultural Politics* and co-editor of *Re-Understanding Media: Feminist Extensions of Marshall McLuhan*, both published by Duke University Press.

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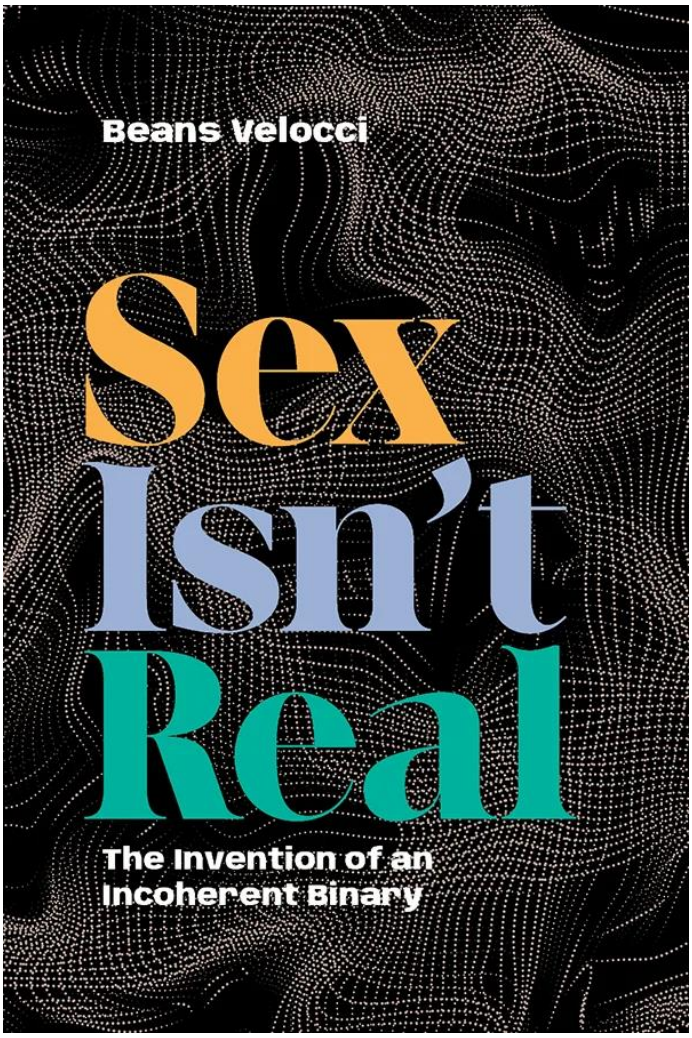

Book Cover (from Duke University Press)

"In *Sex Isn't Real*, Beans Velocci traces the history of current high stakes attempts to define sex and to create a world devoid of trans life. Drawing on lab notes, family genealogies, medical case studies, and more, Velocci follows scientists and clinicians from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century and across five disciplines—zoology, eugenics, gynecology, statistical sexology, and transsexual medicine—as their ideas and practices created a definitional tangle. They demonstrate how the sorting of bodies into male and female persists not despite but because of sex's incoherence: the defining features of these categories shift to contain various understandings of anatomy and physiology, theories of race, developments in research and medical methodologies, and bodies that cannot be accounted for in a binary framework. Exposing the endless work required to produce a world in which most people have a binary gender identity that neatly fits their binarily sexed body, Velocci demonstrates that it is not cis people who fit the categories; it's the categories that flex to make them fit."

Beans Velocci is Assistant Professor of History and Sociology of Science and Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies at the University of Pennsylvania.

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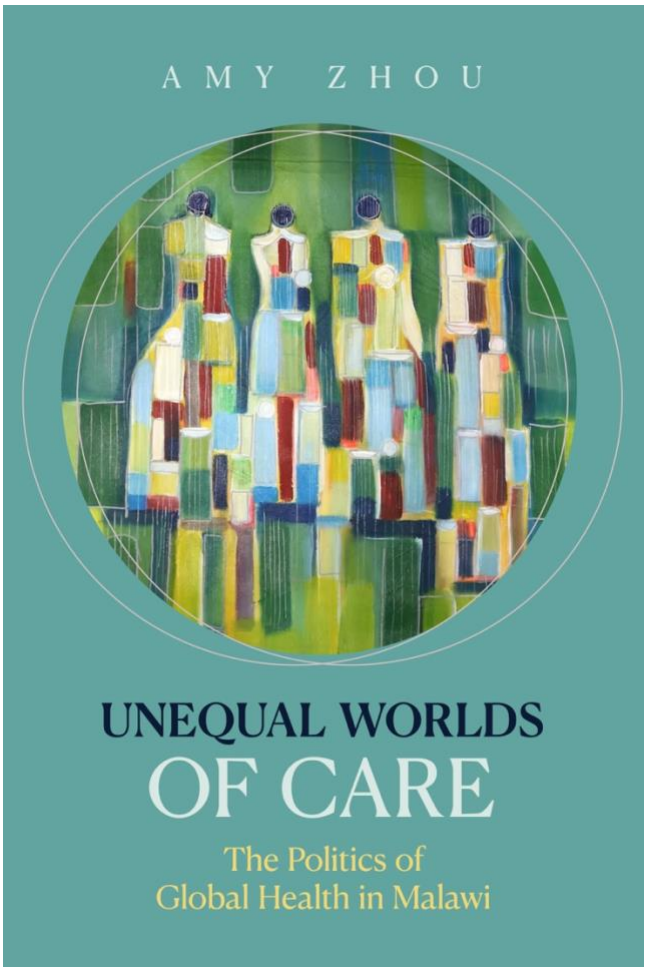

Book Cover (from University of California Press)

"Global health experts are optimistic that the end of AIDS is within reach. Yet while programs to combat HIV/AIDS have been essential they exist alongside public healthcare systems that have struggled to gain donor attention and support. *Unequal Worlds of Care* examines how policymakers providers and patients in Malawi navigate a healthcare system transformed unevenly by foreign aid.

Whether through engaging in political resistance refusing treatment or leveraging the opportunities available to them people contend with global health programs that only partially recognize their healthcare realities. Ultimately overlooking fundamental aspects of healthcare limits even the best-intentioned efforts to improve people's health and well-being. Amy Zhou provides a comprehensive portrait of the human costs of institutional constraints—as well as the ingenuity and dignity of the people continuing to pursue care along these uncertain pathways.

Amy Zhou is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Barnard College, Columbia University.

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