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## Chair's Report

This has been a challenging year, but our section has certainly showed its vibrancy and dedication! During the SKAT preconference this year, I asked our incredible plenary speakers to talk about how we can marshal SKAT theories toward unpacking the current conjunctural crisis we are facing but to also point us toward directions we can take to engender more just futures. Our speakers pointed out that the task at hand is daunting but encouraged SKAT scholars not to shy away from the challenge. As Steven Epstein reminded us, the answer is not to “defend insulated science” but to be brave enough to reimagine new avenues for science-making, even as we witness brazen governmental and scientific defunding (as Scott Frickel illustrated) and overwhelming challenges from the expansion of AI and LLM technologies, which have destabilized, as Marion Fourcade warned, our “social infrastructures of truth.” We were also reminded by various speakers that SKAT is well-poised to manage both epistemic and political crises, especially if we confront them boldly, with honesty, and well-armed with STS lessons from the past and insights from other sub-disciplines. Both Siri Suh and Santiago Molina encouraged SKAT to learn from theories of racial capitalism, colonialism and postcolonialism, and Black feminist scholarship. Alondra Nelson suggested we might find new epistemic insights by returning to classic STS scholarship, Janet Shim encouraged us to bolster the institutions to which we belong to promote situated trust and institutional change, and Jon Schaffer encouraged SKAT scholars to engage in political organizing as a form of pragmatic sociology. While these talks and those I listened to throughout the day reminded me of the tremendous challenges we face, I also witnessed the remarkable creativity and perspicacity within our field. As I listened to talks from established scholars and new entrants into our field, I felt emboldened and hopeful because our SKAT community is strong and our future is bright.

On September 1, the leadership of SKAT officially transitions, and we welcome a whole new amazing group of people to shepherd SKAT through the next year. Rene Almeling will begin her tenure as chair of the section! And we also welcome these tremendous folks to council positions: Oliver Rollins (Chair-Elect); Jennifer Singh (Secretary-Treasurer); Council Members, Zach Griffen, Santiago Molina and Siri Suh; and student members, Shira Zilberstein and Janna Huang!

I would also like to thank our outgoing council members for their tremendous service: Past-Chair, Janet Vertesi; Secretary-Treasurer, Emily Vasquez; Council members, Sharla Alegria, Martine Lappé, and Benjamin Shestakofsky; and our two student members, Mary Shi and Jorge Ochoa.

I am also so thrilled to let you know about another tremendous accomplishment for the year. We were able to raise enough money to begin a separate gift account for our Anti-Racism Awards, which will now be able to self-fund and

remain sustainable for the future! This was a really incredible achievement, and I would like to thank Jill Fisher and Emily Vasquez for their help in securing this account that will render our Anti-Racism awards, including the Emancipatory Practice Award and the Ida B. Wells/Troy Duster Paper Award for an Early Career Scholar, self-sustaining.

Despite all of the challenges this year brought us, we have actually grown our section membership. We now have 696 members! You can see how our numbers compare to other sections [here](#). This just proves what I've experienced this year - that our section is strong and dynamic! We are also in excellent financial shape. Thanks to all of you for your section dues and for donating to support the section, and to Emily Vasquez for stewarding our finances so effectively.

This year, we hosted several virtual workshops, providing advice and support to those going on the academic job market and those seeking positions in the tech industry, government, and NGO sectors! We also hosted an important conversation about academic freedom and teaching. I want to thank Alex Hanna, Dan Morrison and Mel Jeske for their service in organizing these incredible virtual workshops.

It has been a true privilege and honor to serve as SKAT chair this year, and I was consistently humbled as people in our section stepped up to volunteer and support one another throughout the year. We are an incredible group of scholars and a strong community, and I look forward to seeing where the future takes us!

Claire Decoteau



*Our Section Logo*

## SKAT Officers

2025-2026

### **Chair**

Claire Decoteau,  
*University of Illinois  
Chicago*

### **Chair-Elect**

Rene Almeling,  
*Yale University*

### **Past Chair**

Janet Vertesi,  
*Princeton University*

### **Section**

#### **Secretary/Treasurer**

Emily Vasquez,  
*Wesleyan University*

### **Council Members**

Sharla Alegria,  
*University of Toronto*  
Alex Hanna,  
*Distributed AI Research  
Institute*  
Martine Lappé,  
*California Polytechnic  
State University, San Luis  
Obispo*  
Luciana de Souza Leão,  
*University of Michigan*  
Benjamin Shestakofsky,  
*University of  
Pennsylvania*  
Catherine Tan, *Vassar  
College*

### **Student Council Members**

Mary Shi, *University of  
Michigan*  
Jorge Ochoa,  
*Northwestern University*

## SKAT Committees (2025-2026)

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

**Anti-Racism in SKAT:** Shannon Malone Gonzalez (Chair), Dan Morrison, Jennifer Carrera, Elaine Draper

**Communications:** Jorge Ochoa (Chair), Vasundhara Kaul, Jeba Humayra, Jian Meng, Zahra Abba Omar

**Events:** Larry Au (Chair), Alyson Spurgas, Catherine Tan, Natalie Aviles, Zach Griffen

**Fundraising:** Jill Fisher (Chair), Stephanie Nairn, Claire Decoteau

**Hacker-Mullins Award:** Zach Griffen (Chair), Anabella Afra Boateng, Janna Huang, Torsten Voigt, Janet Vertesi

**Membership:** Benjamin Shestakofsky (Chair), Jeremy Brenner Levoy, Martine Lappé, Kate Burrows

**Mentorship:** Jennifer Singh (Chair), Luciana de Souza Leão, Jina Lee, Gwendolyn Berumen, Ni'Shele Jackson

**Merton Award:** Larry Au (Chair), Kushan Dasgupta, Jordan Brensinger, Catherine Tan

**Star-Nelkin Award:** Sharla Alegria (Chair), Nicole Foti, Amanda Sikirica, Dan Navon

**Program Committee:** Claire Decoteau (Chair), Dan Navon, Joan Robinson, Alex Hanna, Mariana Craciun, Santiago Molina, Mel Jeske, Mary Shi

**Roundtables Committee:** Sutina Chou (Chair), Jingang Lyu, Xinyan Wu

**Virtual Workshop Committee:** Mel Jeske (Chairs Academic Market Workshop), Dan Morrison (Chairs Academic Teaching Workshop), Alex Hanna (Chairs Alt-Ac Workshop), Katherine Furl, Victoria Beckett, Anabella Afra Boateng, Mary Shi, Jane Pryma, dana boyd, Xi Wang

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

### 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](mailto: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

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

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

# SKAT Awardees

## Robert K. Merton Book Award - Winner



**Becker, Andrea.** 2025. *Get It Out: On the Politics of Hysterectomy*. NYU Press.  
<http://nyupress.org/9781479826629/get-it-out/>

The 2026 Robert K. Merton Book Award is given to Andrea Becker's *Get It Out: On the Politics of Hysterectomy*, published in 2025 by NYU Press. The committee was quick to recognize the important contributions that Becker has made to not only the sociology of science, knowledge, and technology, but also to medical sociology, gender studies, reproduction, and other interdisciplinary fields and sociological subfields. The book is timely, and asks important questions about agency and choice amidst rising restrictions, inequality, and surveillance in reproductive healthcare. Focusing on hysterectomies and the different pathways that individuals find themselves into receiving one of the most common yet least discussed gynecological surgeries, the book is empirically rich and draws on interviews with 100 individuals, including women, trans, and nonbinary individuals. Becker carefully and artfully interweaves the voices of her participants into the text, while contextualizing their accounts in the broader history of medicine. Becker shines a light on how medical and reproductive technologies intersect with social identities such as race, class, and gender: For some, hysterectomies are recommended and even coerced, while for others, particularly those who become "unruly patients", this surgical procedure must be fought for. Ultimately, Becker's conclusions challenge researchers, medical professionals, and policymakers to rethink the politics of healthcare.

**Committee:** Larry Au (Chair), Jordan Brensinger, Kushan Dasgupta, and Catherine Tan

**Robert K. Merton Book Award - Honorable Mention**



**Vera, Hector.** 2025. *Yardstick Nation: The Metric System in America*. Vanderbilt University Press. <https://www.vanderbiltuniversitypress.com/9780826507839/yardstick-nation/>

Another standout from this year's submissions is Hector Vera's *Yardstick Nation: The Metric System in America* published by Vanderbilt University Press in 2025. The book tackles the question that any international visitor to the United States asks: "Why does the United States not use the metric system!?". This book answers that question. The answer, as most sophisticated sociological analysis often is, is multilayered and draws on rich comparative and historical sociology to show how a constellation of factors—empire, postcolonial struggles, political identity, expert debates, infrastructures, and more—coalesced in the perpetuation of inches, gallons, and pounds here in the United States. As such, Vera's account shows how measurement is not a neutral act, rather it is deeply bound up with social, political, and economic forces, as well as to the contingencies and timing of historical events. Vera's analysis of American exceptionalism in measurement offers us fellow sociologists a roadmap to understanding other cases of technical standardization.

**Committee:** Larry Au (Chair), Jordan Brensinger, Kushan Dasgupta, and Catherine Tan

Star-Nelkin Paper Award - Winner



**Tsai, Yu-Yueh.** 2024. "Indigenous DNA as a metaphor: Nation-building and scientific debates on the rediscovery of Taiwanese ancestry." *Social Studies of Science* 54(5): 777-802. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03063127241226869>

The article examines the coproduction of science and politics examining how genetic research on Taiwanese ancestry has been co-produced with national identity politics, asserting a distinct Taiwanese national identity that disputes claims of shared ancestry by the People's Republic of China. Tsai shows how genetic science and shifting identity politics in Taiwan have mutually shaped each other, rendering biomedicine and national identity into mutually sustaining national projections. It emphasizes the interplay between scientific findings about the multiple and hybrid origins of Taiwanese people from biomedical laboratories and nation building understandings of that work through media, textbooks, and public debate. The paper is a joy to read with a powerful empirical payoff.

**Committee:** Sharla Alegria (Chair), Nicole Foti, Amanda Sikirica, Dan Navon

### Star-Nelkin Paper Award - Honorable Mention

**Sayegh, Karla, Ann Langley, and Samer Faraj.** 2026. "Unsettling Settled Knowing: Reconciling Differences in Expert Practice." *Organization Science* 37(2):563-93. doi:10.1287/orsc.2021.15859.

This paper examines how neonatal nursing teams with competing expert practices reconcile these divergent practices during a hospital merger. The paper has many merits, but the data collection stands out as an impressive highlight.

**Committee:** Sharla Alegria (Chair), Nicole Foti, Amanda Sikirica, Dan Navon

### Hacker-Mullins Paper Award - Winner



**Sánchez Lopez, Daniela.** "Beyond 12 Weeks: How Abortion Acompañantes in Mexico Produce Subversive Later Abortion Expertise."

The winner of the 2026 Hacker-Mullins Paper Award is Daniela Sánchez Lopez, for her paper "Beyond 12 Weeks: How Abortion Acompañantes in Mexico Produce Subversive Later Abortion Expertise." Sánchez's paper is an ethnographic study of abortion *acompañantes*, or companions, as well as feminist abortion collectives in Mexico following the decriminalization of the procedure in 2023. In the wake of decriminalization, which has been unevenly applied throughout Mexico, Sánchez finds that legal gestational

limits to abortion access also limits what is known about abortion care, which results in knowledge about later abortion that is not only medical, but political, emotional, sociological, and perhaps most importantly, often subversive. The committee found the theoretical framing of the paper in feminist STS, the sociology of ignorance, and social movements to be very clear, and the ethnographic depiction of this clandestine form of expertise was very compelling. Furthermore, the paper advances the notion of "subversive expertise," which is both a worthy contribution to SKAT scholarship that also highlights the broader social impact of Sánchez's work.

**Committee:** Zach Griffen (Chair), Anabella Afra Boateng, Janna Huang, Torsten Voigt, Janet Vertesi, Catherine Bliss

### **Hacker-Mullins Paper Award - Honorable Mention**

**Adetiba, Elizabeth and Adam Reich. 2026.** "The Science of Blackness: Biology and Social Science in Black-Focused Scholarship, 1900-2020." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 12(2): 217-237.

Elizabeth Adetiba's paper, which appears in *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, is an impressive multimethod analysis that shows the waxing and waning of social scientific thinking about Blackness over time. She argues that while contemporary scholarship no longer explicitly links racial inequality to biology, an increase in the language of scholarship on medical and social risk has made more recent research more difficult to challenge.

**Committee:** Zach Griffen (Chair), Anabella Afra Boateng, Janna Huang, Torsten Voigt, Janet Vertesi, Catherine Bliss

### **Hacker-Mullins Paper Award - Honorable Mention**

**Zhou, Jun. 2026.** "Doing Data, Doing Gender: Manufacturing Gendered AI through the Optimization Loop." *Big Data & Society* 13(2). doi: 10.1177/20539517261426453.

Jun Zhou's paper, which just recently appeared in *Big Data & Society*, is a fascinating study of AI streamers in the growing Chinese live-commerce sector. Through ethnographic work with engineers, designers, and brand marketers, Zhou introduces the concept of the *optimization loop* to demonstrate how the gender of AI streamers is recursively tinkered with to meet commercial goals. The committee was especially impressed with how Zhou's work updates classic sociological scholarship about "doing" gender to account for the role of AI.

**Committee:** Zach Griffen (Chair), Anabella Afra Boateng, Janna Huang, Torsten Voigt, Janet Vertesi, Catherine Bliss

### 2026 Emancipatory Practice Award - Winners

**Dr. Alex Hanna and Dr. Timnit Gebru** with the Distributed AI Research Institute (DAIR)

The Emancipatory Practice award recognizes the pursuit of anti-racist social change, either by supporting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities within our subfield or by supporting broader public engagement with SKAT knowledge and principles. The committee has selected Drs. Alex Hanna and Timnit Gebru with Distributed AI Research Institute (DAIR) as this year's winners as their cutting-edge antiracist work on AI technologies embodies these SKAT principles and more. DAIR is at the forefront of addressing issues of access and ethics in AI, and their work with BIPOC communities and technology is critically important and timely. Drs. Gebru and Hanna impressively manage a global team of academics, activists, and engineers who conduct community-grounded research. This work spans many areas, including projects on sovereign language technologies, data workers, and technology governance. Through DAIR, Drs. Hanna and Gebru powerfully use data for change, engaging workers and communities as partners in their research and disseminating information throughout different political, geographic, and linguistic communities via multiple forms of media.

**Anti-Racism in SKAT Committee:** Shannon Malone Gonzalez (Chair), Dan Morrison, Jennifer Carrera, Elaine Draper

### 2026 Ida B. Wells-Troy Duster Paper Award for Early Career Scholar - Winner

**Elizabeth Adetiba**, Early Career Researcher/Assistant Professor, Department of Black Studies, University of Rochester

Adetiba, Elizabeth and Adam Reich. 2026. "The Science of Blackness: Biology and Social Science in Black-Focused Scholarship, 1900-2020." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 12(2): 217-237.

Dr. Elizabeth Adetiba was selected as this year's winner of the 2026 Ida B. Wells-Troy Duster Paper Award for Early Career Scholars. Her paper impressively uses computational and qualitative methods to trace how scholars conceptualize Blackness in research on race and ethnicity. The committee especially appreciated the paper's analysis of work conducted by scholars at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and importantly, highlighting how their work directly challenged eugenicist research in the United States. Published in the *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, Adetiba's article makes important contributions to work at the intersection of race and the sociology of knowledge.

**Anti-Racism in SKAT Committee:** Shannon Malone Gonzalez (Chair), Dan Morrison, Jennifer Carrera, Elaine Draper

### 2026 Ida B. Wells-Troy Duster Paper Award for Early Career Scholar - Honorable Mention

**Santiago J. Molina**, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Northwestern University

Molina, Santiago J. and Melissa Creary. 2025. "The Racial Politics of Visibility and Equity in Genome-editing Therapies for Sickle Cell Disease." *Social Science & Medicine* 383:118452.

Published in *Social Science & Medicine*, the committee selected Dr. Santiago Molina's paper as a co-honorable mention. This article skillfully uses discourse analysis and ethnographic observations to examine

the development and approval of genome-editing therapeutics for sickle cell disease. Molina impressively illustrates the superficial and selective inclusion of Black experts and patients, many of whom cannot afford access to the genome-editing therapies they are discursively used to support. As such, this important article makes a significant contribution to research on racialization and biomedicalization.

**Anti-Racism in SKAT Committee:** Shannon Malone Gonzalez (Chair), Dan Morrison, Jennifer Carrera, Elaine Draper

### **2026 Ida B. Wells-Troy Duster Paper Award for Early Career Scholar - Honorable Mention**

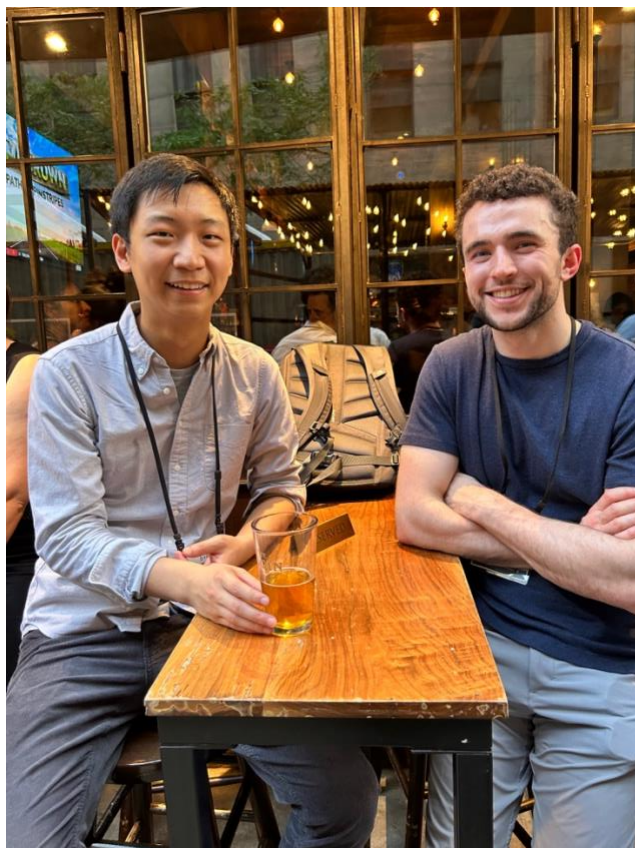
**Sigrid Luhr**, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Illinois at Chicago

Luhr, Sigrid. 2025. "We're Better than Most": Diversity Discourse in the San Francisco Bay Area Tech Industry, *Social Problems* 72(1): 261-276.

Dr. Sigrid Luhr's paper on diversity discourses in the tech industry was selected as a co-honorable mention for this year's award. This impressive article specifically examines how diversity discourses perpetuate the exclusion of Black and Latinx workers from the tech sector. Luhr expertly shows that these companies do this by leveraging diversity discourses to convince workers that their workplaces were diverse, even when there was no change in racial composition. Published in *Social Problems*, Luhr's article makes significant contributions to research on race and organizational inequality.

**Anti-Racism in SKAT Committee:** Shannon Malone Gonzalez (Chair), Dan Morrison, Jennifer Carrera, Elaine Draper

## Scenes from NYC – SKAT Reception



## Scenes from NYC – SKAT Pre-Conference



## Scenes from NYC – SKAT Pre-Conference



# Meet our SKAT Graduate Student and Postdoc Members

Every year we publish profiles of some of our SKAT section student and postdoc members to highlight some of the important work that they are doing. Below, see the bios of eleven of our early career SKAT scholars.

## **Sayan Bhattacharjee, PhD Candidate, Human Centered Design and Engineering, University of Washington**



I'm a doctoral candidate in Human Centered Design and Engineering at the University of Washington, where I study technical systems alongside the people, politics, and institutions that shape them. My dissertation traces the trajectories of two skin tone scales: the Fitzpatrick Skin Type scale and the Monk Skin Tone scale in AI fairness research across imaging, biometrics and dermatological AI. Specifically, I examine the conditions under which social critique becomes technical reform (or not), and how sociological insights are translated into technical instruments. Additionally, I have co-led community focused research for an offshore wind study funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. Across projects spanning AI, energy, and scientific infrastructure, I bring an analytical lens strongly rooted in STS (Science and Technology Studies) and critical computing, skills in employing rigorous qualitative and mixed methods, and a commitment to shaping technology that is equitable and accountable.

Website: <https://sayanbe.com/>

## **Mariia Chetverikova, PhD Candidate, Sociology Department, University of Illinois Chicago**



Mariia Chetverikova is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the University of Illinois Chicago. She studies knowledge under political pressure – how scholarly fields remake themselves in crisis, how cultural production circumvents censorship, and how archives hold the memory of repression and resistance. Her dissertation traces the reconfiguration of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (SEES) in U.S. academia after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, drawing on interviews with displaced and U.S.-based scholars, conference fieldwork, and archival analysis. This year at ASA, she presents "The Double Bind of a Field in Crisis," a paper based on 41 interviews with SEES scholars across the field. It argues that the invasion destabilized an epistemic hierarchy long anchored in Russian institutional prestige, yet change has been uneven: departments face an administrative demand for Russian-centered courses that reliably enroll alongside a scholarly demand to de-center Russian. They manage this by decoupling structure from practice in two opposite directions, extending decoupling theory to organizations answerable to two audiences at once. She will be on the job market next year.

**Margaret R. Eby, Postdoc, Medical Ethics & Health Policy, University of Pennsylvania**



A sociologist by training, I study the construction of ethical responsibility around new technologies from early 20th century eugenics to artificial intelligence in healthcare settings. My work has been published in *Social Science & Medicine*, *Big Data & Society*, *Work and Occupations*, *PLOS One*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, among others.

**Nayun Eom, PhD Student, Department of Sociology, Harvard University**



My research interests center around the political economy of technology, care work, and the welfare state. I am interested in how government and market actors develop technological “solutions” to fill gaps in care labor, including AI and robotics that attempt to automate elderly care. In a recent interview-based study, I examined how welfare agency bureaucrats evaluate care technologies created by startups in the US in the procurement process. My dissertation will expand this to a cross-national project, comparing approaches in the US and East Asia.

In another line of work, I use survey data to examine the impact of workplace automation technologies on the wellbeing of service workers in the US. At the broadest level, I seek to understand the social consequences and implications of the many attempts to replace or augment undervalued human labor with technology.

**Hsu Huang, Postdoc, Center for Economy and Society, SNF Agora Institute, Johns Hopkins University**



I'm a comparative sociologist studying science, knowledge, technology, and political economy in East Asia and Eurasia. I'm currently working on a book project based on my dissertation that examines the emergency COVID-19 vaccine development in China and Russia. I'm concurrently working on a few other projects on the “culling” of individuals in hierarchical organizations across different societies and historical contexts.

**Haley Lepp, PhD Candidate, Education, Stanford University**



I am a PhD candidate at Stanford University studying the relations between the technology industry and higher education institutions. My ethnographic dissertation examines how a group of academic computer science research labs engage with rising industry power, especially as experienced through a collapse in peer review and movement toward fame-based evaluation, the need for “diplomacy” with funders, faculty absenteeism and movement of labs into industry, and the ongoing devaluation of the work of women and racially minoritized researchers. These mechanisms suggest that rather than “democratizing” education, industry influences in this site may contribute to the consolidation of elite social networks. I situate my work at the intersection of Science and Technology Studies, Organizational Theory, and the Sociology of Education. I have also published mixed-methods work on language ideologies and AI adoption for scientific writing, and have a long-standing interest in how English hegemony intertwines with innovation and adoption of new media technologies. My work has been published in ACM FAccT (Best paper award 2025),

Nature Human Behavior, and The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (forthcoming), among other venues. Prior to my PhD, I worked as a Natural Language Processing engineer and built digital education programs for students in Jordan, Iraq, and the U.S. I hold an M.S. in Computational Linguistics and an M.A. in Sociology. I am the chief union steward for graduate workers in Stanford’s Education School, Law School, and Business School.

**Xiaoting Lu, PhD Candidate, Sociology, the University of Virginia**



Xiaoting Lu is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at the University of Virginia. Her research examines how financial institutions, policy expertise, and market devices shape technological and industrial transformation, with a regional focus on China. She is particularly interested in the relationship between finance and technological development: how late-developing economies engage with the knowledge economy, how investors evaluate and shape the digital economy and technology entrepreneurship, and how policymakers distinguish between productive and speculative forms of finance around technological innovation. She approaches finance itself as a set of institutional, calculative, and epistemic technologies. Her work examines how financial logics and infrastructures refigure state capacity and make particular firms and industries visible, valuable, and investable. Her dissertation develops this perspective through a study of the changing role of finance in China’s transition toward innovation-led growth, including the expansion of venture capital and private equity, the political and expert construction of financial risk, and industrial policies to redirect capital toward technology, green industry,

and other policy priorities. Across these projects, she investigates how governments, financiers, and firms define and negotiate value, efficiency, productivity, and risk. More broadly, her academic interests include economic sociology, science and technology studies, political sociology, and the sociology of development. She uses archival and policy research, interviews, and text analysis to study the co-evolution of financial power, technological change, and state capacity.

**Max Lubell, PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, University of Texas at Austin**



Max Lubell is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin. His research uses quantitative and qualitative methods to study the proliferation of surveillance technology in society. Specifically, he focuses on how a private marketplace of consumer surveillance products (e.g., Ring, Vivint, and SimpliSafe) and algorithmically driven neighborhood platforms (e.g., Neighbors, Nextdoor, and Facebook) provide ordinary citizens with a set of tools for enhancing community safety. His work shows how digital participatory surveillance can simultaneously foster collective efficacy between neighbors and racial criminalization through online narratives that mark people of color as “suspicious” persons. He situates this work in suburban neighborhoods undergoing racial and socioeconomic change that he shows are associated with higher surveillance activity. Accordingly, this project shows how the retreat from overt forms of suburban segregation is accompanied by subtler forms of digital gatekeeping that allow suburbs to achieve formal integration while maintaining local racial and class hierarchies. Max approaches his research as a mixed methodologist, drawing on spatial

analysis, interviews, and ethnographic observations to connect broad patterns of social stratification to the social forces that reproduce them. In doing so, his work highlights how major shifts in American society—the advent of surveillance technology and growth in racial diversity—converge to reproduce social inequality. More broadly, his research agenda explains how algorithmic, smart home, and automated technologies are reshaping the social institutions that structure everyday life. As scholars debate the extent to which American communities are characterized by increasing social isolation, his work shows how digital technologies create active forums for neighborhood interactions and the enforcement of symbolic boundaries. Max’s research has received external funding and awards from the National Science Foundation, American Sociological Association, and Horowitz Foundation for Social Policy.

**Teddy Zamborsky, PhD Student, Sociology Department, Columbia University**



Teddy Zamborsky is a second year PhD student in the Sociology Department at Columbia University. His research examines the relationship between scientific theories of pain and the death penalty in the USA. His work draws on science and technology studies, sociology of expertise, and sociology of medicine. He also organizes a working group on the sociology of death (feel free to email if you'd like to participate). He is broadly interested in interview and archival methods as well as text based computational methods. Teddy earned his MSc in Science, Technology and Society at University College London in 2024. Prior to pursuing his master’s, he worked in the tech industry for five years and earned his B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Chicago.

**Jun Zhou, PhD Candidate, Sociology, University of Michigan**



Jun Zhou is a doctoral candidate in Sociology at the University of Michigan, with a graduate certificate in Science, Technology, and Society. Spanning economic sociology, gender, labor, and STS, her research is unified by an interest in the gendered foundations of political economy. A historical and comparative ethnographer, she pairs fieldwork with archival research to ask how the digital revolution is remaking women's labor, and with it, inequality and family life. Her dissertation, *Dancing with Metrics: The Digitalization of Women's Labor in China*, examines China's trillion-dollar live-commerce industry, the largest platform employer of women in the world, through five years of research, including fifteen months of fieldwork in Hangzhou, embedded work as a livestreaming assistant, and 141 interviews. Tracing what she calls the "'metricization of work,'" the reorganization of labor around continuous measurement, the dissertation follows metrics from the labor markets platform firms design, through the gendered labor performed inside them, to the automation of that labor by AI and its reach into intimate life. Her research on how AI avatars are built from the very

metrics that rate the women they replace received an honorable mention for SKAT's Hacker-Mullins Student Paper Award, and related articles appear in *Work and Occupations* and *Big Data & Society*. Jun is on the 2026-27 academic job market and will be at ASA; she'd love to connect.

**Shira Zilberstein, Postdoc, Princeton University**



Shira Zilberstein is a post-doctoral associate at Princeton University. Her research investigates the moral and organizational foundations of knowledge production, with particular attention to how science and technology are used to define and address social problems. Her current work focuses on the development and governance of AI models for healthcare. Using qualitative methods, she studies how researchers and practitioners justify and seek to ensure the "goodness" of their pursuits. She is especially interested in how research communities navigate uncertainty and sustain commitments to technological innovation in the face of contested outcomes and recognized limitations. Shira holds a PhD in sociology from Harvard University, where she was a Science and Technology Studies Fellow and a BA in Sociology and History from Northwestern University. In addition to her academic scholarship, she has collaborated with researchers at MIT, Duke, and Yale on projects related to the development and governance of healthcare AI. At

Princeton, she is affiliated with the Center for Information Technology Policy and the Princeton Societal AI Initiative.

# Problem Convergence in Practice: Sports, Military, and Gender Disparities

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

In our [first article](#) in this series, we introduced **problem convergence** as a social process in which previously separate communities of scientists, researchers, and activists coalesce around a shared [work object](#). Our focus is on traumatic brain injury (TBI), which can result in chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), poor health, disability, and death.

In this second research brief, we describe an example of problem convergence in action, the [NCAA-DOD Grand Alliance Concussion Assessment, Research, and Education \(CARE\) Consortium](#). Launched in 2014, the study has enrolled athletes from 30 universities and students at four US military service academies. NCAA athletes participate in a range of sports, from football to soccer, cross-country to rowing at institutions as diverse as Humboldt State, Winston-Salem State, Pittsburgh, Azusa Pacific, Wake Forest, UCLA, UNC, and the University of Pennsylvania.

For most of their histories, sports medicine and military medicine were distinct enterprises, funded separately, with little overlap in research populations, research questions, and medical/research staff. [Andrews and Abbasian](#) (2024) trace the history of sports medicine back to Herodicus, through Harvard Medical School in the late nineteenth century, to the establishment of professional organizations in the twentieth century. Military medicine is, in some ways, as old as modern war, though for centuries, the injured and dead were mostly left on battlefields. The [Napoleonic era](#) brought medicine to the frontlines. One thing both sports medicine and military medicine had in common: returning the injured to the field for further action.

The CARE consortium represents an important shift in bringing these fields together. Led by the University of Michigan, Indiana University, the Medical College of Wisconsin, and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, the project has received more than \$100M in funding. The first study enrolled 11,000 participants, the second around 700. Of these, nearly 1,900 reported a concussion, approximately 11% of the full sample. This first-tier study focused on short-term consequences of concussion, measured up to one year following injury. The second tier sought to define intermediate and cumulative effects of concussion and/or head impacts from one to five years after injury or exposure. The third tier, called CARE-SALTOS Integrated, follows athletes and service members up to 10 years after injury or exposure.

The main goal of each tier/study is to describe effects of concussion across each of these time horizons, tracking outcomes, diagnostic efforts, machine learning applications, return-to-play and return-to-learn, and much more. To date, more than 53,000 student-athletes and cadets have been studied, approximately 60 percent men and 40 percent women. Research conducted by Consortium members has resulted in [140+ publications](#) since 2017.

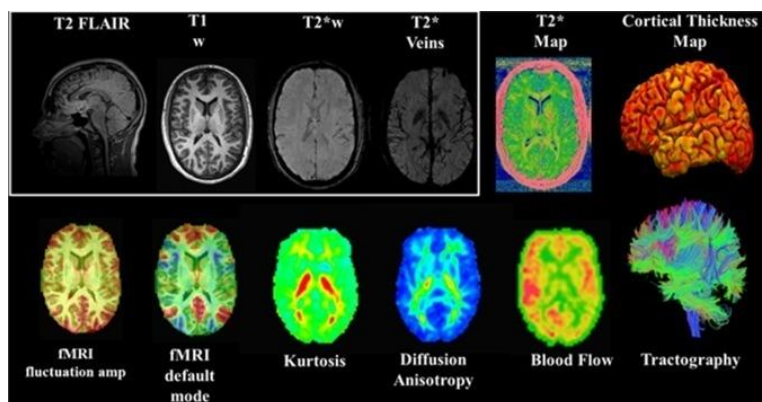


Image Source: [Broglia et al 2017](#)

Our commitments to feminist STS research oriented towards social change led us to examine these studies with a special focus on gender differences in exposure, symptoms, and outcomes. While that review is ongoing, we highlight a few studies that examine sex and gender alongside outcomes. For example, a 2021 study on Sport-Related Concussion (SRC) in college athletes confirmed what many readers might expect: concussions are most likely among men playing American football. Among women, concussion was most common for those playing soccer, volleyball, and basketball. Several studies document gendered differences in reporting, symptom onset, severity of symptoms, recovery time, and other outcomes. Commonly documented differences include delayed symptom onset, delayed reporting, and longer recovery times for women compared to men.

Broglia and colleagues found [statistically significant differences](#) regarding reporting and recovery, with men reporting a return to participation protocols earlier than women, and a shorter recovery time than women. The authors suggest biological factors may be at play, but also note that women may be more willing to disclose ongoing symptoms than men. Other scholars cite prior research showing that women cadets take more time to return to practice protocols, and that women [report their symptoms differently than men](#). In a particularly compelling example, one subset of CARE Consortium researchers focused on [1,947 cadets who experienced over 2,200 concussions](#) from 2015 to 2019 while at a US service academy. In this cohort, men were more likely to report easily recognized symptoms such as altered mental status, posttraumatic amnesia, and retrograde amnesia; women were less likely to report their injury immediately, and were slower to recover relative to men. The authors report that their findings may be associated with sport type: men were more likely to play full contact (e.g. American football and lacrosse) sports relative to women ([Kelly, Caccese, Jain, et al. 2024](#)). Delays in reporting may indicate another possibility: women are intentionally underreporting concussions due to the culture of the US military and women's under-representation in the academies. Reporting such an injury may result in academic and interpersonal sanctions.

Another [study](#) from the CARE Consortium on university student athletes across 22 sports found that approximately 9% of men and 7% of women reported at least one concussion during their participation in the study. Research on race and ethnicity in this body of work is less common overall, but this same study reported that Black and multiracial student athletes had statistically significantly higher odds of experiencing a sport-related concussion than White student athletes.

These studies reveal not only the extent of brain injury and gendered differences in symptoms and reporting, but also the benefits of researching populations across domains, here sports and the military. Understanding how injured cadets and student athletes navigate TBI, including recovery and return to practice/play, deepens our understanding of the scope of injury and recovery, including gendered dimensions. Shared data may also facilitate improved prevention and recovery protocols.

In our next and final research brief, we will discuss traumatic brain injury resulting from intimate partner violence (IPV), and document the ways TBI and IPV researchers have come together through the nonprofit organization [Pink Concussions](#).

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

# Recent Publications from Section Members

## New Articles

- Becker, Andréa.** 2026. "Hegseth's Testosterone Program Is a Disservice to Men." *The Nation*, August 4. <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/hegseth-testosterone-disservice/>
- Birch, Kean.** 2026. "Tech Oligarchy." *Science as Culture* 0(0):1-17. doi:[10.1080/09505431.2026.2691792](https://doi.org/10.1080/09505431.2026.2691792).
- Brandt, Emma E. S.** 2026. "Mirrors and Messaging: The Role of Media in Serbia's Protests, 2023-2025." *Filozofija i Društvo/Philosophy and Society* 37(1):99-120. doi:[10.2298/FID2601099B](https://doi.org/10.2298/FID2601099B).
- Chiarello, Elizabeth, Kelley Fong, and Josh Seim.** 2026. "Handing Off: Frontline Redistribution of Work." *American Sociological Review* 91(4):651-73. doi:[10.1177/00031224261454367](https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224261454367).
- Crooke, Catherine L.** 2026. "Participant Observation in the 21st Century: How the Digital Dimension Matters for All Ethnographers." *Qualitative Research* 26(2):457-77. doi:[10.1177/14687941261420113](https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941261420113).
- Kim, Theodore, Alexa Schor, Julian Posada, and Alka Menon.** 2026. "The Racial Character of Computer Graphics Research." Pp. 1946-78 in *Proceedings of the 2026 ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency, FAccT '26*. New York, NY, USA: Association for Computing Machinery.
- King, Molly M., and Jeffrey W. Lockhart.** 2026. "Sharing Knowledge Openly: Author Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Feminist Science." *Gender & Society* 40(4):508-34. doi:[10.1177/08912432261453086](https://doi.org/10.1177/08912432261453086).
- Li, Zhuofan, Daniel Dohan, and Corey M. Abramson.** 2026. "Temporal Misalignment and Unequal Agency: What Terminal Cancer Patients Teach Us about Time and Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 91(4):545-71. doi:[10.1177/00031224261448220](https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224261448220).
- Aviles, Natalie, and Janet Vertesi.** 2026. "Merton Redux: Re-Confronting the Norms of Science in Democracy." *Issues in Science and Technology*. <https://issues.org/merton-redux-aviles-vertesi/>.
- Tubi, Omri.** 2026. "Calamitous States: War, Health, and Crisis in Mandate Palestine." *Social Science History* 1-24. doi:[10.1017/ssh.2026.10134](https://doi.org/10.1017/ssh.2026.10134).
- Tubi, Omri.** 2026. "Colonization Fever: Malaria and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882 to 1914." *American Sociological Review* 91(3):519-44. doi:[10.1177/00031224261439738](https://doi.org/10.1177/00031224261439738).
- Van Pelt, Craig.** 2026. "Cyberzombies and the Afterlife of Thought: Dead Labor, AI, and the Necropolis of Capital." *Fast Capitalism* 23(1). doi:[10.32855/1930-014X.1504](https://doi.org/10.32855/1930-014X.1504).
- Vertesi, Janet, danah boyd, Alex Taylor, and Benjamin Shestakofsky.** 2026. "Reckoning with the Political Economy of AI: Avoiding Decoys in Pursuit of Accountability."

**Zhou, Jun.** 2026. "Doing Data, Doing Gender: Manufacturing Gendered AI Through the Optimization Loop." *Big Data & Society* 13(2):20539517261426453. doi:[10.1177/20539517261426453](https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517261426453).

**Zilberstein, Shira.** 2026. "Jurisdictional Gerrymandering: The Authority of Problems Without Solutions." *Social Problems*. doi:[10.1093/socpro/spag024](https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spag024).

## **Special Issue: What Is Sociological About AI?**

**Davis, Jenny L., and Mona Sloane.** 2026. "AI's Sociological Era." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):3-9. doi:[10.1177/08944393251394690](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251394690).

**Baert, Patrick, Robert Dorschel, Meredith Hall, Isabelle Higgins, Ella McPherson, and Shannon Philip.** 2026. "Dialogues Towards Sociologies of Generative AI." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):59-79. doi:[10.1177/08944393251370354](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251370354).

**Bohner, Jason, and Janet Vertesi.** 2026. "Towards a Socioeconomics of Hype: Hype Dynamics and Symbolic Boundary Work Within the Speculative AI Bubble." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):10-28. doi:[10.1177/08944393251361935](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251361935).

**Hardcastle, Faranak, Kathryn Henne, Jenna Imad Harb, Ashlin Lee, John Noel Viana, and Susan Halford.** 2026. "Unblackboxing How Sociotemporalities Inform AI Accountability: The Case of Targeted Advertising." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):131-49. doi:[10.1177/08944393251365275](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251365275).

**Harvey, Maxime.** 2026. "Artificial Intelligence and the Social Scientist: The Mediation of Alfied Creative Sites." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):80-91. doi:[10.1177/08944393251361457](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251361457).

**Lepp, Haley, and AJ Alvero.** 2026. "Linguistic Affordances Framework: A Linguistic-Sociological Approach for the Social Study of Language Technology." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):100-115. doi:[10.1177/08944393251366242](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251366242).

**López, Claudia, Francisca Luco, Mónica Humeres, and Teresa Correa.** 2026. "Performing Productivity: Exploring the Narratives of State-Funded AI Projects Over a Decade in Chile." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):29-50. doi:[10.1177/08944393251361444](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251361444).

**Moradi, Pegah, Karen Levy, and Elizabeth Chiarello.** 2026. "Goffmanian 'Cooling' in Technology-Mediated Frontline Enforcement Work." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):51-58. doi:[10.1177/08944393251361938](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251361938).

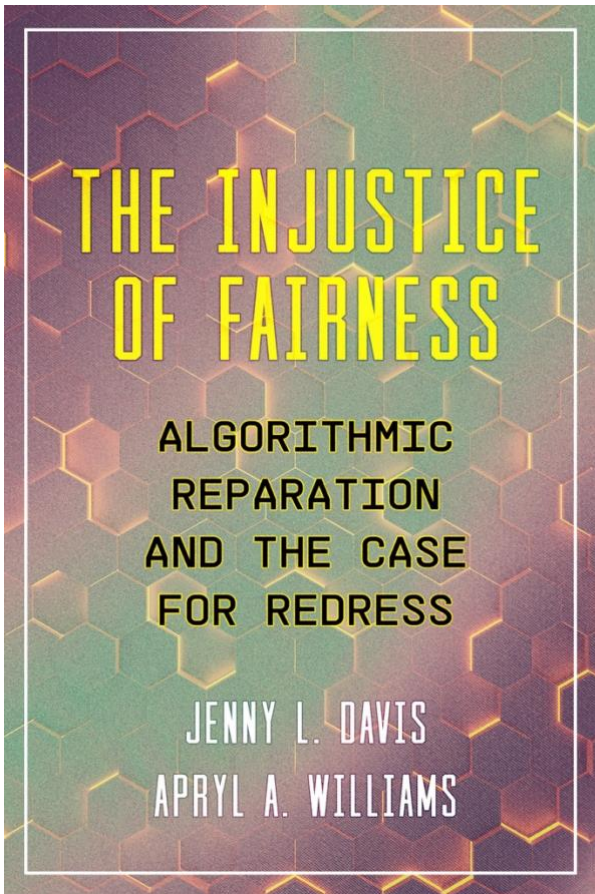
**Orr, Will.** 2026. "Ghosts in the Data: The Contested Politics of Absence in Data Infrastructures." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):116-30. doi:[10.1177/08944393251365277](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251365277).

**Smith, Naomi, and Clare Southerton.** 2026. "AI and Aesthetic Alienation: The Image and Creativity in Contemporary Culture." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):170-79. doi:[10.1177/08944393251361449](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251361449).

**Zanger-Tishler, Michael, and Simone Zhang.** 2026. "The Sociology of Technical Choices in Predictive AI." *Social Science Computer Review* 44(1):150-69. doi:[10.1177/08944393251367045](https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393251367045).

## New Books

**Davis, Jenny and Apryl Williams, Editors.** 2026. *The Injustice of Fairness: Algorithmic Reparation and the Case for Redress*. University of California Press. <https://www.ucpress.edu/books/the-injustice-of-fairness/paper>



Book Cover (from University of California Press)

"*The Injustice of Fairness* shifts the foundation of algorithmic ethics, displacing 'fairness' with repair and redress. A substantial and growing field, algorithmic ethics aims to mitigate harms and realize social good. The fairness paradigm dominates this field across AI, machine learning, and other data-driven domains. So far, efforts toward fairness have been unsuccessful, with algorithmic harms that propagate and persist. Jenny L. Davis and Apryl A. Williams explain why algorithmic fairness perpetually fails and present "algorithmic reparation" in its place.

The stakes are high because algorithms are everywhere—from law to love, healthcare to housing, education to media, and beyond. More than lines of code or mathematical operations, algorithms carry history, configure the present, and are actively shaping the future. Set against a backdrop of societal instability and technological transformation, *The Injustice of Fairness* offers a careful critique, original framework, and blueprint for social change with algorithms as entry points and levers."

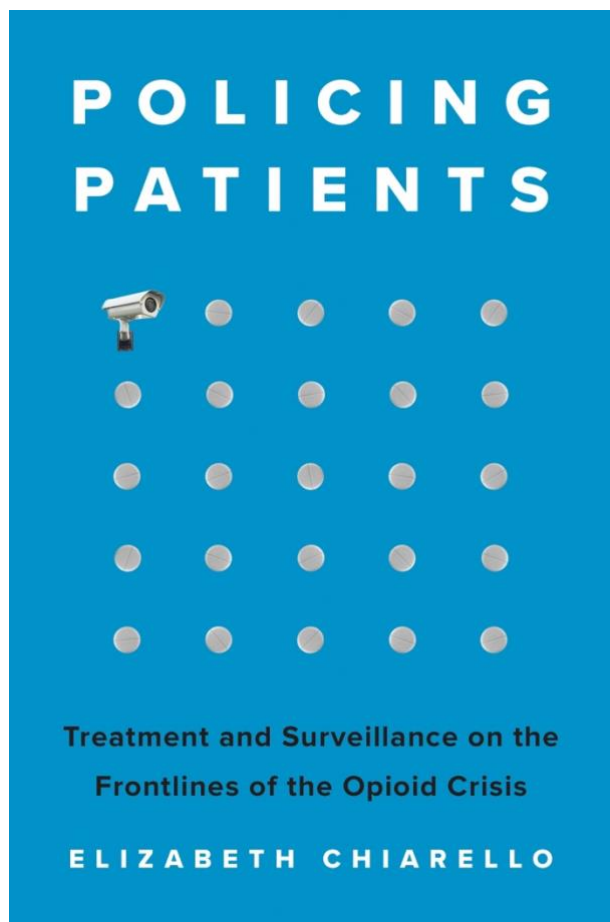
"**Jenny L. Davis** is Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Chair and Professor of Sociology at Vanderbilt University and Honorary Professor of Sociology at the Australian National University. Blending sociology with tech studies, she explores the ways design shapes society and society shapes design. Her previous book, *How Artifacts Afford*, decodes how politics and power are embedded in everyday technologies."

"**Apryl A. Williams** is Associate Professor of Digital Studies and Communication at the University of Michigan and Faculty Associate at Harvard University's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society. Her previous book, *Not My Type*, offers a powerful critique of how technology replicates and amplifies real-world social inequities in digital culture."

All text quoted from: <https://www.ucpress.edu/books/the-injustice-of-fairness/paper>

**Chiarello, Elizabeth.** 2026. *Policing Patients: Treatment and Surveillance on the Frontlines of the Opioid Crisis*. Princeton University Press.

<https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691224770/policing-patients>



Book Cover (from Princeton University Press)

Now out in audiobook and paperback.

"Doctors and pharmacists make critical decisions every day about whether to dispense opioids that alleviate pain but fuel addiction. Faced with a drug crisis that has already claimed more than a million lives, legislatures, courts, and policymakers have enlisted the help of technology in the hopes of curtailing prescriptions and preventing deaths. This book reveals how this 'Trojan horse' technology embeds the logics of surveillance in the practice of medicine, forcing care providers to police their patients while undermining public trust and doing untold damage to those at risk.

Elizabeth Chiarello draws on hundreds of in-depth interviews with physicians, pharmacists, and enforcement agents across the United States to take readers to the frontlines of the opioid crisis, where medical providers must make difficult choices between treating and punishing the people in their care. States now employ prescription drug monitoring programs capable of tracking all controlled substances within a state and across state lines. Chiarello describes how the reliance on these databases blurs the line between medicine and criminal justice and pits pain sufferers against people with substance-use disorders in a zero-sum game. Shedding critical light on this brave new world of healthcare, *Policing Patients* urges medical providers to reaffirm their roles as healers and proposes invaluable policy solutions centered on treatment, prevention, and harm reduction."

**"Elizabeth Chiarello** is associate professor of sociology at Saint Louis University, a former fellow at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute, and a frequent public commentator on opioid-related topics. She and her work have been featured in The New York Times and USA Today, among other leading media outlets. Her work has been supported by the National Science Foundation."

All quoted text from: <https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691224770/policing-patients>