

Table of Contents

From the Section Chair 1
 SKAT Section Awards 2
 SKAT Section Program in Atlanta 3
 SKAT-Related Sessions in Atlanta 3
 Recent Dissertations 3
 New Books 4
 Member News and Publications 6
 Book Review, Susan E. Bell's *DES Daughters* 7
 Call for Papers 8
 Employment and Fellowships 9
 SKAT Officers 11

Science, Knowledge, and Technology

From the Section Chair: SKAT and the Public

I came to the sociology of science and STS in the first half of 1985 through a graduate assistantship that involved study of the biotechnology industry. High technology and venture capital was beginning to re-make the US economy, but I am pretty sure terms like the “new knowledge economy” were not in widespread use, and I certainly had no idea that technoscience would come to so completely saturate the media and the broader public imagination. Today, there is little question that the many topics explored by scholars affiliated with the SKAT section are central elements of our social landscape, and our analyses are potentially of broad social importance. We have the opportunity to raise the quality of public debate through discussion of such topics as healthcare reform and the BP deep sea oil disaster. On the latter, topics such as the proprietary character of BP’s knowledge and the “normalization of disaster” are ripe for analysis by SKAT members. In the years to come, I hope we will see work on such topics featured in sociology journals, STS journals.

But beyond these scholarly outlets, I want to encourage members of SKAT to seek to publish in periodicals that reach beyond the scholarly community. I fully realize that publication in general audience venues don’t count for much in tenure and promotion decisions (at least at research one institutions) and that we often don’t hold our colleagues in higher esteem for publishing in their local newspapers or on current event blogs. And yet, doing so is a means to reach wide audiences and conceivably a way to (re) define the contour of some public discussions. Plus, there is an opportunity for some immediate gratification, something rare in the academy. Last fall, in the week after I published a piece in our local newspaper, people I knew from assorted walks of life commented on the article. I had several interesting discussions. By contrast, it takes years before my scholarly publications get any significant response.

There are other reasons to do this kind of work. As important and pleasurable as contributing to scholarly debate is, we offer angles of vision on technoscience that are commonplace among our colleagues, but heard relatively rarely in public discussion. What is more, this isn’t an either/ or situation. Research can do double duty. It is possible to write for journal or book publication and produce shorter pieces, lighter on jargon, for broader audiences. There are opportunities too to speak to high school students and

at public libraries and similar venues. These are places to have not insignificant impacts, and this work can feed back into one's undergraduate teaching by pushing us to think about how to communicate our ideas to non-specialists.

There is another important reason to consider writing for non-scholarly outlets: legitimacy. I am sure there is great variation across the country, but in Wisconsin, where I work, many of our legislators and, indeed, state citizens don't see the university as primarily a relatively autonomous space for the production of "basic" research; they see the university as a school for educating the state's young people and a facility for solving real life problems. By writing for audiences beyond our colleagues, we can make a plausible case that we are addressing issues of broad public concern, and at a time when elected officials continue to look for places to tighten fiscal belts, our public service may spare us some of the worst of the budget ax.

Certainly, the topics of several of the SKAT sessions this August would lend themselves to discussion outside of the ASA hotels. The talks we'll hear in Atlanta are going to be very stimulating, I'm sure, and many, in expanded form, will end up in our leading journals. But I hope also that SKAT members presenting work at ASA will craft that work in forms that will be accessible to broader audiences. Indeed, perhaps all of us would do well to commit ourselves over the next year to writing one piece for a popular venue or giving one talk to a broad community audience.

Daniel Lee Kleinman
Department of Community and Environmental Sociology
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SKAT chair

SKAT Section Awards

The Robert K. Merton Award goes to **Gabriela Soto Laveaga** for her 2009 book *Jungle Laboratories: Mexican Peasants, National Projects and the Making of the Pill*. Laveaga's book is published by Duke University Press.

The Merton Award Committee received many excellent nominations and elected to recognize **Marion Fourcade** with *honorable mention* for her 2009 book, *Economists and Societies: Discipline and Profession in the United States, Britain, and France, 1890s to 1990s*. *Economists and Societies* is published by Princeton University Press.

The winner of this year's Hacker Mullins Student Paper Award winner is **Owen Whooley** for his paper "Diagnostic Ambivalence: Psychiatric Workabouts and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Whooley's paper appears in the March 2010 issue of *Sociology of Health and Illness*.

Thanks to our awards committees for their thoughtful and diligent work:
Merton Award Committee: Jackie Orr (chair), Elizabeth Popp Berman, and Libby Schweber.
Hacker Mullins Award Committee: Sydney Halperin (chair), Mathieu Albert, and Abby Kinchy



SKAT Section Program in Atlanta

Monday, August 16, 2010

- 1) 2:30-4:10: "The Field of Science: Capital, Habitus, and the Struggle for Power"
- 2) 6:30-8:15: SKAT Section Reception

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

- 1) 8:30-10:10: "Knowledge about the Economy: Creating it and Using it"
- 2) 10:30-11:30: SKAT Roundtables
- 3) 11:30-12:10: SKAT Business Meeting and Awards Presentation
- 4) 12:30-2:10: "Science, Medicine, Race and (In)Justice"
- 5) 2:30-4:10: "Science, Technology, and the Struggle for Human Rights"

SKAT-Related Sessions in Atlanta

Saturday, August 14, 2010

- 1) 10:30-12:10: Author Meets Critic Session. "Medical Research for Hire: The Political Economy of Pharmaceutical Clinical Trials (Rutgers University Press), by Jill A. Fisher"
- 2) 10:30-12:10: Thematic Session. "The Uses of Identity."
- 3) 2:30-4:10: Thematic Session. "Technologies of Citizenship: The Regulation of Identity, Mobility, and Belonging."

Recent Dissertations

Jia-shin Chen (Jia-Shin.Chen@ucsf.edu)

PhD: Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of California, San Francisco, December 2009

Title: "Assembling Harm Reduction Policy in Taiwan"

This dissertation analyzes the process in which harm reduction was formulated and implemented as a health policy against HIV transmission among injection drug users. Jia-shin situates this biopolitical project in the socio-historical context of drug control policy in Taiwan and examines how the formed governmentality is predicated on the neoliberal notions of modern subjects. As knowledge and power are intertwined, he also examines the formation of new expertise in harm reduction and the burgeoning conditional citizenship of drug users as significant parts of this new assemblage. Elaborating the idea of assemblages, Jia-shin critically analyzes the process of policy transplantation. In the end he concludes his dissertation by raising several pivotal issues for science and technology studies (STS) scholars who aim to understand the entanglement of contemporary policy and science, especially in a non-Western context.

Jennifer S. Singh, (jennifer.singh@ucsf.edu)

PhD: Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of California, San Francisco
Title: "Autism Spectrum Disorders: Parents, Scientists, and Interpretations of Genetic Knowledge"

This dissertation is a sociological study of the cultural, social and scientific representations of autism genetics. Over the last decade, there has been an increase in the awareness and prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and efforts to identify the causes and etiology of this disorder have been unprecedented, particularly in genetics research. To address the implications of genetic knowledge of autism, this dissertation maps out, identifies and ultimately compares the various genetic interpretations in four different autism spectrum disorder (ASD) sites, including: health social movements concerned with autism and autism genetics ASD; scientists of various disciplines who study autism genetics; parents with ASD children that participate in genetics research; and individuals experiencing ASD. Based on over fifty interviews with scientists, parents, and individuals with autism, and the incorporation of grounded theory methods, this dissertation literally "follows the DNA" in order to trace the heterogeneous processes of many institutions, people, theories, materials and practices involved in the production and representations of autism genetics.

New Books

Elaine Howard Ecklund, *Science vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think* (Oxford University Press, 2010)

That the longstanding antagonism between science and religion is irreconcilable has been taken for granted. And in the wake of recent controversies over teaching intelligent design and the ethics of stem-cell research, the divide seems as unbridgeable as ever.

In *Science vs. Religion*, Elaine Howard Ecklund investigates this unexamined assumption in the first systematic study of what scientists actually think and feel about religion. In the course of her research, Ecklund surveyed nearly 1,700 scientists and interviewed 275 of them. She finds that most of what we believe about the faith lives of elite scientists is wrong. Nearly 50 percent of them are religious. Many others are what she calls "spiritual entrepreneurs," seeking creative ways to work with the tensions between science and faith outside the constraints of traditional religion. The book centers around vivid portraits of 10 representative men and women working in the natural and social sciences at top American research universities. Ecklund's respondents run the gamut from Margaret, a chemist who teaches a Sunday-school class, to Arik, a physicist who chose not to believe in God well before he decided to become a scientist. Only a small minority are actively hostile to religion. Ecklund reveals how scientists-believers and skeptics alike-are struggling to engage the increasing number of religious students in their classrooms and argues that many scientists are searching for "boundary pioneers" to cross the picket lines separating science and religion.

With broad implications for education, science funding, and the thorny ethical questions surrounding stem-cell research, cloning, and other cutting-edge scientific endeavors, *Science vs. Religion* brings a welcome dose of reality to the science and religion debates.



<http://www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/ReligionTheology/SociologyofReligion/?view=usa&ci=9780195392982>

Matthias Groß, *Ignorance and Surprise: Science, Society, and Ecological Design* (MIT University Press, 2010)

Ignorance and surprise belong together: surprises can make people aware of their own ignorance. And yet, perhaps paradoxically, a surprising event in scientific research—one that defies prediction or risk assessment—is often a window to new and unexpected knowledge. In this book, Matthias Gross examines the relationship between ignorance and surprise, proposing a conceptual framework for handling the unexpected and offering case studies of ecological design that demonstrate the advantages of allowing for surprises and including ignorance in the design and negotiation processes.

Gross draws on classical and contemporary sociological accounts of ignorance and surprise in science and ecology and integrates these with the idea of experiment in society. He develops a notion of how unexpected occurrences can be incorporated into a model of scientific and technological development that includes the experimental handling of surprises. Gross discusses different projects in ecological design, including Chicago's restoration of the shoreline of Lake Michigan and Germany's revitalization of brownfields near Leipzig. These cases show how ignorance and surprise can successfully play out in ecological design projects, and how the acknowledgment of the unknown can become a part of decision making. The appropriation of surprises can lead to robust design strategies. Ecological design, Gross argues, is neither a linear process of master planning nor a process of trial and error but a carefully coordinated process of dealing with unexpected turns by means of experimental practice.

<http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?type=2&tid=12180>

Torin Monahan, *Surveillance in the Time of Insecurity* (Rutgers University Press, 2010)

Threats of terrorism, natural disaster, identity theft, job loss, illegal immigration, and even biblical apocalypse—all are perils that trigger alarm in people today. Although there may be a factual basis for many of these fears, they do not simply represent objective conditions. Feelings of insecurity are instilled by politicians and the media, and sustained by urban fortification, technological surveillance, and economic vulnerability.

Surveillance in the Time of Insecurity fuses advanced theoretical accounts of state power and neoliberalism with original research from the social settings in which insecurity dynamics play out in the new century. Torin Monahan explores the counterterrorism-themed show 24, Rapture fiction, traffic control centers, security conferences, public housing, and gated communities, and examines how each manifests complex relationships of inequality, insecurity, and surveillance. Alleviating insecurity requires that we confront its mythic dimensions, the politics inherent in new configurations of security provision, and the structural obstacles to achieving equality in societies.

http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/acatalog/Surveillance_in_the_time_of_insecurity.html

Gayle Sulik, *Pink Ribbon Blues: How Breast Culture Undermines Women's Health* (Oxford University Press, 2010)

Pink ribbon paraphernalia saturate shopping malls, billboards, magazines, television, and other venues, all in the name of breast cancer awareness. In this compelling and provocative work, Gayle Sulik shows that though this "pink ribbon culture" has brought breast cancer advocacy much attention, it has not had the desired effect of improving women's health. It may, in fact, have done the opposite. Based on eight years of research, analysis of advertisements and breast cancer awareness campaigns, and hundreds of interviews with those affected by the disease, *Pink Ribbon Blues* highlights the hidden costs of the pink ribbon as an industry, one in which breast cancer has become merely a brand name with a pink logo. Indeed, while survivors and supporters walk, run, and purchase ribbons for a cure, cancer rates rise, the cancer industry thrives, corporations claim responsible citizenship while profiting from the disease, and breast cancer is stigmatized anew for those who reject the pink ribbon model. But Sulik also outlines alternative organizations that make a real difference, highlights what they do differently, and presents a new agenda for the future.

<http://www.us.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Medicine/Oncology/?view=usa&view=usa&ci=9780199740451>

<http://www.pinkribbonblues.org/>

Hot Off the Press: Section Member News and Publications

Riley Dunlap has recently published two pieces with colleagues:

Dunlap, Riley E. and Aaron M. McCright. 2010. "Climate Change Denial: Sources, Actors and Strategies." Pp. 240-259 in Constance Lever-Tracy (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Climate Change and Society*. London: Routledge.

McCright, Aaron M. and Riley E. Dunlap. 2010. "Anti-Reflexivity: The American Conservative Movement's Success in Undermining Climate Science and Policy." *Theory, Culture and Society* 26:100-133.

Joan Fujimura and colleagues Ramya Rajagopalan, Pilar Ossorio and Kjell Doksum have written a paper on the intersections of "race" and "ancestry" in human genetic variation research. Their paper, "Race and Ancestry: Operationalizing Populations in Human Genetic Variation Studies" is part of a volume published recently by MIT Press entitled *What's the Use of Race? Modern Governance and the Biology of Difference* (2010).

Fujimura and Rajagopalan have also written an article which was recently accepted in the journal *Social Studies of Science*. The article, "Different differences: The use of "genetic ancestry" versus race in biomedical human genetic research," will be published later in 2010.

David Hess has worked with a team of eight graduate students to host a summer training seminar, funded by the STS Program of the National Science Foundation, in STS and energy studies. Students came from RPI, Loyola University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Virginia Tech, University of Illinois, and Antioch University. The team has produced a white paper on state and local government policies that bring together environmental and economic development efforts to create green jobs. The full report is available at <http://www.davidjhess.org> after July 23.

Book Review

Susan E. Bell, *DES Daughters: Embodied Knowledge and the Transformation of Women's Health Politics* (Temple University Press, 2009)

Reviewed by: Melissa Gesbeck-Howell, Loyola University Chicago (mhowell1@luc.edu)

In her history of the feminist DES health movement, Susan E. Bell tells the story of an accidental disease born of medical technology and the embodied health movement that grew from it. By employing a complex narrative analysis framework and situating the DES movement within embodied health movements and feminist health scholarship, Bell presents a compelling case study in the production of knowledge and the way power over knowledge production can shift in congruence with larger political and social change.

Diethylstilbestrol (DES) was widely prescribed to pregnant women between 1941 and the 1970s to prevent miscarriage and otherwise ensure healthy pregnancies. The daughters who were exposed to DES in utero have suffered from rare vaginal cancers and malformations in their reproductive organs, causing miscarriages, ectopic pregnancies, and other suffering. These women's conditions are so distinctive as to be ascribed the identity "DES daughters." What makes the DES case study unique among studies of health social movements is that the condition around which this movement is situated is itself a creation of the medical industry.

Throughout, Bell highlights the interactions between the medical field and patient/advocates, situating them against the historical and political backdrop of the women's health and women's liberation movements. By integrating a painstaking narrative analysis of in-depth interviews, conference proceedings, and the deep archives of an activist newsletter, Bell gives voice to the women whose varied identities, relationships with their deviant bodies, and orientation to medical and scientific authority reflect generational social changes in women's empowerment. Through the efforts of DES activists and their scientist allies to set research agendas, the subjugated knowledge of the DES daughters has emerged to challenge and shape future understandings of their condition.

Narrative analysis has the potential for bringing together an infinite number of threads in weaving a more complete understanding of the story—however this depth of analysis is costly. In order to present the daughters' collective story, Bell justifiably omits or minimizes the voices of the mothers, sons, prescribing doctors, and any number of other key players. What little is presented from those perspectives is gleaned from the narratives of the daughters, the conference proceedings, and Bell's vivid depictions of scenes from DES daughter Judith Helfand's (1996) documentary, *A Healthy Baby Girl*. Further research into interactions of activist patient groups, science, and medicine from the

perspectives of physicians and scientists, however, might expand Bell's claim of collaborative knowledge production.

By engaging so faithfully in this method, Bell is writing not just about but also within the DES health movement. By acting as a bridge between activist and scientist communities, she lends her expertise as a researcher and scholar to the embodied health movement, and in doing so carries forth its tradition of collaborative knowledge production. Through Bell's thorough methodological explanation, she demonstrates the power of narrative analysis and provides a stunning example and invitation for other researchers to engage in this method.

DES Daughters serves to educate and remind us as scholars and activists of the controversial technoscientific beginnings of much of the hormone-based therapies we take for granted in western culture. Through her engaging narrative, Bell demonstrates how DES Daughters and their allies have created an embodied health movement that takes their unfortunate suffering and uses it as a catalyst for producing embodied health knowledge alongside the medical community, laying the groundwork for important social change.

Call for Papers

The Rutgers Journal of Sociology: Emerging Areas of Sociological Inquiry

Deadline: September 30, 2010

The Rutgers Journal of Sociology: Emerging Areas in Sociological Inquiry provides a forum for graduate students and junior scholars to present well-researched and theoretically compelling review articles on an annual topic in sociology. Each volume features comprehensive commentary on emerging areas of sociological interest. These are critical evaluations of current research synthesized into cohesive articles about the state of the art in the discipline. Works that highlight the cutting-edge of the field, in terms of theoretical, methodological, or topical areas, are privileged.

RJS invites submissions for its first annual edition, which will focus on issues of MIND, BODY AND SOCIETY. *Papers and abstracts must be submitted by September 30th, 2010.*

Some overarching questions you might consider are:

- How might sociological approaches to and/or theories of mind and body elucidate unanswered or developing questions in the field?
- How do mind, body and society intersect to contribute to educational and occupational outcomes, sexual activity, deviance, reproduction, cognitive functioning, physical and mental health, political processes and social policy?
- What are some cross-cultural and trans-historical differences in the intersection of mind, body and society? How are these variations embedded in local and global contexts?

Areas we are especially interested in include the relation of Mind, Body and Society to:

- *Cognition
- *Genetics and the human genome
- *Disease diffusion
- *Envisioning the body, especially in terms of race, class, gender and sexuality
- *Effects of/on the environment
- *Medical technology
- *Mental health and illness
- *Studies of the mind
- *Cultural variation and perception
- *Sexualities
- *Lifestyle and sub-cultural practices
- *Social movements
- *Political processes and structures

[REDACTED]

*Inequality, power and resistance *Social networks *Transnational mobility and diffusion *Social connections *Technology

Guidelines: We accept original reviews of relevant research. Reviews must not be under review or elsewhere published at the time of submission and should be no more than 10,000 words, including references, notes, tables, figures, acknowledgements and all cover pages. The first page should contain a title, author's affiliation, a running head and approximate word count. The second page should contain the title, an abstract of no more than 250 words and should not contain the names of the authors. Papers should be double-spaced, using Times New Roman font size 12, with 1.25" margins on all sides. All references should be in Chicago Style (see ASA guidelines). All documents should be submitted as email attachments to RJS@sociology.rutgers.edu and must be MICROSOFT WORD DOCUMENTS. For further submission guidelines, see our guide for contributors at <http://sociology.rutgers.edu/RJS>.

Employment and Fellowships

Five Colleges Feminist Science Studies Tenure Track Position (Assistant Professor)

Deadline: September 22, 2010

URL: <http://www.umass.edu/wost>

UMass Amherst/Five Colleges, Assistant Professor, tenure track to begin Fall 2011. Emphasis on race, gender and science. Specialization in natural, social sciences or humanities, or interdisciplinary work. Focus could include the environment, technology, medicine, sexuality, transnational contexts, and/or the theory and practice of science. Ability to teach core Women's Studies courses assumed. Qualifications: PhD required by 9/2011; teaching experience preferred. Annual teaching load: two courses at the home campus, UMass Amherst (Women's Studies); one at Mount Holyoke College (Gender Studies); and one at Hampshire College. Review of applications to begin September 22, 2010. Application should include a letter of application, curriculum vita, a syllabus or course outline for a course on "Race, Gender and Science" as well as other relevant syllabi and course descriptions, and three letters of recommendation. Send application materials to Chair, Feminist Science Studies Search Committee, Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, Bartlett Hall 208, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst 01003. U Mass Amherst is a member of the Five College Consortium along with Amherst, Smith, Hampshire, and Mt. Holyoke Colleges.



National Humanities Center Fellowships 2010-2011

Deadline: October 15, 2010

URL: <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/>

The National Humanities Center offers 40 residential fellowships for advanced study in the humanities during the academic year, September 2011 through May 2012. Applicants must hold doctorate or equivalent scholarly credentials. Young scholars as well as senior scholars are encouraged to apply, but they must have a record of publication, and new Ph.D.s should be aware that the Center does not support the revision of a doctoral dissertation. In addition to scholars from all fields of the humanities, the Center accepts individuals from the natural and social sciences, the arts, the professions, and public life who are engaged in humanistic projects. The Center is also international and gladly accepts applications from scholars outside the United States. Deadline and Application Procedures. Applicants submit the Center's form, supported by a curriculum vitae, a 1000-word project proposal, and three letters of recommendation. You may request application material from Fellowship Program, National Humanities Center, Post Office Box 12256, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27709-2256, or obtain the form and instructions from the Center's website. Applications and letters of recommendation must be postmarked by 15 October 2010.

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