WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of STS,

Another year of events and accomplishments has come and gone in the Program on Science, Technology and Society at Harvard. Despite all the turbulence in the world, I am pleased to report that the Program’s relationships across and beyond the University remain as strong as ever. We continue to benefit from close connections with Harvard Law School, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS), where we typically host the STS Circle. This year has seen continued growth in attendance at our events, with attendance at the STS Circle, co-funded by the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, routinely reaching into the high-forties, testifying to growing interest in all things related to STS at Harvard.

The past academic year featured two packed Science and Democracy events, a lecture on economic cooperation for climate change with William D. Nordhaus, eminent economist, and a surprisingly prescient panel on democracy in the digital age with noted STS scholars Yaron Ezrahi, Andy Stirling, and Shiv Visvanathan. The spring semester also featured a book launch for our colleague David Kennedy, director of the Law School’s Institute for Global Law and Policy, and a workshop on the molecularization of identity organized by two former fellows, Ruha Benjamin and Ian McGonigle.

This was also an enormously productive year for STS research at Harvard. It was the first year of a new National Science Foundation project, “Traveling Imaginaries of Innovation: The Practice Turn and Its Transnational Implementation.” This three-year project, analyzing innovation practices in Boston, Cambridge (UK), Munich, and Bangalore, has grown in scope and size to incorporate new team members and sites in Barcelona, Copenhagen, Dakar, Vienna, and Santiago. We also wrapped up our successful NSF-funded Life in the Gray Zone project with the development of the Bio+Society Collaboratory, a web resource that seeks to strengthen and grow the network of Harvard-trained STS scholars who conduct research at the intersection of the biological and biomedical sciences and technologies and society.

In June, our UK colleagues Jack Stilgoe (University College London) and Tim Forsyth (London School of Economics) hosted the 15th Annual Meeting of the Science and Democracy Network in London. The first day of the meeting coincided with Britain’s historic “Brexit” vote to leave the European Union. It was the first of a number of shocks in 2016 that gave unexpected urgency and meaning to discussions in SDN’s international community of STS scholars.

Our teaching and training endeavors also continue to flourish, with growing student participation and interest in the Graduate Secondary Field in STS. A new development with interesting implications for STS is Harvard College’s adoption of a General Education requirement on science and technology in society. I am as always most delighted to report on career milestones, publications, and research grants for current and former STS Fellows. You will find fuller information about all of their accomplishments below.

With best wishes for the new year and gratitude for your continued interest and support.

[Signature]
The Elusive Demos

April 20, 2016

Panelists Yaron Ezrahi (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Andy Stirling (University of Sussex), and Shiv Visvanathan (O.P. Jindal University) discussed the shifting relationship between the state and its publics in “The Elusive Demos: Democracy in the Digital Age,” the Spring 2016 event in our Science and Democracy lecture series. Ezrahi pointed out that digitalization has widened the imagined global space and dispersed the voices of the public, but that there are important continuities within a demos that is after all always shifting. Stirling suggested we are facing an unprecedented existential threat to democracy and argued for what he called “root-like structures,” such as open-source media, over more top-down “tree-like structures.” Visvanathan voiced his concern that “the body is disappearing,” and that the social is being erased, and suggested we look at digital subversion and crime for cases of real democracy. In her comment, Jane Mansbridge (Harvard Kennedy School) discussed the role of the state’s coercive power, and questioned the ability of digital tools to enhance the legitimacy of democracy.

The event was co-sponsored by the Harvard University Center for the Environment, the Harvard School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs.

A video of the event is available here.

The Molecularization of Identity: Science and Subjectivity in the 21st Century

On April 29-30, 2016, about 100 Harvard graduate students, current and former STS fellows, and invited speakers discussed recent advances in biological and computational technologies and how they are changing the way we imagine, race, gender, kinship, citizenship and disease risk. Organized by former STS Fellows, Ian McGonigle and Ruha Benjamin, this symposium interrogated the complex ways in which the molecular realm is an emerging site for constituting human identities in the 21st century. In addition to presentations by Ian and Ruha, it also featured talks by former STS fellows Alessandro Blasimme and Amy Hinterberger and a comment by Sheila Jasanoff. A report on the workshop, written by Ian and Ruha, was published in Genetics Research.

Further support for this event was provided by the Israel Institute; the Center for Middle Eastern Studies; Hutchins Center for African & African American Research; the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics; Department of Anthropology; Weatherhead Center for International Affairs; Committee on Degrees in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality; Political Anthropology Group; Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations; The Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Tel Aviv University; and MIT Anthropology.

Book Launch for David Kennedy’s A World of Struggle


This book launch was part of the continuing collaboration between the Harvard STS Program and the Institute for Law and Global Policy (IGLP) at Harvard Law School. This past July, Sheila Jasanoff and Benjamin Hurlbut co-convened the STS stream of IGLP’s most recent workshop in Madrid. In January 2017, Sheila and Ben will also travel to Bangkok, Thailand to participate in the IGLP Asian Regional Workshop.
The 15th Annual Meeting of the Science and Democracy Network was held at University College London and the London School of Economics and Political Science, June 23-25, 2016. This year's meeting included pre-circulated papers on a diverse array of topics such as crafting a public for geoengineering; the technocratic empiricism of the Obama administration; transnational fractures in global regimes of toxicity; global food politics; and agricultural production in Argentina. In collaboration with Tiago Mata (University College London), the meeting also held a special session on the regulation of public numbers. Another special session focused on expertise and politics of subsidiarity in the wake of the Brexit vote, which fortuitously occurred on the first day of the annual meeting.

The Secondary Field in Science, Technology and Society continually attracts Ph.D. students from varied backgrounds including anthropology, law, design, chemistry, and engineering and applied sciences, among others. In Fall 2015, Secondary Field student Amy Gilson (Chemical Physics) and Science in the News (STIN), Harvard's graduate science communication organization, partnered with the STS Program to produce Sit’N Listen, an ongoing Science and Society podcast series, written jointly by students from the natural sciences, STS, and other Harvard schools. The podcast draws on STS in many ways, prominently, by examining how changing public values and scientific knowledge can reconfigure relationships among experts and publics as well as the process of scientific knowledge itself. Sit’N Listen can be found on the STIN website and on iTunes or Soundcloud.

The STS Undergraduate Essay Contest recognizes independent original research on science, technology and society conducted by Harvard College students in any field. STS Fellows read and evaluate the submissions, awarding three prizes. Nicole Bassoff (History of Science '16) won first prize for her thesis chapter, “Whose Name is it Anyway?: Medical Authority and the ‘Hansen’s Disease’ Movement.” Leah Singer (Anthropology '16) won second place for her thesis chapter “Injury Law and the Calculation of Future Lost Income Capacity.” Emma Woo (History of Science '16) was awarded third place for her paper “Seeing Pregnancy: Prenatal Care and Women's visibility in the Women's Municipal League of Boston.” To see the winners discuss the relationship between STS and their prize essays, click here.

The complete STS Circle program is available at http://sts.hks.harvard.edu/events/sts_circle/.
The Fukushima Disaster and the Cultural Politics of Nuclear Power in the United States and Japan

Principal Investigator: Sheila Jasanoff (Harvard) and Senior Researcher Kyoko Sato (Stanford) continued their NSF-funded investigation of nuclear governance in the United States and Japan. The project, now in its fourth year, examines the sociotechnical imaginaries that anchored postwar nuclear governance in the two countries, as well as how the 2011 Fukushima disaster affected these imaginaries. Sato’s fieldwork and document analysis show that, in Japan’s post-Hiroshima nuclear governance, a boundary between weapons and energy created a break in the nuclear imaginary. Furthermore, in both Japan and the US, nationalized nuclear imaginaries led to the understanding of nuclear disasters in other countries as attributable to the host country’s institutions, culture, and geology and therefore irrelevant to their own nuclear safety governance.

Kyoko Sato
Associate Director
Program in Science, Technology, and Society at Stanford University

Kasper Hedegaard Schielin
Regular Member
Centre for Science and Technology Studies at Aarhus University

Amit Shenik
Postdoctoral Fellow
Swiss Center for Conflict Research, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Maayan Sudai
SJD candidate
Harvard Law School

Tina Talleraas
PhD Candidate
Science and Technology Studies
TIK Centre for Technology, Innovation, and Culture, University of Oslo

Gili Vidan
PhD Candidate
History of Science, Harvard

Life in the Gray Zone: Governance of New Biology in Europe, South Korea, and the United States

This NSF-funded project completed its work in May 2016. Graduate Research Fellow Jacob Moses and Research Assistant Jessica Cussins worked on the Bio + Society Collaboratory, a new website that seeks to strengthen and support the network of Harvard-trained and Harvard-affiliated STS scholars working at the intersection of the biological and biomedical sciences and technologies and society. The site features profiles, publications, and joint projects of this group. This grant also funded work on the Bioconstitutionalism research platform, a portion of our website which will contain sample cases and interactive resources to inform scholarly work connecting STS theory with empirical studies of biology, bioengineering, and the law. The project also contributed to the conference on “Molecularization of Identity” held in Cambridge in April.

The Ethics of Invention: Technology and the Human Future

In August 2016, Sheila Jasanoff published a new book, The Ethics of Invention: Technology and the Human Future. The book explores a world increasingly governed and shaped by technology, and asks, “To what ends?” Jasanoff dissect the ways in which we silently delegate power to technological systems and uncovers the complex interplay among technology, ethics, and human rights. Looking in particular at powerful emerging biotechnologies such as gene editing, Jasanoff challenges the common assumption that technology is an apolitical and amoral force. Instead, she demonstrates how technology can warp the meaning of democracy and citizenship unless we carefully consider how to direct its power and promise through open, democratic dialogue. The book is available through W.W. Norton & Company.
Elizabeth Barron (2011-2013) has co-authored several new articles and book chapters including “‘Like a Second Home’: Conceptualizing Experiences within the Fox River Watershed Through a Framework of Emplacement” in Water; “Names Matter: Interdisciplinary Research on Taxonomy and Nomenclature for Ecosystem Management” in Progress in Physical Geography; and “Situating Wild Product Gathering in a Diverse Economy; Negotiating Ethical Interactions with Natural Resources” in Making Other Worlds Possible: Performing Diverse Economies.

Steve Bernardin (2006-2007) will receive the 2017 “Prix International Jean Widmer” for his paper “Taking the Problem to the People: Traffic Safety from Public Relations to Political Theory, 1937-1954.” The paper was originally published in the April 2015 issue of Technology and Culture. The Prix International Jean Widmer is awarded to a young international scholar, who published a paper (in either French, English, Spanish or German) that brought a significant contribution to the study of public problems during the past three years.


Mads Dahl Gjøsøen (2011-2013) recently published “Crafting the Expert-advocate: Training and Recruitment Efforts in the Carbon Dioxide Capture and Storage Community” in a special issue of Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research. In June 2016 he started working for the University of Wisconsin’s Technology Transfer organization, WIStys Technology Foundation.


Iris Eisenberger has been appointed Professor of Law in 2016 at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, where she heads the Institute of Law. Her book Innovation im Recht (Innovation in Law) has just been published and she has recently begun two grant-funded projects, AUTO-NOM is an interdisciplinary project on traffic behavior and its effects on different classes of autonomous driving, funded by the Austrian science funding agency. She is also working with former fellow Sebastian Pfotenhauer on “Kryptowährungen – Digitale Transaktionen – Staatliche Transformationen,” a project focused on the legal governance of cryptocurrencies and funded by the Styrian funding program “Polaritäten in der Wissensgesellschaft: Allt und Neu-Tradition und Avantgarde.”

Sam Weiss Evans (2009-2011 and 2015-present) has an article out in Issues in Science and Technology on “Biosecurity Governance for the Real World.” He is also working on his book on the construction and governance of security concerns in emerging technology and building up a new project on governance issues around CRISPR gene drive research.

Mascha Gugganig (2014-2015) successfully defended her dissertation “Learnscapes on Kaua‘i: Education at a Hawaiian-focused Charter School, a Food Sovereignty Movement, and the Agricultural Biotechnology Industry” at the University of British Columbia. In October 2016, she began work as a postdoctoral researcher at the Center for Technology in Society at the Technical University-Munich in the research cluster led by Sebastian Pfotenhauer on Innovation, Society and Public Policy.

Amy Hinterberger (2014) won a Wellcome Trust Seed Award in Humanities and Social Science for her project “Blood and Tissue as Human Research Subjects.” In this project, she will investigate transformations in the definitions and practices of what constitutes a human research subject in the context of data-intensive biology.

Joakim Juhl (2013-2015) was promoted to Assistant Professor in Design Methods and Synthesis in Engineering and Innovation at Aalborg University, Copenhagen, in August 2016. He recently published “Innovation Science: Between Models and Machines” in Engineering Studies. The article investigates the intersection of academic science and private industry and discusses the form, meaning, and success criteria of this kind of knowledge production in relation to pure science, Mode 2, and engineering science.

Monika Kurath (2007-2008) obtained a venia docendi authorizing her to teach in the academic discipline of Science and Technology Studies from the University of Vienna,Austria.

Ian McConigle (2015-2016) co-organized with Ruha Benjamin the “Molecularization of Identity” conference at Harvard STS in April 2016, and co-published a report on the proceedings in Genetics Research. He also published articles in Genetics Research, The Journal of Law and the Biosciences, and Transversal: Journal for Jewish Studies. He was awarded a language study bursary from Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies for summer Arabic language training in Oman, as well as a study tour fellowship by the Turkish Ministry for Culture and Tourism.


Zoe Nyssa (2014-2016) accepted a position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Purdue University. She joins a department filled with scholars working onSTS issues. In addition to her research and teaching on environmental problems, she is co-developing an applied program at the interface of anthropology and STEM for students planning careers as practitioners.

Helen Pallett (2012) is now a Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in the Human Geography of the Environment at the University of East Anglia.

Benjamin Raimbault (2015-2016) published a chapter with former STS Fellows Nicole Gayard, Mylene Tanferri, and Zara Mirmalek called “An Utopia of Presence: (Re) situating Places, Times and People in Our Desired Worlds.”

Krishanu Saha (2009-2012) helped run a successful STS Summer School in July 2016 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he is currently Assistant Professor of Biomedical Engineering, BIONATES; Sheila Jasanoff delivered a guest lecture remotely from her summer base in Freiburg, Germany. The Madison summer school continued the work of the Harvard-coordinated Biology and Society Collaboratory, which has organized and run three previous summer schools on current social and policy issues in the biosciences and technologies. Kris’s lab also received NIH and NSF awards in 2016 to conduct research on gene editing.

Human and Machine in the Neurosciences”). Her project focused on the adaptation of human and machine in neuroscience and demonstrated how the human as a techno-cerebrally operating form acts and interacts in neuroscientific experimental therapies. Melike is currently working on two projects on human enhancement at the Orient-Institute Istanbul: “Blurred Boundaries of Assistive Reproduction Technologies” and “Neuroenhancement: Practices and Techniques.” Both projects are concerned with finding solutions for problems confronting human beings who are differently embedded, individually and socially, in national historical, ethical, legal, and cultural contexts.

Matthew Sample (2014-2016) defended his dissertation “Evaluating Neural Futures: Good Technoscience and the Challenge of Co-Production” and accepted a postdoctoral fellowship at the Institut de recherches cliniques de Montréal. His research at the Neuroethics Unit will focus on the ethics and politics of brain-computer interfaces.

Kyoko Sato (2013-present) continues to work on the politics of nuclear governance in Japan and the United States. Her latest publication is “STS and the Future of the Democratic Society: Post-Fukushima Reflections” (in Japanese) in 科学技術社会論研究 (Research in Science and Technology Studies, published by the Japanese Society for Science and Technology Studies). She will be co-directing “Nuclear Governance after Hiroshima: Atoms for War and Peace in Japan, France, and the United States 1945-1970,” a collaboration with Stanford University, Université Paris Descartes and Université Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne. The project is supported by two grants, one from the Partner University Fund of FACE (French-American Cultural Exchange) Foundation and the other from France-Stanford Center for Interdisciplinary Studies.

Kasper Schiølin (2016-2017) recently published an article “Cum Deus Calculat, Fit Mundus” (or The Will to Technology: Diagnosis and Cure) in a book entitled Teknologi [Technology] (Aarhus University Press), as well as a book chapter in Danish on the representation of technology in Ernst Jünger’s late fictional work (Museum Tusculanum Press). He also has two forthcoming book chapters: “Lost in Translation: Getting to Grips with Multistable Technology in an Apparently Stable World” (Rowman & Littlefield, coauthored with Lasse Blond) and “Bataille’s Bicycle: Execution and/as Eroticism” (Autonomedia, coauthored with Marie Louise Juul Søndergaard).

Gouk Tae Kim (2011-2012) has a new position as Research Assistant Professor at the Research Center for Strategic Management in KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology), South Korea.

Mattij van Maasakkers (2012-2013) published a book, The Creation of Markets for Ecosystem Services in the United States: The Challenge of Trading Places, for which he completed much of the research and some of the writing during his time as an STS fellow. The book offers a detailed analysis of the most advanced efforts to create markets for ecosystem services in the United States. Using in-depth case studies of three well-known attempts to create such markets—in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the Ohio River basin and the Willamette River basin—this book explains why very few of these markets have actually succeeded even after close to two decades of much scholarly enthusiasm, significant federal funding and concerted efforts by NGOs, government agencies and private businesses.