



Editors' Introduction

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One of the central claims in the sprawling interdisciplinary field of science and technology studies (STS) is that science, technology, and medicine reflect and create social inequalities, from vast disparities in healthcare provision to epistemic gaps rooted in the productive and yet ever constraining “partial perspective” (Haraway 1988). Historical and critical insights do seem to have affected some areas of science more than others; for instance, debates over difference and inclusion are much more visible in clinical and biomedical research than they are in, say, quantum physics (though efforts to grapple with materiality and representation in the physical world have been highly influential within science studies) (see, e.g.: Barad 2007; Knorr Cetina 1999). At this juncture, the social studies of science seems to be divided between those seeking to understand how social location affects the content and production of scientific knowledge and those more keen to study diversity in the makeup of practitioners and researchers as an issue of equity and access.

This collection of essays and focused discussion pieces encourages STS to focus on inequalities within scientific practice and knowledge production. The goal of this issue is to interrogate the various and intersecting forms of inequality that shape power structures in science and technology, and questions the link between inclusivity in working groups and opportunities for new and expansive knowledge. Following the “normative turn” in STS, the essays probe the normative and ethical concerns of why diversity is “good” or meaningful for science, given science’s orientation as “value-free,” objective, and universal.

The reviews in this issue also illuminate how STS scholars, particularly those engaged with feminism, sexuality studies, and critical race studies, have focused increased attention on how inequalities among scientists affect

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the very kinds of knowledge yielded. This line of inquiry requires an enormous amount of reflexivity—from understanding how the composition of scientific teams relates to the quality of scientific research to investigating the differences in understanding central categories. With this collection we hope to spark conversation about the shifting contexts of social inequality within the ever expanding field of STS.

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