Editorial

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We are delighted to announce that *BioSocieties* has received its first Impact Factor from the latest Thomson Reuters' Journal Citation Reports® – an exciting 1.907! This propels us immediately into eighth place in the rankings in the 'Social Sciences, Biomedical' category (of 33 titles). We are very proud of the terrific scholarship that earned *BioSocieties* this rating and first and foremost thank the contributors who submitted to the journal in these early years. We also deeply appreciate the extensive labors of our associate and managing editors past and present, superb peer reviewers and our publishers.

This issue of *BioSocieties* again offers an impressive range of social studies of the life sciences. The articles span stem cells, patients' attitudes, new forms of surveillance of scientific practices and more. Foucault lives and sometimes *we* are the panopticon. Assuredly, the surveillance is increasingly transnational as science, medicine and the varied old and new products and technologies that constitute it travel more widely and routinely and are increasingly capable of producing profit.

One exemplar here is the standard of 'Good Manufacturing Practice'. Lewis and Atkinson document the shift from local laboratory practices as craft to routinized modes of surveillance, the new requirements of self-documentation and regulatory protocols. Interestingly, the ways in which the social is embedded in and part of the scientific are rendered more transparent through surveillance procedures. Lewis and Atkinson call this 'extended visibility', part of what Strathern identified as the 'tyranny of transparency'.

Surveillance is also a key factor in stem cell trials. Webster, Haddad and Waldby demonstrate how speed is increasingly of the essence in clinical trials as stem cell tourism is ramping up in the absence of transnational regulation and the omnipresence of hope. In this report from a quickly moving front, individualized regenerative medicine is being displaced by product-focused efforts with greater commercial potential. However, the risks of 'ectopic life' – forms of cellular life where they should not exist – are also omnipresent.

Richardson's paper calls for a different kind of surveillance – really deeper engagements – by our own community of social scientists of the life sciences with the emergent constellation of research becoming known as 'evolutionary cognitive genetics'. This terrain is covered by researchers in brain genomics, human population genetics and molecular anthropology. Focusing on the microcephaly case, Richardson draws our attention to the power of the shared technology platform of postgenomic science to bring questions of race and IQ 'in from the cold' – from margin to center. She argues that this research could lead to 'transformative conversations and the articulation and refinement of community standards' on the long-controversial issues of IQ and race.

A new tool for social science engagements in the life sciences is offered by Valkenberg and Aarden. They begin from the core assumptions of co-production (Jasanoff, 2004), emphasizing the non-fungible nature of technology, politics and situatedness. They then offer the concept of *nexus* as a generic term for distinctive perspectives on the complexities

of co-production in a site of controversy. The cases of preimplantation genetic diagnosis in the Netherlands and Germany offer very different nexuses in terms of constructing embryos, nexuses that are highly consequential downstream, as well as self-perpetuating if uncontested. Valkenberg and Aarden argue that nexuses should be activated as sites of controversy and engagement to disrupt their conservatizing tendencies and provoke new sites of democratic engagement that offer both broader participation and more transparency.

Patients' attitudes to research have been another important focus of recent social studies of public participation in the life sciences. Vermeulen, Schmidt, Cornel, Knoppers, van Leeuwen and Aaronson offer a mixed methods study of Dutch patients' attitudes about researchers' use of their excised tumor tissue. The transnational and more local organization of long-term biobanking make the use of this tissue, including for unanticipated purposes, a pressing matter for researchers and ethicists as well. In this study, patients accepted the 'dislocation' of their tissue in time and space in research, but not its disconnection from self or family. In fact, patients construed their tissue use in research in relational and in personal terms, as grounds for ongoing relations with researchers, as personal property and as potentially improving the health of their own future family members.

In closing, we want to acknowledge our subscribers and readers, who have ensured that *BioSocieties* is increasingly accessed and read around the world. One of our key strengths as a young journal has been our ability to inspire and nurture an exciting, growing and global field of social studies of bioscience, biomedicine and biosociety. Our readers and subscribers are our partners in this endeavor, and we encourage you to keep reading the journal, keep talking with us and to keep those innovative and insightful articles coming.

Reference

Jasanoff, S. (ed.) (2004) *States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and Social Order*. London: Taylor and Francis.

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