

GUEST EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The sociological citizen: Pragmatic and relational regulation in law and organizations

1. Introduction

The interconnected networks that constitute our everyday lives can be both intensely familiar yet completely unknown. Whether we call it a firm, a university, an industry, a system, or a society, we live and work in collectivities coordinated through human, physical, and chemical transits. Most of the time, we fail to notice the links that connect one action to another, one person to hundreds of others, and one organization to a framing institution or field of action. We may be momentarily reminded of those relations when a major disaster occurs, or we chat with a new acquaintance actively seeking common ground. More often, however, articulations among people and places are mediated through representations, in effect, known of but not part of how we live and work.

The articles collected in this special issue of *Regulation & Governance* challenge this conventional account of the unconscious threads assembling the social (Thévenot 2004; Latour 2005). With case studies ranging from Australia to France, Mexico, Brazil, and the US, the articles describe how some organizational agents apprehend “relational interdependence and use this systemic perspective to meet occupational and professional obligations” (Silbey *et al.* 2009, p. 203). We call these public agency regulators, inspectors, prosecutors, private managers, and microloan officers “sociological citizens,” and the consequent performance of their professional obligations “relational regulation” (Huisig & Silbey 2011). These concepts identify and name patterns of relatively successful, and distinctly pragmatic, regulatory implementation achieved across diverse roles, organizations, and locales.

Although sociology is a scholarly occupation, we invoke the label to identify among a population of non-sociologists (ordinary persons and members of communities and organizations; that is, citizens) an appreciation of the processes that assemble, sustain, reproduce, and, as importantly, revise social transactions, organizations, and institutions.¹ To actors characterized by this label, the setting in which they perform their professional obligations – a bank, a firm, a university, a security agency, or a local economy – is understood “as the outcome of human decisions and indecisions, trial and error, and just plain making do” (Silbey *et al.* 2009, p. 203). The organization is experienced as a garbage can rather than a rational plan (Cohen *et al.* 1988). Sociological citizens, acting as managers and law enforcement agents.

See their work and themselves as links in a complex web of interactions and processes rather than as a cabin of limited interests and demarcated responsibilities. Instead of focusing closely, as we normally do to manage daily affairs, and only sporadically taking account, if ever, of the larger reverberations of one's

actions, these actors view their organizations, or states, as a dynamic entity in which their own role is reconceived as insignificant by itself yet essential to the whole.

(Silbey *et al.* 2009, p. 203).

The concept of the sociological citizen developed through a process of inductive theorizing across the projects presented in this issue. Our conceptual invention itself exemplifies the unscripted, yet pragmatic processes we first observed among the actors and organizations we were studying in the field: by speaking with each other about our research, we began to see commonalities and connections across these different projects and settings. Whether attorneys general, middle managers, microloan officers, labor inspectors, security agents, or environmental health and safety staff, some people were doing their jobs in ways that seemed to serve the organizational and legal mandates more consistently than were others. Some were working beyond compliance and the formal responsibilities of their role. There was a strong commitment to practical rather than perfect outcomes, to experimenting with what might work now and dealing with similar or different situations as they arose. We use the term relational regulation to name a particular form of this practice, or sociological citizenship, through which agents “govern the gap between regulatory expectations and performances with an appreciation of the ongoing production of organizational and material life through human transactions . . . Relational regulation acknowledges the impossibility of perfect conformity between abstract rules and situated action while nonetheless managing to keep practices within a band of variation surrounding, but not perfectly coincident with, regulatory specifications” (Huising & Silbey 2011, p. 17).

In 2008, I was asked to submit an article for review to *L'Année Sociologique*, the journal first published in 1898 (founded in 1896) by Émile Durkheim. Silbey, Huising, Coslovsky (2009) used that opportunity to theorize across the observations we were collecting. We became increasingly confident from these disparate examples that something was happening in management and regulatory enforcement that merited closer attention. The result was the article “The Sociological Citizen: Recognizing Relational Interdependence in Law and Organizations” (Silbey *et al.* 2009). We offered a nominal definition and examples, with limited hypotheses and a call for further research.

The announcement requesting applications for special issues of *Regulation & Governance* provided the impetus to push the work further. I submitted a proposal to edit a special issue, which was accepted by the Journal's editors. Once the proposal was accepted, I put out a call for papers on various list servers between July and October of 2008. Authors of articles that survived a preliminary review process for quality and relevance, along with scholars who would critique each paper, were invited to participate in a two-day workshop held at MIT in January 2009. For two days we shared data, manuscripts, and comments. The articles were revised on the basis of the group discussion and written critiques by the invited commentators. The articles appearing in this issue were each sent out for anonymous peer review by the editors of the Journal, revised again in response to the Journal's reviewers, and finally accepted for publication if they met the reviewers' and editors' criteria.

The research collected in this issue attempts to overcome the theoretical impasse that has characterized much of twentieth century social science in which the heterogeneity of human action is simplified within homogeneous models of action. It seeks to

enhance policy debates paralyzed by theories locating the source and shape of social action in either human will and desire (i.e. markets) or conversely in forces determining the course of both individual and collective affairs (i.e. social structures, bureaucracy, or government). Piore's contribution to this issue directly and purposively intervenes in these debates about the proper understanding of political economy. He observes that what seems to be an emerging, contemporary preference for more regulation is not driven by theoretical persuasion or conviction. In other words, structural social theory has not trumped rational choice or methodological individualism. Rather, across the globe, policymakers have reacted to a continuing stream of spectacular disasters as well as economic, environmental, and financial crises. Although empirical events overwhelm, the theoretical impasse remains. We are left, Piore suggests, in a conceptual vacuum. The work in this issue attempts to address this void by offering a conception of governance (coordination and regulation) based on conceptions of neither the rational, utility maximizing individual nor the rule-governed bureaucracy, but on a model of the sociological citizen, a pragmatic actor who sees her work and herself as a link in a complex web of unfolding transactions and processes. As Piore (2011) writes, the authors in this issue are "looking for ways of creating flexible, innovative . . . solutions" for the coordination of human action "through the management of [organizational] cultures rather than through direct management of the agents themselves." Furthermore, the research reported here argues quite consistently that no single, simple solution will address the problems public policies seek to regulate: the systemic consequences of complex organization.

The following section offers a more elaborate discussion of the concept of the sociological citizen. Drawing from the empirical projects reported in the articles, I describe how, by recognizing a world of unfolding relations constantly in the making, these innovative managers and law enforcement agents reach beyond scripted responsibilities and immediate work groups to gather information for pragmatic and experimental adaptations to meet organizational goals. The performances are enabled by flexible organizational cultures. Notably, we suggest that organized heterogeneity in roles and means may limit the excesses inherent in any particular role performance, whether legitimate or illegitimate. In the conclusion, I locate this concept within modern social science and suggest questions for future research.

2. The concept of the sociological citizen

Durkheim famously observed that in societies with a complex division of labor, administrative, commercial, and procedural law would predominate, serving to reconstitute ruptured interdependencies and helping to sustain the organic solidarity characteristic of industrialized societies. Nowhere did he suggest, however, that relational interdependence or the compensatory and reparative functions of law would be intended by or manifest to broad segments of the society's actors. Indeed, he was adamantly opposed to the notion that the basic mechanisms of social solidarity and coordination would be components of popular consciousness. Although Durkheim remained committed to the notion of social life as a "system of representations and mental states," his analyses depended on a sharp distinction between the mental life of the individual and collective representations "subject to their own laws which individual psychology could not foresee" (Durkheim 1982, p. 253). He insisted that "not a single word of mine must be understood" to suggest

“that social facts can be understood immediately by states of individual consciousness” (Durkheim 1982, p. 253).

For Durkheim, the networks of association and meaningful character of social interactions are routinely and systematically obscured, their functions more latent than manifest. Only through meticulous analysis of social facts (empirically demonstrable patterns of action) could the web of associations that constituted the social be uncovered and specified. This analysis of patterns of action, networks of association, and circulating meanings is the work of sociology, Durkheim claimed, and what 50 years later C. Wright Mills would call “the sociological imagination.” According to Mills (1959, p. 5), “the sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life *and* the external career of a variety of individuals. It enables him [*sic*] to take into account how individuals, in the welter of their daily experience, often become falsely conscious of their social positions” (my emphasis). Those collectivities coordinated through human, physical, and chemical transits in which we live and work are the subject of sociological inquiry. Because most social actors are, happily, not professional sociologists, they normally focus closely, attending to their immediate activities, pacific or troubled, indifferent to the invisible threads that connect their individual biography to historical trajectories. Although both Durkheim and Mills insisted on the necessity of mapping the relational interdependence that constituted what in more contemporary verbiage we might call the assemblage, neither expected this perspective, and thus this capacity, to persist widely beyond the bounds of professional sociology.

Thus, our invocation of the term “sociological” demands emphatic clarification lest we be misunderstood. We use the expression metaphorically to denote exactly this apprehension of the assembling activity that constitutes the social (Latour 2005). We are not claiming that the actors who use this relational perspective have an innate proclivity toward this mode of action, choose it deliberately, or are always conscious of their unusual cognition. Some may become sociological citizens and engage in relational regulation because of idiosyncratic and serendipitous variables, interactions, or sequences of events. Moreover, we are not claiming that these agents are sociologists or that only sociologists share this understanding. Quite the contrary. We are suggesting that while Durkheim and Mills may have been correct in predicting that few persons would analyze, or appreciate, the interdependencies that constitute the social, they were wrong in assuming that only sociologists would. Durkheim and Mills were, after all, engaged in jurisdictional competitions for professional terrain (Abbott 1988). We are not. Again, quite the contrary. The scholarship contained in this issue was produced in diverse disciplinary spaces observing phenomena spread across different occupations and types of organizations not limited to the interests of one professional or disciplinary community.

The metaphor “sociological citizen” is deployed as a label for actors who accomplish their work by *enacting a relational epistemology*, seeing a world of “unfolding relations” (Emirbayer 1997). Rather than consisting primarily of substances, static organization charts, or even scripted processes, the organization in which the agents work comes to be understood as the outcome of momentary as well as continuing human transactions.

They come to understand that work gets done in these organizations – whether public or private – through fluid relationships where the lines of the organizational chart and

the boundaries separating different organizations describe formal positions and roles, obscuring the activities performed within, among, and across those positions and organizations.

Through the regular interactions, especially talking with others and sharing and exchanging information, the sociological citizens *reach beyond scripted responsibilities and immediate work groups*, extending the material and informational resources available to do their work. For example, Coslovsky (2011) provides an account of the alliances attorneys general in Brazil develop on a case-by-case basis to invent integrated solutions to complex environmental and labor problems that create persistent violations of current regulations. Similarly, Pires (2011) describes how labor inspectors in Pernambuco state in Brazil's labor ministry collaborated with the federal banking system to develop an information system that would allow very few inspectors to assess wage and severance payments across a large number of firms. This unconventional outreach to another agency permitted four inspectors to do the work otherwise occupying 99 inspectors. Canales (2011) describes how what he calls "spirit of the law" loan officers often use their clients' networks to find creative ways to help clients and collect loans. They straddle boundaries in their own organization to bend rules or create new rules when they think it will enhance loan performance. These loan officers created the notion of loan restructuring and new, more realistic, and less restrictive ways to assess client assets that were not part of their jobs but nonetheless were value added for the firm. Haines (2011) describes how the human agency of officers responsible for counterterrorism efforts at seaports and airports was essential to achieving regulatory goals, but nonetheless depended on their ability to reach beyond their agencies to secure support from political elites.

For the actors studied in these projects, their worlds are composed of relationships, links, and collectivities rather than individuals. Although they do not use the language of units of analysis, their practice and orientation substitutes the link or connection for the individual as the unit of analysis. Eponymously, Huising and Silbey (2011) name this practice "relational regulation." We describe, for example, how serendipitously organized meetings among environmental health and safety coordinators created the opportunity to exchange stories about problems they were having implementing health and safety regulations in laboratories. Through these stories, the coordinators discovered a common content to the narratives of their difficulties.² The stories "uncover[ed] the similar experiences of which they [had been] collectively unaware: a state of pluralistic ignorance of the shared features of their lifeworlds" (Fine 2010, p. 665). The group meetings revealed the collective organization that had first seemed like – and may have continued to be experienced as – individual, idiosyncratic situations in the different departments (Ewick & Silbey 1995, p. 221). However, the common narrative of a collective situation was slowly understood to be an ongoing production, the consequence of all sorts of diverse actions and actors, not what was planned or mischievously created.

Most important, perhaps, these actors we call sociological citizens are *pragmatic, experimental, and adaptive*, going beyond and outside the prescribed rules and processes with the goal, nonetheless, of actually achieving the ostensible public or organizational purpose (Coslovsky *et al.* 2010). Each of the articles in this issue describes agents' practical accommodations within local contexts – adjustments that look like divergence from prescribed procedures but even so achieve desired outcomes. Sometimes those outcomes

are exactly what was institutionally expected – repaid loans (Canales), compliance with labor standards (Pires) or reduction in environmental degradation (Coslovsky) and safety violations (Huising and Silbey). At other times, the goals are expanded, for example to produce economic as well as environmental sustainability (Coslovsky). Finally, as Haines (2011) describes, pragmatic adjustments between security aspirations and resources lead not only to shifts and but also to narrowing of goals. In Haines's work, a sociological citizen did not necessarily pursue the goals as set by the regulatory agency or even goals that were necessarily socially desirable. Individual creativity and vision allowed for an expanded diversity of goals.

The sociological citizen is a quintessential bricoleur, a tinkerer, a fiddler, who uses what is available to achieve what is possible. The bricoleur, “is someone who uses . . . the instruments . . . which are already there, which had not been especially conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogenous” (Derrida 1978, p. 285). Across the various articles, we find accounts of how the agents' activities extend beyond the scripted responsibilities and how they are invented to fit specific contexts, although sometimes also develop a pattern or toolkit of adaptable processes. This very practical, experimental approach recognizes *no simple script or singular way of doing the work*, but rather relies on the lively interactive relations to provide informational feedback for self-correction – back and forth between goals and means – asymptotically approaching institutionally and organizationally legitimate goals.

Others have surely noted that actors pursuing illegitimate activities may also display these same methods of achieving their purposes; for example, drug dealers (Venkatesh 2006) and others engaged in criminal conspiracies (Baker & Faulkner 1993). After all, Merton (1938) famously noted that both illegitimate crime and legitimate innovation adopted unconventional means to achieve culturally legitimate goals. If the role of sociological citizen is enacted by recognizing a world of unfolding relations, reaching beyond scripted responsibilities to gather information for pragmatic and experimental adaptations to meet organizational goals, what constrains these performances? What prevents corruption that may flow from exceeding responsibilities, reaching beyond existing rules and resources?

Sociological citizens work among others who do the same jobs differently; the combination of divergent approaches serves as a check on the excesses implicit in each. Thus, Canales (2011) describes a type of bank officer who attempts to achieve the “spirit of the law” in securing, monitoring, and enforcing microloans. These loan officers establish strong relationships with their clients, achieving a deeper understanding of the environmental conditions in which the clients live and work, the constraints they face, and the opportunities that may be harvested only by time, loosening loan restrictions and payment schedules. While these “spirit of the law” officers often deviate from centralized bank policies, they do so with a “detailed understanding of the relationships between organizational policies and the broader goals such policies serve.” The existence of heterogeneous processes and modes of action within an organization not only acts as a check on any particular course of action, but also amplify the organizations' powers and the reach of the work being performed. Canales reports that bank branches that house both “spirit of the law” and “letter of the law” loan officers report generally higher rates of

repayment than branches where one or the other type predominates. Similarly, Pires (2011) claims that the Brazilian labor inspectors first used a heavy-handed enforcement strategy to display to employers the consequences of resisting subsequent negotiations seeking improvements in labor conditions. Coslovsky (2011) describes how prosecutors who favor different modes of action compete, cooperate, and find common ground in a way that strengthens the work of the organization as a whole. In effect, the models of the sociological citizen and relational regulation we describe herein is not *the* singular model of regulation or management. It works alongside and in collaboration with conventional processes and performances.

The general take-away point is clear. In no organization or institution should we expect only one way of performing a role or achieving rule compliance. Policymakers', managers', and social scientists' impulses for homogeneity in organizational norms and performances have fueled a series of vacillating policies and prescriptions, reforms, and reactions over the course of the last century or more. Characterizing phenomena by a predominant feature – the central tendency in the data – ends up obscuring the constitutive heterogeneity. It fuels academic careers advanced by promoting one or another model as the correct model (of some social phenomena, practice, or organizational form), although few such models have achieved long-term validity.

However, by theoretically embracing what has been repeatedly empirically observed – that is, heterogeneous norms and performances – we can better align our theoretical models to observed practice. The sociological citizens we describe here succeed at their organizational roles because they work in a context of alternative expectations that are not fully achieved without these pragmatic adaptations and do not by themselves adequately describe what is expected or achieved. Thus, our empirical research and theoretical formulation suggests that pluralism in management and enforcement techniques moderate the excesses and limitations of any singular approach.

3. Conclusion

Apprehending what seems like inescapable, inevitable interconnectedness, the sociological citizen realizes that whatever the current configuration of the world he knows, it is the outcome of particular human actions that cumulate over time and space. As a consequence, sociological citizens experience a sense of freedom to try things, experiment, and intervene in organizations and arrangements where others would hesitate. They do not ask for permission to do the things they do. They are enabled by the awareness of human capacity as they may be simultaneously appreciating the constraints (on themselves and others) of the web of embedded relationships. The common bureaucratic structures that enable work to be coordinated across vast numbers of persons and distances of space and time nonetheless often blunt our interpretive and rational capacities, what Garfinkel (1964) called our ethnomethodological intuitions, so that these native understandings have to be either liberated or relearned. Where others fail to act, the sociological citizen is enabled and endowed by that web of constraining associations, which provide the material and symbolic resources for intervention and reconstruction. In other words, by recognizing one's location in an extended network of associations, a sociological citizen has an extended, rather than constricted, set of opportunities (resources, schemas, persons) with which to fashion solutions to local problems (Granovetter 1973).

Certainly this concept requires further work. Is this a common or rare phenomenon, and as such what significance might we attach to this phenomenon? The examples reported in this issue arose in the course of unconnected research projects whose questions and theories derived from different disciplines and professional fields. As such, we cannot make any assessments of the prevalence or distribution of the phenomena. Haines (2011) suggests that further attention to the structured constraints that inhibit (at least the progressive) work of sociological citizens is essential. We would require a more systematic sampling of situations to identify both the necessary and the sufficient conditions that generate or produce the sociological citizen.

Is this an emergent empirical phenomenon, something unobserved in the history of sociology, or simply old wine in new bottles? Frankly, we are inclined to think that this is an emergent phenomenon we are describing, something for which transformations in regulatory practices have made space. This does not mean that what we describe is entirely new, only that reconfigurations of the regulatory world may have allowed such practices to flourish, or even made it more necessary.³ Piore's essay emphasizes the recent shifts in preferences for regulation, suggesting that there is an increased possibility for incorporating sociological thinking, that is, relational epistemologies, into the way regulatory and policy work is done. Perhaps, as he suggests, these new possibilities emerge because of the failures of neoliberalism, the attempt to coordinate as much as possible through markets (cf. Silbey 2009). Perhaps, again as Piore suggests, changes in political economy emerge because empirical events simply demand a response.

However, the sociological citizen is not just an emergent phenomenon. It is also part of an emergent theory of social action: pragmatic and relational, insisting on the importance and inescapable heterogeneity of social phenomena. Certainly, we can find descriptions in the literature about professional practices describing similar conceptions of pragmatic professional roles and selves. For the most part, however, these are normative, aspirational, and inspirational models of professional practice rather than empirical accounts (e.g. Fried 1976; Schon 1983). In the essays collected posthumously as *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, Durkheim (1957, pp. 23–24) also claimed that professional associations could serve as an important source of moral order based specifically upon this ability to apprehend the whole of which the association and its members are a part. He suggests that where we find “individuals who share the same ideas and interests, sentiments and occupations, in which the rest of the population have no part . . . [where] they feel a mutual attraction, they seek out one another, they enter into relations with one another and form compacts and so, by degrees, become a limited group with recognizable features.” It is impossible for them “to live together and have constant dealings without getting a sense of this whole which they create by close association; they cannot help but adhere to this whole, be taken up with it and reckon it to their conduct” (p. 23–24). Although he elaborates how intermediary organizational forms are important sources of group morality, the workers, loan officers, security agents, managers, and attorneys general we describe are acting in ways inconsistent with what has developed as the common morality of their work groups and professions. Their practices do not develop in relation to a professional community but more directly in relation to the regulatory goals and organizational contingencies at hand. These may be, however, indicators of newly emergent, perhaps reformist, professional

ethics and civic morals; indeed, we surmise that this is exactly what they are (cf. Anteby 2010).

Certainly, we can also find examples of trial-and-error problem solving, bricolage, and satisficing within organizational constraints in the literature on various occupations and workplaces, including management, law enforcement, and lawyering (e.g. Gouldner 1954; Bittner 1967; Skolnick 1967; Van Maanen 1974; Lipsky 1980; Silbey 1980–1981; Feldman 1992; Orr 1996; Anteby 2008). More often than not, however, these descriptions were read as variations from a normative ideal of efficient or rule-governed organization, illustrating how the implementation of public policies, bureaucracies, or work organizations display less rigid divisions of labor and unwavering hierarchical control than programmatic or didactic readings of classic sociological theory might suggest. Although the richly textured empirical accounts provided alternative models of action, they were too often interpreted as deviations from expected or desired normative practice.

Recent sociological theorizing and modes of inquiry encourage us to rethink some of the assumptions and conventions that animated research over the twentieth century. These new paradigms and modes of inquiry offer, each in its own way, a less reductionist, less partial, less mechanistic, less idealistic, and less moralistic understanding of social action and its aggregation. Whether one deploys varieties of network analysis or actor network theory, engages in cultural analysis, or adopts an institutionalist or neo-institutionalist approach (each of which is importantly different), what matters is the effort to get beyond the conceptions of compartmentalized social action by depicting the relational interdependence that had been elided in the earlier nineteenth and twentieth century efforts to produce reliable and valid depictions of social facts as things. Across these perspectives or analytic tools, the research shows how relatively stable social practices and institutions, from legality (Ewick & Silbey 1998), scientific authority (Latour 1987; Knorr-Cetina 1999; Hilgartner 2000), research excellence (Lamont 2008), or love (Swidler 2001) are produced through discrete, often contradictory, sometimes fleeting transactions and events. From these newer perspectives, what had been conceptualized as deviations from expected models can be reinterpreted as normal, everyday routines that demand explanation, and perhaps even normative legitimacy by virtue of their persistence and ubiquity.

Perhaps in our twentieth century efforts to consider social facts as things, we deluded ourselves into thinking that social facts are things; we reified our own inventions and thus were captured by our particular golem (cf. Collins & Pinch 1998). Perhaps by identifying the sociological citizen as a recognizable form of action, we begin to remedy the limitations of our own professional practices. We must beware, however, of turning this observation into a reified type. As social scientists, we often talk about social life in terms that first abstract and then synthesize particular aspects of the myriad activities of life. This is part of our method, after all. We then give a name – for example, role, status, family, motherhood, law – to these abstractions as if the named phenomena existed independently from the living embodied persons doing, talking, and interacting with others and with things. Through our language we suggest independence, homogeneity, and generality where upon closer examination we observe concatenation, heterogeneity, and variation. Recent innovations in social theory and research methods, to which this compilation contributes, focus on the links and associations, the exchanged, shared and contested schemas and cultural repertoires, the non-instrumental as well as programmed

aspects of economic and rational organizations. Yes, it is old wine in new bottles because the old bottles failed to make room for what became defined as excess, detritus, or more often, the unexplained variation from the central tendency. The task of many contemporary sociologists, and anthropologists, is to trace the variations in the enactment of what has in the past too quickly been excised in our efforts to build general models of action, culture, and society. Providing richly detailed accounts of human action, or complex models of transactions, scholars try to show how “it is through the flow of behavior – or more precisely, social action – that cultural forms [such as law, legality, love, science, production, or management] find articulation” (Geertz 1973, p. 17). Understanding and attending to the variability of human action and how it is produced is what makes sociological citizenship possible. Attending to the regularities of modal experience just does not permit the adjustments to contingency that sociological citizenship requires.⁴

If scholars are finally understanding that law enforcement, productive work, banking, security, and environmental management are produced through a network of relationships among persons and things, including symbolic and normative commitments as well as non-rational and habitual action, should we be surprised that ordinary citizens also make the same observations? Why shouldn't ordinary citizens make the connections between biography and history, especially if they are not blinded by sociological theories of social forces or conceptions of social facts as things? If contemporary societies are reflective projects continuously worked and reflected upon (Giddens 1991), it should not be surprising; and, we might expect as societies to become much more reflexive and habituated to our electronic and informational connections, and to find increasing cadres of sociological citizens distributed across workplaces, law enforcement agencies, and nations.

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Notes

- 1 The conceptualization of the sociological citizen presented here and below as well as in the concluding discussion is borrowed from Silbey *et al.* (2009).
- 2 Piore (2011) similarly observes that “the discussion through which knowledge evolves among the line agents of a street-level bureaucracy does not necessarily proceed in analytical terms. Much of the tradition of the organization is embedded in war stories which the agents tell each other, mostly in informal settings over the water cooler in the office, at lunch or drinking a beer together after work. These war stories are basically narratives in which a sequence of events in time takes the place of a formal causal model.”
- 3 I am particularly indebted to Carol Heimer for helping me to see the relationship between the observed phenomena we call the sociological citizen and transformations in regulatory practice generally.
- 4 Again, I would like to thank Carol Heimer for this particularly helpful formulation of the conditions and requirements of sociological citizenship.

Susan S. Silbey

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