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Mobilizing Science: Movements, Participation, and the Remaking of Knowledge

Sabrina McCormick

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Mobilizing Science theoretically and empirically explores the rise of a new kind of social movement—one that attempts to empower citizens through the use of expert scientific research. Sabrina McCormick advances theories of social movements, development, and science and technology studies by examining how these fields intersect in cases around the globe.

McCormick grounds her argument in two very different case studies: the anti-dam movement in Brazil and the environmental breast cancer prevention movement in the U.S. These, and many other cases, show that the scientization of society, where expert knowledge is inculcated in multiple institutions and lay people are marginalized, gives rise to these new types of movements. While activists who consequently engage in science often instigate new methods that result in new findings and scientific tools, these movements still often fail due to superficial participatory institutions and tightly knit corporate/government relationships.

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