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Abstract

### **From Sex Selection to Savior Siblings: Governing Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis**

The central objective of this project is to investigate how genetic risk and responsibility are conceptualized in relation to reproductive genetics, and how examining discourses of risk, responsibility, normalcy, and pathology can open up the space for analyzing cultural, political economic and ethical implications of these technologies. This research is focused on the technological site of preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD). Since 1990 PGD has been used in assisted reproduction primarily in the US, Western Europe, and Australia to test one cell of an embryo for heritable genetic predispositions. This includes screening embryos for therapeutic genetic matches for children already living with one of these conditions, known as savior siblings. Within the last few years PGD has also become a popular sex-selection technique at a handful of infertility clinics worldwide. Michelle is investigating how discursive constructions of PGD reflect and construct cultural assumptions and values in the contemporary historical context by employing discourse analyses popular commentary, marketing, and users representations of PGD. These analyses of media coverage of PGD, clinical marketing, and users' assessments of the technique as discussed in chat rooms will provide insight both into how these various constituencies justify or condemn uses of reproductive genetics and how users of PGD construct their own subjectivities in relation to this technology. She is specifically interested in investigating how relationships of social inequality are reproduced and reconstituted through the discourses associated with this technology. In this workshop Michelle will present her theoretical framing of this project and give some examples of the data that she is collecting and beginning to analyze.