

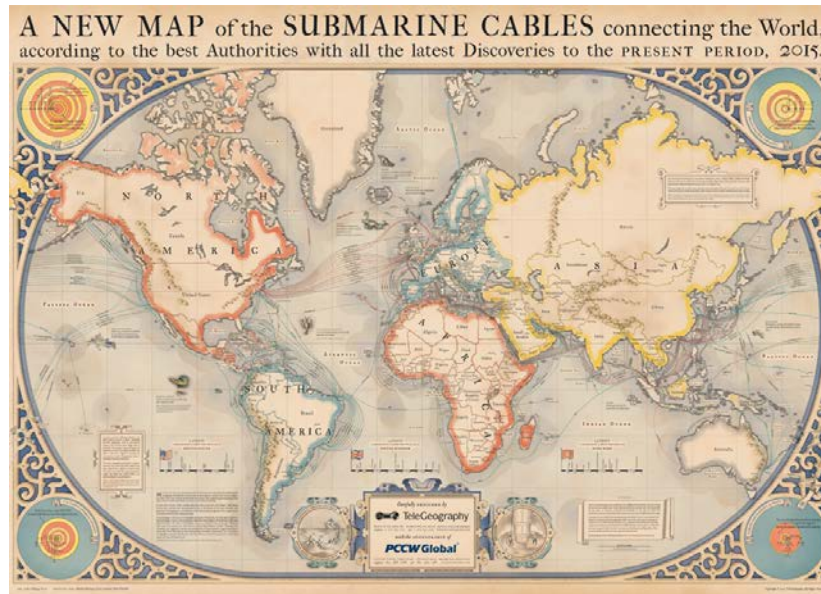
COLLOQUIUM

**Mechanics of Connection and Complicity: Iceland, IT, and Entangled Sovereignties**

*Alix Johnson, Department of Sociology and Surveillance Studies Centre at Queen's University*

Drawing on 20 months of ethnographic research, this talk reads two sites of technical connection – the landing station of Iceland's first telegraph, and its contemporary fiber-optic cable exchange point – as articulations of Icelandic sovereignty. I argue that as a peculiar kind of colony, seen as culturally proximate to the heart of European empire, Icelandic nationalists pursued independence not through claims to meaningful difference, but through demonstrations of closeness and complicity. Past and present information infrastructures embody these strategies and their ongoing effects. Thus while many accounts of expanding communications networks emphasize their potential to erode national boundaries, this paper pays close attention to actual sites of technical connection in order to draw out the more complex commitments, dependencies, and entanglements they entail.

Thurs April 25, 2019  
3:30-5:00pm  
SBSG 1517



**Alix Johnson** is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Sociology and Surveillance Studies Centre at Queen's University. In Fall, 2019 she will join the University of Florida as Assistant Professor of Anthropology. Her current book project, *Compromising Connections*, examines expanding digital networks in Iceland as a lens on questions of sovereignty, identity, and imperial power. Her work has appeared in *American Ethnologist*, *City & Society*, *Culture Machine*, *Imaginations*, and *Allegra Lab*.

