

New Sociology in the Making: Fresh Perspectives, Transforming Futures

Umika Kumar, Gustavo Segat, Mateus Mendonça, Lili Schwoerer*

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* On behalf of the 2020–21 NSP Editorial Board.

We are delighted to publish the first volume and issue of *New Sociological Perspectives* (NSP). One year ago, in the background of the distinct challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to pose to our societies, we embarked on a journey of editorial collaboration through long virtual discussions across five time zones and seven countries. The COVID-19 pandemic insistently reminded us of the importance of understanding our world's unequal and multifaceted realities, and in turn, of a sociology that is able to capture these.

Our stance is certain: we want a sociology that is less dominated by the Western and anglophone world, a sociology less centralised, a sociology more dynamic in its agenda. As graduate students in the Sociology Department at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), we recognise that we are part of reproducing the discipline's dominant paradigms *and* believe we can play a humble part in challenging them.

We know that academic spaces are highly hierarchical. Such structures are shaped by race, gender, class, sexuality, and (dis-)ability, amongst other factors, and are exacerbated by our neoliberal context favouring competitiveness and individualism over cooperative and collective work. Most opportunities to advance in academia are still intrinsically connected to privilege, power, and our ability to access it. Exclusionary structures in the field are significantly produced and reproduced through publishing. Much of what is considered canonical, or having the potential to become canon or seminal contributions, within the discipline are texts written by white, English-, German-, or French-speaking cisgender and heterosexual men. At the same time, most renowned academic journals and important book collections are only accessible to small academic circles either through costly institutional subscriptions or well-served libraries. These exclusionary practices leave most social practitioners and the wider public out of sociological knowledge production.

Sociology increasingly speaks of opening up to different social agents and diversifying its constituency in the academic sphere. And indeed, much has been happening on that front already. In the UK, the Black Curriculum moves the sociological debate forward by diversifying secondary school history and social science syllabi. There is also the collective effort led by Gurminder Bhambra at Global Social Theory, the Connected Sociology Curriculum Series, Discover Society, the Surviving Society Podcast, and many other local efforts to diversify or decolonise the discipline. There are also other student-led sociology journals, such as the University of Manchester *Student Journal of Sociology* and the Sheffield *Student Journal for Sociology*.

Still, we are short of open-access platforms which encourage broad participation and engagement – in terms of local context, career stage and research topic. We need to encourage academic rigour alongside innovation and experimentation in methods and approaches because the lion's share of our discipline still applies the same models based on Western social life repeatedly without ample consideration of what is left outside these already established debates (Go 2020). While the established canon is by no means useless, we firmly believe that by broadening our scope we can produce a more relevant discipline.

This cannot be a merely additive exercise but has to involve challenging the assumptions that are grounding our analysis. Sociologists have done this work, amongst many other approaches, by rethinking social theory's core concepts from a postcolonial perspective (Bhambra 2014), developing African-centred sociologies (Caroll 2012), applying Indigenous ontologies to social analysis (Krenak 2019), and by drawing out the non-western foundations of 'classical' sociology (Qi 2011). We hope that we can contribute to the project of challenging sociology's assumptions and play a small part in moving towards a discipline that is able to account for global interconnections, intersecting power relations and epistemic differences. Our strategy is to publish PhD and master's students' outstanding research from all over the world in open access, and encourage an interdisciplinary and original approach to theory and methodology. We also want to engage with and contribute to efforts to change society and to include a diverse range of positionalities in our pool of authors, peer reviewers, and board members.

The publishing process also plays an important pedagogical role for emerging sociologists. We hope that our contributors, many of them publishing for the first time, can learn from the patient and dedicated feedback of our editors and external peer-reviewers to improve their writing, sharpen their arguments, and get a clear vision of their contributions to the field. Similarly, the students and early career researchers who are involved in the journal as board members or peer-reviewers gain a chance to better understand the academic publishing process and improve their critical lens, academic rigour and scientific knowledge.

There is indeed demand from early career researchers for opportunities to publish their work. In our first-ever call for publications, we had almost one hundred submissions, and almost all of these were highly rigorous and thoughtful proposals for research. Selecting and reviewing the few articles that are a part of this inaugural edition was a laborious task and one that our small editorial team approached with care, intellectual integrity, and excitement.

Beyond carving out a space for ourselves, we hope that our journal creates space for other such journals, providing more opportunities for graduate students and early career researchers to exchange ideas and publish their innovative work. We were inspired by Brazilian graduate students in the Department of Sociology of the University of São Paulo who, twenty-seven years ago, established the journal *Plural* and worked with their professors to build a graduate journal that now sits among the most influential sociological publications in the country. This initiative paved the way, and soon after, every major sociology department in the country had set up graduate journals.

We also looked to other exciting graduate journals when developing our structures, missions and ways of working together. In particular, we were inspired by the aforementioned initiatives in the UK, the *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, *New Sociology: Journal of Critical Praxis*, and *Plural*. Rather than seeing our role in isolation, we hope to become part of a community of progressive, diverse, and publicly engaged graduate publications.

We certainly could not have come this far without support. Lucy Lambe and Claire Delahunty from Houghton St Press, our publisher, were incredibly helpful. We are also grateful to our department at LSE and especially want to thank Dr Fabien Accominotti for working with us at the very beginning, and our academic advisor Professor Fran Tonkiss. She enthusiastically supported us early on and has been offering invaluable help and advice since then. You have our most heartfelt appreciation.

We are committed to making this a long-lasting project. One of the key features of academic journals is consistency in publications over time and sustainable organisational practices. During this foundational period, we have put a lot of effort into establishing a solid foundation for the future. As a graduate journal, it is natural that our board will face frequent turnover. This challenge is also an opportunity to bring new insights and to keep innovating. We aim to build an open community around this journal, integrating it as part of our sociology department but also connecting students, organisations, and departments across the globe.

Current Issue

Reflecting the plurality of social problems tackled by the LSE Department of Sociology and by its PhD students and nine masters programs, we cover a wide range of research topics in sociology. Our topics of interest include social inequality, urban sociology, cultural studies, economic sociology, politics, human rights, social theory, gender studies, and methodological discussions; although, aligned with our mission, we publish beyond these sub-disciplines. This plurality is reflected in all our sections.

The peer-reviewed research articles in this issue bring insights into a wide range of topics, and apply a panoply of methodological approaches.

In 'Feeling Bodies, Feeling Borders: A Collective Exploration of Racialisation and Bordering in Britain', Janna Aldaraji (2021) conducts a crucial exploration of art and creativity as a

source of knowledge about how individuals experience and manoeuvre bordering. The article follows in the steps of important innovative work by scholars of colour who strive towards deconstructing the colonial and racial dynamics at the core of methodology and knowledge production in academia. The article artfully breaks away from the traditional positivist model by focussing on embodiment and affect as a valid way of knowing.

'Trains of Thought: Theorising the Relationship between Temporality and the Tube experience' also engaged with the ways in which structures of power and oppression impact racialised bodies, both the physical and intangible self. The article refutes single explanations of the relations between time and society as overdetermined by temporal determinism and time-pressure. By focusing on the role of agency, embodiment, and habit, Shanae Dyer (2021) shows us how individuals retain a certain amount of agency to create their own experiences of temporality.

Aseela Haque's (2021) "'Playing on the back foot": The Pakistani Male Diaspora and Cricket in Berlin' is an ethnographic investigation into the Pakistani diaspora and their relationship with playing cricket in Germany. The author explores this marginalised sports practice in the respondents' host country to challenge our understanding of nationalism, diaspora constitution and racism.

After the persistent campaigns of Justice for Cleaners organisations, many universities in the UK decided to end outsourcing in the last three years. In 'In-House, yet "Standing Somewhere off": Spatial Reflections on the Enduring Marginality of Cleaning Staff in High-Ranking London Universities', Alma Kaiser (2021) interrogates the cleaners' continuous experience of spatial marginality. The article demonstrates that processes of insourcing these cleaners remain incomplete; therefore, institutions need to ensure that cleaners are not only legally in-house but also fully included in the house: in the built and social-organisational university spaces.

Molly Naylor-Komyatte's (2021) 'Crime Without Punishment: Exploring the Possibility of International Corporate Liability for Climate Crimes at the International Criminal Court' critically interrogates the scope and limitations of international law. The article is an innovative socio-legal assessment of whether it is possible or desirable to consider ongoing contributions to climate change, particularly by fossil fuel companies, as crimes against humanity.

Sofía Daniela Negri's (2021) article 'The Labour Process and the Emergence of Workers' Mobilisation in Delivery Platforms in Argentina' shows us the deep connections between platform workers' conditions of precarity and their mobilisation in the labour market of Argentina. Combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, the article illuminates how the country's growing informal workforce articulate their struggles and forge solidarity.

By drawing on genealogy and the sociology of literature – both well established methodological approaches – Santiago Vargas (2021) is able to offer new insights into the history of 'boredom', contributing to emerging attempts to de-essentialise the concept and trace its shifting meanings in 'Boring Modernity.'

For our book reviews, we are particularly interested in interdisciplinary work, politically engaged scholarship, and work in languages other than English. In this issue, Rose Bewick (2021) reviews Harsha Walia's ground-breaking *Border and Rule*, which challenges mainstream sociological understandings of borders, migration, and class formation. A. Haziz Ginsberg (2021) reviews James Trafford's *The Empire at Home*, an intervention that grapples with Britain's ongoing internal colonialism and 'provides a road map for thinking of new forms of practice' (2021: 137). Gabriela Sarmet (2021) reflects on Alberto Acosta's *O Bem Viver: uma Oportunidade para Imaginar Outros Mundos* (here translated as *The Buen Vivir: An Opportunity to Imagine Other Worlds*). Highly influential in Latin America, the book has significantly shaped community organising and party-political platforms but has not yet been translated into English. Sarmet illustrates the relevance of its concepts for thinking about and challenging capitalism and its development logics globally.

In our translations section, we publish thought-provoking pieces written in any language other than English that have provided significant contributions to sociological debate outside the Anglophone world. In this edition, we bring to you Lélia Gonzalez and Florentino

Menezes. Gonzalez, who passed away in 1994 was an influential scholar and activist working at the intersections of gender, ethnicity and culture in the country. Her seminal works were fundamental to Black and Latin feminist thought and to the effort of decolonising the Brazilian feminist movement. Menezes, on the other hand, was largely influenced by Durkheim and Comte, and was one of the first public sociologists in the world. Despite writing his last contributions around the 1950s, his work is still relevant to those trying to understand political governance and stability.

Lastly, we interview established academics. Our intent here is to explore and demonstrate to early-career scholars how experienced academics have impacted our discipline throughout their career trajectory. For our first edition, we chose to stay close to home and Hannah O'Shea and Robin Corminboeuf talked to Professor Judy Wajcman, a leading academic here at LSE and the Alan Turing Institute, whose work in Science and Technology Studies has been pivotal for many of us.

We recognise that many brilliant pieces were left behind in this issue due to our limited capacity. Because of this, we have worked to expand our board to handle more articles and expand our scope beyond what we included in this first issue, and we look forward to seeing how this journal grows and evolves.

With care,

NSP Board 2020–2021

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