


Revising: *Sociologica* as an International Journal for Sociological Debate

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Abstract

In this essay the editors-in-chief reflect on recent development of the journal and introduce the Symposium on Revising. We at *Sociologica* do not aim to be a major journal of sociology, but we do aspire to be a leading journal. Here we briefly gesture to four areas in which we aspire to leadership. These include: identifying vital topics for sociological debate; offering an alternative editorial model where the review process is not regarded as gate keeping; promoting greater diversity of formats for presenting sociological ideas beyond the one-size-fits-all model of Introduction – Theory – Data & Methods – Findings – Discussion – Conclusion; and presenting critical reflections on the practice of sociology.

Keywords: International journal; sociological debate; sociological craft; revising.

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Books and journal articles often have subtitles — but journals themselves much less frequently. At *Sociologica* we do have a subtitle: *International Journal for Sociological Debate*. Our emphasis on debate stems from the very founding moments of the journal more than fifteen years ago with the decision to publish lead essays in a format that included critical commentary and rejoinders.

In fact, we added the subtitle starting with volume 12, no 1, in 2018. With that we signaled continuity, and indeed we continue to publish essays for which we invite another sociologist (or several others) to write critical comments. That impetus finds expression in this current issue in a debate about Daniel Beunza's ethnography of finance *Taking the Floor: Models, Morals, and Management in a Wall Street Trading Room* (Princeton University Press, 2019).

We at *Sociologica* aspire to be a leading journal of sociology. We are not and do not aspire to be a “major” journal, but we do hope that we can offer leadership in four ways. First, we see our most important task as identifying vital topics for sociological debate. To this end, we are frequently publishing special, thematic issues — most recently, for example:

- “Preparedness in an Uncertain and Risky World,” 15(3), 2021;
- “Becoming Wealthy, Staying Wealthy: Social Acceptance of the Super-rich,” 15(2), 2021;
- “Against Disaster: Critical Reflections on the Concept,” 15(3), 2021; and
- “Power and Control in Platform Monopoly Capitalism,” 14(1), 2020.

Second, we aspire to lead by offering an alternative editorial model. In place of the dominant model that regards the review process as gate keeping, we see the manuscript review process as a collaboration in which we work with authors to improve manuscripts. In almost all cases, we either conditionally accept or reject manuscripts, and we never go more than one round of revise and resubmit.

Third, we aim to promote greater diversity of formats for presenting sociological ideas beyond the one-size-fits-all model of Introduction – Theory – Data & Methods – Findings – Discussion – Conclusion, all in 35 double-spaced pages. As part of this effort, see our special feature “Re-formats, Envisioning Sociology: Doing Social Sciences via Comics and Graphic Novels” (vol. 15, no 1, 2021).

Fourth, in line with our mission as an international journal for sociological debate, we frequently present critical reflections on the practice of sociology. As an example in this number of the journal, see the symposium on “Revising,” the third in a series on the sociological craft curated by David Stark. In 2018, Stark invited a dozen prominent sociologist to tell us how it happened that they started a new research project. He deliberately did not ask how they “chose” or “decided on” a new topic. We received twelve entirely different and equally fascinating answers, published in a special symposium, “Heuristics of Discovery,” vol 12, no 1, 2018. Our prompt to the second set (a different dozen) was simply “What is your publication strategy?” Published in vol 13, no 1 (2019), the responses we received were again highly diverse — in content, format, and style. For example, in each of these special features, we published verbatim (with the authors' permission, of course) the emails from the authors explaining in each case why they could not contribute.

The simple prompts worked well in the two cases, eliciting thoughtful responses that carried insightful messages with a strong personal character. The contributions we received were also accompanied by notes from the authors about how much they had enjoyed the exercise (recognizable when you read these wonderful essays). From the audience's side, word back from readers is that many sociologists are using the special features with their PhD students. And, so, for the third set, published here, Stark again used a simple prompt:

We are interested in the process of improving a manuscript (article or book) for publication. We'll call the feature, "Revising." Peer review is one aspect, but not necessarily. As with the previous special features, our query is open to interpretation.

Once again the prompt provoked highly diverse responses, as you will see in these brief but deeply insightful essays.

References

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