

From the Editors: Next Steps for *Sociologica*

Elena Esposito (Editor)* Marco Santoro (Editor)[†] David Stark (Associate Editor)[‡]

Published: July 26, 2018

We at *Sociologica* are proud that in the eleven years since our first issue we have been a free, open-access, online journal. Starting from this number (2018/1) *Sociologica* will be issued by a new publisher, the University of Bologna. With this change we take advantage of new publishing technologies at the oldest university in the world. Some aspects of the journal's functioning will change immediately but will not be apparent to the reader. Better search engine optimization, for example, will insure that our authors' work will be more widely recognized; and more efficient manuscript processing will make things easier for our editorial staff and our manuscript reviewers. Other new features such as a new side bar that allows readers to extract metadata are now in place to immediately benefit our readers. In the future we will exploit technologies provided by our new publisher so that our authors can include visual, audio, and video materials in the scholarly products that they publish in *Sociologica*.

Although we are changing publishers, there are important aspects of *Sociologica* to which we remain committed. First, as our masthead now makes explicit, we are an *International Journal for Sociological Debate*. As one expression of this goal, a key feature of the journal has been the lead *Essay* debate in which we present an important article followed by commentary from several critical perspectives and a reply by the lead author(s). Second, in the process of publishing high-quality theoretical and empirical scholarly articles, we continue giving special attention to promoting reflexivity about sociological practice. Third, we expand our search for new forms for expressing knowledge of and findings about the social world.

In one of our recent editorial board meetings, a discussion was sparked by a thought exercise: Of all possible forms of activity (in politics, business, arts, sports, knowledge and culture) what product has experienced the least innovation in the past fifty years? Our answer: the social science journal article which, if anything, has become even more widespread and entrenched as the ubiquitous genre form of Introduction, Theory/Literature Review, Data and Methods, Findings, Discussion and Conclusion in 8,000 words. It need not have been so. In the 1970s and 1980s, for example, the editorial team around Pierre Bourdieu at *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* were experimenting with various kinds of formats for presenting sociological research.

* University of Bielefeld (Germany); University of Modena-Reggio Emilia (Italy); ✉ elena.esposito@unimore.it

† University of Bologna, Department of the Arts (Italy); ✉ marco.santoro@unibo.it

‡ Department of Sociology, Columbia University (United States); Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies, University of Warwick (UK); ✉ dcs36@columbia.edu

We are not proposing to do away with the existing journal standard, and the typical *Essay* in *Sociologica* will likely adopt that format, for there are good reasons to do so. But alongside that publication genre we have been exploring alternative formats since the inception and are trying to innovate further. The current issue provides several examples.

As part of our commitment to reflexivity about sociological practice, the reader will find a *Symposium*, “Heuristics of Discovery”, for which we asked eleven prominent sociologists to reflect on the process of discovering a research topic. We have plans for other topics about which we will invite contributors to reflect on various aspects of sociological practice, and our readers are invited to suggest themes of interest.

Whereas in “Heuristics of Discovery” we asked several sociologists to write short essays on a single theme, we have also used the interview format to have an extended conversation with a single sociologist. In recent issues, for example, Laszlo Bruszt interviewed Claus Offe; Filippo Barbera interviewed David Stark; Riccardo Emilio Chesta interviewed Craig Calhoun; and in a forthcoming issue we will publish an interview by José Ossandón with Viviana Zelizer.

In addition to the stand-alone sociological article, we will also continue to publish *Symposia* on special topics and *Flashbacks* i.e. investigations and interventions about classical texts, pioneering contributions or even forgotten episodes in the history of sociology. As part of our commitment to reflexivity about sociological work and witness of our sensitivity to the history of the discipline, this issue contains a section on Max Weber’s “Science as a Vocation” edited by Paul du Gay and José Ossandón.

Finally, we remain committed to reviewing books; but we are making format changes in this area as well. With our *Review Essays* section, we encourage reviews that deal with more than one book on a given topic. And with our *Focus* section we encourage incisive essays that present the state of the art on a particular topic. This could take the form of discussing a debate across a set of articles and/or books. Another format could take a classic text (e.g., Erving Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, or Lucy Suchman’s *Plans and Situated Actions*) and examine areas in which the author’s concepts are newly relevant or are being currently challenged. Going forward, all such contributions in the *Review Essays* and *Focus* sections will have a title and abstract with the same kinds of metadata as for a published article so they can be recognized and cited.