Editors' Introduction

Fadhilah F. Primandari, Miriam Hiersch, Valeria Khudiakova, Samira Diebire, Anna Ridgewell, India Hughes, Lottie Anstee, Marcela Gola-Boutros, Ellen O'Brien, Leanne Freeman, Libby Hamling, Rose Crossgrove, Salome Chapeyama, Natasha Hill, and Rea Gill

In early 2024, Goldsmiths, University of London, announced what it called the Transformation Programme, a restructuring and financial plan which required at least 132 members of its academic staff be made redundant (Williams, 2024). Some departments, include psychology, anthropology, sociology, and politics, were predicted to lose 50% of its staff (Weale, 2024; Williams, 2024). Although the University College Union (UCU) campaigns that followed managed to halt compulsory redundancies at least for the 2024/2025 academic year, 62 members of staff had to accept a redundancy agreement (UCU, 2024).

The story at Goldsmiths is not unique and illustrates the precarity of social science research and education today. Over the recent years, various universities have announced redundancies in or closures of their social sciences departments, and significantly reduced financial support for social science research (British Sociological Association, 2024; The British Academy, 2021). These redundancies and reduced research funding at universities are driven by both a profit-driven model of education provision and the expectation that research should deliver "clear" or "tangible benefits" (Armstrong & Pauls, 2021; Hochstrasser, 2025).

At the first instance, these developments confront us with questions such as: What is the point of the social sciences? What do the social sciences have to offer? How do we ensure that the social sciences remain relevant today? However, they also invite us to revisit and critically reflect on the forces that structure the ways we think about social problems and the solutions to them, as well as how we approach, do, and evaluate social science research.

It was within this context that we released a call for papers in February this year, with the theme *Social Sciences Beyond Academia: Ideas, Innovation, Impact.* We invited authors to consider the relationships between the social reality and the social sciences, as well as reflect on the (perceived) barriers between them.

The submissions we received did not disappoint. Keeping true to Sentio's interdisciplinary scope, our authors came from a wide range of social science disciplines. They discussed an array of questions, such as: What are the challenges that the social sciences face in answering present-day problems—and how do these challenges relate with the approaches to problem-solving in and outside academia? Who decides which knowledges are important and which are not? Who defines the subject and the object in the social sciences? How do our methodological choices restrict and expand our world views? How do social structures shape the ways we navigate social science

research? How do our personal experiences and identities shape our approaches to social science research?

In many and various ways, our authors remind us of the social sciences' persistent relevance—and that relevance, innovations, and impact may not necessarily look the same for everyone, nor the way we might expect it to *a priori*. Our authors bring not only findings from their own research projects, but also reflections from their personal experience in navigating their research journey. Some also point us to the value of discomfort, surprise, dilemma, and nuance in approaching social science research. We are delighted to invite you to read their works.

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