



Sociologies of the Future and the Future of Sociology

Call for Papers - Sociology Special Issue

Special Issue Editors: Susan Halford & Dale Southerton (University of Bristol)

Deadline for submission of full papers: 1 December 2021

Overview:

The British Sociological Association celebrated its 70th anniversary at our annual conference in 2021. Our theme for this conference was '*Re-Making the Future*': drawing attention to the ways in which Sociology and sociological research engages with, understands and shapes futures. That the conference was held during the covid-19 pandemic – which is at once profoundly disruptive to and generative for emergent futures at individual, community, national and global scales – only served to underline the need for renewed sociological attention in this area. This Special Issue picks up these concerns and seeks to provide a benchmark for reflection on sociological futures and consider what this might mean for the future of Sociology.

The future has been woven in and out of the history of Sociology. Imagined futures are *implicitly* central to much sociological research: for example, in arguments about epochal social change, in attention to hopes and expectations and – more generally – in activist and participatory sociological research that seek to bring about social change. And yet, powerful critiques of prediction and determinism deny *explicit* sociological attention to 'actual futures', leaving the field open to other disciplines (for example, Engineering, Economics and Data Science) to lead public and policy debates. Although 'public sociology' is recognised as a priority for Sociology there is an urgent need to amplify sociologists' contribution and voice to futures thinking and futures making.

The Special Issue aims to bridge this 'gap' between implicit sociological engagement in and sociological distancing from the future. It has two key starting points. First, that sociological theories, methods and empirical research have a great deal to offer in understanding how futures are claimed, enacted and made. And second, that a concerted effort is required to excavate, articulate and implement this promise. In contributing to this effort, this Special Issue seeks to draw together a range of theoretical, methodological and empirical resources that, collectively, will offer a powerful intervention for sociological futures thinking and futures making.

Themes may include:

- Sociological analysis of futures and future-making e.g. decolonial and reparative futures, sociotechnical futures, sustainable futures, fair and inclusive futures;
- Futures for Sociology as a discipline and its contribution within inter-disciplinary dialogues;

- Theoretical approaches to futures and future making (e.g. theories of time and temporality, space and spatiality, power and inequality, movements and social change, practices and everyday lives);
- Methods, methodologies and data for futures research (e.g. reflections on mainstream sociological methods, creative methods, new and emerging forms of data);
- Increasing sociological engagement in futures thinking and future making (e.g. in policy, public debate, and with other disciplines and sub-fields such as Design, Responsible Innovation, Anticipation Studies).

Format

We welcome articles of 6-8000 words in the usual house style.

We also welcome novel and alternative contributions. If you are considering this, please contact the Editors in advance to discuss. Such contributions might include:

- Review articles (of a sub-field, a collection of books or specific methods);
- Interviews or dialogues with key contributors to sociological futures research;
- Blog posts on topical contemporary issues.

These should be 2-4000 words in length. We would also be happy to consider non-textual contributions.

Submission Details:

Deadline for submissions: 1 December 2021

For any queries regarding this special issue, please contact the guest editors:

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Submit online: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/soc>

Full submission instructions are available on this site on the 'Instructions and Forms' page. Please read these in full well before submitting your manuscript. All manuscripts will be subject to the normal referee process, but potential authors are welcome to discuss their ideas in advance with the editors.