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Preface

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Preface

Dear reader,

Depending on your preference, before you lies, hovers, or radiates, the second issue of *Amsterdam Social Science*. A very special issue, as its appearance marks the continuity of our project. What was once one, has become two, and *deo volente* will be three and beyond. Continuity you will find in the journal's format, in the broad range of subjects covered, and in the fact of student authorship – core elements, we wish not to disembark from.

Continued also is the brutality of peer review. In this regard, we *could* brag a 66% rejection rate of submitted articles. Then again, we ought to be wary though not to succumb to “peer cannibalism”¹; be careful for our editors and contributors not to eat one another in what is perceived as the act of ‘gatekeeping’ academic quality. While we value quality over quantity, it is exactly *a lack of* cannibalism that we strived for in setting up this journal. That is, we intend to make the journal a training ground for graduate students, allowing authors to practice their academic writing skills, while others are offered the opportunity to constructively review their peers’ work.

We look for work that can be presented to a broad audience of interested readers and, in doing so, we aim to avoid the common practice of, what Harvey Molotch² calls, “(...) treating ‘hard to read’ as a benign challenge, like climbing the Mount Everest, with honor going to those with the temerity to take it on.” While many students long to be part of the scientific community, there is no necessity in accepting uncritically its practices. We set our own substantive standards, and look for originality and talent – and some naive idealism, every now and again. Our motto being:

“Besides Type I and Type II error, there is Type III error: nobody cares about the null hypothesis anyway.”³

1 Molotch, Harvey. 1994. “Going out.” *Sociological Forum* 9(2): 221-239.

2 Ibid. p. 230.

3 Ibid. p. 226.

We have accepted the challenge to keep peer review the ‘Holy Cow of Science’⁴ that it ought to be, and let it become neither a *raging bull*, acting recklessly beyond our control, nor an *anonymous member of the herd* that is unable to live up to our high expectations.

Furthermore, we continue to bring to our readers diversity; something we embrace and promote by having an interdisciplinary editorial board, board of advisors, and of course, by selecting for each issue a diverse set of articles. Last issue covered topics ranging from the sexualized social space of Amsterdam’s red light district, to religiosity trends in post-communist Bosnia. This issue features, among others, a critical view on the implications of the European Data Retention Initiative for the frail balance between personal freedom and public safety; an argument against the ‘institutional LEGO’ approach to social policy; and a discussion of local and global forces in shaping gay identity, cross-culturally.

Besides promoting diversity of *articles*, however, we would like each *author* to add to the journal something new. In this respect, what Molotch⁵ wrote on sociologists, goes for students of all social sciences:

“Having only a thin slice of human experience weakens the sociologists’ crucial first order of data, the thickness of one’s own biography. If what the sociologists know best is what is also commonly known to the rest of the educated public, they are naive to all other settings – both substantively and methodologically – tabula rasa all over again.”

So let us go out and experience the social world around us: parlor, drink, and shake a leg, for it is the experienced all-round researcher that has most to offer to the research community. But please, in between of your dance and your drink, be sure to submit your experience to the next issue of *Amsterdam Social Science*.

Jonathan Mijs and Thomas Franssen

4 De Vries, Jaap. 2001. “Peer Review: The Holy Cow of Science.” Pp. 231-244 in *A Century of Science Publishing. A Collection of Essays*, edited by E.H. Fredriksson. Amsterdam: IOS Press.

5 Ibid. p. 231.