Sentio

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY SOCIAL SCIENCE JOURNAL

About the journal

*Sentio* is a new online journal founded and edited by PhD students from the ESRC-funded South-east Network for the Social Sciences (SeNSS) Doctoral Training Partnership. The journal’s name, *Sentio*, translates to “I sense”, and reflects our editorial interest in exploring the multiple and varied means by which knowledge may be produced in and through the social sciences.

We invite submissions from doctoral researchers and scholars from all institutions as our current and future collaborators and interlocutors. Articles will be selected on a basis of merit and contribution to the journal’s theme, not the author’s institutional affiliation.

We aim to publish contributions from PhD candidates, postgraduate students, early-career researchers (ECRs) and scholars that speak to current debates within and across all social sciences disciplines. Submissions to the journal may comprise theoretical, methodological, and empirical scholarship pertaining to the journal’s theme, or reports, commentaries, and personal reflections on issues relevant to social science scholarship. We particularly welcome submissions from an interdisciplinary perspective.

*Sentio* is comprised of three sections:

- **Features** (1,000-1,500 words) containing interviews, book reviews, and reportage of current events.

- **Reflections** (250-1,500 words) featuring informal deliberation on fieldwork, methodology, grant/job application writing, and other aspects of PhD/ECR life.

- **Articles** (1,000-3,000 words) featuring short academic articles, usually brief versions of PhD chapters, conference submissions, or journal articles, giving
contributors a platform to publish early-stage ideas, theories, or findings from their research as they emerge.

Our theme for the inaugural issue: Validity

The theme of our first issue is ‘validity’. We invite contributors to reflect on the various uses, meanings, and mobilizations of the concept within and across specific social science disciplines.

Validity is often interpreted differently across qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Research designs and conclusions considered valid in one approach might be seen as invalid in another. Contributions on this theme might involve reflection on debates between different theoretical and epistemological paradigms, or they could discuss the abilities of certain methodologies to uncover ‘truths’. Scholars working in a positivist paradigm might have different opinions on this to those working in a post-positivist paradigm, for example.

Validity might also refer to the uses of research output, for instance through claims that research is only ‘valid’ if its results are taken up by policy makers and advocacy groups. Further, validity might be a quality relevant for research ethics: how can we conduct scientific study that produces insights about the social world without doing harm to those we are researching?

Whilst debates about validity are a perennial issue within the social sciences, the concept has been thrust into the spotlight once again in recent months. The notion of validity has been marshalled in debates about the status of gender, race, and queer studies (as well as other forms of theorizing associated with emancipatory movements) as forms of ‘scientific enquiry’, with some commentators arguing that they fall short of scientific standards on methodological and epistemological grounds. Further, while efforts to strictly circumscribe ‘proper’ social sciences are as old as each of its constituent disciplines, the current debate takes place in a setting of increased urgency. The policing of disciplinary boundaries occurs simultaneously with the fortification of territorial boundaries, as well as an attendant climate of increasing hostility against minoritised others. The academy of
which we are all a part is a site of real struggle when it comes to this debate: the ‘hostile environment’ policy enforces increased surveillance of non-EU staff and students, while race, gender, and sexualities scholarship is under threat from cuts in funding and disruption by right-wing agitators.

**Submissions**

Against the background of recent political and intellectual debates on the merits and obligations of scientific inquiry, we invite authors to reflect on ‘validity’ in the social sciences.

Abstracts of maximum 250 words, along with full author details (name, position, contact details, and institutional affiliation(s)) should be submitted by **18 January 2019**. Please submit contributions to [SentioJournal@gmail.com](mailto:SentioJournal@gmail.com).

All submissions will be blind reviewed by the editorial team, and contributors will be notified of the outcome by 8 February 2019.

Whilst we welcome broad interpretations of the theme for this issue, recognizing that validity might be approached in a number of ways, we offer some suggestions of potential areas of interest across the journal’s three sections:

**Features**

- Interviews with scholars whose work engages with, troubles, or critically pushes the boundaries of how social science scholarship comes to be seen as ‘valid’
- Review articles of recent publications engaging the concept of social science validity
- Reportage of recent debates, observed online or in person, of questions surrounding social science validity
REFLECTIONS

- Moments of a researcher’s experience often left out of the final text. Instances of personal realisation, emotional revelation, or descriptions of felt experiences

- Stories that highlight the ways, means, and processes by which you as a researcher or your research itself have been validated or invalidated. What kinds of validity do you seek to attain? What kinds of validity do you notice yourself imposing on or reproducing for others?

- Experiences of applying different methodological approaches in order to validate research, e.g. questionnaires and scales, interviews, observation, participatory methods, etc.

ARTICLES

- Philosophical or theoretical discussions about the concept of ‘validity’ and its centrality in social science research

- Methodological approaches to obtaining ‘validity’ through quantitative and/or qualitative means

- The place of ‘validity’ in data collection, analysis and dissemination of research findings

- Definitional debates around ‘validity’

For questions, please contact SentioJournal@gmail.com

Twitter: https://twitter.com/SentioJournal

Website: https://sentiojournal.wordpress.com/