

FROM THE EDITORS

Time for a new journal. Not that there isn't no shortage of venues for scholarly inquiry in the social sciences: indeed, countless journals document the ever-expanding tapestry of our disciplines. Yet, in this age when our methods and assumptions are laid bare under the light of ethical scrutiny, there emerges an acute need for a forum devoted to questioning the very grounds of our research. *Ethical Review of Social Sciences* is our response to that need, a space where rigorous inquiry meets a steadfast commitment to responsibility.

We find ourselves at a juncture where the ways we investigate society are increasingly entangled with the moral commitments that both guide and challenge us. A circle of international professors has joined forces to breathe life into this journal, not to simply add another title to the list, but to create a repository for critical reflection—a place where the integrity of research is examined as closely as its results. In an era dominated by rapid discovery and technological prowess, our endeavour is to remind ourselves that every method, every dataset, and every conclusion carries with it ethical implications that demand our attention. In an era when groundbreaking research is all too often sidelined by commercial interests and superficial metrics, and when even so-called “top tier” journals have been tainted by lax editorial practices and questionable peer review, the need for a dedicated space to reflect on the ethical foundations of our research has never been more urgent. I have witnessed, with growing dismay, how the relentless drive for profit has warped the academic landscape. The pioneering work of Nobel laureates Katalin Karikó and Drew Weissman, whose life-saving insights into RNA biology were once dismissed for lacking “commercial interest” in 24 hours, now serve as stark reminders that merit should never be measured solely by immediate marketability. Their experience, shared by many who have seen innovative ideas rejected on the basis of superficial criteria, exposes a system that often privileges spectacle over substance.

There is a dual current at work in our academic environment. On one side lie the institutional forces that provide us with recognition, resources, and a

platform for growth. On the other, there is a persistent risk: that in our quest for legitimacy, we might sacrifice the critical edge that questions, challenges, and, ultimately, refines our practice. Our task is to traverse this delicate balance, to harness the strengths of established academic support while never losing sight of the need for uncompromising reflection. For John Stuart Mill, *“Truth gains more even by the errors of one who thinks for himself than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think”*. This maxim remains as relevant today as ever, urging us to value independent, critical thought over the comfort of consensus. Yet, the prevailing editorial practices in many prestigious journals have, over time, undermined that very spirit. Investigative experiments – such as those revealing fake peer review and superficial editorial scrutiny – have unmasked a troubling reality: when editorial decisions are driven by profit and influenced by superficial citation metrics, the moral fabric of academic publishing begins to unravel. *“The first principle is that you must not fool yourself”*, said Richard Feynman.

Our mission is not to offer ready-made answers but to open a space where questions of accountability, responsibility, and integrity are brought to the fore. We are here to probe those foundational assumptions that too often escape examination, to interrogate the processes that shape our investigations, and to foster a dialogue that is as incisive as it is respectful of the traditions we inherit. The ethical dimensions of our work are not mere footnotes; they are woven into the fabric of every inquiry and must be considered with the same rigor as our empirical pursuits.

Consider for a moment the many ways in which our research, in its unbridled pursuit of progress, can inadvertently reinforce imbalances of power, marginalize dissenting voices, or obscure the very biases it seeks to overcome. With these challenges in mind, we welcome contributions that scrutinize the ethical undercurrents of social research—be they critical analyses of prevailing methodologies, reflective essays that question our assumptions, or incisive commentaries that propose new paths toward responsible inquiry.

In this first quarterly volume just released, you will encounter a series of essays, critiques, and commentaries that embody our commitment to this rigorous examination. These pieces do not simply chronicle current practices; they interrogate the values and ideals that guide them. They serve as both a

mirror and a lamp—a reflection of our present challenges and a beacon illuminating potential paths forward.

We are acutely aware that our pursuit is not without its perils. The swift currents of change in research practices can erode the critical space needed for true accountability. Yet, it is precisely within this tension—between the comforting embrace of tradition and the disruptive call for reform that *Ethical Review of Social Sciences* stakes its claim. We invite scholarship that is unafraid to question established paradigms, that is bold enough to challenge the status quo, and that remains ever vigilant in its pursuit of intellectual honesty.

Let us also acknowledge the broader context in which this journal emerges. In a world increasingly driven by expedience, where the race to publish often overshadows the contemplation of ethical duty, our collective endeavour is a call to slow down, to reflect, and to engage in the kind of deep scrutiny that transforms not only our work but also the world it seeks to understand. Here, the rigorous examination of ethical concerns is not an ancillary pursuit but the very core of meaningful inquiry.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the many colleagues, reviewers, and advisors whose persistent support and discerning insights have been indispensable in bringing this project to fruition. Their contributions remind us that the quest for a more responsible and reflective academic practice is a shared responsibility, one that is enriched by a diversity of voices and perspectives. As you peruse the pages of this inaugural issue, we invite you to join us in this journey of reflective inquiry. Engage with the debates, question the assumptions, and contribute to the dialogue that seeks to redefine the boundaries of our research. In doing so, we hope to foster a community of scholars who are as committed to ethical rigor as they are to the pursuit of knowledge.

With firm resolve and a deep sense of duty, we present the *Ethical Review of Social Sciences*, a forum where critical reflection and moral responsibility meet, with courage and clarity.

Kind Regards,
Frans Lavdari