

# FOR A PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT IN THE AMERICAS: AN EDITORIAL CALL ON BEHALF OF A SOCIALLY ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP ON SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

*POR UMA SOCIOLOGIA PÚBLICA DO ESPORTE NAS AMÉRICAS: UM CHAMADO EDITORIAL EM PROL DE UMA EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA SOCIALMENTE RELEVANTE*

*POR UNA SOCIOLOGÍA PÚBLICA DEL DEPORTE EN LAS AMÉRICAS: UNA CONVOCATORIA EDITORIAL EN PRO DE UNA EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA SOCIALMENTE RELEVANTE*

**Peter Donnelly\*, Alex Branco Fraga\*\*, Angela Aisenstein\*\*\***

## Keywords

Public Sociology of Sport.  
Physical Education.  
Academic productivism.  
Scientific Communication.

**Abstract:** This essay was jointly written by the three editors of the special issue of Movimento – For a Public Sociology of Sport in the Americas: Accomplishments, Challenges, and Emerging Agendas – celebrating the twentieth anniversary of this Brazilian journal and inspired by the tenth anniversary of Burawoy’s manifesto for a public sociology. The article is divided into three sections. The first section, originally written in English, discusses the importance of practicing sociology of sport with a public character and producing research that effectively and concretely contributes to political engagement with society’s problems. The second section, originally written in Portuguese, approaches the effects of academic “productivism” on Brazil’s scientific communication policy, especially for the humanities and social sciences. It stresses the specific role played by Movimento in disseminating socio-cultural and pedagogical research in physical education. The third section, originally written in Spanish, lays out the challenges faced by the editorial team to organize the special issue and presents an overview of the content of the texts included in a call for a socially relevant scientific production in the field.

## Palavras-chave

Sociologia pública do esporte.  
Educação Física.  
Produtivismo acadêmico.  
Comunicação científica.

**Resumo:** Trata-se de um ensaio produzido de forma conjunta pelos três editores do número especial da revista Movimento – Por uma sociologia pública do esporte nas Américas: conquistas, desafios e agendas emergentes, proposto em comemoração ao vigésimo aniversário desta revista brasileira e inspirado nos dez anos do manifesto de Burawoy em favor de uma sociologia pública. O texto está dividido em três seções, a primeira, escrita originalmente em inglês, discute a importância de se praticar uma sociologia do esporte de caráter público e de se produzir pesquisas que efetivamente contribuam para o enfrentamento político de problemas concretos da sociedade. A segunda, escrita originalmente em português, trata dos efeitos do “produtivismo” acadêmico na política de comunicação científica brasileira, em especial para as ciências humanas e sociais, destacando a especificidade da Movimento na veiculação da produção sociocultural e pedagógica da educação física. A terceira, escrita originalmente em espanhol, cita os desafios enfrentados pela equipe editorial para a organização do número especial e apresenta de forma panorâmica o conteúdo dos textos que compuseram um chamado à produção científica socialmente relevante no campo.

## Palabras clave

Sociología pública del deporte.  
Educación Física.  
Productivismo académico.  
Comunicación científica.

**Resumen:** Se trata de un ensayo producido de manera conjunta por los tres editores del número especial de la revista Movimento – Por una sociología pública del deporte en las Américas: conquistas, desafíos y agendas emergentes, propuesto en conmemoración al vigésimo aniversario de esta revista brasileña e inspirado en los diez años del manifesto de Burawoy a favor de una sociología pública. El texto está dividido en tres secciones. La primera, escrita originalmente en inglés, discute la importancia de practicar una sociología del deporte de carácter público y de producir investigaciones que efectivamente contribuyan a enfrentar políticamente problemas concretos de la sociedad. La segunda, escrita originalmente en portugués, trata de los efectos del productivismo académico en la política de comunicación científica brasileña, en especial para las ciencias humanas y sociales, destacando la especificidad de la revista Movimento como vehículo de la producción sociocultural y pedagógica de la educación física. La tercera, escrita originalmente en castellano sintetiza los desafíos enfrentados por el equipo editorial para organizar el número especial y presenta de manera panorámica el contenido de los textos que compusieron un llamado a la producción científica socialmente relevante en el área.

\* University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.  
E-mail: peter.donnelly@utoronto.ca

\*\* Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil.  
E-mail: brancofraga@gmail.com

\*\*\* Universidad Nacional de Luján e Universidad de San Andrés, Provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina.  
E-mail: aaisenstein@gmail.com



## 1 THE VIEW FROM THE NORTH OF ABYA YALA<sup>1</sup>: THE (IR)RELEVANCE OF SOCIOLOGICAL WORK IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL CULTURE

[British socialist historian, E.P. Thompson] helped to maintain the immensely intellectually productive and sometimes politically important borderland between academic scholarship and public activism – and always, I think, regretted the way this borderland had been attenuated by the increasing capacity of universities to absorb and domesticate intellectual discourse (CALHOUN, 1994, p. 223).

In a recent article in the (U.S.) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Harvard professor Orlando Patterson (2014) became the latest sociologist to question *How sociologists made themselves irrelevant*. He points to the absence of sociologists on policy-oriented expert panels in the United States, to the point that “sociologists have become distant spectators rather than shapers of policy”. Thus, Patterson joins a chorus of voices calling for the reinvigoration of *public sociology*: “using our expertise to help develop public policies and alleviate social problems in contexts wherein the experience and data can, reciprocally, inform our work”.

While sociology has been marginalized from public policy in the United States, both through its own inaction and perhaps a more deliberate marginalization by policy-making bodies, in Canada the anti-sociological stance of the current government has been more overt. Echoing Margaret Thatcher’s 1987 claim that “there is no such thing as society”, Prime Minister Stephen Harper responded in 2013 to a call to seek the root causes of an alleged terrorist plot in Canada by stating that this was not a time “to commit sociology”. In 2014, arguing against a public inquiry into the murder and disappearance of large numbers of indigenous women, the Prime Minister argued that this was a series of individual crimes and “not a sociological phenomena”. These statements followed the cancellation, by the current government in 2010, of Statistics Canada’s mandatory long form census – one of the best sources of social scientific data in Canada.

The marginalization of sociology appears even more ideological when we see who is invited to serve on and consult for policy-making bodies, and whose voices are most often read and heard in the media when addressing social problems. Political scientists and economists, especially those who tend to view people as individuals and consumers rather than as citizens and members of society, “have had their say in debates over [among other things] incarceration, gangs and violence, high-school dropout rates, chronic unemployment, and socioeconomic disconnection, all subjects studied at great length by sociologists” (PATTERSON, 2014). If sociology is seen as a threat by the neo-liberal capitalist order, then, as many Canadian sociologists argued in 2013, there has never been a better time to “commit sociology”.

Sociology in Canada and the United States has continually struggled over its purpose<sup>2</sup>. Is it to produce “knowledge for the sake of knowledge” (i.e., the traditional academic discipline) or “knowledge for the sake of humanity” (a more engaged, relevant and *practical* approach). Burawoy (2005) makes this point by asking, “Sociology for Whom?” (is the audience ourselves or others?) and “Sociology for What?” (sociology for given ends or for the discussion of ends and/or values).

1 *Abya Yala*, in the language of the Panamanian Kuna people, refers to “land in full maturity.” The Kuna people occupy the bridge between North and South ‘America’, and indigenous peoples of the ‘Americas’, and others, are increasingly employing the term to refer to the entire continent. Its use is attributed to (‘Bolivian’) Aymara leader, Takir Mamani: “To name our cities, town and continents with a foreign name is equivalent to submitting our wills to the identity of our invaders and their heirs” (ALBO, 1995, p. 33).

2 Parts of the following are adapted from Donnelly (2015).

In Burawoy's classification of sociological work (*professional, policy, critical and public*), it is the *professional* that has dominated sociological work in Canada and the United States for much of the last 50 years, and has reproduced itself through the production of doctoral students and hiring practices. As Patterson (2014) points out, "in the effort to keep ourselves academically pure, we've also become largely irrelevant in molding the most important social enterprises of our era".

But Burawoy's typology is not intended to classify sociologists – many sociologists work in more than one type of sociology, some in all four types, and work in all four types is necessary. Ingham and Donnelly (1990) argued that all sociological knowledge is *practical* knowledge;<sup>3</sup> in other words, sociological knowledge can "make a difference". However, sociological work finds different expressions in different countries. Perhaps the hegemony of *professional* sociology does not exist to the same extent in the Central and Southern countries of *Abya Yala*, and "perhaps, only in the context of a strong professional sociology do we need to develop the idea of a 'public sociology'" (BURAWOY, 2007, p. 7).

Although our discipline emerged in North "America" from both sociology and physical education as a *professional* sociology of sport,<sup>4</sup> the practical approaches of physical education and sport have continually led sociologists of sport to be concerned with social problems. However, while sociology and sociology of sport in Canada and the United States was affected by the anti-war, anti-colonial, anti-poverty, and pro-women's and civil rights movements of the middle years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and while the sociology of sport has routinely produced research that, to a greater or lesser extent, has "made a difference" (DONNELLY, 2015; DONNELLY; ATKINSON, 2015); it seems that Burawoy's (2005) call for a *public* sociology has hit a nerve, and not just in North "America".

The First International Sociological Association (ISA) Forum on Sociology in 2008 opened with a seminar on how the discipline of sociology was changing. Among the 19 papers given, a fairly wide range of linguistic and national cultures was represented (although *Southern Theory* – Connell, 2007 – was quite limited, and English was the majority language), and the most frequently cited author is Burawoy (published subsequently by Kalekin-Fishman & Denis, 2012). As one reviewer notes, "where [sociology] has achieved much is when it has kept its feet on the ground and stuck to studying the real world" (HUSBANDS, 2012). He goes on to note that many of the major concerns of the day—climate change, mass migration, economic inequalities, and so on – are covered by the authors "who recognize that a principal task of sociology – if it is to have any worthwhile future – is to analyze and confront these issues with meaningful research on how they will affect humanity and how some of their worst effects might be mitigated" (HUSBANDS, 2012).

We want to take this claim further and argue that the work of sociologists of sport, if it is to have a future, should be practical, should be *public*, and should be ready to make a difference. We need to ask ourselves if our research questions, and those of our students, are relevant in terms of problems of the day and of the future. Is sport, as it is constituted today, sustainable (wherein we address problems relating to climate change, environment, and the size and cost of sports and events)? From the perspective of sport and physical culture, we can also continue to address, among other topics: poverty and social inequality; conflict and conflict

3 By this claim, they were acknowledging their sociological influences, such as Peter Berger and C. Wright Mills, who argued that sociological knowledge could change your life and the lives of others.

4 See Donnelly (2015) for a brief explanation of these origins.

resolution; participation, the social determinants of health and the spread of non-communicable diseases; the human rights and labour rights of athletes and those engaged in the industries supporting sport and physical culture; and the democratization of participation, of participants, and of governance. If we do not contribute to the resolution of major problems facing the world today, we will continue to contribute to our marginalization in the academy and the forums where public policy is discussed.

## 2 THE VIEW FROM THE SOUTH OF ABYA YALA: THE EFFECTS OF ACADEMIC “PRODUCTIVISM” IN THE SCHOLARSHIP ON SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

We believe that Iberian American peoples should live together fraternally and use solidarity to face the social problems plaguing most of those living in the continent (EDITORIAL, 2000, p. 4).

The editorial for the last issue of *Movimento* in 2000 announced the launch of its “Mercosur” section<sup>5</sup>. Its central aim was to open space for texts in Spanish and become a channel for knowledge produced within our field in Iberian American countries. The opening article was *La configuración postmoderna del cuerpo humano*, by Spanish educator Conrado Vilanou (Universidad de Barcelona), and the closing piece was *Olympia: la mirada femenina sobre los juegos olímpicos de Berlín*, by Argentinean sociologist María Graciela Rodríguez (Universidad de Buenos Aires), published in the last issue of 2002. Although short-lived, the Mercosur section signaled the editorial team’s intention to trigger a process of internationalization, having its “feet” in the Latin American territory and its “eyes” on research that was engaged and socially relevant to the continent. These purposes are strongly reaffirmed in this special issue celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Movimento*.

The editorial in the last issue of 2002 did not mention that María Graciela Rodríguez’s essay would be a farewell to the Mercosur section. But it did announce that a stage in the journal’s editorial policy that had led to significant structural changes would end at that very moment. From the first issue of 2003 onward, *Movimento* would no longer publish articles from the biodynamics subfield and would instead focus on works from the sociocultural and pedagogical subfields<sup>6</sup> (EDITORIAL, 2002). According to Stigger, Fraga and Molina Neto (2014), that decision was based on the journal’s own publishing history and intended to meet some of the editorial standardization requirements for indexing in Brazilian and international databases. “That was an important moment and a decision that impacted *Movimento*’s ‘life’ from then on, because the foundations on which the journal was built and which established its specific place in the academic field of Physical Education were launched at that point” (STIGGER; FRAGA; MOLINA NETO, 2014, p. 797).

The focus on the sociocultural and pedagogical subfields of Physical Education – in an academic context dominated since then by the production of the biodynamics subfield and requiring Brazilian professors to publish articles on an industrial scale – was aimed at taking

<sup>5</sup> The section name was inspired by the alliance between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay (as member countries) and Bolivia and Chile (as associated countries) in order to establish business rules for the free movement of goods and services among South Americas’ Southern Cone countries (BRASIL, 2014a).

<sup>6</sup> Seeking to characterize Physical Education in Brazil in academic terms by analyzing research lines of graduate programs, Edson Manuel and Yara Carvalho (2011) found three subfields: biodynamics – including basically sub-disciplines such as biochemistry of exercise, biomechanics, exercise physiology, motor control, motor learning and development; sociocultural studies – dealing with the field’s topics from the perspectives of sociology, anthropology, history and philosophy; and pedagogy – investigating issues related to teacher training, school curricula, teaching methods, didactics, pedagogy of sport, and theories of education in general.

a stance in this “battleground for real utopias” (BURAWOY, 2012), which has been favoring research and scientific media oriented to natural sciences while marginalizing those oriented to the social sciences and humanities.

In Brazil, the quality of researchers’ production has been measured by the number of articles they are able to publish in well-ranked scientific journals, regardless of theoretical and methodological designs. Scientific journals are ranked by a scoring system (QUALIS-Periódicos<sup>7</sup>) based mainly on the impact factor assigned by *Journal of Citation Reports* (JCR), based upon citations collected on *Web of Science* (WoS), and by *Scimago Journal Ranking* (SJR), based upon citations collected on *Scopus* (PACKER, 2014). The higher the impact of a journal, the more points researchers will be awarded for articles published in it.

In order to be considered “productive”, researchers must publish a number of articles consistent with their field’s median every four years.<sup>8</sup> That median is computed only at the end of the four-year period based on the production of all professors registered at graduate programs. The quality of graduate programs is also measured, mainly by their faculty’s ability for large-scale publication within the same period—that is, a graduate program’s good scores depend on “productive” professors.<sup>9</sup> This intricate evaluation apparatus is used as a parameter by universities and funding agencies to fund research projects, to grant scholarships for students at different educational levels, to rank professors in public selections, as well as to grant and cancel professors’ registration at Brazilian graduate programs (JOB, FRAGA, MOLINA NETO, 2008). Such production-inducing policy focused on publishing in scientific journals has been called “academic productivism”.

That policy – and indirectly the indexing of several journals in international databases – has helped Brazil to rank 13<sup>th</sup> among science-producing countries based on WoS measurements (PACKER, 2014, BIANCHETTI; VALLE, 2014). However, it has also led to all sorts of problems for the organization of the graduate studies system (KUENZER; MORAES, 2005, MANOEL; CARVALHO, 2011, SILVA; SACARDO; SOUZA, 2014), for researchers’ work process (MANCEBO, 2013), for ethical investigative conduct (CASTIEL; SANZ-VALERO, 2007), for undergraduate students’ education (ALCADIPANI, 2011), for the science communication system (DOMINGUES, 2014), for researchers’ health (DE MEIS, 2003, BERNARDO, 2014), and for the management of journals in various fields of knowledge (REGO, 2014).

Academic productivism has affected Brazil’s scientific publishing policies, and especially the editorial process of journals dedicated to knowledge produced in the humanities and social sciences. Since the establishment in 2003 of the Electronic System for Journal Publishing (SEER)<sup>10</sup> – a tool created by the Brazilian Institute of Science and Technology (IBICT) after customization of the Open Journal Systems (OJS) – several journals already established in the area were able to be electronically published at near-

7 Brazilian system for evaluation of journals, created and maintained by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) to rank and list journals around the world that publish the scientific production of professors registered with graduate programs. Each knowledge field has its own Qualis with rules established by expert committees (BRASIL, 2014b).

8 In 2014, CAPES changed the interval for evaluation of programs from three to four years.

9 In an article published in 2011, Maria Luisa Sandoval Schmidt examines the episode known as the “list of the unproductive” – an article published by newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* on Sunday, February 22, 1988, disclosing the “names of University of São Paulo (USP) professors and researchers who had not written or published from 1985 to 1986” (2011, p. 315).

10 More information at <[http://seer.ibict.br/index.php?option=com\\_frontpage&Itemid=1](http://seer.ibict.br/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1)> Accessed on December 20, 2014.

zero cost and according to international editorial standards for online journals.<sup>11</sup> Under that format, journals were able to automate editorial management, thus increasing the number of articles published, expediting their review processes and expanding access to content. As the number of journals increased and the quality of texts published decreased (REGO, 2014; PACKER, 2014), pressure turned to indexing in international databases, especially WoS and Scopus, inducing human and social sciences journals to follow bibliometric criteria more typical of scientific media operating on an industrial scale in order to meet the demands of the global science market. The journals that managed to be included in prestigious international databases, or even in Brazilian databases emerging in the world scene – such as SciELO<sup>12</sup> – gained more visibility and therefore started to deal with a higher volume of submissions, exponentially increasing the workload of their editorial teams and the number of articles published without the desired social relevance.

The few journals focused on human and social sciences that managed to “pass the level” in this intricate game of journal internationalization came across an even tougher battlefield: increasing the impact factor of their production based predominantly on JCR (WoS) and SJR (Scopus). According to Packer (2014), besides the fact that mechanisms of international databases favor journals from developed countries, their coverage of the humanities and social sciences journals is limited – especially WoS, which leads to much lower citation rates regarding all fields. Therefore, besides problems such as limited participation by foreign authors, low international collaboration in Brazilian research, and articles written in Portuguese – pointed out as causes for the low impact of Brazilian works in all fields (PACKER, 2014) – researchers in the humanities and social sciences usually favor the book format and their topics of study target the Brazilian public (REGO, 2014).

The quest for citations in the globalized productivist jungle has led many Brazilian journals to make extreme decisions, such as only accepting submissions written in English. In addition to devaluating Brazilian production, this type of editorial policy usually ends up having the opposite effect, since articles written in Portuguese have helped to keep Brazilian journals’ citation rates at the same level as BRICS journals and with an outstanding performance in Latin America (PACKER, 2014). In addition to these misconceptions, the pressure for performance improvement in citations ends up having more adverse consequences. Concerned about overvaluation of those bibliometric indices and distortions in the productive base of our knowledge field, the editorial of the 3<sup>rd</sup> issue of *Movimento* in 2013 criticized the artificial increase in citations in databases found by WoS in 2012. In that year, 64 journals that had been on JCR in 2011 were excluded for using strategies to manipulate citations, including four Brazilian ones – with great impact on the country’s publishing sector (EDITORIAL, 2013).

In 2014, in its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *Movimento* set out to address the hardships imposed by this new phase of the international publishing game by inviting scholars from the Americas to share their experiences and respond to this new world order in their own languages. *Movimento* is linked to the School of Physical Education of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, funded by public agencies (CAPES, CNPq), published on an open

<sup>11</sup> According to Packer (2014, p. 313), “Brazil ranks second in number of open access journals, after the United States”.

<sup>12</sup> SciELO is a multidisciplinary collection of national scientific journals from 16 countries (Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe and South Africa) and a pioneer in open access. Created in 1998, the program is linked to the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) and supported by the Latin American and Caribbean Center for Information and Health Sciences (BIREME) and the National Council for Science and Technology Development (CNPq)” (REGO, 2014, p. 327).

access electronic platform (SEER),<sup>13</sup> indexed in WoS and evaluated by the Social Science Index. Therefore, this special issue reaffirms *Movimento's* commitment to academic and scientific development of the field of Physical Education interfaced with the humanities and social sciences, keeping alive the critical flame that has made this journal from the far south of Brazil a center of resistance to the commodification of knowledge in Physical Education and sports.

In order not to miss the train of this history – let alone become a “hostage of academic productivism”<sup>14</sup> – *Movimento* keeps in mind that “the game is played under the game’s rules”.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, in order to remain in the game we have to count on researchers from different parts of the world who are engaged in solving social problems that affect mainly the population in the north and south of *Abya Yala*.

### 3 BEYOND THE FRONTIERS OF ABYA YALA: ASSERTIONS, CHALLENGES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF A SPECIAL ISSUE

Based on Michael Burawoy’s remark – suggesting that civil society is currently beleaguered by the dominant interests of markets and states – and recognizing that sports might be the sphere of social life in which that is most obvious, the call for papers for this special issue intended to follow his argument advocating “a robust public sociology [...] anchored in the assumption that the struggles of civil society may take different shapes in response to the distinct oppressing conditions encountered in each social landscape”.

The call stated that “in spite of numerous efforts to consolidate access to sport and physical activity as a human right, sport policies and programs tend to be among the very first to undergo cuts at times of fiscal austerity”. It also stressed that “all over the Americas – and most notably in North America – the rise of neoliberal agendas has triggered an unparalleled commodification of the pathways and spaces to engage in sport and physical activity, while at the same time significantly eroding the capacity of states to deliver opportunities for sport participation”. It extended its concern to “the threat of privatization [that] remains widespread throughout most capitalist societies”.

The argument calling upon those who do – professional, critical, organic, public – sociology to engage in the writing of manuscripts did not overlook the fact that in recent years, some countries from the south of, such as Brazil, Ecuador, Argentina and Bolivia, have experienced an unprecedented allocation of resources to their sport participation policies. Nevertheless, it also recognized that “it is still unclear, however, whether these policies represent an effective challenge to the hegemonic values pervading mainstream sports monoculture – or, on the contrary, help to reproduce them”.

Therefore, under the title “For a Public Sociology of Sport in the Americas: Accomplishments, Challenges, and Emerging Agendas”, the special issue of *Movimento* sought “to explore how scholars of sport situated all over the world – and especially in the Americas – have ‘navigated’ some of the challenges presented above, engaged with their

<sup>13</sup> *Movimento* began to be published through SEER in May 2007. Before that, the journal used to circulate only in print and was distributed free of charge, preferably to libraries of public institutions with ties to the field of training in Physical Education.

<sup>14</sup> Adapted from BIANCHETTI, MACHADO (2007).

<sup>15</sup> Coined by STIGGER, FRAGA, MOLINA NETO (2014, p. 798).

respective ‘publics’, and taken a stand on behalf of civil society.” In that context, it worked to update the commitment by intellectuals in the field and to encourage their repositioning as public intellectuals.

The call had an immediate response. The editorial team was pleased to receive numerous manuscripts and had the challenge of selecting – through double-blind peer review – those that best responded to the scope of this particular special issue.

The articles in this issue have been written by colleagues from different countries: Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Spain, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, several articles are the product of “intellectual partnership” between colleagues from different countries. They worked together from shared spaces of academic education in order to bring to public debate issues of their social and professional daily lives that are often internalized as natural social practices.

The articles may be organized into two thematic groups. The first group includes those that update, discuss and relate Buroway’s assertion with the authors’ theoretical perspectives and the academic-scientific field in which they operate (both in the Latin American and the European contexts). The second group includes those productions that take sociology as a tool for analysis and intervention in order to understand and address specific problems or issues of the social realities that surround sport and physical culture in general in their respective countries, but are not reducible to them. All of the articles allow for the recognition of the local and national contexts in which their authors’ intellectual concerns emerge, as well as for the circumstances that surround the making of the objective conditions from which these concerns arise – concerns that are, as well, often global. At the same time, they work to produce unconventional interpretations and intervention proposals that can be understood as supranational intellectual exchanges without claiming to have a universal nature.

While a policy, in this case an editorial one, should be evaluated for its effects rather than its assertions – and that will be judged by each reader – it is worth suggesting a thorough reading of the special issue. Beyond the particular interest that might guide the choice for one article or another, and while the special issue did not have a centralized writing coordination – so that the authors of each article write from different theoretical perspectives – altogether, the articles can produce the effect of a whole. The editorial team chose to encourage the creation of a public space in which a “sociological community” would express itself. In that attempt, it was also accompanied by colleagues from different countries who – in their role as peer reviewers – questioningly read early versions, interviewed authors about their views and arguments, and pushed them to sharpen and further clarify their writing. If the final product in some measure meets the purposes that drove the editorial team, we can only thank all colleagues for their work, their effort to respond to demands, and their patience to wait until this issue came to light.

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**Corresponding author:**

Alex Branco Fraga

Rua Felizardo, 750, Jardim Botânico, Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil, CEP 90690-200