

Dear reader,

This is the third (and final) issue for the year of *Družboslovne razprave* – *Social Science Forum*. Unlike the previous (double) issue, this one is not thematic; instead, showcasing a selection of articles and book reviews on a range of timely topics and discussions in the social sciences and humanities in general, as well as specifically in South-East Europe. The task at hand is as complex as it may seem, with the issue certainly proving to be a challenge to process and compile. We therefore dedicate this introductory note to everyone who took part in this laborious enterprise. Especially, we wish to thank the authors of the articles in this issue, and the anonymous peer reviewers whose invisible efforts are one of this journal's key quality assurance mechanisms. The reviewers' passion for knowledge production and ensuring high standards for scientific contributions shapes the content of *Social Science Forum* in considerable ways, yet their input remains under the radar.

Peer review is an integral part of the *Social Science Forum*'s publication process. While the main editors hold the right and responsibility to reject formally, structurally or thematically inadequate submissions before peer review, they cannot publish papers that have not undergone peer review. Each article is therefore anonymised and sent off to two experts in the field or – if these prove difficult to find – an expert in the field and a generalist, who evaluate the submissions and provide guidelines for improvement. This model ensures the latest developments are included in academic knowledge production. Peer review has been increasingly viewed as “one of the fundamental conditions of possibility of academic knowledge and the construction of its value” (Biagioli 2002: 11) since the end of World War II, and is even more so in the 21st century. At the same time, many concerns have been voiced regarding the objectivity, purposefulness and constructiveness of the procedure, leading journal editors to frequently reconsider what are the optimal procedures for preventing scientific fraud and streamline academic discourse, while leaving enough room for innovation and critical thought.

Social Science Forum relies on the “double-blind” peer review model, meaning that the author and the reviewer are unaware of each other's identity throughout the review process. While publication dispels the mystery around the authors' identity, the reviewers' names remain anonymous unless they specifically request that they be revealed to the authors (and may hence become accessible to the broader public should the authors choose to explicitly thank or otherwise acknowledge the reviewers in their publication). So far, the practice of reviewer-

identity-disclosure has been rare, making it difficult to publicly acknowledge their impact on the quality of the journal.

While double-blind peer review has become ever more popular over the past decade, models which rely on varying degrees of anonymity also exist. A small minority of academic journals thus subscribes to the “no anonymity” model whereby both parties in the review process are aware of the other’s identity. This model may be praised for its transparency, yet it is also seen as the trickiest one to implement if the goal is to ensure the highest standards of bias-prevention. Two other models employ partial anonymity, either concealing the author’s name from the reviewer, or vice-versa. Until the 2010s, the latter, “single anonymity”, namely, anonymisation of the reviewer’s comments coupled with disclosure of the author’s name to the reviewer, dominated in most scientific disciplines (Brown 2006: 1275). The recent preference for the double-blind model may be attributed to growing concerns over ethnicity-, race-, gender-, institution- and seniority-related biases. And, in case you have been wondering, the “reverse single-blind” model, which discloses information about the reviewers to the authors, but not vice-versa, predictably never gained traction, compromising the reviewers’ task by failing to grant them protection while potentially overexposing them, and possibly skewing their assessments.

Social Science Forum takes peer review very seriously, appreciating its significance for a journal that aims to promote the work of early-career scholars (among others), and to facilitate conversations across the social sciences and humanities. Our mission would be unthinkable without the efforts of our academic peers who see reading and reviewing their colleagues’ work as a rewarding investment of their time. To illustrate the scope of the endeavour: the minimal standard that Social Science Forum’s reviewers accept involves a succinct questionnaire allowing space for a short comment of a minimum of 150 words. In practice, most of the reviews we receive are much longer, providing the authors with detailed instructions on how to refine their claims, re-think their concepts and methods, and asking them to rectify errors, or to highlight the most outstanding aspects of their argument. Further, the international nature of our pool of reviewers ensures the journal’s articles are adapted to speak to a broader, international academic public. In some cases, the reviewers must – or choose to – comment on second or even third versions of manuscripts. Speaking in terms of this issue of the journal you are now reading, eight reviewers from different research areas within the broader region were heavily involved in the review process, helping to improve the publication results.

Equally, our mission would be unthinkable without responsible authors who we request to carefully consider all of the reviewers’ suggestions, and to respond

to them, summing up their reflections, and describing the changes made. Finally, it is the journal's technical editor, Jasmina Šepetavc, who kindly agrees to bear full responsibility for the professionalism of this process, ensuring the authors' and reviewers' anonymity. As editors, we find this level of commitment helpful and inspiring, and hope our readers feel the same way. Accordingly, we invite you to leaf through the latest set of texts generated by the process described above.

The issue begins with Aljoša Pužar's theoretically rich discussion on the contemporary structures of melodramatic feeling, underpinned by a (digital) ethnographic examination of a specific case in point, and a diachronic comparison with similar events. Pužar aligns the recent collective bereavement of the regionally famous Yugoslav and Serbian singer Đorđe Balašević with popular reactions to the death of certain other "celebrity folk heroes". He thereby points to the affective dimensions of such bereavement, sketching out how "economies of impossibility" are transformed into "melodramatic bursts of pseudopolitical (im)possibility".

In the following article, Emanuela Fabijan and Marko Ribač follow up on popular sentiment, presenting the findings of an empirical study on populism in and by Slovenian media (television news programmes) in the context of the 2015–2016 migration crisis. The authors trace "populist antagonisms" in media narratives, shedding light on how these emerge in both political and media communication, and questioning the role of political television interviews in the reproduction of populism through the conundrum of television logic and ritualised journalistic conventions.

The second half of the issue returns to the spectrum of the pandemic that has haunted knowledge production over the past 2 years. Marjan Svetličič's theoretical reflection on the philosophical, political and social significance of the COVID-19 crisis offers an impressive literature review of these topics, expounding on the proposition that the crisis might be productively thought of as a "turning point", pushing humankind to part with anthropocentrism and to take on a more ecocentric worldview. In an attempt to provide a feasible basis for this ambitious plan, Svetličič revisits the basic tenants of capitalist and socialist sociopolitical programmes, seeking a "hybrid model", and stressing the importance of the State in these efforts.

The issue concludes with Marjan Smrke and Mitja Hafner Fink who offer an empirically grounded view on the local ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, scrutinising the underlying causes of Slovenia's poor virus-containment figures. The authors offer a sociological take on the question, presenting the results of two public opinion surveys. Analysis of the respondents' reasons for (non)com-

pliance with (or defection from) the national pandemic-containment measures reveals a complex matrix, where the lack of trust in the government stands out as an important factor.

Apart from original research papers, this issue contains four book reviews. The books are all recent Slovenian translations of selected classics curated by *Social Science Forum's* book reviews editor Klemen Ploštajner, and revealing another dimension of the review process in academia: its capacity to excite the reader about scholarship. This month's selection includes books by Simone de Beauvoir (the second part of *The Coming of Age*, reviewed by Metka Mencin), Paolo Freire (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, reviewed by Zala Gruden), Pierre Bourdieu (*Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, reviewed by Marko Ribač), and bell hooks (*Where We Stand: Class Matters*, reviewed by Klara Otorepec).

Natalija Majsova and Tanja Oblak Črnič, editors in chief

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