



Critical Journal of Social Sciences EDITORIAL

Charting New Paths in Critical Social Inquiry

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Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Critical Journal of Social Sciences*, a new interdisciplinary platform dedicated to fostering rigorous, reflective, and critical scholarship across the social sciences. The world we live in is increasingly complex, uncertain, and contested — shaped by rapid political, economic, cultural, and technological transformations that cut across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Now more than ever, we require spaces where diverse forms of knowledge can come into conversation with one another, allowing scholars to reflect collectively on pressing social questions.

This journal was founded on the conviction that deep social inquiry cannot remain confined to a single discipline or method. Instead, we must embrace an open, interdisciplinary, and engaged form of critique that bridges theory and practice, history and present, global and local. Our aim is to provide a home for research that advances critical thinking, examines power and inequality, and explores the connections between lived experience and broader social structures. In this light, this first issue represents the culmination of months of preparation and the beginning of a collective, ongoing conversation across diverse disciplines — from sociology and anthropology to political science, education, cultural studies, and beyond.

We live in an era characterized by rapid and often disorienting transformations. The social, political, and economic realities we face are complex, fluid, and increasingly difficult to interpret with the traditional tools of a single discipline. Climate change, global inequalities, the crisis of democratic legitimacy, ongoing struggles for social and racial justice, and the profound impacts of digital technologies and artificial intelligence all pose new kinds of questions that demand interdisciplinary thinking, collaborative methodologies, and, above all, critical sensibilities.

At *Critical Journal of Social Sciences*, we believe that scholars must not only describe the world as it is, but also interrogate the power structures that shape it. Critical scholarship, for us, means situating research within the histories and contexts that produce oppression and inequality. It also means seeking connections across diverse forms of knowledge — breaking down the barriers that separate academic disciplines, and acknowledging the lived experiences of people whose voices have too often been silenced.

Our journal aims to be a meeting place for scholars and practitioners who recognize that new and creative approaches are needed to address today's challenges. Throughout this issue and those to come, readers will find work that crosses disciplinary borders and explores the social world in all its complexity. Our contributors embrace empirical research as well as theoretical exploration, they draw on diverse methods and traditions, and they ask how scholarship can not only critique society, but also contribute to its transformation.

This first issue is an invitation to participate in a dialogue. It reflects our commitment to publish work that is as rigorous as it is provocative, as deeply grounded in evidence as it is driven by bold questions. We encourage readers to approach these articles not as isolated pieces but as contributions to a larger collective project — one that aspires to make sense of an increasingly diffuse world, and to illuminate new paths toward a more just, sustainable, and democratic future.

In the pages that follow, you will encounter a rich range of research, case studies, and theoretical essays that exemplify this vision. Taken together, they illustrate the vitality and necessity of critical, interdisciplinary social research in the present moment. We look forward to engaging with you — our readers — as we grow this journal into a dynamic forum for debate and exchange.

In this first issue, we have assembled a diverse range of contributions that illustrate this commitment to interdisciplinary dialogue and critical insight.

Antonio Alaminos-Fernández's article, "*The Good Old Days Never Die*": *Nostalgia, Temporality, and Affective Politics in Trump's Musical Populism*, explores the power of sound in shaping political mobilization. Analyzing the playlists used at Donald Trump's campaign rallies, Alaminos-Fernández shows how particular musical choices — mostly tracks from the 1970s and 1980s — evoke nostalgia and establish an emotional climate that resonates with populist appeals to national revival.

In Spanish, Reynier Rodríguez Rico's article, *¿Es Cuba un país de implosión demográfica en la época post-COVID?*, examines the sharp demographic decline Cuba has experienced since 2016 — and especially since the pandemic. By analyzing vital statistics and migration patterns, Rodríguez Rico paints a vivid picture of population implosion driven by excess

mortality, economic hardship, and accelerated emigration, raising urgent questions about social sustainability and resilience in contemporary Cuban society.

Ana Belén Soage's contribution, *Evolving Identity in the Face of Imperialism and Colonialism: The Emergence and Development of Political Islam*, adopts a constructivist lens to examine mainstream Islamism in the Sunni Arab world. The article tracks the formation of Islamism as a response to colonial legacies and the search for a non-secular modernity, showing how Islamists draw on an idealized past to craft an alternative vision of the future while defining their own social boundaries.

Udo Usiere Akpan and Imaabasi Aniema's article, *Media Usability and Advancement of Regional Political Agenda in West Africa*, appraises the flow of political information in Ghana and Senegal. Drawing on survey data, they find that radio and indigenous media remain the most influential channels for regional political news — a pattern that reflects enduring inequalities in access to information and shapes political knowledge and engagement across West African societies.

Parshuram Sahoo and Usharani Khuntia's article, *Revitalizing Higher Education through the Indian Knowledge System in the Light of NEP-2020*, discusses how India's new National Education Policy integrates Indigenous knowledge traditions into higher education. The article explores the policy's aim of balancing tradition and modernity and underscores its promise of producing globally competitive graduates grounded in India's own cultural and intellectual heritage.

Tran Tuyen engages with the rapidly evolving landscape of digital innovation in tourism. Set against the backdrop of sweeping technological change, this article explores how virtual reality is reshaping tourist experiences and empowering tourism enterprises to reimagine their business models. Focusing on Ho Chi Minh City, the study surveys local companies and finds not only widespread optimism about virtual reality tourism but also a shared understanding that these tools can enhance promotional strategies, enrich visitor engagement, and diversify tourism offerings.

Donika Bakiu's article, *Language Use in North Macedonia*, looks at the role of multilingualism as both a tool of communication and a marker of identity in a society where Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, Roma, and other groups live side by side. The article discusses progress following legal frameworks like the Ohrid Agreement and emphasizes that sustained social change requires more than formal policies — it depends on broad educational and media practices that make diversity a meaningful part of public life.

Finally, Doleh Khan's working paper on an ongoing research, *Empowering Women through Vocational Training: A Case Study from Sujawal, Sindh*, documents how vocational skills

development is transforming women's lives in rural Pakistan. The article draws on qualitative research to show how targeted training programs supported by local and international partners enhance women's self-reliance, leadership, and capacity to navigate restrictive gender norms.

At the *Critical Journal of Social Sciences*, we believe that working papers deserve a prominent space in academic publishing. They allow readers to glimpse research at its most dynamic and formative stages — a process that invites constructive critique, sparks dialogue, and keeps us abreast of the questions and methods that are shaping scholarship in real time. By showcasing work in progress, the journal hopes to encourage an academic culture rooted in exchange and collaborative refinement rather than in the mere dissemination of polished final results.

This commitment to openness also extends to emerging scholars and researchers at early career stages. The *Critical Journal of Social Sciences* is committed to making room for doctoral candidates, recent PhDs, and other scholars who are still in the process of forging their academic paths. Providing a welcoming platform for these voices is not only a matter of equity; it also enriches the journal by bringing in new perspectives, bold ideas, and fresh critical approaches to the most pressing social questions of our time.

Finally, we recognize that a truly critical and interdisciplinary journal must transcend linguistic boundaries. In this issue, articles appear in both English and Spanish, a choice that reflects our belief that multilingualism is a vital part of scholarly practice. By embracing multiple languages, we aim to reach diverse audiences and ensure that important research does not remain confined to any single linguistic or national community. This openness is at the heart of our vision for a global, inclusive, and intellectually vibrant academic exchange.

Together, these contributions underscore the complexity of the world we seek to understand — from the cultural politics of music and nostalgia to language rights, gender empowerment, media practices, demographic transformations, and educational reform. Taken as a whole, they highlight the necessity of interdisciplinary and critical approaches to the study of society.

As you read this first issue, we invite you to reflect on the connections and resonances that emerge across these diverse topics. We hope these pages will inspire new questions and productive debates — and that this journal will grow into a collaborative space where critical inquiry can flourish.

We look forward to engaging with you, our readers, and to the many conversations that lie ahead.