

Editorial

New Cultural Frontiers

Emanuele Toscano

University of Rome “La Sapienza” - Italy

E-mail: emanuele.toscano@uniroma1.it

This first editorial has the not easy task of outlining, for the first time, the project that lies behind this review.

Established within the framework of the RC47 (Social Classes and Social Movements) project of the International Sociological Association by a group of young researchers, New Cultural Frontiers is an ambitious project. It has set for itself the task of creating a venue for academic and scientific debate involving postgraduate students, young researchers and influential figures of international sociology. It is therefore appropriate to thank those colleagues who have been involved with the RC47 project and have worked hard to develop it, namely Breno Bringel, Elaine Coburn, Yohanna Gandu, Eiji Hamanishi, Paola Rebughini, who, with myself, are co-editors of this review. It is also appropriate to thank the RC47 past president Prof. Henri Lustiger Thaler and the present one Prof. Antimo L. Farro, who have not only believed in the project but also sponsored and sustained it.

Each issue of the review will be opened by a prominent international sociologist whose article will act as the base for the ensuing call for papers addressed to all those who wish to take part. The aim is to offer a showcase for young researchers, who are often given little opportunity to highlight their ideas and circulate their findings. The quality of the selected works is entrusted to a blind peer review system with a view to ensuring over time an ever higher scientific level and broader scope in the debate.

Bearing in mind the peculiarities of the RC47 project, where cultural exchange among scholars from various parts of the world has always been a prominent feature, the editorial board of the review will comprise a number of young researchers, each referring to a specific region of the world, so as to ensure a cultural exchange that is truly global. This approach will be further stimulated by the fact that the review has taken the decision to accept contributions written in the three official languages of ISA, therefore not only in English but also in French and Spanish.

Managing a review is complicated. We have discovered it in this start-up phase. Complicated but

at the same time exciting because we have the opportunity to come into contact with that part of the scientific community that is starting to participate in the international debate with contributions that are often not only of excellent level but also feature a high degree of multidisciplinary, which is another of the distinguishing characteristics of *New Cultural Frontiers*. Starting from a sociological matrix, one of our goals is, in fact, to widen the debate to include contributions and reflections from other social sciences so as to be in a position to analyse topics from different academic and scientific perspectives.

An online review looks ahead and may even envisage – in the short and medium term – different forms of expansion, such as the creation of a forum or blog; or of information collection and dissemination channels concerning specific topics, both theoretical or empiric, tackling global or local issues. Everything is possible, and all will depend on how well this project will be able to strike root in the scientific community of reference and on how it will be able to expand with everyone's contribution.

This first issue will open with an article by Prof. Alain Touraine. It is a tribute to a great sociologist, one who has played an inspirational role in the academic and personal lives of many among us who have conceived this project. Prof. Touraine's opening article in the first issue of *New Cultural Frontiers* focuses on the need for a new paradigm to interpret today's social world where the nature of the changes underway can no longer be defined by the theoretical setup that have so far contributed to provide the different interpretations of modernity. This new paradigm must necessarily set aside a social reading of contemporary phenomena – economic and financial globalisation, the emergence of mass communication technologies, the movements – in order to focus on the subject rather than on the social system. A sociology of the personal subject that emphasises on the affirmation of the self and focuses on the role of the actors and on their roles as bearers of universal rights. According to Touraine, a sociology that hinges on the personal subject will be able to play a key role in bringing about change not only in sociology itself but also in the social world, which is characterised by the decline of the previously strong integration among Nation States, defined as “societies” animated by conflict among social classes.

The contributions that have been selected for this first issue are a response to the challenge posed by the new sociology of the personal subject, where the focus is less on the system as on the subject, considered as the bearer of universal rights in a globalised world. By concentrating, for example, on the impact of the effects of globalisation on the cultural models of migrations from Mexico to the United States, on the choices made by Mexican migrants in terms of family and

personal options, as in the contribution by Adrien Quittre. Or by focusing on the more theoretical aspects of the role played by intellectuals and on how this role has changed in a post-modern world characterised by networked individualism, subjectivity and weak relations, as in the essay by Francesco Antonelli. Such theoretical aspects are likewise tackled by Andrea Spreafico, who criticises the notion of subject in its individual resistance against a domination, by focusing, instead, on social interaction intended as a new development of social contemporary life through an approach that is typical of symbolic interaction. Some contributions, on the other hand, have tackled the relationship between globalisation and National State, focusing, on one hand, on mass media, as in Kenji Kanedo's essay on the links between nationalism and television in Japan, and, on the other hand, on the definition of the new constitution in Bolivia as in the essay by Íñigo Errejón Galván. Two other contribution deal with the affirmation of the self through the web: the first – more general in character – concentrates on the web intended as a new space for socialisation and opportunity for the development of one's individual personality; while in the second Momoyo Mitsuno, more specifically, investigates the use by teachers in Japan of blogs as tools of subjectification and construction of personal experiences. And, finally, a last contribution is by Fernando Fontainha, who analyses the construction of the individual self starting from the files of candidates to the 2007 French Judicial public contest.

This first issue thus contains a range of contributions from various young scholars coming from different parts of the world. The spirit of the review is to maintain a geographical, thematic and disciplinary outlook that is as wide and most inclusive as possible.