

# LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

We are delighted to present the 7th edition of *The Open Review*, the student-led open access journal of the South West Doctoral Training Partnership. Founded in 2015 to support academic publication for PhD students in the social sciences, the TOR journal brings together doctoral candidates from across the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Exeter, Plymouth and the West of England. In creating an opportunity for students to submit to this peer reviewed journal, TOR provides a supportive yet rigorous platform for authors to develop their work and gain experience of the peer review process. It also challenges a new student-led editorial board each year to enhance their skills through designing, peer reviewing, and publishing the annual edition. This year's editorial board would like to extend our warmest thanks to Molly Conisbee at the SWDTP, designer Ben Dynamou, and of course to all authors and peer reviewers who participated in producing this edition, thereby contributing to maintaining this valuable critical space led by students, for students.

When last year's team chose the topic of Collaboration for the sixth edition, they could hardly have foreseen the UK entering lockdown only weeks later. Three national lockdowns and nearly two years on, the 7th edition of TOR continues to speak to the Covid-19 pandemic as a defining issue of our times. However, despite the predominance of Covid-19 and its often time-slowing effects on our lives, other crucial social challenges continue to emerge. Initial discussions of the theme for this edition took place under the shadow of the third UK lockdown, yet they also happened against the backdrop of the growing Black Lives Matter campaign, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020; furthermore, we finalise the edition for publication in the aftermath of the recent "COP 26" 2021 UN Climate Change Conference. While the first topic mooted was 'Disruption,' we ultimately hoped to invite consideration of positive changes that may emerge from a time of crisis, and thus settled on the theme of **Transformation**.

We were enormously pleased to receive a high number of submissions in a wide range of formats, from research articles and short essays, to photo essays, personal reflections, and even digital media apps!

Opening with a critical reflection on 'Radical Uncertainty,' the first half of this edition addresses the Covid-19 pandemic, from both personal and wider social experiences of it, to the production and assessment of interventions to it. Following this, artist Gail Flockhart (also winner of the cover art competition) shares her interpretation of the theme of **Transformation** in her powerful visual work which addresses personal narratives of trauma and memory. Her photo series beautifully bridges to the second half of the edition, which explores issues of representation, activism, and social change in social sciences research. In addressing these themes, I am pleased to say that the original theme of 'Disruption' (for which we are indebted to Malcolm Richards) retains its presence.

We hope you'll join us in thanking all contributors for this rich tapestry of transformative interventions, and that you will enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed bringing it together!

Best wishes,

*Anna, Amina, Aqila,  
Evantia, Lucia & Yunyan*

The Editorial Board