

Reflecting on 40 years of *New Zealand Sociology*: A Roundtable Conversation on the Past, Present and Future of *New Zealand Sociology*

Jessica Terruhn, Chamsy el-Ojeili, Steve Matthewman, Moeata Keil,
Anna Friedlander and Shinya Uekusa*

Abstract

To mark *New Zealand Sociology's* (NZS) 40th anniversary in 2026, the current editorial team organised an online roundtable discussion with five scholars who have engaged with the journal in different roles and at different times: Chamsy el-Ojeili, Anna Friedlander, Moeata Keil, Steve Matthewman and Jessica Terruhn. Complementing our publication trend analysis of all 1174 contributions published in NZS over the past 40 years, this roundtable conversation serves to reflect on NZS's past achievements as well as current challenges and opportunities that arise with respect to equity in access and representation and the journal's public image. The participants discussed NZS's unique value as a local, independent and supportive outlet within a metric-driven publishing culture in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond, and we outlined future directions and priorities around (re)branding, dialogue, outreach and community building.

Keywords: New Zealand Sociology; 40th anniversary; local sociology journal; reflection; roundtable discussion

Introduction

To celebrate *New Zealand Sociology's* (NZS) 40th anniversary in 2026, we as the current editors organised a roundtable discussion to reflect on the journal's past, present and future. Alongside the publication trend analysis undertaken by the current editorial team (Terruhn et al., 2026), we wanted to create a space for collective reflection with people who have strong relationships to the journal. To bring a range of perspectives into conversation, we invited participants who have been involved with NZS at different times and in different capacities: Chamsy el-Ojeili (Chamsy), a former editor; Steve Matthewman (Steve), a major contributor; Jessica Terruhn (Jess), a current editor; Moeata Keil (Moeata), a mid-career scholar and current associate editor; and Anna Friedlander (Anna), an early career scholar and current postgraduate associate editor. We acknowledge that there are many others we would have liked to talk to but could not include in this conversation. Instead, we extend our sincere thanks to all former editors, contributors, reviewers, readers and supporters of the journal. We also hope to convene further dialogues and roundtable discussions in the future.

The roundtable discussion we offer in this article was conducted online in March 2026 and ran for just over one hour, facilitated by a current co-editor, Shinya Uekusa (Shin). With the consent of all the participants, the entire conversation was audio-recorded and transcribed, using Microsoft Teams. This

* **Shinya Uekusa** is a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury, and facilitated this roundtable conversation.

Corresponding author: shinya.uekusa@gmail.com

Biographical notes on all five scholars who participated in the roundtable can be found in the Notes on contributors section near the end of this article.

article presents an edited version of our conversation that highlights some of the key insights and reflections that help us steer the future direction of the journal.

Participants: Roles and relationships to *NZS*

Shin: Thank you very much for joining us today. This year, we celebrate 40 years of *NZS* and we would like to talk a bit about the past, present and future of the journal. Jess and I prepared a list of discussion questions, but, if you have any questions you would like to ask, please jump in. Let's start with introductions. Could please briefly introduce yourself and your relation to *NZS*? Chamsy, can we start with you as a former editor?

Chamsy: I'm in sociology at Victoria University of Wellington, and I got brought on to the editorial board of *NZS* in the late '90s with Lincoln Dahlberg. We were both PhD students at Massey University then, and Peter Beatson was instrumental in getting us involved with the idea that we would take over as editors. At this point, the journal was looking a bit shabby and it was running behind schedule. We eventually did become editors, alongside Mike Lloyd, and the journal moved from Massey University to Victoria University of Wellington.

Shin: Thanks, Chamsy. How many years did you edit the journal?

Chamsy: We were doing quite a bit of work on the journal from the late 1990s. We got it running on time and we changed the look significantly. Increasingly, Mike became the real editor of the journal—Lincoln and I had largely stepped aside by the end of 2004. We were still on the editorial team, though, when it was passed it over to Charles Crothers in 2007.

Shin: It would have been so nice to actually have Charles Crothers here. He would be really happy to actually be part of this conversation.

Steve: Kia ora koutou, ko Steve Matthewman tōku ingoa. I'm in sociology at Waipapa Taumata Rau [the University of Auckland], and I checked my CV to get my facts straight. *NZS* published my second and third articles in 2001 and 2002. So I am very grateful for that. That was my first engagement, a little after Chamsy. I do remember Chamsy and team taking over, and there was a real professionalisation of the journal under those guys. He alluded to a new look, and it did get a nice clean new aesthetic. It was something I remember people being very proud to put on their shelves. So they really did a fantastic job.

I think *NZS* published my first-ever special edition, too, which I edited with Tracey [McIntosh] and Bruce [Curtis], that came out of the 2007 TASA [Australian Sociological Association] conference that we hosted at the University of Auckland, called "Trans-Tasman Sociologists". I think my first-ever book review was published with *NZS* in 2001. Then I was an associate editor from 2002 to 2008 and on the editorial advisory board from 2013 to 2015. I was on the editorial board again as a book reviews editor from 2017 to 2021. I just did the maths: that's 15 years of various roles for the journal. And that is why all my hair fell out (laugh).

Moeata: Talofa lava, I am Moeata Keil. I'm a senior lecturer in Sociology. I joined the editorial board only a few years ago, so I definitely do not have a long history with the journal. As an associate editor, I have published two articles in *NZS*, in the most recent issue. I had long wanted to publish in *NZS*. I am always encouraging so many people to submit to the journal, and now as an associate

editor, I moved publishing in *NZS* to the top of my list of things to do. That is my sort of very short history with *NZS*. But hopefully at the 80th, I can look back and say 43 years in (laugh).

Jess: Life goals!

Anna: Kia ora koutou. I'm Anna Friedlander, a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of Waikato and an associate editor with *NZS* for three, coming up on four years. I am focused with Jess and Bonnie Trotter-Simons on soliciting and editing the annual PhD thesis summaries for the journal, which has been a really awesome way to get an overview of what has been published and studied in sociology in Aotearoa New Zealand, and also to get a little bit of an insight into how to run a journal. Jess has been a really amazing mentor for me in that role. I think she has been very generous with her time and expertise. I have not published anything in *NZS* yet, but I have submitted an article which is currently under review. So fingers crossed!

Jess: I am [Jessica Terruhn] currently a research associate at the University of Waikato after leaving my senior research fellow role on the WERO [Working to End Racial Oppression] research programme there last year. Excitingly, I am now also a professional teaching fellow at Waipapa Taumata Rau [University of Auckland]. I have been editor of *NZS* since 2022. Since then, we have published eight issues. I initially edited the journal with Casimir MacGregor, who works at BRANZ [Building Research Association of New Zealand]. When he left this role because of time commitments, Shin joined us and that was awesome.

I am enjoying the co-editor role alongside Shin and in a new team structure [with several associate editors from different universities], which we only adopted when I took over. And as you were saying, Chamsy, in my case it was a bit of being brought on to the journal. At the time, they were looking for people to take over the journal. I did not have much experience and put my hand up for an associate editor role, but Avril Bell was like, "No, go edit it." So it was kind of in at the deep end. To my shame, I have only ever published one book review in *NZS*, so I am very grateful that these two articles, including our analysis of the 40 years of publishing, will be published in *NZS* soon.

“Local”, “accessible” and “independent”: Describing *NZS* in three words

Shin: Well, thank you so much. Next one would be kind of an interesting question. If you have to describe the journal in three words, what would they be?

Anna: Well, the obvious answer is 'New Zealand Sociology', right? That is three words. But seriously, I would say 'local sociological scholarship'. The local nature of the journal is really important to me. I have had, as a PhD candidate, advice from academics to be aiming for international journals or to write in a manner that you are writing to an international audience. I definitely understand why it is important to write for an international audience. However, I think it is also important to write for ourselves, and that is something that I really value about New Zealand Sociology and other journals like *Kōtuitui*,¹ for example.

Jess: That is interesting. It is something that came up in a survey we did a few years ago and also in talking to postgraduate students at SAANZ [the Sociological Association of Aotearoa New Zealand] conferences: that they really valued the regional, local, place-based aspect of the journal.

¹ *Kōtuitui*: *New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online* <https://rsnz.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/1177083x>

Especially because it is a generalist sociological journal, our scholarship can get a bit lost in international terms.

Moeata: I was going to say something similar. I thought 'local'. I also thought 'contextual', contextual to Aotearoa New Zealand. I also thought 'accessible', but I thought accessible in two ways, accessible in terms of literally open access, but then I also thought accessible for postgraduate students in terms of a place to get their research published in a local context and in an accessible way. I thought accessible in that dual meaning.

Chamsy: I was thinking a similar thing, in terms of feeling very 'inclusive' and 'welcoming', which is something that I really felt about SAANZ as a whole. I remember going to my first SAANZ conference. I'd always prided myself on being a bit of an outsider, but I felt incredibly welcomed and like a real insider at SAANZ straight away. I get the feeling that the journal has been like that. And one sign of this is that there has been so much great student work in there. It's fantastic. I think the last ten years have been particularly strong in this respect.

Steve: I totally agree with everything that's been said. When I tried to come up with three words, the words I came up with were: 'autonomous' – not commercially controlled by some international publisher or beholden to them; 'supportive' – which was also my version and Chamsy's points. We support graduate students, emerging scholars and ECRs, and I think that's a really important part and has always been, including all the way up to the editorial boards, right? As Jessica's experience has told us, and Chamsy's. Just as Chamsy brought in SAANZ, the broader organisation, I think we could bring in SAANZ here as well. I have gone all around the world to find out our conferences as good as any other, and in some ways maybe better in terms of the ease with which you can become an insider, for example. If you want to feel like an outsider, you can go to the European Sociological Association or the British one or the American one and talk on a New Zealand topic and then wait for the interest. So, I think, just as our national conference is ours and as our home, it goes for the journal too. My final word would be 'interesting'.

Jess: I did have 'independent' as well. It is important in this publishing environment. There is a lot of tensions around that, but I think being independent is critical as the basis for being supportive. I put 'nurturing', which is similar to what you have been saying both in terms of that accessibility, the kind of formats that we can support in terms of publications, the roles we have created on the team, like Anna was saying earlier, and the ways in which we can support ECRs [early career researchers]. For instance, when ECRs submit a manuscript, we have a relationship with people that you cannot really have in a much more automated system and therefore we can have a pre-discussion with them if maybe the work is not ready to be sent for review. I think that is really important. The other term I had is 'quality'. I know that the journal is not always the first choice for authors, and their manuscript may reach us after having been rejected at higher-ranking journals. However, as we found in the survey, there is also a sense of loyalty to the sociology community in Aotearoa, which means people will submit manuscripts to *NZS* rather than elsewhere. Either way, we ensure double-blind peer review and have high standards for the quality of the work that gets published in the journal.

Shin: Yes, being supportive. As a co-editor, I thought getting submissions is of course difficult, but these days, finding reviewers is even harder. But I found that our community is really supportive.

So when we reach out to potential reviewers, usually they just accept it. I actually have not had much difficulty finding reviewers, which has been really nice.

Jess: That depends a little bit; I think it has been getting harder. I think people are super busy. I might come back to that later when we talk about the challenges of relying on free labour.

Key achievements in *NZS*

Shin: You have all touched on this a bit already. The next question is mainly for senior academics like Chamsy and Steve. Looking back over the last 40 years, or even 20 years or 10 years, what do you see as *NZS*'s key achievements?

Chamsy: Obviously, when it was established, it was the central hub for distinctively sociological publishing in Aotearoa New Zealand. I think it was really intellectually serious and very theoretically rich. That is probably testament to the stuff that was happening at Massey University. There were very strong cultural studies and theory interests at Massey University, not only in sociology—with Paul Spoonley, Brennon Wood, Allannah Ryan, Avril Bell, Peter Beatson and, of course, Gregor McLennan, who had been at the Birmingham School—but also in other departments like anthropology and education, with Dick Harker, Roy Shuker, Roy Nash, Jeff Sissons and Henry Barnard. In the journal and in *Sites*, which was also situated at Massey University, these people and others were focusing on New Zealand topics in this very serious-minded, theory-driven way.

Steve: We probably need to do a bit more on class as well. There was lots of work on cultural studies as well in the early days reflecting, what Chamsy just discussed, the intellectual interests of the people running it. Māori and Pacific issues are just totally absent. You know in those first ten years there is a gap. So I think another strength is that, across time, other voices, other authors, other topics have come in, and it is good to see new innovations. Anna had mentioned the PhD student synopsis. I think that is a really great innovation. I think we do also need to say something about anyone or any group of people that can sustain something for four decades on free labour. It is essentially a passion project, mahi aroha, people gifting their time and effort, and I think that really is something important, something that is going to be increasingly difficult to sustain I suspect. That is certainly something to be celebrated.

Shin: Maybe to return to the point about the journal being theoretically rich, especially in the earlier days. The editorial team has done a publication trend analysis, going through all 1174 contributions and found that social theory has been one of the most frequently published topics in the journal (see Terruhn et al., 2026).

Jess: It was in the top three. Gender, then social theory and neoliberalism. These are the top three topics. There were quite a few articles focused on theory in the early years.

Anna: In the first couple of decades social theory was particularly strong, and then maybe fell away a bit in the next two decades.

Steve: Across the 40 years, we have seen this huge exponential proliferation of journals, right? And so it is probably hard to remember, and Chamsy did mention it, what an important intervention *NZS* was and how it filled a niche that had not been occupied. This was such an important thing.

I guess now that there are *Kōtuitui*, which Anna mentioned, and of course *Counterfutures*,² which has its origin story at Victoria University of Wellington (and Chamsy has an involvement and knows all about that). So I guess the journal has to constantly reposition itself. What is the niche it occupies and what does it offer people? And maybe we've got to lure some of those political economy and class people back from *Counterfutures*, so that they remember New Zealand Sociology as well. But I think the gender work, the Indigeneity work, the Pacific work, all of this stuff is really important, and I would agree with what Chamsy said about the last decade seeing the quality of it, which I can get no credit for because I have not been submitting anything lately. So it is really cool to see new generations of scholars doing really cool things.

Ongoing challenges for *NZS*: Representation, inclusion and the journal's public image

Shin: In the first two decades, most contributors were Pākehā men. As our publication trend analysis shows (Terruhn et al., 2026), this has of course changed over time. Over the last couple of decades, *NZS* has published more work by Māori and Pacific scholars, women and (former) migrants who were previously underrepresented. So we started to see greater diversity. Let's now discuss the question of representation in authorship.

Jess: I think what kinds of engagement we see and authorship, and I am probably jumping ahead to the challenges and opportunities of the future, but I think the representation of themes and authorship is certainly something that we need to think about. Maybe that is something to do with repositioning the journal, finding a niche because the scholarship related to Māori and Pacific communities, Indigenous knowledges and rights and so forth is still quite minor. There have certainly been changes, but I feel like it has been too late. So when I looked at Pacific scholarship, I have not got the figures in my head now, but it was something like 18 articles or so over the last 40 years, and 12 of those are in two special issues.³ So there are actually very few that are in general issues that were not solicited by specific guest editors. I think that is something that we really need to look into and do more about, right?

Steve: And we would mention the other journals. *Kōtuitui* is a local and *AlterNative* is an international journal.⁴ So they will take a lot of Māori and Pacific publications. *Kōtuitui* publishes a lot of Māori publications.

Moeata: And a lot of Pacific publications. So there is definitely competition for those articles.

Jess: That is a good point because there is always a question of where Pacific and Māori scholars publish, right? And what are the rationales? And I guess what role can *NZS* play?

Shin: In our publication trend analysis, we noted that we have some control over who becomes the next editor and we can work to promote diversity within the editorial team, but we do not have the same control over who submits to the journal. We can encourage postgraduate students and colleagues to contribute, but there is nothing we can really do to ensure diversity among contributors. So we try to promote Māori and Pacific scholarship and, of course, the work of

² <https://counterfutures.nz>

³ 'New Directions in Pacific Social Science' (2016, Vol. 31, No. 2), guest edited by Cluny Macpherson, and 'When Mana Whenua and Mana Moana Make Knowledge' (2022, Vol. 37, No 1), guest edited by Sereana Naepi and Simon Barber.

⁴ <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/aln>

other minority scholars, but what are the key challenges in terms of the presentation of the scholars and the scholarship?

Jess: If *Kōtuitui* has more Māori and Pacific publications, the underrepresentation of authors [in *NZS*] does then not just reflect the small number of Māori and Pacific scholars.

Steve: And *Kōtuitui* is funded by the Royal Society and is effectively open access. So there is a lot of money that goes into it through Wiley. That means that when you publish in *Kōtuitui*, anyone from anywhere in the world can access it. They do not need a library subscription, making it an impactful place to publish. It has something approaching 250,000 downloads a year.

Jess: And that is another challenge, I think. We are open access, right? That is all on our website.

Steve: Oh, I did try and open access it today and got a 404 error. So I thought this could be good for the challenges discussion. I then went straight to the University of Auckland library and accessed it. There was no problem. I also think that our challenge is paradoxically an opportunity because the issue is that the journal work is a labour of love; there is no official funding. This gives you freedom and autonomy and scope, but what it does not give you is an infrastructure of support and continuity. And I mean we could talk about this, but the Australian journal and the New Zealand journal were one and the same, and our associations were one and the same. A generation of scholars prior to Chamsy and I decided to split. That might have had a whole number of consequences, but one of them is that the Australian journal now has a six-figure royalty returned to the organisation each year from Sage. I know that because I used to co-edit the *Journal of Sociology*.⁵ That can buy you professional help. It does all your professional copy editing. But it can be harder to innovate in the supposedly more professional sphere.

I do not really know the original story of why we split from the Australian counterparts, because whenever I talked to people, the story shifted. The story I always heard was the Australians were not engaging with biculturalism and Indigenous issues or being in a settler society. So we had to leave them. But then if you look at the first decade of *NZS*, it's pretty absent of those issues. I am not saying that New Zealand sociologists were not thinking that through. Paul Spoonley was, Cluny Macpherson was, Avril Bell was, and the list goes on. But I've never had a satisfactory story told to me, and it is sometimes interesting to think about counterfactuals and alternative histories. What might have happened if we were still the *Australia New Zealand Journal of Sociology*? I would like to think we would have a better name by now, but also what would our organisation look like, what would our conferences look like? Maybe when we re-federate with Australia, we'll just reintegrate our organisations.

Moeata: I was just thinking in terms of the inequities around representation, and I was supposed to pick up on this earlier. When I submitted my journal article, I raised it and I just never followed up or never did anything about it. But in thinking about the branding and increasing maybe Māori and Pacific scholars who are contributing to *NZS*, obviously there is a lot of competition as we have already noted and *AlterNative* and *MAI* are typically the first thoughts for Indigenous and Pacific scholars in terms of publishing locally.⁶ But I wonder if it is also just even in the branding of the name *NZS* without any Aotearoa attached to it. So anything to prompt a decolonial focus or an anti-colonial focus or an Indigenous focus.

⁵ <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jos>

⁶ <https://www.journal.mai.ac.nz>

Even coming down to the author guidelines,⁷ when you write an article and then check the journal guidelines to make sure everything aligns, there were very specific instructions about the use of Māori and Pacific terms. It even specified preferred language for how to refer to Pacific communities, I cannot remember what it is now, but I think it was Pasifika as opposed to Pacific. Of course, scholars move between Pacific, Pasifika, and, depending on where you are, it even extends now to Oceania or Moana. So when I was preparing my submission, that is what I raised, but I have never gone back to the guidelines to make any changes. It is sort of prescriptive.

Shin: It is on our to-do list [as the current style guide was last updated in 2022].

Moeata: The journal prescribing how you define your community, those are added deterrents towards the feeling of interacting with the journal. The same goes for conventions like italicising non-English words. Italicising can de-centre Indigenous languages by saying that if it is not italicised, that is the main language and we need to distinguish. Those sorts of things matter. Pacific and Indigenous communities are small; we talk to each other as well. If I was not an associate editor and if I did not know all of you lovely people, I would probably share that experience more openly. I would say to another Pacific and Indigenous scholar, “Yeah, I published there but they did all these things.” These are tricky things, and they can carry over. Obviously I have kept those thoughts to myself because I know everybody here, I know the journal, and I know the heart behind the journal. But if I was detached from it, I would not maybe have that positive feeling. So, that is definitely an opportunity.

My last thought on that was there is such a close connection between SAANZ and NZS. It is the conference for NZS, or if you go to SAANZ, you publish in NZS. I feel like it is the journal for SAANZ. Thinking of ways of boosting our Māori and Pacific attendees at SAANZ, I think the more SAANZ is diversified, that might also support us with NZS and vice versa. There are growing numbers of Māori and Pacific scholars, but at SAANZ last year,⁸ I was one of three Pacific scholars that I knew of. That is not to say there were only three, but I was only one of three Pacific scholars. I do not know how many people attended SAANZ last year, but we were very underrepresented. And I think there were very few Māori scholars. I think those are challenges, but also opportunities.

Steve: There were quite a few Māori scholars. But I am not defending the point because you are right. We have definitely got work to do there. So in organising this conference this year, which will be a broader conference of the social sciences and have dedicated Indigenous streams, Pacific streams and so forth, this is also an opportunity for us.⁹ As an organisation but also as a journal, it would be a good point to advertise and maybe do publication workshops or just let people know about the journal and what it does.

Moeata: Just picking up on the point around these words to describe the journal, these words really matter. Someone asked me about this upcoming SAANZ conference, which is now the Social Sciences Conference, and I said, “There is an Indigenous stream.” I am sort of selling it. There is an Indigenous stream. There is a Pacific stream. But they noted that the Pacific stream was framed in relation to the Moana rather than the Pacific, which emphasises definitions outside of the

⁷ The current version was last updated in May 2022: <https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/New-Zealand-Sociology-style-guide-updated-2022.pdf> Following this discussion, the editors have updated the style guide.

⁸ The last SAANZ conference was held at Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington in December 2025.

⁹ The Conference for the Social Sciences: He kai kei aku ringa will be hosted by Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland, 2–4 December 2026.

region as opposed to within it. So again, framing matters. I was like, “Come to the conference, submit an abstract. We need to have these conversations!”

Steve: That is a totally fair point, and that will all be finessed by the people who manage those streams. So it will be the right people doing those for sure.

Jess: These are really good points, Moeata. I just wanted to say, I think, in terms of how the journal was presented and some of these conventions, that is a good reminder to update and check those on a regular basis because often you sort of inherit them from previous editors and just keep going with them. I know there are issues around the use of Pacific and sometimes it has been dictated by APA or government language. But we need to question adhering to these norms that sometimes do not actually make sense. That is a good reminder to check some of those things on the website and in the author guidelines.

Moeata: Just for the record, I raised it as an opportunity as well as a challenge, but without a critique. This journal is running on labour of love, so it is a complete recognition of that as opposed to a critique of what we have not done or those sorts of things.

Jess: Yeah, absolutely receiving it like that.

Shin: Thanks for the honest feedback, that is helpful! On the question of branding, I think journal’s image matters, right? What is the journal’s image? Now, as editors, we are so close to it and might have lost some perspectives from outside. Steve, you are now involved in *Kōtuitui*, or Chamsy, you edited the journal some time ago and now may see it more from the outside, how does NZS look these days? What is the journal’s image?

Steve: I think it is a place that has an interest in our issues, our stories, our challenges, our work, and it is certainly something I would encourage students into as well. I think that, in a way, some of the older academics—and I might be projecting or universalising—but if I think about academics, our generation still have not quite decolonised ourselves from the PBRF [Performance-Based Research Fund] research exercises, we have always had a cultural cringe in this country. So anything in New Zealand is kind of a bit embarrassing by default, which is a terrible attitude because you go around the world to look at sociology conferences and you think, “Wow, man, my colleagues are doing way more interesting stuff in New Zealand!” That is what I am seeing here. Just because it does not rate or rank, because it has just been seen as a local journal, and because these senior people that might not be contributing so much to the journal, you kind of owe it to the community. You kind of owe it to the discipline. You should be role modelling a bit here. I am talking myself into submitting another article. I am getting quite excited.

Shin: We have all described this journal as a home for local sociology general, right? But probably readers and potential contributors might not necessarily see it that way. As Moeata noted, we try to promote Māori and Pacific scholarship but maybe we are not inclusive enough in practice, we are not using inclusive language, and the journal does not feel very welcoming.

Steve: I think it is healthy that you are thinking about these things. One of the things I wanted to compliment the current editorial team on is precisely some of the topics you have discussed. I even wrote a note down. You have analysed publication trends. I do not ever remember doing that on my watch. I remember we had a lot of good ideas and often ran out of time and they just

never happened. I think the very fact that you are thinking about, “Well, is our language inclusive and welcoming for scholars of different communities? Are we giving wrong messaging to people?” The fact that you have got these innovations like the PhD summaries and you are thinking very hard about where the trends are, how they are tracking, what we are doing well, and what we are not doing well. This is all really good stuff for the future of the journal, and you should be complimented on that.

Anna: I was just going to say this before when we were talking about the Māori and Pacific scholars. I think that one thing that was really interesting that came up when we did the analysis of publication trends, when we looked at the list of the most highly cited articles, despite the fact that there were few contributions or publications overall by Māori and Pacific scholars, they were disproportionately represented in the most cited articles [such as Brendan Hokowhitu (2003) and Laumua Tunufai'i (2016)]. I think this was the trend for a few different groups of underrepresented scholars in the journal's history. So in terms of opportunity, it is doubly impactful, right, to be having more publications from a greater diversity of scholars.

Steve: And that could also be a strategic opportunity because, as Anna was talking, we were always told by Sage, the publishers of the *Journal of Sociology*,¹⁰ that you could even think about commissioning stuff, but definitely special editions are cited more highly, so we increase the frequency of special editions. We had multiple bids every year, and sometimes we had special sections. So when we might not have enough to fill out a whole journal, this could be a way of being more inclusive to communities that might currently feel excluded. If they are given the opportunity to do it their way with their people on their terms, this could make it a lot more attractive. There is nothing wrong with us advertising far and wide about calls for interest: “Would you like to edit a special edition or in particular areas or particular topics or with particular people?” You would need to decide how to manage that, but that could be a way to bring in scholarship from communities that at the moment may not feel as welcome or as inclined to publish, or we may just simply not be on their radar.

Chamsy: Regarding what Anna said, I think that with *Counterfutures*, our most influential article has probably been Simon Barber's “Māori Marx”. I do not want to derail the conversation, but I was really interested in the publication trends and some thoughts around that. I wondered if you could detect these distinctive moments in the journal, particularly with the shift in editorial teams. Obviously, as I said, there was a strong emphasis on theory and cultural studies in the 1980s and '90s, attached to the rise of neoliberalism and those post-modern challenges, but I was just wondering about some of those trends and shifts in emphasis.

Jess: There is an invitation coming up for you to look into that because one of the things we [the editorial team] are doing now is exactly that—a bit of an analysis. But what we also want to do is to encourage people to engage with what has been published, so we also want to make the database available to people for that purpose. I have a friend in criminology, for example, who has asked, “Oh, what has been published around the criminal justice system in NZS?” So that means we'd like to invite people to re-engage with what has been published across the journal's history. And if people are interested in particular trends, there is a great opportunity for more articles.

¹⁰ Steve served as a co-editor of the *Journal of Sociology* from 2017 to 2020.

Shin: We will publish the publication database. So the future editors actually can do analysis at 50 years, 60 years or 100 years actually.

Jess: We thought we might keep the database up to date because it was a lot of work to enter all 1174 articles! Thank you to all the team who was involved: Anna, Bonnie and Jason as well. But going forward, it is relatively easy to keep it up to date, right? We just add in new papers as they are published, as a running database that people can draw on and we will put it on the journal website.¹¹

And that links to the point about the public image and advertising. I think that is a really good idea. Yesterday when the SAANZ newsletter came out, I thought, “Oh, we [*NZS*] are not in the newsletter.” Previously, we had a standing section on *NZS*, which advertised or announced new publications or a new issue, but also served to just keep the journal in people’s memories and to say, “Please submit or please propose a special issue, or if you want to review a book, please get in touch.” I think we should bring that in again and maybe we should have a LinkedIn page or something that we properly use to connect to other associations, other journals, including *MAI* and *AlterNative* to make *NZS* more visible.

Moeata: I am part of the Fofonga, which is the University of Auckland’s Pacific Research Excellence Hub, and I am part of their executive team and we are wanting to put together a special issue, and I am, of course, shopping around for a suitable journal. And I realise now that I did not think of *NZS* because I have been thinking in the Pacific space, and I am thinking of Pacific-focused journals. And as we are talking, I see that I compartmentalise my mind. I did not think of *NZS* as a publication for Pacific scholars, which is another opportunity to change that so that *NZS* does come to mind.

Shin: Maybe we should change the journal name first.

Moeata: Before I invite my Pacific scholars?

Between metrics and care: *NZS* as a ‘safe space’ and ‘our community’

Jess: I don’t know if Anna perhaps has any thoughts on early career academics. We have seen a big increase in early career scholars publishing in the journal; the biggest growth in the most recent decade were ECR authors, partly, I think, because publishing expectations have much increased for PhD candidates. But I was wondering what impact the new TREF metrics-based assessments will have on *NZS*. We are currently Q4 in the SCImago ranking,¹² and I wonder what that means, especially, for early career researchers. Because, Steve, you were talking earlier about the older generation pulling their weight and putting something in but I was wondering with publishing expectations and how research performance will be assessed going forward, what that means for a local independent journal whose impact factor is not as good as other journals, of course. So that is another challenge, I think, to navigate in the future. I wonder if early career scholars have a view on that.

Anna: I feel thoroughly unqualified to answer that. I am still at the stage where I am just starting my publishing career.

¹¹ The database is available on the journal website: <https://nzsociology.nz/index.php/nzs/supplementarymaterials>

¹² <https://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=5600153163&tip=sid>

Jess: Do you get any advice from supervisors on publishing? Do you talk with your supervisors, for example? I was wondering about those kinds of things and where there might be opportunities for the journal.

Anna: I think that there is an expectation both from me and my supervisors that I would publish as I went along. And I think, when I talk to my peers who are PhD candidates, regardless of whether they are doing a PhD by thesis or by publication, I think there is an expectation that you will publish. I personally often feel confused about where to publish, and the whole impact factor thing, and often lean on the opinion of my supervisors or other academics that I know about where to publish. There are journals that I like because I've read lots of interesting articles in them or they are important to me for another reason. And that is where I tend to lean.

Moeata: If I talk to my PhD students or even my postgraduate students (honours, masters) who are doing empirical research as part of it, I always encourage them to consider publishing in *NZS*, which speaks to what I said around accessibility and also around safety. I always think it [*NZS*] is accessible, it is safe, and it is a safer process. If the paper gets sent for review, the reviewers are more likely to be locally based and more responsive to their research. So I think about it in safety terms as it reduces the chances of a desk reject as well as all the way through the peer review process, because reviewers are more likely to be locally based. I also imagine that a lot of our peer reviewers anticipate that some of the submissions to *NZS* are from postgraduate students, so I find they are not necessarily overly generous but a little bit gentler in their reviews.

The reason I never published in *NZS* while I was a student—and I have been publishing from my master's onwards—when I write the article, I just look at which journals I have used the most that are either Australian or New Zealand based. So, instead of shooting right for the top, I would think, “What are the New Zealand- or Australian-based journals that I am citing in this article?” And that is where I would take mine to. So I guess this speaks back... because I am a family sociologist who does Pacific research, there is not a lot of family sociology happening in *NZS*. There also was not a lot of Pacific scholarship in *NZS* that I drew from. That's why.

Shin: And beyond gaps in topic coverage, it is difficult for early career and mid-career researchers because institutions increasingly expect us to publish in Q1 and Q2 journals. I co-author papers with my PhD students, and we consider publishing in *NZS* because it feels like a safe space. But, outside of that, these institutional expectations and metric-driven publishing culture make it a big challenge for us to consider submitting papers to *NZS*.

Steve: I think that you are right, there is an institutional pressure. But there is another institutional pressure which helps *NZS*. Promotion criteria are often quantity over quality, or at least there is a quantitative metric. When you look at our institution [University of Auckland], if you want to be a senior lecturer above the bar, you need x number of outputs. If you want to be an associate professor, x number of outputs. If you want to be a professor, you need x number of outputs. That is where *NZS* might be a good friend. I was interested that we used the word “safe” and “safe space” because as we were getting to the next question that was exactly what I was thinking. One thing *NZS* has historically done in our past, and what we should always do in our future, is provide a safe publishing space for early career researchers and for students. Again, you might want to go for these top-tier journals, but often if it is a New Zealand-focused/based topic, *NZS* makes more sense. There can often be a metropolitan arrogance in some of the big international journals, and they have not quite decolonised and, in some cases, not at all. So when you submit

anything about New Zealand to those international journals, they want to know what it means for Britain, what it means for America, or what it means for somewhere that is not New Zealand. This is something we are frequently confronted with. So, at least we know that if we submit to *NZS*, we are going to get a fair go. People will definitely engage with your work. As we said, they will probably be coming from a spirit of generosity. Editors, reviewers and readers are not going to want to dismiss you because it is a New Zealand-based issue. So you are right on one level. I do not know what these new performance criteria [replacing PBRF] are going to be for the new research assessment exercises, but, even in the old one, there was the quality assessment even though there is still a quantitative metric as well and how many outputs you have done. But there is definitely a quantitative metric again to promotion criteria. You still got to name your best outputs and say why your research is impactful and all that sort of stuff. But I still think there is a place for *NZS* within this complex sort of academic publishing world.

Moeata: That is what I was going to ask. If we think about what are our aspirations or what are the aspirations for *NZS*? We need to ask ourselves these questions, if we want to keep the journal local, keep those kinds of associations and continue developing the safe space. It is different if it organically grows into this top-tier journal. But is that the aspiration for it? If I think about me, I approach publishing and all the work that I do, there is of course a level of strategy but there is also a lot of heart in what I do. And so those two things always need to coalesce for me. It is not just strategy, strategy, strategy, promotion, promotion, go up, take! It is the heart behind what I do, why I do it, and that is what keeps me loving my work. Now I am thinking about the aspirations for *NZS*. Is it going to focus on the strategy and the aspirations to take over the world and become the top? Or is it wanting to keep the heart behind, taking care of the ground and taking care of emerging scholars, taking care of scholars in Aotearoa New Zealand, and being happy with the local placement?

Steve: I agree. I have been challenged by senior academics, deans and others: “Oh, there is a bit of *NZS* here, and these journals are not very prestigious”, and I think this is my address, this is where I exist, these are communities I engage with, I have a commitment to my national community, and, as scholars, of course, we all should. So I think you can also make principled arguments about why we should be supporting that and feel good about it. I do not think *NZS* is something we need to apologise for publishing in or for being involved with.

Jess: It gives us that sense of integrity as well, right? In a world of predatory journals and all of that, I think we are in a really good place. I completely agree, Moeata, about the aspiration of having our identity as a local, regional, independent journal that looks after the community and builds community.

Shin: I think that is an important point, and probably the current editorial team needs to emphasise that more and to show that “this is us, we are still part of the current academic publishing landscape, but we want to do more than that, we are building and looking after the community”.

Future visions: Dialogue, responsiveness and community building

Shin: As we are talking about the future and all the challenges and opportunities, what would you like *NZS* to look like in ten years?

Moeata: I would love a renaming of the journal or I would love to see, at least, an acknowledgement of Aotearoa. I am not Māori, but I'm just paying respect to Indigenous scholarship and Indigenous peoples here. That really signals it from the outset in the name that we hold.

Steve: I think that would be a great thing going forward. I definitely agree with that. I think that is a nice new change, retaining a commitment to some of the things that the journal has always done well: showcasing students, often quite junior students and early career researchers. I think that, going back to Moeata's point about it being a safe space, continuing to do the things that are its strengths. Absolutely keep publishing interesting stuff, remain open to new topics, challenges and issues. Welcome the next generations of scholars.

Jess: Absolutely, I agree. I feel like we are in a really good place, and, with a few reflections and feedback, we can keep going and doing what has been working well.

Anna: One thing that I thought was really cool in the earlier years of the journal was a real sense of community. There were articles that were "replies to" where people would have conversations over consecutive issues, and I would love to see a bit of that come back where we could talk to each other through the pages of the journal.

Chamsy: Actually it was a real thing that Peter Beatson tried to push as well. He was feeling that it was losing a sense of dialogue and communal commitment. So we started with a fair bit of that and actually just today I read this quite spicy reply by Greg Newbold (1993) to a review by Charles Crothers, which is really fun. Probably the tone is a bit sharper than a lot of people would now feel comfortable with, but I think some more dialogue would be really nice.

Jess: Yes, agreed. We did recently have somebody get in touch to say, "Oh, we would be interested in writing a response to an article that came out in *NZS*." I think that is great. And I hope that the analysis we have been doing might catalyse that engagement, too. And that people actually consider publications in the journal when they think about their own work. It is not all about citing it highly, but it would be a nice side effect. There is so much good work in the journal. Looking through them for the analysis, I thought: "Wow, there is some really cool stuff in here."

Steve: Anna's idea is nice. You are quite right. I was looking at some of these old ones, and there was a title "A reply to my critics", and I thought, "Wow, when was the last time I saw that in a journal?" If we think about what the journal is today and what its purpose is, for many, the purpose is to individualistically get a high-citing article of lots of prestige and get promotion. But beyond that, it is actually to build community and represent community. Having these dialogues is also a way to build community if you can get people to do it. It could be really interesting.

The other thing is... we did this more through the newsletter, but we have really got out of touch with what is happening with each other's worlds because we are all too busy in our own work and things. If we do not mind about impact factors and citations, we could possibly write some interesting things that, from an institutional perspective, may be slightly controversial or challenging. I am talking about our own universities here. Pieces about the state of sociology and sociology in our world and what it is like going forward. Who knows?

Moeata: Last year I looked at a special issue [where] Ti Lamusse, Emmy Rākete and Will Hansen (2025) wrote a piece around the Destiny Church and what had been happening. It was such a wonderful and brilliant commentary that I am excited to use in my teaching. You have got these really nice

pieces that are timely, that are talking about contemporary things that students can resonate with. It has happened in their time, in their lives right now. Those sorts of things, I think that is what makes *NZS* really cool.

Steve: A bit premature yet, but, with the Government making sociology an approved subject at years 11, 12 and 13, we will be getting high schools teachers starting to teach sociology more and wanting resources. So, I like Moeata's idea, and it is potentially getting those teachers into the community, or even sometimes students or whatever it may open up some interesting new domains for *NZS* as well.

Shin: The journal then needs to be even more responsive to changing societies, social justice and social change.

Afterthoughts

As editors, we are heartened that this roundtable discussion affirmed that *NZS* is sustained by more than publication outputs; it is held together by relationships, shared commitments and a sense of collective responsibility for sociology in Aotearoa New Zealand. Reading through the transcript and reflecting on the discussion, we all repeatedly described *NZS* as “local”, “independent” and “supportive”; it is an intellectual home by, and for, our community. It is ‘ours’.

However, we would also like to foreground the tensions that come with sustaining a journal largely through a ‘labour of love’. We are happy to provide free labour and keep the journal independent from the mega commercial publishers such as Elsevier, Sage, Springer, Taylor & Francis and Wiley, but we also operate within an increasingly globalised and metric-driven publishing landscape. In that context, it is difficult to ignore rankings and impact factor entirely, even though *NZS*'s unique contribution lies in providing a culturally responsive, supportive and safe place-based space for intellectual exchange within ‘our community’. *NZS*, therefore, needs to clearly articulate why a place-based sociology journal matters—not as a ‘second option’, but as part of the infrastructure that supports sociological community, dialogue and public relevance in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The roundtable discussion also identified ongoing challenges around representation, inclusion and the journal's public image. While *NZS* has diversified over time in terms of scholars and scholarship (see Terruhn et al., 2026 for details), our discussion points to continuing gaps in representation, particularly in relation to Māori and Pacific scholarship, and highlighted the importance of attending to the journal's public image and everyday signals including language use, the journal's name, author guidelines and stylistic conventions. These are not merely technical matters. As our discussion notes, these signals shape whether colleagues feel welcome, recognised and able to publish on their own terms. More proactive strategies such as more frequent special issues or special sections co-produced with wider (social science) communities in Aotearoa New Zealand, may create pathways for participation and community building while keeping *NZS*'s distinctive and expected role as an intellectually productive and safe space for all.

As editors, we value this opportunity for reflection and take this conversation as constructive feedback, encouragement and invitation. Overall, this roundtable offered a rare opportunity, especially for the current editorial team (and future generations of editors), to see *NZS* from multiple perspectives and to identify potential gaps and misalignments between the journal's public image and how we, as insiders, understand it. Over the coming months, we aim to build on the momentum of the 40th anniversary by making the publication database publicly available, initiating the process of a name change, improving our communication and outreach, revising our author guidelines, and updating website infrastructure to better align the journal's practices and public image with its values and objectives. We also hope to cultivate more dialogue within *NZS* through responses, debates, commentaries and timely interventions that speak to the

rapidly changing world. We invite you, as reader, to consider taking up such opportunities for constructive engagement with the scholarship of your peers. This way, the journal continues to be not only an archive of the discipline's past, but a living forum for its future.

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank Chamsy, Steve, Moeata and Anna for their time to participate in the 40th anniversary roundtable discussion and for their thoughtful feedback and suggestions for NZS's future. In celebrating NZS's remarkable achievement, we also extend our sincere thanks to the many individuals, institutions and organisations who have sustained the journal over the decades, as authors, reviewers, editors, readers and supporters.

Notes on contributors

Jessica Terruhn is a research associate at Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato | University of Waikato and a professional teaching fellow at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland. Her work considers the operation of settler colonial and racial ideologies in relation to the politics of migration and housing in Aotearoa New Zealand. She is co-editor of *New Zealand Sociology* and associate editor of *Kōtutui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online*.

Chamsy el-Ojeili is an associate professor in Sociology at Te Herenga Waka–Victoria University of Wellington. His research centres on the sociology of knowledge.

Steve Matthewman (he, him, ia) is a professor in Sociology at Waipapa Taumata Rua | University of Auckland. His research interests include the sociology of disasters, science and technology studies (STS) and social theory. Theoretically, his current work explores the connections between Critical Disaster Studies and Critical Future Studies. Practically, it looks at what happens after 'managed' retreat.

Moeata Keil is a senior lecturer in Sociology at Waipapa Taumata Rau | University of Auckland. Moeata is a Samoan decolonial feminist scholar. She is an associate editor of *New Zealand Sociology* and co-editor of the *Pacific Islanders Studies* book collection with Lived Places Publishing.

Anna Friedlander is a PhD candidate in Sociology at Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato | University of Waikato. She works in feminist data and technology studies, with a focus on menstrual tracking apps and digital menstrual tracking practices. She is an associate editor of *New Zealand Sociology*.

Shinya Uekusa is a senior lecturer in Sociology at the University of Canterbury, Aotearoa New Zealand. His work focuses on linguisticism, vulnerability, reflexivity and the experiences of migrants and other minoritised groups in crisis and disaster. He co-edited *A Decade of Disaster Experiences in Ōtautahi Christchurch: Critical Disaster Studies Perspectives* (Palgrave, 2022) and is currently editing *Critical Disaster Studies in Asia and the Pacific* (Palgrave, forthcoming). He is a co-editor of *New Zealand Sociology* and an associate editor for *Critical Disaster Studies*.

References

- Hokowhitu, B. (2003). Māori masculinity, post-structuralism, and the emerging self. *New Zealand Sociology*, 18(2), 179–201. <https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NZ-Sociology-V18-No.2-2003.pdf>
- Lamusse, T., Rākete, E. & Hansen, W. (2025). Combat safetyism. *New Zealand Sociology*, 40(1), 122–130. <https://www.nzsociology.nz/index.php/nzs/article/view/224>

- Newbold, G. (1993). Rejoinder to Charles Crothers. *New Zealand Sociology*, 8(1), 117–118.
<https://www.saanz.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NZ-Sociology-V8-No.1-1993.pdf>
- Terruhn, J., Uekusa, S., Friedlander, A., Trotter-Simons, B. E., & Ran, G. J. (2026). 40 years of *New Zealand Sociology*: The journal as a mirror of sociology in Aotearoa New Zealand. *New Zealand Sociology*, 41(1), 1–27. <https://www.nzsociology.nz/index.php/nzs/article/view/249>
- Tunufa'i, L. (2016). Pacific research: Rethinking the talanoa 'methodology'. *New Zealand Sociology*, 31(7), 227–239. Available at <https://www.anticolonialresearchlibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Tunufai-CritiqueofTalanoa.pdf>