



**Miroirs. A journal of Anglophone, Iberian and Latin American studies**  
**Call for Papers**  
**Volume 7 Knowledge societies**  
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Knowledge is one of the foundations of human societies, which attribute a specific status to it within their political institutions. From the outset, knowledge has been associated with the State, and thus contributes to its legitimacy. In Western societies, knowledge was very quickly associated with the written text and with reasoning (Goody, 1977). The administration of societies depends on the written word through the force of law. The 'logic' of writing imposes the power of the written trace, with the written word (*de jure*) prevailing over what is done in practice (*de facto*). This particular form of communication has also been one of the catalysts for processes of homogenisation and standardisation of social, linguistic and cultural practices. The history of law and the evolution of printing are only two instances that testify to this process. Furthermore, as the relationship between knowledge and state power has contributed to the legitimisation of certain types of knowledge as well as to their hierarchisation, we can see the outlines of an opposition between 'royal science', which is part of an economy of knowledge, and 'nomadic science', which tends to call into question the normalized production of instituted knowledge, which is itself the guardian of a norm (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980).

Foucault had formulated and theorised the notions of biopolitics and governmentality to speak of the power of the State over the bodies of subjects (1975, 1976). If 'knowledge is power', power manifests itself in myriad forms. It can be made evident through institutional, institutionalised forms of power – political power, economic power, etc. – on the one hand, and through power relations between individuals on the other.

Historians and researchers in the humanities and social sciences have thoroughly documented, studied and analysed forms of counter-power. The latter is generally defined as the power of the people. It is in the name of the people that counter-powers such as opinion-led movements as well as some targeted forms of engaged activist movements (against unfair treatment imposed on the subjects by carbon democracy, or pharocracy, etc.) have taken shape. These counter-powers rely on the general and global usage of networks, with flows of opinions putting forward heterodox knowledge (conspiracy theories, alternative truths, etc.). The democratic system most often confronts issues surrounding the concentration of knowledge in the hands of economic, political or spiritual elites, who determine its nature (its legitimacy) and modes of dissemination.

In this controlled, gridded space, knowledge is also a generator of behavioural norms that spread within the social body and form the basis of a complex culture, situated somewhere between power, control and emancipation. Knowledge as an economic weapon and a strategy for developing state power (soft power) has become a geopolitical issue in the contemporary world. These different tensions and conflicts give rise to processes in which the power of subjects to act can also become manifest.

The issue of elite monopoly in the generation and control of knowledge dissemination is also central to contemporary thought on human rights. According to UNESCO, "knowledge and information have significant impact on people's lives. The sharing of knowledge and information, particularly through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), has the power to transform economies and societies. (...) Knowledge societies must build on four pillars: freedom of expression; universal access to information and knowledge; respect for cultural and linguistic diversity; and quality education for all"<sup>1</sup>.

For this thematic issue on knowledge societies, prospective authors are invited to propose texts offering theoretical and empirical explorations of the question of knowledge. Submissions should adopt an interdisciplinary approach to one of the following sub-themes:

- the links between governance by power-knowledge and the violence generated by power struggles
- the dialectic between inclusion and exclusion
- historical and/or field perspectives centered on particular cases or examples
- the development of the notion of 'information' and diplomacy
- the social and societal implications of human relationships
- norms and values as influenced by governance
- the knowledge economy
- forms of state propaganda and their counter-models in art and literature
- issues of education and media as means of dissemination

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/building-knowledge-societies> consulted 15th July 2021.

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SUNDER RAJAN Kaushik, *Pharmocracy. Value, Politics, and Knowledge in Global Biomedicine*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, coll. « Experimental Futures », 2017.

## Publication Details

Authors can send their proposal (300-500 words) in one of the four languages with a short bio (50 words) to [revue.miroirs@gmail.com](mailto:revue.miroirs@gmail.com) ; [madhura.joshi@ut-capitole.fr](mailto:madhura.joshi@ut-capitole.fr) and [Anne-marie.O-connell@ut-capitole.fr](mailto:Anne-marie.O-connell@ut-capitole.fr)  
Miroirs accepts contributions in English, French, Spanish and Catalan and applies a double-blind peer-review process to full texts prior to publication.

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