

Construccionismo(s) social(es), otra vez

*Mirka Koro**, *Marco Gemignani***

Resumen

¿Cómo puede el construccionismo social, en sus diversas formas, desarrollarse hacia una perspectiva más relacional y más-que-humana a la luz de las contribuciones teóricas recientes del nuevo materialismo y la investigación post-cualitativa? En un diálogo entre ambos, hablamos sobre las posibilidades que estos marcos pueden ofrecer para la conceptualización de epistemologías y ontologías dentro del construccionismo social. Prestamos especial atención a sus diferencias creativas con el construccionismo social y a las posibilidades que representan para pensar de otra manera. Partiendo de reflexiones críticas sobre los conceptos de “social” y “construcción”, exploramos la posibilidad de un construccionismo social que deje de basarse en el discurso, el lenguaje y la negociación de significados, para reconocer los límites de la interpretación y de la agencia antropocéntricas. En particular, hablamos de comprender las construcciones como intra-acciones más que como interpretaciones, de pasar de conocer un objeto a un devenir performativo con él, y de considerar las implicaciones que las ontologías relacionales, inmanentes y especulativas pueden tener para las prácticas de investigación que incluyen consideraciones sobre la materialidad posthumana, así como para las conceptualizaciones de comunidad y cuidado. Concluimos el manuscrito con una lista de preguntas provocadoras para pensar juntos y de manera diferente sobre el construccionismo social en psicología.

Palabras clave: construccionismo social – nuevo materialismo – post cualitativo – innovación, relacionalidad – ontologías de proceso

Social constructionism(s), again

*Mirka Koro**, *Marco Gemignani***

Abstract

How can social constructionism in its various forms develop toward becoming more relational and more-than-human, in light of the recent theoretical contributions of new-materialism and post-qualitative research? In a dialogue between the two of us, we talk about the possibilities that these frames may offer for the conceptualization of epistemologies and ontologies within social constructionism. We pay particular attention to their creative differences with social constructionism and to the possibilities that they may represent to think differently. Starting from critical reflections on the concepts of “social” and “construction,” we explore the possibility of a social constructionism that goes from being based on discourse, language and negotiation of meanings, to acknowledging the limits of anthropocentric interpretation and agency. In particular, we talk about seeing constructions as intra-action rather than interpretations, moving from knowing an object to performative becoming with it, and considering the implications that relational, immanent, and speculative ontologies may have for research practices that include considerations on post-human materiality, for the conceptualizations of community and care. We conclude the manuscript with a list of provocative questions to think together and differently about social constructionism in psychology.

Keywords: social constructionism – new materialism – post-qualitative – innovation, relationality – process ontologies

Introduction

In this dialogue we aim to address some innovative possibilities of social constructionist research. We hope to open the concept of social constructionism for new, contemporary variations within frames and practices of knowledge making. We acknowledge the rich history of social constructionism (SC) and its immense contribution to how social, educational, and health researchers, professionals, and scientists understand and practice their work (Burr, 2025; Holstein & Gubrium, 2008; McNamee et al., 2020; McNamee & Hosking, 2011). Starting from the historical foundations of SC, we imagine possible extensions, developments, and challenges that may originate from some of the latest theoretical innovations in qualitative research, namely new materialism (Barad, 2007, 2017; Murriss, 2021; Tamboukou & Benavente, 2020) and post-humanism (Braidotti, 2013a, 2013b, 2017; Gemignani, 2017; Murriss, 2021).

Even though many historical and theoretical traces can be considered to locate where social construction has happened and how it has been named, Gergen's seminal work on the social constructions has served as our dialogical starter for this paper (Gergen, 1985). At the beginning of this foundational article published in the *American Psychologist*, Ken Gergen writes that "Social constructionist inquiry is principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live" (Gergen, 1985, p. 266). He then outlines the features of SC as a movement and a metatheory which, instead of prescribing content or evaluation of knowledge, entails an epistemological and ontological position on science. For instance, rather than assuming the appropriateness of some disciplinary content (e.g., the physiology of synapses for biopsychology or the role of the unconscious for psychoanalysis), Gergen argues that any knowledge is historically and contextually valid within its scientific paradigm. He underscores that science and its key components (e.g., paradigms, methods, theories, validity criteria) are relational and contextual.

This contemporary moment of global distress, turmoil and potential radical dismissal of the 'social' good is a good time to return to the concept of social construction. It might also be a time for SC to re-assert its relations with contemporary society, including issues of social justice and complex questions of the need and worth of the social in a rapidly shifting political and conceptual landscape. More specifically, we are interested in the different ways in which historical and contemporary variations of SC could revision and re-practice themselves to raise important questions about "today's social" and to facilitate practices which foreground care and democratic constructions of our common world and planet. We hope for this dialogue to become transformative and relational in nature, as we think through some of the different forms in which the "social" and the "constructing" help to reflect about truth, science, agency, language, speakers, signs, actors, and actants across perspectives and viewpoints.

This dialogue is not designed to define SC in the new contemporary era. Rather the dialogue illustrates how two scholars wonder about this movement in a way that would assist both junior and senior scholars to create their own openings and ways to utilize SC and its variants. Even if our dialogue is limited and does not address many important areas and applications of SC, we hope it will serve as a provocation to think and do differently with social constructionism as well as an invitation to consider future possibilities of social constructionist inquiry.

We would also like to acknowledge our subjectivities and personal histories and their impact shaping this conversation and the ideas presented here. We are experienced qualitative researchers, whose foothold in critical theories has systematically questioned the immobility of orthodoxies and assumptions. For us, this has meant to work at and from the margins of our respective disciplines: for MK, qualitative research methods and education; for MG, critical community psychology, qualitative methodologies, and psychotherapy.

As this dialogue took place over numerous online meetings and email exchanges, it does not always follow a linear structure and line of thought. For this reason, some concepts and reflections may appear more than once. When this occurs, however, it is never an exact repetition of its former occurrence. In a social constructionist fashion, in the same as it is impossible to step in the same river twice, our concepts and reflections evolve with us – and we become with them. To keep the dialogical style of our reflection, we chose to include references and quotations as footnotes, rather than in the text, with the exceptions of the prologue and conclusions. We included subtitles to facilitate the reading process and separate the topics of discussions, although the conversations flew with no interruptions. Thus, the subheadings provide a pause, but not necessarily a change of topic.

Wondering about SC

MK: As for any theoretical constructs and conceptual assumptions, it can be productive and vital to bring the key terms “social” and “construction” into question. We are not rejecting them as concepts or practices. Rather, we are kind of puzzled with the different forms of “social” and “construction” at this historical moment and the usefulness or uselessness of these terms.

MG: To me, a starting point is that SC challenges the separation between the individual and the social to move beyond the individual – and even the human – by approaching these concepts as discourses and discursive practices. For instance, let’s imagine that I interact with somebody who is or feels oppressed. A way to go beyond an individualistic understanding of oppression would be including it into a wider net of discourses concerned with power, gender, racism, institutions, human rights, neoliberalism, and so on. This is not to discount personal experience, but to think about it with a broader framework of interpretation. This move is bifold: first, it entails thinking

systemically, for instance, about institutional oppression and its re-producing of discriminatory practices. From this perspective, oppression is not isolated from the network of discourses and practices that helps construct this person as “oppressable” and oppressed. The second dimension of this move toward “the social” entails wondering about what makes an experience count as oppressive. Into what systems of constructions, conventions, discourses, power, and possibilities does this label make sense and appears “true” or important?

MK: It is interesting to think with the systems (of social) and their intersectionality. It is not that there exists one “social” creating one social construction. From my perspective, we have many “tiny” socials that interact, clash, unite, separate, disappear, emerge, and so on. These socially constructed discourses and forces are shifting, plural, and reconstructed again and again. Thus, one can find hope and care in these shifting social constructions.

Language and the plurality of power/knowledges processes that make reality

MG: I think that probably every social constructionist will agree that we need to move away from singularities, that is, from monolithic and unidirectional views of truth and reality. I wonder, though, what it means to become plural because, at times, plurality may be seen as triangulation or methodological pluralism. I don't think this is what SC means by plurality, because the intent is not to get closer to the truth or to be more objective. To me, SC is concerned with plurality in terms of perspectivity as well as hybridity, of blending ideas about the real, of creating new possibilities.

MK: To co-exist and potentially understand each other in the midst of many knowledges and networks of structures, caring dialogue is crucial. Languages, which create many forms of dialogue, offer us a shared platform to communicate and to learn signs and their meanings.

MG: Yes! Language subsumes categories and structures and, at the same time, generates them. The categories that people use to go by compose a framework to make sense of the world. Yet these sense-making processes and constructed realities are always relational.

MK: However, relationality does not mean neutrality, equity, or absence of power and privilege. Rather, relationality acknowledges how power and privilege flow and create realities making something potentially more accepted, powerful, recognized, heard, speakable, doable and so on. The multidirectionality and multiplicity of relational forces can also make humans and social actors humbler, while acknowledging their limitations and limited capacities.

MG: Along this line, I find useful to consider the possibility or the position of not-knowing, the epistemic humility that Gergen advocates for. There is something beautiful

in saying, "I don't know" because it opens me to the possibility of truly learning from multiple angles and sources.

As a constructivist therapist, it is important for me to consider that multiple interpretations are always possible and, with them, many realities may co-exist. There is no definite perspective from which knowledge can be developed. This, to me, a key feature of SC. Rather than searching for a truth, we may think with Anzaldúa to create something new by adopting the position of not-knowing, from "the cracks of knowledge", from embracing different frameworks, and from the deadlocks of interpretations.

On the one hand, the idea that language needs to be re-negotiated and potentially recreated, rather than assumed [in its ability to represent reality] is liberating. It demands an ongoing renegotiating or making of language. On the other hand, language uses need to be renegotiated because they don't make sense, when the communication and understanding do not flow or move in different directions. That is, when at the cracks of knowledge, interactive and relational tensions develop as power-struggles (Gemignani, 2025). This often happens when one interpretation or knowledge is valued or considered superior to another. It is at that point that we should dialogue, to negotiate knowledges about reality, to critically consider which frames exist or are (made) available for a reality to be recognized as evident. Knowledge, in other words, is not separated or separable from the power-games that make it possible and that are based on language and its uses.

MK: In this constant process of negotiating constructions, dialogue is one of the main elements of social constructionism. It takes us to the epistemological construction of knowledge, needing multiple kind of parties and negotiation...

MG: ...which brings us back to think about power relations, and how power may create spaces and places for social constructions. When we talk about construction as the place and practice of negotiation, do we need to wonder about who is doing the negotiations?

MK: Yeah. Who gets to be on the table to negotiate? I am seeing social constructionism as an ideal or a process that has a potential to neutralize some of the damaging effects of power. SC has this ideal: that knowledge is not necessarily equally constructed; it is contextually co-constructed. SC is practiced within specific time, space, and it's responsive to the realities of that space, in it. We have to acknowledge that it is not always the same. For instance, when we are together in this time space, constructions in the here and now are always different. Reality gets constructed, always in different degrees.

So, I don't think it is possible to say that everything we're going to do from here on is 50% you and 50% me; equally socially constructed. For instance, being or becoming a socially constructed researcher. I always carry my researcher hat with me, but the key question is how much of my being or becoming a researcher I am foregrounding in my relations and social construction. How much and in which ways do I involve others, and I am receptive for the construction of others? How much are the others disclosing to me,

and all that? Knowing is always a relational process, and its degrees of freedom are shifting based on the different situations.

Can SC avoid anthropocentrism?

MG: The problem may be with assuming that a dialogue happens between two or more positions that are set.

MK: Not necessarily so. Social roles and positions could be part of the dialogue, but we could also think to go beyond human dialogue. I think that, at the current times of ecological crisis, SC has to go beyond human interactions and dialogue. Does the dialogue need to stay anthropocentric in order to recognize itself? Or can we think dialogue with kin, more-than-human other, plants and so on ?

MG: So, the question then would be: what would a non-anthropocentric social constructionism be like?

MK: Yeah, how far can we go? And what is social? "Social" has to move beyond anthropocentrism: "social" has all these variations and forms that are beyond the human. But we could also consider what happens if SC stays in that anthropocentric framework: Is it going to be useless? Is it going to be no longer needed? Is it going to be misleading? What is going to happen if we continue this anthropocentric worldview?

MG: To me, this question about going beyond the human translates into the question of "Whose constructions are these?". In SC, the person has the power to dialogue. Instead, for instance, in some indigenous epistemologies, a mountain or nature can become an agent.

MK: Well, if we follow that, a more than human or post-human kind of construction has to look different. It needs to be recognized and constructed differently. And it doesn't have human actors anymore leading it. As long as human actors do inquiry, we will be anthropocentric in some ways. For me, it's a question of degree: How much "human" do we expect from or require in social constructionism?

MG: OK, let's think about a specific example...

MK: Tsing's "Mushrooms at the end of the world" (2015) illuminates multi-layered social forces, and political and economic interactions with the mushroom: relationships among mushrooms and their collectors, cultures, land, the how of knowledge, capitalism, conservation, native knowledges, and more. New discourses and practices are born with and in these interactions with forests, mushrooms, native people, healers, and researchers. Those constructions are multidimensional, shifting and complex within multispecies landscape.

In our revisioning of SC, we are drawing from diverse and less familiar knowledge systems: human plus other knowledge systems. We are not just observing the

mushrooms: humans can develop skills and arts of noticing, too [see Tsing, 2015]. We live and co-exist with mushrooms and nature even without knowing all forms that these constructions may take. We cannot know about this, unless we leave space for materialities and mushroom to matter, to have agency and vibrancy. Life, beyond human construction and control, is a life of precarity without promises of stability and guarantees.

MG: So, in the moment in which we develop some knowledge, for instance, about the mushroom realm, this is not just my construction of the mushrooms. It's not my interpretation, such as a mental image of the mushroom, what counts here. It is the mushroom relations, mushroom-human becomings that construct me in the process of learning about and relating with the mushrooms. They are present to me, even if I don't interpret or construct them, not as essence but as relationship. I am "becoming with" the mushrooms or other non-human lifeforms.

SC beyond human interpretation and agency

MK: One could argue that, outside anthropocentrism, the act and need for interpretation is not foregrounded. These spaces are full of diverse processes and actions upon actions in interactive and intra-active ways. There is no necessary need for interpretation or for human understanding to develop control.

MG: We could think of a construction as an action that is performative, constitutive of reality, and based on inter-action or relationship. However, seeing constructions as intra-action moves us to go beyond interpretation of a reality. Interpretation is reality. Reality and its interpreters become together in the process of intra-acting.

MK: I would argue for the separation between interpretation and reality. Interpretable realities are only some possible realities. Something is always happening also outside interpretation. I am shifting; we are moving. Multiple diverse material realities are created within/in/alongside/with intra-action. From a new-materialist perspective, social constructions are not interpretations of something pre-existing them, because the boundaries and properties of the phenomenon or reality become determinate and meaningful through the very process of constructing it.

MG: Yes! A social construction is not interpretative but constitutive of reality. That is, there is no object to be interpreted. Rather, the object is constructed through my and our relations with it. From this perspective, which could be radically innovative for SC, research practices do not discover preexisting identities. Neither they interpret or construct these identities. Rather, research practices and the act of observing help constitute some identities (for example, humans, nature, animals, machines) as well as specific kinds of human identities: women, men, trans, White, Black, migrant, middle-class, and so on).

There is no agent, identity, or being that exists before the interaction or intra-action. I think that seeing social constructions as intra-action – and not just as interpretation – is a key and often misunderstood aspect of SC. Even if SC does not use this word [i.e., intra-action], it is not correct in my opinion to say that SC is concerned with language-based interpretations, therefore reducing constructions to a cognitive and linguistic process, whereas new materialism (NM) productions are bodily, affective, pre-verbal, based on desire, post-human, and so on. This is not a correct distinction, in my view, because language does not need to be neither verbal nor cognitive: the language of the body and the language of desire, for instance. Understandings are always negotiated, whether this is in the dictionary-style language or in a slang, an unspoken language, or a social movement.

MK: I am not putting those thoughts necessarily into the interpretation language. For instance, I get sick when I eat a bad mushroom. I do not need to interpret the eating or encountering a bad mushroom. I am actually sensing the mushroom in my body. I'm vomiting, I am having aches. The act of interpretation can be, but it does not necessarily guide the event and reality construction.

Social constructionism and the material

MG: A key difference between SC and NM concerns the materiality of the various agents that are involved in the inquiry. So, in your example, the mushroom and the humans become an assemblage, something all-together in the process of relating to each other within the system.

MK: Yes. I wonder what needs to happen in order for social constructionism to lose its emphasis on constructing an individual, social human being. What would become of “construction” then?

I wonder how SC could be extended to focus more on the materiality of our lives, or on the different ethical responsibilities that we have as researchers. Construction for me is a place for negotiation, it's where things and matters are coming together. Without this relationality, without this shared space, there would be no construction. This is ever important today.

To reflect and consider the materiality of the world and its agents and agencies means that we need to inquire about the way in which social science researchers are working within planetary ecosystems, how they are working with the participants (human and more-than-human). Are we working with and alongside with materiality? Are we working with sustainable policies, or does our research create some sort of one directional knowledge production system? SC beyond the human is badly needed today because we are not engaging with those kinds of transformative and negotiated practices very often, in today's society.

MG: So, a negotiation of possible constructions, of possibilities that include a view of agency beyond the human. The agency of the material and the materiality of the agentic. This would be major shift for SC, which has traditionally seen language as productive and representative of matter: language is active, whereas materiality is passive. Language and its uses construct the possibilities for reality and knowledge. That is, reality is created through social practices of language, negotiation, narrative, and discourse.

This view contrasts with acknowledging the agency of the matter itself, the constructive power of the material. For instance, the apparatus that we use to observe and analyze a phenomenon, such a microscope or, in the social sciences, a survey or the questions of an interview, play a role in shaping social realities or data. Non-human actors are acknowledged. The interpreting or the constructing of a human, whether an individual, group or community, is not the only one at the center of the process of constructing reality and knowledge.

The material world, methodological decisions, and field practices taken and reproduced by the researcher produce agential cuts that are ontological: they constitute or participate in the constitution of the reality that researchers observe. For example, smartphones “matter”, in the sense that they materially condition the experience of sociality nowadays. One could argue that a cellphone is just an instrument, a tool, and that its power derives from how we use it. And how we use it would depend on how we interpret it. This reasoning brings agency back to the person, making them central.

Instead, from a materialist perspective scholars would underscore the agency of the smartphone and the human-phone relationality in shaping the ways in which we interact with others. For instance, in terms of the possibilities the smartphone allows for; what others expect from me based on the smartphone I have (e.g., social status); how I use it, etc. It is an intra-active force, a relational agent (Gemignani, 2025).

Human-phone relationality enables humans and phone to engage in specific practices, which are informed by this particular relation and intra-action. This intra-action and the materiality [of the human-phone assemblage] shape what can be done, for instance, based on the cell phone’s design and software, or the chemical materials it is made of (e.g., its battery). All of this interacts with the dynamics of human interactions, shaping how we communicate, how we expect social relationships to evolve over digital technologies, how we access information about our friends, and so on. So, these are non-human elements that materially co-produce our experiences and influence our behaviors. The boundary between the active human subject and the passive tool becomes blurred.

SC and the performative development of constructions

MK: The role of determinism and agency is an interesting area to be considered. The time-space or spacetime-matter, which is how Barad calls it to underscore its unity and

matter, is potentially differently configured in traditional SC context and posthuman and new materialist framework. The linearity, causality, and the stability of spacetime mattering take different forms. How epistemology might be privileged over ontology is also an important consideration here.

MG: It occurs to me that we are always in the process of becoming. Both theories underscore this. However, SC seems more linear, progressive. For instance, we become subjects through some discourses and not others. Discourse exists beforehand, and we adopt it and, by doing this, we reproduce and feed them. For instance, in my research I explore how immigration policies create irregularized migrants. Migrants can only exist, be recognized, and seeing themselves as “irregular” in their relation with these policies. The fact, then, that some migrants are identified as irregular confirms or gives strength to this social categorization and, for instance, to the need of policing irregularized immigration, without realizing that it is these policies that create the issue.

So, SC would use Discourse Analysis to link the phenomenon of irregularized migrants to “something” that stands behind it, such as identity politics, or discourses aimed at instilling fear, which justify the creation and implementation of some migration policies.

For NM, instead, there is no before and after. Everything is happening simultaneously. The material formation is ongoing. Behind a phenomenon, there could be dominant discourses, but they are not the producers or causes of the phenomenon. Neither they exist independently from the phenomenon. Instead, the thing is in the phenomenon. Through specific intra-actions phenomena come to matter, both in the sense that things become matter (e.g., visible, tellable), and that they become problematizable. So, the things, discourses, agents, constructions, phenomena, relations... they all compose materiality, and they are not separable from each other. It is not the case that there is a perceiving human being who constructs reality according to dominant discourses and reflexivity, in a linear way. Rather, everything is a unique performativity process.

Discourse on immigration, immigration policies, identity politics, border-securitization practices, police control, impossible or very slow or complex bureaucracies, and so on... they are all part of the irregular-migrant phenomenon. They are in it, not its causes happening – in time – before the phenomenon.

MK: So, this brings us back to what we said earlier that one of the ways in which SC has evolved or can evolve in relation to the idea of intra-action. Drawing from Barad, data, researchers, research strategies, and problems are not to be seen as pre-existing and separate realities that interact in the analysis and are represented in writing thanks to the researcher’s will and skills. Barad notes that “agency is a matter of intra-acting”. Scholars know and learn not because they are a part of the world, but because they are the world. The product and the producer, object and subject, me and the other, are inseparable in their materiality. So, there is no autonomous and separate object that needs to be

researched, but researching configures its actants. That is, research is a process to describe how matter comes to matter.

MG: This brings to the connection between representation and performativity: Foucault and, later, Butler deeply challenge the idea that knowledge can represent something without being part or contributing to this something. In a sense, it's very difficult to talk about the problem without being part of the problem.

Rather than representative, knowledge is performative. Practice is constitutive. SC and NM are in agreement on this. However, NM underscores that SC (and Foucault and Butler) situates agency, discourse, and practices of construction within the human domain, failing to consider the importance of the apparatus and, then, that the human too is an intra-action and a performance.

MK: In traditional research, SC is seen as a framework to interpret or analyze reality, as it is socially constructed and experienced. Discourses and narratives are the typical "units of analysis" to inquire, for instance, on how a specific discourse – let's say, gender – produces realities and practices, which end up validating this discourse. So, reality is produced through language and its uses. Language and reality are mutually constitutive, in SC.

Through NM, however, we are suggesting that everything exists and evolves simultaneously. Not just language, but all of the parties, actors, agents and agencies are of and co-constitute of an inquiry. Barad proposed that performativity moves away from correspondence toward matters of practices thus delinking reality and truth from their assumed forms.

Speculative futures

We end this dialogue by bringing our re-imaginings of social construction into speculative and future-oriented spaces. For example, Kaljonen and colleagues (2019) suggest that scholars working from speculative pragmatism could move beyond the thinkable and doable to imagine and invent practices of doing otherwise. This is in line with one of the most inspiring articles by Ken Gergen (2014) in which he argues for moving from an "oculocentric" research concerned with an "object of study", such as identities and phenomena, even when these are addressed from a critical and reflexive position, to a research whose aim "would not be to illuminate what is, but to create what is to become." He wonders, "What if we replaced the persistent rush to establish 'what is the case' and began to ask, 'what kind of world could we build?'" (p. 294); "to what kind of future can I contribute?" (p. 306).

Process and relational ontologies, such as those of NM, Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of immanence (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), and post-qualitative researchers (Gemignani, 2025; Koro-Ljungberg, 2016; St. Pierre, 2024), also advocate for such move from being to becoming. In these ontological positions, "there are no separate things. To

simplify greatly, in immanence we move from existence to the not yet, from being to becoming. [...] Nothing is ever the same; nothing ever exists” (St. Pierre, 2024, p. 15).

From this perspective social constructions might function as pre-objective and pre-personal; within spaces before and outside the individual. Social construction as one potential speculative form would be open to the more-than thinking and processes and involve something – a material – doing and becoming. According to Manning (2016), speculative approaches ask

what thought-feeling does in this instance, and how it does it. It means inquiring into the modes of existence generated by the act of ‘hypothetical sympathy,’ honoring the minor gestures produced at this interstice, and seeing what these open up, in a transversal maneuvering. (p. 39-40)

Furthermore, speculative social constructions are tentative and hesitant without repetitive and predictable value, which is reconstituted every time, in the immanence of being. These kinds of social constructions could foreground complex and creative experimentations with kin and more-than-human forces where different forms of agency and vitality are potentially beyond our human understanding, language, and consciousness, beyond our human vision of capacity and possibility. Speculative social constructions might function as illustrations of ideas (possibilities), not ideas themselves (certainties) (see also Debaise, 2017). Similarly, the speculative socially constructed subjects do not form independent and self-sufficient identities but stretches, crossovers, and projected relations. Thus, speculative constructions are about taking risks, escaping present impasses, and cultivating the future (Wilkie et al., 2017).

Now, to end this contribution to this special issue, we leave the readers with a few questions and provocations that may be of guide toward socially constructed speculative futures:

- How to socially construct without a language?
- How might embodied and affective forms of social construction function and become recognizable?
 - How might the vitality of social foreground ethical responsibilities?
 - How do our research practices, methods, theories, and standards contribute to form the subject of our inquiries and to constrain our possibilities for knowing?
- How to do research without thinking in terms of an “I” and a “you” (or “us” and “then”)?
- How to make kin with more-than-human elements and forces?
- What cannot social construction not do? (Double negation)

- Where could wild thinking and wild profusion take social constructionist practices?
- What could material ethics of social construction do?
- Social construction, play, and imagination: what becomes possible in their entanglements?
- To what unthinkable “where” could social constructionism go, next?

Referencias bibliográficas

- American Psychological Association. (2017). Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality. <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/multicultural-guidelines>
- Anderson, H., & Goolishian, H. (1992). The client is the expert: A not-knowing approach to therapy. In S. McNamee & K. J. Gergen (Eds.), *Therapy as social construction* (pp. 25–39). Sage.
- Anzaldúa, G. (1997). La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a new consciousness. AM Garcia, *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings*, 270–274.
- Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Duke University Press.
- Barad, K. (2017). TROUBLING TIME/S AND ECOLOGIES OF NOTHINGNESS: RE-TURNING, RE-MEMBERING, AND FACING THE INCALCULABLE. *New Formations*, 92, 56–86. <https://doi.org/10.3898/NEWF:92.05.2017>
- Bell, V. (2010). New Scenes of Vulnerability, Agency and Plurality: An Interview with Judith Butler. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 27(1), 130–152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409350371>
- Binetti, M. J. (2021). Philosophy and the Speculative Turn in the 21st Century: New Materialisms and Realisms. *Philosophica: International Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 29(57), 53–67.
- Braidotti, R. (2013a). Nomadic Ethics. *Deleuze Studies*, 7(3), 342–359. <https://doi.org/10.3366/dls.2013.0116>
- Braidotti, R. (2013b). *The posthuman*. Polity Press.
- Braidotti, R. (2017). Critical posthuman knowledges. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 116(1), 83–96.
- Burr, V. (2025). *Social constructionism*. Routledge.

- Debaise, D. (2017). *Speculative empiricism: Revisiting whitehead*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Engert, K., & Schürkmann, C. (2021). Introduction: Posthuman? Nature and Culture in Renegotiation. *Nature and Culture*, 16(1), 1–10.
<https://doi.org/10.3167/nc.2020.160101>
- Foucault, M. (1982). Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Michel Foucault: Ethics, Subjectivity, and Truth* (pp. 223–252). The New Press.
- Gemignani, M. (2017). Toward a critical reflexivity in qualitative inquiry: Relational and posthumanist reflections on realism, researcher's centrality, and representationalism in reflexivity. *Qualitative Psychology*, 4(2), 185–198.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000070>
- Gemignani, M. (2025). Transmethodologies: A theoretical introduction and its application in the field of family transnationality. *Qualitative Research*. Online First.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/14687941251341983>
- Gemignani, M., Pujol-Tarrés, J., & Gandarias-Goikoetxea, I. (2023). Social justice narrative research: From articulation to intra-action and ethico-onto-epistemology. *Qualitative Psychology*, 10(3), 552–564.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000254>
- Gergen, K. J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist*, 40(3), 266–275. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.40.3.266>
- Gergen, K. J. (2009). *Relational being: Beyond self and community*. Oxford University Press.
- Gergen, K. J. (2014). From mirroring to world-making: Research as future forming. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 45(3), 287–310.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jtsb.12075>
- Gergen, K. J. (2021). *The relational imperative: Resources for a world on edge*. Taos Institute Publications.
- Gergen, K. J. (2022). *An invitation to social construction: Co-creating the future*. Sage publications.
- Giliberto, M., Lui, C., & Sagliocco, E. (2024). Constructivist teaching: beyond the toolbox, the ICP experience. *Rivista Italiana Costruttivismo*, 12(2), 7–17.
<https://doi.org/10.69995/VZZJ4955>

- Guimarães Corrêa, L. (2023). Four concepts to think from the South. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 27(2), 143–154. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13678779231218395>
- Haraway, D. (2008). *When species meet*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Haraway, D. J. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (2008). *Handbook of constructionist research*. Guilford Press.
- Kaljonen, M., Peltola, T., Salo, M., & Furman, E. (2019). Attentive, speculative experimental research for sustainability transitions: an exploration in sustainable eating. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 206, 365–373.
- Kelly, G. (1955). *Personal construct psychology*. New York: Norton.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2016). *Reconceptualizing Qualitative Research: Methodologies Without Methodology*. SAGE Publications.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M., MacLure, M., & Ulmer, J. (2017). D... a... t... a..., data++, data, and some problematics. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 462–484). Sage Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Lemke, T. (2014). New Materialisms: Foucault and the 'Government of Things.' *Theory, Culture & Society*, 32(4), 3–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276413519340>
- Manning, E. (2016). *The minor gesture*. Duke university press.
- Marder, M. (2013). *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life*. Columbia University Press, New York, in «Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews».
- Maturana, H. R., & Varela, F. J. (1987). *The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding*. Shambhala Publications.
- Mauthner, N. S. (2018). A posthumanist ethics of mattering: new materialisms and the ethical practice of inquiry. In R. Iphofen & M. Tolich (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research Ethics*, London: Sage Publications (pp. 51–72). Sage.
- McNamee, S., & Hosking, D. M. (2011). *Research and Social Change: A Relational Constructionist Approach*. Routledge. <https://books.google.com/books?id=WuaEZwEACAAJ>
- McNamee, S., Rasera, E. F., Camargo-Borges, C., & Gergen, M. (2020). *The Sage handbook of social constructionist practice*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Murris, K. (2021). *A glossary for doing postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research across disciplines*. Routledge.
- Scott, J. W. (1991). The evidence of experience. *Critical Inquiry*, 17(4), 773–797. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1343743>

- St. Pierre, E. A. (2024). A primer for post qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 21, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2024.2347579>
- Tamboukou, M., & Benavente, B. R. (2020). Doing new materialisms: an interview with Maria Tamboukou. *MATTER: Journal of New Materialist Research*, 1, 155–175. <https://doi.org/10.1344/jnmr.v1i1.30290>
- Tsing, A. L. (2015). *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton University Press.
- van der Tuin, I. (2014). Diffraction as a Methodology for Feminist Onto-Epistemology: On Encountering Chantal Chawaf and Posthuman Interpellation. *Parallax*, 20(3), 231–244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2014.927631>
- Wilkie, A., Savransky, M., & Rosengarten, M. (2017). *Speculative research: The lure of possible futures*. Taylor & Francis.

* * *

* **Mirka Koro:** (Ph.D., University of Helsinki, Finland) is Professor of qualitative research at the Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation, Arizona State University. She also worked as a professor of qualitative research at the University of Florida and visiting scholar at the University of Georgia. Her scholarship operates in the intersection of qualitative inquiry, methodologies, philosophy, experimentalism, and socio-cultural critique. She has published six methodological books and various articles in different qualitative, methodological, and educational journals. [E-mail: Mirka.Koro@asu.edu].

** **Marco Gemignani:** (Ph.D., University of Florida, USA) is Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at Universidad Loyola (Seville, Spain). He is a clinical community psychologist who specializes in qualitative research methodologies, especially in their critical and post-structural practices, and in migration and cultural studies. He was formerly a tenured professor in the Psychology Department at Duquesne University (Pittsburgh, PA, USA), where he founded and directed the “Psychological Care Services for Spanish Speakers.” His latest research concerns the psychosocial processes and dynamics of family transnationality and of the forced return of migrants. He is president-elect of the Association of European Qualitative Researchers in Psychology. [E-mail: magemignani@uloyola.es].