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Special Issue Graduate Journal of Social Science:
'How Well Do 'Facts' Travel?'

It is often assumed that a fact is a fact is a fact, yet those who work across disciplinary boundaries are well aware that the life of a fact is not so simple. Even everyday experience suggests that, like gossip, facts that travel rarely remain stable. This special issue comprises four papers analysing how well "facts" travel between and within social contexts, and why evidence considered acceptable in one context retains or loses its status in another. Each paper focuses on a different type of vehicle for the travel of facts: Albane Forestier discusses *infrastructure*, such as institutions helping commercial information to spread across the world; Julia Mensink studies the role of *common measures* in disseminating facts about poverty; Aashish Velkar considers the *standards* used to communicate facts about grain quality; and finally, Ashley Millar analyses the recycling of *ideas* that characterised European accounts of Chinese political economy in the eighteenth century.

The study of how factual knowledge travels through space, time and cultures yields rich insights on what makes specific facts more or less likely to be adopted by contexts other than the ones in which they were first produced. However, adopting this perspective also involves resolving difficult methodological questions. For instance, are 'facts' an actor category? And if not, how

can social scientists individuate and follow factual knowledge as it shifts from context to context and transforms itself as a result? What kind of interdisciplinary approach is needed? And what specific tools are available and recommendable for this purpose? Each of the papers in this issue embodies a different approach to these questions, which could potentially inspire and inform future work on the travel of 'facts'.