From the Introduction:

From the 1820s, a new literary form, based on social introspection, emerged in the cultural axis between London and Paris. In an expanding newspaper and magazine market, descriptions of social styles, cultural routines and institutions became a popular medium to measure the increasingly diverse societies. Terms such as "sketch of manners", "esquisse de moeurs", "image" or "sketch"[[1]](#footnote-1), which were often included in the titles of these texts, refer to their documentary intent, which was closely linked to the ethnographic paradigm of bourgeois modernity (Köstlin 1994: 8).

From the Conclusion:

As a heuristic format of Ethnography and Ethnology of the inherent, the social sketch favored detailed as well as multi-perspective documentation and interpretation of social phenomena and structures. Furthermore, it also contributed, when considering its commercial orientation, to the popularization of cultural introspection (primarily in the urban, middle-class milieu). When looking at the social sketch within the context of earlier sociological-anthropological debates, this always involves including a history of knowledge "from below".

This contribution has formulated preliminary elements for a knowledge and scientific-historical re-evaluation of an early form of ethnographic journalism, whose function in relation to the cultural and social sciences which were being consolidated at that time will still need to be clarified.

1. In German, the documentary prose was often referred to by the term "sketch". I use the term "social sketch" to refer to the writings, because "society" in the 19th century became the key concept to experience the social world and also played an important role in the "sketches". [↑](#footnote-ref-1)