

Diversity: From people to knowledge and back again

As incoming editors in chief, we are honoured to take stewardship of the *European Journal of Social Psychology (EJSP)* for the next three years. The job before us is made easier by the healthy state the journal is currently in. For this, we thank – and congratulate – the outgoing editors in chief, and their editorial board. In particular, we celebrate their commitment to constantly improving the quality and reputation of the journal, and to opening the journal up to a wider diversity of perspectives, approaches, contributions, and contributors. We inherit these goals humbly and gratefully, and we hope to further strengthen and expand the journal while it is in our hands.

Our task of expanding the journal's branches is also supported by the depth of its roots. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the journal and its mission to strengthen European social psychology and to foster dialogue across national boundaries within (and eventually beyond) Europe. Looking back, there is so much to celebrate in how consecutive editorial teams have brought the journal, and our community, forward to the present day. Currently, *EJSP* represents a mature platform—neither retired nor green—publishing some of the highest quality social psychological research. Looking forward, our primary goals, and our responsibilities as editors, are to maintain and to grow *EJSP*'s reputation. Our editorial stewardship will seek to balance continuity and advancement with the ultimate goal of publishing the best-quality social psychological research that speaks to core issues of theory, method, or application within our field.

Before we elaborate our vision for the next three years, we would like to present ourselves. Since our very first meeting, we have embraced the identity of being a team. The ideas presented here flow naturally from the process of blending our personal contributions into a wider—and definitely better—vision. We strongly believe that the benefits of working together as a team is grounded in the diversity of our own backgrounds, diversity that is represented in our professional and private lives, and encompasses many forms: Culture, gender, preferred topic, sexual orientation, family setup, career history, spoken languages, professional networks, skin color, geographical origins and geographical landing, teaching fields, research topics and approaches. Diversity is indeed our favorite word – it is a value we enthusiastically stand for and will actively pursue.

1 | DIVERSITY IN ACTION

In the world of science, but also beyond, diversity should be seen as neither a threat to, nor in competition with, competence. Through a combination of an open call for applications, and direct approaches to individuals, we actively sought to assemble the most

diverse editorial board that we could, not just “for show” but also for the skills and expertise that diversity brings. Our board spans theoretical and methodological expertise, quantitative and qualitative approaches, and cuts across geographical regions and socio-demographic characteristics.

Perhaps naively, diversity seemed like it should be simple to achieve: It was not. Creating a diverse editorial board meant going beyond our default personal and social networks to reach out to talented and capable individuals of whom we may have remained unaware otherwise. We are grateful to those who stepped forward and made themselves known to us, as well as to those who helped us in our search. Although it may not be so simple to achieve, with perseverance diversity becomes possible. We are very proud of our formidable editorial team that has agreed to serve with us. We hope that future editorial teams will push even further for diversity and inclusion in all its forms, and in so doing look beyond traditional demographic categories that still constrain our thinking—as well as working hard to address the ongoing imbalances that still exists, even in our own team.

2 | DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE MODEL OF KNOWLEDGE GENERATION

Social backgrounds shape cognition, even when cognizers are scientists. Yet, various audits (e.g., Arnett, 2008, Brady et al., 2018; Thalmayer et al., 2020) document the stark reality that up to 95% of the world remains absent from psychology's knowledge generation processes, both as researchers and as participants. Sometimes a restricted focus is justified, for example, when research is guided by the goal of achieving a deep contextual understanding (e.g., the English riots in 2011) rather than making claims of breadth. However, the wider pattern of exclusion from science is troubling in today's world, especially when communication technologies enable relatively easy access to potential collaborators from around the globe, and with the opportunity to recruit non-WEIRD (Henrich et al., 2010) participants for research.

As the incoming editors, we especially welcome submissions that demonstrably take the effort to address current imbalances in knowledge production. This could include working collaboratively with researchers from non-WEIRD regions, testing theoretical models beyond the ‘usual subjects’ of research participants, and through otherwise validating, questioning, or stretching the applicability of accepted wisdom to the wider world of human experience. Here

again, diversity strengthens our science—it forces us to engage with the untested assumptions behind theory and the methods we use to establish truth, as well as our interpretation of data and application of knowledge. Taking the effort to address imbalances in knowledge production involves more than collecting data in two places and recruiting collaborators merely to facilitate this. Rather it involves digging deeply into the very definitions of the phenomena we study. Ideally diverse collaborators would be enrolled early in the research process so the work benefits from different perspectives on the important questions and instincts about methodological choices. In these ways, we would not just be documenting diversity through our data, we would be actively diversifying (or decolonizing; Phillips et al., 2015) science.

Affirming the value of diverse science is easy to do—but encouraging others to adopt this mindset is much harder. Even in our own association EASP, diversity is still an aspiration rather than an achievement (Nyúl et al., 2021). And on those occasions when diverse voices are present, their contribution may not be fully heard or appreciated (the Diversity-Innovation Paradox; Hofstra et al., 2020). To achieve a diversity-oriented mindset, and to encourage as well as monitor diversity in research practices, we ask authors to indicate in their cover letter whether or not their research has engaged in diversity practices, be that through collaborating with a diverse research team, collecting data from diverse groups of participants, or employing diverse research methods. We are especially keen to promote research that is both high quality and embodies diversity, and we will work with the publisher to increase the visibility of such research. Of course, we continue to welcome submissions from research teams or participant populations that are singular rather than plural. But, in these cases we expect active consideration by authors of the limits of singularity for the research conducted, findings produced, and interpretation of these. In our eyes, diversity needs less justification since it should be our default. Ultimately, our key message is that we can always do better research when we do it together and across boundaries of difference.

We are aware that one of the biggest obstacles to bringing researchers from non-WEIRD regions onto the pages of our journal may be the requirement to write in English. Copyediting services are available, yet they are expensive, potentially creating a double burden. With this in mind, we commit to strategizing as much as we can during our editorship over the way we can better support authors for whom English is not their native tongue. And, of course, we welcome you as members of our community to share with us any creative and impactful support strategies that you may have in mind. A related obstacle is access to previously published work: large parts of the world's population cannot pay the subscription fees that are the entry price for being part of our scholarly conversations. Addressing this challenge requires a deeper critical reflection on the economic, as well as the moral, foundations of knowledge generation models, including publication itself. Small steps might alleviate the impact of such barriers (e.g., providing additional online summaries in languages other than English), but ultimately a more systemic—or even radical—approach might be necessary to develop

a model of research dissemination that is both just and sustainable. These are ambitious goals that go beyond our 3-years mandate, yet if we do not start the conversation progress will never happen. We therefore welcome constructive discussions about these issues with the authors, the EASP executive committee, the publisher, and the scientific community to address these obstacles in concrete ways.

Discussions of diversity, sustainability, and justice also extend to the work of reviewers, without whom scientific journals cannot exist. Peer-reviews scrutinize and improve submissions and contribute to the credibility of journals and the field as a whole. Yet, this work is often done outside working hours, not credited by academic institutions, and free of charge. A small step that we will take to minimize the burdens of this model will be to prioritize members of our consultant editorial board as reviewers. This is actually how it should be, but our impression is that consultant editors are often underutilized and some were themselves inactive. Consulting editors can expect to be actively called upon during our term. Although consulting editors are still unpaid, they do gain exposure and recognition of their work, and can use this when applying for future editorial vacancies. But, this is just a small step, and again deeper, critical yet constructive, discussions are needed across our community and between publishers and learned societies. As the incoming editors, we welcome such discussions and would be happy to facilitate them.

3 | TRANSPARENT RESEARCH THAT PUSHES THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT WE KNOW

The best research is conducted openly and transparently, sharing and discussing what was done, what was expected and what was not. Continuing the policies instituted by the outgoing editorial team (Imhoff et al., 2018) we expect researchers to engage in Open Science practices in order to raise the credibility of our field and utility of our knowledge base. Consistent with current journal policy, authors should grant access to materials and data so that others can fully benefit from their work and evaluate their contributions accurately. Sometimes access cannot be given for good reasons. Where this is the case, authors should be open about why. We also expect authors to interpret data in keeping with its evidentiary value (e.g., through using pre-registration to distinguish between exploratory confirmatory claims). While this approach is becoming more and more routine, we think we need to go further to really push the boundaries of knowledge and to generate insights that are enduring and important.

Much of the debate over research practices has, rightly, emphasized the need for more precision in hypothesizing, manipulating, and measuring. However, to produce knowledge that is both enduring and useful, we need to be prepared to step outside the lab and into the real world (Maner, 2016; Paluck et al., 2020). Testing our theorizing in the messier, less controlled, wilderness of everyday human life will tell us how precise our theories really are and whether our insights are sufficient to produce meaningful change. Indeed, simply looking at the

real world, in systematic and detailed ways, will improve the relevance of our theories and the validity of our efforts to test them. Along these lines, we especially welcome submissions reporting data from outside the psychology lab, and even better connecting different forms of data and drawing on different methods, without compromising over rigor. And in return, we will be equally welcoming of the noisier data applied studies produce, especially where these open up conversations about the limits of what we really know or think we know.

Sometimes science isn't clear—but it is more likely to move forward when we are aware of the uncertainties and can think carefully about why things are not as we might expect. For all kinds of research—lab or applied—we encourage authors to think carefully about the strength of their theorizing, the rigor in their designs, their capacity to rule out competing explanations, the degree to which findings are shaped or constrained by the research setting and participants. Of course, null findings are also welcome—especially when researchers can evidence strong support for the null hypothesis, for example, by high powered tests and/ or using Bayesian analysis or meta-analytic approaches. In these ways, all submissions should reflect on the balance between what we do and do not know—can and cannot say—based on the research at hand. Messy real-world data, detailed discussions of the caveats around preferred conclusions, and null findings might all create uncertainties. Yet, uncertainty can be productive—it can trigger curiosity and inspire new research questions, activity to resolve the inconsistencies, and might even force us to look back at the real world and wonder ‘what’s really going on?’.

4 | EXPANDING AND FOSTERING MORE DEBATE

To produce knowledge that is enduring and useful we also need to “connect the dots” and integrate data into overarching theories (Ellemers, 2013). In addition to the previous editorial team's commitment to Open Science, we will retain Theory Articles as a welcome type of submission. At a time when data and theories can seem endless, having the space to consolidate knowledge, identify gaps in understanding, and suggest new and important directions for research is vital to science and to the ongoing evolution of our discipline. Yet, we also see ways to expand the generative value and impact of this format.

In keeping with our desire to see more work from outside the usual lab settings, we welcome Theory Articles that feature directions more in line with Kurt Lewin's maxim that there is nothing more practical than a good theory. Ideally, theoretical articles will describe social realities accurately, generate verifiable predictions, and also discuss new areas of knowledge that would have the potential to impactfully inform practice or otherwise support the health and well-being of people as they live out their lives embedded in their social worlds.

We also welcome reflections on the field from those who are at its edge, or outside the ‘mainstream’ of social psychology. Breadth

of content and approach is one of the most important strengths of *EJSP*. To consolidate and advance this strength, we welcome contributions from scholars in neighboring disciplines, those working from critical perspectives, or those engaged in the Lewinian type of Action Research to reflect on what is ‘known’ by social psychologists, the validity of the assumptions behind that knowledge, and its overall value beyond the boundaries of the discipline. Creating more space for these contributions would shine new light on old topics, and further enhance the capacity for reflection on the products of mainstream theorizing and research in social psychology.

Finally, we welcome submissions in the form of *Debate Articles*. Especially at this moment in time, as we write in the final quarter of 2020, it is sometimes painfully evident how polarization can limit our capacity to respectfully engage those with whom we disagree. In our observations, outside of methodological and statistical issues, intellectually stimulating debates around theory and perspective have become less frequent. Yet, these kinds of debates used to be central to scientific progress and lively, generative, exchanges populated the pages of our most esteemed journals. Think about the empathy-altruism debate (Batson, 1987; Cialdini, 1991), the debates between cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) and alternative accounts (Bem, 1967; Tedeschi et al., 1971), or between the primacy of identity concerns (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, 1982) versus interdependence (Rabbie et al., 1989) for explaining intergroup conflicts. We would like to revive theoretically-oriented, empirically-grounded, debates on the pages of *EJSP*. To do so, we welcome proposals from individuals or teams of researchers in which they state their vision for reviving a particular debate and willingness to engage in dialogues with others that are meaningful, respectful and transformative.

We would also open up the pages of *EJSP* to debates that cross generational boundaries and speak to the concerns of early career researchers. This would further contribute to the overall spirit we hope to cultivate as editors, including honest critical reflection on the state of knowledge, identifying gaps in knowledge, spurring new research agendas, and achieving more accurate insights into human relations. In order to engage the wider community in constructive exchanges, we welcome submissions that comment on previously published theoretical or empirical work. For example, this might also entail offering the opportunity to turn particularly sharp reviews into published commentaries.

5 | FINAL WORDS

The above editorial articulates our vision for the kind of work that we would like to see published in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*: work that engages with important real-world issues, pushes the boundaries of theory, draws on mixed methods, is inclusive, collaborative and generative in all senses. Maybe this kind of work is a rare thing, but we would like to encourage it as a standard to aspire to. And even if all papers cannot (and perhaps should not) look like this magical beast, we see it as our responsibility as editors

to ensure that these elements do come together collectively on the pages of our journal. When we say 'our journal' we do not mean ours in a narrow sense: This journal belongs to our community as social psychologists. By serving that community, we hope that we can build on the work of our predecessors and maintain *EJSP*'s position as a forum for dialogue, debate, and collective growth.

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