

PROPOSAL FOR THE CO-EDITORSHIP OF *SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY QUARTERLY*

Karen A. Hegtvedt and Cathryn Johnson
Emory University, 1 November 2009

Vision Statement

Social psychology is an interdisciplinary field of study. Unlike other social psychology journals, *Social Psychology Quarterly* is distinctly sociological. As editor, Gary Alan Fine recently drove this point home by introducing the descriptor “The Journal of Microsociologies.” The journal’s mission statement emphasizes publication of papers that link the individual to society, either through relationships with one another or with groups, collectivities, or institutions. While the journal considers studies of intra-individual processes that typify psychological social psychology, it does so largely in terms of how such processes influence or are influenced by social structures and processes.

Social Psychology Quarterly covers the three traditional areas in sociological social psychology: symbolic interactionism, group processes, and social structure and personality. Yet, in recent years the journal has published theoretical integrations among these areas, and empirical studies that inform issues relevant to fields such as race, gender, inequality, health and culture. Indeed, social psychological concepts and theories are a critical feature in many of the questions raised in these fields of study. In addition, as indicated by the journal’s impact scores, which are consistent with other highly regarded journals (e.g., *Sociology of Education*), the journal’s influence extends beyond the community of social psychologists. We commend former editors and the current editor in particular for elevating the breadth and quality of the research published in the journal. We intend to continue this tradition by actively seeking out and publishing the best scholarship in microsociology, representing a diverse array of substantive topics and methodological strategies.

As co-editors, we would pursue several strategies to build on the strengths of this flagship journal. The first strategy involves bridging – both *within* social psychology and *between* social psychology and other sub-disciplines in sociology. The link between the individual and society may take many routes. We know them as sub-areas within social psychology, for example, identity processes, status effects, power dynamics, life course analysis, and the like. Over the last decade, exciting new lines of inquiry have been opened by articles that combine some of these sub-areas (e.g., status and power, identity and social exchange, emotions and leadership). Yet, given the parochial tendencies of reviewers in some areas, it is often difficult to publish articles that bridge sub-areas. To facilitate the development of sub-areas linkages we will encourage the submission of such articles and be particularly careful in the shepherding of them through the review process. Periodically, we would put a call out to the social psychology community urging the submission of articles that make such linkages; we would attempt to group such articles within an issue to highlight their impact.

In addition, following some of the trends already evident in *SPQ*, we recognize that micro processes occur in the context of structural and cultural elements of society. Thus, social psychology is uniquely situated to reach out to other domains of sociology and to engineer bridges to those domains. Lines of inquiry that connect substantive areas such as culture, race, gender, stratification, criminology, health, and globalization to social psychology provide a means to create more comprehensive explanations to social phenomena. Such bridges characterized the ASA sessions that Dr. Hegtvedt designed in her recent term as chair of the

Social Psychology Section. Conference attendees flocked to two invited sessions, one emphasizing the role of social psychology processes in understanding various aspects of culture in society and the other emphasizing the role of such processes on stratification. Part of the inspiration for these sessions stemmed from the keen interest we piqued in organizing the 2003 Group Processes Conference (Atlanta) around linkages among social psychology, gender inequality, and organizations. We are strongly committed to highlighting and expanding intellectual diversity in social psychology. To achieve this end, we would solicit submissions by scholars in substantive areas whose explanations involve social psychological processes by postings in the section newsletters and websites of the cognate fields noted above.

With our first strategy, we hope to attain breadth in who submits to *SPQ*. Our second strategy focuses on broadening the readership of *SPQ* and in doing so increase the visibility of sociological social psychology. We would work to make the contents of each issue of the journal known to a broad range of audiences. Constructing variants of what the current editor compiles in his informative “subscriber letters,” we would create communiqués appropriate to various sections of ASA and other professional organizations. Specifically, the communiqués would highlight articles specifically relevant to the members of particular sections (e.g., articles focused on race would be sent to the Race and Ethnic Minorities section) or organizations with particular substantive foci (e.g., justice publications would be sent to the International Society for Justice Research). With regard to other professional organizations, we would send an issue’s table of contents to the notice of members of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology or the Society for Psychological Study of Social Issues, both divisions of the American Psychological Association as well as sections of the Academy of Management, namely the Organizational Behavior group, and the Managerial and Organizational Cognition group. To the extent possible, we would attempt similar strategies to reach an international audience (e.g., the Social Psychology research committee of the International Sociological Association).

Finally, our third strategy resonates with our goal of broadening the readership by increasing the relevance of *SPQ* articles for teaching and communicating with an undergraduate audience. Dr. Fine’s initiation of *SPQ* Snaps is an excellent framework for reaching this audience and we would maintain this endeavor. Snaps are shortened, accessible versions of selected articles that are tailored for a less specialized audience and can be easily incorporated into undergraduate classes (indeed, a Snaps version of an *SPQ* article has already been selected for a teaching anthology). We would augment this framework in two ways. First, we would ask authors to include concrete real life examples to illustrate the key processes and/or findings in their studies. Second, when appropriate, authors could also provide a teaching tool which may take the form of suggested films or film clips, class exercises, or websites.

Co-Editor and Deputy Editor Background Information

We are applying to be co-editors of *Social Psychology Quarterly*. Although trained as experimental social psychologists, as our records will show, our substantive and methodological expertise is far broader than our training suggests. We recognize, however, the importance of depth in areas more distant from our expertise. As a consequence, we have invited two deputy editors, Timothy Hallet (Indiana) and Deborah Carr (Rutgers) to join our team.

We are professors in the Department of Sociology at Emory University. We have both published substantially, often in *Social Psychology Quarterly*, and we have each received

National Science Foundation (NSF) funding. Although we have both spent our careers at Emory, our collaborative research on justice and legitimacy began only in 2000. Besides our shared research endeavors, we have worked jointly with many masters and doctoral students since the early 1990's. As a consequence, we have a close, convivial working relationship and have, over the years, formulated ways to divide our tasks and solve problems as they emerge.

Both of us have served in leadership positions in the department (Director of Undergraduate Studies [Johnson], Director of Graduate Studies [both], and chair [Hegtvedt]). We have reviewed extensively for many journals and have served on the editorial boards of *Social Psychology Quarterly* (both), *American Sociological Review* (Johnson), *American Journal of Sociology* (Hegtvedt), and *Social Forces* (Hegtvedt). Dr. Hegtvedt has also been a deputy editor of *Social Psychology Quarterly* and has been a member of the sociology panel at NSF. Dr. Johnson edited a volume of *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* (2004) and Dr. Hegtvedt co-edited a volume of *Advances in Group Processes* (2008). Our vitae list the various positions we have held in the Social Psychology and Emotions sections of ASA as well as other professional activities and leadership roles at our university.

The skills we have honed in our various positions and the multifaceted tasks we have completed prepare us well for juggling the responsibilities of the editorship of the journal. As our colleagues would attest, we are both quite organized. Moreover, they would note our citizenship to the department, to the university, and to the discipline. And, they would laud our commitment to social psychology.

We see our joint strengths in the following areas of expertise: group processes (e.g., status, power, justice, and legitimacy) and emotions. To this list, Dr. Johnson would add identity processes whereas Dr. Hegtvedt would specify social cognition and socialization. Jointly, we have experience conducting experimental, survey, and qualitative research, as reflected in our publication records. Although we claim specialty areas, we envision social psychology more broadly. This breadth serves us well in our current writing of a social psychology book for the 21st Century Series in Sociology, published by Pine Forge Press. Consistent with our goals for *SPQ*, a hallmark of our text is the connections it makes between areas within social psychology and the basis it lays for recognizing the value of social psychological arguments in understanding other sociological phenomena. This text should appeal to undergraduates as well as offer an overview of the field to graduate students and to scholars in other substantive areas who may find social psychological tools useful to their own pursuits in stratification, organization, culture, criminology, and the like.

In seeking deputy-editors we wanted individuals who share our passion for social psychology but who complement our strengths. As an exemplary young scholar, Dr. Timothy Hallett of Indiana University has expertise in social psychology, culture, ethnography, organizations, and theory. His work in social psychology is largely in the tradition of symbolic interactionism and his methodological expertise is qualitative. His forthcoming article in the *American Sociological Review*, "The myth incarnate: Recoupling processes, turmoil, and inhabited institutions in an urban elementary school," won the 2008 Davis Conference Qualitative Research Best Paper Award. He has also published several articles in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. As a consequence, we believe that he will be an excellent advisor for us with regard to symbolic interaction and in the area of qualitative methods. Moreover, as a member of the current *SPQ* editorial board, Dr. Hallett is quite familiar with the journal. And,

his work in culture and organizations builds the kind of bridges that we believe will push the boundaries of social psychology.

Dr. Deborah Carr of Rutgers University brings to our team her wealth of knowledge in the area of social structure and personality. Her research interests focus on aging and the life course, health, family, and gender. She is well-known for her research examining psycho-social influences on well-being over the life course. Much of her work involves survey methodology, thus rounding out the methodological expertise of the editorial team. Many of her investigations combine substantive interests in areas like health and family with consideration of basic social psychological processes. Thus, she, like Dr. Hallett, extends the influence of social psychology to other domains of sociology as well. Dr. Carr has considerable editorial experience, having served as a deputy editor of *Journal of Marriage and Family* and as a member of a number of editorial boards, including *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, and *Sociological Forum*. She is also currently the “Trends Editor” for *Contexts*; such experience will be helpful in editing *SPQ Snaps*.

We believe that our editorial team represents diverse approaches to Social Psychology, both substantively and methodologically. Importantly, based on their own strong research records, we are confident that our deputy editors share our philosophy of revealing the relevance and application of social psychology beyond its traditional purview.

Structure and Activities of the Editorial Team

Our overarching goal is to create a journal that includes reports of cutting-edge research, representing the breadth of what social psychologists study. In doing so, we deeply believe (as social psychologists must!) that how we interact as an editorial team matters. Likewise, how, as an editorial team, we interact with authors and readers (as well as board members, copy editors, publishers, and Publications Committee members) matters as well. Below we first outline the roles of the co-editors and deputy editors. Then we discuss how we envision our interaction and its consequences for the journal.

As co-editors, we would model our editorship after that of former *SPQ* co-editors, Linda Molm and Lynn Smith-Lovin. Each manuscript submitted would be assigned to one of us. We would match manuscripts with our areas of expertise, except in cases of conflict of interests. Authors would be informed of which editor would be in charge of their manuscripts in order to facilitate direct correspondence. We would consult with each other and deputy editors as necessary, but especially when problems arise. Should we disagree, it would be our policy to allow the designated editor to make the final decision. Given the “reliability” we have observed in terms of our reactions to the work of graduate students, we anticipate few irreconcilable disagreements. Moreover, we anticipate weekly meetings to review the status of submissions.

We intend to involve our deputy editors in many ways, beyond using them as a sounding board with regard to general issues surrounding the journal. Specifically, we envision the deputy editor’s responsibilities as follows: 1) consulting for appropriate reviewers when a manuscript is in the deputy’s area of expertise; 2) advising editors when reviewers are vehemently split on a manuscript in the deputy’s area of expertise (this may involve an email exchange, phone conversation, or possibly a meta-review); 3) reviewing 6-8 papers each year; 4) managing the entire review process of a paper when the editors both have a conflict of interest; and 5) consulting for appropriate members of the editorial board to ensure representation of substantive

breadth. In order to keep deputy editors abreast of the manuscript flow, we will send them weekly updates in addition to other communications about specific manuscripts.

We share with previous *SPQ* editors the goal of high quality, swift reviews. Dr. Fine's request of "two in two" – two pages of review within two weeks – has decreased the length of the review process to an amazingly low 54 days. As a consequence, we would adopt many of the methods used under Dr. Fine's editorship.

In addition, we want to commend Dr. Fine for the introduction of the "Authors' Bill of Rights." This document is consistent with our own strong conviction regarding fairness in decision-making and social interaction. For example, despite our background in group processes, we would actively avoid giving special treatment to submissions within that realm. We would expect reviewers to offer professional, constructive, and courteous critiques in order to communicate the respect the journal has for the development of ideas and the difficulties of packaging those ideas. We would recognize reviewers who provide especially helpful, thorough reviews by sending them a note acknowledging their efforts and tactfully remind reviewers who fall short of the expectations laid out in the "Bill of Rights" of the importance of collegial reviews. As co-editors, we would also demonstrate respect toward authors by providing rationale for editorial decisions, by making decisions in a timely fashion, and by responding promptly to other inquiries by authors, readers, and those involved in production (including the ASA!). Moreover, we would be sensitive to the career stage of the author, recognizing that younger authors may need a bit more direction and support. Through these actions, we hope that trust will characterize all publishing relationships. We believe that fair interactions, coupled with competent reviews, are the keys to sustaining the quality of the journal.

Institutional Support

The *U.S. News and World Report* ranked Emory University 17th in the nation in 2009. Our specialty – social psychology – earned the 9th spot in the rankings of all graduate programs. In our application for this co-editorship, we have the strong backing of our department.

We are fortunate to have several colleagues in our department who augment our strength in social psychology. Dr. Tyrone Forman is a well-known scholar in the area of racial attitudes, race and ethnic relations, and children and youth. Moreover, he recently served on the *SPQ* editorial board. Dr. Corey Lee Keyes is a social psychologist specializing in mental health and well-being. Dr. Robert Agnew is a criminologist who, in his general strain theory, takes a decidedly social psychological approach to understanding crime. And, owing to the dissertation projects of some of our students, we have worked with other colleagues to forge bridges with culture, social inequality, race, and organizations. Indeed, we plan to consult with these colleagues to increase our awareness of ways to solicit submissions that link social psychology to these other sub-fields of sociology.

The Department of Sociology at Emory can provide us with office space, equipment, graduate assistance, and possibly undergraduate assistance. The Dean of Emory College wholeheartedly supports our application and is willing to negotiate with us about additional resources, including course release.

Our community of scholars, coupled with the commitment of our university, will allow us to implement the strategies we outlined above. By doing so, we hope to continue the tradition of excellence and inclusivity that characterizes *Social Psychology Quarterly*.