March 7, 2016

Dear SPQ Subscribers,

We would like to highlight the articles in the March 2016 issue of SPQ and share with you other SPQ news. The first issue of Volume 79 features Murray Webster’s Cooley-Mead Address; Alison Bianchi’s Introduction of the Cooley-Mead Award; two articles; and two research notes. The research articles present important theoretical arguments and interesting findings. In the first article, we learn about how advice-giving varies across the life course. In the second article, we see the impact of over-reward on emotional responses. The first research note investigates the relationship between neighborhood age composition and age discrimination. The second research note examines how gender and race enter into the lending market decision.

Bianchi provides an engaging introduction to Murray Webster that anticipates his Cooley-Mead address. Webster describes the state of social psychological research and its theoretical developments. His presentation uses “research opportunities” as one mechanism for engaging in collaborative research that results in theoretical growth and advancement. He argues that as sociologists embrace research opportunities, the result can be significant theoretical developments in understanding social phenomenon. He further suggests that there is value in social psychologists sharing their scientific contributions to enhance applications, particularly in the areas of policy and practice in government and business.

In the first article following the Cooley-Mead address, Schafer and Upenieks use survey data from the 2006 Portraits of American Life Study to investigate advice-giving across the life span. Fundamental to their argument is that giving advice to others reaffirms life meaning and is an integral aspect of well-being. They find that the amount of advice-giving declines over the life course. Younger adults (in their 20s) are more likely to report advice-giving to a variety of others. Older adults (in their 60s) are less likely to give advice to others, especially to non-family members. The authors argue that this is due to changes in social networks as one gets older that reduce opportunities to engage in advice giving. Older adults, however, are more likely than younger adults to see advice-giving as providing meaning in one’s life, even though they are less likely to give out advice to others. The authors conclude that there is a mismatch between developmental goals for adults (i.e. life meanings attached to advice giving), and the opportunities to achieve such goals.

The second article by Clay-Warner, Robinson, Smith-Lovin, Rogers, and James asks the question “How do people feel when they benefit from an unfair reward distribution?” They present the results from three experiments to provide a theoretical explanation for why some research finds negative emotions in
response to over-reward while other research finds positive emotions in response to over-reward. In general, they argue and find that different justice standards, that is, local equity standards versus referential standards account for the variation in findings regarding emotional responses to over-reward. Local equity comparisons, which entail a high degree of interdependence between actors such as between intimate partners, results in comparisons that are often personal and zero-sum, resulting in negative emotions for over-reward as one sees the fate of others. In contrast, referential standards entail actors who are more loosely tied to one another with actors comparing their outcomes to an abstract standard (a group similar to their own) instead of a close other. The distal nature of the comparison results in positive emotions for over-reward, obscuring the fact that others are receiving less when one is receiving more. Essentially, over-reward is perceived as “fair” in referential conditions, resulting in positive emotions, while over-reward is perceived as “unfair” in equity conditions, resulting in negative emotions.

In the third article, Stokes and Moorman analyze the relationship between neighborhood composition and age discrimination using survey data from the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States and the 2010 U.S. Census. The authors find that older adults living in a neighborhood with a higher density of older persons report less age discrimination than older persons in living neighborhoods with less density, supporting the group density theory. However, this is not the case for the oldest adults in the sample. The relationship of an older density neighborhood and perceived age discrimination wanes in its effective strength for the oldest-old age persons regardless of neighborhood age composition. The authors posit that this effect may be the result of older individuals perceiving or experiencing less discrimination as they age.

The fourth article by Harkness experimentally investigates inequality in market lending procedures. Respondents are asked to act as lenders in the survey and evaluate loan applicants that vary by gender and race. Making comparisons of loan applicants by race and gender, the findings demonstrate an interaction (race and gender) affected the lenders evaluations and funding decisions. The status of the “borrowers” operated as a driving mechanism for decision making. This process operates in a way that benefited those in higher social status (white males). The author argues that when assessing borrowers, lenders apply cultural stereotypes, especially those associated with gender and race resulting in preference to fund higher status groups.

In March, we are adding one additional paper to SPQ SNAPS. SNAPS papers provide the latest social psychological research in a format that is accessible for teaching in the classroom. We want to encourage you to explore the SPQ SNAPS catalog at http://www.asanet.org/journals/spq/snaps.cfm and to consider using these articles in your courses. There are over two dozen SPQ SNAPS for your use. The newest addition to SNAPS is:

- “The Age-Graded Nature of Advice: Distributional Patterns and Implications for Life Meanings,” which offers insights into the process of aging, the ability of persons to engage in providing advice, and the implications for well-being. (Markus H. Shafer and Laura Upenieks)

Finally, we want to mention that we are very pleased and excited by the interest and the number of manuscript submissions for the upcoming special issue, “Methodological Advances and Applications in Social Psychology.” This special issue focuses on new qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches as they are applied to social psychological inquiry. The coeditors for the special issue, Kathy Charmaz (Sonoma State University) and Jane Sell (Texas A&M University), are very busy seeking reviews and evaluating the
papers. The special issue is shaping up to be a collection of very strong manuscripts that will help guide the development and expansion of methodologies in social psychology.

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Kind Regards,

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