Proposal for Social Psychology Quarterly Editorship
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Vision Statement

Social Psychology Quarterly (SPQ) is ASA’s second oldest journal and the oldest in social psychology. Originating in 1937 (one year after American Sociological Review) under the name of Sociometry, it became an official journal of the American Sociological Society in 1955 (the journal and society have undergone name changes since then). Social psychology’s intellectual roots are interdisciplinary, but it has always had one foot squarely in sociology, and sociology has always had a unique and important viewpoint within social psychology. The term “social psychology” first appeared in 1908 in the title of two books, one by a sociologist and another by a psychologist. The first social psychology courses were taught by Charles Horton Cooley in University of Michigan’s Sociology Department. The organizational meetings for social psychology’s most elite scientific society, Society for Experimental Social Psychology, were held in sociologist Fred Strodtbeck’s lab at University of Chicago. Sociologists helped found social psychology, institutionally and intellectually, and continue to ground social psychological research in an understanding of larger sociological processes. After more than 80 years, SPQ remains the premiere journal for publishing research that emphasizes the social component of social psychology.

SPQ has been in good editorial hands for decades, relies on a community of dedicated scholars as reviewers, and does not have any major “problems to solve.” As SPQ editors, we would see our primary charge as being good stewards of the journal – protecting the journal’s quality and mission, while taking steps to advance its impact in a variety of ways. Specifically, this translates into four goals: (1) Maintain the quality, speed, and clarity of editorial decisions; (2) Encourage diversity of method, theory, and intellectual content; (3) Continue adapting to evolving publishing standards that promote rigor and transparency; and (4) Increase the international, interdisciplinary, and disciplinary presence of the journal.

Maintain the quality, speed, and clarity of editorial decisions. Social Psychology Quarterly has a reputation for delivering timely decisions with helpful feedback and clear editorial guidance. We view these as the most critical features of a well-functioning journal. The journal is in good shape regarding submissions, decision processes, communication, and quality of published research. Our focus would be on protecting that standard. Distributing the workload among three editors with effective and frequent communication, we would aim to maintain or improve the journal’s already strong record in this domain. The editorial team – including co-editors and deputy editors – bring a wealth of experience in reviewing manuscripts and serving as decision editors. We also have strong working relationships that would facilitate consultation and joint decision-making when appropriate.

Encourage diversity of methods, theory, and intellectual scope. We recognize that the scope, content, and quality of research contributed to a journal is determined by its community of scholars. We believe, however, that editors can encourage and enhance diversity of method, theory, and content by signaling openness and providing relevant editorial expertise to evaluate a wide portfolio of research. We would encourage research relying on social psychology’s core methodological approaches – ethnographic, experimental, interview/survey-based, as well as archival, computational, comparative, and cross-national
research. Our proposed team of editors and deputy editors has experience with each of these methodologies, and we would further signal our openness to methodological diversity through communications with relevant ASA sections and scholarly societies, editorial board appointments, and editorial notes. Research published in \emph{SPQ} likewise draws from a wide array of deductive and inductive theories, and we would ensure that our editorial team, board, and reviewer base have the relevant expertise to evaluate this intellectually diverse body of research and that scholars across these traditions perceive the journal as a welcoming home for their best work.

In addition to encouraging diversity of theory and method within social psychology research, we feel strongly about expanding the use of social psychological approaches to study diversity itself. 2020 will mark twenty years since the publication of a landmark article in \emph{SPQ} \cite{Hunt2000} calling out social psychologists for lack of attention to race and ethnicity. A special issue in \emph{SPQ} on the social psychology of race, racism, and discrimination followed in 2003. Our sense is that the article and special issue prompted a conversation that began to shape subsequent research in our field. We think a special issue organized around the social psychology of race, racism, and discrimination two decades later would be a good way to take stock of these efforts.

Finally, we want the journal to be seen as a welcoming home for research produced by a diverse array of scholars themselves. Accordingly, we would work toward expanding participation of racially, ethnically, and LGBTQ diverse scholars on the editorial board and in our reviewer base.

\textit{Implement publishing standards that emphasize and document methodological rigor and transparency.} Our third goal would be to continue aligning \emph{SPQ}'s publishing practices with evolving publishing standards. Innovations by recent editorial teams include publication of \emph{SPQ Snaps} (author-distilled synopses for teaching use, available outside a paywall), encouragement of data archiving, and publication of online supplements. We would continue and expand these efforts in ways that enhance the rigor, transparency, and reach of research published in \emph{SPQ}.

Study preregistration has arisen as one tool for addressing research quality concerns in social psychology. We do not favor requiring study preregistration for publication in \emph{SPQ}, but would like to begin noting study preregistration during the manuscript submission process and in publications. We would also investigate and consider policies adopted in sister disciplines (political science and psychology) for rewarding authors who publish preregistered research via mechanisms like pre-registration “badges.”

We would continue encouraging authors to archive anonymized data where ethically feasible and to publish online supplemental materials with details about methodology, robustness checks, instruments and protocols, and code. Access to such materials contribute to trust and reproducibility in ways that we think are invaluable for our research community.

Finally, we would expand the scope of \emph{SPQ Snaps}. \emph{Snaps} are teaching tools that mostly consist of an article synopsis and, sometimes, discussion questions. We think the pedagogical value of \emph{Snaps} would be enhanced by including presentation slides with figures and tables. Our vision of this model is based on practices of the \textit{New England Journal of Medicine}, which publishes downloadable PowerPoint presentations with original research articles. It is unclear whether their specific approach, requiring coordination with Sage, would be optimal or whether it would be preferable to develop a plan compatible with copyright agreements that could be implemented on the ASA’s current \emph{SPQ Snaps} website. Either way, we are enthusiastic about this means for getting more \emph{SPQ} research into sociology classrooms.
Increase the international and interdisciplinary presence of the journal. Our fourth goal would be to increase SPQ’s visibility with international researchers and interdisciplinary researchers. We note that SPQ’s former practice of maintaining an “International Editorial Board” has fallen by the wayside. We do not recommend resurrecting the international board, but would seek to expand participation of social psychologists around the world on the board and in our reviewer database. Drs. Clay-Warner and Robinson each participate in international research societies (International Society for Justice Research, International Society for Research on Emotion), collaborate with teams of international researchers, and have ongoing relationships with universities in other countries (especially Africa, Asia, and Europe). We would make use of these relationships to expand the international visibility of SPQ.

Participation of non-sociologists on SPQ’s editorial board has also declined in recent years. We would like to see SPQ remain squarely in the hands of sociology and focused on sociological concerns. However, we also believe that there are social psychologists outside of sociology departments whose work is highly sociologically relevant. We would like these scholars to see SPQ as a prestigious outlet for their best work and to increase their readership of sociological research published there. Consequently, in addition to maintaining a visible presence in sociological meetings like ASA and Group Processes, one or more of the co-editors would speak at the business meetings of the following societies at least once during the editorial term: Society for Personality and Social Psychology, International Society for Justice Research, International Society for Research on Emotion, International Society for Social Network Analysis, and Society for Experimental Social Psychology. We would seek to marginally increase the number of social psychologists outside of sociology on the editorial board to signal openness to cross-disciplinary work and expand the necessary expertise for reviewing such work.

Editorial Team and Activities


All three prospective co-editors are transitioning out of professional responsibilities requiring significant time commitments around when SPQ editorial responsibilities would begin. Clay-Warner stepped down as Department Head in summer 2019; Tinkler will step down from Graduate Coordinator in summer 2020; and Robinson will close out two major research grants with the Army Research Office in summer 2020. These changes will free up time and energy that editors would enjoy redirecting toward the journal.

Jody Clay-Warner, Meigs Distinguished Professor of Sociology, University of Georgia. She studies how social structure affects the emotional, cognitive, and legal processes involved in responses to injustice, as well as how contextual and identity factors affect responses to criminal victimization. Her research has been funded by the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of State. She chaired the ASA Sociology of Emotion section and was Secretary-Treasurer of the ASA Social Psychology Section. Clay-Warner has received UGA’s Owens Creative Research Award for distinguished contributions to the social sciences and the Pacific Sociological Association’s Best Article Award, the American Society of Criminology’s Teaching Award, and the Southern Sociological Society’s Outstanding Contribution to
Teaching Award. She is a Fellow of the Society of Experimental Social Psychology. She has served on the NSF Sociology Grant Review Panel and the NSF Sociology Dissertation Improvement Award Review Panel, as well as grant panels for the National Institutes of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control.

Dawn T. Robinson, Sociology Professor, UGA. She was elected a 2009 Kavli Frontiers of Science Fellow by the National Academy of Sciences and is a fellow in the Sociological Research Association and Society for Experimental Social Psychology. She chaired three ASA Sections: Social Psychology; Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity; and Sociology of Emotion; and served on Council of two additional ASA sections. She chaired ASA’s Committee on Sections, served on ASA Nominations Committee, ASA Council’s Concealed Weapons subcommittee, and on the Committee of Visitors for NSF’s Human and Social Dynamics program. Her recent research includes cross-national research on affective-linguistic culture, mathematically modeling cross-cultural interaction, measuring social emotion, and research on gender, interaction, and networks. Her research has been funded by NSF, U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Naval Research, and Army Research Office and has appeared in American Sociological Review, Annual Review of Sociology, Social Forces, and Social Psychology Quarterly.

Justine Tinkler, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Georgia. She received her PhD in Sociology from Stanford University in 2007. Her research is unified by an interest in examining the micro-level processes that create and reinforce gender and race inequality. She employs experimental, survey-based, and qualitative research methods to provide empirical evidence for advancing theory in social psychology, law, and inequality. Dr. Tinkler’s research contributes to knowledge about implicit and explicit race and gender bias, intersectional processes that shape evaluations of women leaders, sexual harassment law’s effects on attitudes, and has implications for social policy. She has published this work in top journals including Law & Social Inquiry, Social Psychology Quarterly, American Sociological Review and Social Science Research. She serves on the ASA’s Sexual Harassment Working Group.

Deputy Editors. Corey D. Fields, Matthew Hunt, and Stefanie Mollborn have agreed to join our team as Deputy Editors. These outstanding scholars cover substantive and methodological areas where the co-editors have less expertise. Each has published in SPQ and served on its editorial board. Corey Fields (Georgetown University) uses qualitative, quantitative, and experimental methods to explore the relationship between identity, experience, and culture. He authored Black Elephants in the Room: The Unexpected Politics of African-American Republicans (2016, University of California Press). His expertise in ethnography and theoretical approach to racial identity processes will make him invaluable on our team. Stefanie Mollborn (University of Colorado, Boulder) is a multimethod scholar who examines social norms and inequalities in early life course, focusing on health lifestyles, technology use, and reproductive health. She authored Mixed Messages: Norms and Social Control around Teen Sex and Pregnancy (2017, Oxford University Press) and over sixty articles in outlets including Journal of Health and Social Behavior and Social Problems. She served twice on SPQs’s editorial board, Chaired the ASA Children and Youth section, and served on ASA Social Psychology section Council. She brings a social structure and personality perspective and expertise in life course research and adolescence to the team.

Matthew Hunt’s (Northeastern University) research focuses on the intersection of race/ethnicity and social psychology. He was Resident Fellow at Harvard University’s Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research and former ASA Social Psychology section chair. He has published in outlets including American Sociological Review, Social Forces, and Sociology of Education. He served on Sociology of Race and Ethnicity’s editorial board. He brings significant expertise in quantitative analysis of secondary survey data and a social structure and personality approach to understanding racial attitudes to the team.
Activities. Our editorial team has a long history of working together on research, co-directing the Laboratory for the Study of Social Interaction (LaSSI), and co-advising graduate students. Our strong personal and professional relationships will streamline communication and make this task more intellectually fulfilling and enjoyable. We will meet regularly and interact frequently to discuss editorial decisions. We envision working with our managing editor to roughly balance the number of manuscripts assigned to each editor, with allocation decisions guided by the match between the substantive focus of the paper and our respective expertise. Co-editors will work with the managing editor to select reviewers. When one editor deems a paper suited for desk rejection, she will consult with at least one other editor before making the decision. We will meet weekly with the managing editor to keep communication lines open and routine. At these meetings we will consult each other on desk rejections, reviewer suggestions, and manuscripts where reviewer advice is conflicting.

Our plan is to seek deputy editor input when (1) a paper’s substance or method is outside our expertise, (2) we require help adjudicating conflicting reviews, or (3) all co-editors have a conflict of interest. Given the breadth of our expertise, we anticipate our deputy editors might each handle six-eight papers per year. When we have a conflict of interest or the paper is outside our expertise, we will ask deputy editors to select reviewers and make an independent recommendation to the responsible editor. We identified our deputy editors on the basis of their ability to cover domains in social psychology where their expertise exceeds ours. Consequently, we would use our deputy editors as strong partners in making decisions about reviewers and manuscripts.

Institutional Support

Our department has a strong social psychology training program, providing us with infrastructure and resources that will enrich our ability to serve as editors of SPQ. We co-direct LaSSI, a collaborative research enterprise in the Sociology Department housing multiple streams of research conducted by faculty and students. LaSSI is one of the top laboratories in the country for sociological social psychologists studying affect control theory, justice, sociology of emotions, and implicit and explicit race and gender bias. In addition to having dedicated facilities we can use for editorial tasks and well-trained graduate students to serve as editorial assistants, we have several departmental colleagues with adjacent areas of expertise on whom we can rely for guidance in finding reviewers and evaluating manuscripts. Ronald Simons’ has research expertise on the experience of racism, mental health, and criminal behavior and is familiar with cutting edge theories and methods connecting the social environment to biological outcomes. Leslie Simons is an expert on family violence and relationships during adolescence and emerging adulthood. Joseph Hermanowicz is a qualitative scholar of higher education with expertise on life course, socialization, and work and identity. Barry Schwartz is an intellectually active professor emeritus with expertise on culture and history and with using archival and comparative historical methodologies for investigating micro-macro processes. Maryann Erigha has expertise on cultural practices and discourses underpinning racism, sociology of emotion as well as with research on the sociology of media.

Our department and university enthusiastically endorse the prospect of bringing SPQ to UGA and have committed generous resources to facilitate our editorship. The most important of these resources is a course release per year for each of us. This is a strong testament to the university’s support of our proposal to edit the journal and awareness of the work involved. The department will also offer money to cover the cost of travel to ASA meetings, as well as office space and computers for our editorial work. We will use ASA’s support to fund a graduate student to serve as managing editor. We have multiple social psychology graduate students who could serve as excellent managing editors, and who we believe would benefit greatly from involvement in the editorial process.