

Becoming an International and Interdisciplinary Journal.

By: Rebecca Adams

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Abstract:

Since its inception, the various Editors and Associate Editors of *Personal Relationships* have strived to achieve its vision as an interdisciplinary and international journal. The team that oversaw the review process for the articles published in this issue is no exception. We have been working since June 1, 2005, when we first began processing new submissions, to attract and cultivate manuscripts submitted by authors from a variety of disciplines and countries. In addition to working with our publisher, Blackwell, to recruit authors from outside of psychology and residing in countries other than the United States, we have continued several traditions established by previous editorial teams to encourage interdisciplinary and international personal relationships scholarship. We, like our predecessors, firmly believe that interdisciplinary and comparative scholarship on personal relationships is necessary to advance theory and to increase how useful scholarship on this topic is to clinicians, policy makers, and other practitioners.

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Article:

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Our editorial team is structured to encourage diversity in submissions and, consequently, in articles published. I am a sociologist residing in the United States. The Associate Editors include: Susan Boon (Psychology, University of Calgary, Canada), Susan Branje (Adolescent Development, Utrecht University, The Netherlands), Rodney Cate (*Emeritus*, Family Studies, University of Arizona, United States), Catrin Finkenauer (Social Psychology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Mario Mikulincer (Psychology, Bar-Ilan University, Israel), and Denise Solomon (Communication Studies, Pennsylvania State University, United States). The 82 scholars who comprise the Editorial Board represent 12 countries (Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Greece, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and five disciplines (communication, family studies and human development, philosophy, psychology, sociology). The representatives from psychology include social, clinical, applied, and counseling psychologists. In addition, almost 300 established scholars and almost 100 new scholars, from an even more diverse array of disciplines and countries, have served as reviewers.

Outreach and a diverse editorial team are not sufficient to encourage interdisciplinary and international scholarship, however. We have also continued the practice established by previous editorial teams of inviting scholars from at least two disciplines and countries to review each submission. The Associate Editors and I rely on these scholars to review manuscripts from their disciplinary and international standpoints.

We want *Personal Relationships* to be an interdisciplinary journal, not merely a multidisciplinary journal. In our minds this means that articles published in *Personal Relationships* are held to a higher standard than articles published in disciplinary journals. In other words, not only must the manuscripts we accept for publication be readable and understandable by members of a variety of disciplines, they must meet the expectations or at least address the concerns of a heterogeneous group of scholars. For example, our editorial experience has taught us that psychologists tend to be more concerned about measurement issues than sociologists. So for a sociologist to be published in *Personal Relationships*, he or she must employ good measures or at least address the shortcomings of the measures available. Conversely, sociologists tend to be more concerned about sampling issues than psychologists. So for a psychologist to be published in *Personal Relationships*, he or she must either draw a probability sample or at least admit that the findings reported are not generalizable to a known population.

Similarly, we want *Personal Relationships* to be a truly international journal, not merely a journal that publishes articles authored by scholars living in an assorted collection of countries. We want our reviewers to help authors make their underlying cultural and structural assumptions explicit, to avoid ethnocentric language, to describe the characteristics of the populations studied and the contexts in which data are collected that might shape results, and to discuss how their results might have been different in another context. Of course, the ultimate goal is for personal

relationship researchers to conduct comparative research, but an awareness that cultural and structural context might affect results is a step in the right direction.

This issue is our first. Our team was very pleased when Harry T. Reis agreed to serve as our first distinguished scholar and to write a paper based on the provocative key note address he delivered at the 2004 meeting of International Association for Relationship Research in Madison, Wisconsin. His article, which is the lead article in this issue and which Editorial Assistant Brandi McCullough refers to as “Reis’s Piece,” is titled “Steps toward the Ripening of Relationship Science.” In it he discusses several steps necessary to move the field of personal relationships forward, including becoming more action-oriented, growing to more cumulative and collective, and developing an integrated network of theories, constructs, and their observable manifestations.

The remaining articles are published in the order in which they were submitted. These eight articles are authored by 22 scholars representing six disciplines (communication, computer science, human development and family studies, marriage and family therapy, endocrinology, and psychology) and four countries (Australia, Israel, Spain, and the United States). Three of the articles are the result of interdisciplinary collaboration, including “Exploring Perceptions of Online Infidelity” (Brandon H. Henline, Marriage and Family Therapy; Leanne K. Lamke, Human Development and Family Studies; and Michael D. Howard, Psychology), “Speed-Dating as an Invaluable Tool for Studying Romantic Attraction: A Methodological Primer,” (Eli J. Finkel, Psychology; Paul W. Eastwick, Psychology; and Jacob Matthews, Computer Science), and “Is it All About Intimacy? Age, Menopausal Status, and Women’s Sexuality” (Gurit E. Birnbaum, Psychology; Ohad Cohen, Medicine; and Vered Wertheimer, Psychology). One article, “A Spanish Version of the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) Adult Attachment Questionnaire,” is the result of international collaboration by two psychologists from Spain (Itziar Alonso-Arbiol and Nekane Balluerka) and one from the United States (Phillip R. Shaver). Other articles are authored by two triads of United States communication scholars (“Creating Closeness: Discerning and Measuring Strategies for Fostering Closer Relationships” by Jon A. Hess, Amy D. Fannin, and Laura H. Pollom and “Using the Relational Turbulence Model to Understand Negative Emotion within Courtship” by Leanne K. Knobloch, Laura E. Miller, and Katy E. Carpenter), a triad of Australian psychologists (“Adoption, Attachment, and Relationship Concerns: A Study of Adult Adoptees,” by Judith A. Feeney, Nola L. Passmore, and Candida C. Peterson), and a psychologist whose appointment is in a department of psychology and neuroscience in the United States (“Hard and Soft Emotion during Conflict: Investigating Married Couples and Other Relationships,” by Keith Sanford).

As you explore the articles in this issue, we hope you will find them rewarding on many levels. Individually, they stand as scholarly endeavors that reveal, inform, and advance research on their topics. These works also illustrate how personal relationship scholars can transcend disciplinary and national boundaries to engage the larger audience of scholars. As a set, we hope that these articles showcase the diversity and vitality of interdisciplinary, international personal

relationships scholarship. Although by our own rigorous criteria we have not fully achieved our vision of *Personal Relationships* as an interdisciplinary and international journal, we think that the content of this issue bodes well for the future of research in this area.

On behalf of the editorial team of *Personal Relationships*,

Rebecca G. Adams