Virtual Issue to coincide with the International Society of Political Psychology's Annual Meeting (San Diego, 3rd-6th July, 2015).

Welcome to this virtual issue of the *British Journal of Social Psychology*, which has been complied to coincide with the annual meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology (2015). The conference theme is 'The Psychology of Encounter and the Politics of Engagement' and this virtual issue showcases some of the work published in *BJSP* that has a particular resonance with this theme. The papers available here have either been published recently in the journal, or will soon be in print in forthcoming issues.

This virtual issue also illustrates the range formats in which *BJSP* publishes papers. Each year, the journal publishes a state-of-the-art *Landmark Article*. Such papers are sole-authored by prominent researchers in the field and the format allows the author to step outside the confines of a typical review article to develop a more personal statement on an area of their choice. In this virtual issue we have the Landmark Article contributed by Alex Haslam in 2014. In this article, Haslam offers a vision of how research inspired by the social identity tradition can be applied to a range of contemporary social problems. Of particular relevance for the conference theme is Haslam's observation that interventions seeking to shape people's understandings of their social identities are inevitably political interventions. This raises a number of issues, many of which are pursued in the videocast that accompanies this paper in which Haslam is interviewed by previous *BJSP* co-editor Jolanda Jetten.

The other papers in this virtual issue report empirical studies. Most of these are traditional *Research Articles* with a word length of up to 7,000 words. However, the final paper in this issue is a *Brief Report* with a word length of up to 3,500 words. This format is particularly suitable for innovative pieces with broad appeal across the discipline.

As you will see from this collection, *BJSP* seeks to publish high quality work that draws upon a range of data types. These include quantitative data obtained through questionnaire surveys and experiments, through to analyses of qualitative data derived from all manner of sources (e.g., social media, archival records). Moreover, as you will see these quantitative and qualitative data are analysed from a variety of theoretical perspectives and contribute to the richness of research that characterises contemporary political psychology.

The papers selected for this special issue address a number of themes of direct relevance to the psychology of encounter and the politics of engagement, and to political psychology more generally. First, there are papers that concern the relations between majority and minority groups and how these are shaped by political and psychological dynamics. For example, Thijs Bouman, Martijn van Zomeren and Sabine Otten report two studies that examine how social problems occurring elsewhere

in the world can have more local impacts on social attitudes and intergroup relations. Moreover they document the diverse mechanisms through which such local effects arise. The relevance of such work for a globalizing world (in which representations of social problems elsewhere in the world fill our TV screens) is obvious. In a similar vein, another paper authored by Anouk Smeekes, Maykel Verkuyten and Borja Martinovic, considers how feelings of national nostalgia may be associated with attitudes concerning the rights of diverse groups (particularly Muslims) to express their group identities in the public and political domain. Complementing these two papers (and their focus on the attitudes of majority group members) is a third, which takes as its focus the minority group (specifically Muslims in the UK). In this article, Mick Finlay provides an analysis of a particular construction of Muslim identity and how this has implications for Muslims' encounters and engagement with the non-Muslim majority. Reporting qualitative data obtained from an Al-Qaeda-supporting group Finlay explores how denunciation is used to construct an understanding of group identity that problematizes encounters between Muslims and non-Muslims and discourages minority group members' social and political engagement.

Other papers explore the ways in which hierarchy impacts upon individuals' opportunities and experiences, and how people may seek to exert some control over their situation. For example, Mouna Bakouri and Christian Staerklé provide an account of how identity processes may help young people overcome the negative effects of various social barriers that limit their opportunities. They show that having valued identities linking them to others helps maintain a sense of efficacy that offsets the psychological costs of such barriers. Addressing the issue of social and political engagement from a rather different perspective, Mindi Foster explores how engagement can be facilitated by new social media such as twitter and examines how using these media can allow forms of collective action that bring various political and psychological rewards. Specifically, she considers how women's opportunity to tweet about sexism may help mitigate negative affect and improve women's well-being. Also addressing the social and psychological significance of group identities in social encounters and political engagement, Rim Saab, Nicole Tausch, Russell Spears and Wing-Yee Cheung address the question of when and why people are motivated to act in solidarity with distant others. Specifically, they consider the identity-related motivations that encourage people in Britain to protest in solidarity with those in Palestine, and those in Hong Kong, to commemorate the deaths in Tiananmen Square.

Our last two papers address the issue of hierarchy and resistance. In one paper, Matthew Hollander revisits the classic work of Stanley Milgram on 'obedience' and explores how participants in the original studies negotiated non-compliance with the directives and orders that lay at the heart of that research. What makes this work particularly interesting is the way in which the analysis of participants' responses in the original experiments (available in the archives) are analysed so as to complement the analysis of a classic experiment. In the other, and final paper in this special virtual issue, the authors consider the ways in which hierarchy and inequality are reproduced. Specifically, Fabio Fasoli, Anne Maass and Andrea Carnaghi explore how the use of homophobic epithets contributes to unfairness and inequality in the distribution of resources.

We hope you enjoy this selection of papers. We also hope that you will consider *BJSP* as an outlet for your own research. We are keen to see the journal publishing good quality work of interest to Political Psychology and believe the journal has much to offer. Published by Wiley, *BJSP* is available in around 13,000 libraries around the world. Once accepted, articles appear online within seven weeks.

We hope the annual meeting in San Diego is a great success characterized by exciting and challenging intellectual encounters and political engagements. We also hope that this small selection of papers from *BJSP* whets you appetite for such encounters.

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