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Passing the Torch: Reflections on 3 Years at the Helm of the *EJSP*

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1 | Introduction

At the beginning of our term, in "Continuity and Change" (Epstude et al. 2025), we reflected on how the *European Journal of Social Psychology* (EJSP) could maintain its traditions while adapting to a rapidly changing academic context. We outlined a vision centred on stronger theoretical integration, open research practices, broader diversity, and a sustainable review process. As our editorial term ends, it is worth considering what those ambitions meant in practice.

2 | Supporting New Article Types and Transparency

A key goal of our editorial term was to create more space for theoretical integration and reflection within the journal. Our discipline advances not only through the accumulation of findings but also through synthesis: connecting across studies, resolving inconsistencies, and building new frameworks. In a field defined by a high volume of empirical papers, this theoretical work is essential. It was with this in mind that we introduced Outlook articles. This new article type is designed to afford reflection and debate, allowing colleagues at any career stage to review the state of a research area, surface unresolved tensions, and propose new directions. For instance, a recent outlook paper examined how academic freedom can be preserved in illiberal political contexts (Kende and Pántya 2026). As such, it showed how attacks on academic institutions are often a central feature of democratic erosion. By connecting social psychological theory with urgent societal concerns, the paper raised concrete suggestions for strengthening democratic resilience in academia. Similarly, another paper addressed the role of intergroup conflict in slowing global progress on climate change (Hornsey et al. 2025). By linking social psychological theory to one of the most pressing global challenges, this contribution shows that Outlook papers are not meant simply to summarize existing knowledge but to encourage broader theoretical reflection. We are pleased to see growing use of this format.

Registered Reports complement this by supporting theory development earlier in the process. Evaluating submissions on the quality of research questions, theoretical rationale, and study design, before results are known, encourages conceptual clarity. Whether findings confirm or reject the original hypotheses, they are still useful, helping researchers to refine theories, capture complexity, and generate new questions. Registered Reports also make the research process more transparent. When hypotheses, methods, and analytical plans are explicit from the outset, contributions can be evaluated for their quality rather than the direction of their findings. While the adoption of this format has been gradual, we are convinced of its importance for both the long-term credibility and the theoretical development of the field.

The same logic shaped our approach to open research practices. We strengthened expectations around sharing materials, data, and analytic scripts, while recognizing that legitimate exceptions exist. Transparency matters not just for replication but for building on each other's work. We made it the default expectation for new submissions, asking authors to justify clearly when sharing was not feasible.

3 | Reviewing as a Collective Responsibility

Like many journals, the *EJSP* operates in a context where the increasing volume of submissions places substantial pressure on peer review. Thus, we aimed at strengthening reviewer

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capacity and making the review process rigorous, constructive, and sustainable.

To support this goal, we introduced the Junior Consulting Editors initiative, aimed at involving junior scholars from underrepresented groups and regions more directly in the editorial process. This helped us to broaden the diversity of perspectives within the journal and increase the opportunity for mutual learning and professional development. By working closely with the editorial team, Junior Consulting Editors were able to strengthen their reviewing and editorial skills while contributing fresh perspectives to the journal.

We also introduced a simplified review process to reduce unnecessary duplication. When authors substantially revised manuscripts following reviews at another journal, this allowed the *EJSP* to build on existing scholarly labour rather restart from scratch. This made publication more efficient, reduced response times for authors, and eased the burden on reviewers by avoiding unnecessary rounds of evaluation. The whole initiative helped us make peer review rigorous and more sustainable for everyone involved.

4 | Embracing Diversity

A journal should reflect the breadth of its field. At the start of our term, some areas of social psychology were underrepresented in the *EJSP*, and regional and demographic diversity in editorial structures remained a real challenge. We worked to address this by encouraging submissions across the full range of social psychological inquiry, broadening editorial expertise, and creating more opportunities for junior scholars and researchers from underrepresented groups to be involved in the reviewing process. This also resulted in an increase in submissions not only from Europe but also from well beyond its borders. This reflects the truly international scope of the journal and represents a welcome development.

The commitment extends to method. Social psychology benefits from a plurality of approaches, and the *EJSP* has increasingly welcomed qualitative work, longitudinal designs, and other methods that capture social phenomena from different angles, alongside experimental research. Methodological diversity strengthens both empirical rigor and theoretical development.

We also aimed at increasing the journal's thematic scope. While the *EJSP* has long been a key outlet for research on intergroup relations, we have seen a welcome increase in contributions in areas such as social cognition, person perception, and interpersonal relations. Expanding the range of topics represented in the journal offers a more complete picture of contemporary social psychology and better reflects the diversity of questions that define the discipline.

5 | Looking Forward

Editorial terms end. Journals continue. Our role was to contribute to that continuity while making changes where they seemed necessary. We leave with genuine gratitude for the trust placed in us and for the collaborative spirit that shaped the past 3 years.

We were lucky to work alongside an exceptional team of Associate Editors, whose expertise, judgment, enthusiasm, and commitment made the *EJSP* stronger. Our regular discussions and editorial meetings were helpful for decision-making and allowed us to refine ideas and learn from one another's perspectives.

Our sincere thanks also go to our Consulting Editors, Junior Consulting Editors, and the many reviewers who gave their time over 3 years. Even if peer review is largely invisible work, it remains one of the foundations of academic life. The care, rigor, and generosity with which colleagues have contributed their time and expertise have been essential to maintaining the quality and integrity of the journal.

We would also like to warmly welcome the new Editors who will guide the *EJSP* over the next 3 years. We look forward to seeing the agenda they will set for the journal and how they will continue to strengthen the *EJSP* in the shared and ongoing goal of improvement.

As we look ahead, the landscape of academic publishing continues to evolve rapidly. Questions about publication models, artificial intelligence, and public trust in science will shape journals in ways we cannot fully anticipate. This makes the role of the *EJSP* especially important. Journals do more than publish research: they help define standards, shape conversations, and create intellectual communities. They are not only archives of what has been done but also platforms for what comes next.

Our hope is that the *EJSP* will continue to be a journal that combines rigor with relevance: a place where strong theory meets strong evidence, where diverse voices are heard, and where social psychology remains meaningfully connected to the world it seeks to understand.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

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