

The Rookie



The voice of SPSSI graduate students



Letter from the GSC Chair

Carlie D. Trott, Colorado State University

Greetings SPSSI members!

I write to you from still-snowy Colorado, where after last month's record-breaking temperatures around the globe and certainly in the U.S., a Spring Break snowstorm is actually rather welcomed. By this mid-March, many of us have begun to sense around us the energizing hints of new life—the thawing and drying, the budding and buzzing—that will accompany us to another semester's close. I've always felt that spring was the hopeful semester, and not just for delivering us to a much-needed summer break. Springtime has an air of promise, of reawakening, of a fuller sense of possibility that with the range of dire social, political, and environmental issues we are all no doubt working to alleviate, provides a vital fuel for our collective energies.

Since I last wrote to you in [November](#), the Graduate Student Committee (GSC) has been busy building and refining a number of exciting projects to benefit student members. In this newsletter, Julia Tran's innovative initiative to showcase graduate student research appears in its second installment. Angela Robinson's efforts to provide valuable opportunities for skill-building and professional development through methodology-focused webinars will launch next month. Rashmi Nair's work to provide an informative resource for graduate students seeking policy-focused and applied careers continues to grow and will be disseminated this summer, just in time for graduating students embarking on their job search. And recently announced is the student [survey](#), designed by Ashley Weinberg and Julia Tran, which is the first step towards providing an essential tool for SPSSI graduate students to establish networks based on shared geographic region and research interests. Also available in this survey are a number of opt-in opportunities available to SPSSI graduate student members for CV-building, professional service, and networking. To make this resource as successful as possible, we ask you to take ten minutes and fill [it out today](#). It is my sincerest hope, as Chair of the SPSSI GSC, that one or more of the resources and opportunities made available to you through the hard work of the GSC will speak to your specific needs, or at the very least, provide a number of avenues towards professional growth so essential to our work on today's most critical social issues.

Just on the horizon is also the SPSSI 2016 summer conference in Minneapolis (June 24-26). [Registration](#) is now open, as are a number of Student Travel Awards to help defray the cost of conference attendance. A hint at what's to look forward to: Above and beyond the innovative and engaged research on showcase, Kristen Hackett and I are working to organize a [peer-based mentoring program](#) to launch at the conference. The GSC will also be hosting a social and professional networking event after-hours, in collaboration with the Early Career Committee. Please be on the lookout for student-specific announcements between now and June! So if springtime new beginnings alone just don't do it for you, the forging of new relationships, the fruitful exchange, and the (re)union with a welcoming academic family—that is, the SPSSI 2016 conference—is sure to motivate. Start the 16-week countdown!

—Carlie D. Trott, GSC Chair
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Letter from the Editor

Hello SPSSI members,

I hope you all had a restful and productive Spring Break! In this issue, you'll find a summary of an innovative research project on minority-minority relations in India by Rashmi Nair. For those interested in majority-minority relations, I recommend reading Ashley Weinberg's discussion on her research program on interracial friendships and intergroup prejudice. Finally, for those interested in how to become a more productive writer, please check out Andrew Pilecki's step-by-step guide on academic writing. Happy reading!

-Julia Tran (jtran7@ucsc.edu)

Research Spotlight

Rashmi Nair, M.A.

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Hi! I am serving as Member-at-Large on SPSSI's Graduate Student Committee this year; I focus on connecting academic researchers with opportunities in policy and applied settings. My interest in applied work stems from my experience with various non-profit organizations in India that worked with disadvantaged minorities. These experiences also fueled my research interest in examining social psychological processes related to experiences of collective victimization and group-based disadvantage among minorities.

In my research, I use both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine different ways in which people think about their group's past and present experiences of collective disadvantage, and its influence on their intergroup relations.

More specifically, in my dissertation, I explore social psychological processes underlying minority-minority relations. Although social psychological research on intergroup relations has made great strides in understanding relations of minority groups with majority group members, research on relations between disadvantaged minorities remains scarce. Moreover, the scarce research on this topic treats minority groups homogeneously, without accounting for intra-group inequalities of gender and class.

Furthermore, this research predominantly focuses on the western context. Addressing these gaps, in my dissertation, I employ an intersectional lens and examine social psychological factors underlying relations between two minorities - Muslims and Dalits (or "lower"-caste Hindus) - in the understudied context of India.

Given the scarcity of research on this topic, I employed qualitative methods to explore various themes related to group-based disadvantage underlying relations between these minorities. More specifically, I conducted 32 individual interviews and 12 focus group discussions among Dalits and Muslims living in the capital city of New Delhi, India. Adopting an intersectional approach, I made particular effort to reach Dalit women, Dalit men, Muslim women as well as Muslim men. Furthermore, I

recruited members from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds; participants were employed in organized (e.g. government officials, lawyers, accountants and engineers), as well as informal or unorganized sector (e.g. daily-wage workers, rickshaw drivers, domestic helpers and homemakers).

An initial analysis of the data has revealed various themes related to group-based disadvantage that can explain solidarity as well as tensions between minorities. For instance, some participants expressed perceptions of similarity across experiences of collective victimization between Dalits and Muslims; these perceptions referred to as inclusive victim consciousness have been shown to predict positive intergroup outcomes (Vollhardt, Nair, & Tropp, 2016). Moreover, some members

expressed that their own group was worse off when compared to others; this was particularly the case among Muslim participants, who were largely denied affirmative action rights, despite being similarly disadvantaged as Dalits. Such perceptions of relative deprivation have been found to shape relations between groups negatively (Walker and Smith, 2002). In addition to this, the intersectional framework employed in the project revealed that these processes are not only relevant for single category comparisons (e.g. comparisons between Dalits and Muslims), but also for intersectional comparisons (e.g. comparisons between Dalit women and Muslim women). This research holds important implications for public policies, educational programs and interventions that are directed at improving the situation and intergroup relations of disadvantaged minorities.

Ashley L. Weinberg, M.A.

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Hello my name is Ashley Weinberg, and I am the Member-at-Large Membership Coordinator for SPSSI's Graduate Student Committee, 2015-16. I am also in my second year of the Experimental Psychology Master's program at San Diego State University. Broadly, I am interested in analyzing the mechanisms of intergroup relations and the ways to empirically address relevant social issues. My research analyzes intergroup contact, cross-group relationships, stereotypes, prejudices, and implicit/explicit biases.

The amalgamation of my research on identity and implicit and explicit biases has centered my research interests on the interplay of juxtaposed perspectives and biases involved in cross-group interactions. I have begun to look beyond circumstances promoting positive interactions to consider which basic cognitive and emotional processes promote positive outgroup attitudes and interactions. Specifically, I became interested in

intergroup self-disclosure as a means for evoking personalization of the outgroup. My Master's thesis on interracial friendships between Whites and Latino/as utilizes a moderated mediation model to investigate the mediators of self-disclosure's ability to promote positive outgroup attitudes—trust (including vulnerability), empathy, anxiety reduction, and race-related self-disclosure.

This project also compares both majority and minority group members' perspectives, an essential aspect for understanding intergroup dynamics. Ultimately, I strive to apply this research to reduce outgroup biases and promote beneficial intergroup interactions through interventions and public policy.

My first project at SDSU addressed the current replication crisis through participation in Many Labs—a nation-wide study that replicated multiple studies while measuring fluctuations in

student responses throughout the semester. My current research project analyzes implicit and explicit perceptions of current political candidates' warmth, competency, and "Americanness" based on both the target and participant's race/ethnicity, gender, and political orientation. By studying intersecting identities, I hope to better understand the contexts where group stereotypes and outgroup biases are not as easily activated. For more information about my research or other projects, please contact me at aweinberg@mail.sdsu.edu.



How-to-WRITE

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The purpose of this blog post is to impart the following piece of advice to those who currently toil in graduate school: find your writing process. To help you find yours, I will describe the five-step process I use whenever I confront a writing task.

Step 1: Brainstorming

I start my writing process by reviewing any relevant articles or research notes. I then start jotting down ideas, concepts, quotes, or citations that come to mind on a blank sheet of paper.

Step 2: Outlining

I now try and pull something coherent out of the mess I just made in Step 1. I use Roman numerals (e.g., "I. Defining morality") to indicate the point of the paragraph and letters for each relevant sentence fragment or citation (e.g., "A. Moral Foundations Theory (Haidt, 2012)"). I am also

interested in making sure my paragraphs present coherent, well-rounded ideas in a concise manner. My rule of thumb is that if I can't get to "C," it means that my paragraph is not strong enough to stand on its own. In contrast, if I go past "E," I know the idea I'm trying to express in the paragraph is too broad and needs to be refined.

Step 3: Writing

I handwrite every first draft because the words seem to flow better when I'm writing by hand than when I use a computer. Writing by hand forces me to slow down and concentrate on the here-and-now of the sentence on which I am working. Previously, a

blank MS Word document would open the door to self-doubt or worries about the writing project in general. Writing by hand helps to keep this door closed.

Step 4: Typing

I now transcribe my handwritten work from Stage 3 into a word-processing program (e.g., Google Docs). I also revise my writing as I transcribe it. Step 4 is when I first unleash that critical, perfectionist voice in my head that was locked away in Step 3. I also try to allow a day to elapse between Steps 3 and 4 so that I can look at my work with fresh eyes. It always surprises me how much I will like a sentence today that I hated yesterday.

Step 5: Finalizing

I also try to let a day pass before proceeding to Step

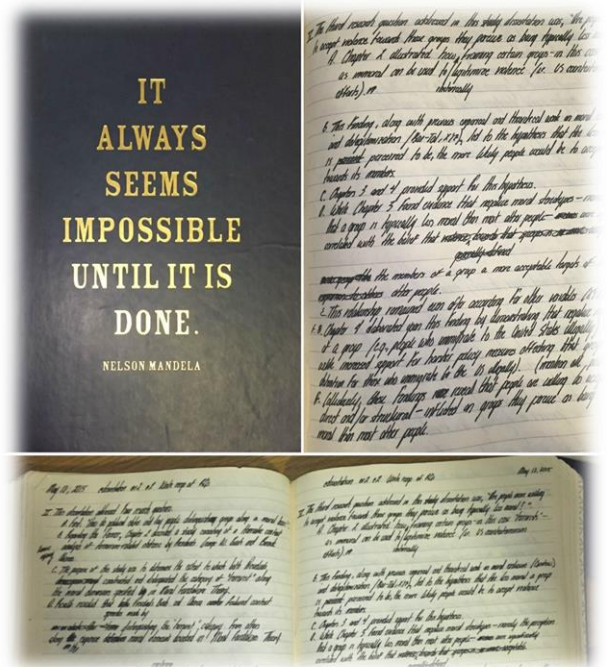
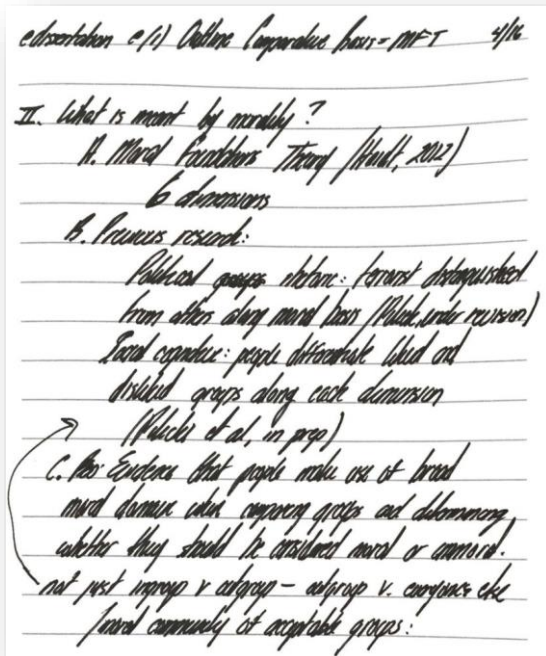
5, which is when I give my writing a second look and make further revisions. I've already fixed the glaring mistakes in Step 4; my goal in Step 5 is to improve my writing's conciseness. When reading my work at this stage, I ask myself questions like:

"Can I shorten this paragraph or sentence while keeping its original meaning?"

"Can I describe this concept without relying on jargon?"

"Am I using one of my "crutch words" here?"

Remember, although some may be born with a talent for writing, no one is born with a fear of writing. It is learned, which means it can be unlearned. Sometimes all you need is a plan of attack.



HAPPY SPRING!

Chair



Carlie D. Trott

Colorado State University

Chair-elect



Kristen Hackett

Graduate Center of the
City of New York

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Academic Focus

Policy and Applied Work Focus

Communications Focus

Membership Coordinator



Angela Robinson

University of California, Irvine



Rashmi Nair

Clark University



Julia Tran

Clark University



Ashley Weinberg

San Diego State University

Be sure to visit the updated SPSSI Graduate Student Committee website!
The GSC has compiled information on funding opportunities, career preparation, and ways to
increase your involvement with SPSSI.

Go to: spssi.org -> Students and Early Career -> Click on the 'Graduate Students' tab

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? SUGGESTIONS?

Email us at gradstudents@spssi.org

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