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Researching Attitude–Identity Dynamics to Understand Social Conflict and Change

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Abstract

Societies undergo constant change, manifested in various ways such as technological developments, economic transitions, reorganization of cultural values and beliefs, or changes in social structures. Individuals play an active role in shaping social and societal change by interactively negotiating its manifestation. However, this shaping of change is seldom harmonious; instead, it is often characterized by dissent and conflict. This special section gathers a collection of articles concerned with the role of attitude–identity dynamics in contexts of contemporary conflict and change. The corpus of research that builds this special section describes mutual impacts of attitudes and identities, explores different actors in social debates and covers a wide range of both established and innovative research methodology. This introduction summarizes and synthesizes the various contributions and offers insights into future research directions.

KEYWORDS

attitudes, conflict, identity, polarization, social change, social discourse

1 | INTRODUCTION

1.1 | The times they are a-changin’

A long time has passed since 22-year-old Robert A. Zimmermann, better known under his alias Bob Dylan, electrified his generation with his songs calling for justice, self-determination and peace. Today, advocates and opponents of the counterculture movement have faced the inevitable march of time. The essence of transformation, however, remains as vibrant today as it was when a young Dylan uttered his iconic lyrics into the microphone for the very first time. Amid the imminent perils of climate change, the demand for environmental protection has transcended the stereotype of sandalled, bearded and long-haired Hippies. Today, younger generations across the globe urge swift and

decisive action to safeguard their own future and that of generations to come. At the same time, women are still fighting to reclaim control over their own bodies, and marginalized communities continue to struggle for justice and recognition. This short list of examples could be readily expanded to encompass a wider range of other topics. Some of them might be highly localized, impenetrable to outsiders despite the strength of feelings for people involved. Others might seem regressive, highlighting the fact that the arrow of progress is not in one direction. In fact, often what counts as progress is precisely at issue, and clashing narratives built on different moral and ideological assumptions may effectively turn disagreements into full-blown intergroup conflicts (Bliuc & Chidley, 2022).

An interdisciplinary corpus of research literature highlights the importance of attitude–identity interplays in these regards. The

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Opinion-Based Group literature, for instance, outlines the importance of attitude–identity dynamics when it comes to the mobilization of large-scale collective action (Bliuc et al., 2007). Specifically, this research branch redirected the focus on collective selfhood from social categories to (often hyperdynamic) group identities that emerge from attitudinal agreement and can act as an incubator for activism and protest (McGarty et al., 2009). Social media affordances like #hashtags seem to support the formation of opinion-based groups, making it easier than ever for people to connect and interact across physical and socio-structural boundaries (Lüders et al., 2022; McGarty et al., 2013). However, to turn mere sympathizers into genuine group members, people must be able to negotiate a common understanding to effectively struggle for a shared cause (Smith et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2022). By exploring how individuals gauge their degree of attitudinal agreement, this special section advances the understanding of how people construct and cultivate group identity in various interaction settings.

The relevance of attitude–identity dynamics expands to the broader issue of societal polarization. A great deal of research on that topic has been conducted in the United States, where the level of political partisan disliking has become the epitome of a polarized Western democracy (Finkel et al., 2020). The alignment of partisan identities with attitudinal preferences arguably represents a significant aspect of polarization, affecting even the most ordinary aspects of people's daily lives (DellaPosta, 2020). In such a highly polarized social system, expressing an attitude can readily be seen as a form of identity performance, exerting a direct impact on interpersonal perceptions (Hiaeshutter-Rice et al., 2023; Lüders et al., 2023). By advancing the understanding of polarization as a psychological experience that influences social behaviour, this special section complements existing research from neighbouring disciplines that has often focused on polarization at the macro-level.

Importantly, when aiming to describe relevant psychological mechanisms underlying conflict and change, researchers must be sensitive to relevant contextual specificities in which these phenomena occur. Such factors may refer to the prevailing structures and normative positions in an ongoing debate (Ton et al., 2022). They may further encompass an individual's position within socio-economic structures, influencing their attitudes towards the wider social system (Jost, 2019). Additionally, relevant contextual factors may involve the physical and psychological connection that people have to places that are most affected by change (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004). By connecting various layers of analysis, the research featured in this special section facilitates insights into important interacting elements that shape human responses to pressing challenges like climate change and social inequality.

1.2 | Defining attitude–identity dynamics

For this special section, we define attitude–identity dynamics broadly as *ways and processes by which attitudes and identities intersect, thereby impacting people's perceptions, motivations, and actions*. As such, we con-

sider attitudes and identities not only as individual 'properties' but also as communication elements that stay in recursive and dynamic relationships with the social contexts in which they occur (Hogg & Smith, 2007; Lüders et al., 2022; Quayle, 2020; Turner & Oakes, 1986). This interpretation builds on the idea that the expression, withholding and perception of attitudes and identities helps people to form impressions about the state of a social system (e.g., its degree of polarization, the normativity of specific attitudes, the identities being present). These impressions may not always be accurate as, for instance, when people overestimate the level of opinion divergence between opposing political groups (Fernbach & Van Boven, 2022). Nevertheless, they will influence how people perceive, navigate and hence influence their social environment.

2 | THE AIMS AND STRUCTURE OF THE SPECIAL SECTION

This special section is driven by three goals, which we consider as fundamental for advancing the understanding of attitude–identity dynamics in the context of contemporary conflict and change.

The first goal is to promote the theoretical and practical understanding of attitudes and identities as mutually informative psychological elements. To support this goal, we were particularly interested in contributions which approached issues of intra- and intergroup dynamics as shaped by repeated social interaction. We prioritized research that explored attitudes and identities as elements that are actively and openly expressed within interactive social settings. The advantage of such designs is that they reveal insights into the functionality of attitudes and identities as psychological 'tools' that help individuals to structure and navigate social reality.

The second goal is to stimulate 'out-of-the-box' methodological thinking by including research that presents innovative and transdisciplinary methods, either in comparison or in combination with more conventional approaches in social psychology. In accordance with this goal, we are pleased that the collected contributions cover a broad methodological range. This diversity encompasses various analytical approaches, including algorithm-assisted qualitative analysis (Rizzoli et al., 2023), correlational class analysis (Kesberg et al., 2023) and network analysis (O'Reilly et al., 2023). Additionally, the incorporated research presents different data types, including experimental data (O'Reilly et al., 2023), cross-sectional survey data (Ton et al., 2023), data from self- and observer-reports (Koudenburg et al., 2023), and qualitative data (Rizzoli et al., 2023).

The third goal is to better understand the relevance of attitude–identity dynamics in real-world contexts. Accordingly, the selected articles cover a range of pressing topics including the transition to more sustainable energy production (Rizzoli et al., 2023), the juridical regulation of abortion rights (Ton et al., 2023), the integration of refugees into national education systems (Koudenburg et al., 2023), the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine (O'Reilly

et al., 2023), and motives for system change and system justification among people in disadvantaged socio-economical positions (Kesberg et al., 2023).

In the following, we will provide a brief summary of each contribution before reflecting on their impact as well as on future questions.

3 | OVERVIEW OF CONTRIBUTIONS

3.1 | Online identities emerging from attitudinal agreement

O'Reilly and colleagues (2023) present three online experiments that investigate attitude–identity dynamics in action. Existing evidence suggests that the awareness of attitude congruence offers a readiness for social categorization which may translate into shared selfhood and its behavioural expression in the form of collective action (O'Reilly et al., 2022). In this special section, O'Reilly and colleagues (2023) present new insights that are critical to understanding the dynamic transformations attitude-based social categories undergo in social spaces. In particular, their work demonstrates that group categories are continuously updated based on newly available and situationally relevant information. The authors recruited participants to engage in multiple rounds of an attitude exchange game, during which they received feedback about their interaction partners' attitudes regarding the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine. The results imply that, as consensus extends across multiple attitudes, it incrementally contributes to the development of a more profound sense of social identity. Simply put, interaction partners who had already formed a psychological bond because they shared an attitude 'y' experienced an even stronger bond upon discovering their agreement on issues 'x', 'z', ... and so on. What may appear as a straightforward rule, at first sight, carries a fundamental message concerning the emergence of opinion-based groups, namely, that the interconnectedness of multiple attitudes can prompt individuals to (re)interpret their social environment and their relative position within it.

Insights derived from an additional network analysis, gauging the level of alignment in attitudes among participants, indicate that individuals may actively strive for attitude synchronization (and consequently, *identity growth*). When comparing the properties of networks that model relationships between interaction partners based on their expressed attitude similarity, O'Reilly and colleagues (2023) found higher levels of attitude congruence in the experimental condition where interaction partners openly expressed their attitudes, in contrast to a control condition in which participants reported their attitudes anonymously. Building on the premise that attitude sharing offers a psychological substrate for emerging group identity (Bliuc et al., 2007), O'Reilly and colleagues' findings incorporate a provocative implication: A research tradition that widely focuses on individual self-reports will inevitably struggle to detect the real impact that attitudes pose on social dynamics once they are *expressed* in a particular social context.

3.2 | Objective and subjective consensus perceptions in face-to-face discussions

Koudenburg and colleagues (2023) present two face-to-face interaction studies. The research involves Dutch high school pupils and German university students discussing the integration of asylum seekers into their respective host country's education system. Koudenburg and colleagues (2023) focus on the distinction between *objective* and *subjective* consensus experiences. To this end, the authors based their research on discussion settings that involve a variety of nonverbal communication elements (e.g., disruptions, silences, laughter) that may shape the dynamic of a conversation as well as perceptions of consensus among interaction partners. Previous research suggests that people often struggle to estimate the extent of (dis)agreement among those with whom they interact. For instance, studies of the U.S. electorate found that partisans tend to overestimate the extent of disagreement on hot-button issues – a phenomenon sometimes referred to as 'false polarization' (e.g., Fernbach & Van Boven, 2022). Such misperceptions seem to be most pronounced when people hold fixed representations of attitude–identity relationships within specific groups. Conversely, the discussion settings in Koudenburg and colleagues' research do not involve predefined group categories, making them particularly suitable for studying intragroup consensualization processes.

The findings presented by Koudenburg and colleagues (2023) suggested considerable variation in objective and subjective consensus across the conducted studies. Objective consensus did not significantly predict subjective consensus in Study 1, but it did in Study 2 (where it accounted for 34% of the variance). Considering that each discussion setting reflects its own microcosmos with a variety of factors that could shape the course and perception of an interaction, one may expect a certain level of variation. However, given that many contextual factors were under experimental control, this level of variation seems remarkable.

Looking at other factors that influence people's subjective assessment of consensus, the data are more consistent. Coders who counted expressions of agreement and disagreement and provided overall consensus ratings could explain 35–43% of the variance of participants' self-reported consensus perceptions. Individuals thus seem to gauge consensus by integrating both subtle and explicit cues that signal agreement and disagreement. Another consistent predictor of subjective consensus was the experience of *conversational flow*. Although the researchers assessed different behavioural factors that could define conversational flow, the experience of flow seems to be highly subjective and produced within the context of an ongoing interaction.

Taken together, the presented findings shed light on different communication elements that shape people's subjective experiences of consensus. At the same time, they do not produce a consistent picture of how these same mechanisms contribute to objective attitude convergence. This asymmetry shifts the focus from finding the factors that deterministically produce certain outcomes in interaction, to understanding the features and processes by which people use attitudes and other contextually relevant information to create and interpret social reality.

3.3 | System justification and system change: Addressing empirical controversy through innovative methodology

Kesberg and colleagues (2023) demonstrate the potential of using innovative research methodology to address contradictory findings in the social psychological literature. Using four representative national European samples, they investigate a paradox described by System Justification Theory (SJT; Jost, 2019) – namely, that socially, economically and politically disadvantaged people sometimes embrace attitudes that justify and defend the same social order that oppresses them. SJT explains this counterintuitive behaviour as a consequence of a set of underlying deeply rooted psychological needs for existential, epistemic and relational security. The empirical evidence for these claims, however, is mixed which has sparked scholarly debate about the theory's viability (cf., Kesberg et al., 2023).

Starting with a traditional methodological examination, Kesberg and colleagues (2023) find no consistent evidence of system justification among disadvantaged groups. However, rather than simply adding their findings to the corpus of contrary evidence, the authors re-analysed their data using correlational class analysis, a method initially proposed by sociologists to explore shared cultural schemas (Boutyline, 2017; Goldenberg, 2011). Correlational class analysis enhances the possibility of detecting inter-attitude-relationships in a sample as it explicitly assumes pluralism in the social construction of belief systems that are latent to participants' survey responses. When applying this technique, Kesberg and colleagues (2023) find evidence for different subgroups that construe the relationship between inequality and system justifying attitudes very differently. The general trend was that between 25% and 45% of participants responded in line with the predictions of SJT, whereas the remainder revealed patterns inconsistent with the theory.

The reported findings may be seen as a challenge for social psychology that seeks to discover general trends in human behaviour. After all, do they speak in favour or against the theoretical framework the authors test? Perhaps we should reconsider this question and instead ask how we can advance theoretical claims about basic psychological mechanisms while simultaneously acknowledging diversity and fluidity in social psychological realities. Kesberg and colleagues (2023) demonstrate that methodological approaches like correlational class analysis, which assume complexity rather than linearity, may support such a paradigm shift.

3.4 | Caught in the crossfire: Navigating polarized discourses

Describing the mechanisms that produce polarization between supporters of competing collective narratives is of extensive interest for the broader social sciences. However, in advancing this objective, little attention has been dedicated to the psychological experience of those who feel *caught in between* the defined lines of conflict. Ton and colleagues (2023) address this important gap by exploring

the psychological states of US-American women with ambivalent attitudes towards abortion, a topic which is hotly debated in parts of the US-American electorate (Mouw & Sobel, 2001). Ton and colleagues (2023) present results from two independent samples of women with mixed feelings towards abortion in a moment when the abortion debate was particularly contentious. The authors collected their data during the passing of the Texas Heart Beat Act 2021 (a law that reduces the legally permitted abortion period roughly to the first 6 weeks of pregnancy) and the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark decision to re-allow states to organize abortion laws widely independently.

Results from both samples indicated a positive association between perceptions of polarization and attitudinal ambivalence. Moreover, this relationship was explained by participants' feelings of *being torn* and, to a slightly lower level, by *having sympathies for positions from both sides*. In subsequent explanatory analyses, Ton and colleagues investigate how these experiences relate to people's motivations to engage in the topic's further discourse. The results revealed a significant association between reported experiences of 'feeling torn' and the motivation to avoid discussions about abortion as well as interactions with people who hold strong opinions on this issue. Conversely, having sympathies for both pro- and anti-abortion viewpoints was the strongest predictor for participants' motivation to engage in efforts to depolarize members of the two conflictive camps.

Despite the cross-sectional nature of the data and the resulting lack of causal clarity, the presented findings propose an intriguing model linking an individual's assumptions about the state of a social system to its emotional, attitudinal, and motivational representation.

3.5 | Place identity and attitudes towards economic transition

The global transition towards a sustainable and decarbonized economy represents one of the world's greatest and most urgent challenges. These transitions can only be successful with wide-scale public support. Even though there is growing awareness of the need to act, the distribution of economic and psychological costs of action is far from equal. Rizzoli and colleagues (2023) address this problem by exploring emerging representations surrounding the decarbonization of the Sulcis area in Sardinia, Italy – an area that has a history of coal mining and economic dependency on fossil fuel extraction. Due to these historical and economic forces, coal mining is tightly interwoven with many locals' construal of *place identity* (e.g., Devine-Wright, 2009; Dixon & Durrheim, 2004). Decarbonization efforts may, therefore, be perceived not only as an economic threat, compounding existing problems of outmigration and industrial decline, but also as an identity threat related to people's representation of their homeland. Rizzoli and colleagues (2023) analyse a corpus of newspaper articles to explore the narratives and salient identities surrounding the energy transition of the Sulcis region that emerged on a regional, local and national level. Using an innovative mix of methodologies, the authors organized their data through structural topic modelling and then text-mined for

identity signifiers within these topics before qualitatively interpreting their findings.

Independent of the level of analysis, the overall image is that negative attitudes prevail and are shaped by the economic threat of declining traditional industry. Due to these strong concerns, resistance to change is prevalent, with negative attitudes overshadowing any positive environmental aspects of energy transitioning. The most relevant difference in the representation of energy transition was not found from the different types of outlets where the data came from, but from the identities that were discussed within them. Articles that focused on the identity of the local population (i.e., miners and local habitants) replicated representations of coal as something that is deeply ingrained within local identity. If the anchor for discussions moved to an overall Sardinian identity, the discourse focused on the need to remain economically competitive while the overall transition was being depicted as negative or ambivalent. Finally, when discussing a broader citizens identity, citizens are depicted in opposition to largely incapable or malicious industries and authorities.

In sum, the findings underline the psychological complexities that can shape people's resistance towards necessary socio-economic transitions but also convey an important implication for the advancement of the latter: successful change is not only a matter of navigating diverse opinions. Attitude change may involve identity change, and successful transitions will require opportunities for those who are most directly affected by it to reconstruct their ideas of culture and place in ways that are integrative to their identity.

4 | IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The aim of this special section was to collect research that advances the theoretical, methodological and practical understanding of attitude–identity dynamics and their impact on contemporary conflict and change. Two articles have focused on the role of agreement as a critical predecessor of emerging (social) identities in interactive social settings. O'Reilly and colleagues (2023) illustrate that mutual agreement may *causally and autonomously* create a situational psychological bond, even among strangers. This bond becomes stronger if individuals perceive their attitudes aligning more closely. Notably, in the presented research, participants actively sought to synchronize their attitudes while interacting. If replicated, this finding could advance the understanding of polarization by offering a social-motivational rationale for uniformity as frequently seen in cultural and socio-political narratives. However, whether this motivation holds true in less contentious contexts or when discussing different subject areas remains to be tested.

O'Reilly and colleagues (2023) use unambiguous markers of consensus and dissent, yet in most real-life situations, people must decipher these cues themselves. The research presented by Koudenburg and colleagues (2023) explores how people make sense of social-contextual information to gauge agreement. Depending on the available social cues, interactions can be intricate and allow ample space for misperception and misinterpretation. Accordingly, the presented research findings suggest significant disparities between participants' objective

and subjective assessment of agreement during face-to-face discussions. The likelihood of people identifying with each other, therefore, seems to be more reliant on their *perception of agreement* rather than on objective attitude alignment. In Koudenburg and colleagues' research (2023), these perceptions were widely informed by participants' evaluation of conversational flow. Given the importance of flow experiences for the perception of agreement and, therefore, for emerging collective selfhood, future research should aim to investigate factors that contribute to the perception of flow in different interaction contexts. This may also involve online debates in which people, sometimes quite creatively, combine minimal cues such as 'likes' with other interaction features such as chat boxes or emojis (e.g., Groggel, 2023; Sadia & Hussain, 2023).

Rizzoli and colleagues' research (2023) suggests that identities play a pivotal role in shaping people's attitudes, just as attitudes can also influence identities in return. Their work also reminds us that identities are multifaceted and shaped by various elements including people's experiences and construal of place, security and tradition. Viewing attitudes as reflections of these perceptions may explain the emotional intensity often displayed in discourses about change, as well as why the direction of feelings may sometimes differ between 'outsiders' and those who are directly affected by it. Within the context of Rizzoli and colleagues' research on energy transition in a Sardinian coal region, it becomes evident that a transition primarily directed from the top-down, without active engagement and buy-in from locals, will likely encounter significant resistance. Conversely, implementing and endorsing grassroots-level initiatives that empower individuals to find ways to incorporate a cause into their core identities promises to be a more effective and sustainable strategy, ensuring that initiated change does not come at the expense of the well-being of the affected communities.

Together, the collected papers suggest a complex and nuanced interplay between attitudes and identities. This complexity provides a challenge for psychological empirical modelling as it requires consideration of dynamics, context and contingencies. However, with the advent of new techniques and approaches, researchers have fresh opportunities to revisit and re-assess earlier findings in order to address empirical contradictions. Kesberg and colleagues (2023) illustrate this potential by re-analysing their data through the lens of a correlational class analysis. The outcomes generated through this approach suggest a diverse pattern that, while not entirely aligned with the predictions of the underlying theoretical model, corresponds with the pre-existing empirical inconsistencies concerning links between social status and system defence. One could argue that psychological theories sometimes exhibit a higher degree of tolerance towards variation compared to what commonly used linear models designed to test their assertions might imply. Novel methods that are more tolerant towards data complexity and sensitive to dynamics shifts in attitude–identity connections may not only provide more accurate 'snapshots' of these processes but also assist in refining existing theories by delineating their boundaries. In the end, expanding the scope of our empirical models to accommodate greater data complexity may also compel us, as researchers, to re-evaluate our understanding of psychological

mechanisms as deterministic laws and shifting our focus from identifying replicable *effects* to understanding *systems and processes* that – despite their consistency – might have unpredictable outcomes. Indeed, there might be more meta-flexibility to those mechanisms than we usually (like to) think. The associated increase in uncertainty in the research process, however, must not necessarily be considered a bad thing. On the contrary, it could lead to a more provocative and curious research culture – one that places as much importance on *uncertainty creation* as it does on uncertainty reduction (cf., Haslam & McGarty, 2001).

Finally, the research presented by Ton and colleagues (2023) reminds us of the importance of considering the perspectives of individuals holding ambivalent, moderate or neutral viewpoints when it comes to explaining polarization and identifying potential pathways to depolarize. The presented model suggests that experiencing a polarized social debate can trigger psychological pressures that increase attitudinal ambivalence and may result in contrasting motivations, namely, either to avoid or to reconcile polarization. Starting from here, several open questions seem relevant for future research. One of which could involve the exploration of differences between ‘neutral’, ‘ambivalent’ or ‘moderate’ attitudes (note that all of them might reflect the mid-point of a typical attitude item), as well as the mechanisms that shape their resistance to polarization and their potential for depolarization.

5 | LIMITATIONS

Despite our hopes that this special section will make a meaningful contribution to the understanding of attitude–identity dynamics, some important limitations must be considered. Firstly, in our attempts to advance the understanding of attitude–identity relationships as processes relevant to dynamic social systems, we somewhat neglected the evolution of attitude–identity dynamics on the individual level (e.g., shifts in attitudes and identities that occur over a person’s lifespan). We justify this decision by the fact that the bulk of existing attitude research prioritized intraindividual observations (cf., Hogg & Smith, 2007). This strategy, however, should not be misinterpreted as a preference for a specific level of observation. On the contrary, we believe that models capturing recursive interplays between attitude–identity dynamics and their respective contexts should view people as active and interdependent entities who shape reality because of both individual and social properties. We believe that the articles selected for this special section have advanced our understanding in this regard, and we hope that future research will take this path further.

Another limitation is the dominant Western perspective within this special section. In this regard, the special section suffers from a problem that is common in the dominant social psychological literature. We would expect some of the described basic processes to generalize beyond the observed samples. However, gaining a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying attitude–identity dynamics and their impact on conflict and change will require further examination of their

socio-political boundaries and potential contextual adaptations. For instance, while in liberal democracies, people are widely free to openly express their opinions and identities both online and offline, the same liberties may not be equally accessible everywhere. Under such conditions, people often develop creative practices to exchange attitudes and identities through symbols, clothes, dances, music, art and various other forms. The extent to which these and other practices function similarly to the processes examined in this special section remains to be explored.

Additionally, while this special section delves into various elements related to attitude–identity dynamics, it can only offer a glimpse into the psychological and contextual complexities associated with the topic. To deepen our understanding of the role of attitude–identity dynamics in contexts of conflict and change, future research must integrate additional factors such as the quality and quantity of contact both within and between groups, the alignment of attitudes and identities with higher-order beliefs, as well as the nuanced nature of prevailing emotions among relevant social actors. Ultimately, beyond describing attitude–identity dynamics as potential facilitators of conflict and change, it will be crucial to explore whether and how the same mechanisms can be leveraged to promote reconciliation.

6 | CONCLUDING REMARKS

Societies are dynamic social systems that undergo continuous transformation. This special section has focused on the intersection of attitudes and identities as fundamental social psychological processes that influence the dynamics of discourse underlying competing enactments of what counts as desirable progress. The collection of articles demonstrates how attitude–identity relationships are *context-dependent*, *fluid*, and *inherently social*. Exploring and comparing the diversity of factors and processes underlying attitude–identity dynamics is a massive yet gainful endeavour that promises to further advance the understanding of the mechanisms underlying diverse forms of conflict and change. We hope that this special section will advance this aim by stimulating interest among scholars with diverse theoretical and methodological backgrounds and interests.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

None of the authors have a conflict of interest to disclose.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no data sets were generated or analysed during the current study.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This special section introduction was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association.

TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

This special section introduction was written with the intention of providing a framework for the five selected articles in alignment with the announced goals, as well as offering suggestions for future research. No empirical data was generated or analyzed for this article.

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