

Introduction to Special Issue of Relationship Research in Scandinavia

This Special Issue on Relationship Research in Scandinavia brings together very interesting contributions of one of the most socially and culturally advanced areas on the planet. This issue was possible only to the great efforts and hard work of Dr. Bjarne Holmes who did a great job and a significant contribution to this new journal as an associate editor. I hope that this issue will encourage authors from this fascinating area of Europe to continue submitting papers to *Interpersona*. I am also enthusiastic about the fact that researchers, potential researchers, and students from any country on Earth will have the opportunity to access these papers on interpersonal relationships.

I am grateful to all those who took part in this historical issue: authors, reviewers, and specially to Dr. Holmes for his dedication and commitment.

Agnaldo Garcia

Editor

I am pleased to introduce to our international readership a Special Edition on Relationship Research in Scandinavia. As a backdrop to all work presented, the Scandinavian countries are often understood to boast some of the highest living standards in the world, the most protective social welfare systems, the most progressive family policy and support, and a seemingly high level of gender equality. However, despite this, one thing I have learned over these past 18 months is that relationship research in the Nordic countries is alive and well with numerous researchers working toward still bettering their societies. Each of the papers in this

Special Edition has a core element of practical significance, with authors often making concrete suggestions of particular relevance to clinicians and policy makers.

In my editing process I have tried to strike a balance between publishing the best possible papers and presenting variety from different countries, disciplines, and methodological approaches. I chose to send out 14 original submissions for review and to publish 5 of those in the end, an acceptance rate of 36%. Represented in the papers published are three of four Scandinavian countries as well as a healthy mixture between psychology and sociology/gender studies. Three papers take a quantitative approach while two take a qualitative.

Seldom if ever will you come across high quality papers from such differing epistemological perspectives as are presented side-by-side in this Special Edition. My hope is that this mixture will spur scholars who traditionally hold opposing views toward acknowledging each others' value and contribution. Some of the most important questions still to be answered regarding modern day relationships require a new and bold approach to research where the safeguarding of traditional disciplinary, methodological, and theoretical dogma is abandoned and replaced by intellectual tolerance and a desire to collaborate.

I have leaned heavily on the world-class expertise and decisions of the 40 reviewers who volunteered their time and effort to this Special Edition. I wish to give my most sincere thanks to you – you know who you are! I also wish to thank all contributing authors for engaging in this process; keep up the great work!

In the first paper, a team of international researchers (Ottesen Kennair, Schmitt, Fjeldavli, & Harlem, 2009) use an evolutionary psychology perspective to test for sex differences in sexual desires and attitudes in Norway. In stark contrast, paper two (Evertsson & Nyman, 2009) takes a social constructionist approach to exploring gender equality and the organizing of everyday living in Swedish couples. Paper three (Bergnéhr, 2009) continues by exploring the contribution of the social influence of peers and family on the deferral and timing of parenthood, again in Swedish couples. Paper four (Lasgaard & Elklit, 2009) utilizes a population stratified sample to help us gain a better understanding of the demographic, psychological, and relational features of loneliness in Danish youth. Lastly, paper five (Lundh, Wångby-Lundh, & Ulander, 2009) uses both

a variable-centered and person-centered approach to test for the influence of the emotional quality of relationships with both parents and peers on deliberate self-harm in a Swedish sample of young adolescents.

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