PREFACE

Advances in Group Processes publishes theoretical analyses, reviews, and theory based empirical chapters on group phenomena. The series adopts a broad conception of "group processes." This includes work on groups ranging from the very small to the very large, and on classic and contemporary topics such as status, power, trust, justice, social influence, identity, decision-making, intergroup relations, and social networks. Previous contributors have included scholars from diverse fields including sociology, psychology, political science, economics, business, philosophy, computer science, mathematics, and organizational behavior.

Volume 31 represents somewhat of a first for the series. In August 2013, group processes scholars from around the world gathered in New York City to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Annual Conference for Theory and Research on Group Processes. That conference was first held at Emory University in 1988, and part of the goal of the 2013 event was to celebrate several of the mainstream theoretical research programs in the group processes arena. This volume brings together a subset of the papers that were presented at that conference.

The volume begins with "Twenty-Five Years of the Group Processes Conference: A Review Essay" by Morris Zelditch Jr. This paper reviews and analyzes the impact that the group processes conference (and to a lesser extent the *Advances in Group Processes* series) has had on small groups research. "Buzz" has been an important part of the formalization and growth of the group processes domain and a mainstay at the Annual Group Processes Conference. We are extremely pleased to have his insights to open the volume.

The next five papers represent what are likely the most complete and comprehensive reviews of some of the most influential theoretical research programs in the group processes domain. First, in "Expectation States Theory: Growth, Opportunities and Challenges," Joseph Berger, David G. Wagner, and Murray Webster Jr. review the Expectation States theoretical research program. After identifying the contemporary branches of the program and specifying the important concepts, the authors explicate the main theoretical branches prior to 1988 and those that have emerged

since then. They close by identifying a number of experimental and theoretical challenges that lie ahead. Next, Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke outline the current state of the affairs in "The Development of Identity Theory." The authors trace the development of identity theory from 1988 to the present day, detailing the development of the perceptual control system, the role of resources and symbols, and the fundamental bases of identity stability and change. The authors also show how identity theory has been applied in the areas of crime and law, education, race and ethnicity, gender, family, and the environment. The chapter closes by examining future areas of research and development.

Shane R. Thye, Aaron Vincent, Edward J. Lawler, and Jeongkoo Yoon review the past two and a half decades of research on relational and group ties in "Relational Cohesion, Social Commitments and Person-to-Group Ties: Twenty-Five Years of a Theoretical Research Program." Beginning with research on commitment that emerged in the early 1990s, the authors describe and explain the evolution of three inter-related theories about the role of emotions in social exchange: the theory of relational cohesion, the affect theory of social exchange, and the theory of social commitments. Empirical tests and applications are discussed and new directions are identified. The following chapter entitled "Back to the Future: 25 Years of Research in Affect Control Theory" by Neil J. MacKinnon and Dawn T. Robinson track the development of affect control theory from the late 1960s to today. They not only explore the questions, theoretical advances, and empirical base for the theory, they also examine how changes in technology have allowed the theory to answer new questions and forge into new domains.

The set of review chapters closes with "Elementary Theory: 25 Years of Expanding Scope and Increasing Precision" (by David Willer, Pamela Emanuelson, Michael J. Lovaglia, Brent Simpson, Shane R. Thye, Henry Walker, Mamadi Corra, Steven Gilham, Danielle Lewis, Travis Patton, Yamilette Chacon, and Richard Chacon). This contribution explains how Elementary Theory works (i.e., how it simplifies the world into basic elements and builds more complex models from there) and how the theory has experienced both increased scope and precision over its life course. Covered are the many ways that elementary theory has guided prediction and explanation in both laboratory and field applications.

The final three papers are not reviews in the same sense as the preceding papers but offer new insights into other well established realms of the group processes tradition. First, in "Perceptions of Ability and Adherence to Rules, Guidelines, and Tradition," Jeffrey W. Lucas, Wesley S. Huey,

Marek N. Posard, and Michael J. Lovaglia offer a new theory linking status processes in groups and the proclivity to follow rules. Testing the theory, a new experiment shows that individuals who perceive they have low abilities are stricter in following the rules relative to those believed to have high ability. The authors discuss both the theoretical and practical implications of the work. The final two papers explore issues relating to social networks. In "Referent Networks and Distributive Justice," David Melamed, Hyomin Park, Jingwen Zhong, and Yue Liu theorize how simply knowing others' reward levels (i.e., knowledge of some referent network) can impact perceptions of justice. Whereas prior work in the area tends to examine referent *individuals* they recast the problem in terms of referent *networks*, and thus move to a more complex referent unit. A series of theoretically derived hypotheses are tested. The final paper in the volume is by James A. Kitts entitled "Beyond Networks in Structural Theories of Exchange: Promises from Computational Social Science." Social networks are typically viewed as a set of role relations, interpersonal sentiments, social interactions, or opportunities to exchange. Kitts examines the interplay across these four dimensions and argues that with emerging technologies comes the opportunity to more carefully analyze dynamic structural interdependencies and advance theories of exchange. Overall, this paper nicely integrates several conceptions of social networks and suggests new avenues for the development of theory and research.

Shane R. Thye
Edward J. Lawler
Series and Volume Co-Editors