

Editorial

In-Mind Magazine: The Why, the What, the When, and the How

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Writing an editorial to captivate a broad and knowledgeable audience seems much less than a piece of cake. How does one captivate a skillful and inquisitive audience, with simply the boring facts of a magazine's history at hand? Because as researchers, we typically seek out the tiniest details - and we debate on such details for hours. Don't ask us why, but it's our hobby. Similarly so, history buffs may tease apart the smallest details about the course of past actions - and let's say we embark on a brief history of In-Mind here. But is this history even interesting for a broader audience? Probably not. Because why would anyone other than the staff be interested in the history of a magazine? I cannot be sure of any potential motivations behind this.

Good. You did not get discouraged from reading. I hope I have lowered your expectations from me sufficiently to be able for you to enjoy this editorial. I'll tell you about the why, the what, the when, and the how of In-Mind. Let me get to the when and the why first. In-Mind started in 2006, founded by yours truly, in order to fill as what I felt was an immense gap in the journal market. Talking to knowledgeable and educated people surrounding me, it became obvious that people were enormously inquisitive to discover the intricate workings of the human mind - but, the question was often - how to? Within the academy, we have seen tough-to-read, perhaps for some dry, academic papers. These are typically interesting and thought-provoking for experts - for the same reason history is interesting for history buffs - as they provide the amount of detail that allows us to debate about the smallest possible things for hours on end.

On the other end, psychology glossies often provide an immense range in the quality of their arti-



cles. From well-researched articles about deception or emotion to unfounded claims about evolution or "karma": The variation in quality often provides a nuisance for psychological researchers. Where popular culture has absorbed immensely important psychological terms like "cognitive dissonance" and knowledge about conformity or obedience to authority, it has also absorbed myths about posture or the workings of the brain (do you only use 2% of your brain? Absolutely not - these people (e.g., <http://www.zoxpro.com/>) merely attempt to scam you). As a psychologist researching the body, hearing someone telling you that "that is a closed posture", when I have my arms folded, may sometimes make my hair rise. If I'd receive a Euro for every time I'd heard that sentence, I'd be a rich man

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now (oh, and while you are at it, check out another tale about the Mehrabian Myth: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7dboA8cag1M>). So, psychology may sometimes be misrepresented by people trying to make a buck, but as psychologists we may also not have been sufficiently involved in “knowledge valorization”. And that is where In-Mind steps in.

In-Mind provides the middle way between glossies and the academy, to communicate the intricate workings of the human mind does in a social context. Social psychologists study how the social environment influences people’s thinking, their feelings, and their behaviors – and the interaction between them. The influence of the social context is pervasive in almost everything people think, feel, and do, and as such, social psychology is a very broad and multidisciplinary field. Because the influence of the social context on people’s psyche is so pervasive in people’s life, we aim to demystify findings and allow our audience and the authors to engage in a scholarly debate. What makes In-Mind such a reliable and enjoying tool as a source for public education is that articles undergo rigid peer-review. In other words, we borrow the best of the academic and the mainstream articles to guarantee you the utmost quality.

While In-Mind should be enjoyable, insightful, and thought-provoking for a wider audience, there’s one thing it does not do. It will answer you the immediate question: What does research finding X or Y tell us theoretically? But we may not always be able to tell you what’s the use of research finding X in terms of application. And may we always want to do this? Perhaps not. Let’s dive into a famous example from Southern Europe. The work by the Italian Alessandro Volta is an example of embarking on an uncertain path. Volta created the forerunner of the first battery which for example now can be used in pacemakers. But had Volta in advance argued for the development of the battery for this purpose, people would have probably thought he’d be crazy. In other words, science is important on its own merit and can and should be disseminated. It is important to communicate our discipline to a broader audience, and In-Mind provides you with all the necessary tools to apply this knowledge and improve your own decisions. And think of cognitive dissonance, think of our knowledge about conformity, or even think about white lab coats and authority, or, perhaps, you may even think about Zimbardo’s Prison Experiment (which, despite many ethical and methodological issues, has become well-known in popular culture and captured in film). If you don’t know them, Google them. They have become part of our public discourse and slowly but surely we become more

knowledgeable about stigma and ostracism, sexual objectification, attribution of humanity, for instance.

Then what about In-Mind’s own history? Perhaps this is best captured in what Psychblog has said about us in 2008: “It was a good while ago (well back in April) when I first talked about In-Mind. Back then it was just starting out as a blog-come-journal-type-thing in social psychology. Well, over the last few months it’s gone from strength-to-strength and it’s one of the sites I make sure that I read when I have a minute.” And this was only in 2008. Now we’d like to think we have evolved to being the highest impact journal in social psychology. But let me tell you what has occurred over the past years, as I have said some things about the why, but it’s the how’s turn now. I will disclose some information with you, our Italian reader, about where it happened, but don’t share this information. It will be the first and only time I share the photograph associated with it. In-Mind was started in the habitat below (I cannot call it more than a habitat – it was certainly not a house). Yes, indeed, In-Mind was started in a sea container (not bigger than 25 square meters). I had just finished the research master at VU University, in Amsterdam in 2006 and that was where I had lived for 2.5 years. There – I said it: In-Mind was started in a sea container in the port area of Amsterdam. I admit it.

These first years were tough. It meant begging other sites for links, it meant begging authors for articles, and we only had the capabilities to create an extremely basic site (Dirk Schrama, one other person living in one of those enormous habitats, was our first webmaster who helped us out voluntarily). We barely had anything to offer. Other research master students were willing to help out writing, and the magazine started to grow just a bit once some faculty members from the VU were willing to write a piece. It took a lot of time and effort to create the site, to get links, and to gain some name recognition. Our first few issues were not peer-reviewed, simply because we did not have the staff to do so. Then came Phil Zimbardo and people like Angela Leung and CY Chiu, who wrote wonderful articles. And then our editorial staff started to become better and better. Other researchers started to contribute in terms of content and form. In-Mind slowly starting gaining ground and enthusiasm amongst other psychologists. Ask any social psychologist now about In-Mind, and they will most certainly know our magazine (and if they don’t, you have a bit of explaining to do).

And perhaps sometimes it may appear now as if I consider In-Mind solely my “child”. This is certainly not the case. In-Mind has had many mothers

and fathers, and has become a brand in our science because of the small, large, and immense contributions from many different staff members. Small pieces of the puzzle started to come together as we go along. And it's been mostly trial and error. Because what things should or should we not borrow from other journals in terms of how they work? And how can the different versions of our journal best work together? There have been many different ways in which we tried to work – and does it work well! We are now visited by at least 500 people per day, and score 6/10 on Google Page Rank (this is a great rank – just ask Google!). On our English site, we now also present online research in which people can participate, we review news headlines about social psychology in the world, and review books related to social psychology. And we only just got started. Soon we will present you our In-Mind iPhone App, and many, many more cool new articles.

As a cherry on our ever-expanding cake, we present to you In-Mind Italia. Its editorial team will offer you a new part of our ever-expanding puzzle – now fresh in Italian. In-Mind Italia will use the existing format, but it will undoubtedly improve and has improved our format. The team (Lisa Fellin, Silvia Galdi, Stefano Pagliaro, and Elena Trifiletti) has been doing a tremendous job in putting together this first issue, pushed to great heights by the inspiring Giulio Boccato and Luca Andrighetto. In the first issue, you will read insightful reflections on the importance of research in social psychology, by Luciano Arcuri, and on the role of rationality in social judgment and decision making, by Joachim Krueger. You will discover how people can love animals and eat them, as explained by Stephen Loughnan, Boyka Bratanova, and Elisa Puvia. You will learn more about sexual objectification of women, in a paper by Giuseppina Pacilli, and about the relation between stigma and ostracism, in the final paper by Adriano Zamperini.

Oh, and your expectations? I set you up. Research shows that lowering your expectations may decrease your potential disappointments. I hope you are as excited about In-Mind Italia as I am and hope that it will serve Italy for many years to come!

Hans Ijzerman, the founding editor of In-Mind Magazine, received his Bachelor Degree in Psychology from Saint Vincent College in the United States. Once he returned to the Netherlands, he earned a Master's Degree from VU University and a PhD from Utrecht University, both in Social Psychology. He is now



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