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Social Psychological Bulletin Special Topic on Psychosocial Functioning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly an exceptional event in our lives. Few could believe that the entire world would go into a state of emergency with schools, workplaces and public places closed for months, and our daily personal and professional routines severely interrupted.

People's reactions to the pandemic have captured the fascination of psychologists. Psychologists initiated efforts to find solutions useful to the general public and policy makers, and the pandemic offers unique settings for testing and developing theory. Many of us have decided to conduct research to understand and explain people's behavior, attitudes and emotions during the COVID-19 outbreak, and to test theories in the novel context that it offers (e.g., Bavel et al., 2020; Brooks et al., 2020; Cantarero, Van Tilburg, & Smoktunowicz, 2020; Dolinski, Dolinska, Zmaczynska-Witek, Banach, & Kulesza, 2020; Torales, O'Higgins, Castaldelli-Maia, & Ventriglio, 2020).

As part of the Special Topic on the COVID-19 Pandemic at SPB, we invited submissions reporting research on psychosocial factors related to the coronavirus outbreak. The number of articles we received greatly exceeded our expectations. Thanks to thorough



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and prompt work delivered by the reviewers, we were able to select articles for the Special Topic. These papers offer important insight on psychosocial functioning of individuals during the pandemic. Most of the articles that were chosen for this Special Topic focused on adopting measures to strengthen protective behaviors related to the pandemic. For example, Dohle, Wingen, and Schreiber (2020, this issue) show the importance of trust in science and trust in politics as a basis for the adoption of behavioral protective measures, such as good hand hygiene and social distancing. Results of the research conducted by Drążkowski, Trepanowski, Chwiłkowska, and Majewska (2020, this issue) indicate that self-persuasion may be an effective technique to bolster moral obligation, which in turn enhances the intention to socially isolate. The paper by Koniak and Cwalina (2020, this issue) reports that employing an ‘allow’ (vs. ‘forbid’) frame results in higher acceptance of COVID-19 related restrictions. Additionally, in cross-cultural research, Wismans et al. (2020, this issue) found that social distancing and hygiene behaviors differ in how they are perceived, which should be taken into consideration when generating valid public health recommendations. The articles by Lamarche (2020, this issue) and Harth and Mitte (2020, this issue) focused on people’s functioning during the pandemic. Lamarche (2020, this issue) showed the importance of sociorelational safety for the perception of COVID-19 precautions and trust in government responses. Finally, Harth and Mitte (2020, this issue) examined the negative effects that the pandemic has on parents (vs. non-caregivers) and the extent to which they experience role conflict and exhaustion.

We think that the results of the works gathered in this Special Topic are not only important and timely for researchers in social sciences, but also potentially meaningful and useful for practitioners outside academia. Furthermore, they underscore the critical role that social psychologists can play in helping humanity overcome the psychological challenges the pandemic caused.

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