

International Journal of **Strategic Communication**



Call for Abstracts & Papers

Special Issue – Volume 17(3)

Evolutionary Psychology and Strategic Communication

Guest Editors:

Cary Greenwood, University of Oklahoma, USA

Howard Nothhaft, Lund University, Sweden

Jens Seiffert-Brockmann, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria

Deadline for Extended Abstracts: 31.03.2022

Rationale

At the very end of *The Origin of Species* (first edition 1859), Charles Darwin famously outlined his vision of an evolutionary mind science: “In the distant future I see open fields for far more important researches. Psychology will be based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation.” (2017, p. 525) More than 150 years later, evolutionary biologists, anthropologists, and psychologists are exploring approaches to the human mind very much in line with Darwin’s vision. Driven by scientists such as Leda Cosmides and John Tooby (1997), evolutionary psychology has taken shape as an increasingly coherent research agenda.

Today, evolutionary psychology and the mind sciences have made numerous inroads into areas associated with the social sciences and humanities. Not only have cognitive and affective neuroscience, personality psychology and social psychology found their way into curricula of managers. Evolutionary psychology is applied as a fundamental framework in disciplines as diverse as marketing (Saad, 2007), political science (Hibbing, Smith & Alford, 2014; Orbell, Morikawa, Hartwig, Hanley & Allen, 2004), anthropology and the study of human conflict, political and conflict psychology (Orbell & Morikawa, 2011), philosophy and epistemology (Rosenberg, 2018), and sociology (Dietz, Burns & Buttel, 1990). Inevitably, there is also criticism (Goldfinch, 2015), which ranges from total and uninformed damnation to nuanced, well-articulated doubt (see Confer et al., 2010).

Cary Greenwood (2010) was the first scholar to systematically introduce evolutionary thought to public relations and organizational communication. She proposed evolutionary theory as the metatheory for public relations and adoption of E. O. Wilson’s (1998) idea of *consilience*. In recent years, a handful of scholars have followed Greenwood’s lead (e.g., Marsh 2013; 2017; 2018; Seiffert-Brockmann, 2018;

Seiffert-Brockmann & Thummes, 2017). Like Greenwood, Nothhaft recently called for a conceptual integration based upon Wilson's (1998) idea of consilience. Specifically addressing strategic communication, he suggests that for "the field to mature, leading researchers need to work towards a consilient synthesis, i.e., a theoretical framework that contains nonrelativistic conjectures about the world which form a nucleus for research to accumulate around" (Nothhaft, 2016, p. 69).

We believe that strategic communication benefits greatly from *being informed by* evolutionary, personality and social psychology, cognitive and affective neuroscience, psycholinguistics, behavioral economics etc. While authors are not required to have their disciplinary home in these fields, the Special Issue calls for contributions rooted in a firm layman's understanding of evolutionary psychology and the mind sciences.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Conceptual and theoretical approaches to integrate evolutionary psychology with strategic communication
- (2) The evolutionary foundations of strategic communication and communication management
- (3) Conceptualizations of key issues such as reputation, image, trust, status, prestige against the background of evolutionary thinking
- (4) Evolution, language and strategic communication
- (5) Power and influence
- (6) Manipulation, deception and self-deception in strategic communication
- (7) Fundamental motives in strategic communication
- (8) (Costly) signaling of organizations
- (9) Corporate storytelling and narratives from an evolutionary point of view
- (10) Cooperation, relationships and engagement
- (11) Corporate Social Responsibility and organizational generosity, altruism, reciprocity
- (12) Ethical and moral implications for strategic communication
- (13) Practical applications of evolutionary psychology in communication

Contributions to the Special Issue should conceptualize how insights may be utilized to approach, unpack and disentangle key issues in the field of strategic communication such as reputation, image, trust, status, prestige, power and influence, manipulation and deception, ethical and unethical communication, etc. Ideally, authors should not stop at 'exploration', however. While exploratory discourse is an important first step, the aim is to work towards theory with explanatory power and practical utility. Ultimately, our project is to connect theories of public relations, strategic communication, and organizational communication with the mind and natural sciences in a rigorous way. Beyond the Special Issue, we hope to gather a small but determined group of researchers who will collaborate and cooperate in this project. We also welcome contributions that take a critical stance against evolutionary psychology and the mind sciences, of course. We strive for an informed, substantial debate, however, so authors will have to demonstrate a thorough understanding of what is being criticized.

The selection of papers will reflect the scope of the *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, which aims to build an interdisciplinary body of knowledge in strategic communication, defined as "all communication that is substantial for the survival and sustained success of an entity. Specifically, strategic communication is the purposeful use of communication by an entity to engage in conversations of strategic significance to its goals. Entity includes all kind of organizations (e.g., corporations, governments, or non-profits), as well as social movements and known individuals in the public sphere. Communication can play a distinctive role for the formulation, revision, presentation, execution, implementation, and operationalization of strategies" (Zerfass et al., 2018, p. 487).

Submitted papers should clearly be linked to existing scholarship in strategic communication and reflect the understanding mentioned above, but can be based on theoretical and methodological

approaches from diverse disciplines. Research questions and topics addressed should be valuable for a global readership. While international, comparative, and cross-cultural studies are especially welcome, research with a regional or national focus is suitable if insights or results build understanding of strategic communication in other parts of the world.

Submission and Selection Process

Abstracts with proposals for submissions should be no more than three pages, including references (double-spaced with 1" margins, Times New Roman 12 pt.). Abstracts should outline the paper, providing research questions and/or hypotheses, methods, key messages or results, and contribution to the body of knowledge.

Please also submit a separate title page to list all author names and affiliations, as well as a short bio (2-3 sentences; max 75 words) of the author(s).

Abstracts and bios should be submitted by March 31, 2022, to guest editors Jens Seiffert-Brockmann (jens.seiffert-brockmann@wu.ac.at) AND Howard Nothhaft (howard.nothhaft@isk.lu.se) AND Cary A. Greenwood (cary.a.greenwood-1@ou.edu).

The authors of the abstracts most suited to the topic of the Special Issue will be asked to submit full papers of not more than 32 pages, including references and tables/figures (maximum 8,000 words), by August 31, 2022. Full paper submissions should follow the Instructions for Authors on the IJSC website. Authors must use APA 7 style for citations, references, tables and figures caption. All identifying information must be deleted before full paper submissions.

Full papers will receive blinded external review, as well as review by the guest editors. The accepted manuscripts will be published online and in print in IJSC, Vol. 17(3), June 2023.

Depending on the overall breadth and quality of the selected submissions, the articles might also published later on as an edited book by Routledge – this was done with some special issues of this journal before and gained more outreach for all authors.

Timeline

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| ▪ Deadline for abstract submission: | March 31, 2022 |
| ▪ Requests for full papers provided: | April 30, 2022 |
| ▪ Deadline for full article submissions: | August 31, 2022 |
| ▪ Reviews of full papers provided: | October 15, 2022 |
| ▪ Deadline for revised submissions: | December 1, 2022 |
| ▪ Additional revisions (if necessary) | subsequently |
| ▪ Final versions due: | January 31, 2022 |
| ▪ Papers and editorial transferred to production: | April 20, 2023 |
| ▪ Proofs sent to editors and authors: | subsequently |
| ▪ Special Issue published: | June 28, 2023 |

About the journal

The International Journal of Strategic Communication (IJSC) is one of the top journals published by Routledge (Taylor & Francis) with a record 120,000 downloads of articles in 2020. Its readership is truly international with article downloads spread over Asia (20%), North America (20%), Europe (39%), Africa (9%), and Australasia (11%). The journal is part of a multi-national effort to integrate various communication disciplines into a coherent body of knowledge and facilitate the development of strategic communication as a domain of study. IJSC seeks to define the field of strategic communication, address the application of theory to this emerging field, provide a forum for multidisciplinary approaches and diverse research traditions, and espouse a truly international perspective that gives voice to cross-cultural research and scholars in all regions of the world. To view

an online sample, visit www.tandfonline.com/HSTC. The journal is edited by Dr. Ansgar Zerfass, Institute of Communication and Media Studies, Leipzig University, Germany, and Kelly Page Werder, Ph.D., Zimmerman School of Advertising and Mass Communications, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, USA.

About the guest editors

Cary A. Greenwood, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA, is Associate Director for Public Relations Research at the Debiasing and Lay Informatics Lab in the Center for Applied Social Research at the University of Oklahoma. Her research interests include evolutionary theory, whistleblowing, employee-organization relationships, and corporate social responsibility. She is the author of *Public Relations and Whistleblowing: Golden Handcuffs in Corporate Wrongdoing*, published by Routledge in autumn 2021.

Dr. Howard Nothhaft is Associate Professor in the Department of Strategic Communication at Lund University, Sweden. His research interests include strategic communication theory, the democratic impacts of corporate communication, and techniques, stratagems and strategies of counter-influence. He is the lead author of *Future Directions of Strategic Communication*, a seminal book published by Routledge in 2020.

Dr. Jens Seiffert-Brockmann is Professor for Business Communication at the Department of Foreign Language Business Communication at the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU). He is the chair of the Public Relations and Organizational Communication Division of the German Communication Association (DGPUK), Co-Editor of *Medien Journal*, the Austrian Journal for Media and Communication Research, and member of the board of the Austrian Communication Association (ÖGK).

References

- Confer, J. C., Easton, J. A., Fleischman, D. S., Goetz, C. D., Lewis, D. M. G., Perilloux, C., & Buss, D. M. (2010). Evolutionary psychology. Controversies, questions, prospects, and limitations. *The American Psychologist*, 65(2), 110–126. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018413>
- Cosmides, L. (1989). The logic of social exchange: Has natural selection shaped how humans reason? Studies with the Wason selection task. *Cognition*, 31(3), 187–276. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277\(89\)90023-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0277(89)90023-1)
- Darwin, C. (1859). *The origin of species: By means of natural selection*. The preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life. John Murray, Albemarle Street.
- Dietz, T., Burns, T. R., & Buttel, F. H. (1990). Evolutionary theory in sociology: An examination of current thinking. *Sociological Forum*, 5(2), 155–171. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01112590>
- Goldfinch, A. (2015). *Rethinking evolutionary psychology* (2015th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Greenwood, C. A. (2010). Evolutionary theory: The missing link for conceptualizing public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(4), 456–476. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10627261003801438>
- Hibbing, J. R., Smith, K. B., & Alford, J. R. (2014). *Predisposed: Liberals, conservatives, and the biology of political differences*. Routledge.
- Marsh, C. (2013). Social harmony paradigms and natural selection: Darwin, Kropotkin, and the metatheory of mutual aid. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 25(5), 426–441. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2013.795861>
- Marsh, C. (2017). *Public relations, cooperation, and justice: From evolutionary biology to ethics*. Routledge.
- Marsh, C. (2018). Indirect reciprocity and reputation management: Interdisciplinary findings from evolutionary biology and economics. *Public Relations Review*, 44(4), 463–470. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2018.04.002>
- Nothhaft, H. (2016). A framework for strategic communication research: A call for synthesis and consilience. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 10(2), 69–86. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2015.1124277>
- Orbell, J., Morikawa, T., Hartwig, J., Hanley, J., & Allen, N. (2004). “Machiavellian” intelligence as a basis for the evolution of cooperative dispositions. *The American Political Science Review*, 98(1), 1–15.
- Orbell, J., & Morikawa, T. (2011). An evolutionary account of suicide attacks: The Kamikaze case. *Political Psychology*, 32(2), 297–322. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2010.00808.x>
- Rosenberg, A. (2018). *Philosophy of social science* (5th ed.). Routledge.
- Saad, G. (2007). *The evolutionary bases of consumption*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Seiffert-Brockmann, J. (2018). Evolutionary psychology: A framework for strategic communication research. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 12(4), 417–432. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1490291>

- Seiffert-Brockmann, J., & Thummes, K. (2017). Self-deception in public relations. A psychological and sociological approach to the challenge of conflicting expectations. *Public Relations Review*, 43(1), 133–144.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2016.12.006>
- Tooby, J., & Cosmides, L. (1997). *Evolutionary psychology: A primer*. Center for Evolutionary Psychology, University of California Santa Barbara. <https://www.cep.ucsb.edu/primer.html>
- Wilson, E. O. (1998). *Consilience: The unity of knowledge*. Knopf.
- Zerfass, A., Verčič, D., Nothhaft, H., & Werder, K. P. (2018). Strategic communication: Defining the field and its contribution to research and practice. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 12(4), 487–505.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1493485>