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Submission Deadlines
International Psychology Bulletin
Vaishali V. Raval, Editor, ravalvv@miamioh.edu
For smaller articles (op-ed, comments, suggestions, etc.), submit up to 200 words. Longer articles (e.g., Division reports) can be up to 3,000 words (negotiable) and should be submitted to the appropriate section editor. Guidelines for submission to peer-reviewed research article or theoretical review sections, please see the next page.

- Book Reviews, Current Issues Around the Globe, Division 52 News, and Peer-Reviewed Research Articles: Vaishali V. Raval ravalvv@miamioh.edu
- Early Career Professional Column: Zornitsa Kalibatseva, zorito7@gmail.com or Snežana Stupar-Rutenfrans s.stupar@hotmail.com
- Student Column: Marta E Pagan-Ortiz, Marta_PaganOrtiz001@umb.edu
- Teaching International Psychology: Gloria Grenwald grenwald@webster.edu
- Travels in the History of Psychology: John D. Hogan, hoganj@stjohns.edu
- Heritage Mentoring Project: Neal Rubin, nealrubin@hotmail.com

Submission Deadlines:
- Spring issue March 31st
- Summer issue June 30th
- Fall issue September 15th
- Winter issue December 15th

Issues typically will be published about 4 weeks after the deadline.
Inside This Issue

Early Career Professional Column

Psychotherapy for Personal Growth? A Comparison of South and North American Practices.” (Ignacio Etchebarne, Cristian Garay, & Katie Aafjes van Doorn)

Student Column

In the Words of the Four Winners of the 2016 International Research Award for Graduate Students (Daria Diakonova-Curtis)

Graduate Student Internships with APA at the United Nations (Teresa Ober)

Teaching International Psychology

Teaching Abroad as Graduate Students: Reflections on an Applied Cross Cultural Psychology Course in Morocco (Rachel Shor & Lauren Breithaupt)

Book Review

Looking at the other 96 percent of children (Elaine P. Congress)

Submission Guidelines for Peer-reviewed Articles

International Psychology Bulletin

The IPB publishes peer-reviewed research articles and theoretical reviews that focus on important issues related to international psychology. The review process takes approximately two months.

Please submit the following three documents in Microsoft Word format to Dr. Vaishali Raval at ravalvv@miamioh.edu:

A cover letter
A title page with the title of the manuscript, author names and institutional affiliations, and an author note that includes name and contact information of corresponding author
A blinded manuscript that does not include authors’ names or any identifying information

Cover letter
In your cover letter be sure to include the author’s postal address, e-mail address, and telephone number for future correspondence
State that the manuscript is original, not previously published, and not under concurrent consideration elsewhere
State that the manuscript adheres to APA Ethical Principles (Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct), and all co-authors are in agreement about the content of the manuscript
Inform the journal editor of the existence of any published manuscripts written by the author that is sufficiently similar to the one submitted (e.g., uses the same dataset).

Blinded Manuscript
Check APA Journals Manuscript Submission Instructions for All Authors
The entire manuscript should be formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins, and double-spaced submitted as Microsoft Word document. The entire manuscript should be up to 4000 words.
The first page of the manuscript should include a title of the manuscript (no more than 12 words)
The second page of the manuscript should include an abstract containing a maximum of 250 words, followed by up to five keywords brief phrases
The remaining pages should include the text of the manuscript. For research articles, include introduction, method, results, and discussion. The format of a review paper will vary, and may include a brief introduction to the topic, review of the literature, and conclusions and future directions.
Present tables and figures as per the Manual, if you have any, at the end of the manuscript.
Review APA’s Checklist for Manuscript Submission before submitting your article.

Upon acceptance
Please note that if your article is accepted for publication in International Psychology Bulletin, you will be asked to download the copyright transfer form, complete and sign it, and return to the editor (ravalvv@miamioh.edu) before the manuscript can be published.
Current Issues Around the Globe—Reports

New Oxford University Press Bibliography on “International Psychology” (Uwe P. Gielen, Grant J. Rich, Richard Velayo, & Karold Takooshian) 49

The 20th European Congress of the International Association for the Adolescents’ Health (IAAH) in Kosovo (Flaska Isufi & Fitim Uka) 49

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Board Members

Officers / Committee Chairs 52
Overview of Division Activities and Strategic Planning

Jean Lau Chin, Ed.D.
APA 2016 Division 52 President
chin@adelphi.edu

Connections-Collaboration-Communication and Technology are the buzzwords to capture how I would like to describe my year as president of Division 52 so far. The energy of our Executive Committee was evident in our EC meeting in Denver, Colorado at the 2016 APA Convention as we continued our strategic planning. We have successfully enabled our meetings to be accessible virtually in real time for members unable to attend face to face, thanks to the efforts and technology support of our webmaster Lucio Forti, and Education and Training Chair, Richard Velayo. We cosponsored the International Visitors Reception together with CIRP and used the occasion to recognize Merry Bullock on her retirement as Director of the Office of International Affairs, but welcome her as our incoming President-Elect for 2017. We collaborated with Division 2 (Teaching) and Division 56 (Trauma) on proposals to provide joint programming in internationalizing the curriculum and on immigration trauma with refugees. We joined Division 29 (Psychology) in their agreement with Oriental Insight in China to collaborate on the status of psychotherapy. Suzana Adams has done a great job with FAST-CONNECT, a trio of interviews linking ECP, student, and senior psychologists together featuring their work. The work of many of our committees has enriched what our division is doing.

Strategic Planning

During our August EC, Task Forces for our strategic planning process reported on their progress addressing a blueprint for our division’s future to identify—Where we have been, Where we are now, and Where we might go—to actualize the division’s potential in international psychology.

TF 1: Celebrating our 20th Anniversary—Chair, Mercedes McCormick. Join our celebration at the 2017 APA Convention in Washington, DC.

TF 2: Appraising our Past, Present, and Future—Chair, Senel Poyrazli. We see Division 52 as being the International Division.

TF 3: Engaging our Leaders—Chair, Mark Terjesen. Collaborating to engage psychologists internationally for research, training and practice.

TF 4: Engaging our Members—Chair, Laura Reid Marks. Engaging our members through outreach, social media, networking, and member benefits. Supporting students and ECPs for opportunities both in the US and internationally.

TF 5: Engaging our Partners—Chair, Suzana Adams. Collaborating to engage divisions and other international partners.

TF 6: Communicating and Publicizing Who We Are and What We Do—Chair, Stuart Carr. Promoting international issues through our publications and communications.

TF 7: Clarifying our Identity—Chair, Neal Rubin. Addressing policy on international issues related to such issues as: advocacy, trauma, humanitarian, immigration, social justice, diversity.

TF 8: Completing our Strategic Plan—Co-Chairs, Jean Lau Chin and Craig Shealy.

International Leadership Network

We have had several signature events to develop this network to promote mutual exchange and collaborate for scholarship, research, education and training on global and diverse leadership.

My hope was that this network could build a critical mass of scholars internationally to collaborate on issues in leadership, build a pipeline for leaders in psychology, create leadership development activities and training for new and existing leaders, and to address disparities in leadership via training, policy, and research.

We are now developing our database on LinkedIn. Go to the International Leadership Network – Global and Diverse Group: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2820671

We had several successful forums and symposia of the International Leadership Network during 2016 at conventions of the: American Psychological Association in Denver, Eastern Psychological Association in New York, International Union of Psychological Science, and International Council of Psychologists in Yokohama, Japan. These were also accessible remotely and brought scholars together for presentation and participation. Nancy Sidun and Linda Garcia Shelton are working to develop a mutual exchange for Education and Training of psychologists between institutions of higher education. Jean Lau Chin and Craig Shealy are working on Leadership Research.

Leadership Development—Richard Velayo has planned a series of Conversation Hours on Leadership during 2016-2017 via virtual access and web conferencing. This series of conversation hours are for all who are interested in leadership. It is FOR leaders and ON leadership to talk about being and becoming good leaders, and on the strategies and models for effective leadership. These sessions will be video-recorded and archived to be available on our Division 52 (International Psychology) website: https://div52.org/ln/

FALL 2016

Sep 19 (Mon) - Jean Lau Chin: "Global and Diverse Leadership"

October 19 (Wed) – Craig Shealy: “Cultivating the Globally Sustainable Leader”

Nov 16 (Wed) - Uwe Gielen: “Developing International Psychology Leaders through Publication and Scholarship”

SPRING 2017

Feb 17 (Fri) - Richard Velayo: "Perspectives on Internationalizing Leadership in Psychology through Teaching and Curriculum Development"
Message From the President

March 10 (Fri) - Merry Bullock: "Engagement in International Organizations, Partnerships and Collaborations: Pathways for Leadership Development in Psychology"

April 12 (Wed) - Harold Takooshian: “Developing International Psychology Leaders through Cross-National Teaching and Research”

Contact Us
The Division 52 leadership looks forward to engaging with our member to achieve our goals. As president, I especially invite you to join the ongoing discussion through the open forum on the Div52 Listserv or contact me at: ceoservices@yahoo.com If you are not currently a member of the listserv, please send a request to lforti@pace.edu.
Five candidates were nominated for the 2016 President-Elect ballot of the American Psychological Association. In alphabetical (first name) order, they are:

Ali Mattu, Jessica Henderson Daniel, Kurt Geisinger, Rodney Lowman, Steven Reisner. Each of the five candidates was invited to submit a statement responding to:

1. Are you a member of Division 52?
2. What is your vision for international psychology?
3. If elected president, what might you do to promote international psychology?

In response to this request, we received statements from four candidates that are available below for your information. Our Division-52 leadership believes it is very important for division members to vote in this election and have your voice heard. Psychology within a global and international context is central to Division-52 goals, so we ask each member to consider these goals in casting your vote. It is important to remember the Hare system used by APA for casting ballots enables you to rank order the candidates. If your first choice candidate is not elected, your vote goes to your second choice. If both are defeated, then your vote goes to your third choice; this continues until your choices are exhausted to determine the final winner. The candidate statements below reflect their priorities and what they will bring to the APA presidency if elected. We are not telling you how to vote. Rather, we include the candidates’ statements as received to inform your decision in voting. The important thing is to VOTE.

### Ali Mattu

*Are you a member of Division 52?*

I am not a member of Division 52.

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### Jessica Henderson Daniel

*What is your vision for international psychology?*

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss my platform as it relates to Division-52. Psychology has always evolved its methods to understand the current issues impacting our world. Over the past decades, the internet has made us more interconnected and interdependent. Additionally, the major challenges facing our society (e.g. climate change, terrorism, economic stability) are global in nature. If we want to support APA’s vision of using psychological science to improve society in the 21st century, we must adopt an international perspective. This means understanding the cultural bias with which we approach psychology in the United States, collaborating with our international partners, and learning from each other.

*If elected president, what might you do to promote international psychology?*

If elected President, I will aim to help APA become a leader in the international community through the following actions:

- Collaborate with our international partners to develop global standards of research, practice, and training that are responsive to culture, protect the public, and facilitate professional mobility.
- Discuss the role of psychological science in creating solutions for the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- Cultivate international collaboration by expanding funding for APA’s cultural exchange program.
- Improve linguistic access to our website by translating popular resources into multiple languages.
Jessica Henderson Daniel cont’d
Are you a member of Division 52?

I am a member of 12 APA Divisions related to my current work responsibilities. While not a member of Division 52, I have a very strong interest in international issues having lived outside of the continental United States for seven years as a child and adolescent. I have also presented at two international psychology conferences in Cape Town, South Africa and in Paris, France.

What is your vision for international psychology?

Given the increased availability of international travel and resulting shrinkage of our globe, more people are visiting various parts of the world. Threats and advances with psychological implications readily cross national boundaries. Also, numerous international conferences offer many opportunities to meet scientific and applied colleagues across the globe.

I believe we should encourage more psychologists to attend such meetings and make contacts that will facilitate engagement in international projects across the spectrum of psychology.

My vision focuses on increasing interest and participation in international psychology at all levels from graduate students to senior psychologists. Mentoring both between and within the groups in the US and across the world would be intellectually stimulating.

If elected president, what would you do to promote international psychology?

First, I would encourage the Divisions in particular to identify psychologists who reside outside of the United States and who are working on projects related to the Division and then to invite them to join the Division and provide brief descriptions of their work first for publication in the Division newsletter or journal. Second, I would encourage creating travel scholarships for graduate students and ECPs to attend international conferences. Third, those psychologists who work at institutions that can fund travel to the United States may invite psychologists from abroad to give guest lectures. The international scholars may provide lectures at several universities while they are in the US. And finally, I would encourage psychologists to apply for Fulbright Fellowships and other resources to fund international travel.

Kurt F. Geisinger

Are you a member of Division 52?

Yes, in fact I have been a fellow for a number of years. International issues and membership in this division are both very important to me. I am presently the President-elect of the Assessment and Evaluation division of the International Association of Applied Psychology, where I have given talks in recent years. I am also President-elect of the International Test Commission and have served on their council (board) for the past six years and the last four as the only American officer. I have served on the Committee on International Relations in Psychology (CIRP) as well as the fellows committee for the division. I also represented APA on the International Standards Organization’s (ISO) first test standards committee successfully. I studied in Germany for a year as a matriculated student in psychology as an undergraduate. Since that time, as an academic vice president, I fostered study abroad programs to the extent that one university where I served, was identified as one of the top ten comprehensive universities in the country for fostering international education.

What is your vision for international psychology?

First, I believe that APA needs to become more international. Psychology is advancing rapidly and in some cases differently around the world yet many APA members (not appropriately) are focused on state issues, not even national ones, much less international issues. Second, I also believe that APA should endorse the International Declaration on Core Competences in Professional Psychology. It has been supported by APA in the past as well as ASPPB. As president, I would like to invite and sign more MOUs with countries and have communicated with the President-elect of Division 52, Dr. Merry Bullock in terms of identifying the best countries to approach. Finally, I want APA to increase the size and staffing of the International Office to the extent that APA can. It is a critical resource for APA and the world’s psychology.

If elected president, what might you do to promote international psychology?

I believe that I have provided some of these answers already. I would like to invite more international keynoters to the conference to discuss international issues in psychology at the APA conference. In fact, I would very much appreciate input from Division 52 in terms of having an international theme to the 2018 conference. As representative of APA I would also attend international congresses; I am already prepared to attend two international conferences as a board member of the two above-named organizations in 2018 and would hope to add several others. Whether or not I am able to attend some of the important international congresses, I would work to ensure that APA is represented. I would hope to work very closely with the International Office at APA and with the Committee on International Relations in Psychology to highlight issues that they believe important. Finally, I would like to emphasize the work that the psychology delegation to the United Nations makes to psychology. Extolling their work, as President I would expect to write an early Monitor article on their work. I would also continue my work as chair of the Governance Task Force for IAAP
and as president-elect of the International Test Commission and other international work. I was asked and agreed, for example, to provide the keynote address (on fairness in testing) to the association of Mexican educational researchers in Mexico City in September, 2016 (time when I could be continuing to campaign).

Rodney L. Lowman

Are you a member of Division 52?

Yes, I am a Fellow of Division 52.

What is your vision for international psychology?

As I wrote recently in the APA Monitor, “We live in extraordinary times. Soon, psychological services will be able to be delivered electronically around the world, psychological research will be conducted using global samples, and psychology graduate education will include work with globally diverse professors. But in expanding and adapting our services and research there are also challenges including standardizing credentialing, the need to expand our understanding of multicultural competencies to include international ones, and consideration of issues of validity and integrity of measurement in virtual contexts. We will need to prioritize these issues and the opportunities for collaboration with other psychological associations but the prospects are revolutionary.”

It is difficult to summarize all that is involved in my vision for internationalizing APA and American psychology in short space. Let me therefore contextualize my response by noting that internationalizing psychology is one of my major presidential goals (see rodneylowman.com) and also part of my life.

I’ve also written extensively on international issues in psychology including my book Internationalizing Multiculturalism: Expanding Professional Competencies in a Globalized World. My most recent books (An Introduction to Consulting Psychology: Working with Individuals, Groups, and Organizations and the forthcoming The Ethical Practice of Consulting Psychology (co-authored with Stewart Cooper) also addresses international issues. During my editorship of Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research the journal published a number of special issues and articles on international issues. As university president and Provost at my current university I revamped a multicultural initiative to be one equally focused on international issues and we created international competencies for all students, staff, and faculty.

As president of another university that was on an international border I made major initiatives with the Canadian city and their universities.

Internationalism is not a casual or late-arriving interest for me. I come from an international family with deep roots in Central America and Canada. I’ve lived abroad three times and have traveled to almost 80 countries on six continents. I have been a visiting faculty member or lecturer in a number of universities including, most recently at the University of South African and the University of Johannesburg.

In short my vision for internationalizing APA is not just words and ideas. It is a commitment to rethinking what it means for APA and APAPO to work in new ways to infuse the globalization of psychology in all that APA does.

If elected president, what might you do to promote international psychology?

First, I would build on the extensive work already done by APA through its international office and the work of Dr. Merry Bullock and her colleagues and CIRP. These include increasing the linkages with international psychology organizations around the world and an important effort to begin to define international guidelines and competencies. Second, we need to better recognize how psychology has developed around the world and to be more inclusive of international psychologists and associations with relevant expertise. I will seek to build better respect and recognition for international psychology around the world and to help American psychologists learn, and to integrate, best practices and research findings, from our international colleagues.

Third, I will use the APA presidency as a bully pulpit from which to bring international issues to the forefront. As part of that, I will create a summit on “internationalizing psychology and the APA/APAPO” to include consideration of the rapidly expanding opportunities to deliver our services electronically including to underserved areas and to address what it means to be a psychologist in an increasingly globalized world. Fourth, I will advocate for re-thinking the limited path for international psychologists to become engaged with APA as international affiliates (right now, other than Canadians, international psychologists can only become affiliate members of APA). That’s not good enough for today’s world. I will suggest that we consider paths that would allow psychologists from other countries to become full voting members of APA. Finally, I would aim to help re-conceptualize multiculturalism in the context of an already-globalized US, to help focus psychology’s attention on immigration policy, and to formulate our policies in ways that recognize that increasingly multiculturalism needs to be inclusive of internationalism.
Division 52 News and Updates

Division 52 2016 Awards

Mark Terjesen, PhD
Past president of D52

Dear International Psychology Community,

Below are the 2016 awards and their recipients. We held an awards ceremony in August in our hospitality suite during the APA conference in Denver to give out these awards. Please keep in mind that the call for the 2017 awards will be coming out in the upcoming months. You can also visit our website (www.div52.org) for a list of the awards and their criteria. Please consider applying for one of these awards either yourself or nominate somebody you may know.

OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST AWARD (NON-U.S. BASED):

Geoffrey Mark Reed, PhD
Professional Address: INPRFM-UNAM Centro de Investigación en Salud Mental Global Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría ‘Ramón de la Fuente Muñiz’ Calzada México-Xochimilco 101 Col. San Lorenzo Huipulco, Del. Tlalpan 14370 México, D.F., México reedg@who.int; gmreed@mac.com

OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST AWARD (U.S. BASED):

Larry Gerstein, PhD
George & Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of Psychology-Counseling (Ball State University) Director, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies (Ball State University) 765-285-8040 lgerstein@bsu.edu

EARLY CAREER OUTSTANDING PSYCHOLOGIST AWARD (U.S. BASED):

Gail M. Ferguson, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Studies Faculty Affiliate, Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Doris Kelley Christopher Hall, MC-081 904 West Nevada Street, Room 2015 Urbana, Illinois 61801 Phone: +1 217.300.0365 Email: gmergus@illinois.edu

EARLY CAREER OUTSTANDING PSYCHOLOGIST AWARD (NON-U.S. BASED):

Brian J. Hall, PhD
University of Macau Department of Psychology Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) Room: Humanities and Social Sciences Building E21-3040 Telephone: +(853) 8822 8369 E-mail: brianhall@umac.mo

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RESEARCH AWARDS:

Lauren Dewey, M.A.
"Providing Care for Many in the Context of Few Resources: Secondary Traumatic Stress, Burnout and Moral Distress Experienced by Healthcare Providers in Rural Uganda"
Clinical Psychology Program
Graduate Center at the City University of New York
New York, NY
Advisor: Maureen Allwood, PhD

Xue Yang, M.A.
"Culture and Stigma Internalization: The Buffering Effect of Dialectics among Hong Kong Chinese and Mainland Chinese"
Department of Psychology
The Chinese University of Hong Kong Shatin, NT, Hong Kong
Advisor: Winnie W. S. Mak, PhD

Jean-Machelle Benn-Dubois, PhD
"A Cultural Study on Transactional Sexual Abuse in the Caribbean: Professional Perspectives"
International Psychology Program
The Chicago School of Psychology Chicago, IL
Advisor: Patricia Perez, PhD

Ben Chun Pan Lam, M.Phil
"Dialectical Relationship Thinking: Explicit and Implicit Partner Evaluations across Cultures"
Department of Psychology, Social Psychology
Iowa State University Ames, IA
Advisor: Susan E. Cross, PhD

URSULA GIELEN GLOBAL PSYCHOLOGY BOOK AWARD:
Zeynap Aycan: Organizations and Management in Cross-Cultural Context.
Koc University, Sariyer, Istanbul, Turkey
zaycan@ku.edu.tr
90(212) 338 1353
THE ANNE ANASTASI GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH AWARD NOMINATION
Two Graduate Student Research Awards

Han Na Suh, M.A. (Korea)
University of Missouri-Columbia
Title: Assessing Discriminating Power and Dependability of Engineering Interest Scale via Modern test Theory

Roseanne M. Jocson, M.A. MS (Philippines)
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

HENRY P. DAVID INTERNATIONAL MENTOR AWARDS:

Non-U.S. Awardee:
Helene Hoi-Lam Fung, PhD
Professor of Psychology
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

U.S. Awardee:
Irene Lopez, PhD
Associate Professor of Psychology & Women and Gender Studies
Kenyon College-Ohio

PSI-CHI / DIV52 STUDENT TRAVEL AWARD:

Julia Daugherty
Doctoral Student (focus international neuropsychology)
University of Granada, Granada, Spain

Florence L. Denmark and Mary E. Reuder Award for Outstanding International Contributions to the Psychology of Women and Gender:

Jeanne Marecek, PhD
William R. Kenan Professor Emerita of Psychology Senior Research Professor, Swarthmore College
Announcing the Winners of the Inaugural Division 52 Student Video Contest
Laura Reid Marks, PhD
Membership Committee Chair

The winners of the first ever Division 52 Student Video Contest are Alyssa Benedict, Karen Brown, DeAnza Spaulding, and Joyce Yip Green (pictured respectively below). The winners are doctoral students in the International Psychology program at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Contestants were tasked with creating a YouTube video promoting Division 52 and international psychology. A cash prize of $100 was awarded to the winning video.

**Brief 100 word description of video:** The mission of Division 52 is to establish and develop a psychological science and practice that is contextually informed, culturally inclusive, serves the public interest, and promotes global perspectives within and outside of APA. Because we believe in and support the vision set forth by Division 52, we highlight the many issues that can be addressed and impacted by International Psychologists and Division 52 including violence against women and girls, children’s health, poverty, immigration, and intergroup conflict. We show how Division 52 offers access to critical global work and transformation through international connections, cultural collaborations, and multicultural research and practice.

**Direct URL to your submission video:** [https://youtu.be/tRIsFbQW5qk](https://youtu.be/tRIsFbQW5qk)
Acknowledgement of editorial assistance and expert peer review

Vaishali V. Raval, PhD
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ravalvv@miamioh.edu

This is the last issue of the year 2016 and on behalf of the editorial team, I would like to extend a note of gratitude to the individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to our Bulletin. We are grateful to our editorial assistants for the year 2015-16 who assisted with copy editing and worked persistently to prepare each of the issues in a timely manner. A special note of thanks to our peer reviewers who provided thorough and constructive reviews of the manuscripts submitted to peer-reviewed articles section that included a report of a research study. The expertise of peer reviewers ranged from global mental health, ethnic identity, biculturalism, parenting and parent-child relationships in diverse cultures, and social systems and organizations across cultures.

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Obituaries

Farewell to Professor Mustapha I. Soueif (July 17, 1924—June 27, 2016)
By Ramadan A. Ahmed, Former Professor of Psychology, Kuwait University, Kuwait

Professor Mustapha I. Soueif, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Cairo University, Egypt, passed away on June 27, 2016, just twenty days before his 92nd birthday.

He received his BA in philosophy (1945) and his MA (1949) and PhD (1954) in psychology from Cairo University, Egypt where he began teaching in 1950. In 1957, he obtained, under Hans Eysenck's and Monte B. Shapiro's supervision, a diploma in clinical psychology from London University. In 1970, he was appointed Chair Professor of Psychology in the Department of Philosophical and Psychological Studies, and in 1974, he became the first chairman of the newly established Psychology Department at Cairo University. From 1984 until his death, Dr. Soueif served as Professor Emeritus of Psychology, Cairo University. Having supervised around 100 MA and PhD theses in psychology as well as over 20 MD dissertations in medicine, he played a crucial role in the development of clinical psychology in Egypt and many other Arab countries.

Professor Soueif was not only widely known as the father of Arab clinical psychology but also for his pioneer major achievements in many other psychological fields, such as personality, extreme response sets, creativity and art appreciation, hashish consumption (and subsequently drug and other psychoactive substances consumption, where he led and supervised the Standing Project on Drug Abuse for more than 35 years), creativity, women issues, and the history of psychology in the Arab world. Over the years he exerted a great impact on the development of psychology in Egypt and other Arab countries. His research on hashish and other forms of drug consumption inspired several other Arab psychologists to investigate the subject. Moreover, due to Professor Soueif's efforts, the National Review of Drug Abuse and Addiction, (the first and only specialized journal on this topic in the Arab world and the Middle East, under the umbrella of the National Center of Sociological and Criminal Research in Cairo) was founded in 2003, with Soueif as editor-in-chief. A prolific writer, he authored 35 scientific books, edited and co-edited another 10 books, and wrote over 200 scientific articles and book chapters.

How best to define psychological concepts preoccupied Professor Soueif's mind for a long time. Apparently what attracted him to reflect on this question is the fact that it lies at a crossroad between psychology, philosophy, and methodology. His contention has been that psychologists and philosophers of science should make a joint effort to try to answer the following question: Is logical positivism the appropriate philosophical framework of reference for psychology?

On the international level, Professor Soueif was a member of numerous local, regional, and international scientific organizations and associations, including the New York Academy of Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences. He did serve as the Vice Chairman for WHO's Scientific Group on the Use of Cannabis, was a member of the Section of Epidemiology and Community Psychiatry of the World Psychiatric Association (1982-1983), and was similarly associated with the Association's Section on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency as a member of the WHO Expert Committee for Drug Dependency (1971-1995). His travels as a visiting professor and guest researcher led him to the Institute of Psychiatry, at Maudsley Hospital, University of London, UK; the Max Planck Institute for Psychiatry, Munich, Germany; Lund University, Sweden; and Kuwait University (Kuwait). He also offered scientific testimony on the psychological effects of cannabis consumption to a subcommittee of the U.S. Senate in 1974. In addition, he served on the boards of numerous international, national, and regional scientific journals.

Professor Soueif served as President of the Egyptian Association for Psychological Studies (EPAS) from 1970 to 1971. In later years, he was appointed as Chairman of the Scientific Committee of Egypt’s National Council for Addressing Drug Abuse and Addiction. In 1989, he received Egypt’s State Merit Award for Social Sciences (Psychology), and in 2006, he was the recipient of Egypt's highest award, the Nile State Award (formerly called the Mubarak Award) for Social Sciences. From 1991 to 1993, he distinguished himself as the Chairman of the Egyptian Society for Mental Health.

At least three different interviews have been conducted with Professor Soueif: Ahmed (1997, 2015); and British Journal of Addiction (1988, February).

Apart from his distinguished scientific contributions, Professor Soueif who was concerned about, and involved in, Egypt’s general life for over five decades, is widely considered in Egypt and other Arab countries as one of the most respected thinkers. In this context, he published several books, delivered many general lectures, wrote numerous articles in Egyptian and Arab journals and magazines for the general public, and shared in many televised interviews, all of which reflected his deep concern for issues related to daily life in Egyptian society.

Professor Soueif was married to the late Fatima Moussa (a Professor of English Literature, Cairo University). His three children include Ahdaf (a well-known novelist), Laila (a Professor of Mathematics, Cairo University), and Alaa (an engineer).

As one of his many students, I am profoundly indebted to Professor Soueif. He taught me a lot about myself, about life, about the science of psychology, and how best to structure one’s efforts to promote it. Great men such as Professor Mustapha Soueif will not be forgotten.

References
Search for Security in New Gods and their People: Experiences of Religious Converts in South India

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Christ University, Bangalore, India

Abstract

Under the broader theoretical framework established by the studies of attachment behaviour and religion, this study aims to understand the contextual role played by childhood attachment and its subsequent influence on the religious conversion in terms of establishing a secure base through the new religious affiliation. Other significant factors were assessed to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon. Through theoretical sampling, 48 male and female participants from Karnataka and Kerala, India between the ages 20 to 55 years who had converted from Hinduism to Christianity, Buddhism or Islam were recruited. Using semi-structured interviews, personal narratives and focussed life histories were obtained, which were then thematically analysed with the assistance of NVivo 10. The nature of attachment with the primary caregiver in addition to significant life events, disengagement with the old religion, influential agents, outcome of the new religion and the response of the new religious community were found to play a crucial and an interactive role in the search for security through religious conversion.

Keywords: insecure attachment, religious conversion, search for security

As a phenomenon deeply embedded in the nation’s history, religious conversion refers to the adoption of the practices and ideologies associated with a particular religious affiliation, while abandoning existing set of beliefs. Although conversion has been studied extensively in political, theological, anthropological and sociological literature, the psychological dimension of conversion is yet to be entirely explored in the context of India. Prior studies conducted globally in the field conceptualized two categories to explain the causal factors of conversion - the brainwashing model and drifting model (Gooren, 2007). The former model considers conversion as a coercive process by religious institutions, leaders and cult members (Long & Hadden, 1983), while the latter model views conversion as a gradual, contemplative process that is affected by a variety of psychological and social factors. Among the most popular drifting models is one proposed by Lofland and Stark (1965), which explains the process of conversion in a progressive, step-wise fashion: experience enduring, acutely felt tensions (step 1) within a religious problem-solving perspective (step 2), which leads an individual to define himself or herself as a religious seeker (step 3), encountering the group at a turning point in one’s life (step 4), wherein an affective bond is formed (or pre-exists) with one or more converts (step 5), where extra-cult attachments are absent or neutralized (step 6) and where, if one is to become a deployable agent, he or she is exposed to intensive interaction (step 7) (Gooren, 2007).

Another model was proposed by Rambo (1993) who outlined the process involved in religious conversion also in terms of seven stages. First is the context, which refers to the total environment in which conversion takes place. Next comes the crisis, a significant event that destabilizes the convert’s religious identity. The seeker in crisis embarks on a quest in search of an alternative approach, within or beyond their original faith. Through encounter and interaction the seeker meets other individuals and finds a religious community to explore his/her newfound beliefs. Once in the stage of commitment, the seeker formally, usually ritually, joins the new faith community. In doing so, they take on all the ritual and moral obligations of membership. Finally, in the outcome stage, participation in the new community is assessed in terms of fulfillment or disappointment.

These active models of conversion represent a paradigm shift in theoretical perspectives explaining the process of religious conversion (Richardson, 1985). Conversion came to
be viewed as a dynamic phenomenon wherein the individual was assigned greater agency. This is in sharp contrast to the earlier view of the convert as passive who is acted upon by external forces (Richardson, 1985). The result has been a movement towards studying the role of individual differences in the process of conversion. In this context, an emerging, yet significant body of literature focuses on the system of childhood attachment patterns and their subsequent impact on the decision to convert.

Bowlby (1969) proposed that the attachment behavioural system serves an evolutionary function. Through close proximity with the caregiver, the survival of the progeny is safeguarded (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). The attachment figure (the primary caregiver) serves two functions. Firstly, he or she protects the offspring from danger and provides a sense of security and comfort (Gilbert 2007). Secondly, the caregiver provides a foundation from which the child is encouraged to explore the world and form interpersonal relationships (Flannelly & Galek, 2010).

Ainsworth (1985) summarized certain criteria of attachment based relationships. Accordingly, the attached person: (i) strives for contact with the attachment figure during the time of distress; and (ii) suffers anxiety upon separation. On the other hand, the attachment figure: (iii) provides comfort and protection; (iv) instils a sense of security; and (v) experiences grief upon separation from the attached person.

Kirkpatrick (1992) formulated a conceptual framework borrowing from Bowlby’s attachment theory as a foundation for religiosity and conversion. Through pioneering research conducted in the field (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990), two hypotheses were proposed to explain the impact of childhood attachment relationships on adolescent and adult religious beliefs. Firstly, the compensation hypothesis suggested that belief in God serves as a substitute for the absence of secure attachment with primary caregivers, whereas the correspondence hypothesis, which was revised by Granqvist (2002; cited in Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2004) advocated that a strong and secure attachment with caregivers serves as a foundation through which individuals seek religious exploration.

Adopting an attachment perspective to understand religion allows the phenomenon to be assimilated into mainstream psychology (Granqvist, 2003). A longitudinal study conducted by Kirkpatrick (1997) found empirical evidence for the compensation hypothesis. He demonstrated that the lack of secure interpersonal attachment was associated with establishing newfound connections with God, changes in religious beliefs as well as religious conversion. In addition, Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2004) conducted a meta-analysis using a sample of 1465 individuals across 11 cross national studies to investigate religious conversion and perceived childhood attachment. They found that insecure attachment bore stronger links to sudden conversion whereas secure attachment was sufficient in providing a sense of security especially when a significant incident is encountered. From here stems the search for a new faith, which succeeds in providing a greater sense of security to the individual.

In the present study, first person accounts are used to understand the emotions, dilemmas and crises dealt with by religious converts during the process of conversion. Through a retrospective analysis, a holistic view of the process can be grasped while retaining the subjective essence of each participant. Furthermore, the results can aid in the development of a culture-specific theory of religious conversion in South India. The objectives of the present study are therefore highlighted as follows: (i) to explore the nature of attachment in religious converts; and (ii) to understand the search for secure base through attachment with the new God and the new religion. Thus, rather than focusing on the reasons leading to conversion, we aim to understand the process by which religious converts search for security in the context of insecure attachment with the primary caregiver.

Method

Participants. The sample consisted of 48 individuals (38% female) who reported having undergone religious conversion from Kerala and Karnataka, two southern states in India. Participants ranged in age from 20 to 55 years. The converts were predominantly from a Hindu background and had adopted Christianity (73%), Buddhism (17%), or Islam (10%). The participants were recruited using theoretical sampling principles according to the researchers’ (expected) level of insight for theory building relative to the current state of theory elaboration. Data collection was terminated when theoretical saturation was achieved.

Procedure and Measures. Participants were recruited with the help of religious institutions and religious personnel. The areas and lines of enquiry in the interview schedule were developed based on the research objectives, expert opinions and initial interviews of the pilot phase, in an attempt to obtain a focused life history followed by narratives related to conversion. Informed consent was given and the interview was carried out by a research assistant in the participants’ homes. Malayalam, Kannada and English were used as the medium of communication. Major domains covered in the interview and some sample questions are summarized in Table 1.

Data Analysis. The narratives collected from all the participants were transcribed carefully and the transcribed reports were checked against the audio recordings to ensure accuracy. The interviews conducted in Malayalam and Kannada was translated to English. The next phase involved a thorough analysis of the data to identify emerging themes pertinent to the study. The coding was carried out with the help of NVivo 10, qualitative data analysis software, developed by QSR International. The entire data set was given equal attention during the process of assigning codes to acknowledge all the patterns found in the data.
Table 1

*Lines of enquiry and sample interview questions from the narrative interview schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Line of Enquiry</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial questions</td>
<td>Rapport building, Self description</td>
<td>Can you tell me something about yourself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship with family members and the home environment during early childhood</td>
<td>How were you brought up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health and Illness</td>
<td>Has there been any influential person other than your parents in your childhood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious practices in childhood</td>
<td>Did you have any health issues in the past?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused life history</td>
<td>Occurrence of Significant Events</td>
<td>What did you think about God/religion as a child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education, Career, Interpersonal Relationships</td>
<td>Can you speak about any significant event that occurred any time in your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction to new religious ideas, Differences and comparison made with earlier beliefs, Existing practices, Expectations from the conversion</td>
<td>What did you do after completing school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpersonal interactions, Formal steps taken to convert, The process of decision making, Reactions of related people</td>
<td>What made you decide taking up higher studies or a job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process of Conversion</td>
<td>Changes in self and environment</td>
<td>How did you come to know about new religion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responses of outsiders, Experience of difficulties, Faith in the new and old religion, Conflicts of practice after conversion</td>
<td>Who were the people closely associated during that time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Did you feel any difference between existing and new religion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What was your feeling about new religion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What was the response of people related to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events after conversion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Can you elaborate upon the process of decision of conversion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What you think about yourself as person after conversion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Any observation seen in your social status after conversion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What was the level of acceptance among family members, friends, peer, colleagues and neighbors of your new religion?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional probing was used for purposes of explanation and clarification of certain topics. The interviews were recorded using a digital audio device. Detailed field notes were also prepared to document the interviews. Additionally, process notes and memos were used to track the progress of data collection and analysis.
Codes found similar to each other were incorporated within a theme. A thematic framework was developed to organize the data and study overarching relationships between the themes. The themes that did not fit in with the data set or emerging themes were either refined or discarded. Once the thematic framework was adequately established, the themes were named and briefly defined by the researcher in order to convey their exact essence. The themes were organized into three levels - basic, organizing and global themes which were then illustrated as a thematic network. Patterns between themes were explored. Finally, excerpts from the data were selected to illustrate and supplement the description of the themes.

**Results**

This qualitative study explores the search of security in the context of religious conversion among individuals with an insecure attachment history with their primary caregivers in South India. It further elucidates this process in the light of significant life events, disengagement with the original religion influential agents, response from the new community and outcomes of the new religion. Overall, five major themes were identified: the context of insecure attachment, interaction between critical life events and insecure attachment, the search for security, sense of fulfillment of the attachment needs through the new religion, and sense of security through new God. These have been illustrated as a thematic network in Figure 1.

**The Context of Insecure Attachment**

Across participants, when inquired about the nature of attachment with the primary caregiver during childhood, difficulties were noted. For instance, absence of significant attachment figure was found to be the most prevalent in the sample with 15 coding references (31.91%), substitution of attachment figure had 14 coding references (29.78%) and weak attachment had 12 coding references (25.53%) with only 6 coding references (12.76%) of secure attachment. These results indicate that most participants had an insecure attachment history with their primary caregivers. Table 2 indicates the aforementioned values.
Participants reminiscing weak attachment with their parents include Amritha who reported that the relationship “was very ambivalent with my father” whereas Rani mentioned that she “got every one’s love apart from parents”. Negligence on behalf of the parents was also found. Chandan stated that “no one was there to nurture us and we had worked for ourselves” whereas Reshma reported how there was “no one was to take care of us… and all ignored us.” Cases wherein the converts never received care from their primary caregivers due to the death and absence of their parents and the substitute caregivers were unable to cater to their emotional demands were also present. For example, Lucas poignantly narrated that he and his siblings “I spent my life in our aunts house, they took care of us nicely… I have no regrets but certain times, the kind of love from what we get from our parents, we were not able to get it.” Ganapathi reported that after losing both parents, he was raised by his aunt and uncle. He reported:

My aunt used to abuse me, force me to work, sweep and do all the work, same time no food no clothes, if I remember it makes me cry, so I decided that I won’t stay here and I left their house.

Overall, these participants reported major disturbances in their relationships with their caregivers.

Interaction between Critical Life Events and Insecure Attachment

The present data demonstrated that a majority of the participants confronted a critical life event which precipitated the contact with the new religion. The significant life events included major illnesses, traumatic incidents, failure, alcoholism, social discrimination and the like. Illness was found to be the most predominant with 53 coding references (48.62%). Another set of critical incidents was found to be related to trauma (29 coding references, 26.6%) that included a loss of the participants’ loved ones, a witness of an untoward incident or unexpected emotional pain, acting as a threat to the security of the converts. Binu reminisced a horrific accident his mother met with:

The bus rolled thrice… all the bodies were out with blood. I was crying a lot… A brain and a head were lying… I’m scared and I cannot go there but my mother was inside the bus… At that time I took her to hospital and I did not even have a penny in my pocket.

Other converts experienced discrimination (20 coding references, 18.35%) based on their socio-economic. While a sense of inequality was an underlying factor, some converts fought against it whereas others complied helplessly. For instance Krishna recollected that:

I hesitated to tell my caste to others, I used to lie to the people who asked me about my caste. I lied… because if I said I was a scheduled caste they would avoid me, they told me to sit outside, did not let me enter their house…The first thing they asked is the caste, only after that they would react with us… These things made me to feel bad about myself and my community.

Similarly, participants also faced serious social problems including injustice (4 coding references, 3.67%) as well as ill treatment and violation of their rights solely based on their social class.

Chandan distressingly narrated the experience of discrimination:

My mother was working as maid in some other higher caste house, they use to treat us very badly… They used to keep our plates and cups far from them, those plates were so pathetic and dirty… They used to throw food to us… They avoided us and said that we shouldn’t touch them at all, if we touch it would cause them impurity.

Other issues such as alcohol abuse (3 coding references, 2.75%) created stress and troubles within the family and questioned the converts’ future thereby leaving them in despair. The coding references and their respective percentages are illustrated in Table 3.

The content of the narratives indicated that these experiences principally questioned the converts’ belief about life and religion. As a threat to their sense of security, they

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Number of coding references</th>
<th>Percentage of coding references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absence of Attachment Figure</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure Attachment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitute Attachment Figure</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak Attachment Figure</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
consequently lead to feelings of helplessness, fear and powerlessness. For instance, Pankaj recounted how during one phase of his life he was unable to eat and sleep properly and mentioned:

Everyday... I felt like committing suicide... I thought that if I’m like this, how will survive? How will I take care of my wife or kids? I won’t be able to survive in society, I won’t be able to live properly.

The Search for Security

In the current data, two major factors were observed to lead the converts away from their old religion towards a new one. Firstly, most of the participants were passive with respect to their intensity of faith in their old religion. An analysis of the intensity of faith in the old religion showed that most participants were passive about their original religion (28 coding references) and lacked a clear understanding about the same (5 coding references). Religion was observed “without knowing (it’s) meaning” according to Renu because it is something “everyone does”, practiced “just (for the) sake of it” (Shreeja) “but not with full heart” (Naresh). Hari elaborated on this by stating:

As kid … there was belief in God because our ancestors followed it… it’s because of them we use to follow… If you talk to the general population, they wouldn’t be knowing, they won’t be having any opinion, they only follow what their parents have followed.

In other narratives, accounts of atheism and lack of faith in the previous religion were evident with 10 coding references for non-believers. Rakesh pointed out “I had no belief of devotion to any of god. It was since my childhood I had this kind of attitude.” Interestingly, the non-believing aspect during childhood was also found to be stemming from other financial issues. Vishesh and his family opposed religion which used to create more problems.

Also, during the time of anguish, the converts also perceived a failure to receive support that they sought from their earlier religious deities. Midhun declared “I know the things I have done for the old Gods...even with faith and devotion I served them but my problem was not solved” thereby indicating a lack of trust and commitment to the original religion. There is thus an inclination to pursue a new God, who can rescue them from their crisis. Through a deeper understanding, this can be also inferred as deliberate search for a reason to convert with intent towards a convinc-
Table 3  
*Number and percentage of coding references in the experience of critical incidents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Number of coding references</th>
<th>Percentage of coding references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcoholism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Illness</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injustice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Discrimination</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic Incidents</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4  
*Number and percentage of coding references in testing of faith in the old religion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Number of coding references</th>
<th>Percentage of coding references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Understanding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonbeliever</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5  
*Number and percentage of coding references in influential agents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Number of coding references</th>
<th>Percentage of coding references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctrines</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Members</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutions</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movements</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Personnel</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6  
*Number and percentage of coding references in the nature of action by influential agents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Number of coding references</th>
<th>Percentage of coding references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guidance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Closeness</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame and Guilt</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most participants felt at peace and emotionally fulfilled indicating resolution of distress and restoration of security. As Ram notes “[I experienced] major changes. I was very much disturbed in my mind before this, now I feel like I have hope…I feel calm, quiet and peaceful.” Across participants, the references of positive response from the new community coincided with references to positive outcomes. This indicates that the positive response of the community such as support, acceptance, and respect contributed to the outcomes that the participants experienced such as the improved emotional well-being, self, behavior and social status.

Discussion

The present study explored narratives of individuals who experience religious conversion in South India using qualitative method. Five major themes pertaining to the insecure attachment history of participants and its influence on the process of religious conversion were identified and described. First, evidence was found for the context of insecure attachment during childhood in the narratives of a majority of the participants. This was in the form of absence of an attachment figure, substitution of attachment figure and weak attachment figures which reflect ambivalence and neglect experienced by participants during their childhood. Insecure attachment has been debated as the basis for conversion according to the compensatory hypothesis (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990) which proposed that belief in God acts as a substitution for the lack of secure attachment with the primary caregiver.

Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2004) argued that insecurely attached individuals have greater emotional needs for a compensatory attachment figure. In the context of religious conversion, the compensatory figure is the God. In line with this argument, the present data showed that the absence of or weak attachment with the primary caregiver creates a psychological context, resulting in a feeling of insecurity among the religious converts. It was observed that many participants received support from other caregivers such as their grandparents and extended family members, which is an expected responsibility, considering the collectivistic nature of the Indian society. However, even in the presence of substitute attachment figures, the narratives of the participants show a need for love and protection from the parents. Insecurely attached individuals are more likely to experience intense distress when faced with major life stressors (Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2004) and are placed in an emotionally susceptible position compared to their securely attached counterparts. Thus, there emerges a stronger need for a secure base, which maybe in the form of a compensatory attachment figure. At the same time, this compensatory figure may not necessarily exist as the prototype of God. Rather, the people or ideologies associated with new religious experiences also play a compensatory role.

Critical incidents in converts’ lives are among the central themes in both classical and contemporary studies of conversion and this was evident as the second major theme in the study. Situations related to vital processes, health, economic pursuits, philosophy of religion, etc. are likely to be
Table 7
Number and percentage of coding references for the response of the new community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Number of coding references</th>
<th>Percentage of coding references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36.47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8
Number and percentage of coding references for the perceived outcome of new beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nodes</th>
<th>Number of coding references</th>
<th>Percentage of coding references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better Social Status</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>11.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Well Being</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>17.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found Answers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Habits</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>26.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Self Worth</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>22.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Advancement</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement in Economic Conditions</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise from Inequality</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

defined as problematic by people (Seggar & Kunz, 2012). Critical life events experienced by the participants of the study were explored in terms of their interaction with their insecure attachment history. Insecure attachment pattern and critical incidents were found to interact to develop a need for change in the participants’ life, acting as a key factor in the search of a new God. Many stage theorists in conversion studies have conceptualized conversion as a form of problem solving during a particular crisis event. For instance, Lofland and Stark (1965) hypothesized the existence of a ‘tension’, as a predisposing factor which renders individuals vulnerable to religious conversion. Rambo (1993) also spoke of the existence of a ‘crisis’, placing greater emphasis on the situational context of the convert, ranging from the society to the family. The critical events explained by the participants were found to be major illnesses, traumatic incidents, social discrimination, experience of injustice and alcoholism. Such life events pose a threat to the sense of security and continuity to the participants’ lives through the creation of disequilibrium and distress.

Rambo and Farhadian (2014) argued that in the context of dissatisfaction and suffering, a special event like a serious illness or severe aftermath serves to function as a catalyst for conversion. Individuals with insecure attachment history lack a secure base which could be approached in these times of distress, the deficit may precipitate a search for a secure base in order to restore comfort and security. Hence, the critical events are likely to have served as facilitators in the process of conversion wherein the participants turned to another religion in search of a ‘secure God’.

The third major theme identified in the study was the participants’ search for security in the context of their engagement with their previous religion. The participants’ reports showed a lack of understanding, passive involvement, questioning and lack of conviction with respect to their old religion. Jayaram (2012) documented how a significant section of the Indian society are subjected to downright humiliation and are treated as untouchables by the brahminical Hindus. Scholars such as Robinson (1993), Schmalz (2005) and Kujur (2010) (as cited in Jayaram, 2010) noted that the passivity and questioning of faith may have emerged in religious converts as a response to their lack of trust and loyalty along with the humiliation they experienced.
Considering their lack of active involvement with their prior religion, it may be hypothesized that when faced with a critical incident, the convert may have turned to their original religion to resolve the distress, opting for a ‘religious problem solving perspective’ (Lofland & Stark, 1965) wherein religion is viewed to offer a definition for the nature and the causes of the problem and a plausible solution. However, given that most of the converts did not have a strong faith in their old religion, this attempt is likely to have failed, leading to a questioning of their old religion and initiating a search which make them feel protected.

The fourth major theme that emerged was the sense of fulfillment of the attachment needs through the new religion with emphasis on the influential agents who facilitated the process of conversion. The nature of the action by the influential agents played a role in connecting the participants to the new religion. Participants reported having influential agents such as doctrines, family members, friends, institutions, leaders, movements, religious personnel and teachers who facilitated the conversion process. The interaction between the influential agents and the participants spanned over multiple phases in their process of conversion and the nature of action were observed to be guidance, curiosity, emotional closeness, shame and guilt, motivation, role model and support. Gelpi (1998) observed that religious advocates seek to resolve the crisis that the potential convert is faced with by assuring emotional gratification through faith in the religion, by emphasizing the greater meaning that the religion would bring to their lives, promising techniques of living and personal empowerment.

The response of the new community was also found to play a role in the resolution of the participants’ attachment needs. A majority of the narratives reflected a sense of acceptance, affection, respect and support experienced by the participants from their new religious community members. These responses were found to be congruent with the relationship needs for a secure attachment listed by Erskine, Mounard and Trautmann (1999) such as the need for security, acceptance by a stable, dependable and protective other, and the confirmation of personal experience.

Finally, the sense of security through the new God and people was also identified as a major theme. Participants reported positive outcomes after conversion such as better social status, emotional well being, finding answers, change in habits, enhanced self worth, career advancement, an improvement in economic condition and rise from inequality. Gartell and Shannon (1985) proposed that the convert weighs the benefits of the new religious affiliation. When problems are faced which are insolvable by their traditional or conventional religion, they turn to the new religion, and they convert if they find that the rewards of the new religion outweigh that of the conventional religion (Gooren, 2007). Studies have also reported the positive influence of conversion in terms of subjective well being, experience of positive emotions, change in personality and improvement in the sense of self such as self-identity, self-confidence and self-esteem (Halama & Halamova, 2005; Halama & Lacna, 2011; Zimbauer & Pargament, 1998).

The references made to these perceived positive outcomes coincided with the response of their new community. Thus it was observed that an attachment was formed not only with the new God but also with the people of the new religion. This attachment formation assisted to regulate distress and inculcated a sense of security. In addition, the attachment performs the function of a secure base, through which the converts explore the world and themselves through a new perspective. This can also involve a reconstruction of the past with the discovery of personal needs and problems (Snow & Phillips, 1980) which can sanction the search for a new God. In addition, the attachment performs the function of a secure base, through which the converts explore the world and themselves through a new perspective. This can also involve a reconstruction of the past with the discovery of personal needs and problems (Snow & Phillips, 1980) which can sanction the search for a new God.

In particular, the present study revealed that the participants’ responses highlighted two criteria of attachment relationship in congruence with the findings of Ainsworth (1985); the contact of the attachment figure during distress and the comfort and security provided by the attachment figure. This indicates a formation of attachment of the convert with God and the new religious community as a safe haven. The references made to radical transformations experienced through conversion is consistent with previous research that suggests that once the convert is adequately able to establish a secure relationship with the new deity or religious leader, there is a ‘renewed sense of confidence in the world’ (pp. 226, Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2004) by virtue of which the convert finds encouragement to explore the world.

Limitations, Implications, and Future Directions

Overall, the present study contributed narratives of individual who experience religious conversion and sheds light on the processes involved. The narratives of the religious converts highlight a search for security in context of an insecure attachment history with their primary caregivers. In the vulnerable state created by absence of a secure attachment figure, the previous religious affiliation also proved to be inadequate to regulate the emotional distress experienced by the convert during a crisis situation. It was inferred that the restoration of security was achieved by symbolically representing the new God as a compensatory figure but along with interaction with other influential agents and the membership in the new community.

The present study included adults between the ages of 22 and 55 years from two South Indian States. The findings can help us understand the process of conversion for these individuals, but may not provide information that is generalizable to religious converts in other parts of India or the World. As all the religious ideologies demand in-depth understanding, the heterogeneity of the sample belonging to different religions can be dealt with separately. Regional differences between participants belonging to Kerala and Karnataka could also have been explored.
The present data provides information for future quantitative studies that may test relationships among insecure attachment in childhood as assessed by a questionnaire measure or observational procedure, presence of significant life events, presence of influential agents, acceptance and support from the new religious community and overall well-being. The very essential interdisciplinary nature of the study puts forward many propositions from the field data analyzed which are largely unexplored in psychology in the context of South India.

References


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Grindr as a Participant Recruitment Tool for Research with Men Who Have Sex with Men

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Abstract

Grindr is a location-based online dating application for men who have sex with men (MSM) that has recently been used as a participant recruitment tool in quantitative and qualitative research. This article reviews research studies that used Grindr to recruit participants and focuses on the mode of contact, the nature of research, its benefits and limitations, and recommendations on how to use Grindr for research based on my recruitment experience from a qualitative study conducted in Turkey. Overall, Grindr provides access to participants of diverse characteristics and backgrounds compared to more traditional recruitment strategies like community centers, and it promises to be a useful novel tool to recruit MSM research participants.

Keywords: Grindr; Participant Recruitment Tool; Qualitative Research; MSM; location-based applications

Grindr is a location-based social network application used by men having sex with men (MSM) for different reasons such as to find dates, mates, friends, or casual sex partners. Recently, an increasing number of studies have started using Grindr as a participant recruitment tool for academic studies (e.g., Burrell et al., 2012; Landovitz et al., 2013; Rendina, Jimenez, Grov, Ventuneac, & Parson, 2014). This article aims to review the growing body of literature using Grindr to recruit participants online; to share experiences based on previous research and propose some tips on how to use Grindr to interact with potential participants for qualitative research prior to face-to-face interviews; and to discuss potential research topics that could be addressed using Grindr. The findings and recommendations in the paper could also be useful for research with MSM across the world where certain subgroups of gay men constitute the targeted samples for research.

While doing research with gay men in Turkey on perceptions and constructions of masculinities, my colleague and I initially decided to recruit participants through face to face contact using traditional methods, such as community centers, casual networks, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) organizations. Our research explored how gay men perceive societal masculinities, how they construct their own masculinities, and how this is related to internalized sexual stigma (Eslen-Ziya & Koc, 2016). Turkey provides an interesting cultural context for this type of research as homosexuality is neither illegal nor legally recognized, yet there is a high level of social stigma surrounding gay identity. Recent research showed that religiosity and right-wing ideologies were the predictors of negative attitudes toward gays and lesbians (Anderson & Koc, 2015), and according to a large scale survey in 2013, only nine percent of Turkish society believed that homosexuality should be accepted, which was a five percent drop from 2007 (Pew Research Centre, 2013). Such social hostility predictably puts a lot of pressure on LGBT individuals; in return, they tend to hide their identities, and become invisible in public spaces.

Public invisibility quickly showed itself to be a limitation in our research process. After conducting interviews with four gay men recruited via primary and extended contacts, we noticed very quick signs of saturation in our data (i.e., when researchers believe that nothing new comes out of data; Green & Thorogood, 2004). Although there is a critical discussion about the saturated sample sizes in qualitative research (O’Reilly & Parker, 2012), it is not easily established how big the sample size should be. Accordingly, we concluded that the saturation was not coming out of the nature of the data; it was rather the limitation of our recruitment method, which resulted in having no access to gay men who were invisible in public due to the high prevalence of social stigma around gay identity.

Given that sexual orientation is a social category that is multi-faceted with many subcultures including people who do not wish to openly self-classify (e.g., closeted people) and those who do not identify with the LGBT community, we sought to find other methods of participant recruitment to increase variability in our sample. Sexual orientation is not like other visible social categories such as race. One’s sexual orientation is not necessarily perceivable with behaviors or appearances. It is therefore not possible to recognize, approach or meet gay men in public unless they explicitly state that they are gay. Grindr, on the other hand, makes them “virtually visible” while keeping them closeted and confidential, because they have enough control over how much information they share with other users including their face, any other identification or links to any other social media accounts (Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014).

Hence, we decided to use Grindr as a recruitment tool to see if this would provide us with novel perspectives on our topic of interest.

Grindr: The World’s Biggest Mobile Network of Guys

Grindr was launched in 2009 and has been used by over 4 million users in 192 countries across the world. It is a...
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location-based social network application that uses geo-location features of mobile devices to situate the user among other users. With its “0 feet away” mission, it offers men the possibility to meet other men nearby based on their proximity. Users create a profile for themselves, which requires selecting a profile picture, a display name, a headline, an “about me” section, and a number of demographic details such as age, ethnicity, height, and weight. Furthermore, users are given the opportunity to classify themselves into various “tribes”, such as discreet, geek, daddy, poz (i.e., HIV positive), clean-cut, leather, and bear, to show their interests to other users. Finally, users can also indicate their relationship status (e.g., single, partnered, dating, married, etc.) and what they are looking for (e.g., chat, dates, friends, networking, etc.).

On the main screen, Grindr broadcasts a grid of user profiles based on the geographic proximity of other users ranging from the closest profile to the farthest. Users can browse up to 100 profiles in the free version and 300 profiles in Grindr Xtra, a version that requires paid subscription. When users click on another user’s profile, they can see the picture, the provided information, and the distance. Similar to any other profile information, users can avoid sharing their distance, yet their profile is still located among the other profiles in accordance with the actual distance. Finally, the application allows users to chat with other users, block them, or “favorite” them to be able to see later even when they are not within the geographic proximity. During chat, users can also share pictures or their locations with others users.

Research Using Grindr to Recruit Participants

Researchers saw the potential for Grindr to be an innovative and feasible participant recruitment tool shortly after its launch in 2009. With different topics of research and modes of contact with participants, the first studies to use Grindr reported its use as an effective and efficient recruitment tool for research with MSM populations (e.g., Burrell et al., 2012; Rendina et al., 2014).

One method of recruitment is the use of pop-up advertisements. In this method, when participants log-in to the application, a pop-up ad appears on the screen. This ad is sent out once in a 24-hour time period and all users who log on to Grindr receive the ad. These pop-up ads can include more information about the study, and an e-mail address and phone numbers for contact. One of the first studies to use this methodology was conducted by Burrell et al. (2012). This study explored the relationship between demographics and sexual risk-taking behavior, while comparing participants recruited through Grindr and traditional media channels such as community centers. The users who wanted to complete the study needed to contact the researchers using the information provided in the broadcast. Ten percent of the users who received the broadcast completed the study and the results indicate that Grindr provided access to younger and more educated MSM. A second study used the same pop-up ad method as well as a targeted banner (Rendina et al., 2014). Unlike the pop-up ad, the targeted banner continues to stay at the bottom of the screen while users are logged on to Grindr. In this way, the amount of time users are exposed to the study ad is longer than the pop-up ad. Exploring the patterns of lifetime and recent HIV testing for MSM, this study concluded that Grindr is an appropriate tool for sexual health research, HIV prevention, and other outreach purposes.

Another method used for recruitment involves the use of researcher-created profiles, which allows direct contact with potential participants. This method enables ‘one-to-one’ interactions with participants and the opportunity to answer their questions regarding the studies. Rice and colleagues (2012) created a researcher profile on Grindr and contacted users in randomized fashion with the online study link. This study explored the HIV risk-taking behaviors of young MSM using Grindr and concluded that Grindr is a cost-effective recruitment tool that could provide access to large numbers of people, especially closeted men and younger populations who are not legally allowed to participate in gay social scenes such as bars and clubs. Similarly, Landovitz and colleagues (2012) used research staff’s own Grindr profiles to contact people using a standardized script, inviting them to participate in their study. The research was conducted in predetermined and safe locations, and the participants walked into these venues to complete a computer-assisted self-interview. This study also provided evidence that Grindr is a feasible and innovative tool for recruiting samples.

Finally, a recent study explored how users experience co-situation and manage their identifiability concerns on Grindr (Blackwell et al., 2014). This study recruited participants via two methods: flyers and with a researcher profile on the app. They created the researcher profile with the university emblem and brief information about the study including contact information. The researchers did not approach users on the app; instead, users interested in the study contacted the researchers to participate or ask for more information. The participants were given the choice of three interview methods: online, phone, or face-to-face. The findings suggested that Grindr was useful for providing access to people beyond the limitations of actual locations or venues.

The topics that researchers investigated using Grindr for participant recruitment are varied. Van De Wiele, and Tong (2014) explored motivations for using Grindr, and also investigated users’ boundaries of self-disclosure of information. Usher et al. (2014) recruited participants for a study exploring HIV experiences, whereas Winetrobe, Rice, Bauermeister, Petering, and Holloway (2014) investigated sexual risk-taking behaviors and made suggestions about delivering prevention interventions through Grindr. Overall, the reviewed studies vary in the topics of research, and they also used different modes of contact with the participants. However, a common conclusion was that Grindr is an innovative, cost-effective, and useful tool to recruit participants for research regarding MSM without having to go in the field.

Although the aim of our research was not to compare Grindr-user MSM to non-user MSM, our findings suggested comparable patterns in our research exploring masculinity and internalized sexual stigma between these groups (Eslen-Ziya & Koc, 2016; Koc & Eslen-Ziya, 2012). First of all, participants recruited via Grindr seemed less open about their sexuality to others, including family members, than participants recruited using other methods. For example,
some Grindr users had only been open to their sexual partners and no one else knew about their sexuality. Second, participants recruited via Grindr mentioned the benefit of being able to conceal and manage their identities easily; this was then related to being less stigmatized in society as they were not explicitly labelled and gave them more liberty on the online dating scene. However, they also mentioned that interactions on apps are different than face to face interactions, and they experienced and witnessed more sexual prejudice as a function of masculinity perceptions within the gay community using Grindr. Lots of profiles were reported to include information like “no feminine guys” describing preferences while stigmatizing men of less masculine qualities. Overall, such accounts implied differences between participants recruited via traditional methods and Grindr, and enriched our data.

Based on this experience, several steps are defined for participant recruitment using a researcher profile on Grindr within the boundaries of ethical concerns for offline research that requires meeting the participants.

**Lessons from the Current Study on Participant Recruitment Creating a Researcher Profile**

The first step to interact with participants is to create an online profile. We created a researcher profile on Grindr with a blank profile picture. Other researchers have used their respective university emblem as a profile picture (e.g., Blackwell et al., 2014). The title was ‘Researcher’. No sections were filled regarding the demographics, physical stats, and preferences; the ‘about me’ section provided general information about the study. We provided a few sentences on the nature of the study followed by an invitation to initiate a chat with the researchers for more information.

**Interacting with Participants**

As part of the recruitment protocol, we decided not to contact potential participants and instead waited for them to self-select into our study. When they sent a message, we sent them back a long standard message including information about the study, their requirements as participants, ethical concerns, and ensured confidentiality of their participation. In our study, a large number of people contacted us asking if it was a fake profile (so was it a cover for casual hook-ups) or how they could trust us. We answered every question in a meticulous and professional way to ensure confidentiality, trust, and security. We returned their inquiries regarding hook-ups by saying that this profile was for research purposes only and that more information about the research was available upon request.

Gaining participants’ trust was a key factor in our study to be able to meet them and for them to open up during the interviews. For this, we shared a link to the project directing them to an online website featuring information about the study as well as the profiles of the researchers. This enabled the potential participants to check the genuineness of the study, establish trust and build rapport with the research team. As for their security, the meeting locations for the interviews were an issue to be considered carefully. They did not want to be seen in the university environment lest they might encounter people there who were aware of the scope of our study. Hence, we suggested three different locations for them where they would feel comfortable: two café houses, and a silent bar. Each participant chose one of the two café houses except for one participant who wanted to meet at the silent bar. After meeting the participants, they stated that they were more comfortable at these locations than they would feel in a university setting.

Since it was an interview study, we initially informed potential participants about the requirement of the study in detail to prevent any discomfort later. We told them that they needed to give informed consent, we would record the interviews, we would not use any personal information that could identify them, and all the information would be kept confidential. We also told them that the interviews would be used for academic purposes (i.e., conference presentations and publications), and their data would be treated in a way to ensure anonymity. Finally, they were also told that they had the right to leave the study at any time during data collection or withdraw their data at latest within a week after data collection. The whole research process was completed within the ethical principles and code of conduct regarding research and publication (APA, 2013).

**Recommendations and Limitations**

Based on our experiences in interacting with the potential participants, some suggestions are proposed that could be useful for other researchers.

If you prefer participants to approach you, make the information comprehensive and exciting. Second, be direct about the aims and the requirements of the study in the early stages of the interaction. If people receive information later that would potentially disturb them, they may either decide not to participate or try ways to persuade the researchers to make exceptions (e.g., interviews without recording, meeting at private locations). Third, keep your professional identity intact. Many people tend to believe that it is a fake profile and they contacted for hook-ups disregarding the information provided on the profile. It is important to respond to those queries in appropriate ways because such profiles might end up providing the richest data, which was the case in our research. Finally, when you decide to meet with a participant, make sure you prearrange a time slot with a start and end time. Some participants might want to continue the conversation after the interview, as this might be their first experience of coming out or they might regard the researcher as an expert and ask for insightful comments and feedback. Overall, key points in interacting with potential participants are to be open and direct about the scope of the research and their involvement and to set the boundaries of interaction before meeting in person.

Grindr could be beneficial for some specific research questions targeting particular samples; however, there are few limitations to address. First, people should be able to have access to appropriate mobile devices to be able to use Grindr. In some countries, this might require having high income. Second, although it goes beyond the limits of actual geographical boundaries, Grindr is still location-based. The
target ads and banners are broadcast to users in a limited radius area and the researcher profile method is limited to wherever and whenever the researcher goes online. This could, however, be overcome by the researcher commuting to different research sites and going online in certain timeslots, which we did in our own research.

Other Research Areas Using Grindr

Given that Grindr has different features and attracts people of various backgrounds, it could be a useful tool to recruit participants for a variety of research topics, such as sexual health or mental health. A few studies have so far investigated the characteristics of HIV risk-taking behaviors (e.g., Winetrobe et al., 2014). New studies could focus on possible intervention or prevention for STIs and HIV. Ogden and Nyblade (2005) indicated that HIV-related stigma has serious consequences for people in terms of prevention and treatment. Some people avoid testing so as to not learn from any unexpected results whereas people with HIV are likely to be reluctant to disclose their status and internalize the social stigma leading to negative life outcomes such as losing hope and disengaging in treatment. In this respect, Grindr could be a useful method to have access to closeted people for both research and outreach purposes. Furthermore, Grindr is a virtual socialization venue for MSM of different backgrounds. It is possible to encounter profiles featuring homophobia towards camp and feminine individuals, or racist remarks for different ethnicities. Hence, it could be a good arena to study various social psychological concepts such as prejudice, stereotyping, objectification, and attitudes towards others, as well as phenomenological experiences of those who are subject to social stigma.

Concluding Remarks

The young but expanding body of literature using Grindr to recruit MSM samples looks promising for location-based online recruitment to be preferred and established as a new and innovative recruitment tool for social psychological, clinical, health, and other research in the near future. In our study, Grindr helped us gain access to people who were hidden and otherwise invisible in gay social life. They provided accounts of completely different life experiences as compared to other people recruited through traditional channels. Hence, Grindr could be entirely beneficial to increase variability in a sample as well as to target specific MSM groups utilizing the tribe feature of the app (e.g., poz tribe for access to HIV positive people). Grindr could also be useful for various intervention studies where participants can be sent timed reminders and easily contacted online. Finally, it could provide access to younger populations (between the ages of 18 to 21) that are not legally allowed to be in other venues like bars. Overall, Grindr is a novel, feasible, convenient, and cost-effective participant recruitment tool that goes beyond the limitations of actual geographical boundaries, and is useful for both qualitative and quantitative research using different modes of contact with potential participants. Although our study showed Grindr’s benefits in the context of Turkey, the platform could be used to access MSM around the world concealing their identities in social spaces due to professional, religious, or other reasons. Considering its benefits, Grindr is likely to become a commonly used recruitment tool for MSM research.

References


Early Career Professional Column


The following paper presents the qualitative analysis of a structured discussion that took place at the 46th International Meeting of the Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR) in Philadelphia, USA on June 25th, 2015. The structured discussion was organized by [Author # 1] and [Team director] to address the topic of “Psychotherapy for Personal Growth’’ from a multi-cultural perspective. The relevance of this subject emerged from the psychotherapeutic practice context in Argentina (particularly, in Buenos Aires city), affecting the general definition of psychotherapy, its patients and its therapists.

Argentinian therapists are notorious for having a strong Freudian-Lacanian Traditional Psychoanalytic practice as the mainstream psychotherapeutic approach (Ben Plotkin, 2003; Muller, 2010; Waizmann & Roussos, 2010). However, Argentina also has a small but rapidly growing population of Cognitive-Behavior therapists (Keegan, 2007; Korman, Viotti & Garay, 2015) as well as an increasingly large number of therapists with a more integrative/eclectic stance (Mulier, 2008). Argentinian Psychoanalytic psychotherapists have a longstanding tradition of providing therapy to patients who share the wish to better understand themselves, find purpose in life and/or want to improve their quality of life. In other words, psychoanalytic patients tend to be looking for positive changes that will promote a sense of personal growth and accomplishment. Usually, these patients do not meet full criteria for DSM diagnoses and can present varying degrees of clinical suffering. Likewise, when they meet DSM diagnostic criteria (e.g., Anxiety Disorder, Adjustment Disorder), they usually continue therapy even after achieving full remission of their symptoms, since patients’ and therapists’ shared view of therapy is not restricted to ’recovery.’

In the same way, the notion of ‘personal growth’ is present in Argentinean integrative therapy approaches (Fernández Álvarez, 1992; Fernández Álvarez, Kriszman, & Nieto, 1994; Opazo Castro, 2004), in local textbooks on CBT (such as Baringoltz & Levy, 2007; Keegan, 2007), and in local Cognitive therapists’ clinical views and practices (Korman, Viotti, & Garay, 2015). The concept of personal growth is not limited to Client-Centered or Existential/Humanistic approaches nor necessarily related to Positive Psychology practices (Mariñelarena-Dondena, 2009). Moreover, therapy for personal growth is indicated as a means for personal-professional development and self-care for practicing therapists; i.e., therapists seeking therapy for their own personal and professional development (Hirsch, 2012).

Reports on therapy practice for personal growth from the patient’s perspective are described in García and Fantin’s (2010) survey about the perception of therapy efficacy in 184 citizens from various provinces (states) in Argentina. In this survey more than 40% of the participants stated that they had requested the help of a therapist for issues unrelated to a mental disorder such as (vocational guidance, occasional problem solving assistance, etc.). Similar results were reported in multi-site cross-cultural qualitative studies by Olivera, Braun, Gómez Penedo and Roussos’ (2013) and by Roussos’ and Safran’s research teams (Jock et al., 2013) on former patients’ views on therapy, reasons for consultation and change.

Psychotherapy for Personal Growth? A Comparison of South and North American Practices

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Abstract

This paper reports on the preliminary results of a pilot study consisting of an analysis of a consensual qualitative focus group, facilitated at the 46th International conference meeting of the Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR). This focus group was a structured discussion between expert psychotherapy researchers from South and North America, and explored the local clinical practices of psychotherapy for personal growth. Several differences were discussed with regards to governmental support, clinic practices, types of patients and social stigma. The authors analyzed recordings of the focus group using consensual qualitative research methods. Comparing the contributions from the different experts helps build an in-depth insight into the clinical practices in these different parts of the globe. This preliminary paper describes our research design, our initial results and clinical implications.

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1 We use the term “patient” instead of “client” (or similar) because it is the most common and general term used in South and North America.
In summary, this practice of therapy for personal growth is widely accepted in Argentina, transcending therapists’ clinical and theoretical framework. As such, these conditions in Argentina create a unique challenge for the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based therapy approaches. Most notably, evidence-based practice guidelines are usually informed by disorder specific publications that do not necessarily directly apply to this context. Therefore, therapists in Argentina often have to meet the specific needs of their patients and their life circumstances without the guide of scientific literature to support or ground their clinical practice.

Despite its widespread clinical practice and potential clinical implications for patients and therapists, therapies oriented towards the promotion of “personal growth” (Baringoltz & Levy, 2007; Fernández Álvarez, 1992; Fernández Álvarez, Kriszman, & Nieto, 1994; Garcia & Fanti, 2010; Hirsch, 2012; Jock et al., 2013; Keegan, 2007; Korman, Viotti, & Garay, 2015; Marihelarena-Dondena, 2009; Oliveira, Braun, Gómez Penedo, & Roussos, 2013; Opazo Castro, 2004.) have been under-researched. The nature and effects of this practice and its differential characteristics (if there are any), with respect to recovery-oriented therapeutic approaches remains currently unknown. For example, might this practice serve a primary prevention function for the development of mental disorders? Also, it is unclear whether this practice relates to a different use of diagnostic classifications, differences in patients’ clinical presentations, and/or therapist training. For example, are these patients seeking therapy earlier than patients in other countries; i.e., before they actually develop a mental disorder? Moreover, it is unclear whether this practice represents an “old wave” that survived in Argentina, if it is a strictly Argentinian cultural “trademark”, a Latin American practice or if it is a worldwide phenomenon with differing therapy modalities and providers (such as health psychologists, counselors, self-help publications, positive psychology practices, mindfulness retreats, etc.). Furthermore, it is unknown whether this particular practice limits the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based approaches in Argentina or potentially has a positive impact on social stigma around mental health treatment?

The present study attempts to shed initial light on the practice of therapy for personal growth, as it is viewed by psychotherapy researchers from South and North America, and help create more detailed hypotheses that in the future may be researched by psychotherapy researchers around the globe.

Method

This project can be described as a culturally centered qualitative pilot study. To address the topic of therapy for personal growth from a multicultural perspective, we chose a qualitative methodology that allows for a perspective of openness to different voices and helps to challenge, deconstruct and, hopefully, reintegrate prevailing therapeutic notions (McLeod, 2001). For this reason, we integrated elements of Focus Groups design (Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956/1998; Kitzinger, 1995; Juan & Roussos, 2010) and Consensual Qualitative Research methodology (CQR) Hill, 2010; Hill, Knox, Thompson, Nutt-Williams, & Hess, 2005; Hill, Nutt-Williams, & Thompson, 1997; Hill, Thompson, & Nutt-Williams, 1997) into what [Author # 1] and Roussos (personal communication, July 14th, 2015) have labeled, “Consensual Focus Group” (or “CFG”) design. We chose a Focus Group design, because of its use of semi-structured group interviews as a means of (a) facilitating open discussion and interaction among participants, (b) eliciting differing and common views on a target subject, and (c) monitoring group dynamics to prevent forced agreement. Likewise, we selected CQR because its approach to data analysis enables a rich and rigorous exploration of the phenomenon, by combining the flexibility of qualitative methods (e.g., use of the clinical inferences of judges) with some of the rigor and replicability of quantitative methods (e.g., use of checks and balances of a team of multiple members and auditors) (Hill, Nutt-Williams & Thompson, 1997; Knox et al., 2011). In following this methodological strategy, we are not attempting to create a new orthodox or “trademarked” qualitative research method, but a selection of procedures from different qualitative methods based on their merits to approach our specific research questions (Stiles, 1997).

Sample

Four expert psychotherapy researchers from different countries in South and North America and with differing clinical backgrounds were invited to participate as formal discussants of a structured panel during last year’s Society for Psychotherapy Research’s international conference. [Discussant # 1], a male expert in Cognitive-Behavior Therapy (CBT) and psychotherapy researcher from USA; [Discussant # 2], a female expert therapist and psychotherapy researcher, specializing in Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) from Canada; [Discussant # 3], a male certified CBT therapist and researcher from Argentina, whose research focuses on cultural factors related to psychotherapy and mental disorders; and [Discussant # 4], a male expert therapist and researcher from Chile, specialized in Psychodynamic Therapy (PDT). During the conference panel three members of the audience actively participated in the open discussion segment of the structured discussion and were therefore included as sample of this study. These were: [Author # 1], a certified CBT therapist and qualitative psychotherapy researcher from Argentina, who moderated the structured segment of the discussion; [Author # 2], a certified CBT therapist and fellow psychotherapy researcher from Argentina; and [Author # 3], clinically trained in CBT and PDT in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, as well as the USA, now a psychotherapy researcher in the USA. In this sense, the sample of this study consisted of a non-probabilistic convenience sample of three experts and three non-experts according to Eells and colleagues’ (2011) criteria.

Participants’ demographics are summarized in Table 1.

Materials

To ignite and enrich discussion, the three expert discussants were provided one-month in advance with two clinical vignettes as stimulus material for this structured discussion. The two vignettes summarize clinical cases from expert Argentinian psychotherapists—one a Cognitive-Behavioral therapist, and the other, a Psychoanalyst, who had been certified by international institutions as experts in the
type of psychotherapy they provided. Both treatments were oriented towards promoting personal growth in the patient. After obtaining informed consent from the therapists and patients, interviews were audio recorded, then transcribed and sent back to the treating therapists for a fidelity check. All identifying data was modified to protect the patients’ and therapists’ confidentiality. The abstract versions of the clinical vignettes presented during the structured discussion are the following:

The Cognitive-Behavioral vignette: This vignette describes a successful 15-year-long treatment, with interruptions in between, of a young adult who was originally referred by a psychiatrist to a psychotherapist due to persistent insomnia and a Generalized Anxiety Disorder. The treatment initially focused on recovery from these clinical conditions. After 25 weeks of standard CBT, the patient achieved full remission, and the treatment was reoriented mainly towards sustaining the patient’s desire of pursuing a professional career, in which the therapist acted mainly as a mentor and the interaction became gradually more informal and symmetric. Occasionally, the treatment also focused on addressing specific interpersonal conflicts that blocked the patient’s professional development.

The Psychoanalytic vignette: This vignette describes a 4-year-long, ongoing treatment, of a self-referred, 45-year-old, married woman, complaining about little sense of purpose and wanting to develop both professionally and as a person. As treatment progressed, marital conflicts became evident, partially blocking the patient’s professional development, and the treatment focus pivoted between addressing her marital conflicts and personal growth obstacles. At no time did the patient meet DSM diagnostic criteria for any mental disorder. Through treatment, the patient obtained significant personal growth mainly in relation to her professional activities. Guided by the transference situation, the therapist aimed to provide guided discovery mainly through minimal phatic and supportive interventions.

Procedures [Author # 1] first invited all expert discussants through their personal email addresses, sent each of them the two clinical vignettes, and obtained informed consent from them to frame the structured discussion within a research study about therapy for personal growth. During the structured discussion and acting as its moderator, he obtained verbal informed consent to audio record the discussion from all participants attending the discussion panel. Then, since the clinical vignettes were too long to be read during the structured discussion, he presented their summarized versions, included in the Materials section of this paper. Next, he introduced the context and relevance of this structured discussion, included in the Introduction of this paper. Thereafter, formal discussants were provided with 10 minutes each to present their opening stances on the subject, and this was followed by
50 additional minutes for open discussion among all participants attending this discussion panel.

As mentioned in the Sample section, during the open discussion phase [Author # 1] and two other participants actively joined the discussion by posing questions and/or providing their viewpoints and, thus, were formally invited to participate in all the following phases of this study.

The information presented by all participants during the discussion was transcribed verbatim and analyzed using CQR criteria (Hill, 2010; Hill et al., 2005; Hill, Nutt-Williams & Thompson, 1997; Hill, Thompson & Nutt-Williams, 1997) adapted to fit the specific needs of this study: The participants’ statements were reordered by thematic areas or domains, and are currently being abstracted into core ideas through open discussion, by the authors. Following this, an auditor will review the primary team’s work and provide feedback to ensure that the primary team’s reordering and abstraction of core ideas remains balanced and close to the data. Next, the primary team -audited again- will reorganized the core ideas identified into categories. Finally, before the write-up of the Discussion of this study’s results, the draft version of domains, core ideas and categories will be sent to all participants in the structured discussion, asking them to also audit them, assessing their fidelity and completeness. Likewise, all participants will be asked to add their reflections on the findings of the primary team.

Results

Preliminary results of this study consist of eight domains and 36 subdomains, identified through content analysis of the discussion’s transcript. See Table 1, for a presentation of the eight domains and their definitions and Figure 1 for illustrations of each domain with its related subdomain(s).

To give an example of how results were analyzed, we now present brief transcribed fragments of the focus group (i.e., the structured discussion during the SPR meeting), grouped within each CQR domain:

Domain # 1 (Psychologists):

“Argentina is a country with many psychologists: It has a population of 40 million inhabitants and to date it has 96,000 psychologists […] US has 318 million inhabitants and, according to APA, it has 106,500 [psychologists].”

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Psychologists</td>
<td>Characteristics of psychologists (clinically oriented or not) in each country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mental Health Care System</td>
<td>Description of the mental health system (both governmental and private managed care systems) in each country, and how it shapes therapeutic practices, regardless of therapists’ perspectives, attitudes and preferences towards therapy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Therapy practice characteristics</td>
<td>Description of common and differential characteristics of therapeutic practices in Argentina vs. in other countries. This includes the diagnostic system or criteria used by practicing therapists in each country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Therapy research characteristics</td>
<td>Description of common and differential characteristics of research methodologies, pressures and interests in each country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Patient characteristics</td>
<td>Description of common and differential characteristics of the patients in each country. It includes attitudes towards different formats and contexts of delivery of therapy (public, managed care, self-help, internet, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Therapist characteristics</td>
<td>Description of common and differential characteristics of the providers of therapy in each country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Society and social representation of therapy</td>
<td>Description of the role and purpose of therapy from a social or systems perspective within each country. Description of how psychotherapy is perceived in each country. This includes attitudes towards people receiving therapy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: Map of domains & related subdomains
Domain #2 (Def. “Personal Growth” & “Therapy”):

[…] if I’m a ‘Buenos Arian’ resident and I’m thinking ‘Maybe I should see a therapist […]’ is it a view that I have some limitations and I define myself as that, or that it’s not about my limitations, it’s about getting better […]? So if you play golf, right? You might go to a golf instructor because you want to get better at golf. It’s not an embarrassment because nobody is as good as they could be in golf. So, you go and that’s fine.

[…] the whole notions of problems in living as a reason to seek out treatment is very close to our model and to our home [Canada], and viewing certain kind of really ordinary life crises as opportunities for growth is very much a part from that. So, we would almost see psychotherapy as a facilitator for some core natural change processes that are often very painful, and there’s risk to getting stuck; but they are also an opportunity for growth. I think it is very natural, working from a Humanistic perspective.

[…] therapy is something that you do to something that is infected or complained or what have you […] But I will almost want to call it a different thing [in reference to the Cognitive Therapy Argentinean vignette]. Not that couldn’t have some of the same rationales and approaches, but I wouldn’t want to call it “therapy” anymore or so much, as is personal growth an experience and, again, the therapist might use the principles that are connected or even right in the middle of Cognitive Therapy.

Domain #3 (Mental Health Care System):

[…] So these are all issues that countries are struggling with in different ways, and every country is a bit different in terms of how it’s managing the rising demand for treatment for all the people who are now being educated that they have a problem that requires treatment. Every country is different, but Argentina takes the cake!

[...] The idea of this longer term, growth oriented perspective is somehow being backgrounded with very briefer interventions [in Canada] […] we get messages in our training clinic, as a supervisor, that when there is a significant drop in distress, the message says, ‘Client has benefitted from treatment, it’s time to terminate’. […] The idea of personal growth is not even in the mix.

Domain #4 (Therapy practice characteristics):

“Over 50% of [certified Cognitive] therapists [in Buenos Aires] say that at least 40% of the patients they were working with don’t have a mental disorder.”

If we are going to be, as a profession, helpful with what it is that we think we know, we are not going to do this on one-on-one-treatment—although in Argentina clinicians can, due to their caseload and number of providers, it is impossible for us [in US]—, we are going to be moving toward internet treatments if people don’t just take pills.

Domain #5 (Therapy research characteristics):

“We have very little research. Its like… Argentina is a very strange country. You have social security but you don’t have research.”

Domain #6 (Patient characteristics):

“The social representation [in Argentina] of psychologists who work in pre-paid companies are kind of seen as lower in quality or inferior. So usually people don’t want to go to free therapy.”

[Argentinean patients] are used to the idea that therapy takes long. So they are not so worried about that. It’s like there are a lot of particular reactions of people; when I tell them what I do, which is seen as strange because I do CBT.

Domain #7 (Therapist characteristics):

“[…] 21% of these therapists [in Buenos Aires] were actually in treatment, and nearly 50% had gotten at least 3 treatments.”

Domain #8 (Society and social representation of therapy):

“Receiving psychological treatment is socially acceptable [in Argentina]. It is common to hear artists, soccer players, and even politicians admitting at TV shows or interviews that they are in psychological treatment.”

I think that one of the ramifications of the differences is that when our clients [in North America] actually come to reach a psychologist for psychotherapy … the severity is likely to be much more severe […] because it’s been resisted and been so difficult to take that risk to actually seek out treatment.

Discussion

Preliminary results suggest that, in comparison to patients and therapists from other countries such as Chile, USA and Canada, patients and therapists from Argentina have unique views about the goal of therapy, its societal function, its expected characteristics, and viable means for promoting personal growth. More specifically, therapy for personal growth seems to be frequently provided in Argentina within the context of individual private practices paid by patients who do not meet diagnostic criteria for any mental disorder. There seems to be little stigma in relation to consulting a therapist and, therapy is seen as an acceptable means to promoting personal growth and improving quality of life. Within
adapting their practices to meet the needs of patients seeking personal growth. As a result, it is possible that the empirical basis of the original approaches that inspired Argentinean therapists could be lost in the process of cultural adaptation.

On the contrary, in Chile and North American countries represented in our sample, there seems to be a stigma related to seeking mental health treatment and receiving therapy in particular. The function of therapy appears restricted to recovery of mental disorders. Few people would be willing to pay for such treatments out of their own pocket, and treatment oriented towards promoting personal growth seems more available and accepted when offered in different delivery formats (e.g., self-help books or online sites and smartphone apps) or by different providers (e.g., coaches).

For example, while both treatment manuals for Dialectical-Behavioral Therapy (Linehan, 1993, 1993/2015) and Compassion-Focused Therapy (Gilbert, 2009) include interventions oriented towards personal growth at the end of treatment, people outside Argentina would seem to need to become sick and receive a psychiatric diagnosis before they can accept and gain access to such interventions. Also most (non-therapist) coaches have incorporated Cognitive-Behavioral interventions into their practice to help people with work or life-related problems, such as Neenan and Palmer’s (2001, 2012) “Cognitive Behavioral Coaching”, Neenan and Dryden’s (2013) Cognitive-Behavioral approach to Life Coaching, Green, Oades and Grant’s (2006) "Cognitive-Behavioral, Solution-Focused, Life Coaching", or Good, Yeganeh and Yeganeh’s (2010) “Cognitive-Behavioral Executive Coaching”. In line with this development, the provision of psychotherapy for personal growth could be related with the infamous notion of “the worried well” in North American culture (Amies, 1996, p. 153; Miller, 2007). Also, this negative attitude towards psychotherapy in North America, could reduce its efficiency since people seem to be seeking consultation only as a last minute resource, when their mental disorder is already advanced. Thus, therapists in North America may be seeing more complex cases that require a more intensive and expensive treatment, and also with a worse prognosis than if they had consulted a psychologist earlier. Actually, this is something that Obama’s presidency in US is explicitly addressing (M. Obama, 2016).

This pilot study provides a rich and rigorous exploration of this clinical practice in different cultural and societal contexts. Further data analyses will refine the preliminary results presented here, enabling the identification of subtle differences and commonalities in the participants’ views about therapy for personal growth.

In summary, the results presented so far within this pilot study are relevant in that they suggest that there are different attitudes towards psychotherapy in different countries in America, Such attitudes apparently shape psychotherapeutic consultation motives and practices differently, possibly risking psychotherapeutic practices to lose their empirical basis in the case of Argentina, and diminishing its efficiency in the case of US and Canada. In this sense, necessary next steps for future research would be to test the generalizability of these findings with a broader sample in each country involved, for example, through an online bilingual survey to practicing clinicians. This would enable large-sample quantitative analyses of self-report questionnaire data to complement and quantify the subjective experiences reported in this initial qualitative exploration.

Limitations of this study

This pilot project consisted of an initial qualitative study of 3 experts and 3 non-expert participants. As such, the preliminary results presented and discussed here are meant to generate hypotheses and stimulate discussion rather than provide definite answers.

The reported findings here might not be representative of other or all clinicians and researchers in or outside of Argentina, but indicate that additional qualitative and quantitative research in this area is warranted.

References

Early Career Professional Column


International Psychology Bulletin (Volume 20, No. 4) Fall 2016 Page 38
In the Words of the Four Winners of the 2016 International Research Award for Graduate Students

Daria Diakonova-Curtis
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Our Division welcomes another set of inspiring young international researchers! Every year, the Division of International Psychology recognizes and awards four graduate students for their contributions to the field through their international research projects. As Chair of this award, it has been my pleasure to read the submissions, each with an interesting research question, spanning several continents and investigating a variety of phenomena in different international communities. These four awardees, however, stood out for their rigor, innovation, and commitment to advancing the field of international psychology. Some accomplished their projects through connections with NGOs or direct work in international communities, others through collaborations with researchers abroad. All four awardees, I believe, embody the expanding global perspective we seek to achieve in our Division and the field of psychology overall. Now the awardees speak about their projects, what obstacles they encountered while conducting an international study as graduate students, and offer valuable advice and encouragement to others who may be interested in pursuing such a feat.

Lauren Dewey, Ph.D.

“Providing Care for Many in the Context of Few Resources: Secondary Traumatic Stress, Burnout and Moral Distress Experienced by Healthcare Providers in Rural Uganda”
Advisors: Maureen Allwood, Ph.D. Clinical Psychology Program at John Jay College Graduate Center at the City University of New York, New York, NY

Lauren became interested in international research when during an undergraduate semester at the University of Cape Town in South Africa she became involved in volunteer and research opportunities with street youth and detained youth. After completing a Masters degree in forensic psychology, she engaged in program development for an arts-based program for youth in a favela in Salvador, Brazil. These experiences strengthened her desire to examine and address humanitarian and social-justice oriented issues using psychology. The idea for this research study came to Lauren when she was invited to volunteer in Fort Portal, Uganda with an American-based nursing NGO. She developed a coping and self-care training workshop that reached 300 rural Ugandan healthcare providers. The literature provided little information about the negative mental health consequences experienced by healthcare providers in low-resource, rural, and non-Western settings, and she designed a study, to be run in conjunction with the training, that would address that gap. Lauren worked closely with the director of a Ugandan nursing school, Fort Portal International Nursing School (FINS), to plan a longitudinal study to examine the negative mental health consequences experienced by healthcare providers in Fort Portal and the ways in which they cope. Lauren says that it was important for her to do community-based research and to use a participatory approach and mixed-methods. The specific topic was less important than the process of encouraging community members to look critically at their environment. On account of this approach, FINS’ board of directors helped interpret and disseminate findings and is now implementing their own ideas for change.

As far as obstacles encountered while conducting her study, Lauren mentions that there were multiple logistical and ethical challenges at each phase of this research, due to differences in organizational and cultural expectations as well as lack of resources and communication difficulties. As one example, the approval of the study was delayed because the IRB required the director of FINS to complete the online CITI training, which was difficult given the slow internet connection in rural Africa and the training’s focus on American concepts. Lauren used flexibility, persistence, and acceptance in addressing obstacles that arose throughout this project. Lauren said that her research provided an example of a project carried out with minimal funding that included a public service piece, engaged community members in multiple ways, inspired local change, and provided implications for health workforces in other low resource settings.

Congratulations, Lauren! As for advice for students interested in international psychology, Lauren wrote: “Understand the history of the culture of the community in which you are working and try to build a non-US centric approach to the project. Know the goals and expectations of your partner organizations. Integrate community member/participant involvement into as much of the research design as possible, and especially into interpreting findings.”

Xue Yang, M.Phil.

"Culture and Stigma Internalization: The Buffering Effect of Dialectics among Hong Kong Chinese and Mainland Chinese"
Advisors: Winnie W. S. Mak, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China
Xue became interested in cross-cultural research because when she moved from Mainland China to Hong Kong for her postgraduate study, she experienced a cultural shock and found that Hong Kong culture was quite different from Mainland Chinese culture, while these cultural differences significantly affected local residents' mindset and behaviors. She got the idea for her project because her research interest was in stigma but most studies on stigma were conducted in Western cultures. Thus she was wondering whether there are any local values and lay theories that could explain stigmatization in different ethnic groups. She also had collaborations with both Mainland Chinese researchers and Hong Kong researchers, and therefore had the opportunity to access both Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong samples. Xue said that this research was important to her personally because it provided her with a chance to think deeply of similarities and differences in different cultures. Through international collaboration, she was able to learn from researchers from different cultures and become more critical and open-minded in conducting her research. Xue explained that her study added important findings to the field of international psychology because it was the first attempt to combine the theory of dialectical culture and the theory of stigma to demonstrate the buffering role of dialectical thinking in stigma internalization. It also highlighted the potential of culture-based interventions for stigma reduction.

Congratulations, Xue! As for words of encouragement to new students interested in international research, Xue wrote: “I will suggest other students to communicate and develop more international collaborations with researchers from different cultures. You may find that your perspectives on the same research question can be quite different which will help you raise more research ideas. Also, collaborating with researchers from different disciplines is important and beneficial as well.”

Jean-Machelle Benn-Dubois, Ph.D.

"A Cultural Study on Transactional Sexual Abuse in the Caribbean: Professional Perspectives"  
Advisor: Patricia H. A. Perez, Ph.D.  
International Psychology Program  
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Chicago, IL

Jean-Machelle’s interest in international research emerged during her work with several international organizations, where she began noticing the existence of the same or similar issues in different countries but with different cultural interpretations and hence different reactions and solutions. She noticed that when non-western environments attempted to import western approaches to address their social issues as recommended by funding agencies, it did not produce the same level of positive results in their environments. The idea for Jean-Machelle’s research on Transactional Sexual Abuse (TSA) emerged from her work with high-risk populations in the field of HIV/AIDS, where internationally, minors involved in age discordant relationships were recognized to be at greater risk of becoming infected with the virus. Jean-Machelle mentioned that the opportunity for doing this international research arose within the scope of International Psychology and the guidance provided by The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, who directed her vision into a reality. Jean-Machelle said that this research held personal importance because it bridged the gap of the impact of one’s culture on assumptions and unconscious acceptance of behaviors.

Jean-Machelle did encounter some obstacles while conducting her project. Most noticeable was accessibility of some participants. It was essential to form partnerships with other persons who created a bridge that eventually connected her to the study participants. It was necessary to utilize multiple data collections strategies; for example, some interviews were done via teleconference, others done in person. Jean-Machelle said that ultimately her research challenged the ethnocentric western view of the universal dimension to social problems, by exploring contextual factors that cause and maintain these issues, thus blending emic and etic perspectives on TSA.

Congratulations, Jean-Machelle! For students considering international research, Jean-Machelle shares, “I would encourage students who are interested in international research to get into the community and form partnerships with local personnel for better results. Also let the people and the environments guide your discovery. Let go of taken-for-granted assumptions about life experiences and be willing to learn alternative world views.”

Ben Chun Pan Lam, M.Phil.

“Dialectical Relationship Thinking: Explicit and Implicit Partner Evaluations across Cultures”  
Advisor: Susan E. Cross, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology, Social Psychology  
Iowa State University, Ames, IA

Ben developed his interest in understanding Chinese people's social minds as he reflected on his bicultural experience as a Hong Kong Chinese. Ben got the idea for his project when his advisor and he were invited to write a book chapter on dialectical thinking and close relationships. Ben thought about how Chinese and European American intimate partners differ in their romantic relationship experiences. Subsequent to this, he studied implicit and explicit partner evaluations among Chinese and Americans in his dissertation. Ben said that his study was an important first step in developing a research program on culture and romantic relationships. He was already thinking of following up some of his ideas using different research methods, including experimental and longitudinal research designs. The biggest challenge during his project, Ben shared, was to coordinate data collection in two different places and ensure that the settings were similar across cultures. Ben mentioned that he was fortunate to have excellent collaborators and research assistants in both places. He also tried his best to monitor the data collection process and to frequently...
discuss with his collaborators any data collection issues that they encountered. Ben found that Chinese people compared to European Americans evaluated their romantic partners more ambivalently (holding both positive and negative attitudes), at both implicit and explicit levels. Ben originally predicted that partner evaluative ambivalence would explain cultural differences in relationship quality, but his results showed that explicit but not implicit partner evaluative ambivalence was a significant mediator. Overall, Ben’s research contributed to the limited literature on culture and close relationships, and the findings have implications for counselors who provide services to Asian couples.

Congratulations, Ben! In terms of advice for fellow students, Ben writes, “Be prepared that data collection in two or more places may take longer than expected, due to different issues (e.g., getting ethical approval from both places, matching research procedure, translating instruments, etc.). This is especially important if you have a fixed time frame to complete your research.”

Graduate Student Internships with APA at the United Nations

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The American Psychological Association (APA) at the United Nations (UN) is a non-governmental organization that has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN.

The APA UN/NGO team consists of experienced psychologists who serve as representatives, along with graduate interns who receive mentorship from representatives. Working under the direction of the appointed representative, the team strives to support the advocacy goals and priorities of the APA. The team collaborates with members of other NGOs and APA offices to identify critical issues and human rights concerns, to organize program such as the annual Psychology Day to raise awareness of such issues, and to disseminate information about the impact and need for action. The team aims to provide information to other psychologists who intend to engender a positive change and also strives to maintain ongoing dialogue and discussion between psychologists and UN diplomats and representatives. Overall, the APA UN/NGO concerns itself with assuring the safety and wellbeing of people worldwide - serving both the mission of the APA and the UN.

The members of the APA UN/NGO are joined in their efforts by a group of highly skilled graduate student interns who contribute to the activities of the team in a variety of ways. Each of the interns is selected from pool of competitive applicants, and all represent a unique experiential background and perspective for promoting the wellbeing of individuals on a global level through their work as future psychologists and professionals. The discussion that follows aims to provide an overview of the activities of the organization and information about how the graduate student interns contribute as valued members of a team comprised of individuals who share a collective mission of using psychology and their knowledge as psychologists to promote international human rights.

UN Agenda on Human Rights

The protection of human rights has been a key initiative of the United Nations (UN) since the founding of its Charter in 1945 (UN, 2016). Major milestones have included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which brought such pertinent issues into international law, and the establishment of the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) in 1993 (UN, 2016). In addition to the OHCHR there are various governing commissions and expert bodies that handle specific human rights concerns including but not limited to issues of economic, social and cultural rights, the elimination of discrimination, rights of children and the disabled. Working in parallel with the official governing entities, UN-affiliated non-governmental organizations (NGOs) strive to provide forums within which professionals and experts in the field can become more active in dealing with global issues that impact humanity.

Since the inception of the OHCHR over half a century earlier, the advent of the new millennium began with a breakthrough in efforts to improve the human condition worldwide, as world leaders gathered in New York in September 2000 and adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration. In so doing, they set out a series of targets that became known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs served as a platform for the new UN agenda, including a set of Sustainable Development Goals that aim to put all countries on track toward a more prosperous, sustainable, and equitable world. Most recently, the adoption of the Agenda for the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) holds promise for improving human rights. At this time, many UN/NGOs including the APA UN/NGO attempt to utilize the SDGs as a means of framing their efforts around a common set of objectives towards a more socially conscious future.
APA Agenda on Human Rights

The APA has also set goals for directing attention to issues of human rights. Broadly speaking, these goals are divided into six main areas, which include promoting psychologists’ respect for human rights in their research and practice, monitoring and protecting individual human rights, supporting advocacy to ensure that governments respect human rights, advancing the knowledge of psychology to address human rights concerns, developing policy, and finally, widening the access to public education and resources about issues related to human rights concerns (APA, 2016). When interns join the organization, they support these aims through their advocacy work as members of the APA UN/NGO.

Activities of the APA UN/NGO Interns

The graduate interns of the APA UN/NGO support the team in various capacities including those listed below.

Interact with various NGO Committees. The APA UN/NGO interns participate in the activities of the organization in a variety of ways. While the UN and its entities may sometimes appear expansive, much of work that the APA UN/NGO team members do occurs within the NGO committees, where UN appointed representatives disseminate information and learn about various international issues and concerns. Topics that some of these NGO committees seek to address include the treatment of older persons, children, women, families, as well as issues surrounding environmental and economic sustainability.

Assist in preparation for the Annual Psychology Day at the United Nations. Last year, a panel of experts addressed the topic of health inequalities and psychology’s contributions to the UN’s Post-2015 Global Agenda during the annual Psychology Day at the UN conference. This year, audience members heard from a panel of experts on the topic of using psychology to address the Global Migration Crisis on April 28th, 2016. Two expert panels addressed cultural integration in the resettlement process and experiences of children and families in forced migration. The conference typically occurs in April annually and graduate interns assist in the preparation and logistics of the event.

Attend Briefings, conferences, and meetings. Graduate interns participate in various meetings to discuss human rights issues and to learn how psychologists can impart their knowledge. This past year, graduate interns not only attended numerous meetings, but also provided assistance at several major NGO committee events. For one, the Committee on Ageing held an event to celebrate the International Day of Older Persons on October 1st, 2016. This year, graduate student interns provided logistical support during the event and networked with speakers and attendees.

Collaborate with representatives and fellow interns. As members of the APA and affiliates of UN/NGO committees, graduate student interns have the opportunity to professionally network with other psychologists and individuals working to promote human wellbeing across the world.

Student Column

For one, graduate interns attended several events during the 60th Commission on the Status of Women this past March. Several interns were in attendance during the parallel event co-sponsored by the APA UN/NGO titled “Cyberspace to Cultural Violence: Challenges and Strategies to Overcome Barriers to Empowerment of Girls.” Speakers consisted of APA representatives and colleagues. Throughout the year, graduate student interns participate in multiple events to target similarly timely issues related to the rights of individuals throughout the world.

Prepare presentations for conferences and professional meetings. This past year, the graduate student interns each delivered a presentation during symposium at the Eastern Psychological Association annual meeting titled “The United Nations’ Agenda on Human Rights: Issues Facing International Psychology.” In addition, the interns prepared and delivered presentations at various committee meetings, including one held during the monthly meeting in April for the NGO Committee on the Family.

Contribute to news columns. In the past, graduate student interns have reflected upon their experiences by writing and contributing to columns such as “UN Matters for Psychology International” (Gary & Rubin, 2011).

Provide mentorship and support to incoming interns. Before interns complete their year, graduate student interns are given the option to mentor the incoming group and to provide experientially based support.

Conclusion

The APA UN/NGO invites a group of graduate student interns to participate as members of the organization’s team. In so doing, interns contribute to the work of the organization, alongside representatives who share similar interest with respect to applying their knowledge of psychology to promote the wellbeing of humans throughout the world. The interns in turn have opportunities to develop a professional network along with a well-rounded set of skills that may help them as they continue in their study and practice of psychology.

References


Note: Teresa Ober is a doctoral student in the Educational Psychology program at the CUNY Graduate Center, specializing in Learning, Development, and Instruction and currently serves as the administration assistant to the main representative of the APA to the UN. She has prior classroom experience as a primary school educator and her past research pursuits have included the study of cognitive theories applied to reading comprehension. Her current research interests include cognitive development and the emergence of early language and literacy skills. She hopes to better understand how educational technologies can be used to improve the learning of academic skills, as well as resilience and self-regulated learning, both within the United States and abroad. Contact: tober1@mail.com
Teaching Abroad as Graduate Students: Reflections on an Applied Cross Cultural Psychology Course in Morocco

Rachel Shor & Lauren Breithaupt
George Mason University

Study abroad can have a significant impact on students and provide them with greater insight into how culture shapes the way people think about themselves, others, and the world around them. As globalization continues, local communities have increased cross-border and international dimensions (Lyons, 2006) thereby exposing communities to increasing diversity. One avenue for fostering culturally competent graduate students and professionals in psychology may be through leading short-term study abroad trips. In addition to impacting students in study abroad, these experiences have the potential to affect course instruction and contributions to the international community.

Experiential learning courses, study abroad in particular, have been linked with a range of beneficial individual and social outcomes for students including interest in pursuing higher education, development of cultural empathy, increased understanding of world issues, desire to engage in social justice and environmental preservation, and changes in personal perspective such as increased critical consciousness related to media (see Paige et al., 2010; Mapp, 2012). Short-term programs are those in which students are abroad for less than eight weeks (Donnelly-Smith, 2009). These programs are the largest and fastest growing segment of the study abroad market and provide a pathway for those studying abroad for the first time (McKeown, 2009). A number of theoretical models explore how and why these experiences have such an impact on students. Richard Kiely’s Transformational Service-Learning Process Model, for example, builds upon existing transformational learning models (e.g., Mezirow, 2000) and examines the process of change using a study abroad service-learning course as a case study. Kiely’s model emphasizes key elements that shape how students make sense of their experiences abroad as they are exposed to new information and either assimilate or accommodate existing systems of belief and behavior (Kiely, 2005). The possibility that instructors will undergo a parallel process of transformation as they are also exposed to new professional and personal circumstances is not only conceivable, it is expected.

When graduate students lead study abroad courses for undergraduates, there are a number of new situations that can shape their personal and professional lives. Below we describe our experience leading a study abroad trip and provide anecdotal evidence to outline positive personal and professional (general, teaching, clinical, and research) changes resulting from designing and implementing the course. Lastly, we report challenges to planning and leading a course abroad (limited time, financial resources, and experiences) and suggest future research.

Case Study: Applied Cross Cultural Psychology in Morocco

In 2015, seven students from three universities enrolled in a 14-day, Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology course offered by a large, mid-Atlantic U.S. university for travel to Morocco. The course was led by two third-year, Clinical Psychology doctoral candidates who had completed their masters’ degree in Psychology. The aim of the course was to help students understand how culture can shape individuals, relationships, and social constructs such as mental health. Using the Bioecological Model of Development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), students learned to critically evaluate and observe the reciprocal effects between individuals, microsystems (e.g., families) and macro-systems (e.g., media). While visiting major cities in Morocco, such as Casablanca, Marrakesh, Fez, and Rabat, as well as smaller communities and villages surrounding the Sahara Desert, students engaged in structured experiential exercises, class discussion, and written reflections to encourage them to analyze how their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors interact with influences from local, national, and international communities.

As the course consolidated a semester's worth of material in two-weeks, considerable time in course planning was necessary. To allow the instructors to focus on resources for developing course material rather than travel logistics, we partnered with ARAMFO Educational Foundation (aramfo.org). ARAMFO specializes in short-term, faculty-led programs around the world to promote multiculturalism and academia. This partnership allowed us to develop the course material and customize an itinerary specific for our academic requirements. ARAMFO contributed to our students’ academic experience by connecting us with faculty, students and professors at the University of Hassan II Benmik and Medical School and ensured that we had unique and culturally rich accommodations while traveling throughout the country. This allowed us to have classroom discussions in non-traditional settings while touring historic mosques, eating traditional Moroccan dinners at our Riads, around a campfire in the Sahara desert, and at sunset overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. In addition, the partnership allowed us to travel and explore multiple cities in a safe and efficient manner by providing us with a translator and bus driver to facilitate security and navigation throughout the country.

Benefits

While there is abundant research exploring student outcomes from studying abroad, no literature expounds on potential benefits for instructors, much less graduate student instructors. We found that teaching a study abroad course as graduate students was a wonderful and exciting experience and we hope to encourage other graduate
students to consider the possibility of pursuing similar endeavors. The following section highlights anecdotal support for a range of personal and professional benefits that may result from developing and teaching a course abroad.

Personal Benefits
Similar to undergraduate students experiencing study abroad programs, common benefits for graduate teaching instructors might include greater cross-cultural awareness and interest in diversity, increased intercultural communication skills, and a more thorough understanding of the host country. Also comparable to undergraduates, the individual benefits garnered through leading study abroad trips are likely dependent on “personal aspects of the context [that] include…personality traits…knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, interests, needs, learning styles, expectations, motivations, desires, fears, and sense of efficacy” (Kiely, 2005, p.9). The experience of leading a trip abroad and navigating a different culture may also help develop strategies in managing time, working with multiple systems (e.g., university, ARAMFO, organizations in Morocco) and increasing confidence in professional decision-making that translate to other programmatic domains.

Professional Benefits
In addition to facilitating personal growth, leading a study abroad course can increase skills, knowledge, and abilities directly pertaining to professional development. Graduate students in the field of psychology take on many responsibilities in their professional capacity as mental health specialists. The following section briefly outlines how leading study abroad could inform teaching, clinical work, and research.

Teaching
The process of teaching a study abroad course begins months before actually traveling abroad. Modifying an existing class or developing a new class that incorporates in-country immersion can broaden instructors’ knowledge of course development. It can help instructors learn new approaches to presenting information to students. For our course, we compiled information from several cross-cultural classes and tailored the course material to Morocco-relevant topics. In doing so, we learned strategies to integrate multicultural concepts into varied course material that can be generalized to teaching other courses. For example, we adapted an exercise entitled “Analyzing Insults” (to highlight compliments) from a cross-cultural workbook (Goldstein, 2008), and facilitated small group discussions between a group of Moroccan students at the U.S. Consulate in Casablanca and our students.

We also found that teaching students in-country for extended periods of time helped us learn to better balance lecture, experiential activities, group discussion, and personal reflection in ways that kept students engaged in the course material. Experiential activities are a key teaching technique highlighted for short-term study abroad (Spencer & Tuma, 2008). Graduate students teaching at big universities may not have the opportunity to develop and practice experiential learning activities within large classrooms. Leading a small group of students and practicing these activities in a variety of settings allowed us to create and practice experiential activities. These experiential activities can later be applied in diverse classroom and online settings.

Clinical Work
Globalization raises the need for psychologists to gain cultural competence. Cultural competence in health care has been defined as a system that acknowledges the importance of and incorporates culture, assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance toward the dynamics that result from cultural differences, expansion of cultural knowledge, and adaptation of interventions to meet culturally unique needs of services (Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, & Anda-Firempong, 2003). Gaining cultural knowledge requires time, ability, and cross-cultural experiences which may not be readily available within a doctoral program. Teaching short-term study abroad courses provides an avenue for doctoral candidates to experience cross-cultural and international experiences. Graduate students can begin to cultivate components of cultural awareness in these experiences that may not be otherwise available to them.

Knowledge gained from these experiences can be directly applied to the clinical work that Clinical Psychology graduate students may already be doing in their programs. For example, this experience helped us to gain new insights into how our cultural upbringing shapes our interpretations, how we assess other people’s values, and our awareness of other people’s cultural values. One example of this came from reflecting on the personal connections we made with people in Morocco. These connections emphasized the variability of attitudes and behaviors within a cultural group. One discussion about the role of women in the workplace generated very different views in our male tour guide and bus driver. While the man from a traditional Amazigh community believed women could find fulfillment in being active professionally, the man from an urban center believed women would be happiest staying in the home. Engaging in these conversations provided a critical lesson in recognizing within group differences and being cognizant of personal assumptions when working with a diverse client population.

Research
While short-term study abroad trips increase cultural competence that is imperative for culturally sensitive clinical practice, these experiences may also increase understanding of culture within a research context. Including cultural considerations is vital to making research in the mental health field more relevant to diverse populations. As many theorists have noted, psychologists have often conceptualized culture in inadequate ways (Adams & Markus, 2001; Christopher & Bickhard, 2007). For example, culture is often confused with country in research and treated as a geographic territory or as a nuisance variable. A benefit of doctoral candidates leading study abroad trips is that it allows them to experience and reflect upon the role of culture and to better study cultural influences. A greater ability to understand culture will facilitate research to develop acceptable psychological
interventions that can be applied across various contexts.

In addition, graduate student short-term study abroad trips present the opportunity for international research collaboration. For example, during our trip we developed a conference with university professors from University of Hassan II Bennmsik and Medical School for our students and Moroccan students. The collaboration with faculty at the medical school allowed us to discuss the unique challenges to international publishing collaborations. Furthermore, we have submitted proposals for in-country data collection with the networks we developed by leading the trip. Since returning we continue to stay in-contact with Moroccan professors about potential research collaborations and publications.

**Challenges**

While the benefits of leading study abroad courses may be far reaching, there are also a number of challenges that may feel particularly burdensome to graduate students with their limited time, financial resources, and experience teaching and/or traveling internationally. Below, we briefly outline some of the challenges that we faced and the strategies we implemented in an effort to mitigate these barriers to leading a meaningful course abroad.

**Limited Time**

Three time-related challenges were the greatest hurdles to overcome in order to even consider leading a study abroad course: 1) finding two weeks to lead a trip that does not conflict with personal goals or program obligations; 2) developing the course; and 3) recruiting students. In addition, taking students abroad for two weeks is a huge responsibility for any instructor. It felt particularly daunting to us as graduate students who were not accustomed to being the final arbiter of professional and academic decisions.

To address these challenges, we opted to lead a short study abroad course during students’ Winter break, so as not to conflict with our own course work and to minimize the impact on our research and clinical obligations. This required communicating our intentions to advisors well in advance and planning the course at least 18 months prior to the planned departure. We also worked closely with the university’s study abroad office and academic departments to utilize their expertise in planning and marketing the course to students. We found this to be crucial in developing strategies regarding the cost of the course as well as ensuring that course content met university standards. Additionally, we created a brief YouTube recruitment video and sent it to other universities to expand our recruitment efforts. In the future, we plan to develop additional online course material so that students have more time to complete the instructional components of the course prior to traveling. With decreased instructional content during travel, experiential components in-country can be increased.

**Limited Financial Resources**

As graduate students, we were concerned about the personal costs of travelling abroad. We found that by recruiting more students, the cost of our airfare, in-country travel, accommodations, and some food were covered. While these arrangements may vary by university, there is also the option of partnering with independent study abroad organizations to help defray costs, recruit students, and even offer scholarships for students interested in participating in the course.

**Limited Experiences Teaching or Travelling Internationally**

As graduate students, we decided to co-facilitate the course. This allowed us to collaborate and rely on each other’s skill sets to provide the best course we could for students. For example, Shor (1st author) had experience teaching, and Breithaupt (2nd author) had worked closely faculty who had previously taught abroad and used partner organizations (e.g., ARAMFÔ) to plan the trip. While both of us had each taken several study abroad programs as students and traveled internationally, neither of us had previously led a trip abroad. We chose a location of interest to both of us that we felt was conducive to teaching a cross-cultural psychology course. We then reached out to Aramfo Educational Foundation for Multicultural Education and Students’ Learning to provide additional support in organizing in-country transportation, tour guides and transportation, lodging, and guidance in choosing activities that fulfilled aims of the course. We found that through utilizing each other’s skills, and the many resources available via universities and independent organizations, we were able to lead a successful and meaningful study abroad trip for both our students and for ourselves.

**Conclusion**

This article shared the lessons learned from a short-term study abroad course led by two clinical psychology doctoral candidates. While teaching a study abroad course poses numerous challenges for doctoral candidates, the opportunities for personal and professional development are also abundant. Our personal experiences suggest numerous opportunities for future research to assess the benefits of graduate students teaching study abroad. Research to date has supported change in cultural competence of students participating in study-abroad programs. However, cultural competency gained from the leaders of study abroad programs has yet to be assessed. We hope that this preliminary reflection provides an avenue for further exploration.

**References**


Looking at the Other 96 Percent of Children

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In this second edition of Childhood and Adolescence: Cross-Cultural Perspectives, editors Uwe Gielen and Jaipul Roopnarine present a very comprehensive approach to childhood and adolescent development through a cross-cultural lens, including the 96 percent of the world's children born outside of North America. The book is divided into five main parts: (1) Worldwide Perspectives on Childhood and Adolescence, (2) Childcare, Parenting, and Family Systems, (3) Three Theme in Children’s Lives: Gender Roles, Siblings and Becoming an Adolescent, (4) Transnational and Immigrant Children and (5) Difficult Circumstances and Adjustments.

This organization works very well as the beginning chapters in Part 1 focus on a general approach in applying a cross-cultural perspective to developmental psychology, while later chapters focus on more specific issues of concern in working with children and families from different cultural backgrounds.

The first chapter by the lead editor of this book very clearly outlines the history of developmental psychology, as well as the theories and research of key proponents in the fields of cross-cultural psychology and anthropology. The accompanying table in this chapter is most helpful in understanding the similarities and differences among theories, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. A criticism of developmental psychology has been that it is too Anglo-centric and thus its applicability to children, adolescents, and families around the world is limited. This book aims “to trace and compare the developmental trajectories of children, adolescents, and adults in a broad spectrum of ecological and sociocultural settings around the world” (Page 38). Thus the authors have proposed a way to integrate developmental psychology with cross-cultural perspectives that make it more inclusive as well as relevant. Thus this book makes a major contribution to our psychological understanding of all people during their formative years.

Part 2 on cultural models of stages in child development seeks to integrate the very familiar stages of child development with different cultural perspectives, while chapters 3 and 4 in Part 1 help increase understanding of changing demographics that affect children and families around the world.

Chapters in Part 3 focus specifically on cultural differences in key populations, including Arab (a population about which there is increasing interest but as yet limited literature), Caribbean and Asian (increasing populations in the United States), and Asia, while Part 3 expands understanding of some of the main issues affecting children – gender roles, sibling relationships, and adolescents. What most developmental psychologists have focused on have been these issues in developed countries and in contrast chapters in this part look at these issues in developing countries, which is where the majority of children and adolescents live.

Part 4 is most timely and relevant for psychologists and others in the helping professions because it addresses issues relevant to transnational and immigrant children. Increasingly psychologists work with children who have lived in many places in their lifetime, have emigrated from another country or are truly transnational as they frequently travel back and forth between the United States and their home countries. A particularly interesting chapter is chapter 13 in which the family experience of Chinese children and adolescents is addressed.

The authors of chapters in the final Part 5 focus on challenging problems that emerge in child and adolescent psychology: violence against women, street children, war-traumatized adolescents, and child/adolescent psychopathology.

The book concludes with an ode to “contextualization” that human development cannot be studied or fully understood without looking at its “ecocultural context.” Page 463. The authors acknowledge that the exploration of this approach is relatively new and much more will be learned in the future.

This new volume complements other scholarly books on global children and families (Congress & Gonzalez, 2015). In addition to its very clear and logical organization, this book has several other very positive features.

The editors have assembled a diverse group of contributors who are well credentialed and knowledgeable about the topics they write. While most of the contributors from the US and elsewhere are well established experts in the areas they address, the authors have also included doctoral student contributors. This introduces a younger, fresher understanding on the integration of developmental psychology and cross-cultural research.
A challenge with edited books sometimes is that writing and documentation is uneven. This is certainly not a problem with this book where all chapters are well written with comprehensive literature reviews. Also, the chapters consistently demonstrate inclusion of relevant theory, policy, and research.

As an academic, I always evaluate how useful it would be as a reading for a psychology, child development or family treatment class. Although the chapters are very erudite with much reference to relevant studies, the writing is very clear and understandable which is a plus in engaging students. Examples to clarify theoretical content are used throughout each chapter. What is most noteworthy is that each chapter begins with one or two case examples of a child or adolescent from a different country. This helps an American educated psychology student understand more clearly about child/family differences in countries around the world. Another plus is that each chapter concludes with questions that relate to the content of the proceeding chapters. These questions can either be used for class discussion or for essay exam questions. While some questions look for information about specific content, most serve to develop critical thinking skills, which is a goal of graduate education.

This book is particularly timely and relevant in 2016. Often because of authors’ focus and/or publication delays, by the time a book is published it is out of date. This is not true of this book in which the authors include content on the most current challenging issues with children and families, such as current trends in immigration and the effects of technology.

Although the book is written with an authoritative flavor, there is a final acknowledgment that we are only at the beginning of cross-cultural developmental psychology and much more will be known and explored in the future. This is certainly a book that psychologists will want for themselves and to include on reading lists for their students.

Reference

Note: Elaine Congress, MSSW, DSW, MA, is a social worker, psychologist, consultant to the United Nations, Associate Dean Professor of the Graduate School of Social Service, Fordham University. Address any inquiries to: congress@fordham.edu

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New Oxford University Press Bibliography on “International Psychology”

(http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/)

Uwe P. Gielen, Grant J. Rich, Richard Velayo, & Harold Takooshian

International psychology as an international discipline has made considerable progress during the last few decades. Perhaps three quarters of all psychologists reside now outside the United States, leading journals are routinely publishing articles coauthored by international teams of research psychologists, and many international psychology conferences are attracting presenters and participants from around the globe. At the same time, however, psychology and its practitioners remain underrepresented in many of the low- and medium-income countries located in the Global South. The OUP Bibliography on International Psychology does include a considerable number of references especially in the applied areas that explore the activities of psychologists in these less visible countries. After all, that is where the majority of the world’s people live and where, consequently, psychology as a theoretical, educational, and applied discipline needs to grow.

Reference

The 20th European Congress of the International Association for the Adolescents’ Health (IAAH) in Kosovo

Flaka Isufi & Fitim Uka
Private Bearer of Higher Education "qeap-heimerer", Kosovo

The Republic of Kosovo hosted the 20th European Congress for Adolescent’s Health from 14th to 16th of September 2016. More than 400 researchers from 22 different countries participated in the congress and had a chance to listen to more than 100 scientific oral and poster presentations. The congress was organized by the International Association for Adolescent Health (IAAH), the NGO “Kosovar Adolescent” and Geneva University Hospital, with the support of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Youth and...
Sport in Kosovo, World Health Organization and UNFPA office in Pristina, College "qeap-Heimerer" and International Solidarity Office (Service de la Solidarité Internationale de Genève) Geneva Switzerland. This year, the congress main topic was “Social Media and Adolescent Health”. The 20th European congress of IAAH offered a multidisciplinary platform allowing researchers, students, professionals but also young people and parents to exchange on latest developments and emerging challenges in adolescent health, with a focus on social media. The Congress began its journey with six workshops, which covered interested topics, such as “Doing health-related research with adolescents within their own social media worlds (interactive session)” and “Academic Writing in Adolescent Research”. On the second day, the president of the congress Fitim Uka led the opening ceremony and welcomed local and international participants.

“We will know how to use your experience and your research findings to design best practices in the field of adolescent health. I also think that you will find young, talented and enthusiastic students and researchers from Kosovo, who are ready to collaborate and build a research network”, said Uka at the opening ceremony. Several interesting presentations followed with focus on influences of social media on adolescent health. Dr. Evert Ketting gave an interesting presentation on “Youth and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) – impact of CSE on youth empowerment” as well as dr. Antje von Suchodolez from New York University in Abu Dhabi who presented “A psycho-ecological framework to understand individual differences in adolescents’ health behaviors”. Other oral and poster presentations treated the influence of social media on adolescents’ health. Several studies presented at this congress investigated the relationships between social media preferences and mental health. Findings reported that the social media use can negatively affect sleep, enhance anxiety and depression symptoms among adolescents and reduce school success. However, there were also studies reporting that social media can be used to enhance well-being and learning and that social media could be used as a medical support tool for adolescents. In conclusion, this event was an excellent opportunity for the promotion of Kosovan young researchers and their chance to meet and connect with researchers from all over the world, as well as learn about new developments in adolescent health research.

Member updates:

2016 June-Sept Updates on Dr Ani Kalayjian

1. American Psychological Association’s Trauma Division (56), on August 5 awarded the Outstanding Contributions to the Practice of Trauma Psychology to Dr Ani Kalayjian. Through teaching, advocacy, and clinical practice, Dr. Kalayjian has focused her efforts and expertise on trauma survivors. She has given hope and healing to many who have experienced traumatic events, and we thank Dr. Kalayjian for all of her contributions to our field.

2. Dr Kalayjian organized and led Meaningfulworld’s 11th Humanitarian Mission to Haiti from 17 June to 3 July, 2016.

3. Dr Kalayjian Chaired the International Women’s Committee Meeting at the APA Convention in Denver, CO on Thursday 4 August, 2016.

4. Dr Kalayjian organized, chaired and presented a symposium on Transforming Genocidal Trauma Into Meaning-Making and Forgiveness---Cases From Armenia, Rwanda, Burundi, & Palestine.

5. Dr Kalayjian chaired the International Psychology Disaster Mitigation and Violence Prevention Meeting on Friday 5 August, at APA Convention, at Denver, Colorado.

6. Dr Kalayjian spoke on Ethics: Give it what you’ve got! ---Tutoring psychologists in use of self for social good on 6 August, 2016 at the APA Convention.

7. Dr Kalayjian organized and chaired a symposium on International Humanitarian Aid and Social Justice---Challenges and Lessons Learned, at the APA Convention, in Denver, Co on 7 August.

8. Dr. Kalayjian was elected the Chairperson for the Psychology Coalition at the United Nations.

9. Dr. Kalayjian was elected a Board Member for the International Division (Div 52) of Psychology at American Psychological Association June 2016.

10. Dr. Kalayjian published her poem on “I am a Syrian Refugee”
Present your Internationally Focused work
Western Psychological Association April 27 – 30, 2017, Sacramento, CA Deadline: 15 November 2016 (midnight PST)

With an average annual offering of 30+ poster presentations and 12 hours of symposia/papers (many offering CE), WPA is the place to showcase your international work.

In addition to posters, consider organizing international symposia or selecting the one-speaker paper option (one-speaker papers are assembled into a panel of papers with related topics).

To be reviewed for the international program, use the WPA Call-for-Paper submission process (http://westernpsych.org/wpa-convention-call-for-papers/) and select International Psychology from the topics.

WPA requires that at least one of the authors of each submission should be registered for the conference. Conference registration fees are lower for WPA members and registration for the convention and membership can both be accomplished when you register for the convention.

Student poster competition! Posters with students-as-first-authors (faculty and non-students are allowed as co-authors) are eligible for commendations for their internationally-focused posters. When submitting the proposal, PLEASE identify that it is a student-submission and that the topic is primarily international. We will find your submission and send you details about the contest in the spring.

Contact Lynette Bikos, Ph.D., if you are a student or professional member who:

- Wants to find co-presenters for an internationally focused symposia.
- This year Drs. Harold Takoshian and Lynette Bikos are planning to submit a symposium proposal about internationalizing the psychology curriculum. If you have research related to this topic or would like to showcase examples of how you have addressed global learning outcomes in your course, please contact us!
- Is interested in serving on a Division 52’s International Psychology Western Region Outreach Committee (primarily promoting D52 and international psychology at WPA).
- Would like to volunteer as a poster judge for the student poster competition

To learn more about Division 52/International Psychology, or to join the division: http://div52.org/

Or join the Facebook group: International Psychology: APA Division 52
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