

Report to the National Academies of Science
on the 30th International Congress of Psychology
July 22-27
Cape Town South Africa

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Description of the Congress.

Attendees: The Congress was attended by over 5,500 psychologists from around the globe. Typically the host country has the highest number of participants. This pattern held true for the Cape Town Congress. Of the remaining countries the US was the most well represented with over 430 US citizens (7.8% of total participants) participating in the Congress. The US was followed by China, Germany and Australia in the number of psychologist attending ICP 2012.

The Program. Over 7000 abstract were submitted to be considered for inclusion in the program. The final program consisted of 40 simultaneous sessions running from 8am-5pm for 5 days with many opportunities for socialization in the evenings. The scientific program utilized multiple formats including workshops (n= 14) invited lectures and invited symposia on critical and emerging issues in psychology (n=107), general symposia (2136), specialized debates on scientific controversies (n=14), panels (n=8), and individual papers and posters (n=598). Within these formats a range of research topics were presented from cognitive, social, developmental, organizational, biological and educational psychology as well as the neurosciences, assessment and evaluation. Program topics covered a range of issues including health, sexuality, HIV/AIDS, early childhood development, aging and ethics. Americans and American psychology were prominently featured in the program.

USNC for Psychology Participation. USNC representative Dr. Suchday was involved in 2 formal presentations related to her research interests in health psychology, globalization, and terrorism and Dr. Barbarin was involved in 5 including work on social development of vulnerable boys and the art of scientific writing. Some highlights of the Congress included recognition of the work of Albert Bandura who was granted the Life Time Career Award at the Congress. In addition, a review of current issues in psychology in the United states was provided the President and Chief Executive officer of the American Psychological Association. It is fair to say that the influence of American psychology in the Union is still considerable. The preeminence and influence of the work of US psychological scientists is reflected not only in the numerous presentation by scholars working in American Universities but also in the widespread citation of concepts, theories and findings from American scholars that was reflected in the thinking and research of scholars from around the world. In general, American psychology is still highly regarded and influential. It is noteworthy that there were frequent expressions at the congress of interest in collaborating with American scholars. At the same time there is a growing interest particularly among scholars in developing countries to articulate what is being called an

indigenous psychology that is an attempt to identify phenomena that may be unique to their regions and to account for their own psychological experiences and reflect their world views. Far from being a threat, this is a welcome development by US psychological scientists who are eager to engage in a collaborative dialogue that can only enrich the science of psychology by testing the universality of principles derived from existing research and flesh out more fully our understanding the human mind and behavior. It is this scientific skepticism that will seed further development of psychological science. For this reason it is more important than ever for psychological scientists from the US to remain engaged with the rest of the world in developing and refining our understanding of human functioning. American psychology has an opportunity for a leadership in this area of study because the advanced state of research within US psychological science.

Governance and the Assembly of IUPsyS.

The Assembly is the principal governing body of IUPsyS met in 4-hour sessions on two separate days. The IUPsyS Assembly consists of representatives from the 81 national adhering bodies including the National Academies. The Assembly is convened every two years to conduct the business of the Union. Attending the 2012 Assembly were 67 voting delegate representing 47 countries in addition to a host of non-voting observers from all across the world. Our delegation extended the long history of extensive involvement by Americans in leadership in the IUPsy S. Although there was danger that American representation in the leadership of the Union would end with Dr Bruce Overmier leaving as Past President, Dr. Merry Bullock vacating her position as Deputy Secretary General and Dr Barbara Tversky completing her second and final term as a member of the executive committee. Dr Barbarin was elected to the executive committee with support from a wide range of countries. He has been appointed to several important portfolios, e.g. liaison to the Journal editor and publisher, member of the procedures and processes committee and the Strategic Planning group each of which is critical to the functioning of IUPsyS.

In addition to conducting the election of officers and executive committee, the assembly considered a number of issues related to the development of psychology as a science. A major concern is the development of the next generation of scholars. For the US the ability to involve beginning and mature scholars in cross-national collaborations is critical. One of the issues discussed was the creation of structures that would make it easier to improve the flow of information and human resources across national boundaries. A need was identified for:

- structures by which to organize information to facilitate identification of potential research collaborators
- resources to support collaborative research
- fellowships to support post-doctoral scholarly exchanges
- an efficient means for universities in 3rd world and developing psychology department to identify candidates from around the world for teaching
- capacity building for dissemination of scientific research in English

Advanced Research Training Seminar- Prior to the start of the Congress, Suchday and Barbarin arrived early in South Africa to deliver advanced methodological and conceptual training on how to conduct research that contributes to an understanding of how populations are coping with the strains of globalization and its effects on health and psychological wellbeing. These sessions were conducted over an evening and 2 full days at the University of Stellenbosch, about 40 miles from Cape Town. The participants in the training were early career scholars from African, Middle East, Latin America and Southeast Asia. The leaders and participants work very long days but all felt that the experience was valuable. The training was the most highly sought after among the advanced research sessions offered by the Union and was so well received by the participants that the Union would like it repeated at the next meeting. In addition the participants were eager to continue with this work in the form of a collaborative study of youth and adults assuming we can find funding to support the cost of this research. The dynamic duo of Suchday and Barbarin was an unqualified success as ambassadors of American scholarship.