Towards Culturally Responsible Conduct of International Research

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Complexity of Culture

- Kluckhohn and Kroeber's cited 164 definitions of culture, ranging from "learned behavior" to "ideas in the mind," "a logical construct," "a statistical fiction," "a psychic defense mechanism," and so on.

- The definition—or the conception—of culture that is preferred by Kroeber and Kluckhohn and also by a great many other anthropologists is that culture is an abstraction or, more specifically, "an abstraction from behaviour."

- Ref: Kroeber, A.L., & Kluckhohn, C. (1952). Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions. Harvard University Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Ethnology Papers 47.

Some Fundamental Assumptions

- Most of my presentation is from the perspective of Psychology and I will assume that much of it will be transferable to other arenas of science.
- Human beings are cultural beings
- The community of scientists is made up of human beings and functions as a culture and can be studied as a culture from a psychological perspective.
- A culture is a group of human beings who share a common language and set of values, beliefs, norms and practices in a particular context
- *Ethnocentricism* is a common, natural human tendency and it consist of using our own culture as a standard for evaluating others and founded on the belief that one's culture is superior to others.
- We need to be aware of ETIC (universalist) and EMIC (culture specific) approaches to research and their respective advantages and disadvantages.

Human beings as cultural beings

- "No man ever looks at the world with pristine eyes. He sees it edited by a definite set of customs and institutions and ways of thinking. Even in his philosophical probings, he cannot go behind these stereotypes; his very concepts of the true and the false will still have reference to his particular traditional customs..... From the moment of his birth the customs into which he is born shape his experience and behavior. By the time he can talk, he is the little creature of his culture, and by the time he is grown and able to take part in its activities, its habits are his habits, its beliefs his beliefs, its impossibilities his impossibilities. .... There is no social problem it is more incumbent upon us to understand than this, the role of custom. Until we are intelligent at to its laws and varieties, the main complicating facts of human life must remain unintelligible."

    From Ruth Benedict, 1934, in *Patterns of Culture*

Gold fish and water or the British banker and the Chinese eels

Link to HSBC eel video:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_WAmt3cMdk

Globalization Challenges to Ethical Research Practices

- While the American Psychological Association (APA) has its own Code of Ethics that contain guidelines regarding research, these guidelines do not specifically address international and cross-cultural research.

- Leong and Lyons (2010) reviewed of some ethical challenges and dilemmas for American psychologists conducting cross-cultural research, including collaborative research, in other countries.

APA Code of Ethics (2002)

- 8. Research and Publication
- 8.01 Institutional Approval
- 8.02 Informed Consent to Research
- 8.03 Informed Consent for Recording Voices and Images in Research
- 8.04 Client/Patient, Student, and Subordinate Research Participants
- 8.05 Dispensing With Informed Consent for Research
- 8.06 Offering Inducements for Research Participation
- 8.07 Deception in Research
- 8.08 Debriefing

APA Code of Ethics (2002)

- 8.09 Humane Care and Use of Animals in Research
- 8.10 Reporting Research Results
- 8.11 Plagiarism
- 8.12 Publication Credit
- 8.13 Duplicate Publication of Data
- 8.14 Sharing Research Data for Verification
- 8.15 Reviewers

APA Code of Ethics (2002)

- **8.02 Informed Consent to Research**
- (a) When obtaining informed consent as required in Standard 3.10, Informed Consent, psychologists inform participants about (1) the purpose of the research, expected duration, and procedures; (2) their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once participation has begun; (3) the foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing; (4) **reasonably foreseeable factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate** such as potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects; (5) any prospective research benefits; (6) limits of confidentiality; (7) incentives for participation; and (8) whom to contact for questions about the research and research participants' rights. They provide opportunity for the prospective participants to ask questions and receive answers.

APA Code of Ethics (2002)

- **8.02 Informed Consent to Research (continued).**
- (b) Psychologists conducting intervention research involving the use of experimental treatments clarify to participants at the outset of the research (1) the experimental nature of the treatment; (2) the services that will or will not be available to the control group(s) if appropriate; (3) the means by which assignment to treatment and control groups will be made; (4) available treatment alternatives if an individual does not wish to participate in the research or wishes to withdraw once a study has begun; and (5) compensation for or monetary costs of participating including, if appropriate, whether reimbursement from the participant or a third-party payor will be sought. (See also Standard 8.02a, Informed Consent to Research.)

Limitations of APA Ethics Code

- The behavioral specificity of the APA Ethics Code ignores a whole range of ethical challenges when cross-cultural and international research are conducted by American psychologists in other countries.

- Furthermore, ethical codes are not created in vacuums but are instead contextualized and reflect the culture of the country in which it has been developed.

- We know very little about the cultural conflicts and ethical dilemmas when these culture-specific ethical codes are transported across cultures in international psychological research.

- More likely than not, these codes lack the flexibility to deal with the complexities of different cultural contexts.

Limitations of APA Ethics Code

- One common problem relates to cross-cultural ethical dilemmas created by value or belief conflicts between a psychologist from the United States and the country in which the international research is being conducted.

- A behaviorally-based ethical system is not likely to be responsive to these cross-cultural conflicts that are often subtle and invisible to many American psychologists.

- The APA Code of Ethics is silent on the ways to cope with such cross-cultural ethical dilemmas and consist of major gaps when applied to international and cross-cultural research situations.

Ethical Challenges in international research

- For example, how do we reconcile the IRB requirement of written consent with research in societies that possess no written language?
- How do we reconcile our society's values concerning bribery with other culture's expectations of gifts in order to provide access to samples?
- What constitute excessive or inappropriate financial inducements takes on a different meaning in Third World countries with high poverty rates.
- Who is monitoring the potential abuse of participants in third world countries in order the advance the scientific careers of first world psychologists?
- Uniformity myth, equal treatment is not always fair treatment, and differential research infrastructure

Current Solutions

- Given the limitations of our national ethical codes, what guidance can we provide for the culturally responsible conduct of international research to our scientists?

- For psychologists, we have been advocating two current solutions.

- The Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles for Psychologists

- APA's Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology.

Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles

- Given the behavioral specificity and lack of flexibility of ethical codes when applied cross-culturally, the International Union of Psychological Science and the International Association of Applied Psychology have instead developed a set of ethical **principles**:

- Source: http://www.am.org/iupsys/resources/ethics/univd ecl2008.html

Framework of the Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles

Principle 1 *Respect for the dignity of all human beings*	**Principle 2** *Competent caring for the well-being of others*	**Principle 3** *Integrity*	**Principle 4** *Professional and scientific responsib. to society*
Values	Values	Values	Values
• Respect for the dignity/worthiness of persons/peoples • Non-discrimination • Informed consent • Free consent • Fair treatment/ Due process • Privacy • Confidentiality	▪ Caring (health and well-being) ▪ Maximize benefits ▪ Minimize harm ▪ Offset/Correct harm ▪ Competence (responsible caring) ▪ Self-knowledge (responsible caring)	▪ Accuracy/ Honesty ▪ Objectivity (understanding/ managing biases) ▪ Straightforwardness/ openness ▪ Avoidance of incomplete disclosure ▪ Avoidance of conflict of interest	▪ Development of knowledge ▪ Respect for society ▪ Duties to society

APA Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology

- Adopted by the Council of Representatives July 28, 2004

- **WHEREAS** an estimated 60 percent (or more) of the world's psychologists now live outside the US (Hogan, 1995);

- **WHEREAS** psychologists outside of the US have generated perspectives, methods and practices that correspond to the needs of the people in their societies and data that are relevant to the development of a more complete psychology of people (Bhopal, 2001; Espin & Gaweleck, 1992; Martin-Baro, 1994; Weiss, Whelan & Gupta, 2000; Winslow, Honein, & Elzubeir, 2002);

APA Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology

- **WHEREAS** US leadership in world psychology is sometimes perceived as disproportionably influential, partly because of access to research funds, an abundance of US publication outlets and the wide acceptance of the English language (Kagitcibasi in Sunar, 1996; Sloan 2000);

- **WHEREAS** US psychology needs to more fully consider the ramifications of national and cultural perspectives and indigenous psychologies (Castillo, 2001; Frank & Frank, 1991; Sue & Zane 1987) in its research, practice and educational efforts (Best & Williams, 1997; Draguns, 2001; Segall, Lonner, & Berry, 1998)

- **WHEREAS** US grounded, normed, and structured measures dominate US empirical psychology, while internationally based, qualitative methods such as community action research are less known or valued in the US (Denzin & Lincoln, 2001; Murray & Chamberlain, 1999; Robson, 1993);

APA Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology

- **WHEREAS** US assessment procedures, tests and normative data have been used extensively in other countries, some times without consideration of cultural differences that affect reliability and validity (Dana, 2000);

- **WHEREAS** people of other cultures have adopted US methods of clinical diagnosis and intervention and US psychology has also exported these methods based on US norms and values to other cultures (Foa, Keane, & Friedman, 2000; Mezzich, 2002; Nakane and Nakane, 2002; Thorne & Lambers, 1998]

- **WHEREAS** there is a need to develop and disseminate materials that will facilitate the training of psychologists to conduct culturally-appropriate research and practice around the world as well as within the culturally diverse United States (diMauro, Gilbert, & Parker, 2003; Friedman, 1997; Hays, 2001);

APA Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology

- **THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the American Psychological Association will:

- (1) advocate for more research on the role that cultural ideologies have in the experience of women and men across and within countries on the basis of sex, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity, social class, age, disabilities, and religion.

- (2) advocate for more collaborative research partnerships with colleagues from diverse cultures and countries leading to mutually beneficial dialogues and learning opportunities.

- (3) advocate for critical research that analyzes how cultural, economic, and geopolitical perspectives may be embedded within US psychological research and practice.

APA Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology

- (4) encourage more attention to a critical examination of international cultural, gender, gender identity, age, and disability perspectives in psychological theory, practice, and research at all levels of psychological education and training curricula.

- **(5) encourage psychologists to gain an understanding of the experiences of individuals in diverse cultures, and their points of view and to value pluralistic world views, ways of knowing, organizing, functioning, and standpoints.**

- **(6) encourage psychologists to become aware of and understand how systems of power hierarchies may influence the privileges, advantages, and rewards that usually accrue by virtue of placement and power.**

APA Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology

- (7) encourage psychologists to understand how power hierarchies may influence the production and dissemination of knowledge in psychology internationally and to alter their practices according to the ethical insights that emerge from this understanding.

- (8) encourage psychologists to appreciate the multiple dilemmas and contradictions inherent in valuing culture and actual cultural practices when they are oppressive to women, but congruent with the practices of diverse ethnic groups.

- (9) advocate for cross national research that analyzes and supports the elimination of cultural, gender, gender identity, age, and disability discrimination in all arenas—economic, social, educational, and political.

- (10) support public policy that supports global change toward egalitarian relationships and the elimination of practices and conditions oppressive to women.

Emerging Solutions

- I believe that this NAS workshop will consist of discussions of multiple solutions to the problem we are addressing.
- For my presentation, I would like to discuss a promising emerging solution, namely International Competencies for scientists and practitioners.
- The movement toward defining and measuring international competencies for scientists and practitioner is an extension of Multicultural Competencies movement in minority mental health services.
- This proposal to define, measure and evaluate international competencies in research and practice also flow naturally from the APA Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness.

Cross-Cultural Competencies Movement

- Over three decades ago, the cross-cultural competence movement in psychology was launched in the United States when Allen Ivey, President of the American Psychological Association's Division of Counseling Psychology appointed Derald Sue to chair a Task Force to develop a position paper on the topic.

- That position paper on cross-cultural counseling competencies which was published in 1982 (Sue, Bernier, Durran, Feinberg, Pedersen, Smith, & Vazquez-Nutall, 1982) has served as the foundation for the current day movement towards cultural competence in mental health services in the United States.

Cross-Cultural Competencies in Counseling: The AKS Model

- **Awareness/Beliefs:** refers to the counselor's awareness of his or her own cultural background and how this may bias or skew his perception of the client's experiences and problems due to the client's different cultural background. It requires sensitivity to these cultural differences in the client's attitudes, beliefs and values and the important role these differences may play in the counseling relationship.

- **Knowledge:** refers to the cross-cultural knowledge that the counselor needs to acquire about client's from different cultural backgrounds so that he or she can work effectively with a range of clients.

- **Skills:** refer to the special abilities that counselors have acquired in order to work effectively with culturally different clients in providing therapeutic interventions that are culturally relevant and culturally effective.

International Competencies

- Based on the cross-cultural counseling competencies outlined in the Division 17 position paper (Sue, et al, 1982) and as an extension to the APA Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology, Heppner, Leong and Gerstein (2011) presented a model for developing international competencies in Psychology.

- The basic purpose of this model is to provide a preliminary conceptual framework for guiding the increasing internationalization of Psychology in the U.S.

- As more psychologists engage in international collaboration whether through research, exchange programs, participating in international conferences, serving as invited speakers or consultants, training graduate students from abroad, or counseling international students, there is a need to develop a set of competencies for undertaking these tasks.

International Competencies

- They proposed that the development of international or cross-cultural competencies in Psychology should begin with a multicultural mindset (Leong & Hartung, 2000) that includes a deep understanding of the contextual basis of human behavior that requires a cross-cultural and comparative perspective.

- The tripartite model of cross-cultural awareness, knowledge, and skills is an essential part of this model.

- The opposite of such a stance is ethnocentrism where we assume that our culture's way of thinking, feeling, and behaving is the best and correct one regardless of context….this leads to the dangers of imposed etics.

- It is also important to note that ethnocentrism is a common and natural human tendency and therefore requires mindful efforts at overcoming such a tendency.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model

- Based on Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) model, Heppner et al (2011) presented 6 propositions that outline a basic set of cross-cultural or international competencies for a psychologist who plan to engaged in international activities.

- It is important to note that this model of international competencies and the associated propositions is meant to be only a starting point for us to explore and formulate how psychologists can develop the key competencies to work in the international arena.

International Competencies Model

- **Proposition 6**: The internationally competent psychologist uses this cross-cultural knowledge, skills, and abilities related to differential contexts and ecologies in order to culturally accommodate for significant differences that would otherwise limit or hinder the relevance and effectiveness of his or her international activities.

- In order to illustrate the application of these international competencies, they provided an abbreviated and simplified example regarding a hypothetical case of a counseling psychology professor who is in the process of collaborating with colleagues in Taiwan on a number of professional projects (e.g., research, teaching, training, consultation).

Awareness and Knowledge

- This Taiwanese case also illustrated the role of awareness, knowledge, and skills components in the culturally responsible conduct of international research.

- In the development of international competencies for research and practice, it would be important to use an evidence-based approach by selecting cross-cultural theoretical models that are empirically-based and have sufficient supporting studies.

- In the field of cross-cultural psychology, the programs of research on cultural values (and more recently cultural beliefs) fit this criteria.

- Next, I will provide a brief review of several of these programs of research on cultural values.

Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck Framework

- Their Value Orientations framework includes five universal dimensions which can be observed in every culture:
- *Relationship to the environment (Dominate, Subjugated, Harmony)*
- *Time Orientation (Past, Present, Future)*
- *Nature of people (Good, Evil, Neutral)*
- *Activity orientation (Doing, Being, Becoming)*
- *Social Relations (Collateral, Linear, Individual)*

Cross-Cultural Conflicts & Ethical Dilemmas.

- An application of the Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck Framework would readily reveal significant cross-cultural conflicts in various **SUBTLE** ethical situations embedded in international research.

- Should an American psychologist who believes that children are essentially neutral convince his counterparts in another country who believe that children are naturally evil but needs to be trained to be good to stop using punishments in intervention research on conduct disorders?

- Can psychologists in linear cultures really relate to their American counterparts as equal individuals and object to recommend research strategies, especially with great pressure to publish in top Psychology (usually American and European journals) from their universities?

Hofstede's Model of Values

- Geert Hofstede (1980, 1991) conducted one of the best known, and most widely used, internationally relevant cross-cultural studies, that of which he assessed 116,000 IBM employees from the late 1960s to early 1970s.

- This study included 72 countries and three geographic regions, asking about values (Schwartz, 1997). Through factor analysis he determined that respondents from the countries represented in his samples differed on four value dimensions.

Hofstede's Model of Values

- **Power distance**: This dimension concerned relationships to authority: to what degree was the distribution of power considered legitimate?
- **Individualism-collectivism**: This dimension addresses the relationship between the individual and the group or society, and the degree to which the self or the collective is the primary frame of reference for cognition, emotion, and motivation.
- **Masculinity/femininity**: This dimension concerns the value placed by the culture on assertiveness, achievement, and material success versus interpersonal relationships, caring, and modesty. So-called masculine cultures are associated with excelling and ambition, and tend to polarize (e.g., win-lose), whereas cultures labeled feminine are associated with quality of life and relationships.
- *Uncertainty avoidance:* This dimension concerns the degree to which individuals of a culture feel uncomfortable or comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty.

Triandis' Cultural Model of Social Behavior

- *Individualism-collectivism cultural syndrome*-similar to Hofstede dimension—however, the following two broad cultural dimensions help explain the experience of individuals within the individualism-collectivism cultural syndrome

- *Cultural complexity* – According to Triandis, in complex societies "people make large distinctions between objects and events in their environment" (Triandis, 1994, p.156). The US is considered to be a complex society (e.g., our Dictionary of Occupational Titles contain 250,000 job titles).

- The complexity of a culture is determined by a number of factors such as population density (relating to the number of possible relationships an individual can have), the number of records kept, fixed residences, individual access to technology, education, and transportation, and a variety of other factors (see Triandis, 1989). Complex cultures and countries tend to be individualistic and affluent.

Triandis' Cultural Model of Social Behavior

- *Tight v. loose cultures* – refers to the strength of social norms and the degree to which they are sanctioned (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006)….can also be conceptualized as homogenous versus heterogeneous cultures. In collectivist cultures, in-groups define values, norms and identities, there is more inflexibility ("tightness"), and less tolerance for those who fall outside of the established norms. Such cultures (e.g., Pakistan, Japan, Malaysia) are also generally more homogeneous.
- Individualist cultures (e.g., Netherlands, New Zealand, United States) tend to have more heterogeneity and are more flexible in tolerating differences from established norms ("loose").

Knowledge of differences in cultural values to guide ethical research practices

- This quick review of Kluckohn & Strodbeck, Hofstede, and Triandis' models is to illustrate the importance of acquiring knowledge regarding cultural values to guide ethical research practices.

- The utility of these models of cultural values lies in their application to the understanding of how values congruence or values conflict can create or mitigate ethical problems when conducting cross-cultural research.

- Clifford Geertz, the noted anthropologist, in his *Interpretation of Cultures*, had made the important distinction between "**thick vs thin descriptions**" of cultures…or the related concept of "**deep vs surface structure**" of grammar identified by Noam Chomsky.

- We propose that international competencies consisting of thick descriptions of culture and an understanding of the deep structure of cultural values and beliefs will be the way forward towards the culturally responsible conduct of international research.

Call to Action

- In conclusion, a major purpose of Leong & Lyons' (2010) article was a "Call to Action"...for the APA Committee on International Relations in Psychology (CIRP) and the Division of International Psychology to begin to assess and evaluate the nature and extend of ethical problems in conducting cross-cultural research among its members while guided by the Resolution on Culture and Gender Awareness in International Psychology and the Universal Declaration of Ethical Principles.

- To respond to that call, I am now proposing that we need to launch a program of research aimed at identifying the key international competencies (awareness, knowledge, and skills) in research and practice in order to meet the challenges of globalization and the increasing internationalization of our scientific enterprise.

Closing Thought:
An Affirmation of Cultural Diversity in Response to the Dangers of Ethnocentricism

- "What sets the world in motion is the interplay of differences, their attractions and repulsions. Life is plurality, death is uniformity. By suppressing differences and pecularities, by eliminating different civilizations and cultures, progress weakens life and favors death. The ideal of a single civilization for everyone, implicit in the cult of progress and technique, impoverishes and mutilates us. Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes the possibility of life"

  From: Otavio Paz,1967, in The Labyrinth of Solitude

THANK-YOU

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