

# Indigenous Psychology

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## Abstract

Indigenous psychology (IP) is both an approach or perspective and a movement in psychology. There have been several attempts to define it. The core elements of this approach are indigenous cultures used in explaining behavior and mental processes, using indigenous interpretations, and discovery or revalidation of psychological concepts and theories that emerge from within the culture. These concepts and theories may not necessarily have emerged or been emphasized in current psychological literature that has been pointed out as having a predominantly North American or European character or 'bias.' This article will examine the different definitions of IP, and outline its main features. It will outline the historical background of the perspective and movement, followed by a portrayal of the development and current status in the main societies where this has advanced significantly. Particular attention will be given to contributions to theory and methods. The article will end with an outline of ongoing debates, future prospects as well as challenges for IP.

## Definition of Indigenous Psychology

Indigenous psychology (IP) is both an approach or perspective and a movement in psychology. It has been defined by a number of scholars, most of whom were the founders of the IP movements in their respective countries. Here are key examples of how IP was defined:

Psychology that is anchored on the thought and experience of the indigenous people, as understood from an indigenous perspective (adaptation from the Philippines' Virgilio Enriquez's definition of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*, the Philippine IP, 1975).

Culturally appropriate psychology, or a route to 'appropriate' psychology (Japan's Hiroshi Azuma, 1984: 53).

"Psychological knowledge that is native, that is not transported from another region, that is designed for its people. In other words, indigenous psychology is understanding rooted in a particular sociocultural context" (South Korea's Uichol Kim, 1990: 145).

Psychology that emerges from cultural tradition; lies in daily, mundane activities of people; understands and interprets in terms of indigenous and local frames of reference and culturally derived categories (Berry et al., 1992: 380–381); and embodies psychological knowledge that is relevant and is designed for its people – reflecting the sociocultural reality of its society (India's Durganand Sinha, 1997: 132).

"Various definitions express the same basic goal of developing a scientific knowledge system that effectively reflects, describes, explains, or understands the psychological and behavioral activities in their native contexts in terms of culturally relevant frames of reference and culturally derived categories and theories" (Taiwan's Kuo-Shu Yang, 2000: 245–246).

Denotes three distinct phenomena: (1) the actual culturally organized psychology of an individual, (2) the local understanding of an individual's psychology, and (3) cultural–psychological theory and methodology (Ratner, 2008).

A number of elements of IP can be drawn from these definitions, for example:

Primacy of the indigenous or local or culturally derived perspective, understanding, categories, interpretation, explanation, frames of reference.

Relevance to the indigenous/native culture/people, reflecting their sociocultural reality.

The indigenous culture as the source of concepts and theories, rather than a set of imposed theories and knowledge.

'Indigenous compatibility,' which refers to the extent by which "the researcher's concepts, theory, methods, tools, and results adequately represent, reflect, or reveal the natural elements, structure, mechanism, or process of the studied phenomenon embedded in its context" (Yang, 2000: 250).

A movement or potentially a discipline.

The development of IP as a movement in various regions of the world was the subject of a survey conducted by Allwood and Berry in 2006. Their article included 15 contributions that focused on global development and characteristics, country development and local characteristics in each of the countries that they surveyed. They provided the following useful summary (abstract):

Post-colonial reactions to mainstream psychology, and the belief that it was not an efficient aid to solving local social problems, were seen as important reasons for developing IPs. IPs were generally seen as attempts to produce a local psychology within a specific cultural context. Different views about what methods are legitimate in IPs were present (from experiments to various more 'humanistic' methods). IPs were commonly seen as being able to open up, invigorate, and improve mainstream psychology. The style of theorizing in the IPs was felt by many to be to build theories from the 'bottom up' on the basis of local phenomena, findings, and experiences. Some contributors saw the IP as a kind of cultural psychology, and a few noted that IP and cross-cultural psychology have an interactive mutually enriching relationship. Nearly half of the contributors emphasized the critical reaction to their work on IP by colleagues working more in the line of mainstream psychology. Many contributors felt that IP could contribute to the development

of a more general universal psychology. Different indications of heterogeneity in the IPs were found among the contributors, for example, with respect to the role given to religion in the local IP. Sometimes the presence of different IPs within the same country was reported. This also indicates heterogeneity in the IPs.

Allwood and Berry, 2006: 243

The term 'Indigenous psychology' begs the question, "What is the indigenous in indigenous psychology?" Borrowing from the attempt of Enriquez to clarify this during the early days of IP in the Philippines, it is possible to clarify three uses of 'indigenous': *Indigenous psychology* refers to psychology that is anchored on the thought and experience of the indigenous people, as understood from an indigenous perspective. *Psychology of the indigenous people* refers to any analysis of psychological behavior of the indigenous people, whether from an indigenous perspective or not, i.e., whether using indigenous or nonindigenous theories and methods. *Psychology in the indigenous country or culture* would then refer to the development of psychology in the particular culture or country, embodying both indigenous and nonindigenous perspectives and research.

But the term 'indigenous' needs further elaboration. Indigenous Maori (from New Zealand) psychologist Linda Nikora and her colleagues (in Allwood and Berry, 2006: 254) gave two meanings for the term 'indigenous': (1) Fourth World peoples (Nikora et al. (in Allwood and Berry, 2006: 254) referred to "Fourth World nations, defined here as indigenous communities positioned within First and Second World nations, for example, Hawai'ians, Aborigines, and Maori – the original inhabitants of the lands in which they dwell."); and (2) all peoples residing in a society. In countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, there are distinct and widely recognized/acknowledged Indigenous peoples who are the first inhabitants of the land. In these countries, the word 'Indigenous' (with a capital 'I') in IP clearly refers to these peoples. On the other hand, in countries such as the Philippines, China/Taiwan, and India, 'indigenous' in the term IP refers to the people residing in those societies. The term has also come to be used in contrast to the 'exogenous' (that is, theories and methods that have been imported from the West). This has to be understood in terms of a historical background of colonization that these countries underwent (by Spain, Japan, and the United States in the case of the Philippines; by British rule in the case of India; and academic colonization by the West in the case of all the three countries).

## Indigenization

IP as a movement has been referred to as the "indigenization movement in psychology" (Hwang, 2013: 716), which Hwang traced back to Wilhelm Wundt and his first laboratory at Leipzig in 1879. D. Sinha (1997) defined indigenization as the process of developing IP, the process or the strategy for obtaining an IP. This process evolves through stages, beginning with an acknowledgment of the limitations of Western theories and methods, which are then corrected by adapting them to suit local realities, or through the discovery of indigenous concepts and methods arising from the local culture.

Adair (2006) also talked about stages, identifying indigenization as one of the four stages in the development of IP: importation, implantation, indigenization, and autochthonization. "Autochthonization refers to the processes leading to the emergence of a self-perpetuating discipline independent of its imported source, the culmination of the indigenization process" (p. 472).

Pickren (2013) defined indigenization as "the process whereby a local culture or region develops its own forms of knowledge and practice, either by developing them from within that culture, or by importing knowledge and practices developed elsewhere and combining them with local concepts" (p. 698). Pickren argued that "American psychology was indigenized from German, French, and English developments that were imported to North America and mixed with home-grown metaphysics, religion, and healing practices (e.g., mesmerism), each of which has its own history of indigenization" (p. 698). And this North American (indigenous) psychology was and continues to be dominant in the training of psychologists in many Asian and African countries that lead many to experience the lack of fit to their own cultures. Because of this, they "began a self-conscious indigenization process" (p. 698).

Long before the above definitions of indigenization were offered, Virgilio Enriquez, the forefather of IP in the Philippines, had been very much involved with the process since the early 1970s. This hands-on experience with IP led him to clarify two pathways of indigenization. The first path is *indigenization from without* (Enriquez, 1987, 1992) or *indigenization of the exogenous* (D. Sinha, 1997). Using the exogenous culture as the source, the flow of indigenization is inward, i.e., the indigenous culture is the target. The goal is to create or produce an indigenous version of the exogenous or imported materials, adapting the foreign material to the indigenous context. Typical examples are translation of Western theories, modification of psychological tests or other measures, and replication of Western studies. The second path of indigenization is *indigenization from within* or *cultural revalidation* (Enriquez, 1987, 1992) or *internal indigenization* (D. Sinha, 1997). Here, the source of concepts and methods is the indigenous culture. This path involves processes such as semantic elaboration, indigenous codification or recodification, and systematic explication of implied theoretical frameworks, to produce knowledge that reflects the indigenous experience and realities (Enriquez, 1987, 1992). This strategy of indigenization also pays attention to the application and use of the generated knowledge to benefit the indigenous. The outward flow indicates that there is every intention to apply or relate this outside the indigenous culture. The term 'indigenization' does not seem to fit this second pathway since, how do you indigenize something that is already indigenous? (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino, 2000); thus the term 'cultural revalidation' seems more appropriate.

India's J.B.P. Sinha offered five overlapping trends of indigenization: purist endogenous trend, endogenous indigenization, purist exogenous trend, exogenous indigenization, and integrative indigenization "in which Western and Indian concepts and methods were integrated to produce hybrid concepts and theories" (J.B.P. Sinha, 2003; also in Allwood and Berry, 2006: 256). Vohra (2004) argues for a combination of these trends to help and ensure the sustainability of the indigenization movement.

As borne out by the development of IP in various countries, there is no single path for developing IP. Each country has their particularities in terms of national history, policies, priorities, and positioning in the academic environment. These tend to influence the path taken by the majority and the minority of psychologists, as well as attitudes toward IP in general.

### Cross-Indigenization

One of the end goals of IP is to contribute to universal psychology. In contrast to the cross-cultural approach of comparing cultures, Enriquez proposed 'cross-indigenization' as the strategy for consolidating various indigenization efforts. "In this model [cross-indigenization], the different cultures of the world are tapped as sources of cultural knowledge. The resulting pool may then be called 'cross-cultural knowledge.' More aptly, it is cross-indigenous knowledge..." (Enriquez, 1992: 86).

### Development of IP in Various Parts of the World

As mentioned earlier, Allwood and Berry (2006) provided a good overview of the development of IP in various parts of the world. Notable among these countries in terms of advancement are those where 'indigenous' refers to the 'nonexogenous' such as the Philippines, India, and Taiwan; and those where 'indigenous' refers to the Indigenous peoples, such as New Zealand. These developments are outlined briefly below.

The development of IP in the Philippines is well documented (Pe-Pua and Protacio-Marcelino, 2000; Pe-Pua and Perfecto-Ramos, 2012; Yacat, 2013; Gastardo-Conaco, 2005). In fact, there is a wide recognition of the advanced development of IP in this country than any other (D. Sinha, 1997).

The indigenization movement in psychology also has a long history in Taiwan, spearheaded by Taiwanese psychologists Yang Kuo-Shu and Hwang Kwang Kuo (see Hwang, 2012 for a comprehensive history).

The IP movement in India has also been the subject of a number of writings (Sarawathi, in Allwood and Berry, 2006; J.B.P. Sinha, in Allwood and Berry, 2006; D. Sinha, 1997).

There are a number of similarities in the development of IP in the three countries. (1) All started IP development in the 1970s. The Philippines started in 1971 when its founder Virgilio Enriquez (1942–94) returned from the United States. Taiwan started in the late 1970s, with the founder Yang Kuo-Shu influenced by the development of IP in the Philippines. In the early 1970s, India's Durganand Sinha made a call "to make psychology relevant to the Indian context and to serve the needs of the Indian people" (Vohra, 2004). However, it was not until the 1980s that a clear articulation of IP was made. (2) There are recognized 'founding fathers' of IP in these countries: Enriquez (the Philippines), Yang (Taiwan), and D. Sinha (India). Both Enriquez and Yang were trained in the United States; both started thinking about IP even before they returned to their home countries. And after their return, they embarked on discussions with colleagues and planting the seeds for the development of IP. (3) All countries have professional organizations that are dedicated to the advancement of IP.

(4) All countries have published large quantities of work on IP, mostly in the native languages. (5) The use of the native language in research and writing/publishing has been prevalent from the beginning of the IP movement in the Philippines and Taiwan. During the last 10 years, there have been pressures for these scholars to publish in English due to institutional pressure to publish in internationally refereed journals (in order to get academic promotion) and due to the need to promote IP internationally. (6) In all the three countries, indigenization from without has been the more popular path to indigenization.

Particular to the Philippines is the identification of four lines of filiations of psychology in the country: academic-scientific psychology, academic-philosophical psychology, ethnic psychology (which is the major basis of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino*), and the psychomedical system (Salazar, 1985).

Taiwan's IP development saw the determination "to refrain from uncritically or even blindly, applying American psychologists' concepts, theories, methods, and tools to the study of Chinese behaviour. Instead, they have based their studies on Chinese historical, cultural, social, and language traditions, especially the Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist ones, and have sought to develop an indigenous Chinese psychology suitable for people in all the Chinese societies" (Yang, in Allwood and Berry, 2006: 251).

India's history of IP is no different from the Philippine and Taiwanese in terms of realizing the limitations of Western psychological theories and tools. But if the Philippines has its ethnic psychology as main basis, and Taiwan has its Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist inspirations, Indian IP is "closely entwined with religion. Hinduism, which is described more as a way of life than as a religion, prescribes a code of conduct for human behaviour, recognizing the changing developmental tasks in different life stages" (Sarawathi, in Allwood and Berry, 2006: 255). Therefore, Indian IP draws on Hindu philosophy (Sarawathi, in Allwood and Berry, 2006: 255). In addition, it has a strong basis on folklore practices (D. Sinha, 1997).

The Philippines, Taiwan, and India are countries where indigenization has emerged in reaction to Western imported knowledge. The term 'indigenous' refers to the non-exogenous (aka non-Western), leading some scholars to suggest that the term 'national psychology' is more accurate than IP. Be that as it may, the use of the 'indigenous' perspective is what psychologists in these countries would hold on to in claiming that theirs is 'indigenous psychology.'

On the other hand, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia represent countries where the 'indigenous' in IP refers only to their original inhabitants. (We will discuss New Zealand only here since it has a clear history of indigenization in psychology.) Colonization of the Indigenous peoples in these countries is quite different from the three other countries discussed previously in the sense that the colonization process is ongoing as the Indigenous people continue to live side by side with their colonizers. As Sanson (2000) compares, in countries like the Philippines and India, "such a psychology [IP] would pertain to people of non-Western, largely non-industrialized nations, who have experienced colonization and domination by a Western power; but who nevertheless form the majority in their own country" (p. 13). In contrast, the Indigenous peoples in Australia and New Zealand form the minority of

the population, with the 'colonizer' background forming the majority. Furthermore, there are other cultural background groups in both countries, some of whom number more than the Indigenous groups. Thus, the struggle of indigenization of the discipline of psychology in these countries occurs hand in hand with the political struggle of the Indigenous peoples.

New Zealand's indigenization movement has focused on the relevance of psychology to the Indigenous people of the country, i.e., the Maori.

Indigenous psychology in A/NZ [Aotearoa/New Zealand] has always been part of how Maori approach wellness, health, and being, stemming from a world-view that values balance, continuity, unity, and purpose ... Perhaps it is best referred to by the Maori term *tikanga*, or customary practice – those behaviours, values, ways of doing things, and understanding actions that have always (sic) and will continue to be with us.

Nikora et al., in Allwood and Berry, 2006: 254

Michelle Levy's (2007) PhD thesis *Indigenous Psychology in Aotearoa: Realising Maori Aspirations* provides a comprehensive account of the history of IP in A/NZ,

"the current status of Maori development in psychology, the importance of the critical mass and the notion of collective responsibility ... [It also] identifies 'reaching the point of irreversible change' as the next phase of indigenous psychology development in Aotearoa. This is the point at which indigenous psychology development becomes self-sustaining"

(p. ii).

Just like the three countries previously discussed, psychology as a discipline in A/NZ was 'imported' from the West, having been introduced in 1874. Nikora and colleagues (in Allwood and Berry, 2006) pointed out that interest in Maori between the 1940s and the 1960s led to research that "was criticized for being 'on' Maori, rather than 'with' Maori (p. 254). It was not until around 1987 that psychologists became involved in the 'Maori development agenda,'" inspired and led by Mason Durie, a professor of Maori Studies, also a psychiatrist and a psychologist. Articulating *tikanga* in a clear and concise way, Durie's work has influenced the health and welfare sectors. The ongoing agenda for psychology is "to create psychologies to meet the needs of Maori people in a way that maintains a unique Maori heritage, and makes for a better collective Maori future... towards Maori self-determination... [This requires] the development of a critical mass of indigenous psychologists capable of developing robust *tikanga*-based psychological frameworks" (p. 255). In terms of action in promoting a Maori-centered psychology, Linda Nikora is regarded as the prime mover, with the help of the Maori and Psychology Research Unit based at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand.

## Achievements of IP

What do indigenous psychologists see as the achievements of IP? A common theme is decolonization. For example, IP in the

Philippines started as a movement at a time when the country was rebelling against a dictatorial government, and rejecting 'imperialistic' influence from the West (aka America). Decolonization in psychology was about being critical of Western theories and methods, and discovering their 'own' psychology. The decolonization in Taiwan was also in terms of breaking away from Western psychology. Both countries felt the inadequacy of Western theories in explaining their realities. Decolonization was also an important component of IP history in A/NZ but this was focused on how psychology can help solve the impact of colonization on the well-being of the Maori people.

Another achievement of IP has been in redefining psychology or highlighting what is important as foci of the discipline. Enriquez (1975) took into account the study of emotions and experienced knowledge (*kalooban* and *kamalayan*), awareness of one's surroundings (*ulirat*), information and understanding (*isip*), habits and behavior (another meaning of *diwa*), and the soul (*kaluluwa*) which is the way to learn about people's conscience. Yang (1999) defined psychology as "an empirical science that investigates, from an individualistic-orientation and collectivist-orientation perspective, the contents, structure, mechanism, and processes of human mind and behavior conditioned by physical, biological, social, cultural, and historical characteristics at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup levels." The A/NZ perspective would focus on *tikanga* and related concepts as what constitute psychology.

Psychological testing is another area where both the Philippines and Taiwan made a contribution in terms of indigenization. This is not just the translation of foreign-made tests but starting with indigenous personality traits then moving to develop the tests.

Research methods is an area where IP in the Philippines has made a significant contribution. The advances in this area are discussed by Pe-Pua (2006). These have their humble beginnings in *pakapa-kapa*, introduced by Santiago (1977) and later defined by Torres (1982: 171) as "a suppositionless approach to social science investigations ... characterized by groping, searching, and probing into an unsystematized mass of social data to obtain order, meaning and directions for research." The articulation of *pakapa-kapa* was significant, representing a turning point, paving the way to scrutinize research topics so that they could be more relevant to the needs of Filipinos. It dared the social scientists to question Western methods. "The resulting methods were considered indigenous – not imported nor invented, but natural or existing patterns of behaviour (not methods), discovered and developed as research methods" (Pe-Pua, 2006: 112). Aside from describing some of the indigenous methods that have emerged in the Philippine IP, Pe-Pua explained some guiding principles in undertaking psychological research the IP way. These are: (1) how the quality of research data is affected by the level of social interaction between researcher and participants; (2) the importance of treating participants as equal; (3) valuing the welfare of participants more than just getting data from them; (4) choosing methods on the basis of appropriateness, and adapting these to existing norms; and (5) the language of the participants should be the language of research (Pe-Pua, 2006).



## Indigenous Theorizing

IP has made some inroads in identifying and developing indigenous concepts and theories – not necessarily to be unique to one culture only, but unique in the sense of not having been tapped or articulated as culturally sensitive in mainstream psychology. Some examples are given below.

Enriquez's book *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology* (1992) provides a good overview of the early development and philosophy of *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (indigenous Filipino psychology). Enriquez discovered *kapwa* as a core Filipino indigenous concept which turned out to be the antithesis of the Western individual-centered 'self.' The English 'others' is used in opposition to the self, implying the separation of the self as a separate identity. In contrast, *kapwa* is a recognition of shared identity, an inner self shared with others; the unity of 'self' and 'others'; or fellow human beings (Enriquez, 1978, 1994). In Filipino psychology, *ako/sarili* (I/self) is associated with selfishness or egocentricism. There are words in the Filipino language for 'I' (*ako*) and 'others' (*ibang tao*) but both are included in *kapwa* psychology, so much so that a Filipino would say, "Hindi ako iba sa aking kapwa (I am no different from others)" (Enriquez, 1994). Several studies and writings have focused on *kapwa*, including its place in indigenous research approaches (see Pe-Pua, 2006 for a summary), and *kapwa* as value and social interaction (Enriquez, 1978, 1994). The concept of *kapwa* reflects the flexibility by which Filipinos navigate the domains of inclusion–exclusion or membership/non-membership. These domains are relevant to Filipinos, but in a more flexible way. While Filipinos make a distinction between the *ibang-tao* ('not one of us') and the *hindi-ibang-tao* ('one of us'), both categories are accommodated in the concept of *kapwa*.

The Taiwanese Yang Kuo-Shu's (1995) theory of Chinese social orientation is quite advanced and has potential application to other cultures. This is a theory of Chinese psychological functioning centering on the key concept of social orientation as a comprehensive system as well as a synthetic pattern of Chinese dispositional characteristics. Yang (1999: 194) defined social orientation as "a person's tendency to establish and maintain a harmonious relationship with, and merge into, the surroundings so that collective and relational goals can be effectively achieved." Yang's theory points to four closely related orientations: familistic orientation, other orientation, relationship orientation, and authoritarian orientation. The relationship orientation is particularly elaborate, consisting of three compartmentalized categories of relationship: *jiaren* (family members); *shuren* ('cooked' persons: relatives outside the family, people in the same village, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and classmates); and *shengren* ('raw' persons like strangers). These categories require distinct modes of interaction in accordance with different principles: *jiaren* (*zeren* or responsibility); *shuren* (*renqing* or interpersonal favor and affect); *shengren* (*lihai* or an eye on possible gains and losses) (Yang, 1999).

Another Taiwanese psychologist Hwang (2012) has been advocating for culture-inclusive theories in psychology following Shweder's (Shweder et al., 1998) principle of 'one mind, many mentalities.' He has urged the IP movement to have as its mission "to initiate a scientific revolution by

constructing a series of theories on the presumption of relationalism in replacing Western theories of individualism, so as to help people of non-Western countries solve the various problems they encounter in their daily lives" (Hwang, 2013: 717). He integrated the various theoretical contributions of Chinese IP, as well as the history and philosophy of Chinese IP in his book *Foundations of Chinese Psychology: Confucian Social Relations* (Hwang, 2012).

Hwang's theoretical model of face and favor is a major contribution in this direction of indigenous theorizing. This is basically a theory in interpersonal relationship that is related to four key indigenous concepts: *guanxi* (relationship), *renqing* (favor), *mianzi* (face), and *bao* (reciprocation) (Hwang, 2012). Hwang identified four kinds of interpersonal ties: expressive ties, mixed ties, instrumental ties, and vertical relationship. He then related them to Fiske's (1991) model of elementary forms of social behavior. He then illustrated how certain forms of social behavior are given more credence depending on the orientation of the particular society on the individualism ideal (Hwang, 2013).

There are more examples from the Philippines and Taiwan where IP has developed a quite advanced history. Enriquez's theory of *kapwa*, Yang's theory of social orientation, and Hwang's theory of face and favor present an opportunity for developing a cross-indigenous (it will be premature to speculate 'universal' at this point) theory of the social self. There are a number of similarities across the three theories, which will be the subject of future writings.

The relational orientation was also prominent in Indian indigenous theorizing. Instead of the duality of man and society in Western conceptualization, the Indian perspective values 'man-society' where the two cannot be separated (D. Sinha, 1981). "The individual's identity is conceived not so much in terms of his/her personal qualities and achievements, but in the context of his/her family, caste, place, institutions, and a whole web of interpersonal roles and relationships. It is in this perspective that social behavior is analyzed and interpreted" (D. Sinha, 1997: 151). This relational model is also congruent with Indian healing practices (Kakar, 1984). Incidentally, several indigenous Indian concepts and practices have permeated and have been embraced by Western psychotherapy, including *Yoga*, *Ayurveda*, and so on. These are clear contributions to the discipline of psychology.

There is a Maori concept that comes close to relationalism – *wanangatanga*, meaning relationship, relatedness – that is quite prominent in A/NZ IP development.

Japanese IP is also a source of indigenous theorizing that has potential international application. One such concept that has gained international attention is *amae*, which is defined by Yamaguchi (1999, cited in Yamaguchi and Ariizumi, 2006) as

...presumed acceptance of one's inappropriate behavior or request. In close relationships, one is able to presume that one's inappropriate behavior or request will be accepted due to the positive or at least non-negative attitude of one's counterpart. This definition of *amae* implies that two components, the inappropriate behavior or request and the presumption of acceptance, are involved in *amae* episodes.

There are indeed several developments in indigenous theorizing that could be pulled together through systematic research in order to illustrate the potential contribution to psychological theory in different fields of the discipline.

## Issues and Debates on IP

Psychologists undertaking IP work face a number of challenges and issues. One challenge is related to the language of research and publication. In countries where the first language is not English, most of the publications on IP work are in the local languages, mainly due to the philosophy behind IP that they uphold, i.e., IP should be developed and is best understood and articulated using the local language. In fact, in India, one of the reasons identified for the slow progress in developing IP is the reduced usage of the local languages, which is explained in terms of the dilemma of diversity in languages, religions, and grouping in the country. In some countries, the lack of publication in English, which would make IP more accessible internationally, is due to their lack of English proficiency. A subtle reason also is the attitude held by some psychologists that spreading IP knowledge internationally is not a priority; what is important is that the national development benefits from IP knowledge. Another obstacle to publishing, in general, is the heavy teaching load in many universities and the lack of support (or pressure) to conduct research and have this recognized as part of their academic workload.

Indigenous theorizing is an important undertaking if IP is to be taken seriously by the wider international community of psychologists. Any theorizing, however, is neither a simple nor a straightforward process. There is even a question of whether indigenous theories are useful, i.e., are these just confined to the indigenous cultures or do they have potential to be universal? [Stevenson \(2000\)](#) speculated on 'indigenous theories' failure to flourish,' offering the following reasons: (1) lack of resources for research to advance theorizing; (2) the disciplinary bias for topics that are interesting to a more universal audience; (3) difficulty with linguistic translation; (4) the use of a mere translated version of Western instruments that may not be relevant to the indigenous population; and (5) 'newness of the considerations' – there are simply not enough studies done.

The reality is that there is already a wealth of indigenous concepts and theories out there that are in various stages of development. A more systematic and well-resourced stocktaking is required to bring these out. The body of knowledge needs to be synthesized, and future directions for research are to be guided by this synthesis.

Cross-indigenization would seem to provide a good process for extending the applicability or relevance of indigenous concepts and theories to a more international context. For example, some Japanese psychologists provide a good example of cross-indigenization without necessarily being aware of it. When they identify a 'Japanese' (they do not readily use the word 'indigenous') concept, they try to understand it from the indigenous perspective, relate it immediately to the Western concepts closest to it, and try to collect empirical data, not only with Japanese subjects, but also with

non-Japanese subjects. In many cases, part of the comparison is with Western subjects.

Cross-indigenization is a pathway to discovering universals, if there is indeed such a thing. For example, [Yamaguchi and Ariizumi \(2006\)](#) speculate, as a result of an initial investigation of the Japanese concept of *amae* across three cultural groups, that *amae* could be an etic construct. At the same time that researchers of IP need to be supported in contributing to universal psychology, the wider scholarly community also needed more acceptance and valuing of IP. Developing IP and cross-indigenization help us move away from 'intellectual prejudice,' 'entrenched intellectual habits,' and 'cultural myopia.' Cross-indigenization provides a balance of flow of knowledge between East and West. Not only that, the flow of knowledge within the East is also important. Cross-indigenization also helps us bridge the gap between 'emotional overreactions' and blind assumption that "scientific psychology is a monopoly of the West" ([Enriquez, 1992](#)).

In terms of future directions of IP, [Church and Katigbak \(2002\)](#) offered seven pressing needs in relation to Philippine IP that could very well apply to other IPs as well. These are:

"the formulation of indigenous theory; objective consideration informed by empirical data; continuing development and validation of indigenous measures; systematic investigation of the comparative and convergent validity of various indigenous and imported research methods; institutional/structural improvements leading to growth and stability of the indigenous research culture; maintenance of an appropriate balance between the pursuit of an independent psychology and the avoidance of insularity; and eventually, increased efforts to relate cross-indigenous approach toward a universal psychology"

(p. 141).

By way of concluding, it is important to highlight that IP has been the subject of a number of edited volumes that are inclusive of different countries. The earliest of these was [Kim and Berry's \(1993\)](#) book *Indigenous Psychologies: Research and Experience in Cultural Context* (Sage). A more recent one, [Kim et al.'s \(2006\)](#) volume, *Indigenous and Cultural Psychology: Understanding People in Context* (Springer) was the result of an intensive seminar-workshop in Taiwan that explored the latest developments of the time. This book was then reviewed by a number of authors, with the reviews published in a special issue of the journal *Pastoral Psychology* (volume 56, 2007), a Springer journal. A few journals have also promoted discussion and publication on IP. For example, volume 3, issue 3 (2000) of the *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* provoked a healthy exchange in clarifying the distinctions between cultural, cross-cultural, and indigenous psychology. Another issue of the journal, volume 8, issue 1 (2005) was dedicated to "responses to the epistemological challenges to indigenous psychologies." The *International Journal of Psychology* also devoted a "Special issue on the indigenous psychologies" (volume 41, issue 4, 2006).

**See also:** Acculturation; Critical Psychology; Cross-Cultural Psychology; Cultural Influences on Interpersonal Relationships; Cultural Psychology; Cultural Views of Life

Phases; Culture and Emotion; Culture and the Self: Implications for Psychological Theory; Ethnic Identity, Psychology of; Indigenous Management Styles; Indigenous Social Work; Prosocial Behavior, Cultural Differences in; Social Psychology: Research Methods; Subjective Wellbeing, Psychology of; Values Across Cultures, Development of.

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