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- Overview of Communitarianism through Stanford University – <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/communitarianism/>
- Overview of Colonialism, through Stanford University – <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/colonialism/>
- American Psychological Association, Division 32, Task Force on Indigenous Psychology – <http://www.indigenouspsych.org/>
- University of Victoria, Faculty of Human and Social Development, Department of Indigenous Governance – <http://web.uvic.ca/igov/>
- Canadian Psychological Association, Section on Aboriginal Psychology – <http://www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/cpasections/aboriginalpsychology/>
- The University of Waikato, Faculty of Arts and Social Science/Te Kura Kete Aronui, Māori & Psychology Research Unit – <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/wfass/subjects/psychology/mpru/>
- AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous People – <http://www.alternative.ac.nz/>

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## Indigenous Psychology

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### Introduction

The movement for indigenous psychology is a relatively recent development in the history of psychology. Articles on this subject began to appear in international journals in the 1970s, but it did not become widely known until the 1980s. Since that time, a large quantity of literature on the subject has appeared. It includes two edited collections as well as special issues of journals such as *Applied Psychology: An International Analysis*, the *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, and the *International Journal of Psychology* (Adair & Diaz-Loving, 1999; Allwood & Berry, 2006; Kim & Berry, 1993; Kim, Yang, & Hwang, 2006; Shams & Hwang, 2005). There have also been entries on the subject

### Online Resources

- Cultural Survival: Partnering with Indigenous Peoples to Defend their Lands, Languages, and Culture – <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/>
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS\\_en.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf)

in the *Handbook of Culture and Psychology* and the *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology* (Kim, 2001; Sinha, 1997).

Interestingly, virtually all of this literature has appeared in forums for cultural psychology, cross-cultural psychology, and international psychology. If psychologists who work in more traditional areas of the field are aware of these developments, they clearly do not regard them as worthy of discussion and debate. This situation reflects the naturalistic orientation of the discipline as a whole which tends to be oblivious to cultural differences.

### Definition

It is impossible to give a precise definition of the term "indigenous psychology" since it is used by different writers in different ways. Some writers use it to denote the geographical origins of a particular approach to psychology, even though that approach is generally thought to be of wider relevance. The cultural-historical approach of Vygotsky, which originated in the Soviet Union, and liberation psychology, which originated in Latin America, are examples of this usage. More commonly, it is used to denote an approach to psychology that has its origins in Europe or North America but which has been adapted to suit the local conditions in another part of the world. As some writers have pointed out, the term "indigenized psychology" would be a more accurate description of this situation since the approach to psychology is not truly indigenous but has its origins elsewhere. In spite of this, the term "indigenous psychology" is commonly used. Just to confuse the matter even further, some psychologists in developing countries reject the psychology of Europe and North America entirely and try to build an alternative out of indigenous resources. This is particularly true of India and China, both of which have rich intellectual traditions.

Taking the psychology of Europe or North America and adapting it to suit the local conditions is the most common approach. However, even here an important distinction must be

made. Some writers limit their critique to the unsuitability of the subject-matter of European and North American psychology. For example, illiteracy is a major problem in many developing countries. It is less of a problem in developed countries, and so we would not expect psychologists in the latter to make it a major priority or concern. Such changes are to be expected and hardly merit the term "indigenization." We would expect a science to be applied to different problems according to local priorities and concerns. More interesting from a philosophical point of view is the view that the psychology of Europe or North America is not the universal science that it claims to be but bears the hallmark of the society and culture in which it was produced. This view is likely to lead not just to different applications but also to more fundamental changes to its theories, concepts, and methods.

It is not only the term "psychology" that is used in different ways. There is also variation in what is considered to be indigenous. The term can refer to anything from an ethnic minority, which may or may not be "indigenous," such as Native Americans and Australian Aborigines, to entire countries, such as India and the Philippines. It is also used to describe approaches based on religions, such as Buddhist psychology or Islamic psychology. That with which the "indigenous" is contrasted is variable as well. The term "European" is sometimes used but "American" is more common and "Western" more common still.

### Keywords

Indigenous; indigenization; universalism; science; disciplinarity; culture; globalization

### History

The historian of psychology Kurt Danziger has made the interesting observation that although self-conscious calls for indigenization are a relatively new development in the history of psychology, indigenization itself is not

(Danziger, 2006). It is widely recognized that the kind of psychology that emerged in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century was different from the European psychology from which it had been derived. A major difference was that American psychology had a much more practical and "applied" character, largely due to the need of American psychologists to obtain support for their research from non-academic sources. By way of contrast, psychology in Germany continued to be a branch of philosophy until the Second World War. When more traditional philosophers tried to limit the number of academic positions that were given to experimental psychologists, the latter justified their field in terms of its ability to shed light on philosophical issues. It was not just the kind of topics that psychologists investigated that changed. The theories and methods of the subject changed as indigenous approaches like functionalism and behaviorism began to emerge.

The period between the two world wars is sometimes known as "the age of schools." The term "schools" is misleading in a number of respects, and one of them is that it obscures the profound local character that many of these movements had. The dominant approach to psychology in Germany was "Ganzheit" or holistic psychology of which Gestalt psychology is the variant that is best known internationally. It never managed to establish roots in the United States, even though its main leaders moved there after the Nazi takeover in Germany. Similarly, behaviorism was largely an American phenomenon that was never popular outside the United States. The approach to psychology that was most successful in crossing the Atlantic was psychoanalysis but even it changed significantly as a result of the move.

The end of the Second World War marked the start of a period of American dominance in psychology. Much of Europe lay in ruins, especially Germany which had the strongest tradition of psychology in Europe before the war. Also of relevance is the fact that psychology had yet to be exported to Asia, Africa, and Latin America on a large scale.

This situation did not and could not last forever. European psychology eventually

recovered and, as it did, it began to take a more independent line. The movement for European social psychology in the early 1970s is often considered to be one of the earliest examples of indigenous psychology (Moghaddam, 1987). This movement arose when European social psychologists like Serge Moscovici and Henri Tajfel complained that American social psychology bore the hallmarks of the society and culture in which it was produced and was consequently unsuitable for use in Europe. The movement led to the establishment of the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, a European handbook and a textbook that was written from a European point of view. Around the same time, psychologists in Canada began to complain about the dominance of American psychology in their country and to argue that Canadian psychologists should take a more independent line (Berry, 1993).

The literature on indigenization from countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America began to appear shortly afterwards. It may well have appeared independently of what was happening in Europe due to the declining influence of American psychology around the world. There is no doubt, however, that the efforts of European social psychologists were followed by psychologists in other countries with great interest and that it gave them more confidence in their own attempts to develop an indigenous approach.

### Critical Debates

Perhaps the most common objection that is raised against indigenous psychology is that it has the potential to lead to an infinite number of psychologies and thus result in the fragmentation of the field (e.g., Kunkel, 1989; Matarazzo, 1987). However, one of the most striking aspects of the literature on indigenous psychology is the commitment to a universal psychology of many advocates of this approach (e.g., Berry & Kim, 1993). The argument runs that instead of giving one indigenous psychology (i.e., American psychology) the status of a universal psychology, we must compare different indigenous

psychologies and out of this comparison a truly universal psychology will emerge. It seems counter-intuitive to suggest that by encouraging diversity in psychology, unity will be achieved. There is, of course, a long tradition of trying to promote the unification of psychology, and this has usually been done by encouraging less diversity, not more (Goertzen, 2008). It is therefore unsurprising that some psychologists are skeptical about the prospect of a universal psychology emerging from this work (e.g., Triandis, 2000).

If we abandon the search for a universal psychology, does it mean abandoning the commitment to psychology as a science? There are some who see a requirement to meet the criteria of "Western" science as ethnocentric (e.g., Misra & Gergen, 1993), but most advocates of indigenization see it as compatible with science. The main problem in assessing this claim is that there is no agreed definition of science. Most people agree that physics and biology are sciences and that politics and religion are not but stating exactly where the difference between them lies has never been successfully done, in spite of numerous attempts by philosophers of science. One of the strategies of the advocates of indigenous psychology has been to show that it is compatible with some philosophies of science. Constructive realism is often mentioned in this regard (e.g., Wallner & Jandl, 2006).

The point has been raised that "indigenous psychology" may be an oxymoron or a contradiction in terms (Brock, 2006). It might be argued that psychology is indigenous only to European civilization and its offshoots in different parts of the world. The idea that we have a psychological "interior" that is different from our bodies is by no means a universal feature of human communities and it has not always existed in Europe (McMahon, 2008).

The word "psychology" is of relatively recent origin. It became popular in Germany in the eighteenth century and was picked up in France towards the end of that century. It did not become popular in English-speaking countries for several decades after that (Lapointe, 1970). There was no equivalent word in other languages when translations of works on psychology began to appear.

This was true of Mandarin Chinese and there was a lengthy debate over how the term should be translated. Eventually, it was agreed that a combination of three Chinese characters, representing "heart," "spirit," and "study," would be used (Blowers, 2006).

Adapting European or North American psychology to different social contexts is not a problem here if we think of it in terms of "indigenized" rather than "indigenous" psychology. The point is whether the rich intellectual traditions of places like India and China should be described in this way or whether we should try to understand them on their own terms. The danger here is that by describing them as "psychology," we are encouraging the tendency towards cultural imperialism. The same is true of more specific words like "self," "personality," and "emotion." Some of the writers on indigenous psychology adopt a stance of "naive naturalism" with regard to these concepts, not realizing that they do not exist in many other languages and are relatively recent additions to the English language (Danziger, 1997).

The issue involves more than a discussion of words. As Irmgard Staeuble has pointed out, one of the most common complaints about the kind of psychology that is imported from Europe and the United States to other parts of the world is its inherent individualism; in particular, the idea that individuals can be understood apart from society, culture, and history. What many of the advocates of indigenous psychology overlook is that this disciplinary division of labor was created in Europe and North America and it was created on the basis of the assumptions that they criticize. The division of labor between psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and historians only makes sense in the light of the assumption that individuals can be understood apart from society, culture, and history. We should therefore be wary of replicating this disciplinary division of labor in parts of the world where this assumption does not exist. In addition to being ideologically suspect, it may not be appropriate in a practical sense. In countries with limited economic resources, it might make more sense to have a unified social science than to have a collection of separate

disciplines, each with its own university department, textbooks, journals, conferences, and all the other things that are associated with academic disciplines (Staeuble, 2004).

Indigenous psychology has also been criticized for its injudicious use of the concept of "culture." One problem is the tendency to identify this concept with particular territories. Perhaps the worst offender in this regard is the common notion of "the West versus the rest." The composition of this "West" is rarely made clear. If it refers to some kind of Christian-European civilization, it should include Russia and Latin America, though it rarely does.

Even more problematic is the fact that no collection of articles or book chapters on indigenous psychology has been published without the inclusion of European and North American countries that are traditionally considered to be a part of the "West." If all these countries are to be grouped together with the United States into some monolithic "West," the rebellions by European and Canadian psychologists against the dominance of American psychology make no sense. Moghaddam's notion of the three worlds of psychology, in which the United States is the first world and other developed countries, like the United Kingdom and Canada, comprise a second world shows more clearly the imbalance of power among them (Moghaddam, 1987).

With very few exceptions, the indigenous psychology movement is built around countries, and the idea that each one of these countries corresponds to a "culture" has been questioned (Allwood, 2011). Psychologists in India who have tried to establish an "Indian psychology" are often asked by their compatriots, "What is Indian?". The same question could be asked of "Sikolohiyang Pilipino" or "Philippine psychology." India and the Philippines are multilingual and multiethnic countries with what are considered to be indigenous populations, as well as armed secessionist movements. It is far from clear that all their citizens have something in common that they do not share with the citizens of other countries. If this is the case with individual countries, it is even more so with regional groupings like "Europe" (Smith, 2005).

The point has often been made that psychologists have belatedly discovered the concept of "culture" at a time when anthropologists, who have traditionally been responsible for studying this phenomenon, are beginning to express doubts about its usefulness (Kuper, 1999). One of the reasons for these doubts is that we will live in an increasingly globalized world where cultural penetration and hybridization have become increasingly common (e.g., Hermans & Kempen, 1998). Such phenomena have always existed but they have become more common in a world where people frequently travel for study, work, and leisure and where communication over long distances has never been easier or cheaper. In such a world, the idea that all human beings can be identified with a particular culture, especially a single national culture, seems outmoded and quaint. Cultures have never been static. They are in a constant process of change, often as a result of contact with other cultures. What is considered alien today might be considered indigenous at some point in the future.

None of this suggests that we should abandon the notion of culture completely (Wierzbicka, 2005). It is more a matter of being aware of its limitations and using it in a more judicious way. In the final analysis, psychology is about people. The concept of "culture" can sometimes help us to make sense of how we think and what we do, but it also has the potential to mislead.

### International Relevance

Some advocates of indigenous psychology give the impression that it is an important movement all over the world. In fact, there are many countries where it hardly exists. It is a significant force in only a handful of countries. India, the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, and Mexico are often mentioned in this connection. However, in none of these countries is it the majority view. In each country, there are one or two significant figures who inspired, and in some cases continue to inspire, the movement. Durganand Sinha and J. B. P. Sinha in India, Virgilio Enriquez and Alfredo Lagmay in the Philippines, K.-S.

Hwang in Taiwan, and Rogelio Diaz-Guerrero in Mexico are some of the names that are usually mentioned in this connection. It is also particularly striking that it is always the same few names that appear in the international literature on this subject. John Berry and John Adair in Canada, Bame Nsamenang in Cameroon, Uichol Kim in Korea, and Rolando Diaz-Loving in Mexico are just a few examples.

I make these points not to downplay the importance of the movement but to give an accurate picture of its international strength. It is possible that there are less well-known publications on indigenous psychology that are only available in certain countries and in their local languages. My account is of necessity limited to the material that is available in the international literature.

### Future Directions

A central topic in the literature on indigenous psychology is nationalism and anticolonialism. The movement can be seen as part of the resistance against the cultural homogenization that is commonly associated with globalization (e.g., Seabrook, 2004).

Having said that, it is important to realize that indigenous psychology always exists in a social context and greater insight into the phenomenon can be achieved if it is understood in these terms. The complexity of the situation in some countries is illustrated by Moghaddam (see Allwood & Berry, 2006) in his account of Iran where there are at least three different types of indigenous psychology. On the one hand, there is a conservative "Islamic psychology" which exists mainly in departments of theology and philosophy and which is endorsed by the state. There are also other types of indigenous psychology with a more feminist and democratic orientation, which are not endorsed by the state and whose works are often censored. Other contributions to the literature show that Iran is not unique in having more than one indigenous psychology. This would suggest that different accounts of national or cultural identity have underlying political agendas.

Ideas only have political implications within a specific social context. This is one of the lessons that we can learn from the history of anthropology in South Africa where American ideas on respect for cultural differences that had been formulated with liberal intent were used to justify the system of apartheid (Kuper, 1999). When assessing any approach to psychology, we should ask: who is promoting it, in what context, and what do they hope to achieve? The different forms of indigenous psychology are no exception in this regard.

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## Online Resources

- There are several published collections on indigenous psychology and some of them are available online: Google books preview of *Indigenous and Cultural Psychology* – also available as an eBook: <http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=nJvPfGrcsTMC&printsec=frontcover&dq=indigenous±and±cultural±psychology&hl=en&sa=X&ei=VZwbUb7ONKXK0-AWvzIHQBw&ved=0CDEQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=indigenous%20and%20cultural%20psychology&f=false>
- Special issue of the journal, *Applied Psychology: An International Analysis* – requires subscription: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/apps.1999.48.issue-4/issuetoc>
- Special issue of the *International Journal of Psychology* – requires subscription : <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/pijp20/41/4>
- Special issue of the *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* – requires subscription : <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ajsp.2005.8.issue-1/issuetoc>
- Task Force on Indigenous Psychology: <http://www.indigenoupsych.org/>
- Short article on indigenous psychology in India: <http://www.apa.org/monitor/may02/india.aspx>
- Center for Indigenous and Cultural Psychology, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia : <http://cicp.pskologi.ugm.ac.id/>
- Series of slides on indigenous psychology : <http://www.slideshare.net/horatjitra/indigenous-psychology-incorporating-culture-in-psychology-research>
- Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association: <http://www.indigenoupsychology.com.au/>

## Individualization, Overview

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## Introduction

The term individualization can refer to a number of theses relating to the constitution of the individual as an object of thought, a locus of action, or a motor of social reproduction or social change. It covers concerns with how people are constituted as individuals in systems of knowledge, how they come to recognize themselves as