



## Symposium/Other Proposal

2017 APA Annual Convention

*Proposal ID: sym17495*

- 1. Type of program:** Symposium
- 2. Title of program:** Crisis of American psychology in a global village: Can indigenous psychology help?
- First index term: 58 Philosophical/Theoretical
- Second index term: 43 International
- 3. Brief Content Description:** Today, the flow of influence is no longer unidirectional from West to the rest. An international panel of experts will analyze the challenges posed by globalization to American psychology and demonstrate how indigenous psychologies can help.
- 4. Division to submit this proposal:** 24 - Theoretical and Philosophical

**5. Length of time requested on program:** 1 hr. 50 min.

**6. Chair(s) of the session:**

**(1) Louise K. W Sundararajan, PhD, EdD** (Submitter)

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Membership status: APA Fellow

**7. Participants:**

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Membership status: APA Member  
Title of presentation: Islam-based psychology and its implications for American psychology  
Electronic Archiving: Yes  
Coauthor :

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Title of presentation: Contributions of Indigenous Psychologies to Methodological Pluralism in American Psychology  
Electronic Archiving: Yes  
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Membership status: APA Fellow  
Title of presentation: Wanted: Indigenous Psychologists to run the Globalization Detox Clinic  
Electronic Archiving: Yes  
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Title of presentation: Psychology and the analysis of society: Critical and indigenous thought  
Electronic Archiving: Yes  
Coauthor :

**8. Discussant(s):**

**9. Accommodation request:** None

**10. Submit for CE:** True

Participants will be able to critically assess the role American psychology plays in the globalizing era.

Participants will be informed of the potential contributions of indigenous psychologies toward a more inclusive global psychology.

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*Crisis of American psychology in a global village: Can indigenous psychology help?*

Globalization involves “growing multi-directional flows of people, objects, places, and information” (Ritzer, 2011). The flow of influence is no longer unidirectional, from West to the rest (of the world). For instance, psychologies from the “North” have been challenged by local approaches that arguably address more adequately the mental life of their particular cultures. It can be expected that this process will continue once the global academic community becomes more democratic. The United States has indeed seen its political and intellectual influence diminish, which can lead to differing ideas as to how to deal with this reality. An international panel of experts will analyze the crisis posed by globalization and demonstrate how indigenous psychologies can help.

The first speaker argues that mainstream psychology suffers from mindlessness, to which the antidote is indigenous psychology, which is a rich ore of mindfulness. For illustration, Islam-based psychology is used. The second speaker uses Husserl to analyze the crisis of science in Western psychology, and demonstrates how indigenous psychologies can help us meet the challenge of methodological pluralism in order to do justice to the diversity of human subjectivity around the globe. The third speaker underscores the ethical connection between globalization and indigenous psychologies—doing justice to one is doing justice to the other. It is argued that the challenge faced by American psychology is to choose between two versions of globalization: hegemonic—doing epistemic injustice to indigenous psychologies in the rest of the world; or democratic-- participating as one of the indigenous psychologies in the world. The fourth speaker uses critical psychology to continue the democratic vein of globalization and shows that the challenges of this vision of a global indigenous psychology cannot be met without a new understanding of culture that puts a premium on self-reflexivity, change and flux.

***(1) Islam-based psychology and its implications for American psychology***

This talk will elucidate how certainty, methodolatry and emphasis on the observer as the expert have given rise to mindlessness in American psychology. I will then elaborate on how indigenous psychology, in particular Islamic psychology, can offer a vital form of mindfulness that inform strategies to deal with the existing crisis in American psychology. Among the features of Islam based psychology that can give rise to mindfulness, I will present the following:

1. Presenting compassion as the underlying principle within the psychological perspective, approach and praxis.
2. Flexibility in embracing the truth regardless of time, space, race, class, etc.
3. Openness towards perspectives.
4. Mindful attention toward contexts including local contexts, their idiosyncratic components, their cultural and social frameworks.
5. Revisiting the epistemically accepted propositions within the mainstream psychology.
6. Explicating the interactive and dialogical relationships within psychological schools of thoughts while presenting a critical psychological perspective.
- 7, Demonstrating the significance of indigenous psychology in addressing the global and local issues as a great source for developing informed decisions.
8. Presenting a critical psychological perspective with respect to the ontological paradigms of the main stream psychology.
9. Elucidating the psychological significance of a renewal within the cognitive, emotional and behavioral realms of possibilities beyond the mainstream.

***(2) Contributions of Indigenous Psychologies to Methodological Pluralism in American Psychology***

This paper focuses on the implications of indigenous psychologies for scientific research methods. The developments and challenges of indigenous psychologies are placed within two contexts: 1) philosophical critiques of Western science in the early 20th century and 2) the debates and growing pluralism of research methods in the late 20th century. Husserl argued that science was in crisis because, in assuming the universality of European natural scientific methods that exclude the study of subjectivity, philosophy and psychology were unable to address the deepest question of meaning, value, and purpose in their historical attempt to responsibly and freely shape the destiny of humanity. The hegemony of natural science methods remained in American psychology, despite counter-proposals by continental philosophers, until critiques and innovations in the 1960s led during the last 20 years to the legitimation of qualitative and mixed methods research. Although relatively unacknowledged in this “qualitative revolution” (Ponterotto), writings of psychologists outside of North America and Europe have expressed kindred claims that not only dominant Western theories and knowledge but also research methods must be critically assessed and revised in order to be applicable to human subjectivity in other cultures. This paper focuses on the emergence of indigenous psychologies with an emphasis on their insistence on legitimizing ways of knowing uniquely rooted and developed in other cultures. Examples, including methods used in Filipino and Buddhist psychologies, call for alternative practices of research and conceptions of science. These alterities are explored as challenges to and enrichment of our understandings of scientific method in service of culturally diverse humanity. In the new atmosphere of methodological pluralism, American psychology can respond to indigenous psychologies with a renunciation of our presumed superiority and by learning from and ethically participating in an increasingly global and democratic world.

***(3) Wanted: Indigenous Psychologists to run the Globalization Detox Clinic***

With the rising nationalism as reflected in the recent presidential election, the challenge faced by American psychology is to choose between two versions of globalization: hegemonic—imposing Western culture on the rest of the world; or democratic-- participating as one of the indigenous psychologies in the world. Bourdieu (2000) refers to hegemonic globalization as a “mismatch”-- a “mismatch between economic dispositions fashioned in a precapitalist economy and the economic cosmos imported and imposed, oftentimes in the most brutal way, by colonization” (p. 18,). What Bourdieu (2000) says about economics applies equally well to Western psychology: “. . . economics treats the prospective and calculating disposition towards the world and time . . . as a universal ‘given,’ a gift of nature. In doing so, it tacitly condemns in moral terms those who have already been condemned in reality to the fate of economic ‘misfits’ by the economic system . . .” (p. 28). Detoxification from globalization will be difficult without some generous help from indigenous psychologies. Bourdieu (2000) wrote about his own experience of detox when he learned from the Algerian workers their indigenous theories of economics. Faced with a mismatch between the indigenous economic cosmos and that of his own, Bourdieu (2000) was “forced” to “discover that access to the most elementary economic behaviors (working for a wage, saving, credit, birth control, etc.) is in no way axiomatic and that the so-called ‘rational’ economic agent is the product of quite particular historical conditions” (p. 18). I argue that this self-reflexivity on the part of the “progressive” cultures and their agents-- such as psychologists--may help to deter the hegemonic globalization. To pave the way for a more democratic and inclusive global psychology, we need indigenous psychologists from around the globe to help us run a globalization detox clinic.

#### ***(4) Psychology and the analysis of society: Critical and indigenous thought***

Critical psychology has emerged in studying the epistemic and social injustices that have occurred throughout the discipline's and profession's history, with a focus on the shortcomings of mainstream American psychology. Critical psychology has studied the ontological, epistemological, ethical-political, and even aesthetic problems of mainstream psychology, often labeled as crisis phenomena. But critical psychology has a limitation itself when it fails to practice epistemic modesty and understand critique equally as historically and culturally located, in short, as indigenous. All psychologies emerge from somewhere. There is no culture-free and history-free human science possible as these contexts shape forms of perception. In this argument, I develop the idea of a critical, global, indigenous psychology. In order to address the "permanent crisis" of American psychology, indigenous psychology is applied to identify the danger of assuming that one's own psychology is superior or morally better, that the other's psychology is inferior, or that one cannot learn from the other. Indigenous psychologies also teach to which degree culture-freedom is not achievable or desirable, and that flux, change, adaptation, and modification are part of the processes of internationalization and globalization. American psychology needs to cope with this reality. Critical psychology is invoked in order to introduce the concept of power and epistemic injustice to overcome the notion that all psychologies are already equal. Critical psychology also connects the study of mental life with a critique of American society, culture, and political economy. Possibilities for a global indigenous psychology that endorses an epistemology that is modest but not relativistic, an ontology that is more than relational, and an ethics that takes the particular as well as the general into account are presented. The idea of a reflexive global indigenous psychology that maintains a critique of American psychology and society is discussed.