Introduction: Steering the Cultural Dynamics

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Melbourne, Australia, hosted the 20th International Congress of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology in 2010. Under the shadow of Icelandic volcanic activities and global financial crises, cultures were changing around the world in many ways – threats of climate change, challenges of globalization, and changing balance of political, economic, and military powers. Befittingly, the congress theme was set as *Culture Change: Meet the Challenge* to encourage ourselves to think and talk about these contemporary issues. Bringing the format of the congress proceedings into the 21st century, this e-Book is a selection of papers presented at the congress. The title of the book, *Steering the Cultural Dynamics*, was chosen with this in mind. Culture changes are historical processes that perhaps push us all forward with irresistible force; yet, humanity may be able to steer the dynamics involving culture change. It is an expression of our hope that our discipline can contribute to the collective human effort to shape our own common future.

The book is organized into six sections. Titled *Cross-Cultural Psychology and Disaster Management*, the first section collects papers presented at a symposium organized by a former president of the IACCP, Daphne Keats, on cross-cultural psychology's response to the Sichuan Earthquake of 2008. We often learn about natural and human made disasters in the current globalized information environment. In fact, the frequency of such occurrences seems increasing at an alarming rate: earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, floods, and fires. Whereas some countries in which institutions and facilities with psychological knowledge and expertise exist may be able to cope with such disasters and their psychological aftermaths, cross-cultural psychology can make contributions to those cases where indigenous institutions of psychological disaster management are lacking. The papers collected in this section provide a case study of cross-cultural psychology's contributions and blaze a new trail in this area where cross-cultural research and practice is urgently needed.

The second section is on methodology of cross-cultural research. Traditionally, cross-cultural psychology has been strongly quantitative – standardized research instruments and experimental procedures have been its forte and staple food over the decades. Yet, recent developments in cross-cultural research call for the use of a variety of methods. Not only the standard methods of cross-cultural psychology, but also more qualitative or other creative methods of information gathering and knowledge justification are needed. Often qualitative research methods are met with scepticism about their rigor. Demuth's paper addresses this pressing issue with clarity. Colucci's paper introduces a new arts-based method to cross-cultural psychology, which is at once rich and evocative. Experimentation with new methods would certainly enrich the field's capacity to meet new challenges in the changing world.

So, the third section collects two papers that examine the questions of culture change. Lammel et al.'s paper examines issues surrounding culture change in the face of environmental changes due to global warming. People from different cultural backgrounds construe climate change differently and their responses will also

be fundamentally shaped by their culturally imbued construals of the climate. This paper is an examination of this fundamental question in France and New Caledonia. Mangundjaya's contribution compares the results of a recent measure of Hofstede's cultural dimensions in Indonesia to Hofstede's earlier results and discuss whether Indonesian culture has changed or not. It is an important first step to a rigorous examination of culture change, which many cross-cultural researchers will find fascinating.

The next three sections collect papers in cognition, self and personality, and social behaviour in work settings, three research areas where cross-cultural psychology has traditionally had a strong presence. Collected under the heading of *Culturally Informed Cognition* are diverse papers that examine cognitive ability (mathematics learning by Ndhlovu; task switching by Qu et al.), cultural shaping of folk psychological knowledge structures (theory of mind by Qu et al.; conceptions of freewill by Morf), cultural shaping of people's views about crimes and suicide (crime by Xiong & Smyrnios; youth suicide by Colucci & Minas). *Self, Identity, and Personality* collects papers that delve into many aspects of self and personality processes. Under investigation are the dynamics involving self experience in Japan (Fukuzawa & Yamaguchi) and the Sikh self (Kapur & Misra); self-construals in the contexts of changing societies of Poland, East and West Germany (Schachner et al.); a critical analysis of collectivism and climate (Presbitero); preschoolers' social flexibility (Qu et al.); personality trait structure in India (Singh & Misra); and academic self-concept in China (Lan & Watkins). Finally, *Work, Management, and Organizational Behavior* collects papers on work in diverse cultural settings: management in Germany (Hölter), worker wellbeing in Malaysia (Ibrahim & Ohtsuka), organizational citizenship in Indonesia (Jaya & Mangundjaya), explanations of unemployment in eight different countries (Mylonas et al.), as well as work motivation in Australia and India (Mathew, Hicks, & Bahr).

Scanning the content, what stands out in this volume is a changing character of research in culture and psychology. Although the traditionally strong areas have attracted many papers at the conference, their contents have diversified considerably. Not just cognitive ability and standard measurement instruments, but many psychological constructs and processes that have recently emerged are under investigation. Although the research trend informed by individualism and collectivism is still discernible in the background, more diverse research questions have been raised and answered in this collection of papers. Furthermore, rather than comparisons between two or more cultures, a growing number of papers have addressed more culture specific topics or issues in one particular culture or a class of cultures. Clearly, cross-cultural comparative perspectives have informed these studies, and their orientation is distinctly cultural; yet, research questions often come from the particular socio-cultural milieu in which the researchers began their investigation. Together with the introduction of new research methods and their reflective and rigorous use, fueled by the strong concerns for human wellbeing and social justice, the present proceedings is a testimony to the vitality of cross-cultural psychology and its future.

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