

The Current Status of IP, Inquiry

From: Bilal Afsin

Dear Professor Sundararajan,

My name is Bilal (a Taskforce member). I am a Ph.D. student of Thomas Teo. I am working on indigenous psychologies. I have a question. I have been reading the literature on IP for a while (anthologies, special issues, monographs etc.). I know that Asian psychologists are more active in this movement. What I am trying to find is the current statuses of IPs. I am just wondering about the pedagogical statuses of these approaches: which one is institutionalized; which one is conducted as a separate course or additional content in curricula; or are they remained only on the written material?

I know that K.K. Hwang talks about an institution that he founded, and I know that there is a course on African psychology (mentioned by A. Nwoye), for example. C. Allwood, in his review on IP, published by Cambridge Elements, says that "the current status of IP has been difficult to ascertain", and then he shares some of his impressions (like IP has a more active presence in Taiwan than in China).

Could you share your information with me about this issue or point to some references (if any)?

Best regards,

Bilal

From: 黃光國

Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 9:38 PM

Dear Bilal:

Thanks for your interest in the current statuses of IPs.

Do you have a chance to read my monograph entitled 'Culture-inclusive Theories' that had been published by Cambridge Elements as a reply to C. Allwood's works?

He reviewed and analyzed the problematic situations encountered by most IPists in many areas of the world, while my monograph tried to provide an epistemological strategy for solving these problems.

I have confidence that my strategy is universal and can be utilized by all cultures of the world. Now I am preparing several books to demonstrate that it can be applied to analyze Chinese cultural heritage of Confucianism and Buddhism.

I published more than 120 journal articles and book chapters in English, but most of them remained in written materials only. Now I will publish my books in Chinese first, because the struggle between China and America awakens the Chinese consciousness of my audience in China mainland. I do believe that my works may transform the Chinese community of social science from a state of self-colonization to a spirit of autonomy.

Best regards,

K. K. Hwang

From: Bilal Afsin

Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:10 PM

Dear Prof. Hwang,

Thank you for your reply. Yes, I have read your Cambridge monograph and some of your articles. I also enjoyed following the long debate between you and Prof. Allwood (in Social Epistemology). Thanks for being productive in the area. Also, I want to read your Foundations of Chinese Psychology book. I know that you are prioritizing theory construction and giving weight to the philosophy of science. Some of your ideas inspired me about teaching in academia in a non-western country.

I was just wondering if researchers have transformed their ideas into course materials and found a place in curricula or concretized their ideas in some way. If they did, I would like to learn how they managed to do this; is it structured as a parallel to mainstream courses or integrated with them? I understand that even though most of them remained as written materials, there is hope for the future from your perspective.

Thank you,

Bilal

From: 黃光國

Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 3:03 AM

To: iptaskforce@simplelists.com

Subject: Re: IP--the current status of IP, inquiry

Dear Bilal:

Thanks for your attention to my research works.

It is very difficult to transform my ideas into course materials. Because most psychologists (including IPists) don't understand the evolutionary pedigree for philosophy of science. They have

been trapped in the fallacy of positivism and cannot find easy way to escape from the dilemma as described in C. A. Allwood's monograph.

Eventually most non-Western psychologists prefer the easy way of following paradigms of Western mainstream psychology, even IPists tend to choose the so-called 'pan-dimensional approach', but not my 'cultural system approach'.

Yes, there is hope for the future from my perspective. As I mentioned in our last correspondence, the struggle between China and America awakens Chinese community of social science from the 'episteme of self-colonization', while the same struggle may make Western academic community aware that their 'pan-cultural dimensional approach' is too naive to understand their opponents from another civilization.

Best regards,

K. K. Hwang

From: Arnold Groh

Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 8:06 AM

Dear Bilal,

Your interest in didactic applications of IPs is very commendable. I shall try to briefly set out how I handle this in my university teaching. I did not obtain my knowledge of indigenous approaches during my professional studies and training as a psychologist; rather, I owe a lot to the indigenous peoples I met during my field research in Africa and other parts of the world. I combine this with the humanities' disciplines that I also studied, as well as with insights that I gain as regular participant in UN sessions on indigenous issues.

On this basis, I have compiled the curriculum that I have been teaching during the past 20 years at TU Berlin, but also at other universities. It includes lectures on cultural psychology, courses on cultural theories, and seminars in which the students are trained for fieldwork with indigenous peoples. I also take students to the UN where they collect data for cross-cultural studies, and when there is no pandemic, I take them on excursions once or twice a year to indigenous peoples, as theory does not make sense when it is out of touch with reality.

Of course I have encountered obstacles within the dominant academic

world, which has incorporated the irrationalities of our civilisation. Yet, it does not make sense to comply with them. Where it is necessary to conform, this should be reflected from meta-levels, so that the students understand the various roles they have to play in real life. They seem to appreciate not only this, but also the relevance of indigenous perspectives to topics like climate change. In the past years, the courses' participants have come from many places, not only from Europe, but also from Africa, Asia and the Americas.

So, to answer your questions - yes, findings from IPs are being implemented in curricula, and they also have been transformed into course materials. This teaching concretely includes, inter alia, training of the next generations so that they can carry on that way by their own, and it happens both parallel to mainstream courses and integrated into them. If you are interested in how this is practically done, I have explained that very much in detail in chapter 4 of my textbook on Research Methods in Indigenous Contexts.

I hope that helps, all the best,

Arnold

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Prof. Dr. Arnold Groh  
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