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A K USKUL; A G THALMAYER; A B I BERNARDO; R GONZALEZ; A KENDE ...

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Methodology and Research Practice

Challenges and Opportunities for Psychological Research in the Majority World

Ayse K. Uskul[1a], Amber Gayle Thalmayer[2], Allan B. I. Bernardo[3], Roberto González[4], Anna Kende[5], Sumaya Laher[6], Barbara Lášticová[7], Rim Saab[1], Gonzalo Salas[8], Purnima Singh[9], Pia Zeinoun[10], Ara Norenzayan[11], Melody M. Chao[12], Yuichi Shoda[13], M. Lynne Cooper[14]

[1] School of Psychology, University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom, [2] Department of Psychology, University of Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland, [3] Department of Psychology, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines , [4] School of Psychology, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago, Chile, [5] Institute of Psychology, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary, [6] Department of Psychology, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, [7] Institute for Research in Social Communication, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia, [8] Department of Psychology, Universidad Católica del Maule, Talca, Chile, [9] Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, India, [10] Oxfam Novib, the Netherlands and Embrace, Lebanon, [11] Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, [12] Department of Management, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong, [13] Department of Psychology, University of Washington, Seattle, USA, [14] Department of Psychological Science, University of Missouri Columbia, USA

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How can psychology transform itself into an inclusive science that engages with the rich cultural diversity of humanity? How can we strive towards a broader and deeper understanding of human behavior that is both generalizable across populations and attentive to its diversity? To address these major questions of our field, relying on scholars from different world regions, we outline first the opportunities associated with conducting psychological research in these and other majority world regions, highlighting international collaborations. Cross-cutting research themes in psychological research in the majority world are presented along with the urgent need to adopt a more critical lens to research and knowledge production within psychology. Indigenization, critical, transformative and liberatory approaches to understanding psychological phenomena framed within the decolonial imperative are presented as future options for a more diverse and equitable psychological science. Next, we address challenges, including limited institutional research infrastructure, limited national investment in research, political and social challenges these regions face, and the impact of imported (rather than locally produced) psychological knowledge. We conclude by offering recommendations to enable psychological science to be more representative of the world's population. Our aim is to facilitate a broader, better-informed, and more empathic conversation among psychological scientists worldwide about ways to make psychological science more representative, culturally informed and inclusive.

How can psychology transform itself into an inclusive science that engages with the rich cultural diversity of humanity across the globe? How can we strive towards a broader and deeper understanding of human behavior that is both generalizable across populations and attentive to its diversity? In 2020, the International Committee of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology hosted a professional development session in which scholars from different world regions that are currently under-represented in psychological research came together to discuss challenges and opportunities in conducting research in their regions and ways to further the development of social and personality psychology worldwide. This session sparked a broader conversation about the state of psychological science in understudied and underrepresented geographic regions and inspired us to write the current paper.

The broad aims of this paper are to outline opportunities and challenges associated with conducting psychological

a Correspondence to this article should be addressed to Ayse K. Uskul, School of Psychology, University of Sussex, Pevensey 1, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9RH, United Kingdom, Email: a.k.uskul@sussex.ac.uk

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research in the "majority world"[1] (Kagitcibasi, 2011), and to offer recommendations aimed at making psychological science both more broadly representative of the world's populations and attentive to its diversity. We do this by focusing on six underrepresented and underresearched world regions for which we provide a brief overview on demographic, socio-economic, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity and state of psychological science with relevant historical context in the Supplementary Material. Ultimately, we hope to convey what it means to produce and disseminate psychological knowledge in these regions given on-the-ground realities, to encourage policies that better allow for these realities, and to foster a broader appreciation of the need for and potential of supporting scholars and scholarship in these world regions.

Background

For decades, scholars have pointed to culturally biased sampling practices in the field of psychology, and their distorting effects on scientific inference (e.g., Arnett, 2008; Heine & Norenzayan, 2006; Sears, 1986; Triandis, 1994; Witkin & Berry, 1975). Building on these efforts, Henrich et al. (2010) documented the extent of the problem and highlighted its consequences to make three interrelated points: (1) The cultural database in psychology, as represented by mainstream western journals, is extremely narrow, disproportionately sampling from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic (WEIRD)[2] societies; (2) In cross-cultural comparisons, far from being representative of the world's population, those from WEIRD contexts often fall on the extreme end of population variability on many core psychological constructs; and (3) These facts notwithstanding, researchers, explicitly or implicitly, assume universality of their findings based on these western samples.

Despite growing awareness of these issues over the last decade (e.g., Ledgerwood et al., 2024; Simons et al., 2017; van de Vijver, 2013), sampling practices in the field have changed little. For example, Thalmayer and colleagues (2021) found little progress in global representation over a 10-year period in key "gatekeeper" American Psychological Association (APA) journals representing six subdisciplines in psychology. They found that 62% of samples came from the United States (U.S.) in the years 2014-2018, compared to 68% 10 years earlier (Arnett, 2008), even though the U.S. accounts for less than 5% of the world's population. The small improvement was, furthermore, almost entirely due to samples from similar western countries: The U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand and countries from western Europe – which together account for 11% of the world's population – continue to be the source of nearly 95% of psychology's knowledge base, with 1% or less of samples and lead authors coming from Africa, the Middle East, or Latin America. Reflecting and reinforcing this bias, editorial teams and choice of topics are also heavily skewed. In the journals analyzed, Thalmayer et al. (2021) found that 100% of editors were North American, and 95% of associate editors and 99% of editorial board members were from western contexts (also see Altman & Cohen, 2021 for an analysis of open access journals across disciplines including psychology, and Palser et al., 2022 for a geographic analysis of editorial boards in psychology and neuroscience). Similar biases are present in other highly regarded journals in the field run by international organizations with an explicitly stated global outlook (e.g., *Psychological Science*, see Rad et al., 2018) and in different subfields of psychology (e.g., evolutionary psychology [Pollet & Saxton, 2019]; developmental psychology [Nielsen et al., 2017]).

Disproportionate sampling from western populations is exacerbated by a widespread "localization bias" – that is, the tendency to treat research findings from western countries, particularly from the U.S., as the default or universally applicable norm, whereas findings from the majority world are seen as primarily relevant to a particular local context (Castro Torres & Alburez-Gutierrez, 2022). This is reflected, for example, by the fact that articles from the U.S. typically do not disclose the geographic provenance of their samples in their titles, whereas articles from other countries often do (Cheon et al., 2020; see also Kahalon et al., 2022). These findings suggest that psychology as a discipline fails to grasp that researcher assumptions, intuitions, and introspections arise from a particular cultural milieu and set of experiences that may not generalize to most of the world (Apicella et al., 2020). Thomas et al. (2023) espoused similar argument in relation to cognitive studies arguing that majority of what is known in the field is based on White, English-speaking, normatively invisible, racially color-evasive, socially dominant class populations.

The culturally skewed practices of psychology pose a problem that has been costly, scientifically, ethically, and professionally, to our field on at least four levels (Henrich et al., 2010; van de Vijver, 2013):

Failure to address generalizability. The lack of representation is a barrier to the discovery of cross-cultural regularities in human psychology that are central to the aims of psychology (Norenzayan & Heine, 2005). Without evidence from more contexts, it is impossible to know the degree

1 Here we use "majority world" interchangeably with "non-WEIRD" or "non-western," sometimes also called the "Global South," to refer to those residing in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America, who comprise the majority of the world's population most of whose countries experienced colonialism (Connell, 2007; Ratele, 2017). We emphasize that these are terms of convenience intended to raise awareness about global divides and disparities, and that the profound cultural heterogeneity that falls under any "umbrella" terms should not be underestimated or neglected (for a discussion also see Apicella et al., 2020; Rad et al., 2018).

2 WEIRD has also been defined as referring to "white, English-speaking, normatively invisible, racially color-evasize, socially dominant class' populations (see Thomas et al., 2023).

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to which any knowledge applies broadly to humans regardless of region or culture[3], or whether it varies substantially across contexts.

Culture-blindness. As a species, human beings are dependent on cultural learning (Henrich, 2016), however, current research and reporting practices reflect culture-blindness, with profound implications for theory and application (e.g., Gelfand et al., 2017; Kitayama & Uskul, 2011). Ignoring culture impedes the discovery of important cultural influences on cognition, emotion, and motivation, limiting our understanding of the role of context in shaping the brain and experience, including processes from basic visual perception to moral reasoning and beyond (Henrich et al., 2010, 2023).

Topic-blindness. Biased sampling leads the field to ignore or under-represent topics or phenomena of significance to populations outside the west, such as cognitive development without literacy or formal schooling, honor, shame, food taboos, kinship obligations and ties, religion, and magic, to name just a few (Arnett, 2008; Henrich et al., 2010).

Lack of inclusivity. Failing to include the majority world in knowledge production and dissemination, as evidenced for example through geographically skewed sampling and biased publication practices in mainstream journals, poses ethical and scientific issues for a discipline that purports to be the science of human behavior (Christopher et al., 2014; Puthillam et al., 2023; van de Vijver, 2013), and has downstream consequences for dissemination of research to the general public, the teaching of psychology, and public policy.

We believe that it is crucial to tackle these problems to develop more valid theories of human psychology, methods and instruments that are applicable and fair across contexts, knowledge that is generalizable, and applications and interventions that work in the groups they target. Addressing these issues would also contribute to the creation of spaces where psychologists in the majority world can pursue theories, research questions, and analytic approaches that they think are important and meaningful, without having to follow the research norms in developed societies (e.g., "outcomes" prioritized in global rankings and league tables), and to an acknowledgement that these incremental contributions to psychological knowledge are highly valuable for our understanding of human psychology.

As a step toward overcoming the problems posed by biased practices in psychology such as epistemic exclusion (Durrheim, 2024; Settles et al., 2021), we can acquire a better understanding of the realities of research in different regions, the conditions under which scientific knowledge is produced, and some topics of interest in other places. Toward that end, we describe some of the exciting opportunities for conducting psychological research in and across these regions, including the power of meaningful collaborations, the new topics and themes that can enter psychological science thanks to voices from other world regions, and the potential for an inclusive psychological science. We then address some of the challenges associated with conducting research in these and other majority-world regions, and conclude by offering concrete guidance and policy recommendations aimed at transforming psychology into a scientific discipline that more accurately reflects and embraces human diversity. We complement these sections by highlighting the demographic, socioeconomic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in these world regions and by providing a brief overview of psychological science in each region in the Supplementary Material.

The Author Team

The 15 authors of this paper are all social, personality, cultural, and/or clinical psychologists who conduct empirical research in these subfields of psychology. We are based at institutions in 13 countries, and represent about 13 countries of origin, including all the regions used as case examples in this paper, as well as several others (e.g., North America, Europe, East Asia). Several of us have multi-cultural identities, living in countries that are different from where we earned our PhDs or spent our childhoods. The first, second, eighth, and the final four authors all served during different periods on the international committee of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), which exists to increase international representation both within the society and in research psychology broadly. They invited the remaining co-authors to contribute to this manuscript. The views of the paper were therefore shaped first in committee discussions, second in preparing and presenting the workshop, and finally in the two-year process of manuscript preparation. Throughout these stages, the process was guided by a shared positionality that shaped the selection of presenters and co-authors, and which mimicked the selection of international committee members. That world view is probably best summarized as a deep commitment to empirical scholarship in psychology and respect for different achievements to date, coupled with a critical analysis of its over-reliance on western and especially North American samples, authors, editors, theories, and perspectives. It would be fair to say that for most authors of this paper, the challenges described here of conducting research in the majority world have been personally experienced. We acknowledge that the content covered in the current piece is shaped by the composition of the author team and only scratches the surface of the discussions covered here. We hope that our piece contributes to growing literature that aims to raise awareness of the impor-

3 Where we refer to 'culture', we refer to macro or societal level groupings where a set of values and practices are collectively distributed and shared (Cohen, 1998; Kitayama & Uskul, 2011). In the psychology research literature, this definition is typically represented by ethnic, racial, and/or national groups, but the groupings often intersect with other macro level variables like political/economic system, social class, religiosity, residential mobility, subsistence system, geography/ecology, among others.

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tance of diversity and inclusivity in our science and inspires more in-depth coverage of psychological research in non-western spaces.

The Intended Audience

We wrote the current piece with three audiences in mind. First, we aim to reach North American and Western European researchers, especially those in gatekeeping positions in scientific associations, journals, and granting agencies, to increase awareness of the context of research within the majority-world and to invite them to engage with knowledge production practices that are more equitable. Second, we aim to reach researchers in the majority world to draw connections with each other and encourage coordinated efforts to both collaborate on mutually meaningful topics of investigation and raise voices for better representation in our science. Finally, we aim to encourage knowledge production practices in the field that encourage dynamic interactions to produce a diverse and inclusive future for psychology. There are so many questions of importance yet to ask, and necessary and enriching cross-border collaborations that could and should be part of our future.

Opportunities for Psychological Research

The regions of the majority world covered here reflect a mosaic of diverse demographic, socio-economic, cultural, religious, linguistic, political, historical, and environmental conditions (see Supplementary Material for details on within-region diversity). This diversity, while presenting challenges to conducting research, also provides rich opportunities for exploring the universalist assumptions about psychological processes that have been rooted in recent western research and for generating creative ways of asking and answering research questions fit to local realities, but which also hold translational possibilities to western contexts. Below we discuss some of these opportunities.

International Collaborations

Meaningful international collaborations are a powerful way to advance psychological knowledge. They have the potential to enhance the diversity and representativeness of psychological science and scientists; to permit direct tests of the generalizability of psychological theories and the study of the role of social and cultural context in human psychology in ways that are contextually meaningful, valid, and inclusive; and to produce novel and creative insights into the complexity of the human mind and behavior through the integration of emic and etic approaches (Cheung et al., 2011; van de Vijver, 2013). Moreover, many of the regions covered here have been and continue to be affected by political, environmental, and economic challenges different in both intensity and/or type to that of minority world contexts. Thus, research from these regions provides a window into some of the world's most pressing problems along with possible solutions. Collaborations also provide a mechanism for sharing resources and exchanging expertise across national boundaries to reduce disparities in research capacity. International collaborations can help train future generations and develop networks where early career researchers from different regions become familiar with each other's academic contributions and social realities. Such interactions can increase social cohesion, trust and empowerment, leading to the development of long-term networks, successful research projects, student exchanges, and co-publishing in mainstream journals to produce a more inclusive psychological science.

Unfortunately, collaborations between western and majority-world researchers often involve a simplistic and myopic focus on testing the generalizability or exportability of western theories in majority-world regions, and often devalues local team members. While testing the generalizability of western theories is a valid and necessary step, it is problematic when it is the only focus, implemented without interest in understanding the roots and implications of similarities and differences. Collaborations that confine majority-world researchers to the role of data collectors, with little or no intellectual input regarding hypotheses and study design (e.g., Arvanitis & Mouton, 2019; Hanafi & Arvanitis, 2014) reproduce exploitative colonial dynamics (Malherbe & Ratele, 2022). This tends to be more common in multi-country projects, which have increased in recent years. Initiatives such as the Many Labs (Klein et al., 2018) and the Psychological Science Accelerator (Moshontz et al., 2018) have contributed to increased collaborations across the globe but were initially typically led by western researchers with little input on different stages of the research by collaborators from the majority world (see TRUST, 2018).

It is also common for projects that originate in the west to ignore regional intergroup relations and local legal requirements when forming collaborations. For example, multi-nation projects that aim to include Arab countries also frequently include Israel, despite anti-normalization laws in many Arab countries and/or political commitments by academics to the grassroots Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions campaign, in opposition to the Israeli colonial occupation of Palestine. Collaborations between researchers in the majority and western worlds can also be difficult to sustain due to economic crises, political unrest, infrastructure limitations in online or even power access, and the complications and high cost of obtaining visas, exorbitant currency exchanges and general lack of funding mechanisms for international meetings.

Western hegemony in international publishing, among other factors, has also resulted in researchers in the majority world collaborating primarily with researchers from western institutions, rather than with each other. Majority-world collaborations, however, could draw on useful commonalities at the social, cultural and political levels (Saab et al., 2022). For example, researchers from Latin America and Southeast Asia that study psychological consequences of disasters and natural catastrophes or researchers working with indigenous peoples across different majority world regions could tap into a wealth of regionally accumulated psychological knowledge in other parts of the world.

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Researchers from the majority world who migrate to the west (i.e., diaspora researchers) can also contribute to the development of psychology in their regions of origin. However, developing programmatic research from a base in the west is difficult, due to little funding or recognition for "area studies" in psychology. Legitimizing and incentivizing area studies, in line with other social science fields (e.g., Middle Eastern/Arab studies, Latin American studies), could be a helpful way forward (Saab et al., 2022). Furthermore, diaspora psychologists can benefit from building/joining regional associations (e.g., AMENA-psy and National Latinx Psychological Association in North America) to help connect psychologists from the region with both diaspora and international researchers (Awad et al., 2022; Saab et al., 2022). In a similar vein, researchers from the west could join organizations in the majority world serving on committees, editorial boards and so on.

Another area of untapped potential for collaboration is provided by data from local large-scale survey projects which exist across regions. Some important examples are public opinion polls conducted across the Arab region through initiatives by other social scientists like the Arab Barometer (2006 – present) or the Arab Opinion Index (2011 – present); Afrobarometer which contains data from more than 30 countries in Africa; the Chilean Longitudinal Social Study (ELSOC) (2021); and the European Social Survey (ESS) which includes data from most Eastern European, as well as Western European countries, allowing for comparative research. Such data is useful for the exploration of many social/political psychological processes, whilst considering regional and national indicators related to health, (un)employment, economic conditions, gender equality etc., but they remain underutilized in psychology.

Cross-Cutting Research Themes in Psychological Research in the Majority World

Local conditions drive unique interests, but some themes can be identified that cut across world regions. These represent important opportunities for exchange and collaboration. Without aiming to provide a comprehensive list, we showcase several examples where researchers in the Majority World lead in expertise but are often unrecognized.

Intergroup Conflict. Intergroup conflict is pervasive among humans across history and is an important area of shared research interest across the majority and western worlds. The specific ways in which the topic is conceptualized and pursued is shaped by each region's historical, social and political experiences, and reflects unique national problems such as conflict traced to a country's colonial past or to the specific multi-ethnic composition of a society. Psychologists have increasingly studied characteristics of these conflicts and examined conflict-resolution strategies, mental health consequences of long-term conflict, and peace building in post-conflict societies, among other topics. Some examples include intergroup contact and understanding between ethnic groups in Malaysia (e.g., Ramiah et al., 2014) and in Chile; (González et al., 2017; Hässler et al., 2019); interreligious violence and radical militant groups in Indonesia (e.g., Wibisono et al., 2019); historical revisionism and human rights concerns in the Philippines (e.g., Uyheng et al., 2021); peaceful democratic transition in East Timor (e.g., Montiel & Belo, 2008); the Palestinian struggle for liberation (e.g., Albzour et al., 2023); sectarianism in Lebanon (Badaan et al., 2020), collective action in the context of the Arab Spring uprisings (Ayanian & Tausch, 2016); conflicts between Turks and Kurds and between the citizens and the state in Turkey (e.g., Orhan, 2022); anti-Roma sentiment in East-Central and South-East Europe where Roma comprise 5 to 10% of the total population (e.g., Sam Nariman, Nariman, et al., 2020); relations between indigenous and non-indigenous groups in Latin America (e.g., Diaz-Loving, 2005); reconciliation following ethnic and political conflicts in post-war Yugoslav republics, Rwanda and Chile (e.g., Čehajić-Clancy & Brown, 2019; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2015; Manzi & González, 2007); conventional and radical collective actions associated with recent outbursts in Chile and other countries in Latin-America (e.g., González et al., 2021; Wlodarczyk et al., 2017); ethnic conflicts in Rwanda (Scull et al., 2016) and the impact of apartheid and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on intergroup relations and forgiveness in South Africa (e.g., Fourie et al., 2013; Harriman et al., 2022).

Migration and Displacement. Temporary or permanent emigration of workers to other countries is another topic that cuts across countries and regions. Countries around the globe have opened their doors to migration from neighboring countries and regions, for example, with Turkey hosting millions of Afghani, Iraqi and Syrian refugees; Colombia, Peru, Chile and Ecuador hosting millions of Venezuelans; Chile hosting migrants from Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Haiti; Lebanon hosting the highest number of refugees per capita; countries on the periphery of the EU managing 'migrant transit zones'. This has led to an upsurge in research on prejudice and discrimination, psychological and socio-cultural adaptation of migrants and refugees, and social capital (e.g., Alfadhli & Drury, 2018; Bernardo et al., 2022; Myroniuk & Vearey, 2014; Saab et al., 2017; Şafak-Ayvazoğlu et al., 2021; Xenitidou & Sapountzis, 2018) as well as the experiences and well-being of workers in their host countries and the impact of labor migration on families (e.g., Adra et al., 2020; Kouta et al., 2021; Sahni & Junnarkar, 2019). The Russian invasion of Ukraine and resulting wave of refugees will attract further attention to group relations in Europe and attitudes towards refugees of different origins (e.g., De Coninck, 2023). Similarly, the disproportionate impact of climate change in the Majority World and the growing number of refugees due to climate-related reasons will surely increase the psychological and societal consequences of migration and thus its research relevance (e.g., Hoffmann et al., 2021; B. Ibrahim & Mensah, 2022).

Gender. Research on gender-related topics in the regions covered here has provided tools to understand societal norms and values that govern gendered experiences, gender relations and related inequalities for example on gender differences in life outcomes in post-socialist Eastern Europe (Fülöp & Berkics, 2015), gender and health inequal-

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ities in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Abubakar & Kitsao-Wekulo, 2015), barriers to women's mental well-being in South Asia (e.g., M. A. Khan et al., 2020), violence in the name of honor (e.g., Gengler et al., 2021), international arranged marriages (Merali, 2015), violence against women (e.g., Alkan et al., 2021) and sexism and gender stereotypes (Jiménez-Moya et al., 2022). This work has been hugely important in highlighting local realities, without which attempts to understand topics such as gender inequality, gender-based violence, and gender differences in mental and physical health, among other topics, can lead to the conclusion that majority-world settings are simply oppressive, backwards, or pathological (see Kurtiş & Adams, 2018). Work emerging from different world regions on gendered topics has also fueled the development of transnational feminist psychology (e.g., Zerbe Enns et al., 2021), which highlights the importance of intersectionality (e.g., refugee status and gender identities, see Young & Chan, 2015), inclusive definitions of global and transnational feminisms, and theories and practices that support critical social change (Malherbe et al., 2021).

Mental and Physical Health. Given past and ongoing conflicts and economic instability in many regions covered here, mental health and well-being have been important topics of investigation. For example, reviews from the Arab region show that social adjustment is studied frequently (see Basurrah et al., 2021; Saab et al., 2020) and that mental health publications tend to center on mood, anxiety, substance use, and childhood disorders (e.g., Zeinoun et al., 2020). Mental health problems in relation to poverty, unemployment, and debt have been examined in various regions (e.g., Islam et al., 2022; Lund et al., 2018; Rihmer et al., 2013). Similarly, psychologists in Sub-Saharan Africa have focused on continent-wide physical health problems, including HIV/AIDS for example in terms of behavioral aspects and consequences on mental health. As in other regions, issues around race and mental health are also of interest (e.g., Chong et al., 2016; Williams et al., 2008). Researchers in South-East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, all of which are prone to natural disasters (e.g., typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods), have addressed community disaster preparedness and psychological interventions to address mental health consequences of disasters (e.g., Hechanova & Waelde, 2017; Pityaratstian et al., 2015), a need likely to increase with climate change.

Colonization and Indigenous Peoples. A promising research avenue concerns the psychology of colonization among indigenous communities, which we define as communities that self-identify as such and that maintain a distinct cultural identity showing historical continuity with societies predating (European) settler-colonization, and typically constituting marginalized groups (see González et al., 2022). Indigenous peoples in the regions covered in the current paper, while having distinctive cultural psychologies and identities, share the experience of colonization and its social and psychological consequences (González et al., 2022). Connecting research efforts across the majority world could elucidate common consequences of colonization, including social inequalities, topics surrounding identity and group processes, prejudice and discrimination, racist attitudes and negative stereotypes, marginalization and invisibility, as well as the intergenerational transmission of shared values, and the promotion of social change within indigenous groups. There is potential for insights into the impact of historical trauma and colonialism on cognition, mental health and well-being, substance abuse, educational performance, and rates of violence, among other topics (for reviews see González et al., 2022; see also Fryberg et al., 2018).

Using diverse psychological perspectives, new research involving indigenous and non-indigenous researchers has begun addressing questions of intragroup, intergroup, interpersonal, and individual issues among indigenous peoples (González et al., 2022). As discussed, western psychology has been criticized for its bias, and scholars have raised alarms about replicating colonialism by imposing western psychological views on indigenous peoples, and neglecting indigenous knowledge and practices (see Allwood, 2018; Sundararajan, 2019). There is, however, great potential for psychology to learn from and contribute to the goals of indigenous peoples by embracing questions of interest, by including indigenous contributors, collaborators, and students within their research programs, and by taking the time and effort to more appropriately adapt their methods and approaches.

Decolonization and Indigenization of Research

With increasing resistance to uncritical acceptance of western theories and approaches used in the study of human psychology, there is a growing effort to indigenize and decolonize psychology across the regions discussed in this paper. These efforts entail a recognition that indigenous concepts, processes, and epistemologies can inform, challenge, and expand existing theories, inspire new theories and diversify topics studied (e.g., Adams et al., 2015; Malherbe & Ratele, 2022; Oppong, 2022) and also highlight the need for historical context in research and the need to address issues of social justice in contexts of inequality and poverty (e.g., Adams & Estrada-Villalta, 2017; Laher et al., 2019), which have led to important developments that bring a critical lens to knowledge production in these regions. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the fields of critical social psychology, liberatory psychology and community psychology have grown in importance and impact, thanks to the works of Akbar, Fanon, Hountondji, Nsamenang, Nwoye and Ratele, who provide a critical Afro-centric lens on knowledge production (Malherbe & Ratele, 2022; Nwoye, 2022). Similarly, Latin American researchers are adopting liberatory and community psychology approaches to address local questions (e.g., Burton & Kagan, 2005) and methodologies such as action-research, which have formed the basis of much community social psychology in Latin America (see Martín-Baró's work on this method (Ardila, 2007). These approaches have been extensively used to address questions relevant to indigenous communities in countries such as Mexico and Chile, including collective identities, historical loss, trauma, trust, traditional values,

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social change and development (for a review see González et al., 2022). In Southeast Asia, indigenous approaches draw constructs from the linguistic analysis of local languages and cultural knowledge systems and emphasize historical and cultural experiences for understanding psychological phenomena (Muluk et al., 2018; Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000). Similar projects are found in the Arab region, Africa and Asia, an example of which would be the research on personality across the different lexicons (e.g., Laher & Cheung, 2021; Thalmayer et al., 2020, 2021; Zeinoun et al., 2018). In South Asia, Misra and Mohanty (2002) describe how efforts to respond to the issues faced by the people of India, colonization and regional partitions, pushed Indian social psychology into a phase of indigenization, leading the discipline to become more sensitive to cultural nuances and social reality (Adair et al., 1993; Kiran Kumar, 2011; D. Sinha, 1993; J. B. P. Sinha, 2000).

Research and theory originating from these regions has led to the development of decolonial perspectives of psychology (see Decolonial Psychology Editorial Collective, 2021) and guidance on scholarly practices to challenge dominant western perspectives. Broadly defined, decolonisation refers to dismantling the colonial institutional structures (with their associated power dynamics) that assign epistemic centre status to select groups or geographic regions or languages in a postcolonial world (Oppong, 2022, p. 954). Decolonisation imperatives encourage epistemic freedom, that is, a recognition and appreciation of different ways of knowing. There is an explicit acknowledgement of a need to shift the west as the central repository of knowledge production both in terms of how we understand the world and how this understanding is communicated. Thus, a more critical approach towards understanding constructs and theories is required along with gatekeeping practices in the field that center the west as the metropole (Connell, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). Recent work by Ratele (2017), Nwoye (2015), Oppong (2022) and Malherbe and Ratele (2022) on understanding African psychology offers an example of work in psychology within the decolonial tradition. Other examples of decolonising work such as from the Arab region include exposing experimental social psychology's acquiescence to the Israeli occupation of Palestine (Hakim et al., 2023) and deconstructing the sedative effects of normalization on Palestinian resistance (Albzour et al., 2019).

As detailed in this section, conducting research in the majority world presents an array of exciting opportunities. Oftentimes access to this type of work is a challenge in that many such studies are written in local languages and published in local outlets which makes it difficult to take a bird's-eye view of the overall research output of the discipline in a given region. Further, research produced in the majority world tends to take place under challenging conditions which can restrict its development and execution in various ways. We detail some of these conditions in the next section and then move on to how some of the resulting limitations and challenges can be addressed.

Conditions that Impact Research in the Majority World

The conditions that impact research in the majority world must be situated within the context of a long history of colonialism, neo-imperialism, and military interventions that these regions have experienced and the resulting economic and social inequalities between world regions. While each region, each country, and even each state or province within a country has unique issues originating from localized historical, political, and ecological experiences, we identified several cross-regional factors that impact psychological research: limited institutional research infrastructure, national investment, and leadership and professional coordination. We also discuss political and other contextual factors that shape research in these regions and the limitations of adopting knowledge from the west.

Limited Institutional Research Infrastructure

Generally speaking, research infrastructure in most universities in these regions is basic, even in departments with graduate degree programs. Most universities can barely fund basic student and teaching needs, which means that funds for research, labs and teaching assistants are rare or non-existent. In many cases, because of heavy focus on teaching, hardly any effort is spent on establishing research infrastructure. Although some universities focusing on both research and teaching in the regions covered here offer adequate resources and support for research, most universities lack infrastructure common to productive research environments in western contexts, for example research ethics review committees, research participant recruitment systems, well-equipped laboratory spaces, state-of-the-art data collection and analysis software, or accreditation standards.

Limited availability of books and journals generally and in local languages specifically, along with limited access to subscriptions to costly databases, also negatively impacts the development of psychological knowledge. Regional journals can face challenges related to editorial and content quality, evaluation, access and, above all, management (e.g., indexing of these journals in prestigious databases worldwide). It is also common for some countries (e.g., in Sub-Saharan Africa or the Arab region) to experience problems with connectivity and access to the internet due to limited/damaged infrastructure and/or electricity shortages, resulting for example from wars and economic crises.

Infrastructure limitations impact the type of research that can be conducted and act as a major barrier to the production of knowledge. One-shot cross-sectional or qualitative studies are necessarily more common than programmatic research involving multiple studies, or longitudinal or randomized control designs. Samples tend to be limited to those that are convenient and inexpensive to recruit (e.g., students, small non-random samples). Even when the willingness and funds exist to collect large samples, out-of-date population and census data can limit the potential to make these nationally representative (Harb, 2016).

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Limited National Investment in Research

The lack of infrastructure is, of course, intimately tied to the lack of resources channeled to research and higher education, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Public policy often diverts even those resources intended for higher education or research away from psychology, directing them instead toward natural/physical sciences. Reflecting differing economic and political realities, the percentage of GDP spent on research, innovation and higher education varies dramatically both between and within these regions. For example, in Latin America, Brazil is the only country that dedicates more than 1% of its GDP to research and development. While Chile is among the leading countries in psychological research and publishing in Latin-America, only 0.3% of its GDP is allocated to research and development. Institutions across Africa are also underresourced; for example, an analysis in 2018 showed that the African region received only 0.65% of global research grants (Nabyonga-Orem et al., 2020). A large-scale survey of 95 universities in 29 countries across the Commonwealth highlighted significant disparities in access to funding with lower income countries (e.g., some in Africa) having less access to research funding and research support mechanisms (ACU report, 2023).

Unfortunately, limited funding impacts the availability and quality of research training (e.g., see Saab et al., 2020). Lack of financial resources also affects salaries which can force academic psychologists to juggle multiple jobs (e.g., additional teaching jobs) or seek jobs in western regions. Financial limitations can restrict hiring an adequate number of academics to cover teaching needs, with some faculty having more than 30 hours of classroom teaching per week. Such demands inevitably reduce the quantity or quality of scientific production in these regions at a degree that may be difficult to imagine by researchers in more developed regions (Arvanitis & Mouton, 2019).

In some regions, significant developments in the production of psychological science have taken place in research centers financially supported by ministries of science and technology, research agencies, or private funds. Some examples exist in the Latin American region (e.g., Chile: Center for Social Conflict and Cohesion Studies; the Center for Intercultural and Indigenous Research; Brazil: Brazilian Institute of Neuropsychology and Behavior [IBNeC]); Argentina: Centros e Institutos de Investigación Universidad de Córdoba in Latin America). An example from the Eastern European region is the Central European University, a privately funded American University formerly located in Budapest, which played an important role in facilitating social science and psychological research in the region until it was forced out by the right-wing populist government of Viktor Orbán in 2020.

Limited Leadership and Professional Coordination

Even when resources are available for research, bureaucratic requirements for management of research budgets, heavy teaching demands and limited academic freedom can restrict capacity to produce high-quality research. Some national governments and funding agencies lack clear policies on undergraduate and graduate training and research agendas, and exhibit limited transparency on appointment and funding decisions, which undermines research productivity and motivation. As reviewed earlier, some countries/regions lack formal local/regional networks or associations in psychology or its subdisciplines, which reduces opportunities for collaboration, exchange and coordinated mobilization to demand and bring about change in conditions (see Bou Zeineddine et al., 2022).

Unfavorable conditions for research lead to "brain drain," with researchers leaving academia for higher-paid jobs in other sectors or emigrating to countries with better research support, leaving students and junior colleagues without leadership (e.g., J. Khan, 2021). Needless to say, political instability, war, restricted academic freedom and economic crises experienced in Latin America, Eastern Europe, parts of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab region, among others, have exacerbated the ongoing brain drain. When countries in these regions do attract academics, they usually come from other countries in the same region who face similar challenges (e.g., from former Soviet countries to other Eastern European countries, from the Arab region to Turkey); academic immigration from higher-income to lower-income countries is rare. In Eastern Europe, where brain drain has been particularly severe since 1989, there is an observable generation gap among psychologists, with an entire generation of academics missing from the field.

Political and Social Challenges

Political and social contexts also shape on-the-ground realities of conducting research. For example, the linguistic and cultural diversity that has been described within each region dramatically increases the cost and effort needed to prepare appropriate study materials. Sampling challenges also emerge when some communities do not value academic studies or are suspicious of researchers' intentions (e.g., in countries that are economically, ethnically, and religiously divided or that experience significant foreign intervention), rendering samples from these populations more difficult to recruit (e.g., Hawi et al., 2022).

Researchers in some regions have also been restricted in freely choosing their topics of study (e.g., Bou Zeineddine et al., 2022). For example, topics seen as threatening to the interests of local political or religious authorities have been hindered at different stages of the research process by authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (e.g. Doğan & Selenica, 2022; Hanafi, 2016; Hawi et al., 2022). Hence, questions concerning intergroup relations and political psychology, for example, that are crucial for understanding these regions' most pressing problems can receive comparatively less attention than questions posing less threat to the status quo (e.g., Saab et al., 2020). However, recent years have seen a promising increase in the scale of social/political psychological research conducted in some of these regions (e.g., Hawi et al., 2022). Some of the research on critical or politically sensitive topics tends to be produced by researchers who are originally from these

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regions but are affiliated with institutions located outside of their home countries (e.g., Çakal & Husnu, 2022; Coşkan et al., 2021) where it may be less risky to do so (but see Hawi et al., 2022 for challenges associated with foreign affiliations in Arab countries).

There is also the question of how psychology, as a science, may be viewed in these regions. In contexts with significant societal problems (e.g., poverty, conflict, malnutrition) where essential human needs (e.g., shelter, clean water, physical safety) are not adequately met, behavioral sciences such as psychology may be viewed as a luxury or a preoccupation of an elite middle class, and not worthy of resources that are already scarce (e.g., Carr & Maclachlan, 1998; Moghaddam & Taylor, 1985). When support is provided for training opportunities and research, it is likely to be in applied areas with the greatest potential to improve local conditions (e.g., clinical, health, educational psychology; see Supplementary Material). Psychological knowledge may also be seen as imported from the west and not meeting the needs of local people, leading authorities to question whether such knowledge deserves support.

Imported (Rather than Locally Produced) Psychological Knowledge

By and large, psychological knowledge in these regions has been imported rather than locally generated (e.g., Pillay, 2017; Ratele, 2017). In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, Tchombe et al. (2022) argue that psychology "like every colonial import into Africa, has retained an imperialistic and racist identity in the sense that its theories and methods are still Eurocentric, and its primary focus is on topics that reflect this externalized orientation, thereby largely losing African knowledge and knowledge systems" (p. 47). Seedat and Lazarus (2014) argued that "psychology, a progeny of western ethno-science, was central to colonizing structures and discourses, which sought to center Euro-American self-knowledge and science and marginalize non-western knowledge systems" (p. 268). The legacy of this is a profession premised and practiced as developed on western samples. Similarly, throughout Southeast Asia, South Asia and Latin America, researchers in countries with more developed psychology programs tend to rely on psychological theories and research paradigms from western contexts, as most programs were established by psychologists trained in western countries.

A similar pattern exists in the Arab region (see Saab et al., 2020; Zebian et al., 2007; Zeinoun et al., 2020). In line with the colonial past, psychological research often follows the tradition of western schools of thought. In Syria and Lebanon, for example, psychology has been influenced by the French tradition, whereas in Palestine and Egypt by the British. The French academic influence results in an emphasis on psychoanalysis and phenomenological psychological theories, with less focus on quantitative studies (A.-S. Ibrahim, 2013). Conversely, the British legacy has led to an emphasis on education, especially testing and measurement. Different western influences, however, also occur within the same country (e.g., French and American in Lebanon). These different traditions can give rise to schisms between research published, for example, in Arabic versus English peer-reviewed journals, which makes it difficult to take a bird's-eye view of the overall research output of the discipline in the region. In short, most majority-world regions grapple with a tension between embracing the practices of western psychology as the norm, and the desire to develop local psychological knowledge that is socially relevant and that resonates with local cultural and historical ways of knowing.

The "colonial hangover" on the theoretical positions and research activities of local psychologists can lead to uncritical acceptance of these theories and paradigms as representing the standard of psychological scholarship and failure to acknowledge complex cultural concerns and internal variation within the regions (e.g., Malherbe et al., 2021). This pattern can be exacerbated by helicopter research (or parachute science, see "Tackling Helicopter Research," 2022) where researchers from high-income or more privileged settings conduct research in the majority world without seeking the involvement of local communities or researchers during the process, or sharing their results with local communities afterwards. Over-reliance on western approaches can lead local policy makers to question the relevance and value of psychological research. This is, however, changing with researchers in these regions questioning the adoption of Euro-American-centric research and calling for indigenization and decolonization of psychological theories and methods to understand local social issues and produce effective local solutions (Malherbe et al., 2021), as covered in greater detail in the above section on opportunities.

Despite these significant challenges faced by researchers in the majority world, researchers in these regions have managed to survive and succeed in the competitive scientific world and made important theoretical and methodological contributions to the field that disrupted mainstream theories and evidence. Some of the successes have been possible thanks to the different, illuminating perspectives tied to being in regions outside the mainstream of psychology.

Discussion and Conclusion: Facilitating Change

We hope that the above discussion has made it abundantly clear that a genuine science of human behavior requires knowledge about, by, and for all human beings. It is important to recognize that, like most global challenges, the current state of our science has been created and maintained by a complex web of individuals, organizations, and political entities, each driven by their own matrix of incentives. Attempting change by imposing a centrally devised plan, especially if formulated by those in the west, could repeat the dynamics of colonialism which created the currently biased and narrowly focused state of psychological knowledge (Seedat & Lazarus, 2014). Input is needed from across the spectrum of knowledge production across both the west and the majority world. For this reason, our recommendations were developed through a collaboration between researchers in the majority world and those located in the west.

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Table 1. Questions that we recommend gatekeepers in psychological science to ask themselves

Scientific Organizations	Funding Agencies	University Administrators	Academic Publishers	Scientific Journals
Who can (and cannot) attend our conferences? Where do we hold our conferences? Who can (and cannot) travel to the selected location? Who does the location benefit and disadvantage the most? Whose research do we cover in our bulletins, websites or newsletters? Who do we nominate and see as deserving awards? What is our policy for diversity in our journals? How can we use accumulated funds to support researchers who need it? What initiatives can we start to make publishing in our journals accessible to all?	Whose research and what type of projects do we fund? Who makes up our grant panels? How can we acknowledge the challenges that come with conducting certain type of research (e.g., comparative, with hard-to-reach samples)? How can we support those from less resourced locations to become familiar with and apply to funding opportunities we provide?	How do our promotion criteria consider challenges associated with conducting certain types of research? How can we encourage and support our faculty and students to form international links? What opportunities can we offer to international visitors at our institution and to our own staff/ students who want to visit institutions in other countries?	How can we provide free or reduced cost access to the literature we publish? How can we support authors who are non-native English speakers in their writing? What are effective ways of widely disseminating knowledge published by authors in other languages, in marginalised and/or low resource contexts?	Who is part of the editorial board? Who do we invite to review the manuscript we receive? Whose research do we tend to publish (more or less)? How can we assess and address bias in our publishing practices? How do we take into account where and how the research was conducted when making decisions on publication? How can we generate opportunities for training in publishing and editing to those who have limited familiarity with these processes? What are our reward structures used to make publishing and editing in our journals attractive? What strategies can we think of to increase representation of research by majority world scholars?

We list these recommendations below targeting different gatekeepers such as journal editors, scientific organizations, funding agencies, and university administrators while recognizing these recommendations are not exhaustive.Because the recommendations that work better may vary as a function of various factors, we also provide a list of questions in Table 1 that we think would be helpful for gatekeepers to ask themselves to find appropriate and workable solutions. While discussing various recommendations below, we also refer to other resources that have made related points.

Gatekeepers and How to Build a More Equal and Inclusive Community of Researchers

Long-entrenched attitudes and beliefs about what constitutes appropriate and acceptable methods and topics of inquiry stand in the way of a more inclusive and valid psychological science. Researchers, especially those holding gatekeeping positions at scientific journals, academic organizations, and funding agencies, should adopt a critical lens with respect to their power and positionality, and be more open to new theories, topics, and innovative, contextualized methods and designs that may be better suited to studying populations outside the west. Research and methods originating from underrepresented settings should be supported, while giving attention to historical, institutional and structural background factors that help us understand the social realities from which new research questions emerge. Below, we provide several suggestions that can be taken to improve research and training and to make possible for a more diverse group of researchers to have forums to share their work, contribute equally to funding, promotion, and editorial decisions, and participate fully in governance of professional societies. These would facilitate the creation of new knowledge inclusive of all, and

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evolve perspectives that do not privilege one community of researchers over another (for similar discussions also see Adams et al., 2015; Buchanan et al., 2021; Draguns, 2001; Kyrs et al., 2024; Ledgerwood et al., 2024; Lin & Li, 2023; Liu et al., 2023; Nyúl et al., 2021; Puthillam et al., 2023; Reddy & Amer, 2023). It is necessary to promote an environment of collegiality and intellectual humility (Porter et al., 2022).

Journal editors play crucial gatekeeping roles in shaping what gets published and hence whose careers are advanced, and which direction our discipline travels. Having journals edited by a diverse group of researchers including those from the majority world would alter the modus operandi and lead to challenging the biases that can come into play when research from the majority world and/or submitted by researchers from non-western regions is evaluated (e.g., content being dismissed as irrelevant, being asked to justify the study context and explain why it is a worthwhile topic to study, or to add a western comparison group). The presence of majority-world researchers on editorial boards would also signal that the journal welcomes submissions from outside the west. Yet, all editors (and reviewers), regardless of their origin, should follow clear guidelines on goals related to diversity and inclusivity so the burden of accomplishing these goals is not left to researchers from particular groups.

Better representation on editorial boards would also increase awareness of the conditions under which researchers in different contexts operate, likely leading to some adjustments in policies. For example, editors could reconsider common demands (e.g., to conduct an additional replication study, recruit a bigger sample, employ a commonly used method) if the conditions under which research is conducted do not lend themselves to these requirements (e.g., samples are hard to reach, securing participant trust is difficult, samples have little computer literacy to complete computer-mediated tasks). Editors should provide opportunities for psychologists from historically excluded groups to join editorial teams. This may necessitate internships or editorial fellowships such as ones recently introduced by *Personality and Social Psychology Review* and the American Psychological Association, to familiarize new editors to the context specific requirements of the journal or society. Increasing representation of early career or majority-world researchers on editorial boards would also require acknowledgement of the precarious conditions that can severely limit how much time these scholars can dedicate to editorial activities and point to the need for re-evaluation of workload (e.g., # of manuscripts handled), support and reward structures (e.g., amount of honorarium).

Finally, journal editors can take steps to promote research from under-represented regions by proactively inviting manuscripts from researchers working in similar areas in the majority world. In a similar vein, journals in the majority world should invite contributions from the west. A bidirectional exchange of knowledge is vital for an equitable and inclusive discipline. This bidirectional exchange should extend to the submission of research, reviewing of articles and contributions to editorial boards where researchers from the west must participate actively in knowledge production activities in the majority world. Where needed, journals should provide support for proofreading of articles, invest in translation of relevant articles published in other languages to make them accessible to a broader audience, and reduce or eliminate open access fees for those without institutional means to cover them. Generally, journal editors can seek together with researchers, a model of dissemination that is accessible, inclusive and affordable.

Scientific organizations and professional associations could make membership fees affordable for researchers with limited resources and organize meetings in countries where travel from the majority world is easier (e.g., less restrictive visa requirements, lower travel costs; see Bilgen & Uluğ, 2022; Ebrahimi, 2022). They can develop strategies to increase inclusivity in activities by critically reflecting on whose research and which topics are highlighted in their bulletins or newsletters, who is nominated for awards and prizes, and how diversity is encouraged in their journals. Mentoring or exchange schemes could help researchers navigate the international academic and publishing scene. National and regional networks could be fostered through hosting conferences in underserved regions and actively engaging local researchers by including them on scientific committees, setting quotas for local applications, and including sessions in the conference program to introduce local scholars and discuss local challenges and opportunities. Such meetings could be used as opportunities to discuss local capacity-building, development of indigenous research, and long-term collaborations, networks and associations.

Similarly, scientific organizations could set aside funds to support meetings organized by local researchers to strengthen exchange within traditionally less-well connected groups of researchers. Such meetings can pave the way to formalized local networks that can help researchers connect locally and internationally and stimulate psychological knowledge at a local level. Most professional associations sign Memorandum of Understandings with other international professional associations but these rarely translate into meaningful exchanges. The activities suggested here provide a useful agenda for future engagements amongst professional psychology associations.

Funding agencies could seek more diverse membership in their panels, solicit research using hard-to-reach, understudied, or multinational/cultural samples, and be more attentive to the resources (e.g., time, money) and flexibility (e.g., due to work conducted in less predictable study sites) required to conduct research in the majority world. They could allocate resources to initiatives or fellowships to train or support researchers from across the world to help build capacity to develop methods, writing, and presentation skills, among others. These can be delivered online or integrated into local conferences and meetings. Mentoring programs could involve researchers visiting other countries and spending time with other research groups to gain skills.

More specifically, funding two-way transfers of knowledge and ideas in early stages of research training can expose individuals to each other's realities and help them appreciate differences and similarities in research conditions

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and relevant topics of inquiry. Several existing initiatives (e.g., international summer schools for postgraduate students, workshops and meetings supported by scientific associations, fellowships for international mobility, joint degrees between institutions) serve this goal, yet the scope, frequency and accessibility of such opportunities should be supported across all world regions. New initiatives could expose researchers to on-the-ground realities in under-resourced and marginalized communities (e.g., internet-based research can hardly be representative in locations where connectivity is not well-established), and teach how to produce a scholarship that is accessible and meaningful to scientists around the world rather than only to one's local community. Such approaches – vital to building a more inclusive science – foreground reflexivity and recognize our positionality as researchers (e.g., Jamieson et al., 2022).

University administrators could re-evaluate promotion criteria considering the challenges (e.g., additional time spent building local links and setting up truly collaborative networks, working in economically and politically fragile contexts) faced by researchers whose work is more diverse or inclusive or as part of large-scale collaborations that are built bottom-up. They could provide resources for accessing diverse or hard-to-reach populations and for hosting visiting scholars/students from across the world and setting up exchange programs for students and faculty. Curricula must be restructured to cover a broader methodological repertoire that includes methods better suited for building knowledge particularly in under-explored topics in the majority world, and/or for maximizing impact (e.g., qualitative approaches, participatory methods, action research, transformative methodology, mixed methods research). Finally, university policies could encourage international students to find co-supervisors and collaborators from their region of origin (if their research involves that region) who would work alongside their western-based supervisor to enhance quality, cultural sensitivity, and international networks (Saab et al., 2022).

Importantly, given the underlying structural issues of under-development and under-appreciation of psychological research in and on the majority world, recommendations that do not address structural political constraints cannot go far enough. Thus, ultimately, building a diverse and inclusive psychology inevitably necessitates identifying, recognizing and resisting exploitative and hegemonic systems and powers in our academic associations, institutions, unions and countries.

Concluding Remarks

We hope that, despite the inherent limitations of any group of specific authors with their own positionalities, our piece will add to the efforts to increase inclusivity in our discipline. We would like to end our piece by reiterating van de Vijver's (2013) position that the internationalization of psychology is a moral, intellectual, and professional imperative. Hence, we must continue identifying new strategies that can help us achieve this imperative whilst tracking our progress. Real progress toward an inclusive psychological science that embraces the diversity of human experience will require that researchers around the world take new, creative actions together, as equal partners.

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Competing Interests

We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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