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CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND AFRICAN PSYCHOLOGY: THEMES AND PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

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The paper is a review of studies on psychological themes from African perspectives. An examination of the cultural similarities and differences in the value and belief systems of Africans and indeed Nigerians are discussed in the light of the need for African psychology. The findings of these studies revealed the diversity of African cultures in terms of multiple ethnic nationalities, languages, religions and demography. The cultural, socio-economic, geographical and environmental characteristics of these nations are found to have implications for understanding cross cultural psychology.

Keywords: *african psychology, demography, ethnicity, languages, religion*

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Introduction

Human and cultural diversity is at the core of psychology. Cross-cultural psychology which is the critical and comparative study of cultural effects on human behaviour (Shieraew and Levy, 2001), examine psychological diversity of the underlying reasons for such diversity.

No society is culturally homogenous. There are cultures that are either entirely similar or completely different. Within the same cultural cluster, there can be significant variations, inconsistencies and dissimilarities.

Cross cultural psychologists establish and conceptualize main culture's features in terms of cultural dichotomies. Among such dochotomes are high-versus low-power distance, high-versus low-uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity and collectivism versus individualism. Cross Cultural Psychology uses several approaches to examine human activities in various cultural settings:

General Approaches in Cross-Cultural Research

General approaches in cross-cultural research are: Relativism, Absolutism and Universalism. Others are: Sociobiology, Sociological, Ecocultural, Integrative, Indigenous theories.

Relativism was first identified in anthropology by Herskovits (1984). It offers explanations that psychological variations across the world's peoples are to be sought in terms of cultural variation with little recourse to other factors. The practice places relativists in the ethnic , indigenous and cultural psychology approaches.

Absolutism seems little concerned with problems of ethnocentrism, or seeing people "in their own terms". It considers psychological phenomena to be basically the same across cultures. For example, intelligence, honesty or depression is assumed to be the same everywhere, and the possibility is ignored that the researchers' knowledge is rooted in their own cultural conceptions of the phenomena. Where differences do occur, they are quantitative differences on the assumed underlying common construct; different people are just "less intelligent", "less honest" or more "depressed". Comparisons are considered to create no essential problems, and are carried out easily and frequently, based on the use of the same instruments (presumed to have the same psychological meaning) in many cultures. Even though the linguistic equivalence of these instruments is checked, recognizing the possible role of cultural influences; they are likely be biased, both procedurally and conceptually. This approach leads to imposed ethics.

Universalism assumes that basic psychological processes are likely to be common features of human life everywhere, but that their manifestations are likely to be influenced by culture. Universalism emphasizes the role of culture in bringing about diversity. It explains that variations are due to culture playing different variations on a common theme; basic processes are essentially the same, but they are expressed in different ways. For example, in cultures that share the same conception, and encourage the same expression of depression, differences on a test of depression may be interpreted quantitatively. At the same time, in cultures that differ in conception and expression of depression, it may be impossible to obtain equivalent measurements. Differences that are of a qualitative nature require theoretical analysis to define a common dimension which they can be captured as quantitative differences, before a comparison can be made. While the starting point may be some extant theory or test, one's approach to their use should be informed by local cultural knowledge.

Sociology is a theoretical model that explores the ways in which biological factors affect human behaviour and thus lay a natural foundation for human culture.

Sociological approach focuses on broad social structures that influence society as a whole and subsequently its individuals. There are particular social forces that shape the behaviour of large social groups and human beings develop and adjust their individuals responses in accordance to the demand and pressures of larger social groups and institutions.

Ecocultural approach is where the individual cannot be separated in his or her environmental context. People constantly exchange messages with their environments, thus transforming it and themselves.

Integrative approach to cross-cultural psychology emphasizes human activity, a process of the individual's goal-directed interaction with the environment. Human motivation, emotion, thought, and reactions cannot be separated from human activity which is determined by the individual, socio-economic, environmental, political, and cultural conditions and also changes these conditions. Two factors, presence of and access to resources, largely determine the type, scope and direction of human activities.

Indigenous theories are characterized by the use of conception and methodologies associated exclusively with the cultural group under investigation. Indigenous psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour or the mind, that is designed for a people and natives not transported from other regions (Shirayev and Levy, 2001).

Status of Psychology in Africa

Interest in the study of psychology in Africa, south of the Sahara, extends from Mauritania across to the Sudan and down to South Africa, a vast area enormously diverse in its ecology, ethnicity, linguistics, politics, and history (Naidoo, Olowu, Gilbert and Akotia, 1999). These African scholars reported that western psychology has limited applicability to third world issues because of its individualistic orientations, emphasis on narrow aspects of larger social problems, and lack of conceptual tools for exploring these problems (Sinha, 1990). Findings from Euro-American cultures cannot be assumed to be universal. Scales and testing measures developed in the west have limited usefulness for the study of non-western cultures. When alien schemata are applied to Africa, important phenomena may not be noticed since such models may be insensitive to their recognition (Nsamenang, 1997). Nsamenang calls for African psychologist to endeavor to reverse the dependence on foreign models.

Key contemporary cross-cultural psychologist agree that general psychology is both culture blind and culture bound (Berry and Kim, 1993). They argue that the development of indigenous psychologies is an essential remedy for this state of affairs in the discipline. Hence, the need for African psychology.

The Need for African Psychology

It is well known that traditional psychology originated in Western Europe and was scientifically refined in North America. As a science of human behaviour, it has no doubt certain universal attributes. Western psychology developed out of the cultural, socio-economic, geographical and environmental characteristics and content of Euro-America (Eze, 1996). According to Eze (2004), these are the elements that influenced its original interpretations, conclusions, assumptions, beliefs, evaluations and observations. It was from this background that the early Western psychologists studied the intelligence, thinking, reasoning, perception, self-structure, personality and other psychological attributes of the colonized black Africans, and came up with negative but startling conclusions that the black African is the least intelligent of all races, and his low intelligence is genetic, thinks concretely and like the white baby, reasons inductively, has no awareness of self, is incapable of developing a scientific base and of managing and controlling the resources in his environment, is a mimic and is by nature, dependent. However, the parochial and the racist bias of western psychology was emphasized by Eze.

A majority of black African psychologists have not yet actually addressed themselves to systematic evaluations of these Western scholars' findings and beliefs to determine which of them are false and which ones are true (Eze, 2004). African psychologists must rise to the occasion and prove the distinctiveness of the African people.

Challenges for African Psychologists.

Despite the long-term criticism of western based cross-cultural research by third world psychologists such as Durganand Sinha (Sinha, 1993), little has changed in the psychological world. There lingers a tacit acceptance of western mainstream psychology in African universities generally. Academic trends move from North to South. Psychology theory and methodology are derived from Europe and America.

Psychology departments and current curricula are modeled after those in existence in Britain, Europe and America. Textbooks are largely imported from the United States; most psychologists were trained overseas and their North-South networks are retained. Psychological studies and knowledge emerging from Africa and Asia

have ‘second class’ status. Ethnocentrism, western individualistic values and general failure to draw on indigenous perspectives continue to permeate mainstream psychology.

African psychologists are necessarily uncritical of the contextual appropriateness of the discipline (Gilbert, 1997). The positive outcome of this approach is that students and practitioners can benefit from the sensitivity to culture, methodological rigor and networking among cross-cultural psychologists that the discipline brings with it.

The challenges for African psychologists is twofold. On the one hand, globalization will make African peoples to accept the assumed universal of Euro-America and make it to become more widely applicable (Gilbert, 1997). On the other hand, the countries of Africa, Asia and the Middle East resist the pervasive impact of such globalization, homogenization and Americanization.

In contrast to the tacit acceptance of western psychology, the global/local tension in psychology may be resolved by moving towards relativism (Gilbert, 1997).

This approach seeks to identify the unique (emic) characteristics of the psychological life of “cultural” groups from a more empirical perspective. This approach studies the ‘emic’ nature of the selected cultural group. In recent years, many new insights about the African world view have emerged from the studies that are reviewed below.

Cecil Bodiebe, (1993) discussed the cultural hierarchy that colours the contemporary global scene in which African countries have been relegated to “third world” and by extension, black people and black culture to an inferior status, viewed in terms of a deficit model. Probing the underlying dynamics to African behaviour, (South African context in particular), he asserts that ‘Africans have a cosmology, ontology, eschatology, epistemology and axiology that is quintessentially their own’, (p.54). These ‘ologies’ form a meta-culture from which the manifest behaviour of Africans evolve. He sees African behaviour as wholistic, a product of the reciprocal interaction between the metaculture and the socio-political/economic milieu in which Africans find themselves. Research conducted on Africans samples illustrates Bodiebe’s contentions (Naidoo, Olowu, Gilbert & Akotia, 1999)

Cross Cultural Psychology in Africa

African psychologists’ views of the world, psychological theory, methodology, and applied issues find support through empirical studies conducted in diverse countries of Africa. Progress in the recognition and establishment of the discipline of psychology in Africa has become increasingly visible since 1962, led by impressive developments in Nigeria and South Africa (Naidoo et al; 1999).

Andrew Gilbert (1997) ponders questions of what delineates cross-cultural psychology in Africa as compared to the West. He considers the goals, methods, professional affiliations and orientation of cross-cultural psychologists to obtain understanding of when and how contentions of African psychologists deviate from psychologists in the West. The most fundamental issues revolve around the place of indigenous psychology within the mainstream Euro-American psychology. Despite the over 20 years of criticism of the mainstream psychology and rising body of indigenous (emic) studies deriving from Africa and Asia, little recognition has been given to indigenous movement.

Two assertions that emerged from the studies into African views about their world, work the self, intelligence, children and illness are: (1) the need to resist over dependence on foreign psychological models of human behaviour and (2) the need for innovative methodologies to probe African spiritual beliefs, myths, ritual and world views.

Andrew Gilbert asked the question, is cross-cultural psychology determined by its goals, methods, professional affiliation, or its orientation? (Personal communication, August 22, 1997).

The goal of cross-cultural psychology is invariably stated in the literature as follows “to generate a more universal psychology that will be valid for a broader range of cultures” (Berry, Poortinga, Segall and Dasen,

1992, p.3), and, “to pursue more effectively the universal validity of psychological theories in all branches of psychology and related disciplines” (IACCP Brochure, 1997). Given the growing push towards indigenous psychology in Asia and Africa, one may ask whether the pursuit of universal is basically generated by First World psychologists. Berry (1993) offers a potential, of long drawn out route, to resolving the indigenous (emic)/ universal (etic) controversy. Out of numerous indigenous studies arises the possibility of deriving a universal psychology. African psychologists concur with these goals. Michael Durojaiye (1993, p.219), said “Human nature, human culture, and the uniqueness of each human being lead to the conclusion that each persona is in some ways like all other persons, like some other persons, and like no other person”

Sometimes cross-cultural psychology delineates its discipline by its methodology. Certainly cross-cultural psychologists have been in the vanguard of attention to concerns such as cultural biases of standard research methods, the problems of accuracy of translation equivalence, the sensitivity of field work, and the interpretation of data scholars with understanding of a given culture. In Gilbert’s assessment, a large amount of research in Southern Africa does not take into account the rigorous guidelines provided by cross cultural psychology.

However, this review of psychological studies emanating from Sub-Saharan Africa revealed praiseworthy care, innovation, and execution of studies drawing on samples from African ethnic populations. Their findings enhance our understanding, both emic and etic, of the psychology of people whom researchers world-wide ordinarily cannot access. Thus, for example, Egwu (1996) demonstrated the importance of identifying and utilizing indigenous cultural metaphors in work organization to elicit optimal performance from Nigerian workers.

Metaphors that are meaningful in one culture or society may be meaningless in others. By testing well known subgroups in Nigeria, (the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa), as well as lesser groups (the Tiv, Tarok and Bajju), Egwu (1996) demonstrates commonalities in cultural metaphors of work, time and money for all Nigerians. These shared metaphors for Nigerian sub-samples contrast sharply with Euro-American metaphor for similar concepts. Nigerians do not conceptualize work as an activity that takes place in “modern organizations” under managers, foremen, and supervisors, that is in Egwu’s term, a “ machine” metaphor of work. Rather, work is conceptualized in an environment of freedom, independence and maturity. Indeed, work is directly related to time, money and life itself. Egwu describes the Nigerian worker as disoriented in the modern organization.

Citing other ethnic researchers of cultural metaphors, such as Yoshihisa Kashima, who identifies the family metaphors as a focus of organizational life in Japan (Kashiam, 1994), Egwu calls for integrating Nigerian cultural metaphors into modern organizational in Nigeria. His research suggest that Nigerian cultural ontological metaphors of work, time and money may aid his people in the development of a viable, healthy, indigenous organizational form in Nigeria, possibly generating new solutions to current problems of work organization and associated behaviour.

In one particular interesting study in Ghana, Pupilamp (1997) examined the meaning of work for male and female, senior and junior staff in the service and manufacturing sectors of two organizations in the Accra-Tema metropolis. Pupilampu found significant statistical support for his proposition that the meaning of work is understood by Ghanaian workers in terms of cosmic-spiritual-religious conceptualization. Two beliefs about the concept of work are crucial, “work is central to human life; work derives from God”, (p.8). Urban Ghanaian workers are reportedly poor performers in work settings, according to Pupilampu. If these profound religious work values could be incorporated into their work ethic, motivation and work behaviour may well improve.

Professional Affiliation

If however, cross-cultural psychology is determined by affiliation via membership in organizations such as IACCP or publication in international journals (Gilber, 1997), then psychologists of black African origin need resources, funding, and interest from Euro-American and Asian colleagues. Membership from the sub-continent in IACCP is comprised of mere 32 psychologists, almost half of whom hail from the ranks of White South African psychologists. However, there is a growing presence of Black African researchers in international and African national social and cross-cultural psychology journals

African View of Self

Olowu's (1997) studies of the Black self-concept among the Ashantis of Ghana, and the self concept of Nigerian adolescents reveal the centrality of self as deriving from group "beingness". The individual self-identity is essentially an extended identity of the group. Citing other Nigerian researchers, Olowu reiterates the point that in traditional life, the individual did not and could not exist alone. The individual was simply an integral part of the collective unity. This collectivist world view is captured in Olowu's statement, "I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am" (Personal communication, August 7, 1997). Olowu (1985) warns of the erosion of the African view of self with western contact, which may lead to a problematic behaviour.

Intelligence from an African Perspective

Durojaye's (1993) study of the meaning of intelligence for male/female; urban/rural Baganda (East Africa) and Yoruba (West Africa) samples augment our understanding of the concept for these cultural groups. Durojaiye seems surprised at the similarity of views about intelligence, across the two African peoples geographically so separated. This ethnic view of intelligence stresses knowledge, thinking, inventiveness, practice and harmony. The linkage of practice and harmony with intelligence defines unique meaning for these cultures. "Harmony" is especially important in resolving local disputes. Durojaiye cites Jomo Kenyatta, first Prime Minister of Kenya as follows: "To the Europeans, individuality is the ideal of life, to the African psychologists assert that knowledge about African cultures is inaccessible to conventional research methods because such knowledge is "locked in" African folklores, rituals, proverbs, maxims, and non-verbal cues (Ojiaku, 1974). Innovation, readjustment of existing methods, flexibility, careful thought and systematic procedure are called for, in designing methodology and ensuring replicability (Nsamenang, 1995a).

Nsamenang finds the contextualist paradigm (1997) and the eco-cultural model (1995a) especially insightful. He claims that contextualist approaches are suited to the study of African cultures because of three interrelated factors. The first is the hybrid nature of Africa's politico-economic systems, and the second, African world views that sanction harmony with nature. The third factor, a territorial imperative or psycho-social attachment of identity to a place, arises from the fact that many traditional settings in Africa are prescribed distinctive patterns of behaviour.

The Place of the Child in Africa

Using the contextual/eco-cultural framework in his developmental research, Nsamenang (1995b; 1993, respectively) makes some interesting observations about the place of the child of African society. For example, the child as a source of prestige (more children, more prestige), the child as the parents' "walking stick" (parental social security system), and the child as an agent of national development because African children are part of the economic life of their societies.

The Power of the Spoken Word (as Psychotherapy) in Africa

Awaritefe (1997) developed the so-called "meseron technique" for use in psychotherapy in Nigeria. The technique is based on the observation that many ethnic groups in Nigeria believe in the power of the spoken word and hence in the power of thought. The "mersero" (Urhobo expression) literally means "I refuse" but has deeper connotations. In using the "meseron" the individual both detaches him/herself from the negative aspects of life and actively associates with positive. Alternatively, the negative aspects of life and actively associates with the positive. Alternatively, the negative state may be attributed to an inanimate object. For example, a person may say: "I was very sick" followed by the "meseron" or the person may say "my tree in the bush was sick". Rejecting illness and adopting a positive attitude towards life and living has obvious therapeutic value for the individual.

Gilbert (1997) suggested that addressing the tension between global and local realities can be resolved by adopting pragmatic approaches to socio-psychological problems in their local settings, e.g. rural development (Gilbert, 1997), primary health care (Seedat and Nell, 1992) and so on. Other cross-cultural psychologists also

suggested a problem solving oriented approach (Sinha, 1983). However, in general, the applied of research findings has not been of central concern to cross-cultural psychology in Africa.

Creativity from African Perspective.

Mpofu, Myambo, Mogaji, Mashego and Khaleefa (2006) posited that the rich tapestry of cultural, ethnic, geographical, linguistic, political and religious diversity in Africa influences constructions of and practices of creativity within the individual and collective communities of Africa. Their findings of a survey to define creativity from African perspective suggest that it serves replicative, adaptive, innovative functions involving everyday activities. The practice of creativity in African communities is better understood from the sociocultural benefits for the individual or community. Arab Africans consider innovation to define creativity, perhaps, more than people from aBantu (Sub-Saharan Africa). Adaptation is considered to define creativity by Sub-Saharan Africans. Art is also recognized as a major creative expression in Sub-Saharan African, while it is used for aesthetic, ritualist, or commercial purposes in Arab Africa.

These scholars collected data from 211 citizens (71 men and 140 women) of Arab Africa (n = 82) AND Sub-Saharan Africa (n=129) from two Arab African countries (Egypt and The Sudan) and 6 Sub-Saharan (aBantu) African countries (Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) who participated in the survey. Participants comprised about 28 linguistic-cultural groups. Requesting for a personal definition of creativity yielded responses that could be clustered under the following themes and by percentages, innovative (37.9%), social impact oriented (28%), personal-agentic (17.1%), incremental (6.6%), and domain specific (2.8%). Within Arab Africa, participants responded with being innovative (40.2%), personal-agentic (20.7%), social impact oriented (14.6%), domain specific (7.3%), and incremental (8.5%, and mystical (2.3%).

About 72% of the total population regarded themselves as being frequently engaged in creative activities. Then 68.5% of the Arab Africans and 73% of Sub-Saharan Africans considered themselves as being frequently engaged in creative activities.

Grouping the responses thematically, the combined group of participants regarded themselves as creative because 36.1% engaged in (adaptive)behaviour, 27% (innovative), 19% (social impact), and 11% (artistic). Within Arab Africans, 49.3% (artistic), 19.1% (innovative), 13.2% (social impact), and 12.3% (adaptive).

Within the Sub-Saharan Africans 33.6% engaged in (innovative), 28.3% (social impact) 23.8% (artistic), and 17.6% (adaptive). African creative practices are, in part, a product of their individual and collective expressive selves resulting from the challenges of diversity, as well as from religion, modernization, language, geography, and political systems (p. 459).

Community Psychology in Africa

Community psychology is about understanding people within their social worlds and using this understanding to improve people's well-being (Oxford, 1992). Some of the models used in the literature for achievement of this goal, include: the indigenous, community, mental health, social action, ecological, organizational and phenomenological models. The indigenous perspective of community psychology reflects an attempt to optimize the cultural resources and indigenous knowledge relevant to health promotion and prevention of ill-health (Lazarus, 2006a).

Since community psychology is about making psychological practice relevant to contextual realities, the focus of this model is on developing a better understanding of the context or environment, including people's needs and problems.

Lazarus, Bojuwoye, Chireshe, Myambo, Akotia, Mogaji and Tchombe (2006) presented the findings of a descriptive survey conducted for the purposes of exploring whether and how community psychology has developed in the African region. They collected data from 77 participants from 14 countries who responded to and e-mailed questionnaire (using journal of psychology in Africa as a basis for inviting participant in this study). A qualitative 'cross-country' content analysis was performed to draw out common patterns and trends in the region, and a selected 'in-country' analysis, including six countries (e.g Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria,

South Africa, and Zimbabwe) was conducted. The findings revealed many common threads with regards to the key characteristics of this approach as drawing from indigenous and other local knowledges. Key challenges for now and the future that were highlighted by participants in this study include the need to address negative attitudes towards psychology as a whole in many African countries, and to educate the public about how psychologists can help to address psychological issues in these contexts. All the participants agreed that community psychology should be further developed in their context as it is a relevant approach that takes local understandings, beliefs and practices into account.

School Psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In a 12-nation survey on School Psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa, Mpofo, Zindi, Oakland & Peresuh (1997), used a semi-structured questionnaire to survey 42 special education experts in Botswana, Lesotho, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. On the basis of their findings, they concluded that school psychology was underdeveloped in the sub-region. The study also raised a number of issues that would be of interest in areas that are traditionally associated with school psychology suggested a number of things. First, special education experts may not have been aware of such research by school psychologists due to professional boundary issues. The participants may have been operating with a lack of cultural sensitivity to the instrument used for data collection. They might have graduated from programmes that inadequately prepared them for work in culturally diverse settings.

As a follow-up survey, Mpofo, Serpell, Peltzer, Shumba & Mogaji (2005) collected data from 105 people in a 6-country survey including Nigeria, Botswana, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa who self-identified as school psychologists, school counselors, or people with psychology background (n=87) or as a special or regular class teacher (n=18). A regional survey questionnaire on educational/school psychology designed by Mpofo et al. (1997) was used for data collection. The survey covered several areas including school psychology practices, roles and functions of school psychologists, recognition, regulation, and availability of school psychology services; development issues for school psychology in each country and so on.

This study found that school psychology services are available in some form in each of the countries. Countries that have professional Psychology associations (e.g. Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) appeared to have greater potential for developing stronger school psychology services. There were few school psychologists in any of the countries surveyed, and school psychology services when available, tended to be in urban rather than rural areas. Participants perceived a lot of potentials for school psychology to develop in their countries with support by their national governments, enhance public awareness; more trained school psychologists; and greater investment in research on test use and development.

Communities, schools and students in Sub-Saharan Africa have needs that can be met by school psychology services. These needs include educational support as well as stress and health management in view of the pressure on children and their families due to industrialization, poverty, and disease.

Summary and Conclusion

The theories, measures and views of the world developed in the West, may have only limited utility for the study of African cultures. African psychologists challenge Euro-centered psychology by examining the status of psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa and by debating what constitutes cross-cultural psychology in an African context. African psychologists' views of the world, psychological theory, methodology, and applied issues find support through empirical studies conducted in diverse countries of Africa.

However, political and economic instability, poor infrastructure, widespread Eurocentric attitudes, and lack of tangible support from Western cross-cultural psychologists hinder the advancement of the discipline.

Towards a Balanced Perspective

The literature clearly resonates the call by Africans, Asians and increasing numbers of mainstream psychologists for the empowerment of indigenous viewpoints and unique insights provide by studies of indigenous cultures.

Interestingly, it is in the political arena that indigenous concepts have been welcomed and utilized more readily than in the discipline of psychology. Two examples come in mind. First, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa has focused on reparative justice rather than punitive justice in dealing with perpetrators of violations of human rights during the apartheid era (Gobodo-Madikizela, 1997). National healing is aspired after, through seeking the truth. Second, Botswana in Southern Africa has gone back to its indigenous roots of the system of *kgotlas*, in which chiefs and councilors meet to reach consensus on important matters. Present day government draws on this indigenous institution of participatory democracy (Ayittey, 1998).

Nsamenang (1995a, p. 737), observes that not only will indigenous psychology enhance the understanding of local phenomena, but it will also expand our vision of what forms that psychological functioning may take in diverse cultures. This may call to question models derived primarily from studies of Western populations. However, while noting the importance of indigenous studies and the development of African psychology, African psychologists (Bodibe, 1993; Durojaiye, 1993; Nsamenang, 1995a) also voice concern that indigenous psychology could become narrow and ethnocentric, as they claim has occurred in mainstream psychology. They generally agree that locally developed psychologies should be integrated into mainstream psychology to evolve a universal science of psychology.

Indigenous psychology accounts only for cultural patterning in that, “all human beings, by virtue of being *homo sapiens* will have similar psychological processes” (Durojaiye, 1993; p. 219). Berry and Kim’s framework for pursuing a universal psychology offers promise for achieving this goal (Berry and Kim, 1993). A future Congress of the International Association for Cross Cultural Psychology could create a forum for examining indigenous African research and mainstream psychology, promoting linkages between North-South and South-South cross-cultural psychologists. It would also provide encouragement for the initiative and progress of African psychologists laboring under very challenging political and economic conditions in most Sub-Saharan Africa

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