

Edward C. Chang · Christina Downey ·
Hongfei Yang · Ingo Zettler ·
Mine Muyan-Yılık *Editors*

The International Handbook of Positive Psychology

A Global Perspective on the Science
of Positive Human Existence

 Springer

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I would like to thank the old gang from Akumal for the opportunity to exchange thoughts about what positive psychology could be many, many years ago. Who would have known how much the world needed it! Deepest thanks go to Tae-Myung and Suk-Choon for their enduring support. Finally, I would like to thank Helen Chang, I cannot imagine growing up well, without having her as a sister and a friend throughout my life.

—E. C. C.

*To my mother, whose example inspires me to become more kind, more courageous, and more alive every day;
To my husband, whose steadfast support sustains and comforts me;
To my son, who reminds me that enjoying life is as precious as working hard;
To the resisters of the world, for bringing truth, integrity, and justice to the darkened places.*

—C. A. D.

To my husband, for dancing with me through every rise and fall of life and instilling hope every single day;

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To the people, who keep their inner positivity and light and spread them even in the darkest circumstances.

—M. M. Y.

Preface

After nearly two decades marking the establishment of positive psychology in the world, we felt that it was important to take collective stock of how positive psychology has impacted what researchers have been doing all around the world. In that regard, this volume is as much a review of major works contributed to this emerging science by leading positive psychologists from across different regions of the world as it is an important opportunity to celebrate their efforts in expanding the significance of positive psychology as a globally relevant science for all. Accordingly, we use this volume to share our appreciation to the embodied agents of change who took action to develop and materialize this emerging science and for the important ideas that they worked hard to share with us. This work is indebted to these and the many other “movers” of positive psychology, big and small, who have found the question of how to live the good life a fundamental concern in our efforts to understand what it means to achieve positive survival as human beings.

Ann Arbor, MI

Edward C. Chang

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Chapter 1

The Making of a Global Positive Science of Human Existence: From Appreciating Existential Foundations to Identifying WEIRD Research Trends



Edward C. Chang, Christina A. Downey, Hongfei Yang, Ingo Zettler,
Mine Muyan-Yılık, Abigail G. Lucas, and Olivia D. Chang

The Making of a Global Positive Science of Human Existence: From Appreciating Existential Foundations to Identifying WEIRD Research Trends

[F]or a conscious being, to exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly.

– Henri Bergson

It has been more than two decades since Martin Seligman and his colleagues led a global charge for the establishment of a new field in psychological science, referred to as positive psychology (Seligman, 1999; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Emerging from this bold initiative, numerous scholars and researchers over the years have focused on identifying and distinguishing positive psychology from other areas of psychological science, especially clinical science and psychiatry. Indeed, unlike the focus of clinical science on identifying and treating mental illness among individuals, as codified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental*

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Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013) and the *International Classification of Disease, Eleventh Revision (ICD-11; World Health Organization, 2018)*, positive psychologists have been more interested in identifying and activating human strengths to facilitate an individual's ability to live a better life (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2002; Chang & Sanna, 2003; McCullough & Snyder, 2000; Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Snyder & Lopez, 2007). As some have noted, positive psychology has its roots deeply grounded in the earlier works of existentialism and humanistic psychology (Betthany & Russo-Netzer, 2014; Resnick et al., 2001; Taylor, 2001; Wong, 2010).

Positive Psychology is an Existential Human Science!: From Nietzsche's *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* to Heidegger's Notion of *Sorge*

As Aristotle reflected long ago in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, one of the most profound questions pressing individuals is the enduring question: "how to live a good life?" (Kline, 1988; Peterson, 2012). Although the search to resolve this central problem has been the galvanizing plot shared in many classic works, from ancient philosophical treatises (e.g., Laozi's *Tao Te Ching* to Plato's *The Republic*) and great literary stories (e.g., Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*) to masterful and moving works of poetry and art (e.g., Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* to Munch's *The Scream*), it was the unifying problem tackled by a collective existential movement that gained particular momentum in grappling with the dehumanizing events and horrors surrounding World War II (e.g., Camus, 1955; Frankl, 1959; Heidegger, 1962; Sartre, 1956).

Existentialism has often been discussed by scholars in the context of the intellectual growth of German phenomenology during the twentieth century (e.g., Husserl's *Ideas*; Cho 1984; Chung & Ashworth, 2006; Solomon, 1980; Spiegelberg, 1972). However, existential thinking can be easily found in the works of earlier writers and philosophers (e.g., Dostoevsky, Kierkegaard, & Nietzsche; Barrett, 1958; Löwith, 1964). Importantly, unlike phenomenology, existentialism is grounded in our everyday experiences of the lived world (e.g., an embodied world that cannot be "bracketed" down to its essential components; Chang, 1990). That is, existentialism is defined by, and grounded in, a deep appreciation of the complex, often taxing everyday experiences faced by individuals as they try to navigate and achieve a life worth living (de Beauvoir, 1948; Yovel, 1986). In that regard, while existentialism is not predicated on modern positive psychology, positive psychology is strongly predicated on existential principles. In particular, two orienting axioms of existentialism borrowed by positive psychologists are the centrality of understanding the world from a human perspective and the importance of pursuing and living a good (human) life (Hanscomb, 2006).

From a humanistic stance (Sartre, 1948), existentialists have emphasized the importance of the human perspective in understanding the world around us. Indeed, as some existentialists have contended, there is “no non-human situation” (Sartre, 1956). In that regard, and following in the tradition of earlier psychologists who have contended that psychological science must always be framed from a human perspective (Giorgi, 1970; Maslow, 1962; Rogers, 1961), positive psychologists have tried to apply the tools of science to build a holistic understanding of what it means to be a human being that seeks meaning and purpose in life. In coming to grips with the internal tensions and quandaries raised by Goethe’s *Faust*, positive psychologists have been particularly interested in studying the embodied and able person as they try to positively develop across the lifespan (Chang & Downey, 2012). Thus, aligned with Nietzsche’s provocative exaltation for a brave new “joyful science”, positive psychology is first and foremost a positive science of being human.

Although existentialism has often been considered to represent a philosophical position that emphasizes the isolated individual self, such an appraisal would be incorrect. For Heidegger (1962), the fundamental definition of being human was represented in his notion of *dasein* or being. But, as he contended, *dasein* cannot be understood in a social vacuum. *Dasein* exists across space and time along a social dimension. For some existentialists, this posed a problem of living authentically for the individual (e.g., “hell is other people”; Sartre, 1956). In contrast, it is for this reason that Heidegger argued that *dasein* should be best understood as “being-with-others” (*Mitdasein*). In turn, the actions of social beings are not driven or motivated by socially isolated, indifferent, and selfish individuals, but rather they are motivated by a primordial desire to care (*sorge*) for self, others, and the world (Heidegger, 1962). In that regard, positive psychologists have been interested in how we are able to achieve a life worth living, while living with others. Thus, underscoring Heidegger’s notion of care (see also, Buber, 1937), positive psychology extends this understanding to the study of how the “self” and “others” work together to define what it means to be human and happy, with a fundamental understanding that “other people matter” (Peterson, 2012). Accordingly, although modern positive psychology might have only emerged about two decades ago, it is a science that is founded on universal tenets of what it means to be a human being. That said, however, whether or not this emerging science has grown during this time period from an inclusive approach to the study of human beings has not been examined.

Has the Growth of Positive Psychology Over the Past 20 Years Become Truly Global in Scope?: Or, Is Positive Psychology Just Another WEIRD Science?

Over the past several decades, a number of concerns have been raised regarding *who* the foundations of psychological research and theory have been predicated on. For example, following Sears' (1986) argument that psychological research and theory have been heavily based on studies of young adults, namely, college students, Graham (1992) extended this critique to show that the foundation of psychological knowledge has not only been heavily predicated on college students, but students of a specific ethnracial background and socioeconomic status, namely, White and middle-class. Findings from other studies have continued to support the conclusion that much of the research in psychological science continues to lack a diverse and inclusive foundation that reflects the greater population in society (e.g., Bailey et al., 2002; Hall & Maramba, 2001; Hartmann et al., 2013; Loo et al., 1988; Sue, 1999). Moreover, as Rao and Donaldson (2015; see also, Downey & Chang, 2014) recently noted, this range of focus remains narrow and limited (e.g., primarily focused on the study of Whites) even when examining studies on "positive psychology". These concerns and their implications have been well represented in Henrich et al.'s (2010) contention that social scientists have sometimes been making incorrect universal claims about human behavior that are based on a small and distinct group of individuals that are Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic or WEIRD. What is not clear is whether or not positive psychology is just another WEIRD science. To partly address this concern, we decided to review publication trends of some leading positive psychology journals in terms of their global representation (e.g., research is being produced from different countries around the world) over nearly the past two decades.

A Quick Look at Publication Trends in Positive Psychology Journals from 2000 to 2018: WEIRD Then and Still WEIRD Now?

To provide some indication of publication trends in terms of their global representation across time, we selected three highly regarded positive psychology outlets and assessed works for the country where the study was conducted (e.g., what countries participants were solicited) or where the paper was written (if no data was collected; e.g., review paper). Given that some of the underpinnings of positive psychology can be traced to, and overlaps with, works in humanistic and existential psychology (e.g., Rathunde, 2001; Waterman, 2013), we selected the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* or *JHP* (founded in 1961, published by Sage, US) as one of our journals. The other two journals selected were the *Journal of Happiness Studies* or *JHS* (founded

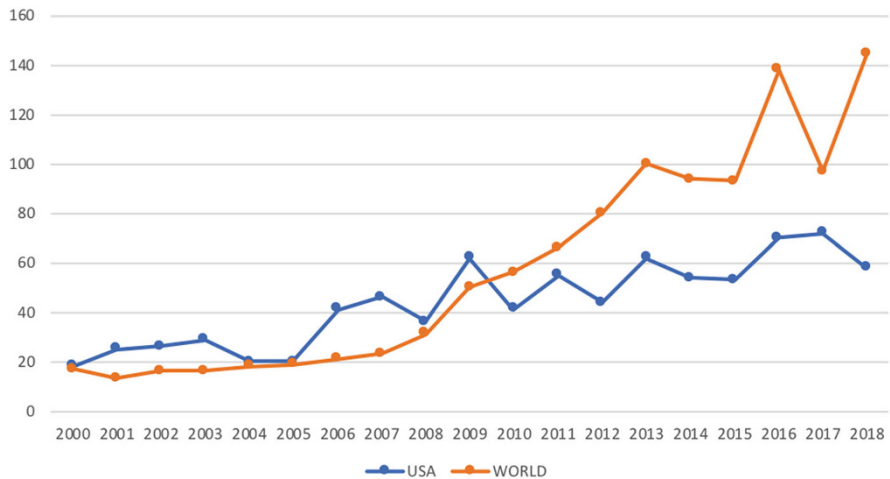


Fig. 1.1 Publication trends across the three top positive psychology journals (*JHP*, *JPP*, & *JHS*) from 2000 to 2018

in 2000, published by Springer, Germany) and *The Journal of Positive Psychology* or *JPP* (founded in 2006, published by Taylor & Francis, UK). Compared to *JHP*, *JHS* and *JPP* are relatively new journals that launched shortly after Seligman’s (1999) call for developing positive psychology around the world. That said, we should note that although other journals focusing on positive psychology may exist, we focused on those that were international in scope and were published in a common language, namely, English. Therefore, our review should be considered with these limitations in mind.

In our initial analysis, we coded for representation of origin of work and origin of author as “USA” if the work or author was affiliated with the USA, and as “international” if the work or author was not affiliated with the USA. Our justification for doing this was two-fold. First, we believe that one can credibly make the case that the epicenter of modern positive psychology originated in the USA (Seligman, 1999; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Second, given that many top journals in psychological science continue to be produced by publishers in the USA (e.g., American Psychological Association; Graham, 1992), coupled by a long-standing culture of isolationism within American psychology (Sexton & Misiak, 1984), works typically produced outside of the USA have often been viewed by researchers as “international” in nature (Brandt, 1970). These said, we plotted the number of works originating from the USA versus international countries that were published annually across the three target journals over a 19-year period, from 2000 (the “start” of positive psychology) to 2018. As shown in Fig. 1.1, we can see what appears to be a growing trend towards works originating from other countries than the USA. However, a closer look at the specific trend for each journal shows that this upward movement towards greater global representation of positive psychology works (i.e., not just “American” works) is not ubiquitous. As shown in Fig. 1.2, the pattern of

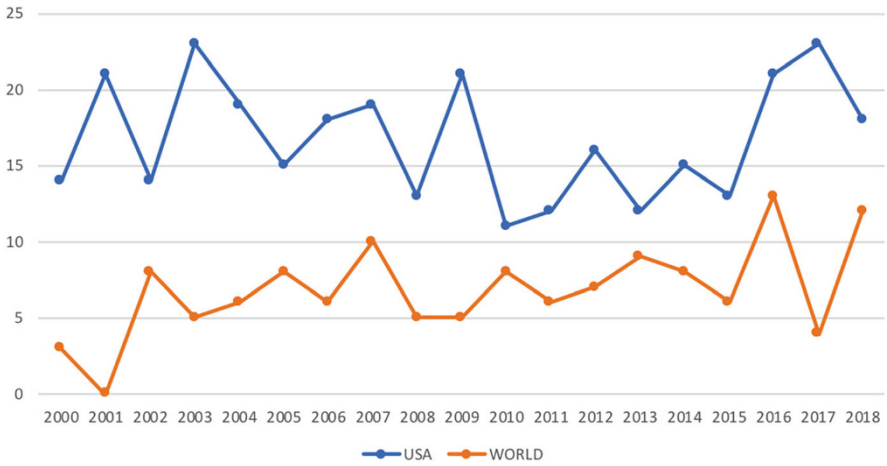


Fig. 1.2 Publication trends in the journal of humanistic psychology from 2000 to 2018

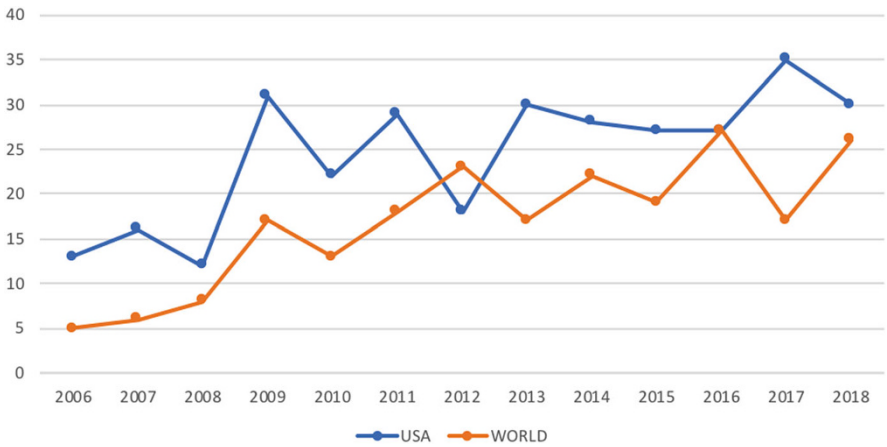


Fig. 1.3 Publication trends in the journal of positive psychology from 2006 to 2018

works published in the *JHP* appears to show a consistent dominance of works originating from the USA compared to other countries from 2000 to 2018. Similarly, as shown in Fig. 1.3, the pattern of works published in *JPP* appears to show a sustained dominance of works originating from the USA compared to other countries from 2006 to 2018. In stark contrast, as shown in Fig. 1.4, the pattern of works published in the *JHS* appears to show a strong and growing focus on works originating from countries other than the USA from 2000 to 2018. Thus, our earlier observation of a growing trend towards more globalization across the three journals appears to be strongly predicated on the annual patterns behind just one journal, namely, *JHS*. Overall, these patterns indicate that although there appears to be a noticeable rise in publications originating from countries outside the USA, compared

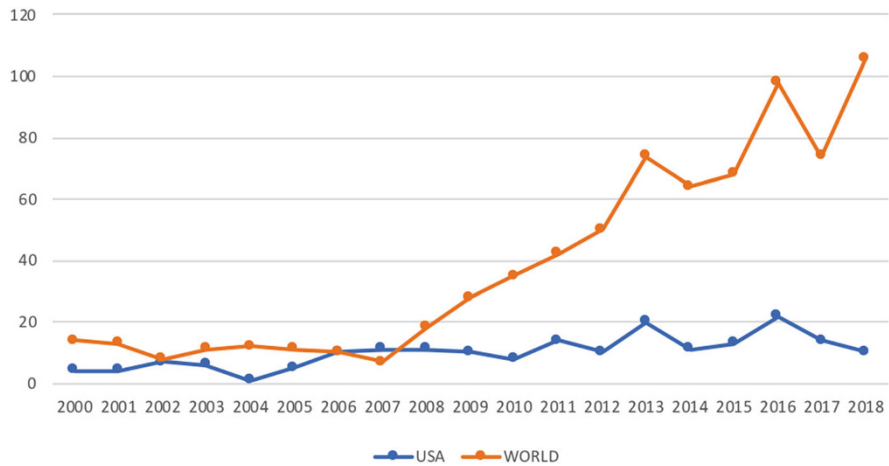


Fig. 1.4 Publication trends in the journal of happiness from 2000 to 2018

Table 1.1 Top 10 originating countries of research or theoretical works published in the *Journal of Happiness Studies* from 2000 to 2018

Country of origin	Works published	Percentage of works
1. United States of America	189	19.2%
2. China	75	7.6%
3. Spain	46	4.7%
4. Australia	45	4.6%
5. Canada	44	4.5%
6. Germany	44	4.5%
7. Netherlands	38	3.9%
8. United Kingdom	33	3.4%
9. Italy	25	2.5%
10. Israel	21	2.1%
10. Sweden	21	2.1%

to publications from the USA, this rise was only evident in just one of the three journals examined.

Although these simple findings indicate that the growth of positive psychology should not be communicated as the development of a science that is exclusively constituted by, and used by, Americans, they do not clarify the extent to which publications in these premier journals continue to be predicated on the study of WEIRD people or are conducted by WEIRD people (Henrich et al., 2010). Accordingly, we were curious to identify the origin of works from specific countries (beyond the USA). Given the prevalence of international research in *JHS* (compared to in *JHP* & *JPP*), we focused our analysis on the 985 works published in this journal from 2000 to 2018. As Table 1.1 shows, the most frequent works (“top 10”) in *JHS* during this period originated from the USA, China, Spain, Australia, Canada,

Table 1.2 Top 10 originating countries for lead authors of published works in the *Journal of Happiness Studies* from 2000 to 2018

Country of author	Works published	Percentage of works
1. United States of America	233	23.7%
2. United Kingdom	67	6.8%
3. Spain	63	6.4%
4. Canada	60	6.1%
4. Netherlands	60	6.1%
5. China	53	5.4%
6. Australia	52	5.3%
7. Germany	48	4.9%
8. Italy	31	3.1%
9. Sweden	25	2.5%
10. Israel	22	2.2%

Germany, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Italy, Israel, and Sweden. Following this analysis, we looked at the country affiliation of the lead author of these publications. Not surprisingly, as Table 1.2 shows, the country of origin of the lead author of works published during this period mirrored the same countries in which the work was done, although the order differed somewhat here. Interestingly, as findings from both of these tables show, going against the trend of WEIRD works and works by WEIRD researchers, Chinese works and Chinese researchers appear to be “well” represented in *JHS*. That said, the conspicuous absence of works based in India and by Indian researchers, for example, are a bit surprising given that India represents the second most populous country in the world after China.

Taken together, these patterns and findings provide some reason for tempered optimism about the global growth of positive psychology. Specifically, these findings indicate that although publications in the three top positive psychology journals have been able to provide and support studies on positive psychology as an international science across nearly two decades since Seligman’s (1999) public call to action, these studies have remained largely focused on the study of WEIRD people (e.g., populations from the USA, Spain, Australia, Canada, & Germany) and, not surprisingly, they have been largely conducted or conceptualized by researchers who themselves are WEIRD (Meadon & Spurrett, 2010).

Overview of the Present Volume

The present volume is broken down into chapters covering major themes linked to different regions of the world and highlighting the major researchers, and their important contributions that have fostered varying degrees of positive psychology’s growth in their respective region. It is our hope that by celebrating some of the major researchers from around the world in the chapters that follow, readers of this volume

will gain a greater appreciation of the contributions made by a global community of scholars and scientists in sustaining the expansive movement of this positive science of existence around the world.

Beginning with Chap. 2, Wong and Tweed focus on the region of North America, specifically, the USA and Canada. In particular, they discuss the slow progression from “Positive Psychology 1.0” to the development of a more mature perspective, one that incorporates an understanding of the complexity and fragility of human existence, as reflected in “Positive Psychology 2.0”. These authors also discuss some of the growing trends in positive psychology in North America, ranging from a greater focus on eudaimonic happiness and the cultural construction of positive psychology, to an appreciation of positive psychology in the everyday world and the development of a dialectic approach for understanding how both positive and negative experiences might work together to foster positive well-being.

In Chap. 3, Tarragona focuses on the region of Mexico, including Central America. Beginning with a brief discussion of the impact of Spanish colonialism in these regions and of the challenges of unification among the different countries in these regions, the author moves on to identify the major researchers who have helped to quickly make positive psychology an important framework of their research, ranging from topics involving positive education, positive relationships, quality of life, to those that focus on resilience, the paradox of high subjective well-being in the context of high poverty, and interventions that foster positive character strengths among children in these regions. This chapter ends with some discussion of the growing emphasis on applying positive psychology to promote good living among those residing in these regions.

In Chap. 4, Garassini, Solano, Daset, Ibanez, Ortega, Vinaccia, and Graziano cover the region of South America, specifically, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, and Uruguay. These authors tackle a comprehensive review of the diverse socio-historical, political, cultural, and economic conditions that have differentially impacted the diverse regions that make up this region. As these authors note, although the “beginnings” of positive psychology in these regions are difficult to identify, there has been a longstanding focus on resilience in the context of the various struggles and challenges faced by those living in South American countries. These authors go on to discuss the specific nuances and commonalities, and the major contributors, that have been associated with the development of positive psychology in this region. In looking at the future of positive psychology in these countries, these authors end their chapter with a discussion of the growing need to focus on making positive psychology a meaningful mechanism for promoting social welfare among those living in South America.

In Chap. 5, Boniwell and Grenville-Cleave cover the region of the United Kingdom, including England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, and Ireland. These authors provide an important overview of some of the similarities and differences in the socioeconomic, historical, and political conditions that have defined this region, and the growth of positive psychology in this region. They next continue to provide a thoughtful appraisal of some of the key figures and their contributions that have helped to foster the growth of positive psychology in this

region over the past decade and a half, with a focus on figures who have helped to identify programs, projects, and movements that seek to increase happiness and resilience among individuals young and old in this region, to figures who have taken on broader economic frameworks to improve happiness in the workplace, as well as those who have focused on developing a useful measure of well-being for all individuals.

In Chap. 6, Ścigala, Dammeyer, Schild, and Zettler cover the region of Northern Europe, specifically, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. They discuss the context and conditions of these diverse and “happy” Nordic countries, and then focus their attention to the growth of positive psychology based on the works of leading researchers from this region. That said, the authors note that given the history of researchers in this region to typically focus on positive welfare and well-being, it may be difficult to distinguish unique aspects of positive psychology that has emerged, given that many Nordic researchers have always been focused on positive processes and outcomes. These authors end their chapter discussing some of the challenges of considering the growth of psychology in this region and offer additional resources for readers to gain a deeper understanding of how the context and conditions of this region inform and intersect with positive psychology around the world.

In Chap. 7, Harzer and Weber cover the region of Western Europe, specifically, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. They discuss the development of positive psychology in the context of these six very distinct countries, noting that although these countries represent generally “happy places”, important differences exist among them. That said, the authors note the tremendous efforts made by those studying positive psychology to establish both country-specific as well as cross-country societies and organizations to allow greater communication among researchers in this region and beyond. Among the major contributors from the different countries covered, the authors note a rich and wide diversity of topics examined, from positive leadership, positive/existential psychotherapy, mindfulness and flow, humor and play, to the classification of character strengths in different Western European countries. These authors end their chapter discussing some of the challenges that would need to be overcome to help unify and support the growth of positive psychology across this region.

In Chap. 8, Ruini covers the region of Southern Europe, specifically, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. The author begins with an appreciation that one can trace the underpinnings of modern positive psychology to early scholarly works produced by those (e.g., ancient Greeks) from this region of the world. In reviewing the major contributors to positive psychology from the countries of this region, the author discusses research that has spanned a range of topics, including the role of positive emotions, the clinical application of positive psychology, the function of positive communities, lay definitions of happiness, to positivity biases in information processing. The author concludes with some important discussions on the growing need for researchers in this region to consider how positive psychology can be used to foster well-being in both the young and in the elderly.

In Chap. 9, Brdar and Rijavec cover the region of Central and Eastern Europe, specifically, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Turkey. The authors begin with a broad overview of the changing histories associated with countries from this region shortly following World War II. In looking at the development of positive psychology in this region, these authors note some early works (prior to 1999) that had already begun to focus on the importance of a modern positive psychology. In reviewing the major contributors coming from the reviewed countries of this region, the authors highlight a focus made across a range of important topics, from distinguishing between hedonic and eudaimonic happiness, quality of life, academic flow in teachers, optimal health, mental and physical resilience, goal pursuits, to theories of immunity and positive thinking. These authors end by raising a call to use the science of positive psychology to build greater strengths for individuals and communities of this region, and discuss the need to destigmatize the use of mental health interventions to foster such changes among those living in this region.

In Chap. 10, Leontiev, Osin, and Lebedeva cover Russia. The authors begin with a review of the major historical changes that have occurred in Russia over the past several decades, and situate their discussion to the Russian notions of happiness, as represented by some of Russia's greatest writers and emerging works on the happiness of Russians. They move on to review some more recent works by Russian researchers who have focused on topics ranging from goal setting and well-being, the self-reflection model of personality, needs satisfaction, to freedom and responsibility, and the assessment of economic well-being. The authors end by noting some of the deep challenges to doing positive psychology in Russia, including getting support from the greater academic community to overcoming the longstanding attitude of holding life with low value within Russian society.

In Chap. 11, Wilson and Wissing cover the countries that make up the region of Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Zambia, Nigeria, Ghana, and Tanzania. The authors begin with a discussion of the rich, but complicated histories associated with countries that make up this region. They then focus on the major contributors of positive psychology from this region who have worked on important topics, including psychofortology, measurements of well-being, resilience-focused interventions for children, adults, and teachers, positive kinship and relations with others, flourishing and job-fit among workers, spirituality and religion, and well-being in the context of trauma. The authors conclude with a very thoughtful discussion of why positive psychology appears to be "late" to arrive in Sub-Saharan Africa and the need for a more contextual approach to building positive psychology in this region of the world.

In Chap. 12, Tiliouine and Bougaci cover the 22 countries, from Bahain to Tunisia, as a general region, that make up the Arab world. These authors begin with a historical review of the major world civilizations that have occupied those areas that now make up the Arab region, and continue with a broad discussion of some of the historical scholars that have pointed to the importance of well-being and happiness long ago. These researchers then review some of the major contributors of this region who have added to the building of positive psychology in the Arab world by focusing on topics ranging from positivity and optimism, concepts of happiness

and personal well-being, to resilience in the context of terrorism. These authors end by identifying several important recommendations for expanding the value and use of positive psychology to those in the Arab context.

In Chap. 13, Shoshani and Mikulincer cover Israel. Noting the high conflict and tension that has long existed between Israel and other countries of the Middle East, these authors point to how Israel has, not surprisingly, become quite interested in what positive psychology might confer to those living in this country. Some of the themes promoted by major contributors to the development of positive psychology in Israel include a focus on positive education, building protective factors, positive organizational behavior, and cultivating resilience to war-related trauma. The authors conclude with some important discussion of how positive psychology might grow in this region, while at the same time remain reflecting the nuances of the culture and context of this region.

In Chap. 14, Misra and Misra cover the countries that make up the region of South Asia, specifically, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives, and Afghanistan. These authors begin with a review of the sociocultural and historical conditions that have shaped life in these regions, and in turn, influenced the development of psychology in general, and the rise of positive psychology more specifically. As they discuss, major contributors from countries of this region have focused on various topics, including indigenous positive psychology, positive training, collective and social capital, and the roles of religion and personality in happiness. However, these authors also note the slow development of psychology in some of these countries, which has in part limited the growth of positive psychology as a consequence.

In Chap. 15, Ng and Ortega cover the 11 countries that make up the region of Southeast Asia, from Brunei to Vietnam. These authors begin by situating important commonalities and differences among the various countries of this region, with particular attention to differences in economic conditions. Then, these authors review some of the major topics that have been focused on by contributors from countries of this region, including positive character, resilience in the context of disasters, personality and well-being, the positive psychology of Buddhists, positive relationships, emotions and the good life, and subjective well-being. These authors end with a discussion about the dominance of the Western approach to positive psychology and call for greater attention to considering positive psychology that is predicated on an Eastern approach.

In Chap. 16, Yang and Chang cover part of the region of Far East Asia made up of Mainland China, including Hong Kong and Macau, and Taiwan. These reviewers identify the rapid growth of positive psychology in this region, with contributors focusing on topics ranging from dialectical culture and well-being, family happiness, hope-based interventions, dynamic psychological balance, indigenous measures of happiness and well-being, expansion of quality of life measures, to positive aging. These authors conclude with discussions on how the growth of positive psychology can make a meaningful impact in the lives of those from this region, while at the same time taking into account centuries of the rich and dynamic culture that has been the foundation for living life well among those from this region of the world.

In Chap. 17, Sink, McMahan, Karasawa, Hashimoto, and Jung cover part of the region of Far East Asia made up of South Korea and Japan. These authors discuss some of the major historical, cultural, and economic conditions that have helped support a rise in positive psychology in the two countries examined in this region. A review of the major contributors of these countries highlight a focus on topics that span from positive educational reform, cultural influence on happiness and subjective well-being, resiliency and character strengths, relational or interdependent happiness, Japanese optimism, positive health psychology, to indigenous measures of happiness. These researchers end by discussing some of the ways that positive psychology might add to supporting existing strengths present among those living in the two countries of this region, including some thoughts on the value of a more coordinated approach to promoting positive psychology and on the importance of applying the science of positive psychology in a manner that is meaningful, culturally informed, and responsive to some of the dramatic changes that have been occurring in these countries over the past several decades.

In Chap. 18, Woldgabreal covers the region of the Pacific Rim, specifically, Australia and New Zealand. The author begins with a discussion of the common and different histories, social contexts, and peoples associated with the two countries making up this region. This author reviews key themes examined by some of the major contributors to positive psychology from this region, including positive education, recovery-oriented mental health approaches, positive coaching, well-being assessments at work and at school, and meaning of work. The author ends with a discussion of how the strong growth of positive psychology is leading to efforts to integrate positive psychology in making positive public policies in this region, as well as a growing appreciation by positive psychologists to value a balanced approach for understanding the intricate balance that holds between positive and negative aspects of life that make it meaningful.

Lastly, in Chap. 19, Downey, Chang, Yang, Zettler, and Muyan-Yılık conclude with a general discussion of some of the complex issues that remain to be addressed in establishing a global science of positive human existence, from overcoming the challenges of exporting regional theories and frameworks to other parts of the world to concerns about a general lack of work focusing on mezzo (group) and macro (societal) levels of analysis, compared to micro (personal) levels of analysis, in promoting the value of positive psychology within and across the different regions covered in the present work.

Final Thoughts

In putting the present work together, we wanted to celebrate the tremendous efforts made by specific individuals who shouldered the weight of pushing forward a science of positive human existence in their countries and regions. Importantly, these individuals come from both WEIRD and non-WEIRD parts of the world. Without their interest and perseverance to make the study of positive psychology a

priority, the existence of a global science of positive human existence simply would not be. In that regard, we thank all of the contributors for helping to identify and acknowledge the diverse community of scholars and scientists that have helped to discover both common and distinct themes associated with our human desire to live a life worth living. In ending, we hope that this volume provides an important initiative to communicate and bolster the slow, but palpable movements that have been occurring across the different positive psychologies of the world to help inform a science of positive human existence for all.

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Chapter 2

Region of Upper North America (United States and Canada)

Paul T. P. Wong and Roger G. Tweed

Humanistic Psychology

The story of positive psychology (PP) in America begins long prior to the modern movement called PP. Humanist psychologists were the first psychologists who focused on the positive side of people—their innate goodness and natural tendency towards the self-actualization of their potentials. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow were the leading figures in this movement. Beginning as a reaction against the determinism of psychoanalysis and behaviorism in the 1950s and 60s, humanistic psychology advocated the need to study the whole person and the subjective perception and phenomenological experience of individuals. It is known as the third force in the history of psychology. From this holistic perspective, behavior cannot be fully understood simply by objective observation apart from the subjective meaning of individuals and their inter-subjective verification. Humanistic psychologists maintain that, ultimately, people are motivated by their beliefs and innate needs more than by their circumstances.

It is interesting that despite Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) disparaging remark about humanistic psychology, it remains an influential aspect of PP (Froh, 2004). In fact, more than half of the positive psychologists covered in this chapter have been influenced by humanistic psychology. It may be argued that a PP inspired and influenced by humanistic psychology has more depth and enduring influence than a PP without a rich humanistic heritage.

For humanistic psychologists (Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1961/1995), the responsible use of freedom is essential to become fully functional human beings. They argued that people can achieve their vision of the good life only when they can

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responsibly exercise their freedom to choose their own authentic path and achieve their life goals. Thus, their true happiness is a by-product of self-determination and self-actualization. Humanistic psychology began to decline in importance as a movement in the 80s, mostly because of its lack of experimental research that impacts mainstream psychology (Wong, 2011a).

Positive Psychology 1.0 in the U.S.A

During his 1998 presidency of the American Psychological Association (APA), Martin Seligman launched his PP movement as a new science (Seligman, 1998, 1999a). After his presidency ended, he continued to promote PP through recruiting both established and elite young researchers and through the provision of research grants to scholars interested in the field. We refer to this brand of PP as PP1.0.

The initial topics that Seligman proposed for PP—positive states, positive traits, and positive institutions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000)—are indeed worthy topics, and a number of American scholars were already working on these. Therefore, it is not so much Seligman’s original ideas as his ability to attract the cream of the crop in mainstream psychology that accounts for the success of PP 1.0. Perhaps it would be more accurate to describe Seligman’s PP movement not as a new science, but instead as a new research community dedicated to advance Seligman’s vision of PP 1.0, which focuses on positivity and the positivist paradigm of science.

The field of PP has had its share of detractors, including Lazarus (2003), who attracted much attention with criticisms such as his assertion that positive psychologists “attack the psychology of the past to create the illusion that what they offer is new and different” (p. 107). James Coyne has also criticized PP and particularly the evidence base for some PP interventions not only in peer-reviewed work (Coyne et al., 2010), but also through his influential PLOS blog (e.g., Coyne, 2014a, 2014b). For a comprehensive critique of PP, see Wong and Roy (2018). On a more popular level, Barbara Ehrenreich (2010) argued that pressuring people to be happy can do more harm than good, and her claims are supported by recent research, such as Oettingen’s findings that some forms of positive thinking predict maladaptive consequences (for a review, see Oettingen, 2014).

In spite of the detractors, the field advanced in a number of ways and continued to gather adherents and institutional support. For example, a U.S. based organization called the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) was formed in 2007, and the organization’s first Congress occurred in 2009 in Philadelphia. There is now a Ph.D. program in PP (e.g., Claremont Graduate School) and many students also obtain a Ph.D. in PP topics in a typical graduate program in psychology (e.g., social, clinical). The Masters of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) program at the University of Pennsylvania is a liberal arts program, and it does not require any specific undergraduate psychology courses as prerequisites. The curriculum does include one research methods course, but it does not require any coursework in other foundational areas of psychology. In spite of its lack of

psychology training, many MAPP graduates market themselves as experts in the science of happiness and well-being. This situation is even more concerning due to the proliferation of PP post-graduate certificate programs. These programs are typically offered by positive psychologists or MAPP graduates to train coaches and consultants and promise to provide a potentially lucrative career for certificate providers and graduates. Though these programs contribute in some ways to Miller's (1969) campaign to give psychology away so that the public can use it, they also produce some graduates with minimal scientific skills who may misapply or overstate the power of PP interventions, thus turning PP into a pseudoscience.

Along with this growth in PP, the field has become closely associated with business. Some business schools are beginning to integrate PP into their curricula. Claremont Graduate School even offers a Ph.D. in positive organizational psychology. For most PP associations, including the IPPA, both the membership and conference programs reflect a mixture of academics, business coaches, and consultants. This inclusion indicates that many people in the business community have bought into the vision of PP. One negative aspect of this development is that the scientific basis of PP is becoming diluted with premature applications and over-generalizations at the workplace (Wong et al., 2016).

In some ways, Seligman's message of positivity also resonates with the same crowd that was once attracted to humanistic psychology. It may be argued that there has always been a trait of optimism and positive thinking in the American psyche (Ehrenreich, 2010). In spite of the rich heritage of humanistic-existential psychology, Seligman decided to distance his PP movement (PP 1.0) from this heritage (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This decision has rippling effects that eventually required a course correction in the second wave of PP (PP 2.0; Wong, 2011b), which attempts to reclaim PP (Wong, 2011b) and integrate it with humanistic-existential psychology (Wong, 2009a, 2011b). What separates PP 2.0 from PP 1.0 is not just the recognition of positive potentials in negative emotions, but, more importantly, the emphasis on humanistic values, the dark side of human existence, and dialectical principles (Ivtzan et al., 2015; Wong, 2011b).

Positive Psychology in Canada

By virtue of its proximity to the United States and a common heritage, Canada has always struggled to maintain its unique cultural identity as a mosaic society. This is also the case with respect to PP. In spite of the dominant influence of American PP, Canada is the home of existential PP (Wong, 2009a) and PP 2.0 (Wong, 2011b). Drawing upon European existential thoughts—especially Viktor Frankl's logotherapy—and Chinese dialectical philosophy (Wong, 2009b, 2016a), Wong developed PP 2.0 and promoted it through the Biennial International Meaning Conferences based in Canada (www.meaning.ca/conference).

PP 2.0 is inherently cross-cultural, existential, and much more complex than the initial tenets of positive emotion, positive traits, and positive institutions. The

starting point of PP 2.0 is embracing the dark side of human existence as the proper context for research and understanding human flourishing and well-being, just as the medical science starts by accepting the reality that we live in a world full of bacteria and viruses. The aim of PP 2.0 is to bring out the best in individuals and society in spite of inevitable human suffering and evil. Secondly, PP 2.0 favors the dialectical principle of yin and yang as a more realistic way to approach negative and positive human experiences than the binary or dichotomous way.

Consequently, PP 2.0 does not confine itself to neutral or positive territories; it covers the totality of human experiences and is relevant to under-privileged and suffering people. Finally, PP 2.0 emphasizes the importance of the internal and external validity of variables pertaining to the good life based on both the existential and cross-cultural literature. In sum, PP 2.0 reflects the mosaic culture of Canada, particularly with its European and Asian influences.

On the global stage of PP, two competing forces are often at work in various countries. Canada provides a good example of the clashing of two competing visions. On the one hand, there is the dominating force of PP from America, with all its big names, big money, influential publications, and evidence-based PP interventions, which may not always be culturally appropriate. An important element in this mix is the training of foreign students in America through the MAPP program previously described. Often, graduates from MAPP promote their coaching business with science as their calling card, and establish a local Positive Psychology Association as their guild; in other words, they serve as “colonizers” of American PP (for a critique, see Wong & Roy, 2018).

On the other hand, there are indigenous positive psychologists trained in their own country and shaped by their own culture. They struggle to establish their own indigenous identity by developing culturally sensitive research programs and interventions often with two handicaps—without the necessary funding and under the huge shadow of American PP.

The dominant force of American PP and the home-grown force of indigenous PP have not found a way to work together to advance PP and benefit their country. The difficulty of merging these two forces was clearly evident in the early days of the Canadian Positive Psychology Association (Wong, 2013a).

Abraham H. Maslow (1908–1970)

Abraham Maslow is included in this chapter not only because he first coined the term “positive psychology” in his 1954 book *Motivation and Personality*, but also because of his profound impact on PP. His is most known for his theory of the hierarchy of needs, which has been influential in psychology, management, sociology, and psychiatry.

Maslow (1961) rejected European existentialism and advocated the need to “push toward the establishment of another branch of psychology, the psychology of the

fully evolved and authentic self and its ways of being” (p. 56). He coined the term the “Third Force” to identify this new branch of psychology.

Maslow is perhaps best known for his theory of the hierarchy of needs, which consists of five levels: (a) physiological needs, (b) safety and security needs, (c) the need for love and belonging, (d) esteem needs, and (e) the need for self-actualization. The first four needs are deficient needs or “D-motives” because people are motivated to fill the deficiency in these needs. Self-actualization motives represent growth-oriented needs at the “being” level; therefore, they are called the “B-values” or “B-motives.” Wong (2005) pointed out that the hierarchy model does not mean a rigid stage model, in which one needs to complete one level in order to move to the next level; in fact, these needs can be met simultaneously or in a reverse manner. For example, some people may value their calling as more important than their personal safety. The bottom line is that Maslow (1954) believed that the unifying motivational principle is to pursue higher needs.

In his old age, Maslow was puzzled by two questions: First, he recognized that some of his self-actualized friends were “prima donnas” who were self-centered and could not work together. Second, he wondered what motivated people who have already actualized. His solution to these problems was to add self-transcendence as the last or the highest stage of human development. Thus, in order to become fully functioning human beings, self-actualizers need to continue to be driven by meta-motivation and devote their lives to helping others actualize themselves. He also expanded the list of B-motives, which now includes the following: truth, goodness, beauty, wholeness, aliveness, uniqueness, perfection, completion, justice, simplicity, richness, effortlessness, playfulness, and self-sufficiency. Maslow (1971) died before he could fully develop his revised needs hierarchy (Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

Maslow’s theory of human motivation emphasized the inner push towards self-actualization, self-transcendence, and the peak experience. Maslow (1954) described the peak experience as a “tremendous intensification of *any* of the experiences in which there is loss of self or transcendence of [self]” (p. 165; emphasis original); it includes a sense of rapture, wonder, and ecstasy, which can transform people’s view of themselves and the world around them. Maslow’s main contribution was his emphasis on the positive existential givens and the human potential for the transcendental, spiritual level of human existence. His theory remains one of the most complete and influential theories of PP, a theory that is based on his noble and optimistic view of human nature and human potentials.

With respect to research, Maslow was opposed to the atomistic, dichotomist thinking that is still prevalent in PP. Much like William James’s (1912) “radical empiricism,” Maslow (1970) believed that it was possible to integrate experiential subjectivity with experimental objectivity; he wanted to “integrate the healthily animal, material, and selfish with the naturalistically transcendent, spiritual, and axiological” (p. 5). Throughout his research career, Maslow attempted to humanize and trans-humanize the non-personal science so that it can account for the unique and holistic human experiences (Maslow, 1966/2002).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Csikszentmihalyi worked with Seligman to facilitate the PP movement beginning in the late 1990s (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2011), but his major contributions to the movement began long before those years. One of Csikszentmihalyi's greatest contributions to PP has been his concept of flow. He wrote about this concept in both academic publications (e.g., 1975) and also in his popular book on the topic (1990). His early descriptions of flow varied somewhat, but twenty-five years after his first publication, Csikszentmihalyi (2000) described flow as a "state of optimal experience that people report when they are intensely involved in doing something that is fun to do" (p. 381).

PP has gone astray, in some ways, by not heeding some of the realizations Csikszentmihalyi developed as part of his studies of flow. In particular, he noticed that lasting pleasure and growth fail to emerge from seeking purely short term happiness. In contrast, he argued that enjoyment can often emerge from circumstances that are not pleasant and are even painful, such as climbing a mountain during a snow storm, perfecting a difficult dance move through repeated practice, or playing an extended chess match in spite of fatigue and headache (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). A second aspect of his flow theory particularly relevant to PP is the fact that his work on flow was originally published in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). In that paper, he reported that this flow experience was indistinguishable from some of the peak experiences described by Maslow. Both the place of publication and the parallel he draws to Maslow's idea highlight the close link between his work and the tradition of the humanistic psychologists.

Another contribution of Csikszentmihalyi was his methodological emphasis on getting out of the typical lab while still using methods accepted within the field of psychology. He was one of the first, if not the first, researchers to conduct experience sampling research using beepers to remind participants to record their subjective experiences (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1977); this again reflects the influence of humanistic psychology.

He also realized the value in studying the negative aspects of human experience in addition to the positives. He collaborated on work with mood swings in adolescents (Larson et al., 1980), television addiction (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), and aversive aspects of self-awareness (Csikszentmihalyi & Figurski, 1982). In view of the above, it is puzzling why he went along with Seligman (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) in explicitly distinguishing PP from its humanistic heritage.

This brief review demonstrates ways that Csikszentmihalyi took a PP perspective long before PP 1.0 was officially launched by Seligman in 1998. PP 1.0 might have been stronger if more of the adherents of this new community of scholars had learned the lessons of Csikszentmihalyi's earlier research.

Martin E. P. Seligman

Seligman's early and continuing leadership within the PP movement gives him a position of significant influence. Several concerns arise from Seligman's powerful role. His early emphasis on happiness may have had the benefits of attracting many people to the PP community and appealing to a consumerist society, but it may have also triggered a backlash and contributed to the development of PP 2.0 (Wong, 2011b). Some research suggests that well-being is predicted more strongly by building meaning and other eudaimonic outcomes rather than by a focus on building happiness (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Steger et al., 2008). Admittedly, Seligman's later work, such as his book entitled *Flourish* (2011), introduced his PERMA model which explicitly denotes that well-being includes life meaning (the "M" in PERMA), yet even within that book, meaning received relatively little attention. The emphasis on happiness, which was admittedly much stronger in his early work in PP, can crowd out attention to other elements of well-being.

Furthermore, even after his conversion to a broader definition of well-being, Seligman does not justify why his vision of well-being deserves pre-eminence over that of other theorists or even other cultures (Wong, 2011c), and that highlights another problem with his powerful role and, more broadly, the centrality of American leadership within PP. The centrality of American scholars in his PP community may hinder the development of indigenous positive psychologies.

In the final analysis, we all owe a great debit to Seligman because without his vision, leadership, and entrepreneurial success in building a community of PP scholars, we would not be contributing to this International Handbook. The past 20 years have witnessed a great deal of growing pains and expansion in PP. We believe that history will recognize his great contributions to psychology in spite of some mistakes along the way.

Christopher Peterson

Christopher Peterson co-taught possibly the first university course in PP ever in 2003 and then published possibly the first full-length textbook on PP (Peterson, 2006), but looking back on the movement, some of his other contributions may be even more significant.

Peterson deserves to be remembered for at least two major contributions to PP: his attention to virtue and character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and his interpersonal impact. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), when they introduced PP, argued for three major foci: positive subjective states (e.g., happiness), positive traits (e.g., virtues), and institutions facilitating these. Thereafter, the bulk of PP researchers and practitioners seemed focused on the first of these three: positive subjective states. In contrast, Peterson helped to keep attention on positive traits including virtues and character strengths. He collaborated on developing a modern

classification system for virtues and character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). His classification system gained much traction possibly not only because of the quality of his work, but also because his collaboration with the VIA Institute in developing and distributing a strengths questionnaire allowed research with large and culturally diverse samples (e.g., McGrath, 2015; Peterson et al., 2008).

Peterson's second major contribution was interpersonal. Peterson was fascinating in part because he didn't feel a need to pretend to always be happy even though he was a positive psychologist. As he said about himself, "I do my share of complaining, and I roll my eyes much more frequently than I smile" (Peterson, 2006, p. 19). Nevertheless, many scholars have reported being inspired and moved by Peterson's commitment to the well-being of others (e.g., Brunwasser & Gillham, 2014; Park & Seligman, 2013; Wright, 2012). For these qualities, he was respected and loved by many psychologists, including those who are critical of PP.

Peterson was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Network on Personal Meaning (INPM) in 2012. Unfortunately, he died prematurely about two months after the 2012 Meaning Conference. His keynote speech at the Meaning Conference was later published (Peterson & Park, 2014), which may be his last journal publication. It is worth noting that, in this paper, they emphasized the need to include meaning as an outcome measure and that a valid meaning measure should include sources of meaning and purpose (Schnell, 2009; Wong, 1998).

Edward Diener

Ed Diener can accurately be portrayed as a courageous proponent of the need to study well-being scientifically. From very early in his career, he was warned that the scientific study of happiness was both impossible and not worthy of study. Now, many years later, it is his research on subjective well-being for which he is most highly regarded, not his other research on the "approved" list of topics.

Diener has worked consistently to make his research and other work relevant to the needs of not only the privileged, but to others as well. For example, Diener collaborated on a book (Diener et al., 2009) describing ideas for applying research findings to develop social policy that could improve well-being for millions of people. In related work, he also argued that governments should consistently survey the psychological well-being of their populace to measure the impact of their policies and also to identify subgroups with the greatest needs (Diener & Diener, 2011).

Diener has also drawn attention to cultural differences in causes of well-being and even in the nature of well-being (e.g., Diener et al., 2017), and he has also at least occasionally given credit to humanistic psychologists for the relevance of their ideas to modern explorations of well-being (Diener, 1984, 2008; Tay & Diener, 2011), though we could argue that the humanist psychologists deserve even more credit.

One concern with Diener's work has been his emphasis on mostly hedonic indicators of well-being (frequent positive affect, infrequent negative affect, and life satisfaction; Diener, 1984, 2000). Though these are important indicators of

well-being, this approach over-represents hedonic indicators of well-being (Proctor et al., 2015) even though eudaimonic orientations seem particularly important for longer lasting well-being (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Steger et al., 2008). More recently, Diener (Su et al., 2014), like Seligman (2011), has broadened his focus to a wider set of indicators of well-being. In spite of this concern, Diener's research is highly valued and has relevance beyond the academy. These, and his courageous perseverance in the face of potential career harm, deserve to be remembered.

Sonja Lyubomirsky

Sonja Lyubomirsky began her PP work with a paper describing a measure of happiness (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). Then, for the rest of her career, she has focused mainly on exploring the causes of happiness. One of the most significant contributions from Lyubomirsky has been her work popularizing the nature of PP interventions. She has written popular books on strategies for increasing happiness (Lyubomirsky, 2008, 2013). In this way, she has become a significant face of PP for many people who lack training in the topic. In some ways, though, in spite of the benefits she has provided to the populace, her prominent role may have exacerbated the tendency for people to attend to mainly the hedonic-oriented values of PP rather than the work on eudaimonia.

Another very significant contribution has been Lyubomirsky's early (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) and ongoing (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011) awareness that people may differ in terms of activities and achievements that produce hedonic well-being. In recent years, she has had an unusual sensitivity to the fact that PP interventions may be ineffective if implemented with the wrong population at the wrong time (Lyubomirsky et al., 2011; Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013).

Barbara L. Fredrickson

Fredrickson is most noted for her broaden and build theory (Fredrickson, 1998). That theory suggests that positive emotions help overcome tendencies toward a narrow focus of attention and thereby help people see a broader range of possible thoughts and actions available to them. The theory also suggests that this broadening then helps people build resources and move toward emotional well-being (Fredrickson, 1998). She has been successful in spreading this message beyond the community of PP scholars to a wider scientific audience (e.g., Fredrickson, 2003).

Fredrickson's work has not been without controversy. Some work on the relation between positive emotion and health has been criticized (Heathers et al., 2015; Kok & Fredrickson, 2015), as has her claim that a critical ratio of at least 2.9 positive emotions to negative emotion demarks a flourishing individual (Brown et al., 2013; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005) and also some work on well-being and genomics

(Brown et al., 2014; Fredrickson et al., 2013). In spite of these controversies, she remains one of the most creative and influential positive psychologists.

In more recent work, like many of the other positive psychologists mentioned here, Fredrickson seems to have reduced her focus on hedonia and taken more interest in eudaimonia including work on meditation (van Cappellen et al., 2016), mindfulness, and even meaning (Garland et al., 2015). In this sense, her trajectory within PP is somewhat like that of Seligman and Diener, with an early focus on hedonia and a later transition toward attention on a broader set of indicators of well-being.

Richard M. Ryan

Richard Ryan is Professor at the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education at the Australian Catholic University and Research Professor in Psychology at the University of Rochester in New York. He is co-developer (with Edward Deci) of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a theory of human motivation that has generated a great deal of research and has been applied to many areas, including education, clinical practice, sports psychology, and eudaimonia (Ryan et al., 2013; Taubes, 2010).

Self-determination is based on intrinsic motivation, such as feelings of autonomy and competence. Patterson and Joseph (2007) were correct in seeing a connection between SDT and Rogers' person-centered theory because they provide similar perspectives and meta-theoretical assumptions. There is a great deal of cross-cultural data supporting the universality of the human needs for autonomy, agency, and freedom (Chirkov et al., 2011). When these basic needs are frustrated or thwarted, people will become more vulnerable to mental illnesses (Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013).

SDT was around in the 1980s, well before Seligman launched his brand of PP in 1998. Ryan and Deci were not included in the group that Seligman called the "Senior Scholars" in Seligman's original network of PP (Seligman, 1999b). Yet, SDT remains the only general theory of human motivation that has received considerable empirical support and provided a very helpful conceptual framework to enhance eudemonic happiness, well-being, and personal growth and, at the same time, reduce vulnerability. The strength of SDT lies in its recognition of the positive potentials of human nature and people's basic needs for freedom, autonomy, and relationships.

Carol D. Ryff

Carol Ryff is Director of the Institute on Aging and Hilldale Professor of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Ryff has never been part of the PP community and has been critical of PP (Ryff, 2003). Yet, her research on

psychological well-being, and positive health has been widely cited because of its broad scholarship, solid empirical foundation, and cross-cultural contribution. Although she is mostly known from her theory and research on well-being, she has also been impactful in intervention strategies and educational programs (Ryff, 2014a, 2014b; Ryff et al., 2014; Ruini & Ryff, 2016).

Multidimensional Assessment of Psychological Well-Being

Ryff's (1989, 2014a) research on the six domains of psychological well-being was both ground-breaking and seminal. Her model was based on integrating ideas from existential, humanistic, developmental, and clinical psychology. She benefited from their deep insights of the bright side of human nature, as shown in Fig. 2.1.

Different from most PP assessment tools, which are based on short and simple self-reports (for a critique, see Wong & Roy, 2018), Ryff's well-being scale is multidimensional and lengthy; the long form of the scale consists of 84 questions and the medium form 54 questions (Seifert, 2005). It has been translated to more than 30 different languages and generated more than 500 publications because of its theoretical rootedness and universal appeal.

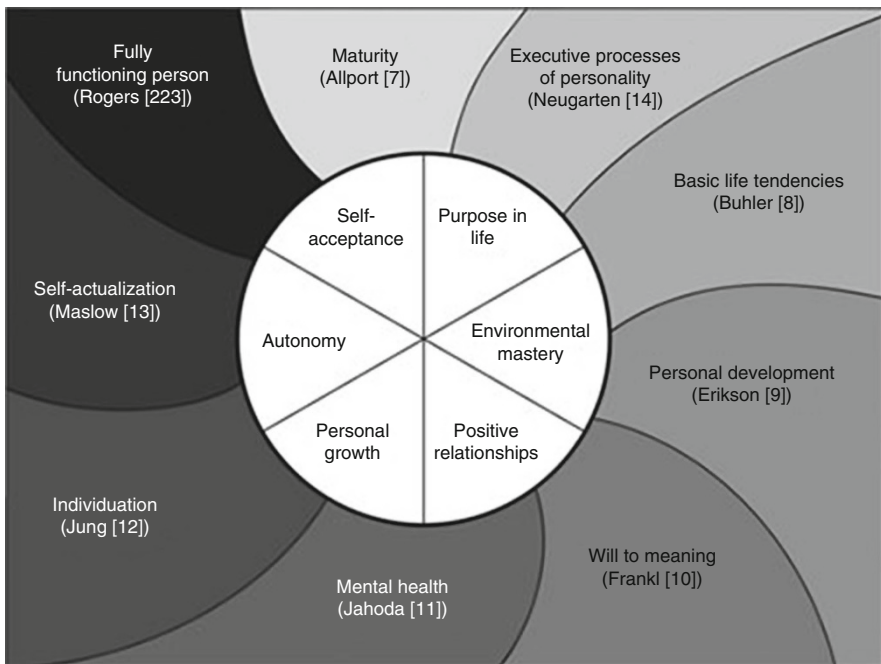


Fig. 2.1 The six main components of psychological well-being (Ryff, 2014a)

Consistent with Aristotle (1908) and existential positive psychology (Frankl, 1985; Wong, 2009a), Ryff emphasized “know thyself and become what you are” as the key to her eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Ryff also provided biological correlates (cardiovascular, neuroendocrine, immune) of a eudaimonic well-being that is rich in meaning and purpose, quality relationships, and continued growth (Ryff, 2012; Ryff & Singer, 1998).

Holistic Multidisciplinary Approach to Human Resilience

Another theme in Ryff’s research has been human resilience—the human capacity to maintain or regain well-being in the face of cumulative adversity and underlying neurobiology. Her holistic multidimensional research integrates several levels of analysis: sociodemographic characteristics, psychosocial resources, life stresses, health behaviors and practices, neurobiological risk and protective factors, and health outcomes with extensive psychosocial and biomarker assessments (Ryff, 2014b). The main findings from longitudinal studies of aging have shown that those who remain purposefully engaged with life experience numerous health benefits. Such findings demonstrate the importance of promoting eudaimonic well-being and resilience across a broad segment of the population, including the socio-economically disadvantaged and those suffering from cancer and child abuse (Ryff, 2014a, 2016; Ruini & Ryff, 2016).

Cross-Cultural Sensitivity

Since 1995, Ryff and her team have researched factors that influence health and well-being from middle age through old age via a study called MIDUS (Mid-Life in the U.S. National Study of Americans). She has also been involved in a parallel study in Japan. She has directly compared well-being, resilience, and adult development in Japan and the U.S. (Ryff et al., 2015). Thus, her third major contribution to PP is that she is keenly aware that well-being is rooted in culture, and hence interventions need to be sensitive to cultural contexts (Ryff et al., 2014). For example, she and her associates (Curhan et al., 2014) discovered that Japanese people were less affected by negative emotions than their American counterparts. This difference can be easily understood in terms of yin and yang differences in coping. Eastern cultures are more attuned to the tragedies and hardships of life and have learned to cope with patience and endurance—the yin aspects of adaptation and are less likely to expect to immediately eradicate every life problem (Lin, 1935; Tweed et al., 2004).

Robert A. Emmons

Robert Emmons is a Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Davis and the founding editor-in-chief of *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. He is the world's leading scientific expert on gratitude (Emmons, 2007, 2013). However, to him, gratitude is more than just a valid instrument to enhance happiness, because “gratitude heals, energizes, and transforms lives” (Emmons, 2016) and the nature of gratitude is spiritual (Emmons, 2010; Emmons & Hill, 2001). The PP literature often ignores Emmons's major contributions to spirituality and meaning. In this chapter, we want to highlight these larger contributions that pave the way for PP 2.0.

Spiritual Beliefs and Strivings Hold the Key to Well-Being

Like Viktor Frankl (1985), Emmons recognizes that spirituality is a core dimension of being human. This deeper understanding of human nature elevates the academic discourse from the simple empirical question of what exercises may enhance well-being and happiness to the fundamental theoretical question of how to be becoming fully functioning human beings with spiritual strivings towards the sacred (Emmons, 2005).

Consistent with humanistic-existential thinking, Emmons (2005) emphasizes the vital role of religion and spirituality in human existence by “establishing goals and value systems that potentially pertain to all aspects of a person's life” (p. 731). By framing religion and spirituality in terms of goal-directed behavior, he makes a compelling case that meaning is not a matter of subjective feeling or thinking, but a matter of goal-directed actions towards ultimate concerns (Emmons, 1986, 1999).

Ultimate concerns are “concerns over ultimate questions of meaning and existence, purpose and values” (Emmons, 2005, p. 737), which express themselves in personal goals. These spiritual goals are characterized by striving to transcend the self and serving something greater than the self, by seeking a relationship with a higher power, and by integrating the individual with “larger and more complex units” (Emmons, 2005, p. 736); these characteristic are highly similar to Wong's conceptualization of self-transcendence (Wong, 2016b).

Emmons' meaning-centered approach to personality and well-being is evident in his definition of self-identity in terms of the “pursuit of personally significant goals in general, and goals of a religious and spiritual nature in particular” (Emmons, 2005, p. 732). His research has demonstrated that people with spiritual goals “tend to experience their lives as worthwhile, unified and meaningful” (Emmons, 1999, p. 104).

Finally, consistent with PP 2.0 (Wong, 2011b), Emmons has recognized that implicit worldviews and values systems—which give rise to spiritual strivings—are essential not only to human flourishing, but also to resilience in coping with adversity and traumas. For instance, Emmons' (2005) research with persons with

neuromuscular disease showed that when their strivings were centered on the sacred, “they [were] likely to experience life as fulfilling, meaningful, and purposeful, even in the face of a deteriorating and disabling physical condition” (p. 742).

Gratitude is an Expression of Spirituality

Gratitude is a natural expression of a spiritual life—a life that is fully aware of God or a Higher Power as the source of life and all its blessings. When gratitude is employed as an instrument to enhance personal happiness, such as paying a gratitude visit or writing a gratitude letter, it does not always work because such exercise depends on each individual’s personal and cultural context (Parks & Biswas-Diener, 2013). Furthermore, a life focused merely on pursuing happiness, whether through gratitude or other means, can undermine the very happiness that is being sought (Martin, 2008). However, when gratitude is cultivated as a spiritual practice, it works in every culture, because it has been an ancient spiritual discipline practiced in every religion. The simplest form of such practice is to count our blessings on a daily basis, not just for being alive, but also for the many blessings we have received (Wong, 2016c).

Emmons (2010) was especially correct in pointing out that the nature of gratitude has two components: “[1] It’s an affirmation of goodness. We affirm that there are good things in the world, gifts and benefits we’ve received. . . . [2] We recognize the sources of this goodness as being outside of ourselves. . . . I think true gratitude involves a humble dependence on others: We acknowledge that other people—or even higher powers, if you’re of a spiritual mindset—gave us many gifts, big and small, to help us achieve the goodness in our lives” (para. 9–10).

Contributions to PP 2.0

Emmons (2005) is fully aware that “what contributes to the self-perceived well-being of an individual might be detrimental to the well-being of others” (p. 742). Thus, a truly meaningful and fulfilling life is not just about the individual, but also about others and future generations. Emmons is also cognizant that spiritual striving towards the sacred may entail guilt and shame, but “dissatisfaction can be desirable if it is used as fuel for constructive life change. Even usually positive characteristics can have harmful consequences” (p. 742).

Finally, in agreement with Viktor Frankl (1985), Emmons (2005) believes that direct pursuit of happiness can be counterproductive, because “research indicates that happiness is often a by-product of participating in worthwhile projects and activities that do not have as their primary focus the attainment of happiness” (p. 733). Like Carol Ryff, he is an important researcher responsible for the transition from PP “as usual” to PP 2.0.

Notable Positive Psychologists in Canada

Canada is not short of positive psychologists influential in research and/or teaching. Tayyab Rashid (www.tayyabrashid.com) is well known for his research on positive psychotherapy (Rashid & Howes, 2016). Robert J. Vallerand (www.lrcs.uqam.ca/rjvaller_en.htm), Professor and the Director of the Research Laboratory on Social Behavior at the Université du Québec à Montréal, is known for his research on the psychology of passion (Vallerand, 2015). Chris Davis of Carlton University is known for his research on meaning-making in tragic situations (Davis et al., 1998). Another major player in meaning research is Gary Reker (Reker et al., 1987). Finally, Kenneth Hart is known for being the first Canadian professor to develop a university course on PP (Hart & Sasso, 2011). However, we decided to focus on Paul Wong for his influence on the PP 2.0 movement and Veronika Huta for her systematic study on eudaimonic happiness because of their potential impact on the future of PP in Canada.

Paul T. P. Wong

Suffering is both the source and inspiration of PP for Paul Wong, because of his experience in poverty and adversities (Wong, 2016d). In his long and varied research over four decades, the leitmotif has been the same: How to overcome the dark side of life in order to be a fully functioning human being. Thus, PP 2.0 (Wong, 2011b, Wong, 2019, Wong, 2020), also known as existential positive psychology, has always been his approach to PP. Although he is mainly known for his research on meaning, he has made significant contributions to research, theory, assessment, and interventions across several domains.

Effective Coping with Frustration and Pain

In his first 10 years of research, Wong's main interest was in persistence. Through a variety of intermittent reinforcement and punishment schedules, he was able to teach animals persistence and flexibility in overcoming prolonged frustration and pain (Wong, 1977, 1995). This line of research provided an animal model of the PP of optimism and persistence (Wong, 1979, 2006a). Wong's research on persistence has also led to Rosenbaum's (1990) development of learned resourcefulness in human beings. These research findings provide the empirical basis for his deep-and-wide hypothesis of negative emotions (Wong, 2012a; Wong & Worth, 2017)).

Effective Coping with Stress, Aging, and Dying

Wong's main contribution to stress and coping research is the resource-congruence model (Wong, 1993; Wong et al., 2006) and the Stress Appraisal Measure (Peacock & Wong, 1990). Wong also made the case that effective coping needs to be a part of PP 2.0, because stress is an ever present reality in human existence (Wong et al., 2006).

In the area of positive aging and dying, Wong's main contribution was to reorient successful aging from biological factors to psychological and spiritual factors (Reker & Wong, 1988, 2012; Wong, 1989; Wong & Watt, 1991). Wong and associates developed the Death Attitude Profile-Revised, which includes three kinds of death acceptance as positive ways to face death (Wong et al., 1994).

Wong's demonstration of spontaneous attribution, both causal and existential (Wong, 1991; Wong & Weiner, 1981), contributes to the understanding of meaning making. As well, Wong discovered that internal and external control function as two separate dimensions rather than two opposite poles on the same continuum (Wong & Sproule, 1984). Thus, positive and negative emotions and experiences can also be conceptualized as two separate interactive dimensions, which led to the dialectical framework of PP2.0 (Wong, 2009b, 2011b, 2016a).

Contribution to Assessments

In addition to those mentioned above, Wong has developed the following instruments, which can be used for both research and therapy: Personal Meaning Profile (Wong, 1998) and Personal Meaning Profile-Brief (McDonald et al., 2012); Trent Attribution Profile (Wong & Sproule, 1984); Coping Schemas Inventory (Wong et al., 2006); Meaning Mindset Measure (Wong, 2012b); Self-Transcendence Measure (Wong, 2016e); Life Orientation Scale (Wong, 2014); and Life Attitude Scale (Wong, 2009c).

Contribution to International Psychology

His contribution to international psychology is threefold: (1) his emphasis on the importance of cross-cultural perspectives in stress and coping and PP (Leong & Wong, 2003; Wong, 2013b; Wong & Ujimoto, 1998; Wong & Wong, 2006); (2) his organization of the International Biennial Meaning Conferences since 2000 (www.meaning.ca/conference), which have been attended by psychologists from over 30 countries; and (3) his research on death acceptance and the meaning of life, which has influenced Taiwan's Life and Death Education (S. Chang, 2016) and the

development of a meaning-oriented positive education (S. Chang, 2016; Wong, 2013c).

Contribution to Existential Competencies and Meaning Therapy

Aware of the prevalence of existential concerns (Frankl, 1985; Yalom, 1980), Wong (2016f) advocated the need to develop existential competencies in all mental health workers, regardless of their therapeutic modalities.

Wong's (2010, 2015) meaning therapy represents a comprehensive approach to transforming existential anxieties to positive motivation and strategies for healing and flourishing. The main existential competences include the dual-systems model (Wong, 2012a), meaning-mindset (Wong, 2012b), and self-transcendence (Wong, 2016b). Meaning therapy is also known as existential positive interventions (Wong, 2016c). In sum, Wong is a positive psychologist shaped by humanistic and existential concerns.

Veronika Huta

Veronika Huta earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from McGill University, but chose to pursue research in eudaimonia. The main reason for choosing Huta over other more established positive psychologists in Canada in this chapter is to include a rising star whose research program shows promise of becoming an important part of PP 2.0 (Huta, 2016a).

Her eudaimonia research focuses on the existential-spiritual aspect of the human condition and emphasizes the active cultivation of virtue, not just the identification of signature character strengths. She is also exceptionally strong when it comes to theoretical integration, and has been working to contribute to the theoretical foundation for the eudaimonic-hedonic distinction (Huta, 2016b).

Huta (2015, 2016b, 2016c) is mostly known for her comprehensive and systematic research on eudaimonic versus hedonic orientations. Based on a review of the literature (Huta & Waterman, 2014), she has distilled the definition to a combination of four elements: (1) pursuing virtue and excellence, (2) meaning and big picture thinking, (3) authenticity and self-honesty, and (4) growth and maturation.

When studying well-being outcomes, from the beginning she has included a more comprehensive package than mere subjective well-being—one which includes the more complex, more existential aspects of experience: meaning (feelings of significance, value, broad implications, personal resonance, and purpose), elevating experience (awe, inspiration, moral elevation, and transcendence or sense of connection with a greater whole), and self-connectedness, all of which have proven to relate

more strongly to eudaimonic than hedonic pursuits (Huta, 2016d; Huta & Ryan, 2010). Her research on the eudaimonic orientation is another demonstration of the advantages of the person-centered holistic approach to PP.

She has also developed the most comprehensive measure of eudaimonic and hedonic orientations, called the HEMA (Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities) scale. The original (Huta & Ryan, 2010) had nine items, and it was later updated to a 10-item version to include all four elements of her definition (Huta, 2016b). Research with the HEMA scale has shown that eudaimonic pursuits are associated with more positive contributions to others, society, and the environment, and more abstract thinking and future time perspective, thus consistent with the lifestyle characterized by self-transcendence (Huta, 2016b, 2016e; Wong, 2016b).

Huta's latest research with her student Braaten on worldviews (Braaten & Huta, 2016) is an even clearer indication that she has extended eudaimonic research to a metaphysical level of spirituality and meaning. Like Emmons, their research also demonstrates that worldviews matter. Human beings are not just creatures motivated by the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain, as proposed by those embracing a naturalist hedonic worldview, but spiritual beings struggling for meaning and purpose and exploring the moral and ethical implications of their actions and goals.

Braaten and Huta have developed (and continue refining) the most comprehensive measure of worldviews to date, based on Koltko-Rivera's (2004) extensive literature review. They have empirically demonstrated the importance of worldviews for meaning and well-being. They have also shown that people are more likely to pursue eudaimonia—serving a greater purpose, achieving excellence in virtue and competence, fulfilling one's unique potentials, and being true to oneself—when they embrace the existential belief that the universe and people exist for a greater purpose. Thus, two different lines of research—the search for meaning (Wong, 2012c, 2014) and the pursuit of eudaimonia (Huta, 2016a, 2016b)—conducted independently have arrived at basically the same conclusion, adding credence to the meaning hypothesis of human flourishing.

Future of Positive Psychology in North America

Given the vibrant recent developments of PP in North American and globally, we are confident that PP will stay for the long haul as a sub-discipline of psychology, just like abnormal psychology (Wong, 2011b). From the perspective of PP 2.0, the future of PP represents the development of the new science of investigating how to bring out the best in people and society in spite of the dark side of human existence through dialectical principles. Here are some specific trends for the future.

Future Trends of PP in North America

From Hedonic to Eudaimonic Happiness

The happiness craze associated with the smiley face of PP 1.0 is over (Ivtzan et al., 2015). We foresee more research on eudaimonic happiness along the lines of research by Ryan (self-determination), Ryff (psychological well-being), Huta (eudaimonic well-being), and Wong (meaning and self-transcendence).

From Mindfulness to Self-Transcendence

We also do not believe that mindfulness will be the new panacea for PP, as many have suggested (Harris, 2008; Weiss & Hickman, n.d.; Williams & Penman, 2012). Although gaining peace of mind through the secular approach to the Buddhist practice of mindful meditation is helpful, it has limited benefits if it does not involve any change in core beliefs, worldviews, and way of life (Wong, 2006b). We hasten to add that Buddhism's emphasis on no-self is only one of the several pathways to attain inner peace and self-transcendence (Wong, 2016a, 2016b). For example, Wong (2012b) emphasizes the meaning-mindset, which will enable us to see life as potentially meaningful. He also stresses the motivation to pursue self-transcendence, which will reorient us from self-interest to caring for others in a responsible way (Wong, 2016b).

From American-Centered Approach to Indigenous Emphasis

Numerous psychologists have argued that PP is rooted in specific cultural contexts (E. Chang et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2006; Leong & Wong, 2003; Wong, 2013b). Each ethnic/cultural group may have their own moral visions, which "inform people about what is worthy, good, and desirable, and about what constitutes the good, virtue, morality, health, and well-being" (Christopher et al., 2014, p. 5).

We foresee the development of indigenous PP for Chinese people (Wong, 2016a), aboriginal communities (McCormick & Wong, 2006), African Americans (Caldwell-Colbert et al., 2009), and Latina/o students (Vela et al., 2015). We also encourage research on well-being and life satisfaction that is sensitive to cultural factors (Diener & Suh, 2000; Ujimoto et al., 1993; Wong & Ujimoto, 1998). Such research has a twofold objective: (a) discovering what is unique about each indigenous culture and (b) discovering what is universal or what is human nature.

From Lab Research to Real Life Experiences

The main problem with lab research is that it may not have external validity and may not be relevant to real life situations. The second limitation of lab research is that all kinds of painful human conditions cannot be studied in the lab due to ethical concerns. Therefore, for PP 2.0 research, it is essential to study real life situations. Csikszentmihalyi's technique of sampling subjective experiences in real life is a promising approach. Biographical and historical research provides yet another fertile ground to study topics of PP 2.0.

Another argument in favor of this change in methodology is the need to honor the subjective experiences of research participants. Rating scores of well-being and meaning in life are difficult to interpret unless we know the mental state or life circumstances of participants while completing the rating scores (Wong, 2017). Therefore, future research based on self-reports needs to have at least a sub-sample that reports what is going through their mind while completing the self-ratings.

From Single-Minded Focus on Positive Variables to Dialectic Interactions

PP's contribution to well-being will be limited if we continue to demonstrate empirically what we all know experientially, such as how being close to nature, listening to music, engaging in interesting activities, or being together with family and friends makes us happy. Such a pedestrian approach to documenting an endless list of activities that can make us happy without knowing the underlying conditions or cultural differences will not advance the science of PP.

It is a more challenging scientific task to investigate how positive variables interact with negative life circumstances to increase our well-being, character strengths, or group harmony, simply because there is very little research on dual-system interactions (Wong, 2012a) and we also have less personal experience in regards to dialectical outcomes.

Major Obstacles that May Prevent Positive Psychology from Growing

We can readily identify the following obstacles to future growth.

Commercialization of Positive Psychology

In the long run, the commercialization of PP beyond scientific support will weaken its credibility. We can understand why such a market is necessary because increasing numbers of positive coaches need to make a living, but, eventually, it could bring discredit to the entire field of PP (Wong & Roy, 2018).

Non-Collaboration Between Different Groups

The lack of willingness to collaborate between the PP and humanistic communities has hindered both groups from realizing their full potentials. One way to overcome this divide is to do quantitative research on humanistic constructs (e.g., Proctor et al., 2016) or to make full use of the mixed methodology (Wong, 2017). Another approach is to forge a closer tie between these two traditions by bringing them together in collaborative projects, such as the INPM's International Biennial Meaning Conferences (www.meaning.ca/conference). Finally, a humble approach to science and a noble purpose for the greater good will facilitate collaboration between diverse groups.

Disparity Between Haves and Have-Nots

Overall, PP has catered to those who have the time and money to pursue happiness projects or benefit from positive coaches. It is hoped that PP 2.0 will develop interventions to help the homeless (Tweed et al., 2012) and the hopeless (Wong, 2009c; Wong & McDonald, 2002), and equip people with better coping skills to grow and to become better persons through adversities (Wong et al., 2006). Furthermore, PP has a responsibility to address the issue of poverty (Biswas-Diener & Patterson, 2011) and social injustice (Eidelson et al., 2014).

Changes Needed to Increase Impact of PP

From the perspective of PP 2.0, the following things need to be achieved:

1. We need to get across the message that PP is not just for people in neutral or positive territories, but also for the suffering masses (Wong, 2007, 2011b, 2019, 2020). It is a branch of psychology designed to bring out the best angels in our nature as a way of overcoming the dark side of life and human nature. Simply focusing on character strengths by itself is not enough, if we do not confront the

- evils of oppression, exploitation, and violence. It should focus on the new science of happiness and wellbeing through the gates of suffering.
2. We need to give PP away to the community as Wong has done for many years (Wong, 2012d). We need to adopt a grassroots approach to educate people on the principles of meaningful living (Wong, 2016g) as a way to prevent mental illness and promote human flourishing. When more people have acquired the basic principles of meaning and practiced them, they will be able to live more positive lives and create a better society.
 3. We need to develop an alternative approach to positive education—positive education 2.0—as advocated by Wong (2013d) and S. Chang (2016). In a way that is different from the first wave of positive education, which emphasizes the science of happiness and signature strengths (Seligman et al., 2009), positive education 2.0 seeks to cultivate a sense of personal and social responsibility (Linley & Maltby, 2009); affirm the inherent value, meaning, and dignity of individual life (Frankl, 1985); and emphasize the practical wisdom of living well (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010) in light of the brevity of life. In Taiwan, this kind of positive education is called “life education”; it has become a national policy for all levels of public schools to include life education as part of their academic curriculum (S. Chang, 2016; Huang et al., 2011). Thus, positive education 2.0 not only teaches students important life skills and moral values, but also imparts in students a sense of civic virtue and social responsibility necessary for a robust democracy.
 4. We need to secure funding for research based on a humble and holistic approach to science (Templeton, 1998) to carry out systematic research within the framework of PP 2.0.

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Chapter 3

Positive Psychology in Mexico and Central America

Margarita Tarragona

Introduction

Mexico and Central America have been grouped together for this chapter because they are part of Latin America, and they have a shared language, Spanish. But geographically they are part of different regions: Mexico is in North America, together with the United States of America and Canada. Central America is comprised of seven separate countries: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

This chapter briefly describes some of the similarities and differences between Mexico and its Central American neighbors, focusing, of course, on the development of positive psychology in these countries and highlighting some of the researchers that are contributing most significantly to it in these regions.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss Mexican and Central American history and their rich cultural heritages in any detail. Here is a very general, and overly simplified, view of some of their highlights:

The territories that are now Mexico and the Central American countries were all conquered by Spain in the 1520's. There were strong indigenous civilizations in the region. In Mexico, the Aztecs had a centralized empire, whose local enemies allied themselves with Cortés to fight against the Aztec's domination, therefore supporting the Spanish conquest, while in Central America there was no dominant local power, but many different groups that were scattered across the area. The conquest was violent, decimated the population, not only through war but also through the contagion of diseases that were unknown in the "New World", and it included not only an economic/territorial appropriation, but also a strong religious colonization through evangelization by the Catholic Church.

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The lands that the Spanish conquered were divided politically into two territories: “The New Spain” or “La Nueva España” and the “Capitanía General de Guatemala”, or “General Captainship of Guatemala”. The New Spain included what is now Mexico, plus what are now the U.S. states of California, Nevada, Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Oregon, Washington and Florida, plus some parts of Montana, Wyoming, Kansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and even a section of British Columbia in what is now Canada (Ávila Marcué, 2013).

The huge loss of almost 120% of Mexico’s current territory¹ to the US a century later, in the 1850s, partially by selling it, and partly due to invasions and tremendous political pressure from the United States, was a traumatic event in Mexican history that, I believe, is one of the causes of what many describe as an ongoing “love-hate” relationship between Mexico and the United States (a mixture of admiration and resentment).

The other Spanish colony, the “Capitanía General de Guatemala”, comprised what is now Guatemala, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, that is, basically all of today’s Central America (except for Panama).

The Spanish colony lasted for 300 years in Mexico and Central America. Mexico had a war for independence from Spain that started in 1810 and lasted for 10 years, until 1821; while the independence of Central America took place peacefully right after Mexico’s independence (and the central American countries briefly annexed themselves to Mexico for a year, to then declare its independence from both Spain and Mexico in 1823).

Most inhabitants of Mexico and Central America have a combination of indigenous and European ancestry. The variety of indigenous groups in ancient Mexico is still evident today, and recent genetic studies show that Mexico is one of the countries with greatest genetic diversity in the world (González, 2014).

It is important to note that the Real Universidad de México (Royal University of Mexico), founded in 1551, was the first university of the American Continent (Carmona, 2018; Anaya Leal, 2015), and it was based on the educational models of the Universidad de Salamanca, the University of Bologna and the University of Paris. It functioned almost uninterruptedly for over 300 years and was the precursor of the UNAM, the National University of Mexico, which was founded in 1910. Such an early presence of a university in Mexico is a sign of a strong intellectual and academic community that has been an integral part of Mexican history for centuries.

If we fast forward through the decades, we can highlight that Mexico had a very violent agrarian and political revolution early in the twentieth century (from 1910 until 1921), followed by political instability and later experienced a period of economic development known as the “Mexican Miracle” for three decades, from 1940 through 1970. Politically, one party, the PRI, governed for over 60 years and it is generally considered that a truly democratic electoral process began in 1994, when a different party won the presidential election for the first time in the twentieth century. Mexico has experienced increasing levels of violence for most of the

¹Which amounts to almost 15% of the US territory today.

twenty-first century, mostly due to the presence of organized crime and the “war on drugs”.

Central America attempted to be one unified federation in the mid nineteenth century, but that project did not last. In the early twentieth century, most of the economy of the region revolved around agriculture, controlled by North American fruit companies. Later and for much of the twentieth century, several Central American countries experienced guerilla and civil wars. Democratic governments have been strengthened in recent decades, but economic development has been slow and violence and organized crime have plagued the region nowadays (Pastor, 2011).

The following economic data can give us a sense of Mexico and Central America today: Mexico’s territory spans close to two million square kilometers, making it the fourteenth largest country in the world. With a population of over 120 million people, Mexico is the eleventh most populated country on Earth (INEGI, 2015). Mexico is part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, which groups the world’s 36 strongest economies. Mexico’s economy is considered the fifteenth largest in the world and the second largest in Latin America (Gobierno de México, 2018).

The seven countries in Central America are all small. Their combined territories are a little over 500, 000 square kilometers and the total population of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama all together adds up to 50 million people. The size of the economies of Central American countries is also very modest, they go from the 175th in the world (Belize) to the 74th in the world (Panama) (World Bank, 2017).

I mention these numbers because the difference in size and economic development between Mexico and the Central American countries is reflected in their respective volume of scientific production. This is the case for research in positive psychology, and the reason why this chapter features a dozen Mexican scholars who study well-being and only one from Central America, specifically from Costa Rica.

Positive Psychology in Mexico

Historically, many movements and developments in psychology that have originated in the US and Europe have tended to take several years to “arrive” in Latin America. This is the case with positive psychology. Mariano Rojas (2016) points out that, with a couple of exceptions, research on happiness in Latin America started with the new millennium. Hernández-Pozo & Salazar-Piñeros (2013), in their overview of papers published in indexed journals that used the term “positive psychology” in their title, abstract or key words between 1960 and 2013, found that less than 8% of those publications were from authors from Latin America, Spain and Portugal, and only about 1% came from Mexico.

This does not mean that there had been no research on well-being and other topics that are now often considered within the realm of positive psychology: Many scholars have studied resilience, healthy psychological development, and quality

of life, for example, but do not necessarily identify their work as “positive psychology”. Still, as we will see in this chapter, positive psychology is growing quickly in Mexico and an increasing number of researchers and practitioners are adopting it as a conceptual framework and an orientation for their work.

Positive Psychology Researchers in Mexico

It is not easy to choose just a few of the many researchers that study happiness and well-being in Mexico. The following list is by no means exhaustive. To compile it I surveyed the literature of Mexican publications on the topic and asked several well-known researchers in the field who they consider to be outstanding leaders in the study of well-being. I then chose some names that appeared repeatedly. I am fully aware that it is an incomplete account of the landscape of positive psychology in Mexico, but I hope it is a good sample of it.

Alejandro Adler

What is positive education? How can we design positive education programs that are appropriate for different cultural contexts? What is the impact of positive education programs? Can positive education programs be scaled to serve very large numbers of students?

These are some of the questions that Dr. Alejandro Adler addresses in his work, which is mostly applied research. Dr. Adler has been the director of International Education at the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania and of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. He was born and raised in Mexico City and he moved to the US to attend the Wharton School and the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned two bachelor degrees, one in Economics and one in Psychology, as well as a master’s in Psychology. At Penn, he obtained a Ph.D. in psychology, under the tutelage of Dr. Martin Seligman. Dr. Adler’s work has focused on well-being, positive education and public policy. His doctoral dissertation “*Teaching Well-Being Increases Academic Performance: Evidence from Bhutan, Mexico, and Peru*” (2016a) received the 2017 Dissertation Award from the International Positive Psychology Association.

Positive education is the integration of positive psychology skills in school curricula, in addition to traditional academic skills. Dr. Adler is an international leader in positive education and is at the forefront of initiatives to include well-being in public policy throughout the world. His pioneering research has shown that children and adolescents who go through programs that teach skills for well-being not only are happier, but they improve their academic performance too (Adler & Seligman, 2017; Adler, 2017).

Dr. Adler spent several years in Bhutan, to get to know and understand the local culture before designing a positive education curriculum that would be congruent with it. In collaboration with the Bhutanese government, he created a “Gross National Happiness Curriculum” that included 10 life skills: mindfulness, empathy, self-awareness, coping with emotions, communication, interpersonal relationships, creative thinking, critical thinking, decision making and problem solving (Adler, 2010, 2016b). A representative sample of thousands of the nation’s teenagers was taught this curriculum and an equivalent-sized group participated in a placebo program. Adler and his team found that the Gross National Happiness program increased students’ level of well-being, and it improved their academic performance in national standardized tests with a gain that was equivalent to having studied a full additional school year. Adler has done similar studies developing and evaluating programs in Mexico (Educación para el Bienestar, or Education for Wellbeing) and Peru (Escuelas Amigas, Friendly Schools), always being sensitive to cultural differences and designing curricula that are a good fit with the local context. His findings in different nations have been strikingly similar: Students who are part of positive education programs are happier and do better academically (Adler, 2017).

Dr. Adler is a scholar who travels all over the world and he is an active participant in different organizations that study, assess and promote well-being, such as the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank. He is also an advisor to policy makers on well-being and education in various countries, including Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Australia, UAE, Bhutan, Nepal, India and China. It is especially notable that he is part of the United Nation’s International Well-being Expert Group, a select team of specialists who are creating a New Development Paradigm based on well-being, as part of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Dr. Adler has published numerous articles and book chapters on the assessment of well-being (Kern et al., 2015a, 2015b) and on the development, implementation and evaluation of positive education programs in different countries (Adler, 2016a, 2016b; Adler, & Seligman, 2016) in English and in Spanish. Most importantly, he has had a positive impact on the well-being and education of hundreds of thousands of young people.

When I asked Dr. Adler whether I should include him in this chapter about positive psychology in Mexico and Central America (since he currently lives in the U.S) he said that being Mexican is a core part of his identity, that he is based in the US, works all over the world, and he feels that he does represent Mexico, just like Olympic athletes and World Cup soccer players can always represent the country where they were born.

Luz de Lourdes Eguiluz

What characterizes happy couples? How do members of positive families interact with each other? How can positive psychology be applied in family therapy? Can positive psychology be useful in suicide prevention?

Dr. Luz de Lourdes Eguiluz Romo has studied these issues in her work as a researcher and clinician. Dr. Eguiluz has been a professor at the National University (UNAM) in Mexico for over 30 years, where she has been the director of the Psychology Department at the FES Iztacala campus. At the university, Dr. Eguiluz has led the research project on Families and Health and founded and directed the Family Development and Education Clinic.

Dr. Eguiluz obtained her bachelor's degree (*licenciatura*) in Psychology from the UNAM's Facultad de Estudios Superiores Iztacala. She went on to obtain a Master's degree in Family Therapy from the Universidad de las Américas, and a doctorate in Psychological Research from the Universidad Iberoamericana. She also specialized in Family Therapy in the US and in Spain and has worked on the integration of positive psychology in family therapy. Dr. Eguiluz was awarded the Mexican Psychology Prize in 2007 by the National Federation of Psychology Schools and Faculties (FENAPSIME) for her merits in the teaching of psychology. She has also received awards in other countries, such as an honorary membership to the Peruvian College of Psychologists and a distinguished professorship by the Colombian Family Therapy Association.

Dr. Eguiluz has made significant contributions to positive psychology in Mexico through her research, teaching, as a clinician, and in her service to the profession. She was the first president of the Mexican Positive Psychology Society (SMPP). She has brought together her experience as a couple's and family therapist with positive psychology by studying happy, long term marriages and "positive families" (Eguiluz et al., 2008; Eguiluz Romo, 2002; Eguiluz et al., 2017; Plasencia Vilchis et al., 2016).

Dr. Eguiluz has also specialized in the study and prevention of suicide and she has recently begun to incorporate positive psychology in this work, including the assessment of subjective well-being in addition to other measures in the evaluation of suicidal risk among young people (Eguiluz & Ayala, 2014; Eguiluz et al., 2014).

In 2009, Dr. Eguiluz and her colleagues at FES Iztacala created a Diploma Program in Positive Psychology, which is being taught to date. She is a founding member of the Mexican Positive Psychology Society and was its first president from 2015–2017.

Dr. Eguiluz is a prolific writer who has published 58 research articles and 9 books on family systems, family therapy and suicide prevention, including: *El baile de la pareja (The Couple's Dance)* (2008) *Dinámica de la familia: un enfoque psicológico sistémico (Family Dynamics: a systemic psychology perspective)* (2007a), *Entendiendo a la Pareja, marcos teóricos para el trabajo terapéutico (Understanding the Couple, theoretical frameworks for therapy)* (2007b), *Dinámica de la Familia*

(*Family Dynamics*) (2006) and *Terapia Familiar: su uso hoy en día* (*Family Therapy: its use today*) (2004).

José García Vega

How can we measure quality of life? What would a good index of quality of life for Mexico look like? How do the values of Mexican people impact their happiness? What is the relationship between quality of life and happiness?

Dr. José García Vega is an economist who has specialised in the study of quality of life and subjective well-being in Mexico and has addressed these questions in his work. He got his undergraduate degree in accounting and his Master's in Business Administration from the Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas, and obtained his doctorate in Economics from Texas A&M University.

Dr. García Vega has been on the faculty of several universities in Mexico and abroad. His most recent appointment was with the Universidad de Monterrey, in Monterrey, Mexico, where he headed the department of Economics and directed the Center for Well-being Studies. In his career, Dr. García Vega has found that happiness still is not taken seriously in many academic circles and that there is a common misconception of happiness as a synonym of continuous positive emotion, which is unattainable (García Vega, 2009).

Among Dr. García Vega's findings about happiness in Mexico are that despite serious problems like corruption and violence, most Mexicans (like many Latin-Americans) have high levels of happiness and satisfaction with life. These levels of happiness and satisfaction in good part have to do with Mexicans' social relationships, particularly with the family (Rojas & García Vega, 2017).

Dr. García Vega believes that, in addition to the good family and interpersonal relationships we enjoy in Mexico, our high levels of satisfaction may have a downside, because they can be the result of a culture that tends towards hedonism, short term planning and conformity. He believes that, paradoxically, high levels of satisfaction might be an obstacle for advancement towards a greater quality of life, such as the one enjoyed by the Nordic countries (García Vega, 2016).

Dr. García Vega has been a member of the Board of Directors of the International Society of Quality of Life Studies and of the Community Indicators Consortium. He coordinated the development of the first Quality of Life Index for Mexico (García Vega, 2011) and has adapted and applied various well-being models in corporations and universities. He is currently a consultant and speaker on happiness, quality of life and well-being. He has published numerous articles and chapters in books about happiness and well-being.

Elías Góngora

What is the relationship between spirituality and well-being? How do we define a measure a “full life”? Can positive interventions enhance pro-social behavior? How do families in the Yucatan cope with difficulties in positive ways? How can positive psychology be applied in sports?

Throughout his long career, Dr. Elías Góngora Coronado has addressed these and many more questions related to well-being, with an emphasis on its cultural components. Dr. Góngora is a professor in the Psychology department at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (Autonomous University of Yucatán), UADY, where he has been on the faculty for over 40 years.

Dr. Góngora obtained his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Psychology from the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY), and his doctorate in Psychology from the UNAM, Mexico’s National Autonomous University. He has been one of the pioneers in introducing positive psychology in Mexico. In 2008, he invited Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi to present in Yucatan, and since then, Dr. Góngora started to offer a positive psychology class at the UADY that has been taken by over 250 students. He also teaches a class on spirituality and well-being, and courses on Wisdom for Well-being and Strategies for a Happy Life. From 2010 through 2017 he led a group of students and faculty, called “UADY Positive Psychology in Action” to scientifically study and promote the good in people.

Dr. Góngora has done much for the diffusion of positive psychology in Mexico, especially in the Yucatan peninsula, in academic settings and for general audiences. Since 2017 he and his colleague Iris Vázquez have taught a graduate level positive psychology class and in that same year, he created the UADY Center of Happiness and Well-being, whose motto is “Science for a Full Life”. The members of the Center do research, teach and apply positive psychology. Since 2018 the Center has offered a diploma program in positive psychology.

Dr. Góngora has had a long-standing interest in the social and cultural contexts of psychological phenomena, and he takes an ethno-psychological approach to the study of personality. He has researched parenting styles in Yucatan, positive coping and happiness. His studies show that a positive coping style is characteristic of several different groups in Yucatán, a state in which there is also evidence that people tend to have a positive self-perception (Canché et al., 2017). His research on spirituality shows that people who rate high on this characteristic tend to be happier (Vásquez-Velázquez & Góngora-Coronado, 2012).

Dr. Góngora is also involved in sports psychology, which he integrates with positive psychology, as exemplified in his work with sports injuries using positive psychology, and self-efficacy among young athletes. His commitment to well-being extends beyond psychology to the well-being of the planet and he is involved in research projects about climate change and conservation.

Dr. Góngora is a member of Mexico’s National System of Researchers (SNI) and he has published tens of research articles, a book on families, parenting and personality from an ethno-psychological perspective, and numerous book chapters

and a book on skills for life: *Enfrentándome a la vida. Manejo de Problemas y Conflictos con el enfoque de habilidades para la vida (Coping with Life. Dealing with problems and conflicts with a life skills approach)* (Pinto Loría et al., 2012).

Norma Ivonne González Arratia

How resilient are Mexican children? What contributes to the development of resilience in youth and adults? What is the relationship between self-esteem and happiness?

Dr. Norma Ivonne González Arratia has studied resilience, self-esteem and well-being among children, teenagers and adults in Mexico. She is a professor in the department of Behavioral Sciences at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, where she heads the Culture and Personality Faculty. Her research focuses on culture, personality and health and she has pioneered research on resilience in children and youth who live in vulnerable situations in Mexico. She has also studied resilience and well-being in people with acute and chronic diseases.

Dr. González Arratia has found that the children and teenagers she has studied in Mexico are resilient and that the variables that have the greatest effect on their resilience are self-esteem and the love and support of their families or other significant people in their lives (González Arratia et al., 2016). Her research also shows that mothers' self-esteem is highly correlated with their children's self-esteem (González-Arratia, 1996) and that low self-esteem in children is a predictor of poor academic performance (Plata et al., 2014). Her studies of children in different risk situations (from family violence to teen pregnancy and homelessness) reveal that hopefulness, feeling loved and accepted predict resilience in the face of family, school and social difficulties (González Arratia, 2016; González Arratia & Valdez, 2015).

Dr. González Arratia has made contributions to psychometry within positive psychology. She developed instruments to assess optimism in teenagers and validated the PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect) Scale and the Positive Mental Health Scale for Mexican children and teenagers (González Arratia, 2014; González Arratia & Medina, 2015, 2016).

Dr. González Arratia received her bachelor's and master's degrees in Psychology at the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, and her Ph.D. in Psychological Research at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. She is a member of Mexico's National Researchers' System (SNI) and she has received numerous academic awards, among them a distinction for young researchers from the Mexican Social Psychology Society and the State Award in Science and Technology in the Social Sciences division, from the government of the State of Mexico. She has also been chosen as an eminent scientist from the State of Mexico by the State of México's Institute of Public Administration.

Dr. González Arratia has published tens of articles in peer reviewed journals and she has written five books on resilience, self-esteem, health and psychology and

qualitative research, among them: *Resiliencia y Personalidad. Cómo desarrollarse en tiempos de crisis (Resilience and Personality: how to grow in times of crisis)* (2016) and *La autoestima. Medición y estrategias de intervención a través de una experiencia en la reconstrucción del ser (Self-esteem. Assessment and intervention strategies through a self-reconstruction experience)* (2011)

Mónica González Ramírez

What is the relationship between stress and psychosomatic symptoms? Why do university professors and students experience burnout? Is having pets beneficial for their owners?

These are only a few of the questions that Dr. Mónica González has addressed in her broad range of research projects. Dr. González is a professor in the Psychology Department of the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León (UANL) in Monterrey, Mexico. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Psychology from the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, as well as her Master's in Health Psychology. She went on to receive a PhD in Behavioral Science Methodology from the Universidad Autónoma y Complutense de Madrid and the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia in Spain.

Dr. González has studied stress among men and women, single and married mothers, and university students and professors. One of her many findings is that single mothers experience more stress, less social support and lower self-esteem than mothers in two-parent families (Hernández & González Ramírez, 2011). She has looked at how people cope with stress and the relationship between stress, burnout and psychosomatic symptoms and found that there is a strong relationship between anxiety, depression and psychosomatic symptoms among college students (González Ramírez et al., 2009). Her studies of other health matters, such as adherence to treatment in HIV patients, how people live and cope with fibromyalgia, obesity among children and pediatric patients who have suffered from burns, have shown for example that self-applied cognitive-behavioral programs reduce symptoms for women with fibromyalgia (González Ramírez & Landero-Hernández, 2010), and that children and teens who suffer burns show high levels of resilience (Quezada Berumen et al., 2014a).

Dr. González is also interested in the relationships between people and their pets, particularly dogs, the benefits of dog ownership and the effectiveness of dog assisted therapy. Her findings show, for example, that people who see their dog as part of the family and devote some time a week to train it, experience less perceived stress than people who see their dog as a pet or a guardian of the house, and that the use of therapy dogs can support cognitive restructuring (González Ramírez & Hernández, 2011).

Dr. González has done important work in psychometrics, validating and adapting several instruments, such as the Spanish version of the Life Orientation Test (LOT) that assesses optimism and pessimism, the Brief COPE that measures coping

responses, the Body Connection Scale, which looks at body awareness, the Lexington Attachment to Pets Scale (LAPS-M), Perceived Stress Scales, and the Brief Anxiety Situations and Responses (SRA-B) test (Landeró Hernández & González Ramírez, 2009; Quezada Berumen et al., 2014b; González Ramírez et al., 2013; González Ramírez et al., 2014).

Dr. González is a member of Mexico's National Researchers' System (SNI) and she has won the Research Prize awarded by the UANL, for her development of a structural model to explain psychosomatic symptoms and stress from transactional theory.

María del Rocío Hernández Pozo

How do people define happiness in different cultures? What role does optimism play in academic performance? How do beliefs about gender relate to violence and discrimination against women?

Dr. María del Rocío Hernández Pozo has studied these issues throughout her prolific academic career. She holds a doctorate in Experimental Psychology from Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM), where she has been a professor since 1989. She currently works in the CRIM-UNAM program for Equity and Gender Studies.

Dr. Hernández Pozo is a level II member of Mexico's National System of Researchers (SNI) and a member of the Mexican Academy of Sciences. Her research career has been very productive and she has studied different topics, including stress among high school and college students and its impact on their school performance; health behaviors, addictions, and the psychological and health correlates of mindfulness. She has also done psychometric work and has validated instruments to assess automatic thoughts and distress, anger and emotional control, and mindful attention.

It is hard to choose a sample of her vast body of work, but as a couple of examples we will mention the study of people's definitions of happiness in different countries. Dr. Hernández Pozo and collaborators found that family and social relationships are central elements of the context in which people experience happiness, and that a sense of inner harmony is a feature that prevails when people describe their psychological experience of happiness (Delle Fave et al., 2016).

Dr. Hernández Pozo has also studied emotional balance, optimism and pessimism and has found that negative thoughts and pessimism are negatively correlated with academic performance among college students, while a balance between optimism and pessimism is positively correlated with academic achievement (González Beltran et al., 2016).

Dr. Hernández Pozo's current research projects cover computerized tracking of behaviors related to health, work, sports and school performance; positive psychology interventions for behavior change; attitudes around gender equity, and binaural stimulation to promote well-being.

Dr. Hernández Pozo has received important recognitions in her career, among them the National Prize for Scientific Research in 1992 and the Aida Weiss Prize in behavioral and sociological research on cancer. She has been the editor of two scientific psychology journals: the *Revista Mexicana de Análisis de la Conducta* (Mexican Journal of Behavioural Analysis), and the *Revista Latinoamericana de Medicina Conductual* (Latin American Journal of Behavioral Medicine).

Gerardo Leyva Parra

How can subjective well-being be measured reliably across nations? What are efficient ways to measure well-being at a country-wide scale? What is the subjective well-being of Mexicans like? What is the relationship between subjective well-being and various economic variables?

In his explorations of these matters, Dr. Gerardo Leyva Parra has been a world leader in the measurement of happiness and well-being in nations. He is the General Adjunct Director of Research at the INEGI, Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography, an autonomous public agency that conducts the nation's population and economic censuses.

Dr. Leyva got his bachelor's degree in Economics at the Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, his Master's in Economics from the ITAM (Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México) and his Ph.D. in Regional Economics from Cornell University. He also has a diploma in Positive Psychology from the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. He has been a member of the United Nation's "Grupo de Río", a group of experts in the measurement of poverty, as well as a participant in the "Technical Committee to Assess Poverty" in Mexico and one of the developers of the first official methodology to measure poverty in this country.

The INEGI in Mexico has been one of the first national statistics bureaus in the world to measure Subjective Well-being, and Dr. Leyva has spearheaded its efforts. Following the guidelines for the assessment of well-being developed by the OECD, to create an instrument that would generate data that could be compared with data from other countries, Dr. Leyva and his team created the BIARE survey (BIARE is an acronym for "Bienestar Autorreportado", Self -Reported Well-being in Spanish) which has been added to other national surveys since 2012 and it is administered every trimester. The current version of the BIARE asks about satisfaction with life in different domains of life, about Eudaimonia or meaning in life, and about affective ratio or emotional balance (INEGI, 2018). Respondents rate their satisfaction on a scale from 0 to 10 with personal relationships, occupation/activity, housing, health, accomplishments in life, perspectives for the future, standard of living, neighborhood, free time, personal accomplishments, expectations about the future, economic situation, work, housing, neighborhood, free time, city, country, and safety.

The most recent data (INEGI, 2018) shows that the average level of life satisfaction for Mexico's urban population is 8.2 (on a scale from 0 to 10). Mexicans are very satisfied with their personal relationships (with an average score of 8.6) and their

occupation (8.5) and they are much less satisfied with the public arenas of life, such as their country (with an average score of 6.1) and their safety as citizens (the lowest ranking domain, with a mean of 4.8).

In terms of Eudaimonia or having a sense that their life is meaningful, people are asked to state how much they agree or disagree, on a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 statements such as “What I do in life is worthwhile”, “I am a fortunate person”, “I have a purpose or mission in life”, and the like. The findings about this eudemonic aspect of subjective well-being show that there are high levels of meaning among the Mexican urban population, with a mean response of 8 and above for most items (INEGI, 2018).

The third aspect of subjective well-being that is assessed through the BIARE in Mexico is affective balance, which refers to the ratio of positive and negative emotions experienced during the 24 hours prior to responding to the survey. On average, the emotional balance of urban Mexicans is positive, with a mean score of 6.4 on a scale that goes from -10 to 10 (INEGI, 2018).

Many people find it puzzling that Mexicans have such a high level of subjective well-being, especially because it is not a rich nation and the country is suffering record levels of violence (*El País*, 2018). Dr. Leyva believes that there are several factors that can explain this: one is that averages do not reflect distributions. There are many people in Mexico who report high levels of life satisfaction (9 or 10 on the scale), but there are over 13 million who report very low scores. Leyva points out that 13 million is the equivalent of the population of some entire countries. Another explanation has to do with how people in Mexico experience various life domains. There is a very significant difference between how satisfied we are with the inner circles of our lives and the more public ones. People in Mexico are very satisfied with their families, their friends and close relationships, but dissatisfied with the country, its government and its levels of violence. Among the INEGI’s findings are that experiencing violence in any form, whether it be domestic abuse or being a victim of a crime, has a large negative impact on subjective well-being. But for people who have not been directly affected by violence, being in a violent environment does not impact their well-being. Leyva hypothesizes that it is as if “otherness” is not very important. Mexicans are affectionate, we are generally in a good mood and enjoy life, especially with our loved ones, but there may not be a very developed sense of community in a larger context (Leyva, 2018).

Dr. Leyva and his team are beginning to study large data sets and they are working with Dr. Johannes Eichstaedt from the Positive Psychology Center of the University of Pennsylvania to measure well-being in large populations through the analyses of public posts on social media.

To have valid and reliable data about subjective well-being is invaluable for social scientists and for policy makers, and this information is now available in Mexico, in good part thanks to Dr. Leyva’s work.

Joaquina Palomar

What makes people resilient? What are the best predictors of subjective well-being among people who live in poverty? How do family and social relationships affect the subjective well-being of people who live in poverty? Are there psychological variables that predict government aid recipients' upward social mobility?

Dr. Palomar addressed these kinds of questions in her research as a leader in the study of quality of life and subjective well-being in Mexico, and is one of the country's foremost experts on resilience. She worked extensively for over a decade with people who live in poverty, studying how family relationships and social networks impact their subjective wellbeing.

Dr. Palomar was a professor in the Psychology Department of the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, from 1996 until her untimely death in 2016. She obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO) in Guadalajara and her Master's in Clinical Psychology at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), where she also got her doctorate in Psychology.

One of Dr. Palomar's areas of specialty was the study of the psychological and social aspects of the lives of people who live in poverty. She studied the impact of one of Mexico's largest social welfare programs, called Oportunidades, and found, among other things, that even though economic well-being is correlated with subjective well-being, there was no sign of lack of well-being or of greater psychological distress among the very poor. Within the same income group (considered very poor), people who were more satisfied with their family relationships and recreational activities were less likely to "feel poor" and tended to have higher scores on subjective well-being. Her findings showed that the best predictors of subjective well-being are related to the personal strengths and competencies that allow people to cope with life in direct ways, for example rational problem solving and self-control. (Palomar Lever & Estrada, 2016a, 2016b).

In her studies of resilience among the very poor in Mexico, Palomar found that the best individual predictors of resilience were an internal locus of control, mastery and competence, optimism, looking for support, a direct coping style, emotional intelligence and an absence of depression. The aspects of family interactions that predicted resilience were warmth and support, and authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles. Social support from family and friends also predicted resilience (Palomar Lever et al., 2012). Her research on teenagers who live in poverty also found that social abilities were predictive of subjective well-being, that the quality of family relationships is central for the well-being of adolescents, and that living in dangerous and stressful environments (like they did) had a detrimental impact on their happiness and satisfaction with life (Palomar Lever & Estrada, in Gaxiola Romero & Palomar, 2016).

Dr. Palomar's research also found counterintuitive evidence that social support may be negatively correlated to upward social mobility among Mexico's very poor people, because there is a culture of solidarity that makes them feel pressured to

reciprocate favors and financial help, and this can limit their economic growth (Universidad Iberoamericana, 2016).

Dr. Palomar was a member of Mexico's National Researchers System (SNI) and was actively involved in various professional organizations, like the International Society for Quality of Life Studies, where she headed the research team on poverty and quality of life. She published tens of articles in peer reviewed journals and co-edited two books on quality of life and resilience: *El Bienestar Psicológico. Una mirada desde Latinoamérica (Psychological Wellbeing: a perspective from Latin America)* (Gaxiola Romero & Palomar, 2016) & *Estudios de Resiliencia en América Latina (Resilience Studies in Latin America)* (Palomar & Gaxiola, 2012).

Tania Romo

How can self-regulation be measured? What does it take to change eating habits? Do psycho-educational interventions for well-being work? What are some of the neuro-psycho-immunological factors involved in stress and well-being?

Dr. Tania Romo González de la Parra's studies well-being with a special emphasis on biological aspects of psychology and health. She is a professor at the Institute of Biological Research of the Universidad Veracruzana in Xalapa, Mexico. She received her bachelor's degree in Chemistry from the Universidad Veracruzana and her doctorate in Biomedical Sciences from the UNAM (Mexico's National Autonomous University). She has also had training in narrative therapy and in natural healing methods.

Dr. Romo's research career is interdisciplinary and spans a broad range of topics, from basic biological research, like studies of patterns in alleles of human immunoglobulin VH genes, parasitic infections of mammals and antigen-antibody reactions in women with breast cancer, to psychological studies of self-regulation, mind-body health, psychosocial stress, happiness, and well-being. She has also studied addictions and the effectiveness of drug abuse prevention programs.

Dr. Romo and her collaborators have developed and validated several psychometric instruments, such as the International Affective Images System (Romo González et al., 2018), and a Physical Activity Self-Regulation Scale (Campos Uscanga et al., 2017).

Dr. Romo designed and implemented a "Positive Education Intervention" called "Self-Knowledge and Care of the Soul", which incorporates traditional practices such as Chi-Kung, visualization, meditation and some narrative therapy exercises. The program increased levels of happiness and well-being for a group of undergraduate students the Universidad Veracruzana (Romo González et al., 2013). She has published many research papers and is the author of *Manual para el cuidado del alma (Manual for the Care of the Soul)*(2017).

Alejandro Tapia Vargas

What variables are good predictors of happiness? Is there a relationship between spirituality, religiosity and happiness? How do personal values influence well-being? How do people with chronic illnesses experience meaning and purpose in life?

Dr. Alejandro Tapia pursued these questions during his 15 years on the faculty of the Universidad de Monterrey, the Universidad del Valle de México and the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León. He has been a member of Mexico's National Researchers' System (SNI). He has specialized in the study of spirituality and religiosity and their relationship to well-being, and has published numerous journal articles and book chapters on the topic.

Dr. Tapia got his bachelor's degree in Psychology from the Universidad del Valle de México and his Master's in Clinical Psychology and Ph.D. in Psychology from Mexico's National Autonomous University (UNAM). He has developed scales to measure spirituality and well-being and has studied the relationship between religiosity, spirituality and happiness (Tapia, & Villegas, 2009; Tapia & Villegas, 2008). Among the findings of research done by Dr. Tapia and his colleagues with populations in the Northeast of Mexico, are that demographic variables are poor predictors of happiness, while satisfaction with personal goals and one's family account for more of the variance in happiness. People who report being happily married are significantly happier than those who are single, widowed, unhappily married and, especially, divorced (Garcia et al., 2007). In terms of values and religiosity, Tapia and collaborators (2007) found that people whose important values include being fair, respectful, honest and helpful with others are happier. The latter value, being helpful to others, explained the largest difference in happiness. Their findings also showed that people who attended religious services more than once a week tend to be happier than people who don't attend them or do so infrequently.

Dr. Tapia also studied well-being and purpose among patients who live with diabetes and cancer, and he found that the latter have a greater sense of purpose than the former. His research has also found that people who are primed with a mortality salience situation exhibit a greater internal locus of control (Willis et al., 2011).

Dr. Tapia is also interested in history and hermeneutics, and he has written a book about historiography in XVI century Mexico (called New Spain at the time), and edited another volume on historical moments in psychology (Tapia Vargas, 2010). Together with me (Margarita Tarragona) and Dr. Mónica González, he co-edited one of the first books in Spanish about positive psychology *Psicología Positiva* (Tapia et al., 2012), and he has published numerous research articles on religiosity, spirituality, mortality, meaning in life and well-being.

Dr. Tapia is currently devoted to his clinical practice, and has founded @ContributingWellness, a multidisciplinary community well-being initiative that works with schools and organizations to foster good nutrition, fun physical activity and emotional well-being.

Andromeda Valencia

What are some of the character strengths of children in Mexico? What positive emotions do Mexican children experience most frequently? Can the well-being of children with chronic and serious illnesses be improved through psychological interventions? Are positive interventions effective in preventing depression in children?

Dr. Andrómeda Valencia Ortíz addresses these questions in her work as professor and researcher at the Instituto de Ciencias de las Salud (Health Sciences Institute) of the Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo, where she is part of a faculty group that specializes in emotional well-being.

Dr. Valencia has made important contributions to the psychology of well-being in Mexico, through her research, teaching and clinical work. She got her bachelor's degree in psychology and her doctorate in Health Psychology at the UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico), specializing in pediatric cancers. Dr. Valencia has taught in several health and clinical psychology university programs in Mexico and headed the National University's (UNAM) Psychological Services Clinic. Among Dr. Valencia's most important contributions are the standardization for Mexico of the SHIPLEY-2 test for cognitive ability, the FROSTIG (DTVP-3) developmental test of visual perception and the FFPI-C five factor personality inventory for children.

Dr. Valencia runs one of the most productive psychology research labs in Mexico. She and her team study chronic and degenerative disease in children, childhood obesity, diabetes, anxiety, depression and behavioral problems in children. Their research includes studies about character strengths in children, positive emotions in children and the development of positive psychology interventions to prevent depression among elementary school students. Among her findings are that children's virtues and character strengths correlate positively with their happiness levels and have a negative association with depressive symptoms (Rubio & Valencia, 2016).

Dr. Valencia integrates cognitive behavioral approaches and positive psychology in her work and she has developed The Optimism Game, an intervention for children and their families to give them tools to better cope with difficult and traumatic situations, particularly when they face serious illnesses. It includes activities for children and parents that foster development of an optimistic cognitive style, de-catastrophizing, problem solving, and relationship skills, such as assertive communication and negotiating abilities. Using the Optimism Game as an intervention has been shown to improve perceived quality of life, increase adherence to treatment and improve social skills in children with cancer (2006) The Optimism Game has been used with children who have cancer, diabetes, neuro-dermatitis, cleft palate, eating disorders, enuresis and encopresis, in addition to kids who have experienced bullying or the divorce or death their parents (2013).

The Optimism Game won an award from the Mexican Psycho-Oncology Society, and Dr. Valencia has also received the first prize from the Research Network on

Psychosocial Processes, Clinical Work and Health, given by the Mexican System of Research in Psychology.

Dr. Valencia has authored numerous scientific articles and book chapters on health psychology and has directed many undergraduate and doctoral dissertations, especially in neuroscience. She is a researcher and a clinician and is the academic director of Servicios Psicológicos Integrales de México (SEPIMEX), a private psychological services center. She has been very active in several national psychology associations, and she has headed the continuing education committee of the Sociedad Mexicana de Psicología (Mexican Psychology Society). She is a reviewer for the *Revista Latinoamericana de Medicina Conductual (Latin American Journal of Behavioural Medicine)*.

Applied Positive Psychology in Mexico

As the previous section shows, there is a solid group of researchers, mostly psychologists and economists, that study happiness and well-being in several universities and other organizations in Mexico. Several of them have been involved in international research collaborations for many years, and some have been members of special commissions that have designed international guidelines for the measurement and study of well-being. In their labs, these investigators are mentoring a new generation of positive psychology researchers and the number of doctoral dissertations about well-being and human flourishing are rapidly growing.

The Mexican Positive Psychology Association (SMPP) was created in 2014 to bring together academics and practitioners. It hosts biennial international conferences on research and applications of positive psychology.

Positive Psychology Training Programs

As encouraging as the development of positive psychology research in Mexico has been, the growth in the application of positive psychology has been even greater. Several universities and private institutes offer diploma and certificate programs in positive psychology that focus on its application in different professional domains. I have been fortunate to be involved in the creation of some of these, and to have among the people who introduced positive psychology in Mexico.

I believe that my colleagues from Grupo Campos Elíseos, Elena Fernández, Sylvia London, Irma Rodríguez and I, were among the first to introduce the concept of positive psychology when we invited Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi to do a workshop in Mexico City in 2003. A few years later we hosted Dr. George Vaillant and Dr. James Pawelski and we started to include positive psychology in our training programs for therapists.

In 2008, the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City opened the first university-based positive psychology in Spanish in the world, the “Diplomado” in Positive Psychology. It was a privilege for me to direct it. It was offered for 5 years and 110 people graduated from it.

Shortly after that, Dr. Luz de Lourdes Eguiluz started another diploma program at the National University (UNAM) FES Iztacala campus. 160 people have graduated from it to date. Yet another university in Mexico City offers a diploma program: the Universidad de las Américas, currently with 30 graduates. And this year, the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán has started a diploma in Positive Psychology, led by Dr. Elías Góngora, with 54 participants. In other cities, the Jesuit University of Guadalajara, ITESO, has recently started to offer a diploma in Applied Positive Psychology, as does another Jesuit institution, the Ibero Monterrey University, in Monterrey.

In addition to universities, there are also private institutes that offer training and certification in positive psychology. I am on the faculty of the Certificate in Positive Psychology for Latin America (CIPPLA), offered jointly by the Wholebeing Institute from the USA and the Instituto de Bienestar Integral, directed by Arlen Solodkin. The program was originally designed by Dr. Tal Ben Shahar, and we have translated it to Spanish. We have 150 graduates since our opening in 2016. ALADEH (Latin American Association of Human Development) also offers a diploma program in Positive Psychology.

If we add the graduates of these different programs, we have over 500 professionals who have specialized in positive psychology and are applying the science of well-being to their work in education, health, management, human resources, coaching, public policy. . . each of them touching the lives of many people.

There are also some undergraduate classes on positive psychology, like the one offered by Dr. Elías Góngora at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, and one taught by Nicole Fuentes at the Universidad de Monterrey, and one that I teach at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México.

One university deserves a special mention because of the role it is playing in the diffusion and development of positive psychology in Mexico and the magnitude of its endeavor: Universidad Tecmilenio. Under the leadership of its president, Dr. Héctor Escamilla, Tecmilenio created the Instituto de Ciencias de la Felicidad (Institute for Happiness Sciences) in 2013 with the mission to promote well-being. Here I was fortunate once again, because I had the opportunity to be the institute’s first director and to be involved in the design of its programs with Dr. María Elena Morín, Dr. Luis Gutiérrez Alladro and their teams. Dr. Enrique Tamés directed the institute after me, and Dr. Rosalinda Ballesteros is its current director. One of Universidad Tecmilenio’s goal is to have as many faculty members and staff as possible be certified in positive psychology. So far, 2500 employees and teachers from Tecmilenio and Tecnológico de Monterrey have gone through the certification. The program is also offered to people outside the university, and 500 have graduated (Morín, 2018).

Tecmilenio also offers a Master’s in Positive Leadership and 48 people have obtained their degree. Perhaps the most impressive numbers are those involving

undergraduates: all students at Tecmilenio must take an introductory positive psychology class. So far, 26,000 students have taken it (Ballesteros, 2018)!

Positive Psychology in Central America

As I mentioned in the introduction, there is very little positive psychology research being done in Central America. But this section features an outstanding exception: Dr. Mariano Rojas from Costa Rica, who has been a leader in the study of happiness and well-being in Latin America and who, in his own life and through his research, is linking the two geographical areas covered in this chapter.

Mariano Rojas

Dr. Mariano Rojas is an economist and a professor of Economics at Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), in México City and at the Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla in Puebla, Mexico. He specializes in studying happiness, quality of life, subjective well-being, social progress, poverty and economic development. Dr. Rojas has been a guest researcher at the Erasmus University Rotterdam (The Netherlands) and at the Universidad de Granada (Spain); and has been on the faculty of University of International Business and Economics (Beijing, China) and at the Universidad de las Américas, Puebla, Mexico.

Born and raised in Costa Rica, Dr. Rojas obtained his undergraduate degree in economics from the Universidad de Costa Rica and went on to obtain a master's and PhD from Ohio State University in the USA. He is a member of Mexico's National System of Researchers (SNI) and he is the president of the International Society for Quality of Life Studies. He led a project called *The Measuring the Progress of Societies: A Perspective from Mexico* (Rojas, 2009b) whose goal is to enrich the global conversation about progress and the way we understand well-being through the contributions of a Latin American perspective.

Dr. Rojas is a prolific researcher and author. He has published over one hundred book chapters and papers in journals such as *World Development*, *Development Policy Review*, *Oxford Development Studies*, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, *Journal of Socio-Economics*, *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *Social Indicators Research*, *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *El Trimestre Económico*, *Latin American Research Review*, y *Pan American Journal of Public Health*. He has also edited several books, including *Measurement, Research and Inclusion in Public Policy of Subjective Well-being: Latin America* (2012) and *Handbook of Happiness Research in Latin America* (2016). He is the author of *The Measurement of Progress and Well-Being; Proposals from Latin America* (2012) and *El Estudio Científico de la Felicidad (The Scientific Study of Happiness)* (2014).

Dr. Rojas has made many important contributions to the measurement and conceptualization of well-being, integrating an economic perspective with psychological knowledge about subjective well-being. He has played an important role in the assessment of poverty, well-being and social development in Latin America and internationally (Rojas, 2009a, 2017; Rojas & García Vega, 2017). He has stressed the importance of having a clear conceptual framework before rushing to measure well-being and having an over-proliferation of assessments (2009a).

Rojas values taking a “subjective well-being approach” in which the researcher does not make assumptions about people’s well-being, but rather is interested on how life is experienced by concrete persons (Rojas, 2009b). He describes three kinds of experiences that make up human well-being: hedonic or pleasurable experiences, affective experiences (emotions and moods), and the cognitive experience of setting goals and aspirations and achieving them. He points out that there is a fourth class of experiences, that has not been studied enough yet: the spiritual or mystical.

Rojas’ studies in Costa Rica and Mexico (2009b) reveal that the impact of income on well-being is large for people with low incomes, and it becomes less influential at higher income levels. His data also show that “there is more to life than standard of living” (2009b, p.71) for example, family satisfaction, enjoying one’s work and being able to have free time, and he reminds us that we are consumers, but we are more than consumers, and that just are there are economic goods, there are “relational goods”, because relationships are central to well-being. Rojas’ findings also highlight the importance of having free time, that education is important, not only because it allows us to get better jobs, but because it may allow us to have better relationships and to develop our skills for a more fulfilling life.

Rojas (2009b) has found that getting out of poverty is not enough to guarantee that people’s well-being will increase. His data also show the importance of the environment and habitability for well-being: having safety, access to green spaces, transparency, health services, are all factors that affect well-being, as are the personal and cultural values that shape people’s life satisfaction.

After finding repeatedly in his research that social indicator measures generally are not very good predictors of Latin-Americans’ well-being, Dr. Rojas has invited his colleagues to question, and hopefully expand, the theories that aspire to understand happiness. He proposes that.

the conception of wealth needs to be expanded; and that the notion of wealth of nations must incorporate factors such as the strength of warm and gratifying human relations (within the family as well as in the neighborhood, the working place, and the community), the availability of free time and the knowledge and skills to enjoy leisure activities, and holding non-materialistic values that place people’s attention on who they are and how they relate to others rather than on what they possess and can purchase (2016, p. 12).

The Future of Positive Psychology in Mexico and Central America

My final comments will be focused on Mexico, since the bulk of this chapter has been devoted to this country. I hope this chapter illustrates that there is a very dynamic community of positive psychology researchers and practitioners in Mexico. There is a growing interest in studying happiness and well-being among young scholars. There is also an increasing demand for specialists on well-being in schools, corporations and other organizations and, fortunately, there are good quality programs to train these practitioners. Government agencies are also showing a serious interest in well-being and how to promote it at a social level.

Some institutions, like Universidad Tecmilenio, have been able to offer the foundations of positive psychology to such a large number of people that it is almost like a social experiment in which we may be able to see the impact that a critical mass of people informed about the science of well-being might will have on a community.

I think that the positive psychology community still faces some challenges in Mexico, like some common misconceptions that are held both within academic circles and among the public. For example, that positive psychology is the same as “positive thinking” self-help, that it is about being happy all the time or that it is a topic of interest just for rich societies, not relevant for a developing country or a Latin culture. I believe this can be addressed by educating people about the scientific basis of positive psychology and by maintaining the rigor and complexity of the science of wellbeing in the growing number of applied training programs.

I believe that the next phase in the development of positive psychology in Mexico, and probably in all Latin America, will involve making the science of well-being our own, doing more research within our local cultures, studying positive psychology interventions in these contexts, adapting them if necessary, and generating new knowledge and new applications to contribute to human flourishing in our countries and in the world.

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Chapter 4

Positive Psychology in South America



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Contextualizing South America

Latin America does not interest the rest of the world, said Nixon in 1971 to young Donald Rumsfeld, future US secretary of defense, when he advised him in which part of the world he should ignore. That line of thought remains valid (Reid, 2009, p. 25).

Latin America is not indispensable for the world's functioning. The failure of Latin America, according to Bolívar and people after him, begins when la Gran Colombia disintegrates due to its instability in its form of government (Rangel, 1976, p. 40).

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As Latin Americans, and South Americans particularly, we are aware of the challenge of trying to understand and describe our nations, which is nothing more than describing ourselves. If we had to quote a few words to depict our historical, political, economic and social elements, we'd propose for the discussion both complementary and opposite concepts, such as: complexity, variety, opportunities, progress, art, nature, challenges, inequality and poverty.

All of these elements coexist in our realities and, from the hand of different authors, we'll present them to the readers so that they submerge in what many have called *the exotic Latin American paradox*. Our challenge is to revert, first in our own thinking and then in world thought, that we are ignored and dispensable. The development of Positive Psychology in these latitudes begins to show that we have a voice and that our contributions will begin to be indispensable, despite all difficulties.

A Brief Summary of the History of Latin America and South American Countries

In his wonderful book titled *The forgotten continent: The struggle for the soul of Latin America* [El continente olvidado: la lucha por el alma de América Latina], Reid (2009) presents an essay on the history, the politics and the culture of the hemisphere, as well as an interesting study of Latin America's current political state. In the following paragraphs, we will present his main approaches.

There are great contrasts between Latin America and the rest of the world. In turn, there are also great contrasts between some of the countries that comprise it. Some writers have stated that the similarities among Latin American countries are so strong, as well as the differences with other parts of the world so drastic, the region constitutes a civilization on its own.

Samuel Huntington, an American political scientist, says Latin America reveals a unique identity that sets it apart from the West. . . Its culture is corporatist and authoritarian and Alan in Rouquie, French political scientist, says it is the Far West, the most defiant western frontier of democracy and the development (Reid, 2009, p. 59).

Rangel's 1976 work *From the good savage to the good revolutionary* [Del buen salvaje al buen revolucionario] tells Latin America's history from the myth of the "good savage", which indicates that men were once good and it is civilization that has corrupted them. An analysis on reality from the book also teaches us that there is not one Latin America; instead, there are twenty. It suggests that Latin America is especially vulnerable to the myth of the "good savage" and to the myth of the "good revolutionary". Millenarian and revolutionary thinking conceive the rise of a prophet or martyr to transform Earth and return it to the perfection it had before the fall, and before it was corrupted. This martyr is endowed with special qualities.

Millenarianism or revolutionism is very tempting for those who feel deprived, ostracized, marginalized, frustrated, like they have failed, or have been stripped of their natural right (just as it is the case of the Latin American "good savage" prior to the arrival of the Europeans).

Europeans utilized the Latin American indigenous people; they made them slaves. This is different than what happened to native Americans, which were only

exiled. Therefore, the indigenous Latin Americans became part of the system, and consequently, the current Latin American people descent both from conquerors and the conquered. We are the product of miscegenation, contrast and inequality.

The history of Latin American (LATAM) after its independence shows the disunity of its countries. This disunity didn't allow the formation of a force that could face or be equal to the one of America, a country with growing power. Also, the post-independence nineteenth century stood out for being a time of civil wars and internal disputes.

Regarding LATAM's reigning disunity:

A less objectionable way than the praising of barbarism as our authentic and autochthonous form of expression, but equally deforming as a way of seeing and justifying ourselves as Latin Americans, is to suppose and maintain that we have spiritual, mystical qualities that place us above the vulgar, materialistic success of the United States (Rangel, 1976, p. 53).

Rangel (1976) particularly mentions Argentina, indicating, "it suffers in a way more than any other Latin American country its inferiority in relation to the United States" (p. 54).

On another hand, Rangel (1976), within Latin America's history, states the desire for cosmopolitanism at the time of the conquest, when the creole man felt "in his closed colonial orbit, the uneasiness of isolation and the pleasure of owning the ideas and applications of the old Europe" (p. 184). Hispanic American culture of the eighteenth century sought encyclopedism or enlightenment, raising the "model of European development" as the ideal, which they lacked of.

Cosmopolitan thinking in the American colonial times was influenced by Hispanic intellect, which had, culturally, two fundamental aspirations: to incorporate into Spanish life the contents of natural science and the techniques that the other European nations already offered; and to substitute the convoluted and diffuse forms of baroque expression with other more clear and popular ways.

In colonial times, the conformation of the region's "creoles or autochthonous" identity implied having what others had as well as power, unification and knowledge.

The great historian Mariano Picón Salas (1944) in his work *From conquest to independence: Three centuries of cultural Hispanic American history* [*De la conquista a la independencia: Tres siglos de historia cultural hispanoamericana*], states the existence of a legal-moral debate regarding the validity of the conquest—or lack thereof. When it comes to the history of the Hispanic American conquest, there are two opposing points of view: the history of being socially dominated vs. the history of being socially catechized. The author comments: "Neither the Spaniards were always those possessions of destruction painted by the black legend, nor the saints or knights of a spiritual crusade described by the not less naïve white legend" (p. 40).

It is extremely important to point out the preponderance of the Church in the history of LATAM and the role it still plays in the current idiosyncrasies of the countries that comprise it:

“The Catholic Church has more responsibility than any other factor in what Latin America is and is not. The Spanish conquest was made because of and for Catholicism”. “Until the middle of the nineteenth century, that is to say in the 350 years decisive in the formation of the culture and of the political and social structures of Latin America, Catholicism was both the brain and the backbone of Latin American society”. “Emancipation was the first thing that was done outside the will of the Church, but not even against the Church” (Rangel, 1976, p. 221).

As an example of the influence of the church, we can point to several constitutions (Venezuela, Mexico) where in its first versions, “the official religion was Catholic and there was no religious tolerance” (Rangel, 1976, p. 222).

This way, we can see how the Catholic Church, with its intolerance to the presence of other religions, in combination and contrast with the ideas of cosmopolitan thought and in comparison with the power and achievements of the US and Europe, all live as protagonists in the history and the construction of identity in LATAM.

This complex and contrasting reality lived during colonial times gradually adopted, in creole leaders, a thought that went beyond social criticism to the consciousness of political freedom. The autonomous thinking that was emerging is represented in the works of Francisco de Miranda, influenced by the French revolution in the decade of 1790–1800. A series of pre-independence movements led by characters from different strata of the social fabric gave rise to the later achievement of independence (Picón Salas, 1944).

Reid (2009) argues that modern history indicates that Latin America is a contradictory name that encompasses Central and South America and was popularized by a Colombian writer, José María Torres Caicedo in 1856. If we consider the countries of South America, we could indicate there is a contrast between the optimism for the current progress of some of its countries and those that show evident recoil.

Brazil has a sense of separation from the rest of South America, not only because of its enormous size, but also because of its history and geography. Portuguese colonialism was less rigid than its Spanish counterpart was. Brazil prefers a united South America instead of Latin America. In Brazil, change tends to be peaceful and evolutionary, with a strengthening democracy.

Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, of the southern cone, exhibit a history different from Mexico’s and Brazil’s. Of small indigenous population, they were the first countries to achieve successful economic growth in South America from 1870 to the First World War. Its extensions of land and temperate climate attracted European immigration. Argentina did well but nowadays, not so much. It is considered a developing country, with the development escaping from its hands.

Colombia has experimented serious difficulties in the last decades, as the weakness of the state allowed the flourishing of drug trafficking. Drug revenues allowed the emergence of three illegal armies: FARC, ELN and AUC. Colombia has a history of global conflicts. It is currently seeking to redress all its historical mistakes.

Like Argentina, Venezuela also had its glimpses of prosperity. In the 1960s, it was the richest country in Latin America thanks to oil. Works such as those of Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo, Gerver Torres and Arturo Uslar Pietri’s *Sowing the oil*

[*Sembrando el petróleo*], explain Venezuela passed from a lethargic agricultural country to the most Americanized country so much that baseball is more popular than football. The Venezuelan political tradition marked a contrast with Colombia. Dictators and strong men until 1958, when a democracy was established based on two apparently strong political parties. Oil financed a welfare state, but also a system of political favoritism and much corruption. By the 1990s, the population grew and per capita oil income fell sharply. Attempts to reform an inflated state had popular rejection, partly because corruption deprived many politicians of moral authority to impose austerity. In its desperation, the population opted for Hugo Chávez, a mestizo who had been in prison for leading a coup against the democratic government that charismatically caused fervor, especially in the poor. From several points of view, his Bolivarian Revolution repeats the same policies of non-sustainable redistribution of oil royalties used by his predecessors but with a single party in power instead of two. Partly in response to a fleeting 2002 coup and an attempt to dislodge him in the 2004 referendum, the government has become more authoritarian and toward military socialism. Democracy is in more danger in Venezuela than in any of the large countries of Latin America. When the price of oil falls, the popularity will decline and there will be an adjustment of accounts.

Politics in South America: Between Backwardness and Progress

To talk about politics in South America is to talk about the forms of government that have prevailed since the conquest, which have marked the way in which the population interacts with its rulers, what each expects of the other, what each wishes of the other and what everyone believes they deserve.

Rangel (1976), making a historical account of the forms of political power in Latin America, poses the presence of *caudillismo*, democrats on countercurrent and the Marxist-Leninists.

Caudillismo in LATAM arises as a response to the reigning anarchy after the conquest:

“In the face of arbitrariness, insecurity, the absence of a stable and adequate institutional legal framework, human beings respond by seeking accommodation and shelter within a pyramidal system of personal relationships, with a tyrant at the top of the pyramid” (Rangel, 1976, p. 332).

In Latin America, super-caudillos have also been the true integrators of our precarious nationalities, by achieving the feat of establishing a network of reciprocal interpersonal obligations over the whole territory; creating for the first time modern, professional and centralized armies, instead of cantonal or regional groups; laying telegraphs that would make it possible to receive information and give orders quickly; and building railroads and highways to send loyal and well-armed troops in days rather than months from the center to the extremes of the countries (Rangel, 1976, p. 337).

The historical example of the Mexican *caudillismo* is a worthy example on the rhetoric: the main (and revolutionary) protagonist of the system, where the power is not occupied by a demagogue or *caudillo*, but by an ordinary man in a transitory way.

On the other hand, at present one of the characteristics of the ‘system’, and almost certainly the fundamental key to its viability and stability, unheard of in Latin America, is the absolute and hitherto scrupulously respected prohibition that the president be reelected, even though during his mandate he is all-powerful. He finally designates his successor, so when he ceases to be president he’ll practically disappear from the political firmament and be replaced totally by a new star that does not admit (nor fears) rivals, nor eclipses, nor that nobody else shines with light of their own (Rangel, 1976).

This prohibition of presidential reelection had been religiously fulfilled in LATAM until the arrival of President Chávez in Venezuela, where a reform to the constitution was made so that he could be all-powerful, beyond a mandate. So he could become, if possible, eternal, if not until death decided.

The democrats on countercurrent in LATAM were those who acted in the opposite way to caudillos and tyrants. History has always privileged the systematization and diffusion of the wicked, in order to not make those mistakes again and because they sell more in the movie theaters and the books, rather than in the knowledge of the moderate leaders.

It is worth noting the presence of the reformist democrats in the political history of Latin America who have contributed to the modernization of their nations with the participation of the citizens, from the peasantry, workers, intellectuals and professionals. History makes reference to Frei in Chile (1964) and Caldera in Venezuela (1969) as representatives of Christian Democrats and to Betancourt (1945 and 1959) and Pérez (1974) like standard-bearers of Social Democracy. Betancourt is also known as the anti-Fidel, as an opponent of the communist model that demanded a servile obedience to the principles of Orthodox Communism.

As a historical example of these counter-current democrats is Chilean democracy: “it was condemned to perish, in one way or another, from the very moment when the party of Frei and Tomic rejected the proposal of Alessandri and voted in Congress to make Salvador Allende president in 1970” (Rangel, 1976, p. 39).

Democracy and the Presence of Marxism-Leninism

Attempts have been made in Latin America to reconcile Marxism with democracy, the latter being the one that promotes the freedom of the joint existence of public and private enterprise and freedom of expression. Marxism-Leninism advises to exacerbate class conflicts, until the day, private property is abolished and class differences disappear. Many Latin American people have believed in this fable as those who brought Allende to power in Chile and Chávez in Venezuela. Democracy allows the supporters of these ideas to come to power by votes. Only history has and will realize

that they subsequently are not willing to share some of their power, as it is required by democracy.

Reid (2009) afirma que en la actualidad la política en Latino América y particularmente en Sur América a pesar de sus dictaduras y una presencia de autoritarismo y contrastes, se puede reivindicar la noción de un progreso democrático con sus realidades y avances varios pintos en las diferentes naciones que lo conforman.

Reid (2009) states that in politics today in Latin America and particularly in South America, despite its dictatorships and a presence of authoritarianism and contrasts, one can claim the notion of a democratic progress with its realities and several advances in the different nations that comprise it.

From Chavez's populist autocracy to Chilean-Brazilian contrast reformism, there is a debate between progress and the populist temptation due to three factors:

- The very constitutionalist democracy but with non-democratic practices.
- The rapid passage from being rural to mostly urban (it was more gradual in Europe).
- Economies eliminated protectionism and statist regulation, incubating large and costly distortions (inflations).

The political battle between the populist autocrats and the democratic reformists is still ongoing in Latin America, but it is not capricious to imagine that the initiative is with the reformists.

Bad governments, democracies and weak and young political systems, and economic and regulatory systems unsuitable to the current world reality are some of the reasons that can explain in a general manner why Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from so many social problems, having everything to be a solid block not only economically, but also socially and environmentally.

An increased international cooperation among the region's countries at all levels, trade and protection agreements or use of shared resources to avoid conflict, to fight poverty in all countries at the local level and to help others with ideas, technical capacity and investments are some of the measures that could help reverse the social situation (Reid, 2009).

Economy: Opportunities, Challenges and Bad Practices

Reid (2009) asserts that Latin America is torn between progress and disillusionment. In the next few paragraphs, we will present his arguments.

At present in Latin America, countries that have followed prudent policies are better positioned for economic storms than those who have not done so, such as Venezuela or Argentina. They were exposed to the fall of the prices of raw material and failed to take advantage of extraordinary income when prices were high. In Venezuela, the socialism of the twenty first century was sustained by high oil prices invested in public spending and imports, intimidating the private institutions with

controls and nationalizations. Argentina nationalized the private pension system, which destroyed investor confidence. Populism and the left remained with the bonanza. Slow economic growth allows right-centerers with credible anti-poverty policies to move forward. Mexico, Peru and Colombia from the center right may have difficulties. Only Chile is a clear economic success.

Latin America is an exporter of people, this being a reflection of the inequality of opportunities in its inhabitants. The flow of immigrants to the US and Europe has tripled. Remittances to Latin America increased, according to the IDB. This statistic reflects the failure of Latin American societies to generate jobs and opportunities.

Latin America is not so poor as to entice compassion, nor as dangerous as for strategic calculation, nor has it grown so much economically to stimulate boardrooms.

In contrast, we find Brazil, the fifth largest country, fourth among the largest democracies, eleventh economy in 2005, which gives us optimism in the current Latin American progress.

The typical Latin American, belonging to the stratum of the middle class of his or her country, lives in a city, has access to basic services and much more information about the world than his or hers parents had. This is another element that generates optimism in the current Latin American progress.

On the other hand, Latin America, and South America within it, has the most inequitable distribution of wealth in the world. For this reason, although most Latin American countries are officially classified as “middle income”, almost two-fifths of Latin Americans live below the national poverty line. Latin American societies remain palpably unjust and this leads to the success of populism.

The two main challenges in Latin America are: an effective and equitable political system and sustained economic growth and development, allowing private investment to be profitable, generating security for local investors. There is a lot of workforce with little education, poor or nonexistent infrastructure, absurd bureaucratic procedures, overregulated labor markets and overprotected monopolies. The success lies in putting into practice centrist consensus.

Citizens want what anyone is looking for: freedom, security, efficient government, social security and a vigorous capitalism that generates employment and prosperity. In a variegated way, we are walking towards that direction.

Reid (2009) argues that it is necessary to guarantee the growth of the economy. To control the fiscal deficit—which is a management problem—is not a thing of the left, nor of the right. The governments of Central and South America are generally moderate. Europeans argue that what kind of social network they can keep without losing competitiveness, Latin Americans, on the other hand, argue what kind of social network can be built to be competitive and maintain social cohesion.

Social and Cultural Reality

South America as part of Latin America and the Caribbean is a very diverse region and that is why it is so rich. However, the different peoples are joined by many historical, geographical, cultural and identity ties, so there is interest among them in knowing what is happening on the other side of the border and how to be able to help each other.

“We are not Europeans. . . we are not Indians. . . We are a small human genre,” said Simón Bolívar. “We have a world apart, surrounded by wide seas, new in almost all arts and sciences but, in a way, old in the uses of civil society.” This “small human genre” of which Bolívar spoke was really the mestizo race, although a long time had to elapse before Latin Americans recognized ourselves as such, and even more so that we understood the creative potentialities of the process of miscegenation and transform it into a motive for legitimate pride (Tünnermann, 2007).

Latin America is, by definition, a land of miscegenation, a meeting of peoples and cultures. That is its sign and its hope, its true human and cultural capital. “Our mestiza America,” said José Martí. The race through which “the spirit will speak,” according to the Vasconcelian motto. The Caribbean poet Derek Walcott, 1992 Nobel Prize for Literature, says in one of his extraordinary poems:

“I am only a black red who loves the sea. . . I have Dutch, black and English inside me, and either I am nobody or I am a nation.”

Miscegenation is what defines our being and doing as Latin Americans. It defines our personality and, at the same time, defines our possibilities as peoples, our originality and creative power. Our present and our future are built on the basis of miscegenation.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a set of socio-cultural elements identify us as belonging to a characteristic and identifiable human group and establishes us as such above the diversity of manifestations, languages, customs, life habits, religions and particularities of ideological-conceptual order present in the particularity of each country or area of the region.

Latin American identity, besides being one of the most comprehensive in the world, is very present in its collective consciousness or imaginary. Not only are we close and alike—in our diversity—but we are also very aware of this closeness (for some that is awareness of their identity) and we feel part, that is to say we have a strong sense of belonging, with exceptions, but it is a very shared identity and millions of people are proud of it.

The main shared features that characterize Latin American identity are: cultural homogeneity (the Spanish language and Catholic religion predominate); economic organization (predominance of trade with Europe); economic dependence (especially of Europe, Japan and the United States); the exploitation of natural resources (precious metals, forest depredation and other natural resources); social inequalities (concentration of wealth, land ownership, power and even education in the hands of a privileged sector of society remain common and shameful features of Latin America); and finally, discontent and constant confrontation, consequences of the

aforementioned trait (social inequalities) which generate violence, suffering and deterioration of living conditions, instead of achieving significant changes that raise the quality of life of Latin Americans.

The social reality of Latin America and the Caribbean is quite diverse because of the different social situations of each country, but there are common problems such as poverty and social inequality that affect the great majority of the continent.

The figures for poverty in Latin America are worrying because it is estimated that 44% of the population is poor, affecting more than 190 million people, 60% of this being children.

In Latin America, there is a great diversity of natural resources, capacity to produce food, landscapes and natural beauties, drinking water, sources of energy generation, etc.

However, although this continent generates great wealth through all kinds of economic activity, the countries that comprise continue to be underdeveloped, and poverty continues to grow in them as well.

The concentration of wealth and natural resources causes economic inequality and the lack of opportunities to have good life quality immerses the vast majority of the population in poverty. This situation is complemented by the insufficient presence of the state to regulate and distribute more equitably the riches.

It is complex to explain why a continent with such great potential wealth suffers from widespread structural poverty.

Diener (2000), presenting an analysis of welfare in the different nations of the world, exhibits the exceptional case of Latin America, where there are many countries with very high rates of satisfaction among their inhabitants, found by using very different types of measures (e.g. Gallup, 2007). It probably becomes clear that a compensating factor of wealth or material poverty can be that of close interpersonal relationships and the natural social fabric so robust that exists, framed in the importance of family as a nucleus of support and care throughout the life cycle. In addition, another important aspect is that in these countries a special importance is given to “being happy” when compared with other cultures.

The Family: The Basis of Social Functioning in Latin America

Vale la pena hacer una mención especial a la familia y sus características en América Latina porque de allí derivan muchos de los aspectos sobre como se conciben las relaciones en general entre los latinoamericanos.

It is worth making special mention of the family and its characteristics in Latin America, because from the concept of family derive many of the aspects regarding how relationships are conceived in general between Latin Americans.

Some historians and scholars allow us to make a historical and current account of the Latin American family (Herrera Luque, 1981, 1986; Moreno, 2007; Recagno-Puente & Platone, 1998; Campo-Redondo et al., 2007; Mora, 2008).

The Latin American family can be understood as the person's affective space of support, learning and training. A place to regulate collective action, the area for return, renewal and beginnings. However, this definition tends to change depending on the social stratum from where it is interpreted, always taking into account the cultural and economic dimensions.

In Latin America, the sense of family varies depending on social class. Popular families give a very high value to family and social ties, to the point of being able to face the breakup scenarios and changes in the structures that families occasionally challenge. Similarly, in this sector of the population it was found that the way in which women and men conceive the family changes according to the meaning they give to children: "a significance mediated by the value that is given to them and the relationship that is maintained with them". For the average socioeconomic sectors of the population, family is attributed a socializing power, because it offers its members a space of love, support and company, in addition to understanding that family allows the process of individualization, thus seeking its own balance and that of the other members of the family.

The Latin American family is composed of a series of traits, which determine its diversity, with heterogeneity in the structure being one of the main characteristics. The complexity of the Latin American popular family distinguishes a variety of unions (single-parent families, nuclear families, reconstituted couples, etc.) and differences in the type and variety of members.

However, it is worth noting that Latin America is a region of strong and deep contrasts in its population, making it difficult to generalize about families. In this sense, it is even more complicated to say that in their totality all families are "mother-centered" ("matricentradas" in Spanish). Despite this being hard to assert, it is undeniable that this is the most common structure, since in many of LATAM's countries, this family model is present in more than 50% of its population, and it is considered to be within the popular classes.

The traditional Latin American family has specific peculiarities derived from its historical and social development that go back to the time of the conquest and colonization, to the fact of the presence of conquerors and predominantly single colonizers who made more or less stable pairs with indigenous people first and black slaves, mestizas or mulattas afterwards. This modality of forming a temporary couple, without permanence in time, became a tradition in Latin America. More recently, some authors point out that the true Latin American family is extensive, not nuclear, the universal prototype of family with father, mother and children being uncommon.

In the Latin American popular family, the father does not paint anything. Apart from the mother, who also contributes is the eldest son, be it man or woman. If there is a father and he works, he usually does not give all that money to the family. In Latin America, the normal thing is for the couple not to exist. There are times when two people coincide because of the physical attraction, but when the man turns the woman into a mother, the expulsion mechanisms rooted in the culture begin. Women from a very young age, even adolescents, usually have children, with which the

grandmother who lives in the house happens to become great-grandmother. Popular Latin American families are a column of mothers.

The Latin American popular family is conceived as a nucleus that is established at the moment the woman becomes a mother. The family is a model in which the mother constitutes the fundamental figure, and therefore the family is “mother-centered” (“matricentrada” in Spanish). It should be noted that a difference is established between the term “mother-centered” and matriarchy. The mother represents the central figure, and the structure and functions of the fundamental group are consolidated thanks to the work of the mother. In this type of family, it’s not about an exercise of power, so you cannot talk about matriarchy. A woman who lives without a partner and becomes a mother, without having yet consolidated or established a union of partners, constitutes the “mother-centered” family. The couple for Moreno (2007) implies “the coexistence continued for a time long enough for both men and women to intervene sharing roles and responsibilities in raising the children common to both” (p. 9).

The reality of the Latin American popular family is the woman does not find satisfaction of their basic needs in the couple and consequently has a great feeling of frustration that seeks to satisfy with her children. In the mother-child relationship, the woman succeeds in satisfying a sense of security, of a stable and lasting relationship, in which she finds affection, protection and satisfaction of her economic needs, her needs of recognition, acceptance, dignity, communication, consideration and exchange. Therefore, the Latin American man never experiences himself as a man, but always as a son.

As a consequence of the above, the woman cannot satisfy her basic needs with her partner, which is why she directs her efforts for motherhood. The Latin American woman is not a woman, but a mother; therefore, she forms her sons so that they are always sons and her daughters so that they become mothers. However, man continues to occupy the position of power. Latin American society remains patriarchal. The mother occupies prominence as the axis of the family order, but it is still the man who occupies the position of power. The power of the mother is emotional, but nothing more. Likewise, the mother never fully assumes the centrality of the Venezuelan family. Faced with the virtual absence of the father in family relations, the mother usually resorts to a father figure in order to, chastely, assume parental responsibility. Among the paternal figures to which the mother resorts, one can find, for example, grandparents, uncles, among others.

Latin America and the Value of Its Contributions to Culture: Export Products

Some authors affirm that LATAM is only felt in the world in cultural terms: music, dance, cinema, novels and painting have become part of the dominant currents of Europe and the United States. Spanish is consolidated as a second language in the

Western world, the fourth most spoken language in the world, tourism, exotic geography and biodiversity, multi-ethnicities and multiculturalism, art in its various variants, arable land, and raw materials.

The Latin American way is present in so many cultural works, customs, habits, etc., that it contributes—in great measure—to give meaning to the lives of its inhabitants and is present in countless texts, works of art and speeches in general that account for its permanent enrichment.

Nature is a major playmate where lush landscapes, majestic mountains and luxurious rainforests give individuals a feeling of abundance, novelty and possibilities not often seen in other places (Castro Solano, 2014).

In the arts, historical and natural circumstances lead to the emergence of a specific form of literature, world and visions of life labeled as “magical realism”. Authors such as Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel García Márquez, and more distantly Cabrera Infante and Vargas Llosa, to name but a few, are part of this most honored and revered tradition. The common denominator of this tradition of literature can be condensed into a phrase: a different life, with abundance and equity, exists and, with an act of imagination, with a mental effort, we are capable of bringing it to life (Castro Solano, 2014).

The South American intellectual soil is, in fact, rich and fertile! In this sense, it is worth remembering that the word “conscientization”, a neologism in English, that means to realize and to lead to conscious thought (or, in Spanish, “darse cuenta”), derives from the work of a Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire (Castro Solano, 2014).

Tünnermann (2007) exhibits what could be considered the collective desire of Latin Americans. In March of 1999, almost a hundred Latin American intellectuals gathered in Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) concluded that the construction of Latin America “more than simply a sum of markets, should be a true political project of profound democratic roots, which promotes solidarity among peoples, establishes its own values and recognizes the reality of its multi-ethnic and multicultural context” (p. 1).

History of Positive Psychology in Latin and South America

Castro Solano (2014) establishes that the beginnings of Positive Psychology (PP) in Latin America is a challenging aim as there was no foundational moment in the words of a renowned psychologist, as was the case of Martin Seligman in the United States (US). Additionally, it is difficult to track works and publications related to PP, as just recently some researchers have been known as ‘positive’. Therefore, many professionals in Latin America now labelled ‘positive psychologists’ have unknowingly contributed to research and practice in this area. Studies that focus on topics such as values, emotional intelligence, motivation, creativity and more recently, flow and psychological well-being can be included within the paradigm of Positive Psychology.

Is an important antecedent for the history of Positive Psychology to say that studies about Resilience precedes it and were born in Latin America at the same time than in Europe and North America.

There is research on resilience as a psychological process from European, North American and Latin American authors (Hutz et al., 1996; Cyrulnik, 2002; Ungar, 2008; Bowlby, 1992; Villalobos, 2003; Crawford et al., 2005; Colmenares, 2002; Soarez de Souza & de Oliveira, 2006; Dell'Aglio et al., 2006, among others).

Latin American researchers as Obando et al. (2010) point out that authors as Bud Hall (1983; as cited in Obando et al., 2010), Fals Borda & Muhammad (1991; as cited in Obando et al., 2010) Rodríguez Brandao (1983; as cited in Obando et al., 2010), Martín-Baró (1994; as cited in Obando et al., 2010), Otalvaro (2006; as cited in Obando et al., 2010), Obando (1992, 2009; as cited in Obando et al., 2010), argue that although there is a commitment of academics as researchers to the production of knowledge, this commitment must acquire the character of social commitment inherent to any investigative work and intervention in current issues. For this reason, the study and interventions that use Resilience, as a human capacity, have gained strength in Latin America, especially in the most vulnerable populations, such as children with experiences of abandonment, mistreatment and general lack of development.

According to the Latin American author Colmenares (2002), resilience is “the possibility of man to create for himself a sense . . . [In adverse situations or vulnerability] . . . a sense that does not ignore the tragedy but organizes it according to referents of its Identity and your dreams” (p. 22).

Colombian researchers Obando et al. (2010) share the opinion of authors like Boris Cyrulnik (2002); Olga Lucía Obando (2006, 2009); María Eugenia Villalobos (2003), María Eugenia Colmenares (2002), among others, who propose that in order to foster continuity in children, it is necessary for accompanying adults to establish meaningful relationships that allow them to be recognized to themselves, in order to establish family ties with a group and with the culture. It is necessary to de-construct the victim's discourse on the abandoned child, a discourse that adult agents have constructed and that does not know the child in his subjectivity. To this same conclusion come different researchers in Venezuela (López et al., 2010), Mexico (Palomar & Gaxiola, 2012), Argentina (Melillo & Suárez Ojeda, 2002), Colombia (Vinaccia et al., 2007) and others authors in Latin America.

There have been 12 congresses of Resilience in Mexico, the first in 2005 and there is currently a Latin American community of Resilience: <http://comunidadenresiliencia.blogspot.com/>. These initiatives reaffirm the importance of this process of Resilience in studies and interventions for the development of well-being and the improvement of the quality of life in Latin America, the central object of Positive Psychology.

Alonso & Eagly (1999) and Ardila (1986, as cited in Castro Solano, 2014) explain that there are some specific characteristics in the way Positive Psychology is developing in Latin-American countries that might be unknown to professionals who reside in other regions. Even though Positive Psychology has followed different paths within each country, there are some commonalities related to Latin-American

Psychology, which are very different from what happens in the US, Europe and other developed countries. Castro Solano says that according to Alarcón (2002), Ardila (2004) and Vera-Villarroel et al. (2010), the following are some of these particular characteristics that worth mentioning: *Dependent nature, Lack of originality, Preference for applied psychology, Social relevance and political permeability, Research orientation, Holistic approach, Areas of application, Number of psychologists per capita, Scientific development.*

Vera-Villarroel et al. (2010; as cited in Castro Solano, 2014) describes a recent meta-analysis which indicates that Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile and Colombia reported the best indicators in terms of scientific development. These countries lead the research conducted in Latin-American Psychology, being quite distant from their neighboring countries. In the last years, Venezuela is increasing their scientific intellectual production about Positive Psychology (Garassini & Camilli, 2016).

Positive Psychology's Origins and Development in Latin and South America

Every body recognises the contribution of María Martina Casullo has the beginner of Positive Psychology in Latin America and particularity in South America and we are going to give many lines to develop it. In the sense to bring justice in the actual development of Positive Psychology in Latin America we have to talk about Margarita Tarragona in Mexico who created in 2009 the first Positive Psychology course called Diploma on Positive Psychology [*Diplomado en Psicología Positiva*] at the Ibero-American University and at this moment possesses many alumni graduate with the Diploma. To date, this is the Latin-American organization with the longest history in training people on Positive Psychology. Professionals from different fields—such as psychologists, nutritionists, dentists, public servants, entrepreneurs and managers—have participated in this program interested in applying PP's principles to their areas of work. Since 2011, Tarragona has been teaching PP at doctoral level and coordinating the 'Positive Psychology Daily News' in Spanish. This website aims to distribute PP's news and research studies in Spanish.

In 2014, she supported the Project from the Tecmillenium University to develop the University of Happiness which goal was createad a campus centered in well-being considering curricula, studentes and proffesors.

Terragona has also joined efforts with Luz de Lourdes Eguiluz and Luisa Pascencia in order to launch the Mexican Society of Positive Psychology [*Sociedad Mexicana de Psicología Positiva*] in 2012. It is also worth mentioning that a book entitled *Positive Psychology: Contributions to Research and Practice* [*Psicología Positiva: Aportaciones a la investigación y la práctica*] was published shortly after by the editorial Trillas (Tapia et al., 2012). The first Crongress of Positive Psychology in Mexico was in 2016.

Positive Psychology in Argentina

Castro Solano (2014) states that Positive Psychology was introduced in Latin America by María Martina Casullo, a well-known Argentinean psychologist that in 2000 published the first theoretical article based exclusively on this topic: ‘Salutogenic or Positive Psychology: Some considerations’ [*Psicología salutogénica o positiva. Algunas reflexiones*] (Casullo, 2000; as cited in Castro Solano, 2014). In this paper, Casullo pointed out that Psychology had made considerable efforts in studying clinical or pathogenic dimensions of human behavior and concluded that both these aspects and salutogenic or positive dimensions should be integrated in the field of Psychology. Casullo understood Positive Psychology as a theoretical and methodological paradigm focused on salutogenic or positive variables.

In the same year, based on Ryff’s model of psychological well-being, Casullo published a scale designed to assess well-being in adolescents, named ‘Psychological Well-being Scale for Adolescents’ [*Escala de Bienestar Psicológico en Adolescentes, BIEPS*] (Casullo & Castro Solano, 2000; as cited in Castro Solano, 2014), a work framed within the paradigm of Positive Psychology. In 2002, this first research study on psychological well-being was published and entitled *Evaluation of psychological well-being in Ibero-America* [Evaluación del bienestar psicológico en Iberoamérica] (Casullo & Brenlla, 2002; as cited in Castro Solano, 2014). This book, published in Spanish language, presented the findings of a study on psychological well-being conducted in Argentina, Peru, Cuba and Spain. Thus, this is also the first regional study on psychological well-being that compares different Latin countries. Furthermore, this work also includes psychometric characteristics and norms for the populations assessed.

Positive Psychology was introduced as a compulsory course in 2002 for students doing their Degree in Psychology at the University of Palermo (Buenos Aires, Argentina). This course also included topics related to the humanistic and counseling psychology. Well-being, life satisfaction, positive emotions, human strengths and virtues, creativity and resilience were some of the topics studied. It should be noted that in Latin countries, psychologists’ training relies almost only on the undergraduate degrees (Castro Solano, 2014). As previously mentioned, resilience has been a central topic in studies in Latin America. At the beginning of the first course on Positive Psychology, resilience represented a mandatory subject.

As undergraduate programs are not part of the arts or science departments, are mainly focused on the field of knowledge and/or professional practice. The degree granted by universities—called Graduate in Psychology [*Licenciatura en Psicología*] or simply Psychologist [*Psicólogo*—demands approximately 5 or 6 years and is the only requirement to practice clinical, educational and forensic psychology, as well as the private practice of psychotherapy. For this reason, including a compulsory course on this specific area becomes a precedent for psychologists’ training and future professional development. This situation was almost unique in the region and, due to Casullo’s legacy, in 2009 two elective subjects were introduced in the undergraduate psychology program. These courses,

named Issues on Positive Psychology [*Temas de Psicología Positiva*] and Interventions in Positive Psychology [*Intervenciones en Psicología Positiva*], which work on constructs that deal with the most modern and positive psychological interventions derived from international authors (Castro Solano 2014).

It is also noteworthy the impulse given by Casullo to the Positive Psychology Ibero-American Meetings [*Encuentros Iberoamericanos de Psicología Positiva*] that have been held uninterruptedly since 2006 to 2013 at University of Palermo in Buenos Aires. These meetings have become a turning point for Positive Psychology development, as they gather papers from most Spanish-speaking countries. Within this same university, Casullo prompted in 2000 the development of a journal named *Psychodebate: Psychology, Culture and Society* [*Psicodebate: Psicología, Cultura y Sociedad*]. From 2006, it has been almost exclusively receiving scientific papers dedicated to PP. In that year, the volume 7 of this publication was entitled “Positive Psychology” and was prefaced by Martin Seligman. From the very beginning, the purpose was to disseminate PP’s research studies in Spanish language. Castro Solano (2014) mentioned that is necessary to highlight the importance of some book such as *Evaluation of psychological well-being in Ibero-America* [*Evaluación del bienestar psicológico en Iberoamérica*] (Casullo & Brenlla, 2002), *Positive Psychology Practice* [*Prácticas de Psicología Positiva*] (Casullo, 2008) and more recently, *Foundations of Positive Psychology* [*Fundamentos de Psicología Positiva*] (Castro Solano, 2010). The latter is a compilation of texts done by one of Casullo’s closest collaborators. Moreover, since 2009, several Positive Psychology seminars have been held at master and doctoral programs such as Quality of life; Positive Psychology; Emotions and psychological well-being, Foundations of PP; and From Psychopathology to PP, among others.

Current research activities and diffusion of Positive Psychology within the University of Palermo are led Alejandro Castro Solano, a professor at this university and a researcher at the National Council of Technical and Scientific Research [Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET]. Research projects on PP aim, on the one hand, to design and validate psychological assessment tests to use them with local population. On the other hand, they also tend to study positive constructs for the prediction of academic and cultural adaptation of international students. Argentine scholars have been the pioneers in these studies of validation of instruments and the study of positive constructs to predict and correlate variables on the Binestar in different populations of Spanish speaking.

Furthermore, the Interdisciplinary Centre for Research in Mathematical Psychology [*Centro Interdisciplinario de Investigaciones en Psicología Matemática*], a CONICET’s agency, brings together a team of professionals with an outstanding scientific career in the study, evaluation and promotion of psychological virtues and resources, such as social skills, attachment, positive emotions, flow, creativity, forgiveness, prosocial behavior, empathy, coping, self-efficacy, parenting styles, values, spirituality, attribution styles and psychological well-being, among others. This Centre has developed an intervention program under the direction of PhD. Maria Cristina Richaud de Minzi. This program named ‘Without affection one does not learn nor grow’ [*Sin Afecto no se aprende ni se crece*], has been designed to

strengthen the development of cognitive, social, emotional and linguistic capital in children who are at risk from extreme poverty. This project has had a positive impact on many Argentinean children's lives by increasing their resilience and subjective well-being (Castro Solano, 2014).

After the foundation of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) in 2007, Casullo was invited to be part of the Board of Directors. At that time, there were three Spanish-speaking countries represented (Mexico, Argentina and Spain), while the majority of directors belonged to Anglo-Saxon countries. In 2009, other Spanish-speaking country, Venezuela, was invited to be part of the Board Directors. From its beginnings, IPPA has considered the development of PP in Latin America and the inclusion of Spanish-speaking countries. In 2009, under the executive direction of James Pawelski, the Ibero-American Network of Positive Psychology [Red Iberoamericana de Psicología Positiva] was created. This network comprises countries such as Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, Uruguay and Spain, and aims to promote contact between professionals from Latin countries in order to disseminate PP's ideas in the Southern cone. A network of support is the main goal of this organization.

At this moment, research about different topics on Positive Psychology are the focus in Argentina, producing many publications in the field.

Professionals in Positive Psychology in Argentina

Alejandro Castro Solano

Dr. in Psychology, currently working at CONICET—University of Palermo. His research line includes topics related to psychological well-being and strengths of character. He has participated in multiple publications among which we can mention: Castro Solano, A. (2016). Lay definitions of happiness across nations: The primacy of inner harmony and relational connectedness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7. Castro Solano, A. & Cosentino, A. (2016). The relationships between character strengths and life fulfillment in the view of lay-people in Argentina. *Interdisciplinaria*, 33, 65–80. Castro Solano, A. & Cosentino, A. (2016). Una Aproximación Léxica al Estudio de las Características Psicológicas Humanas Positivas. Un Estudio con Población General Argentina. *Perspectivas en Psicología*, 13, 75–83. Grinhaus, S. & Castro Solano, A. (2015). Un estudio exploratorio acerca de las fortalezas del carácter en niños argentinos. *Avances en Psicología Latinoamericana*, 33, 45–56. Góngora, V. & Castro Solano, A. (2015). Psychometric properties of the three pathways to well-being scale in a large sample of Argentinean adolescents. *Psychological Reports*, 117, 167–179.

María Cristina Richaud de Minzi

Dr. in Psychology, currently working at CIIPME—CONICET—University of Palermo. Her line of research contemplates subjects related to prosocial causes and vulnerable environments. She has participated in multiple publications among which we can mention: Mesurado, B. & Richaud, M.C. (2016). The Relationship between Parental Variables, Empathy and Prosocial-Flow. *Journal of Happiness Studies*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-016-9748-7>. Richaud, M. C. & Mesurado, B. (2016). Las emociones positivas y la empatía como promotores de las conductas prosociales e inhibidores de las conductas agresivas. *Acción Psicológica*, 13(2), 31–42. Mesurado, B., Richaud, M. C. & Niño, N. J. (2015). Engagement, Flow, Self-efficacy and Eustress of University Students: A cross-national comparison between the Philippines and Argentina. *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, 150(3), 281–299. Mesurado, B., Richaud, M. C., Mestre, M. V., Samper, P., Tur, A., Morales, S. & Viveros, E. (2014). Parental expectations and prosocial behavior of adolescents from low-income backgrounds. A cross-cultural comparison between three countries: Argentina, Colombia and Spain. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 45(9), 1471–1488.

Belén Mesurado

Dr. in Psychology, currently working at CIIPME—CONICET—University of Palermo. Her research line includes topics related to flow in children and prosocial behavior. She has participated in multiple publications among which we can mention: Crespo, R. & Mesurado, B. (2015). Happiness Economics, Eudaimonia and Positive Psychology: From Happiness Economics to Flourishing Economics. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 16, 931–946. Mesurado, B., Richaud, M. C. & Mateo, N. J. (2015). Engagement, Flow, Self-Efficacy, and Eustress of University Students: A Cross-National Comparison between the Philippines and Argentina. *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, 150, 281–299. Mesurado, B. (2014). Nuevas perspectivas en investigación sobre la conducta prosocial: la identificación del receptor de la ayuda y la motivación del agente de la conducta prosocial. *Revista Mexicana de Investigación en Psicología*, 6, 166–170. Mesurado, B., Richaud, M. C., Mestre, M. V., Samper, P., Tur, A., Morales, S. & Viveros, E. (2014). Parental expectations and prosocial behavior of adolescents from low-income backgrounds. A cross-cultural comparison between three countries: Argentina, Colombia and Spain. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 45(9), 1471–1488.

Laura Oros

Dr. in Psychology, currently working at University of la Cuenca del Plata—Misiones—CONICET. Her research line includes topics related to positive emotions

in childhood. She has participated in multiple publications among which we can mention: Cuello, M. & Oros, L. (2016). Construcción de una escala para medir gratitud en niños de 9 a 12 años. *Revista de Psicología Clínica con Niños y Adolescentes*, 3, 35–41. Krumm, G., Lemos, V., Vargas, J. & Oros, L. B. (2015). Percepción de la creatividad desde el propio niño, sus padres y pares: efectos en la producción creativa. *Pensamiento Psicológico*, 13, 21–32. Lemos, V., Hendrie, K. & Oros, L. (2015). Simpatía y conducta prosocial en niños de 6 y 7 años. *Revista de Psicología*, 11, 47–59. Oros, L. & Fontana, A. (2015). Niños socialmente hábiles: ¿Cuánto influyen la empatía y las emociones positivas? *Interdisciplinaria*, 32, 109–125. Oros, L., Vargas, J. & Schulz, A. (2015). Children? Gratitude: Implication of Contextual and Demographic Variables in Argentina. *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud*, 13, 245–262. Oros, L. (2015). Exceso y descontextualización de la experiencia emocional positiva: Cuando lo bueno deja de ser bueno. *Anuario de Psicología*, 45, 287–300. Oros, L. (2014). Nuevo cuestionario de emociones positivas para niños. *Anales de Psicología*, 30, 522–529.

María Laura Lupano Perugini

Dr. in Psychology, currently working at CONICET—University de Palermo. Her research line includes topics related to positive organizational variables. She has participated in multiple publications among which we can mention: Lupano, M. L. & Castro Solano, A. (2017). Virtudes Organizacionales y Características Positivas asociadas a Performance y Satisfacción Laboral. *Acción Psicológica*. Lupano, M. L. & Castro Solano, A. (2017). Influencia de las Virtudes Organizacionales sobre la performance laboral. Un estudio en organizaciones argentinas. *Interdisciplinaria*. Lupano, M. L. & Castro Solano, A. (2016). Perfiles de organizaciones positivas. Análisis de características percibidas según variables individuales, organizacionales y de resultado. *Escritos de Psicología*, 9(2), 1–11. Lupano, M. L., De la Iglesia, G., Castro Solano, A. & Keyes, C. (2017). The Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF) in the Argentinean Context: Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Measurement Invariance. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 13(1), 93–108. Lupano, M. L. (2014). Organizaciones Positivas, un marco de referencia para su abordaje en Latinoamérica. *Acta Psiquiátrica y Psicológica de América Latina*, 60(4), 277–284.

Guadalupe de la Iglesia

Dr. in Psychology, currently working at CONICET-University of Palermo. Her research line includes themes related to Parenting Styles—Positive Personality. She has participated in multiple publications among which we can mention: De la Iglesia, G., Freiberg, A. & Fernández, M. (2014). Perceived Parenting and Social Support: Can they predict Academic Achievement in Argentinean College Students? *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 7, 251–259. De la Iglesia, G.,

Stover, J. B., Freiberg, A. & Fernández, M. (2014). Perceived Parenting Styles and Parental Inconsistency Scale: Construct Validity in young Adults. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 7, 61–69.

Vanesa Góngora

Dr. in Psychology, currently working at CONICET-University of Palermo. Her research line includes topics related to psychological well-being and clinical variables in adolescents. She has participated in multiple publications among which we can mention: Góngora, V. & Castro Solano, A. (2015). Psychometric Properties of the Three Pathways to Well-being Scale in a Large Sample of Argentinean Adolescents. *Psychological Reports*, 117, 167–179. Góngora, V. & Castro Solano, A. (2015). La Validación de un Index de Bienestar para Población Adolescente y Adulta de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencia Psicológica*, 7, 329–338. Góngora, V. (2014). Satisfaction with Life, Well-Being, and Meaning in Life as Protective Factors of Eating Disorder Symptoms and Body Dissatisfaction in Adolescents. *Eating Disorders: The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*, 22, 435–449. Góngora, V. & Castro Solano, A. (2014). Well-being and life satisfaction in Argentinean adolescents. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17, 1277–1291.

Alicia Omar

Dr. in Psychology, currently working at Universidad Nacional de Rosario—CONICET. Her research line includes topics related to positive organizational psychology. She has participated in multiple publications among which we can mention: Vaamonde, J. D. & Omar, A. (2017). Perceptions of organizational justice and ambivalent sexism: The moderating role of individualism-collectivism. *Revista de Psicología*, 35(1), 31–60. Omar, A. & Salessi, S. (2016). Liderazgo, confianza y flexibilidad laboral como predictores de identificación organizacional: un estudio con trabajadores argentinos. *Pensamiento Psicológico*, 14, 33–47. Omar, A. & Salessi, S. (2016). Cinismo organizacional: un puente entre el lado oscuro de la personalidad y la satisfacción laboral. *Universitas Psychologica*. Omar, A., Salessi, S. & Vaamonde, J. D. (2016). Work-Family Enrichment and Core Self-Evaluations: The Mediating Role of Distributive Justice Perceptions. *Studia Psychologica*. Omar, A., Urteaga, F. & Salessi, S. (2015). Propiedades psicométricas de la Escala de Enriquecimiento Trabajo-Familia para Argentina. *Revista de Psicología de la Universidad de Chile*, 24, 1–18. Omar, A. (2015). Constructos fundacionales de la Psicología Organizacional Positiva. *PsyCap Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología Positiva*, 2, 72–87.

Alejandro Cosentino

Dr. in Psychology, currently working at University of Palermo. His research line includes topics related to strengths of character and positive traits. He has participated in multiple publications among which we can mention: Cosentino, A. (2014). Character strengths: Measurement and studies in Argentina with military and general population samples [Las fortalezas del carácter: Estudios y medición en Argentina con muestras de población general y militar]. In Castro Solano, A. (Ed.), *Positive psychology in Latin America [La Psicología Positiva en América Latina]* (pp. 111–127). New York: Springer. Castro Solano, A. & Cosentino, A. (2016). Una Aproximación Léxica al Estudio de las Características Psicológicas Humanas Positivas. Un Estudio con Población General Argentina. [A Lexical Approach to the Study of Positive Psychological Human Characteristics. A General Population Study in Argentina]. *Perspectivas en Psicología*, 13(2), 75–83. Castro Solano, A. & Cosentino, A. (2016). The relationships between character strengths and life fulfillment in the view of lay-people in Argentina [Las relaciones entre las fortalezas del carácter y la realización vital en la visión de las personas legas de Argentina]. *Interdisciplinaria*, 33(1), 65–80. Depaula, P. D., Azzollini, S. C., Cosentino, A. & Castillo, S. E. (2016). Personality, character strengths and cultural intelligence: “Extraversion” or “openness” as further factors associated to the cultural skills. *Avances en Psicología Latinoamericana*, 34(2), 415–436. Cosentino, A. & Castro Solano, A. (2015). IVyF: Validez de un instrumento de medida de las fortalezas del carácter de la clasificación de Peterson y Seligman (2004). *Psicodebate*, 15(2), 99–122.

Positive Psychology in Venezuela

Positive Psychology began formally in Venezuela in 2008, in the fourth Congress of Research and Intellectual Creation [*IV Congreso de Investigación y Creación Intelectual*] that was held in Caracas, organized by the Metropolitan University [Universidad Metropolitana]. At that event, PhD James Pawelski gave a plenary lecture entitled *Positive Psychology: Theory, Science and Application*. The visit of this prominent personality from the Pennsylvania group allowed the implementation of a wide range of activities related to the area. One year before, in 2007, the team of Venezuelan professional that have read and analyzed the book *Authentic Happiness* wrote and email to Martin Seligman to invited him to the Congress. Seligman answered that he is going to be at Australia the next year and contact the team with James Pawelski. Before that first contact, and the visit to Venezuela, James was one of the most important references and support for the expansion of the achievements in Positive Psychology in Venezuela (Castro Solano, 2014).

After James Pawelski’s visit, the professors of the Behavioral Science Department from newborn School of Psychology in the Metropolitan University (2004)

were attracted to Positive Psychology because it was a modern and complementary vision of Psychology. In the foundational documents of the School of Psychology in 2004, Positive Psychology was considered one of its pillars and in 2007, three years before its creation, the head of the Department María Elena Garassini and the director of the School Elena de Martínez decided to gift the book *Authentic Happiness* to the 20 professors of Psychology. All the professors read the book, and had an interesting interchange with Marisol Pulgar, a national expert in the field. Pulgar is known for her involvement in Positive Psychology and has been related to the international Gallup Group.

Since that year, efforts were centered on PP's dissemination both within the University—through workshops for professors and administrative staff—and through activities conducted by Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology [*Sociedad Venezolana de Psicología Positiva, SOVEPPPOS*] in different educational, businesses and public settings in the metropolitan Caracas.

In November 2009, the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology was founded with representatives from various educational, health and business institutions. The aim of this society was to promote, sponsor and certify educational programs, series of courses, conferences and symposia, as well as the printing of books or brochures related to Positive Psychology. In the first Board María Elena Garassini, César Yacsirk, Pura Zavarce are the principal members with Margarita Tarragona (Mexico), James Pawelski (EEUU), Marisol Pulgar (Venezuela) and Iván Mendoza (Venezuela) as its honorific members. It also aims to support events that enrich PP at national and international levels (<http://www.svpsicologiapositiva.com/>) (Zavarce & Garassini, 2010).

In the same year, 2009, Delia Martínez, teen development officer from UNICEF Venezuela, requested Metropolitan University the assement for a proyect to develop a new vision about tenagers based on Positive Psychology. In 2010, Martínez was invited to participate in the first group of the Positive Psychology Diploma Course and, when she concluded it, both institutions, Metropolitan Univeristy and UNICEF, made and aliance. The proyect Positive Youth Development was born in 2011 and two popular communities in Caracas were attendend in two public schools. Courses, workshops and meetings with asolescents, their teachers, their parents and their community leaders ocurred to highlight the strengths and resilient capacities of the teenagers. At the end of 2012 the project finished and UNICEF incorporated among its guidelines the main concepts of Youth Positive Development (YPD). A book was published illustrating all the steps and achievements in the project available in https://www.unicef.org/venezuela/spanish/Adolescentes_cuentan.pdf

At this moment, and based on the experience of the Positive Youth Development project and the different researches realized in the Metropolitan University, a new project was born called Venezuelan Positive Youth Development [*Desarrollo Positivo Adolescente en Venezuela, DPA/Venezuela*]. This project helps Venezuelan social organizations to review and certificate their work with adolescents under the perspective of the conceptual framework of Youth Positive Development. Bussines organizations can give donations to the social organizations to increment their action

and improve their quality. The information about Venezuelan Positive Youth Development is available in <http://dpavenezuela.com.ve/>

In May 2010, a Diploma Course in Positive Psychology [*Diplomado en Psicología Positiva*] was created at the UNIMET through the Center of Extension, Executive Development and Organizational Consulting [*Centro de Extensión, Desarrollo Ejecutivo y Consultoría Organizacional, CENDECO-UNIMET*]. This course lasts two trimesters (two subjects per term), is composed of a total of 192 academic hours and gives a Diploma that names their alumni as Well-being Promoters. The four subjects are: Introduction to Positive Psychology [*Introducción a la Psicología Positiva*], Strengths of Character and positive organizations [*Fortalezas del carácter y organizaciones positivas*], Personal Relationships and life cycle [*Relaciones interpersonales y ciclo vital*], and Positive Interventions [*Intervenciones Positivas*]. At 2017, 27 groups conformed by 30 people each one was graduated for this program in CENDECO, 14 groups in Educational Institutions and 8 groups in business organizations. They have graduated 49 groups of 30 people each for a total of almost 1500 Well-being Promoters of different professions.

In September 2013, the Diploma Course in Applied Positive Psychology: health, work, education and coaching [*Diplomado Aplicado en Psicología Positiva: salud, trabajo, educación y coaching*] was created in the same institution as the first one. This course was received by students of the first diploma course, as a continuation of their studies. It lasts two trimesters (two subjects per term), with a total of 192 academic hours and it gives a Diploma that names their alumni as Well-being Applied Promoters. At 2017, six groups conformed by 30 people each one, graduated for this program in CENDECO, and so did four groups in Educational Institutions. Around ten groups of thirty people each have graduated of this Diploma Course, for a total of almost 300 Applied Well-being Promoters of different professions.

In 2010, the first Congress of Positive Psychology was held in Venezuela with the visited of Carmelo Vázquez, the most important representative of the Positive Psychology in Spain, who gave a conference about Well-being at Nations. More than 200 people attended the conferences and resilience, strengths and flow was the most important topics development during the two congress days. Every two years, the Venezuelan Congress of Positive Psychology takes place. The second, third and fourth Congress have occurred as well in 2012, 2014 and 2016 respectively. The congresses have had several international speakers: Claudio Ibáñez from Chile in 2012, who talked about his experience applying Positive Psychology in the rescue of the Miners in Atacama; Robert Vallerand from Canada in an interactive video conference about his Dual Model of Passion in 2014; and Barbara Fredrickson with a wonderful video conference about love in 2016.

In 2009, with the birth of the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology, the researchers of the Behavioral Science Department in the Metropolitan University and others researchers from Universidad Simón Bolívar in Caracas and Universidad de los Andes in Mérida, placed their focus of interest in the study of constructs related to well-being and Positive Psychology. Many teachers created or expanded their research lines, which already included variables such as emotional intelligence or optimism to complement them with constructs or variables such as Welfare,

Strengths of Character, Resilience, Fluency, Forgiveness, Passion, Healthy Interpersonal Relationships, Positive Aging, and Appreciative Inquiry.

A current review of this intellectual production makes it possible to point out that there are researches at undergraduate and postgraduate level that include descriptive and correlational studies, validation of psychometric tests, design of individual and group interventions, and qualitative studies with different welfare variables.

The most important research topics developed in Venezuela regarding these topics are related to Well-being, Character Strengths, Flow, Relationships, Positive Health, Mindfulness, Positive Youth Development and Appreciative Inquiry. The professors involved in these investigations are Josefina Blanco, Nicolina Calvanese, María Elena Garassini, Anthony Millán, Victoria Tirro, César Yacsirk and Pura Zavarce (Zavarce & Garassini, 2012).

In 2010, the first edition of the book *Positive Psychology: Studies in Venezuela [Psicología Positiva: Estudios en Venezuela]* compiled by Garassini & Camilli was presented in the first Congress, introducing the main theoretical developments and results of studies conducted in the country. The main topics of interest in Positive Psychology in Venezuela have been well-being, character strengths, positive emotions, flow, resilience and positive organizations.

At this moment, the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology has published four more books:

- Lasting Happiness: Studies of Well-being in Positive Psychology [*La felicidad duradera: estudios del bienestar en la Psicología Positiva*], in 2012 (paperback version available in amazon.com).
- Contributions of Positive Psychology to well-being at work: learning from a Venezuelan experience [*Aportes de la Psicología Positiva al bienestar en el trabajo: aprendizajes de una experiencia venezolana*], in 2012, (available online at <http://svpsicologiapositiva.com/web/aportes-de-la-psicologia-positiva-en-el-trabajo-aprendizajes-de-una-experiencia-venezolana/>).
- Venezuelan Strengths: well-being promotion through Positive Psychology [*Las fortalezas del venezolano: la promoción del bienestar desde la Psicología Positiva*], in 2014, (Kindle version available in amazon.com).
- Positive Psychology in Action: Start with what is right [*Psicología Positiva en acción: Empezar por lo que está bien*], in 2016 (Kindle version soon to be available in amazon.com).

The first MOCC in positive psychology in Spanish was created in Venezuela at the end of 2015, as part of the establishment of a virtual campus in the Metropolitan University called Unimet online [Unimet en línea] available in www.enlinea.unimet.edu.ve. This course has a very important impact in the Iberoamerican population. The professor of the course is María Elena Garassini, and it develops four topics: What prevents or promotes personal well-being? [*¿Qué nos impide o nos promueve el bienestar personal?*], Elements of the Well-Being Theory of Positive Psychology [*Los Elementos de la Teoría del Bienestar de la Psicología Positiva*], Why are strengths of character a cross-cutting axis? [*¿Por qué las fortalezas del carácter son un eje transversal?*], How to increase my Wellness?: Recommendations from

Positive Psychology [*¿Cómo aumentar mi Bienestar?: Recomendaciones desde la Psicología Positiva*]. In only a little bit more than one year, 9000 people took the course and the 5% of them, like in others MOCCs, finish it and obtain their certification.

In 2016, the first online Diploma Course of Positive Psychology was offered, called “Personal and organizational wellness management” [*Gerencia del Bienestar personal y organizacional*]. It was created by the newborn International Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology [*Sociedad venezolana de Psicología Positiva Internacional, SOVEPPPOS Internacional*]. This interactive online program lasts four months (one subjects per term/month), with a total of 128 academic hours. The four topics have a professor who receives an assignation and give feedback to each participant during four classes in a month. The four topics with their professor are: Wellness and healthy lifestyle by María Elena Garassini [*Bienestar y estilo de vida saludable*], Strengths and healthy organizations by César Yacsirk [*Fortalezas y organizaciones saludables*], Life cycle and well-being by Victoria Tirro [*Ciclo de vida y bienestar*], and Practices to manage lasting well-being by Pura Zavarce [*Prácticas para gestionar el bienestar duradero*].

Since 2016, two new programs are offered by the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology. The first one is called Positive Psychology: Tools for Wellness Management [*Psicología Positiva: Herramientas para la Gestión del Bienestar*] and the second one, Applied Positive Psychology: Family, Health and Work [*Psicología Positiva Aplicada: Familia, Salud y Trabajo*]. These programs are offered in two different locations in the city of Caracas, by the request of people who wanted to learn about positive psychology but lived far from the Metropolitan University. The two programs are planned to last 14 weeks and 112 academic hours.

In Venezuela, PP’s dissemination is fairly recent and has been consolidating in the last 8 years. The development of Positive Psychology has been based on the work of many of the professors at the Department of Behavioral Science and the School of Psychology of the Metropolitan University [*Universidad Metropolitana, UNIMET*], where PhD. María Elena Garassini coordinates a team of psychologists (Zavarce & Garassini, 2014).

From 2010 until now, several alumni from all the programs created to learn Positive Psychology have been actively involved in the formation of entities dedicated to develop well-being in Venezuela, such as the national and International Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology. This society’s main activity has been shared in the the four International Congresses in Positive Psychology (2009, 2011, 2013, 2015); in the three National Congresses on Positive Psychology in Spain (2012, 2014, 2016); and in our four Venezuelan Congresses on Positive Psychology (2010, 2012, 2014, 2016). Six books about Positive Psychology have been published in paper an online versions. Several radio programs, TV interviews, magazine articles and free speeches for the general public have been done. Our research members have done academic research and have published scientific articles. Many alumni are teaching PP in the academic programs at Metropolitan University and the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology. On the other hand, the vast majority of graduate alumni in PP are dedicated to apply PP in their professional

work as executives, managers, psychotherapists, educators, physicians and coaches. A lot of parents and people in general study our courses on Positive Psychology looking for resources and tools to develop their own well-being and that of their families and communities, as well as to become better people everyday.

Professionals in Positive Psychology in Venezuela

María Elena Garassini

Graduate in Psychology, Master in Psychology of Human Development and PhD in Psychology from the Central University of Venezuela, PhD in Didactics and Organization of Educational Institutions by the University of Seville in Spain, Specialist in Couple and Family Therapy (PROFAM Caracas in alliance with Center for Couples and Family Development, Florida, USA). Director of the School of Psychology of the Metropolitan University (UNIMET). Coordinator and teacher of the Diploma Course in Positive Psychology of CENDECO-UNIMET. Founding member and the Board of Directors of the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology (SOVEPPOS) and SOVEPPOS International. Representative for Venezuela of the IPPA (International Positive Psychology Association). Coordinator of the Positive Youth Development project initiated in alliance with UNICEF-UNIMET-SOVEPPOS. Consultant and facilitator of workshops and training programs in companies for the promotion of welfare for the private sector (Pfizer, Procter and Gamble, Farmatodo, Farmahorro, Central Madeirense, VEPICA, Fundación Polar), concerted sector (Fe y Alegría) and public sector (Police of Miranda). Compiler and author of chapters of books published in Venezuela regarding Positive Psychology by SOVEPPOS and the ALFA publishing house: Positive Psychology: Studies in Venezuela (SOVEPPOS, 2010); Lasting Happiness: Studies of well-being in Positive Psychology (ALFA, 2012); Venezuelan Strengths: well-being promotion through Positive Psychology (ALFA, 2014); Contributions of Positive Psychology to well-being at work: learning from a Venezuelan experience (SOVEPPOS, 2014); Positive Psychology in action: Start with what is right (SOVEPPOS, 2016). Tutor of undergraduate and postgraduate work in the area of Positive Psychology in the areas of Flow, Passion, Strengths of Character, Positive Youth Development, and Appreciative Inquiry. Author of scientific articles published in refereed journals.

Josefina Blanco Baldo

Degree in Psychology from the Central University of Venezuela with a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling at George Washington University in the United States. Advanced postgraduate course in Cognitive Psychotherapy at the University of Buenos Aires and training at the Oxford Center for Cognitive Therapy in the

United Kingdom. Has done studies in mindfulness in Oxford, England with Mark Willimas, with Jon Kabat-Zinn in the United States and in the VIA Institute with Ryan Niemiec. Professor of the Positive Psychology Diploma Course of UNIMET-CENDECO regarding subjects of interpersonal relations. She has facilitated workshops and trainings in Mindfulness as a tool for well-being for 8 years. The spreading of Mindfulness as an attitude of life constitutes one of her fundamental projects. Likewise, in her professional practice as a cognitive psychotherapist for adult care, she incorporates strategies of positive psychology that allow her patients to build well-being as well as to alleviate their suffering. She has collaborated with two chapters in the books published by SOVEPPOS, referring mainly to Mindfulness and has participated in various talks and conferences to spread the theme of Mindfulness and well-being in healthy people and with chronic health conditions. She has experience in the public and private psychological care field for more than 20 years. She is an Associate Professor of the Metropolitan University and member of the board of directors of the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology.

Nicolina Calvenese

Degree in Clinical Psychology from the Central University of Venezuela; Magister Scientific in Psychology of the Simón Bolívar University (Caracas); Specialization in Bioethics of the Faculty of Medicine of the Central University of Venezuela; Doctorate in Health Psychology from the University of La Laguna (Tenerife, Spain). Professor and Researcher Head of the Department of Science and Behavioral Technologies, Simón Bolívar University (1998-currently). Coordinator of Postgraduate studies in Psychology: Master in Psychology and Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Social Sciences and Humanities of the Simón Bolívar University (currently). Head of the Department of Behavioral Science and Technologies (2009–2011). Responsible for the lines of research of the Health Section, attached to the Department of Science and Behavior Technologies, Simón Bolívar University (2013-currently). Professor of the Diploma Course in Positive Psychology (CENDECO-UNIMET). Founding member and Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology (SOVEPPOS). Teaching Collaborator of the Nephrology and Transplantation Service, University Hospital of Caracas (1997–2005). Clinical Psychologist of the Service of Nephrology and Transplants of the University Hospital of Caracas and responsible for national transplant talks (1997–2005). Areas of specialization and research: Evaluation, diagnosis and psychotherapy in chronic diseases. Psychosocial factors associated with health and illness. Stress, Personality, Emotions and Health (Psychophysiology of stress and Positive Emotions in the health/illness process) Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Leadership. Evaluation and treatment of sleep disorders. Bioethics. Author of four chapters of books published in Venezuela about Positive Psychology by SOVEPPOS and the ALFA publishing house. Participation in the research group for the Evaluation of the Factors Promoting Wisdom in Adolescents (University of La Laguna—Spain and Simón Bolívar University). Research project in Psychology of

Wisdom (in development). Adviser and Tutor of Postgraduate Thesis in the areas of Positive Psychology and Health Psychology at the Simón Bolívar University (Caracas, Venezuela).

Anthony Constant Millán de Lange

Degree in Psychology, Industrial—Organizational Mention (Central University of Venezuela), Degree in Education, Mention Human Resource Development (Central University of Venezuela), Master in Psychology (Simón Bolívar University), Interdisciplinary Doctorate in Social Sciences and Humanities (Simón Bolívar University). Professor of the Department of Behavioral Sciences of the Metropolitan University (UNIMET). Researcher in the lines of occupational psychological health and consumer behavior. National and international lecturer. Consultant and facilitator of workshops and training programs in companies. Author of chapters published in Venezuela about Positive Psychology by SOVEPPOS and the ALFA publishing house: Positive Psychology: Studies in Venezuela (Soveppos, 2010); Lasting Happiness: Studies of well-being in Positive Psychology (ALFA, 2012); Venezuelan Strengths: well-being promotion through Positive Psychology (ALFA, 2014). Tutor of undergraduate and postgraduate work in the area of Positive Psychology in the subjects of Flow, Passion, and Psychological Well-being. Author of scientific articles published in refereed journals.

Victoria Isabel Tirro

Psychogerontologist graduated in Psychology from Andrés Bello Catholic University; Master in Neurosciences from the University of Barcelona (Spain); Specialist in Psychology from Maimónides University (Argentina). Professor at the School of Psychology (pre and postgraduate) of the Metropolitan University, Andrés Bello Catholic University, Rafael Urdaneta University and Central University of Venezuela (UCV). She is part of the researchers' team at the Institute of Psychology's Department of Neuropsychology of the UCV. National and international lecturer on issues related to optimal aging. Tutor of undergraduate thesis in the area of aging and health. She exercises clinical practice in private consultation through individual and family counseling in cases related to affective disorders, memory problems and management of aging, as well as therapeutic accompaniment in adverse situations. She teaches workshops related to aging, neuroscience and brain plasticity. She is currently a member of the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology (SOVEPPOS), the Alzheimer Foundation of Venezuela, the Iberoamerican Network of Psychogerontology (REDIP) and the Iberoamerican Network for Research on Aging and Society (RIIES). Author of book chapters edited by SOVEPPOS and the ALFA publishing house: Positive Psychology: Studies in Venezuela (SOVEPPOS, 2010); Lasting Happiness: Studies of well-being in Positive Psychology (ALFA, 2012); Venezuelan Strengths: well-being promotion through Positive Psychology

(ALFA, 2014); Contributions of Positive Psychology to well-being at work: learning from a Venezuelan experience (SOVEPPOS, 2014); Positive Psychology in action: Start with what is right (SOVEPPOS, 2016).

César Ivanhoe Yacsirk Roa

Degree in Psychology, industrial mention by the Central University of Venezuela; Specialization in Organizational Development by Andrés Bello Catholic University; Master's Degree in Healthy Organizations and Innovation in People Management by Florida Universitaria in Spain, and Diploma Course in Coaching Competencies by the Metropolitan University of Caracas. Founding member and current president of the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology (SOVEPPOS). Columnist of Business Venezuela magazine for the "Management" section, edited by the Venezuelan American Chamber of Industry and Commerce Venamcham. National and international lecturer in cities such as Santo Domingo, Madrid, Buenos Aires, Seville, Coruña and Vigo. University lecturer in the organizational area and positive organizational psychology and consultant in the field of well-being and processes of business change. Coauthor of the chapters: Appreciative Inquiry in the Company. Turning Positivo Communication into a possibility and reality (2016); PERMA, Virtues and Strengths in Action: An Organizational Case Study (2016); Humor as Strength of Character in Venezuelan (2014); Contributions of Positive Psychology to well-being at work: learning from a Venezuelan experience (2014). Tutor of special undergraduate thesis in subjects of the area of Positive Organizational Psychology such as: Psychological Capital; Flow; Emotional Work; Humor and Character Strengths.

Pura Zavarce Armas

Graduate in School Psychology and Master's Degree in Human Development Psychology from the Central University of Venezuela. Specialist in Family and Couples Therapy (PROFAM Caracas in alliance with Center for Couples and Family Development, Florida, USA). Practitioner in Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) titled by the NLP Society Dr. Richard Bandler. Coordinator of the Educational Area in the Department of Behavioral Sciences at the Metropolitan University. Member of the creator team of the Diploma Course of Positive Psychology: Bases for well-being and Applied Positive Psychology (CENDECO-UNIMET). Professor of the subject Positive Interventions and Positive Couples in the Positive Psychology Diploma Course (CENDECO-UNIMET). Founding Member and member of the Board of Directors of the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology (SOVEPPOS) and SOVEPPOS International. Researcher and tutor of undergraduate work in Psychological Well-being, Emotional Intelligence, Affective Styles (Attachment), Forgiveness and Personality Traits. Adult therapist oriented towards the functional transition of personal, couples and familiar crisis, the integral recovery from amorous ruptures,

strengthening of self-esteem and reconstruction of life projects. Author of chapters of books published by SOVEPPOS and the ALFA publishing house: Venezuelan Strengths: well-being promotion through Positive Psychology (ALFA, 2014); Positive Psychology: Current Issues (ALFA, 2012); Positive Psychology: Studies in Venezuela (SOVEPPOS, 2010).

Positive Psychology in Chile

Positive psychology (PP) began in Chile on July 10, 2001, with the foundation of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology (www.psicologiapositiva.cl) by Claudio Ibáñez. The mission of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology (CLIPP) is “to develop applications of positive psychology aimed at helping people and organizations to make their dreams come true through training and education in positive psychology”. CLIPP is probably the first entity created in the world dedicated to positive psychology. At the time CLIPP was founded, only three years had elapsed since Martin Seligman’s presidential address as president of the APA (1998), the founding landmark of positive psychology. The meeting of Claudio Ibáñez with this speech was what prompted the foundation of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. A few days after leaving the Human Resources VP of Banco BBVA Chile Ibáñez, using his experience as an executive, psychologist and academic, was starting up a project dedicated to develop emotional intelligence skills. In his long experience as a human resources executive, he had discovered that in most companies, most medical licenses were for depression. Close relatives were afflicted with this illness, as well as some acquaintances and friends. More than the abundance of people with depression, what caught Ibáñez attention was the long and prolonged treatments and the little success they had. Researching this on the internet, he discovered the following statement: “Depression is the mental illness with better prognosis and faster remission”. Whoever claimed this was a so-called Seligman. The surname “Seligman” was not unknown for Ibáñez, because in the early 1970s, during his first years as a psychology student at University of Chile, he had read a paper on learned helplessness by an author with this surname (Seligman and Maier, 1967). Such work had impressed Ibáñez by the ingeniousness of its experimental design and because their results put in risk the behaviorism, to which Ibáñez enthusiastically ascribed at that time, mainly because the rigorous use behaviorism did of the scientific method. He made a few more clicks on the internet, read some other pages and the three letters “M.E.P.” that usually follow the surname Seligman indicated that it was the same person from his university years: Martin E.P. Seligman. In 1998 Seligman had reached the presidency of the APA (American Psychological Association) elected by the highest majority in the history of this grouping. There it was his inaugural address. In it, he called for building a science of human strength, as a complement to the science of healing in which psychology had been transformed. In another paper, he argued that psychology had become a “victimology”. And all this made a lot of sense to Ibáñez.

He then decided to acquire the main Seligman's books by Amazon, and in 72 hours he had them in his hands. He devoted himself to studying thoroughly "Helplessness" (Seligman, 1975), "Learned Optimism" (Seligman, 1998) and "The Optimistic Child" (Seligman et al., 1995). He devoted himself to a thorough study of the material, and after a few weeks of study, he had developed a two-day workshop called "Development of Optimism". This workshop was delivered for the first time on November 29, 2001 for 12 professionals and executives who recently had been dismissed from their companies, and were participating in an outplacement program. This workshop constitutes, probably, one of the first applied interventions of PP in Latin America and dozens of companies have been benefited with this training (El Diario Financiero, 2002).

Since the foundation of the CLIPP, Claudio Ibáñez has developed and delivered positive psychology programs for dozens of companies and thousands of people, consisting of workshops, executive coaching programs, lectures, conferences, psychotherapy, press columns, television interviews and exhibited works in different congresses of psychology, including an active participation in the World Congresses of IPPA.

There are some Highlights of Positive Psychology in Chile. In addition to the founding of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology in 2001, the following highlights stand out in the history of PP in Chile. Most of these milestones have been recorded and disseminated by media in Chile.

November 2008: The first Diploma in Positive Psychology is taught, being one of the first academic programs of training in positive psychology for professionals in the Spanish speaking world. This program has more than 17 versions so far and about 300 professionals from Chile and different Spanish speaking countries (Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, México, Guatemala, Peru, Uruguay) have graduated.

August 2010: Within the few days of the 33 miners' tragedy in the Atacama desert Claudio Ibáñez was interviewed by CNN Chile (CNN Chile, 2010). In this visionary interview, Ibáñez spoke about the hope in front of adversities and the key role that a positive view of the future plays when everything seems lost. Because of this interview Ibáñez was invited by the Government of Chile to be part of the rescue team of the miners with the focus of PP. The role of PP during miners' rescue can be seen in different articles and videos recorded by Chilean and international media (Instituto Chileno de Psicología Positiva, 2010).

November 2010: The book "Los 33 de Atacama y su Rescate" (Ibáñez, 2010; El Mercurio, 2010) is published. In this book, Ibáñez uses the central approaches, concepts and theories of PP to describe and explain how and why, after spending 69 days trapped 700 meters underground the 33 miners were able to leave physically and psychologically unscathed. The case of the miners was exposed by Ibáñez in 2013 at the third World Congress of Positive Psychology in Los Angeles, USA.

September 2011: The Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology publishes the book "Nuestro Lado Luminoso" (Ibáñez, 2011) This book describes the historical, philosophical and empirical foundations of positive psychology, together with the main concepts and theories about happiness and well-being. "Nuestro Lado Luminoso"

was one of the first books published on positive psychology in the Spanish-speaking world.

October 2011: Martin E.P. Seligman visits Chile (El Mercurio, 2011) for the tenth Anniversary of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. When Ibáñez contacted Seligman on August 12, 2009 to invite him to Chile, he responded, very much in his own way, with an immediate and concise email saying “We would love to see the Andes for the first time in our lives” (Seligman, 2009). It was the first time that a psychologist of the highest academic and scientific caliber as Professor Seligman would step on Latin American soil and do so in Santiago of Chile.

On October 12, 2011, the International Seminar on Happiness was held and Martin Seligman was the main speaker, giving three massive lectures.

August 2012: The Master in Positive Psychotherapy begins, a unique and pioneering program in the world. On Saturday, November 29, 2014, after 2 years and 9 months of intensive work, both academic and practical, the Institute proceeded to graduate students of the first cohort of this program with the certificate of Master in Positive Psychotherapy. The fact that these professionals were the first in the world to become certified as specialists in positive psychotherapy, made the top leaders of positive psychology send their congratulations via emails (El Mercurio, 2014). Seligman told them “My sincere congratulations on being the first to reach a Master in Positive Psychotherapy. History will see them as true pioneers “; Carmelo Vasquez, former President of IPPA said: “This program will make a difference in the practice of Positive Psychology in Latin America.”

October 2012: The Happiness Barometer is an annual survey measuring happiness in Chile that is carried out by the Coca-Cola Institute of Happiness, an entity that Ibáñez help to found in Chile for this multinational company. When Seligman visited Chile in October 2011 suggested that we incorporate PERMA (Seligman, 2011) in the measurements for the 2012 Happiness Barometer. We took the challenge and, to our knowledge, the 2012 Happiness Barometer is the first measurement of PERMA in the world (Ibáñez, 2012).

December 2012: Carmelo Vasquez comes to Chile invited by the University of Concepción and visits the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology.

June 2013: The Positive Psychotherapy Center is created, aimed at offering positive psychotherapy services to the community.

June 2013: By the initiative of alumni of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology, the Chilean Society of Positive Psychology (SOCHIPSP; www.sochipsp.cl) is created. Its first directory was composed by Claudio Ibáñez, President; Yemilie Goldberg, Vice-President; María Luisa Piamonte, Secretary; Eduardo Karmy, Treasurer; Rodrigo Ibáñez, Director and as Executive Director was designated Valeria Plaza. It is necessary to emphasize that outstanding PP leaders have accepted to be members of this Society, like Martin Seligman, as Senior Honorary Member and Sonja Lyubomirsky and Barbara Fredrickson, as Honorary Members.

July 2013: The Master in Positive Coaching begins, a program for graduates whose purpose is to train specialists in PP applied to work as professional coaches.

August 2014: Sonja Lyubomirsky visits Chile brought by Seminarium, with the sponsor of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology (Cafati, 2014). She was the

main speaker at the 2014 Corporate Well-being Conference organized by Seminarium and meets with members of the Chilean Society of Positive Psychology. Lyubomirsky accepts the invitation to join this society as an Honorary Member.

May 2015: Barbara Fredrickson visits Chile to participate in the Second Corporate Well-being Conference organized by Seminarium and sponsored by the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. Fredrickson meets with the Chilean Society of Positive Psychology and she accepts the invitation to join this society as Honorary Member.

June 2015: Martin Seligman invites Claudio Ibáñez to be part of his initial keynote at the fourth World Congress of Positive Psychology, Orlando, to expose the achievements of positive psychology in Chile.

June 2015: Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, during the fourth World Congress of Positive Psychology, Orlando, requests Claudio Ibáñez copies in English of his book on the rescue of the 33 miners. Csikszentmihalyi explains that he knows the book is in Kindle Amazon but he requires hard copies, not digital ones, because he uses the book as a mandatory reading in the doctoral program in Positive Psychology at the University of Claremont. Then a new English edition of the book of miners is published, with a foreword written by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (Ibáñez, 2015; El Mercurio, 2015).

March 2016: According to World Happiness Report 2016, Chile reaches the 24th place in the world ranking of happiness, improving 19 positions compared to the 2012 report. Ibáñez was interviewed by CNN Chile about these results (CNN Chile, 2016).

From 2001 until now, several CLIPP alumni have been actively involved in the formation of entities dedicated to positive psychology in Chile, such as the Institute of Well-being whose main activity is the annual Meeting of Happiness. Others alumni are teaching PP in academic programs that have emerged in some universities, such as Adolfo Ibáñez University (Fernández, 2015) and the vast majority of graduate alumni in PP are dedicated to apply PP in their professional work as executives, managers, psychotherapists, educators, physicians (Ibáñez, 2005) and coaches.

The most important and broad development of positive psychology in Chile has occurred in the application of PP to organizations and psychotherapy and in the creation of educational programs of positive psychology outside the field of universities.

In 2013 the Chilean Society of Clinical Psychology published a special issue dedicated to positive psychology (*Terapia Psicológica*, 2013). In this special issue of the journal, articles were written by renowned authors of positive psychology, such as Christopher Peterson, Carmelo Vázquez, Nansook Park, Marisa Salanova, Margarita Tarragona, Robert Vallerand and Chiara Ruini. Although several of these authors are referenced in later Chilean studies, the impact of this special issue on the academic world has been limited. In general, universities, and specially psychology careers, continue to provide an educational curriculum heavily dominated by the more classical and conventional approaches of psychology, both at under and postgraduate levels, and still they do not incorporate the concepts, approach and

findings of positive psychology in their curricula. Only in the recent years a few doctoral theses and some books have incorporated some specific themes of PP such as well-being (Oyanedel and Mella, 2014; Bilbao et al., 2015; Mendiburo et al., 2016).

In Chile, the main development of PP is in applications to the real world (organizations, schools and general public) and in training professionals in PP (Diploma in PP, Master in Positive Psychotherapy, Master in Positive Coaching). From this point of view, Chile is a real pioneer in the world of PP. This fact is not reflected in other works about the history of positive psychology in Latin America, such as those by Castro Solano (2012, 2014), which are confined to and based on articles published in indexed journals only and some academic meetings to build the history of positive psychology in Latin America. This approach results in biased view of the subject because a very relevant current of positive psychology occurs in the field of applications in the real world, as it has happened in Chile and the work of practitioners is not usually a content for the peer reviewed journals.

Professionals in Positive Psychology in Chile

Claudio Ibáñez S

Organizational and Clinical Psychologist titled by the University of Chile with the highest academic distinctions of its promotion. Creator, Senior Partner and Executive Director of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology, Enhancing People S.A. (www.psicologiapositiva.cl or www.enhancingpeople.com). He is founder of Positive Psychology in Chile and current leader of it in the country. He has worked in Citibank, as Training Manager, and in Sodimac and Banco BBVA as Human Resources Manager. He was President of the Human Resources Committee of the Association of Banks and Financial Institutions and member of the Ethics Committee of the Chilean Psychologists Association. As an academic, he has been teaching at the Faculties of Economics and Administration of the University of Chile and the University of Santiago, as well as at the School of Psychology of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. He is a columnist and guest consultant on Emotional Intelligence and Positive Psychology of the newspaper El Mercurio de Santiago. He develops and imparts consulting, executive coaching and personal skills programs for executives and management teams (high performance teams) of the first organizational level in national and multinational companies. He has taught lectures, conferences, courses and workshops on Positive Psychology in various universities. He has been lecturer at the third World Congress of Positive Psychology (Los Angeles, California, 2013) and the fourth World Congress of Positive Psychology (Orlando, Florida, 2015). He was part of the rescue team of the 33 miners of Mina San José. He is creator and Academic Director of the following programs of training and certification in positive psychology, pioneers in Chile and Latin America: Diploma Course in Positive Psychology: Fundamentals-Tools-Applications (DPP),

Master in Positive Psychotherapy (MPSP) and Master in Positive Coaching (MCP). He is usually required by national and foreign media (El Mercurio, Radio Cooperativa, Channel 13C, CNNChile, German TV, Cadena 3 Argentina, CNN en Español, Revista Mensagem, 3TV) to obtain his expert opinion from positive psychology on subjects Relevant current events. Author of the books: *The 33 of Atacama and his Rescue: Positive Psychology in Action* [Los 33 de Atacama y su Rescate: Psicología Positiva en Acción] (Origo Ediciones, 2010). *Our Luminous Side: 12 Years of Positive Psychology*. [Nuestro Lado Luminoso: 12 Años de Psicología Positiva] (Ed. Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology, 2011).

Hernán Cabrera Baeza

Religious belonging to the Congregation of the Marist Brothers of Teaching with own studies of the Congregation in Chile, Spain (Madrid, El Escorial), Italy (Rome), Mexico (Guadalajara) and Colombia (Bogotá). Professor of Basic General Education with a Mention in Religion by the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Professor of Religion of Middle Education by the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso, Professor of Spanish State or Language of Middle Education by the Catholic University of Chile, Education Graduate and Vocational and Professional Advisor by the Catholic University of the North, Diploma in Theology and Youth Ministry by the Salesian University of Rome, Master's Degree in Educational Psychology from Santo Tomás University in Santiago, Chile, Diploma in Positive Psychology and Master (c) in Positive Coaching by the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology directed by Mr. Claudio Ibáñez. Since 2012, in addition to his own academic activities in Colleges and Universities, he has developed a Family Pastoral Program with the Personal Growth Workshop for adults of the Educational Communities (parents, administrators, auxiliaries, alumni...) of the Marist Colleges called "Flourishing from my strengths" [Floreecer desde mis fortalezas]. Since 2014, he has developed a Program of the Department of Orientation called "A Vocational-Professional Proposal from the Strengths" [Una Propuesta Vocacional-Profesional desde las propias Fortalezas] for students when making their professional choice. In 2016, he bagen a project called "Promotion of the Foundations of Positive Psychology applied to the classroom" [Promoción de los Fundamentos de la Psicología Positiva aplicados al aula] in the Teachers' Councils of the Marist Schools of Chile.

Claudio Carrasco O

Work Psychologist, Diploma in Positive Psychology and Master (c) Positive Coaching by the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. Currently, he is in charge of the Organizational Development Unit of the Accounting and Finance Department of the Ministry of Public Works, where he is responsible, together with the Administration Department, of the coordination of the strategic plan for the management of

people of the Service. Within the plan, he is the creator, responsible and rapporteur of the Strengthening of Teams program, where strengthening work is the basis of the program along with Appreciative Inquiry. At the same time, he has held workshops on Positive Emotions, Happiness at Work, Strengths and Mindfulness for Ministry officials. He has also promoted within the strategic plan of Training, internal competition for the workshop Positive Attitude in the Organization, which was based on Selgiman's PERMA model. He is currently designing a Positive Coaching Proposal, for officials of the Accounting and Finance Department, based on the ICHPP coaching model.

Sylvia Farías Alcaíno

She is a licensed psychologist at the University of Concepción, with postgraduate degrees in Systemic Family Therapy (Chilean Institute of Family Therapy in Santiago), Strategic Brief Therapy (Institute of Ericksonian Therapy in Santiago de Chile). Graduate of the Diploma Course in Positive Psychology at the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology, Master in Positive Psychotherapy at the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. Currently working in her private practice conducting positive psychotherapy with excellent results since the year 2014 for adults, adolescents and couples. In addition, she works in agreement with the Public Ministry in the Unit of Victims and Witnesses of the Prosecutor's Office of the Maule Region, applying the models of positive psychology to the reparative therapy. She participates in the Chilean Society of Positive Psychology (SOCHIPSP) as one of the founding partners and carries out activities to promote the science of Positive Psychology and its applications in the city of Talca, Chile.

Ignacio Fernández

Psychologist of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and Master's Degree in Human Resources Management of Adolfo Ibáñez University. Editor of the book "Psychology for Life" and author of the books "Interior GPS" and "Organizational Happiness". The latter is a reference for consulting to apply positive psychology in organizations. Director of the Master's Degree in Management Skills at Adolfo Ibáñez University. In 2014, he created the first Diploma Course in Organizational Happiness in Latin America, at Adolfo Ibáñez University (UAI), where he is the director. During 14 years, he directed the Department of Organizational Psychology of UAI, since its foundation. Consultant in effective leadership, high performance teams and management of organizational happiness in dozens of companies, standing out the advice in several of the best companies to work in Chile. International speaker in organizational happiness, high performance teams and effective leadership. Awarded as Organizational Psychologist of the year 2011 by the College of Psychologists of Chile.

Yemilie Goldberg Ramírez

Psychologist, Diploma Course Graduate in Positive Psychology and Master in Positive Psychotherapy. Both certifications obtained at the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. She is a founding partner of the Chilean Society of Positive Psychology and its current Executive Director. She serves as a private therapist using tools of positive psychology for intervention in patients with depression and other mood disorders, loss of life, and varied clinical settings. University professor in prestigious universities of the country (Diego Portales University, Central University, Alberto Hurtado University, etc.) in postgraduate programs where she transmits the contributions of positive psychology for self-care in psychosocial teams. Private consultant for public and private organizations on issues of happiness, conflict resolution, welfare education.

Rodrigo Ibáñez V

Psychologist, Member of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA). Master's Degree in Human Resource Management and Strategic Management of People (Summa Cum Laude Maximum Distinction). Master (c) in Positive Psychology mention Positive Coaching, Diploma Course in Positive Psychology, both at the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. Member of the Board of Directors and Founding Member of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology and of the Chilean Society of Positive Psychology (SOCHIPSP), institutions in which he is a Senior Strategic Consultant and Professor in academic programs in Psychology Postgraduate Positive. He designs evidence-based intervention workshops and strategies and implements programs in organizations geared toward developing high-level management skills to enable people and high-performance teams to achieve excellence in performance with a high impact in achieving their goals and well-being). He has extensive experience in the application of concepts, tools and strategies of Positive Psychology to the world of work, organizations and positive leadership, as well as to the individual level: Positive Coaching and Positive Psychotherapy. He participated in the fourth World Congress on Positive Psychology, Orlando, Florida, USA, where he presented an abstract entitled "Positive Leadership and People Management".

Eduardo Karmy Butto

Professor of Biology and Sciences and Psychologist with degrees from the University of Chile. Director Saint Gabriel's School, General Secretary of the YMCA of Santiago de Chile, Director of the Arab College, Graduate of the Diploma Course in Positive Psychology and Master in Positive Psychotherapy by the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. Associate Consultant of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. Board Member of Saint Gabriel's School, Board Member of Trehwela's

School, Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Marist Educational Foundation. Founder and Treasurer of the Chilean Society of Positive Psychology.

Daniel Martínez Aldunate

Psychiatrist graduated from the University of Chile. He is currently Director of the Institute of Welfare (www.institutodelbienestar.cl) and President of the Foundation for the Development of Welfare and Happiness (www.fundacionbienestar.cl), institutions dedicated to promoting well-being and happiness in the community. He is currently Director of the Diploma Course in Positive Psychology and Well-being at the School of Psychology at the Adolfo Ibáñez University (UAI) and at the Institute of Well-being (IBE) and Director of the Diploma Course in Positive Psychology and Education at UAI and IBE. Member of the World Group Action for Happiness and co-director of the International Encounters of Happiness since 2012 (www.encuentrofelicidad.cl) and the International Encounters of Municipalities for happiness since 2014 (www.quillotatequierofeliz.cl). Editor and co-author of the book “Happiness: Evidence and experiences to change our world” of Editorial LOM, Society of Neurology, Psychiatry and Neurosurgery (October 2013). He held the position of Vice President of the Chilean Society of Neurology, Psychiatry and Neurosurgery (2013–2014).

Mauricio Silva

Airline Transport Pilot, Flight Instructor (TRE-A320Fam) and AQP Manager at Latam Airlines. Diploma Course Graduate in Human Relations and Communication of the Carlos Casanueva Professional Institute. Diploma Course Graduate in Positive Psychology and Master in Positive Coaching at the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. Member of the Chilean Society of Positive Psychology. He is dedicated to the application of Positive Psychology both in individual coaching sessions and in the development of workshops for youth and adults.

Angela Gilchrist

Positive Psychology Diploma Course Graduate and current student of the Master in Positive Psychology with Mention in Positive Coaching of the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology. Consultant with more than 10 years of corporate experience in Human Resources in Latin America, managing projects in Central and South America. Facilitator and designer of sales and leadership training with experience in Latin America, Brazil and the United States. More than 2000 trained people and more than 3000 hours of facilitation. Certified facilitator in LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® Methodology. Currently working on ways to intervene and apply Positive

Psychology in corporations and individuals through training, coaching, conversation circles and talks.

Positive Psychology in Brazil

In Brazil the first work, which has a record, published with the term Positive Psychology, dated 1982, a book by Lúcia Maria Sálvia Coelho under the name Epistemological Foundations of a Positive Psychology, the same has a philosophical proposal based on the positivism of Comte. However, the first work to be considered within a salutogenic bias (Antonovsky, 1979), was proposed by Claudio Hutz, Silvia Koller and Denise Bandeira in 1996, with article “Resilience and vulnerability in children at social risk”. The first book on the theme published in Brazil, titled “Resilience and Positive Psychology: Interfaces of Risk to Protection” was published by Dell’Aglío, Koller, and Yunes, in 2006. Seibel et al. (2016) have published the book “Positive Psychology: Theory, Research and Intervention”, which includes studies of several years of research from the Center for Psychological Studies CEP-RUA and collaborating researchers on the subject. This book has been widely used as a reference in the subject by covering a wide range of topics of interest on Positive Psychology.

The professional beginnings of Positive Psychology in *Brazil* date from 2003. In that year, PhD Lilian Graziano founded the Institute of Positive Psychology and Behavior [*Instituto de Psicologia Positiva e Comportamento, IPPC*]. This organization was originally created to develop PP in Brazil and to study its constructs with local population. Today, it has expanded its focus to clinical coaching and supervision; scientific research and dissemination; as well as business and educational training (see Positive Business School in www.positivebs.com.br). Thus, professionals working in that institute are based on the latest scientific evidence in the field of Positive Psychology.

In this sense, a project for the recovery of undergraduate students with low academic performance, totally based on Positive Psychology, called phoenix project, was also created in the Alvares Penteado School of Commerce Foundation (FECAP). The project was conceived and conducted by Prof. Dr. Fabio Appolinário and by Profa. Dr. Lilian Graziano. (More detailed information can be found in “Positive Psychology in Latin America”, Castro Solano, 2014, p. 129).

Moreover, the magazine Psyche, Science and Life [Psique, Ciencia y Vida] made an important contribution to PP’s dissemination in the country, publishing an article on Positive Psychology in 2006 first issue. Due to the growing public interest in these topics, in 2008 this publication released a special issue entitled ‘Science in the search of happiness’ [Ciência na busca da felicidade].

The first Brazilian Congress on Positive Psychology was held in Rio de Janeiro in 2011. The topic of this event was ‘The road to flourish’ and approximately 600 individuals participated in that occasion. Martin Seligman was the main guest speaker, presenting an overview of PP, with special reference to his latest book ‘Flourishing’.

James Pawelski was also invited to the event and gave a presentation on the PP status in the academic world and especially in Latin America. This congress was organized by the Latin-American Association of Positive Psychology [Asociación Latinoamericana de Psicología Positiva, APPAL], an organization founded in 2010, which aims to promote human development through the dissemination of PP. APPAL also aims to raise economic means to fund PP's studies, by connecting the academic world with institutions able to support these research. Daniel Levy, coach and psychologist, is the founder and president of the APPAL, organization that has formed an administrative council with leading researchers and professionals based in Brazil. Due to its importance, APPAL and IPPA announced their institutional affiliation in 2011.

Since then, Positive Psychology in Brazil has developed in stride through free courses taught by professionals in the area, to postgraduate courses such as the course coordinated by Prof. Monica Portela, from Rio de Janeiro, who proposes an integration of Positive Psychology with coaching, the latter, in fact, an area that, at least in Brazil, has received Positive Psychology with open arms. In this sense, the Brazilian Society of Coaching will bring in March of this year (2017) no less than Martin Seligman for his Fourth International Business Forum, Leadership and Coaching. With the increase in initiatives in the area of Positive Psychology, Brazil has seen people's interest in the subject grow, both in the academic universe and outside it. In the field of research, we have important contributions, in the form of articles, theses and dissertations from the University of São Paulo (USP), Methodist University and the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, among others. In addition, initiatives such as the launch in 2015 of the electronic journal of scientific divulgation *Make It Positive*, bilingual publication and free distribution, has contributed to the dissemination of knowledge in Positive Psychology that has been produced both in Brazil and in other countries, ensuring that such knowledge is not restricted to the academic universe. Important works have also been done in schools, where Positive Psychology has become part of the curriculum. In this sense, we highlight the work of the psychologist Miriam Rodrigues, who with her Positive Emotional Education project have developed the emotional aspect of many Brazilian children. It is also important to highlight the work carried out by non-profit organizations, such as The Ambassadors of Prevention, coordinated by Sandra Sahad, who, through the encouragement of the virtues, has promoted the prevention of drug use in the region of the city of Campinas, São Paulo. Brazilian companies have also shown a growing interest in the subject, which has stimulated the market for lectures and training in Positive Psychology in Brazil. However, with the popularization of the theme, our challenge has been precisely to maintain the scientificity of this movement, avoiding that Positive Psychology is just an "organizational fad" and that, in fact, can change the mindset of corporations.

Professionals in Positive Psychology in Brazil

Lilian Graziano

Psychologist and Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of São Paulo (USP). She has a postgraduate degree in Cognitive Constructivist Psychotherapy and *lato sensu* specialization in the area of business management, with specialization in Virtues and Personal Forces by the VIA Institute on Character, USA and certification in Positive Acorn Coaching, USA. She is also a member of the scientific committee of the Association of Positive Psychology of Latin America (APPAL). In 1998, although she was not yet familiar with Positive Psychology, she published her Master's thesis on AIDS and resilience, in which her affinity with the principles of this scientific movement that began at that time could be perceived. Some years later, her doctoral work on Positive Psychology and Happiness was the first Brazilian thesis on the subject. From her experience in organizational consulting, she founded in 2003 the Institute of Positive Psychology and Behavior (IPPC), the only Brazilian corporate education company that specializes in Positive Psychology (www.psicologiapositiva.com.br). Since then, it has been developing corporate training and development programs for national and multinational companies such as Natura, Bradesco, 3M, Suncoke Energy, among others. In 2015, she launched the electronic magazine of scientific divulgation "Make It Positive" Magazine, whose objective is to spread Positive Psychology in Brazil and in the world. Make It Positive is a bilingual publication (Portuguese/English), totally free and that can be acquired in AppleStore or GooglePlay (www.makeitpositivemag.com). Graziano is also a lecturer in graduate programs and in-company programs at Fundação Dom Cabral (FDC).

Fabio Appolinário

Psychologist and administrator, with a specialization in Cognitive and Constructivist Psychology. Master and PhD in Psychology from the University of São Paulo (USP), with courses in psychology, anthropology and leadership at Berkeley University, Harvard University and the Smithsonian Institute. Former Pro-Rector of Extension and Development (vice-chancellor) of Fundação Álvares Penteadó and Dean of Business School of Trevisan Business School. He is currently the director of the Institute of Positive Psychology and Behavior (IPPC Brazil) and the Positive Business School. He is also a consultant for applications of positive psychology in companies (programs of mindfulness, positive leadership and change management and appreciative inquiry), having developed projects for the public sector (Banco do Brasil—Government Area, Medical School Foundation of USP, BNDES, Federal Savings Bank, Sabesp and Finep) and private (Febraban, Mahle, Bank Boston, Rede Globo, Santander, Itaú, American Express, Bradesco, Danone, Net, Unimed, Ambev, Robert Bosch, Novartis, Control Risks Group, Pfizer, Leroy-Merlin,

Geoklock, Sanofi-Aventis, Embraer, TIM, Itatiaia, Siemens, Volvo, Dell, IFF, RBS Group, 3M, Allianz, Freudenberg, Deutsche Auslandsschulen International, BASF, Boticário, GM, among others.) He is a lecturer in the Executive MBA programs of Fundação Dom Cabral, BSP (Business School São Paulo) and HSM Educação. He is also an author of books from the publishing companies Atlas, Cengage Learning e Trevisan Editora.

Marco Calegari

Current President of APPAL (Association of Positive Psychology of Latin America). Clinical Psychologist, Master in Neurosciences and Behavior. Director of the Catarinense Institute of Cognitive Therapy (ICTC), Director of the Paranaense Institute of Cognitive Therapy (IPTC), founding President of the Association of Cognitive Therapies of Santa Catarina (ATC/SC), President of the third Congress of the Brazilian Institute of Neuropsychology and Behavior (IBNeC 2012). President of the Brazilian Federation of Cognitive Therapy (FBTC), 2009–2011 management. Author of the book “The New Unconscious: How Cognitive Therapy and Neurosciences revolutionized the mental processing model” (Artmed, 2011) which in 2012 received the Jabuti Literature Award. Author of the Neuroscience column of the electronic magazine Make it Positive.

Daniela Levy

Founder, Former President and current Administrative Adviser of APPAL. Post-Graduated in Clinical-Hospital Psychology by the Heart Institute—InCor of HC-FMUSP, Postgraduate in Behavioral Cognitive Therapy and Hospital Psychology by HC-FMUSP, Specialist Degree in Hospital Psychology. She has worked since 2003 at Movere—Núcleo de Atividades Esportivo and Movere Instituto de Ações Comunitárias until 2009, developing work together with the multiprofessional team in the treatment of individuals and of groups (children and their families). She applies the area of clinical care in her private practice (children and adults), develops orientation programs for the country and Quality of Life in Companies, being Director of Carevolution. She is also experienced in management of multiprofessional teams, new products, mapping and management of patients in the field of psychology. Founding Fellow of the Institute of Coaching Professional Association at McLean Hospital—Harvard Medical School Affiliate. Master Coach in Health and Wellness by Wellcoaches—U.S.A., Co-publisher of the site www.positivepsychologynews.com.

Helder Kamei

Psychologist, Master in Social and Work Psychology from the University of São Paulo (USP) and IBC certified coach. Author of the book “Flow and Positive Psychology: State of flow, motivation and high performance”. He was a researcher in the area of Welfare Sciences at Natura. He is a professor of Positive Psychology at the Executive MBA in Development of Human Potential at Franklin Covey Business School and at the Brazilian Coaching Institute. He was a guest lecturer at the FIA Post-Graduation Course in Quality of Work at Work. He serves as a psychotherapist and coach at Higienópolis Medical Center. He gave several interviews to the media, such as Globo Reporter, Época Magazine and Jornal da Cultura. In 2014, he was speaker of TEDx: The Power of a Smile.

Miriam Rodrigues

Psychologist with a postgraduate degree in Behavioral Medicine by UNIFESP and training in Positive Psychology by IPPC—Institute of Positive Psychology and Behavior, with Lilian Graziano. Idealizer of Positive Emotional Education, orientation program for parents and educators that aims to prevent depression, anxiety, violence, bullying and psychosomatic disorders in children and adolescents through the development of social and emotional skills. Author of Positive Emotional Education and several children’s books based on Positive Psychology. She works as a school psychologist, also from Positive Psychology, at the Wish Bilingual School. In addition, she advises schools and education departments on the implementation of Emotional Education and Socioemotional Competences.

Renata Livramento

Graduated in Psychology (UFMG) and Administration (UNA), with a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology (PUC/MG), Masters and Doctorate in Administration and Emphasis in Marketing (Fumec University). Currently works in private practice with psychotherapy, coaching, positive psychology, guidance and vocational coaching. She is also a university professor. In 2015, she founded her company, the Brazilian Institute of Positive Psychology, through which he offers courses in the field. She is a speaker and idealizer of the Happiness in Action Programs and Donate Positive Feelings.

Andrea Perez

Graduated in Letters and MSc in Management Systems from Universidade Federal Fluminense—UFF. She is also a coach with several formations in the area, including

Positive Coaching by Positive Psychology and Behavior Institute (IPPC). She is dedicated to an important work of dissemination of Positive Psychology in Brazil through social media, called Positive Library, whose objective is the dissemination of books and scholarly works on the subject. Writer of the column “Readings” for the electronic magazine Make it Positive, a publication on Positive Psychology aimed at the general public. Organizer and Co-author of the book: “Positive Psychology—Theory and Practice”. In 2015, he founded her company, the Brazilian Institute of Positive Psychology, through which he offers courses in the field.

Mônica Portella

Scientific director and extension courses at CPAF-RJ (Center for Applied Psychology and Training). Post-Doctorate in Psychology from PUC-RJ. PhD in Social Psychology from UFRJ. Master in Cognitive Psychology from UFRJ. Professor and supervisor of the clinical and teaching staff at CPAF-RJ and the Graduate Program in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy at CPAF-RJ/UCAM. Cognitive Behavioral Psychotherapist. Consultant and Author of books and articles in the field of nonverbal communication and stress control.

Claudio Hutz

Psychologist with a Master’s and Ph.D. from the University of Iowa (USA) and postdoctoral degree from Arizona State University (USA). He is currently Professor of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Coordinator of the Measurement Laboratory of the PPG Psychology of UFRGS and President of the Brazilian Association of Positive Psychology (ABP+). He is also coordinator of the Psychology Undergraduate Program at UFRGS. He was president of the National Association of Research and Graduate Studies in Psychology (ANPEPP) and the Brazilian Institute of Psychological Assessment (IBAP). He has participated in committees of CAPES, CNPQ, INEP, FAPERGS and FAPESP. He was Head of Department, Coordinator of the PG Program in Psychology and Director of the Psychology Institute of UFRGS. His lines of research are in the areas of Positive Psychology, Social and Personal Development and Psychological Assessment and Psychometrics (with emphasis on the construction and validation of instruments for personality assessment).

Sílvia H. Koller

Psychologist and PhD in Education from PUC-RS and Post-Doctorate at Harvard University (USA). She is currently a Full Professor at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, coordinator of the CEP-RUA Center for Psychological Studies at PPG Psychology at UFRGS. She was president of the National Association of

Research and Graduate Studies in Psychology (ANPEPP) and the Brazilian Association of Developmental Psychology (APBP). Participates in international commissions of SRCD, SRA and ISSBD, UNICEF, Childhood, among others and national of CAPES, CNPQ, FAPERGS and FAPESP. She received support from the Kelloggs Foundation and the Jacobs Foundation for research. She is a researcher 1A of CNPQ/MCT/ Brasil and CAPES/Brazil. Her lines of research are in Social and Personality Development, Positive Psychology and Psychological Assessment. She was co-editor with Dr. Débora Dalbosco Dell’Aglío and Dr. Maria Angela Mattar Yunes of the first book on Positive Psychology and Resilience in Brazil (Casa do Psicólogo, 2006) and with Dras. Bruna Seibel and Dr. Michele Poletto of the book “Positive Psychology: theory, research and intervention” (Juruá, 2016).

Bruna Larissa Seibel

Psychologist, Master and PhD from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. Therapist of Couples and Families by INFAPA. Collaborator at the Center for Psychological Studies (CEP-Rua/UFRGS). In her Master’s degree, she developed an intervention for patients with chronic disease based on Positive Psychology, and validated the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) instrument for use in Brazil (Seibel et al. 2016). During her doctorate, she longitudinally investigated the social support network as a protection factor for families in situations of social vulnerability. She also developed and coordinated the Florescendo for Education Extension Program (PROEXT/2015), in order to reduce and prevent school dropout in a community in southern Brazil. She’s a Psychology professor at Cesuca Inedi College. She is current management advisor (2016–2019) of the Regional Council of Psychology/RS.

Michele Poletto

Psychologist from the University of Caxias do Sul, psychoanalyst from CEPdePA, Master’s and Doctorate in Psychology from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. She is a collaborator at the Center for Psychological Studies (CEP-Rua/UFRGS). In 2003, she developed a qualitative study on resilience with children who cared for their siblings and the house, published by the Journal of Psychology: Theory and Research in 2004. In her Master’s degree (2005–2006), she developed a quantitative study on resilience and goodness—subjectivity of children in situations of social vulnerability. At doctoral level, she conducted a longitudinal study on subjective well-being with children living with their families and in institutional settings. During her years at UFRGS, she taught classes, gave lectures, school consultations, courses on resilience and positive psychology. She developed, with the team CEP-rua, a psychosocial technology called “Escola que Protege” [School that Protects]. This tool took part in the coordination of three editions in Porto Alegre, that enabled more than 2000 educators from Rio Grande do Sul to learn on

the topics of good practices and reflections on human rights, prevention of violence against children and adolescents, and conflict mediation. She acted as a guest lecturer to minister the quality of life at work discipline in the Strategic Management of People's MBA at FACE—PUCRS Business School. She is co-editor with Bruna Larissa Seibel and Silvia Helena Koller of "Positive Psychology: theory, research and intervention" (Editora Juruá, 2016). Currently, she works in private practice with psychotherapy, analysis, clinical supervision, study groups and career guidance with a focus on entrepreneurship and innovation. She is a lecturer in the Psychology course at Faculdade Ftec/IBGEN. Idealizer of Skribi, a space for scientific and creative writing, through writing workshops and individual advice to foster light, agile and quality writing. She also acts as a speaker in schools and organizations.

Positive Psychology in Colombia

If we look over scientific literature concerning the history of Positive Psychology (which we will abbreviate PP) in Latin America (Castro Solano & Lupano 2014; Castro Solano, 2014; Hernández & Salazar, 2014) references to PP in Colombia are scarce. However, while a review of the aforementioned literature points to low amounts of scientific and academic activities when compared to countries such as Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Spain, recent years have actually marked a period of sustained activity.

Positive Health Psychology has been one of the most investigated areas within the Colombian context. These endeavors, which have been led primarily by Japcy Margarita Quicken and Stefano Vinaccia, have focused on themes of resilience, happiness and optimism, and character strengths in populations of sick and healthy adolescents and adults (Vinaccia et al., 2006, 2007, 2012, 2017; Quiceno et al., 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016; Restrepo et al., 2011; Quiceno & Vinaccia, 2014).

Positive Psychology in Colombia overall, however, gained scientific academic status in 2015 due to the work of Andrea Ortega Bechara. Andrea obtained a masters in Applied Positive Psychology at University of Pennsylvania. During her studies there, she had the opportunity to connect with Martin Seligman, who she then invited to Colombia. Seligman's arrival signaled the start of PP's sturdy platform in the country. It provided Andrea with the opportunity to launch three PP initiatives—The Florecer Institute, the Colombian Positive Psychology Association (CPPA), and Universidad de Sinú's *Excelencia y Bienestar* (Well-being and Excellence) project—which she had founded. The event, which was offered free of cost and attended by over a thousand people, was a success; attendees included leaders of the public and private education sector, along with students in the fields of Psychology, Business Administration, and Medicine at various universities.

The project *Excelencia y Bienestar* at Universidad del Sinú is the first of its kind in Colombia. It is an applied research program of more than 13 thousand people—. Contributors include prominent national (i.e., Stefano Vinaccia) as well as international (i.e., Margaret Kern, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi) figures. The project was first introduced by Margaret Kern and Andrea Ortega Bechara in 2015 at the first Festival

of Positive Education—hosted by the International Positive Education Network (IPEN) in Dallas, USA.

Later, in January of 2016, Florecer, the CPPA, and Universidad de Sinú carried out Colombia's first International Positive Psychology Conference in Bogotá under the title of "Towards a Greater Societal Good: the Science of Happiness and Success in the 21st Century". This free event ushered in 1500 people, one of whom was Mihályi Csikszentmihályi, co-founder of the field. Csikszentmihalyi, who is considered to be one of the most renowned researchers on the planet on the subject of human happiness, was honored in the conference for his invaluable contribution to the science of well-being. The event was also attended by other international researchers, who explored topics such as social welfare, mindfulness, character strengths, and ways in which PP can be used to create a culture of prevention instead of reparation in the Colombian peace process.

This occasion also marked a formal alliance between the Florecer Institute and many researchers worldwide, including Csikszentmihalyi, who took up the position of scientific director to the *Science for Peace* project. This project is pioneering the use of scientific research to resolve one of humanity's greatest problems: the use of violence to solve conflicts. In the words of Csikszentmihalyi: "This could be one of the most important studies in the history of humanity." This project has also united other important figures Latin American PP, such as Margarita Tarragona of the Mexican Society of Positive Psychology (MSPP) (for whom a collaboration could create opportunities in the Mexican context). Another prominent figure is Maria Elena Garassini of the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology (SOVEPPOS) and of the board of MK Gandhi Venezuela, who believes that learning about peace and nonviolence will promote healthy coexistence and improve the quality of life. She is particularly interested in ways in which the Science for Peace project could illuminate a path for Venezuela. Other esteemed researchers from around the world include Richard Tedeschi, founder of posttraumatic growth, and Everett Worthington, a leader in the science of forgiveness.

These initiatives have helped create momentum for a real revolution in the Colombian and Latin American PP movement. This is because although this hemisphere was home to many centers of Positive Psychology in the past, these were mainly devoted to training, not to research. For this reason, Martin Seligman gave the floor to Andrea Ortega Bechara in his opening address to the International Congress of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA 2015) held in Lake Buenavista, Florida, in recognition of her work, which he classified as one of the three most outstanding in Latin America, alongside work done in Chile and Mexico and headed by Claudio Ibáñez and Héctor Escamilla, respectively.

The scientific leadership of co-founder of Positive Psychology Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi on the Florecer Institute's peace projects shows the profound ways that this branch of psychology can be applied (an interview and speech are available at scienceforpeace.org). Without a doubt, PP has the capacity to increase not only the well-being of people and businesses, but also to address deeply-rooted societal issues around the world. Moreover, the attention that PP's most distinguished experts have given to a country that is trying to heal in the aftermath of

more than half a century of war foreshadows a new direction for the field. This widened purpose is one of societal rather than individual welfare, thus opening up the invaluable opportunity to make a contribution not only to the science of Positive Psychology, but also to humankind.

Professionals on Positive Psychology in Colombia

Stefano Vinaccia Alpi

Dr. Stefano Vinaccia Alpi is a psychologist from the Universidad Pontificia Javeriana-Bogota and Doctor (PhD.) in Clinical and Health Psychology from the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid—Spain. He has taught at different universities in Colombia. In 1998 he received the “Colombian Prize from the Association of Psychological Assessment for the most distinguished trajectory among all the Colombian psychologists under the age of 40. He has developed and directed different works on chronic illness, quality of life and positive psychology of health, which have been presented both at national and international congresses and symposia. He has published more than 135 articles in psychology and medical journals, he has also participated in 10 book chapters and has published three books. He is currently Senior Researcher at Colciencias 2015–2018.

Andrea Ortega Bechara

Founder of the Science for Peace project under the scientific direction of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Founder and director of the Positive Psychology Institute Flourish in Colombia, founder and president of the Colombian Positive Psychology Association, and a member of Universidad del Sinu General Council’s board. Site director of the project *Building More Forgiving Communities around the Globe* funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation in collaboration with CityU and Harvard University. Andrea’s goal is to conduct rigorous research in the field of positive education and positive organizational scholarship that can help individuals, communities, and organizations to flourish. Andrea studied the Master of Applied Positive Psychology program at the University of Pennsylvania. She has a Master of Science in Organizational and Social Psychology from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a B.S. in Philosophy from Université Paul Valéry Montpellier III. She is also graduated with honors as a lawyer from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana.

Japcy Margarita Quiceno

Dr. Quiceno is a psychologist from University of San Buenaventura—USB—Medellin. She has a doctorate in Clinical and Health Psychology from Universidad

Autónoma de Madrid, Spain. Dr. Quiceno has over 70 scientific publications and book chapters on interventions about resilience religion and spirituality. She is the member of national and international scientific journal editorial boards. Her research experience has been focused in the area of clinical psychology, health psychology and Positive Psychology. She has conducted studies about the quality of life, psychological well being, illness perception, positive vs. negative emotions, happiness, social support, religion/spirituality, transcendence, resilience, amongst other health related topics with adolescents and adults with and without chronic disease. She has taught in different Colombian universities and has directed graduate programs. In 2015, the University of San Buenaventura—USB—Bogotá, granted her an award for research excellence.

Positive Psychology in Uruguay

Positive Psychology begins to show its presence at different levels in Uruguay. In the early years of the new century, Professor Seligman's contributions and the scientific articles resulting from growing research into perspective has become the focus of academic discussion. This complementary vision was gradually introduced into clinical, labor, and educational psychology. The concept was included in postgraduate programs in the Faculty of Psychology of the Universidad Católica del Uruguay, while links were established with colleagues from Argentina, Brazil, the United States, Venezuela, Peru and Spain, among other countries.

In the region, colloquially called “Río de la Plata”—along the river shared by Uruguay and Argentina—decisive contributions were made from Professor María Martina Cassullo of the University of Buenos Aires and the University of Palermo—Argentina—and the sponsored meetings by the latter organization in pursuit of the development of Positive Psychology in Latin America. With the departure of Prof. Cassullo, Prof. Alejandro Castro Solano will continue this path.

In 2012, a project on Positive Psychology was presented at the Faculty of Psychology of the Catholic University of Uruguay, within the framework of the curriculum of undergraduate psychology. This group of seminars on Welfare and Health—with Positive Psychology-offered also as electives to other degree studies such as Communications, Psychopedagogy, Nursing, Education, etc. were organized.

Undergraduate students showed high motivation and interest towards the classes of Positive Psychology, scoring the subject on the tops marks (4.86/5). Additionally a growing number of students declared interest in participating in research projects on the topic.

Academic developments in Positive Psychology were also possible by the research Line in Childhood and Adolescence, several projects are related to: Psychological Well-being, Resilience, Protective Factors in Youth, and Life Project. We have also worked with Institutionalized older adults (67–92 years old) self-validating instruments and inquiring about different aspects of Subjective Well-Being. To perform these studies was necessary to translate the tests to Spanish, requesting

the author's authorization and creating protocols that include other variables that are important to investigate for local necessities and characteristics. In some cases, only a few variables have been worked out and this has required further psychometric validation studies.

At the moment a survey is being carried out with a large national sample evaluating the profiles of Psychological Well-being in a population between 18 and 90 years old, the results are expected to be analyzed in the second half of this year.

In all research projects, the objective is to know the levels of psychological well-being (in all dimensions) and its possible relation with sociodemographic and psychopathological aspects, for which extensive protocols have been created with electronic format and also in print version.

Prof. Lilian R. Daset, Ph.D. is leading the research projects with the support of younger researcher, Prof. Viviana Valdez, M.S.—who is the lecturer of the course in Positive Psychology—and in the study in relation to Well-being and substance use in adolescents—in the framework the doctoral thesis—Prof. María Eugenia Fernández Pintos, Ph.D. (c). Additionally there are wide productions of undergraduate thesis, master's and doctorate dissertations being carried out in the frame of Positive Psychology. Moreover students have being inducted in research training in the field.

In Applied Positive Psychology there are some developments in Uruguay, with different characteristics and products and evolutionary stages, such as the following projects:

- *Jóvenes Fuertes* is a secular, nonprofit association which aims at promoting the comprehensive formation of kids and young people throughout the development of virtues, character strengths and abilities. The program is based on the scientific contributions of Positive Psychology. María José Soler, Doctorate (c) is one of the people who made this organization possible in February 2014 with her motivation and experience. This association evolved over the last years in order to cooperate with educational institutions in the formation of resilient youngsters with high command of emotional intelligence and who exercise their freedom with responsibility. The program is groundbreaking in Uruguay, offering in a systematized way, a 3-year program including bimonthly workshops for students, specialized staff and materials along with semi-annual parents' and lecturers' formation. This program is delivered on a one-to-one basis at the *Jóvenes Fuertes* Venue. This year the association presents a program formation in Positive Psychology Applied to Character Education (DUPPAE 2017).
- Another development that has to be mentioned in our country is headed by the Master in Clinical Psychology Mariana Alvez, who founded and runs a center that has as its central feature the spread of Positive Psychology at the population level and in the field of psychological therapy. It is linked to the media of our country, from interviews in newspapers, radio and television with the objective of presenting Positive Psychology to the population, to bring to the public central concepts and to promote some salogenic aspects (i.e.: optimism, a variety of aspects involving the field such as PERMA model or topic of flow). She tells: “we

aim to bring positive psychology to the general public in order to help them flourish”.

Uruguay is a small country in the southern hemisphere with a literacy rate of 98.5% and open access to undergraduate studies, and faces a growing demand for primary health care. That demand would decrease with the contributions of Positive Psychology, especially in what refers to Promotion and Prevention, which could allow an increase in the Psychological Well-being of the population and a decrease in the consultation due to avoidable psychic problems. One of the results of research with youngsters from a secondary school (375 both sexes) showed that those who did not report addictive behaviors did report a high level of psychological well-being (Daset et al., 2015; Fernández et al., 2017). We work with academics of the University of Ghent (Belgium) and University of Murcia (Spain) with postgraduate and doctoral students that are doing their research mobility at our University. The efforts made in these studies and the programs of applied PP in the educational field, together with the training of professionals that incorporate the constructs of Positive Psychology aim to respond to the challenges exposed above.

Professionals in Positive Psychology in Uruguay

Lilian R. Daset Carretto

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The Future of Positive Psychology in South America

Any field of knowledge grows up with the complementary work from research, promotion (teaching, education or formation programas) and applications to individuals, couples, families, organizations, citizen ore any group of people. Positive Psychology shows differents levels of each one with the contributions of the different contries in South America that are working on it.

The scientific psychological production in Latin and South American countries is far from the level of countries with high scientific development (Vera-Villaruel et al., 2010) and many psychological researches in Latin America tend to study the

cultural factors that influence the psychological constructs (Betancourt and López 1993). This focus in cultural diversity is scarcely compatible with one of the central premises of PP that is the existence of a common core human nature (Jorgensen and Nafstad, 2004). This nomothetic premise of PP has a solid empirical support (e.g. Darwin, 1859, 2002; Ekman, 2002; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Park et al., 2006; Dodds et al., 2015) and it is an invitation to spread the main findings of PP into applications around the world.

Nevertheless, the scientific psychological production is increasing in many South America countries and show advances in Argentina, Colombia, Brasil, Uruguay and Venezuela. The pionner studies about resilience were born in Latin America demanded for the high leveles of poverty and inequalities existing in the region. At this moment, the intellectual production developed under the coceptual framework of Positive Psychology has allowed to increase the researches in subjects related to Welfare, Strengths, Positive Emotions, Fluency, Positive Organizations, Appreciative Inquiry, Positive Youth Development and others topics. Scientific societies have been created in several of the countries of South America where Positive Psychology has been developed. In 2009, the Venezuelan Positive Psychology Society was created as the first in the region, followed by the Positive Psychology Association of Latin America created in Brazil in 2010, the Chilean Society of Positive Psychology in 2013, the Colombian Association of Psychology Positive in 2015 and the Brazilian Association of Positive Psychology in 2015.

Investigations are being used in the countries where they are produced or in others to design training programs in Positive Psychology developed from the Universities, Institutes, or Professional Societies of Positive Psychology in each of the Countries. The countries with the highest level of development of Programs for training in Positive Psychology are Chile from the Chilean Institute of Positive Psychology and Venezuela from the Metropolitan University and the Venezuelan Society of Positive Psychology.

In reference to the design of applications or projects to increase Welfare in different populations, intervention programs have been developed or are being developed in the field of Organizations in Chile, Brazil and Venezuela, and in Positive Youth Development in Venezuela and Brazil. The project Science for Peace led by the Colombian Association of Psychology and advised by one of the founders of Positive Psychology, Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, is the most ambitious current project in the area. Is an integral project aimed at the key segments in the process of transition to peace, including several interrelated but differentiable components: victims, reinserted, armed forces and civilian population that will be served under Positive Education. The project team is made up of world leaders in Positive Psychology, including Andrea Ortega from Colombia, Margarita Tarragona from Mexico and María Elena Garassini from Venezuela.

Another field of application in which the conceptual framework of Positive Psychology is being used is the clinic. Some psychotherapists are integrating the principles and instruments of measurement of Positive Psychology into their practice. Although it is possible to point out that there is an incipient development in this

area, it is possible to be pointed out that Argentina is the country that has advanced in the incorporation of the PP in the clinic followed by Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The long mission of PP is to increase well-being and flourishing in the world (Seligman, 2011) and to make substantive progress towards this goal is essential to disseminate PP and to train people in self-management and interpersonal skills (positive education) and to impact with PP in schools, organizations, large communities and the government (Seligman, 2011). All of this requires putting emphasis in the applications of positive psychology to the real world. To assure a promising future of PP in South América applications must be supported by scientific research in order that Positive Psychology gain a solid prestige and not to be confused with a happiology or other nonscientific approaches to well-being. Therefore, a solid and updated in research, education and appications based on the foundations, concepts, theories and methods it is a must to assure a flourishing future for Postive Psychology in South America.

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Chapter 5

UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and Ireland



Iiona Boniwell and Bridget Grenville-Cleave

Historical, Social, Economic and Political Similarities and Differences Across the Five Countries

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (“the UK”) comprises England, Scotland and Wales (which form Great Britain) and Northern Ireland (NI). This chapter focuses on positive psychology and its researchers and practitioners in the four countries which make up the UK, as well as the Republic of Ireland, often referred to as Southern Ireland, Eire or simply Ireland. Sometimes the UK including NI is also referred to as ‘Great Britain’ (for example, we have ‘Team GB’ representing the whole of the UK in the Olympic Games). However, in other global sporting events such as the football and rugby World Cups, each country within the UK plays independently and is highly competitive. Some UK inhabitants call themselves ‘British’ whereas others prefer to identify themselves as ‘English’, ‘Welsh’, ‘Scottish’ or ‘Irish’. Given that the Welsh, Scottish and Irish have closer connections with each other than with England since they, along with the Isle of Man, Cornwall and Brittany, share a Celtic culture, the term ‘United Kingdom’ could seem somewhat incongruent. This might be illustrated in other ways, for example by the well-recognised North-South divide which refers to the significant economic, social, health and political differences between the mainly affluent South of England and the rest of Great Britain and NI, renewed interest in Scottish independence, as well as the social class system, private education system and monarchy. Research led by the London School of Economics, conducted in collaboration with the BBC, which investigated 160,000 participants’ class by their social, economic and cultural capital, revealed seven social classes, including several new ones (Savage et al., 2013) as shown in Table 5.1 below.

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Table 5.1 Summary of Great British Class Survey Social Classes, adapted from Savage et al. (ibid)

Class	Types of Capital		
	Economic	Social	Cultural (highbrow/ emerging)
Elite	Very high	High	Very high highbrow
Established Middle Class	High	High status of mean contacts	High highbrow & emerging
Technical Middle Class	High	Very high mean but relatively few reported	Moderate
New Affluent Workers	Moderately good	Moderately poor mean score but high range	Moderate highbrow but good emerging
Traditional Working Class	Moderately poor	Few contacts	Low highbrow & emerging
Emergent Service Workers	Moderately poor	Moderate	Low highbrow; high emerging
Precariat	Poor	Low	Low

Like many other nations, the formation of the UK as we know it today has not been peaceful or straightforward. Before the Norman conquest of England in 1066, England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland were separate states. At the end of the thirteenth century England conquered Wales, the two countries legally joining together in 1536. In 1603, Scotland and England were united under one ruler, with James VI of Scotland becoming James I of England. However, both countries kept their own parliaments until 1707 when under the Acts of Union England, Scotland and Wales formed the United Kingdom of Great Britain. The constitution of Ireland has been marked by violent political rebellion and protest for centuries. In 1800 the English government made Ireland part of the UK to form the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. In the late nineteenth century Ireland attempted to become self-governing but was unsuccessful. In 1920 the Government of Ireland Act divided the country into Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. For some 30 years until the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, Northern Ireland was plagued by a conflict commonly referred to as ‘The Troubles’, at the heart of which were the opposing goals of the unionist majority to remain part of the UK, and the republican minority to become part of the Republic of Ireland.

The UK Parliament, made up of the elected House of Commons, and the House of Lords (largely hereditary with some appointments) is the supreme legislative body. Since the late twentieth century Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have acquired a degree of self-government (‘devolution’) within the UK and now have their own administrations, called the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Parliament (Senedd) and the Northern Irish Assembly, with responsibility for laws around issues such as education, the environment and health. England is therefore the only country in the United Kingdom which does not have its own devolved parliament. The UK’s decision to leave the European Union in June 2016 (commonly referred to as ‘Brexit’) has thrown its political future into turmoil. Scotland and Northern Ireland both voted decisively to remain part of Europe, whereas England and Wales voted to

leave. At the time of writing, Scotland's First Minister and the Scottish Parliament have announced their intention to hold a second independence referendum should the terms of the UK's ultimate withdrawal from the European Union not protect Scotland's interests; at some point in the near future an independence referendum may be on the cards for NI.

It's not possible to condense the history and social, economic and political backgrounds of the UK and the Irish Republic into a few hundred words, so we focus on two key periods which significantly influenced the development of the United Kingdom: the Scottish Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. The Enlightenment refers to a period in eighteenth century Scottish history characterised by an abundance of scientific and intellectual achievements in fields such as medicine, engineering and philosophy, the impact of which was not restricted to the elite, the wealthy or the academic. Scotland already had a more advanced education system than the rest of the UK, driven by the passing of the Education Act 1496 which made school mandatory for the sons of landowners, as well as establishing five universities (two at Aberdeen, plus Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews) compared to England's two (Cambridge and Oxford) and Ireland's one (Trinity College Dublin). By the late eighteenth century Scotland had become one of the most literate societies in the world. The Enlightenment has been described as the crucible of the modern world. In addition to this, from around 1750 new inventions in agriculture, manufacturing and transport, referred to as the Industrial Revolution, not only transformed economic, social and political life within the United Kingdom itself, leading to seismic social changes in working and living conditions, urbanisation, public health and the role of women in society, but also impacted the rest of the world. Space precludes us from covering the many significant historical events (both positive and negative) and individuals that have helped shape the UK into the nation that it is: culturally diverse and relatively creative, open and tolerant, and at the same time single-mindedly attached to its language, traditions and etiquette.

The study of 'positive cross-cultural psychology' (Lomas, 2015) is relatively new. It suggests that whilst there are shared (universal) determinants of well-being such as health, work and relationships, there are also many 'relativistic mediators', such as culture, history, values and language which shape the experience of well-being in different ways across the globe. As yet positive psychology research into the links between these mediators and well-being in individual countries is in its infancy, although we are starting to see studies focused on identifying the positive characteristics of specific populations. Linley et al.'s 2007 study of the VIA character strengths of UK adults does not provide an analysis of the constituent countries. Nevertheless, one might speculate as to how the top and bottom strengths of UK adults have evolved and/or contributed to the development of the United Kingdom and its culture.

A comparison, shown in Table 5.2, of the top and bottom strengths of UK adult men and women reveals considerable consistency: open-mindedness, fairness, curiosity, and love of learning are in the top five signature strengths for both, and all five of the bottom strengths are the same, albeit in different rank order. National stereotypes are just that, although; British people are generally considered to be

Table 5.2 Top and bottom strengths of UK adults in rank order (adapted from Linley et al., *ibid*)

Top VIA Strengths (in rank order)	Female (mean)	Male (mean)
1	Fairness (3.95)	Open-mindedness (3.95)
2	Kindness (3.92)	Fairness (3.87)
3	Open-mindedness (3.91)	Curiosity (3.85)
4	Curiosity (3.89)	Love of learning (3.79) Creativity (4=) (3.79)
5	Love of learning (3.88)	–
Bottom VIA Strengths (in rank order)		
20	Hope (3.35)	Hope (3.32)
21	Prudence (3.33)	Prudence (3.27)
22	Humility (3.25)	Self-regulation (3.21) Humility (22=) (3.21)
23	Self-regulation (3.14)	–
24	Spirituality (2.95)	Spirituality (2.78)

(Adapted from Linley et al., *ibid*)

relatively pragmatic, tolerant and open towards other cultures, and their creative talents (e.g. in literature, music, drama), National Health Service, and legal system are considered by many to be amongst the best in the world. On the downside, it could be said that the British also have a reputation for binge-drinking (lack of self-regulation), and arrogance (lack of humility).

Top Positive Psychologists from This Region

Richard Layard (England)

Richard Layard (Lord Layard of Highgate) is Emeritus Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics (LSE) and Director of the Well-being Programme at the Centre for Economic Performance. He attended Cambridge University, where he read History, before going to the LSE where he completed an MSc in Economics. Layard has taught at the LSE since 1968, as well as holding many other advisor, consultant and convenor roles in government both in the UK and abroad.

The first half of Layard's career focussed on economics—the economics of labour, with a particular focus on unemployment, inequality and the role of education. Since the early noughties however he has been more active in the world of mental health, positive psychology, happiness and well-being, perhaps driven by the experience of his father's depression and suicide attempt.

He has published several well-known books and a significant number of articles and reports on topics such as happiness, subjective well-being and its measures, mental health and public policy, including *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science* (2005, second ed. 2011, now available in over 20 languages), *Thrive: The power of evidence-based psychological therapies* (Layard & Clark, 2014), *Mental Health:*

The New Frontier for Labour Economics (2013) and the 2013–2019 *World Happiness Reports* (with J.F. Helliwell and J. Sachs). A full list of Layard's publications can be found here http://cep.lse.ac.uk/_new/staff/person.asp?id=970.

As an academic, Layard has always been interested in the evidence for what works and was instrumental in obtaining funding for the UK's Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) programme. He was aware of the increasing global and national incidence of mental illnesses like depression and anxiety and the tremendous burden that this placed on the economy e.g. in terms of lost productivity and welfare benefits (estimated at around £4bn pa in the UK) as well as the suffering endured by the individuals concerned and their family and friends.

During a chance encounter with David Clark, Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Oxford and one of Britain's leading Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) practitioners, Layard learned of the clinical effectiveness of CBT in helping overcome mental illnesses like depression and anxiety. He also discovered that whilst the Department of Health's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, which evaluates evidence to guide the National Health Service's £147 billion annual budget, recommended CBT for depression and anxiety, in fact only around £80 million annually was being spent on such therapies. This made no sense considering the enormous economic costs of mental illness to society. Supported by David Clark, Layard developed a powerful business case for the government to increase its spending on talking therapies including CBT, Counselling and Brief Psychodynamic Therapy, recommending the budget be doubled. Since therapy would enable many adults to go back to work, they argued that the service would pay for itself in reduced unemployment and incapacity benefits and higher tax receipts.

Fortunately for the many people who suffer from mental illness, they were successful in persuading the government to commit to expanding mental health provision, and the IAPT programme came into being. Since the IAPT programme was implemented, Layard has consistently promoted it in House of Lords' debates, stating that IAPT treatment costs on average £1000 per person, whereas Employment and Support Allowance for people who cannot work because of mental illness costs on average £8000 per person pa. It makes economic sense, therefore, for the Exchequer to ensure that IAPT continues to be expanded and adequately funded.

Interestingly, as an English initiative, the IAPT programme was not implemented in the same way in the other countries which make up the UK since Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland manage their own health services. The IAPT programme does monitor the numbers of patients being referred, entering treatment and recovering and figures seem to suggest that whilst the target to treat 15% of the estimated 6.1 m people with anxiety and/or depression each year by March 2015 had been achieved, the 50% recovery rate target for those who complete treatment had not (actual recovery rate was 45.4%). Indeed there appears to be marked variability in recovery rates, with some Clinical Commissioning Groups achieving a recovery rate of less than 30%.

More recently, Layard questioned the contribution that the UK government's focus on economic growth is having on relationships, health and happiness. Long

term growth, he stated, is much less important than we think, and not as important as short-term growth to get back to full employment: *‘We are going to have to revise our priorities away from the presumption before that almost anything could be sacrificed for the sake of greater long-term growth towards one where we put more priority on human relationships relative to long-run growth. We have put excessive priority on long-run growth and we have allowed it to erode our relationships in the family, work and so on’.*

In House of Lords debates, Layard has supported the principle of Parity of Esteem, which has been enshrined in law in the UK by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The parity of esteem principle states that mental health must be given equal priority to physical health. However, in the UK, mental health services continue to receive far less funding than physical health services.

Of all the positive psychology practitioners, researchers and academics we are highlighting in this section, it could be argued that, Layard has the best overview of what is really going on ‘on the ground’ with regards to practical measures to improve mental health in the UK. In 2011 he said in the House of Lords that *‘When the Government talk about the importance of well-being, I think it is totally sincere. It is a concern shared by all parties, but when it comes to the Government’s performance in delivering well-being, I am afraid that there is room for improvement’.*

Layard founded the *Well-being Programme* at the Centre for Economic Performance in 2003. In 2011, together with Sir Anthony Seldon (then Master of Wellington College) and Dr. Geoff Mulgan (then Chief Executive of the social innovation centre The Young Foundation) he set up *Action for Happiness*. It is on these two that we will focus the remainder of this section.

Well-being Programme at the Centre for Economic Performance

CEP’s well-being programme focuses on three themes:

1. The causes and effects of well-being. CEP investigates the scientific evidence base supporting what causes well-being and how it affects our lives more generally, in particular focussing on policy issues such as physical health and education.
2. Well-being Policy. One of CEP’s key priorities is to have public policy focused on well-being and its implementation.
3. Mental Health. Given the evidence that depression is more debilitating than most chronic physical illnesses and taking into account the vast numbers of people who suffer from mental illness, CEP also focuses on how our mental health or illness affect our well-being and promotes policies to overcome mental illness.

Action for Happiness

The charity Action for Happiness, whose patron is the Dalai Lama, is a social movement established in 2011 to promote a happier society. Now with over

190,000 members (and growing) in 180 countries across the world, it encourages ordinary people to come together and learn about what really matters in life, for example through taking a short course called ‘Exploring What Matters’ and attending talks given by experts in subjects connected to happiness and well-being such as mindfulness, resilience and strengths.

Vanessa King (England)

Positive psychologist Vanessa King began her career in the world of finance and consulting. Having trained as a Chartered Accountant she worked for several years with global organisations Arthur Andersen and PWC where she became a business analyst, fuelling her interest in releasing the potential of people and in organisation development. This led her to move into Human Resources before studying for her Masters in Applied Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. After graduating, a chance meeting with Anthony Seldon, who was working with Richard Layard to establish Action for Happiness, led to King’s appointment as positive psychology advisor and board director. King is the creator of the 10 Keys to Happiness (King, 2016) which are evidence-based ways to achieve sustainable well-being. The 10 Keys can be easily remembered using the mnemonic ‘GREAT DREAM’:

Giving

This simply means ‘doing things for other people’. It is interesting that the 10 Keys start by focusing on other people’s happiness rather than one’s own. King explains the evidence and circumstances in which giving, being kind and helpful can increase other people’s happiness, and also enable us to become happier ourselves.

Relating

The idea that feeling well-connected to other people is a primary source of well-being is supported by decades of research across the world from scholars including Ryan and Deci (2000), Ryff and Keyes (1995), and Diener and Seligman (2002). It is vital that as we grow up we learn how to create healthy friendships and relationships with others, be that at work, rest or play. Finding ways to build lots of small moments of positive connection can have a transformative effect on our relationships with others.

Exercising

There is no shortage of scientific evidence that physical activity is important for good mental health including greater happiness, increased resilience, lower stress and reduced depression, and that physical inactivity can be detrimental. Given how busy everyone is, it makes sense to set aside time for physical activity, start small and keep tabs: there are hundreds of smartphone apps and inexpensive wearable gadgets that can help.

Awareness

This refers to being mindful, defined by Jon Kabat-Zinn as *‘paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally’* (1994, p. 3). King outlines the many links between mindfulness and happiness, not just in terms of becoming more aware, but also increasing compassion for ourselves and for others, increasing our self-control and ability to manage our emotions, and behaving more ethically and responsibly.

Trying Out

This refers to learning new things. It turns out that being curious, open to new experiences and interested in trying new things are good for our happiness and well-being because through learning we discover new passions, meet new people, keep our brains and bodies active and ultimately get more out of ourselves and our lives.

Direction

Having personal goals is crucial for several reasons—they provide direction, a sense of purpose and hope, they enable us to achieve what we want to achieve and, when they are freely chosen, working towards them provides us with a sense of mastery.

Resilience

Contrary to popular belief, the science of positive psychology does not deny that life can be difficult, nor does it try to encourage us to view life through rose-tinted spectacles. For some people, suffering can result in personal growth (‘what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger’) but that is not a justification or reason to endure suffering. There is evidence that our thoughts, emotions and behaviours are interconnected such that by learning to think more flexibly and accurately about

adversity, we can build self-awareness and respond more effectively to life's difficulties.

Emotions

Often seen as the essence of happiness, positive emotions are important not just for feeling good but also for functioning well. When experienced frequently, they broaden our focus, build additional personal resources and act as an inner reset button for negative emotions. Given the evidence that we pay closer and longer attention to negative emotions than to positive ones (the 'negativity bias'), we have to consciously find, or even create, new opportunities to experience more positive emotions. Learning to accurately identify, express and manage emotions ('emotional intelligence') has significant benefits, not just for greater happiness but also for better relationships and work performance.

Acceptance

Often when we feel unhappy, we focus on our limitations, imperfections, and failures and can easily get them completely out of proportion. Mindfulness and resilient thinking can be helpful during difficult times, and so can learning to be more self-accepting and self-compassionate. Identifying and using our natural strengths can be a great way to overcome our 'inner critic' and help us to see that we have good points too.

Meaning

A sense of meaning provides a stable foundation in life as well as sense of direction. A stable foundation means that we aren't easily toppled when the going gets tough and a sense of direction means that we have goals and motivation—something to aim for and the drive to get there. Many people have several sources of meaning, for example, family and relationships, work, hobbies and interests. It makes sense to 'diversify' in this way rather than concentrate everything into one source.

Alex Linley (England)

Dr. Alex Linley is the founding director of the strengths-based recruitment and assessment consultancy 'Cappfinity' which is based in the UK with businesses in the US and Australia. Alex Linley began his undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of Leicester in his mid-twenties, when he became interested in positive psychology. Alongside Dr. Ilona Boniwell, Linley was one of the first

positive psychologists in the UK, completing his Ph.D. at the University of Warwick (2004), in which he focussed on positive change following trauma and adversity. He lectured at the University of Leicester for several years during this time, and became visiting professor at the University of Leicester and Bucks New University before leaving academia to focus on consultancy. In the past decade and a half, Alex Linley has authored or edited numerous books on various aspects of positive psychology including strengths, positive therapy, post traumatic growth and applying positive psychology in the workplace; for example, *Positive psychology in practice* (Linley & Joseph, 2004), *Average to A+* (2008) and the *Oxford handbook of positive psychology and work* (Linley & Harrington, 2010). He has also published over 150 articles and book chapters.

Linley and colleagues instigated the Personality Strengths project in the early noughties. This project was concerned with identifying, defining, measuring and classifying personality strengths. By 2008, through a process of strength spotting (i.e. observing and analysing people performing at their best) over 100 different strengths had been identified. These were eventually narrowed down to 60 most representative strengths in the general population in the Strengths Profile (formerly R2 and Realise2—see below). His definition of a strength as ‘*a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that is authentic and energising to the user, and enables optimal functioning, development and performance*’ (Linley, 2008, p. 9) is frequently used by positive psychology practitioners because it explains clearly and concisely the significance of strengths—that they are an integral part of who we are as individuals, and are intimately connected to our vitality and well-being. According to Linley’s research with colleague Reena Govindji (2007), using our strengths makes us feel more alive, more engaged, more vigorous and more in flow, as if we had more energy available, rather than making us feel tired or depleted. Highlighting energy as an explicit criterion for a strength is Linley’s important contribution to our understanding of strengths. Using our strengths also leads to optimal functioning and development because it is easier to build on existing neural networks (the brain wiring that underpins what we do and what we know) than to develop completely new ones. And performing at our best follows on naturally from this—when we feel energised and are learning at our fastest, it is not surprising that this leads to optimal performance.

The 100 strengths identified in the early Personality Strengths project eventually led to the Strengths Profile which is at the heart of Cappfinity’s work. The 60 strengths within the Strengths Profile framework are classified into five strengths families as follows:

- Strengths of Being (14 strengths including Authenticity, Curiosity, Mission, Personal Responsibility and Service)
- Strengths of Communicating (8 strengths including Explainer, Feedback, Humour, Listener and Scribe)
- Strengths of Motivating (13 strengths including Adventure, Catalyst, Change Agent, Improver and persistence)

- Strengths of Relating (11 strengths including Compassion, Enabler, Equality, Esteem Builder and Persuasion)
- Strengths of Thinking (14 strengths including Creativity, Innovation, Judgement, Planful and Time Optimiser)

The research carried out by Linley and colleagues on the Strengths Profile strengths suggest that they are conceptually and statistically independent, with only a handful of correlations with large effect sizes (e.g. between Creativity and Innovation ($r = .550$); Adventure and Courage ($r = .506$)) (Linley & Dovey, 2015, p.35). Interestingly, the research data also indicate that the gender differences are negligible and only produce small effect sizes for a minority of strengths, with ‘Competitive’ being the only strength which demonstrates a small effect size across the three dimensions of performance, use and energy, with men scoring higher than women (Linley & Dovey, *ibid.*, p. 40).

The Strengths Profile technical data outline validity with many other statistical measures including the Life Orientation-Test (LOT-R) (Scheier et al., 1994), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), the Subjective Vitality Scale (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), the Mindful Attentional Awareness Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003) and the Authenticity Scale (Wood et al., 2008).

The Strengths Profile online assessment and development tool enables users to rate 60 different strengths according to three dimensions—whether or not it energises us, whether or not we are good at it and how often we get to use it. The remainder of this section focuses on the Strengths Profile framework and its applications.

The Strengths Profile model differs from other key positive psychology strengths models (VIA, Strengthsfinder and Strengthscope) in that it identifies and measures strengths or their absence in four ways:

1. Realised Strengths—these are things we do well, do frequently and that energise us. There is therefore a risk that we may overuse our realised strengths, so Linley advises that we marshal their use, that is, deploy them wisely.
2. Learned Behaviours—these are things we have learnt to do well, which we may or may not do frequently, but which do not fill us with energy. In fact, learned behaviours deplete our energy and therefore should be used in moderation or just when needed.
3. Weaknesses—these are things we do poorly and which de-energise us. The advice regarding weaknesses is to use them less—for example, in a work scenario we may be able to delegate a task to someone who has the relevant skills and strengths.
4. Unrealised Strengths—these are ‘the icing on the cake’, the strengths that we were previously unaware of—things we do well and find energising, but that we don’t do frequently. Cappfinity’s advice with unrealised strengths is to use them more.

Linley has also been responsible for reintroducing Aristotle’s concept of the ‘Golden Mean’—that there is a desirable middle ground between the two extremes

of excess and deficiency. This is a useful idea, since it suggests that strengths are context-specific, and are unhelpful when they are missing as well as when they are overused. So being able to apply our strengths effectively means that we should neither overplay them nor underplay them. In other words, we must employ the right strength, in the right amount, in the right way and at the right time. Most of the time this may be quite obvious, but at other times, we may need to use what Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) refer to as ‘practical wisdom’. A classic example would be whether or not we use our strength of honesty when a friend asks, ‘Does my bum look big in this?’ Linley suggests (2008, p. 67) that it may be more helpful to think of strengths as having a volume control rather than an on/off switch, and to reflect on whether we are using our strengths optimally, or over/underplaying them. Asking other people for feedback is a great way to gauge this too.

Nic Marks (England)

Nic Marks is a mathematician who brings his passion for statistics into the field of happiness and well-being. He is perhaps best known for his work with the New Economics Foundation (NEF) one of the UK’s leading think tanks promoting social, economic and environmental justice. NEF was established in 1986 in response to the challenge that the UK’s economy, along with those of most of the rest of the world, was becoming increasingly unsustainable. NEF’s aim is to transform the economy so that it works for people and the planet (<https://neweconomics.org/about-us/>).

During Marks’ time at NEF he led the development of the Happy Planet Index (Jeffrey et al., 2016), the National Accounts of Well-being approach (no longer supported), as well as pioneering the Five Ways to Well-being model which is now used across the public health sector in the UK and beyond. Since leaving NEF, Marks has developed the ‘Happiness Works’ consultancy, which focuses on using positive psychology to measure and increase well-being in the workplace.

Five Ways to Well-being

NEF was commissioned by the UK government to create a set of actions, reflecting both the ‘feeling good’ and ‘functioning well’ elements of well-being, using the key findings from positive psychology. NEF identified several key criteria to help select a set of actions from the broad array available as follows:

- (i) the need to be evidence-based (although NEF was upfront about the prevalence of cross-sectional vs longitudinal research and the dearth of causal evidence);
- (ii) having a universal impact rather than targeting a specific group of the population;

- (iii) appropriate for the individual to undertake (rather than aimed at groups or society generally);
- (iv) the need to provide variety in order to avoid experiencing hedonic adaptation.

The long list of possible actions included: work (covered within ‘Connect’ and ‘Keep Learning’ activities), nature (covered within ‘Be Active’ and ‘Take Notice’ activities) and nutrition (which was not specifically covered due to the amount of available advice and guidance on the importance of healthy eating already in the public domain). Actions were excluded from the final short list if they did not meet the above criteria. For example, they were omitted if they were more appropriate for organisational or societal change, or lacked compelling evidence. The final short list of actions, now known as the Five Ways to Well-being (<https://neweconomics.org/2008/10/five-ways-to-wellbeing-the-evidence>), is as follows:

1. *Connect...*

The evidence from positive psychology and elsewhere is that social relationships, with family, friends, neighbours or colleagues, are vital for our well-being, and can help to buffer against mental ill-health. Ryan and Deci’s research (2000) into human needs suggested that relatedness and a sense of belonging are fundamental to human happiness. Research on the top 10% of the happiest people suggests that what differentiates them from less happy people is that they have more social connections and richer social lives (Diener & Seligman, *ibid*). The one thing that many people say when asked about what they value most in their lives is their relationships. Often they would prefer to work less so that they could spend more time with the people who are important to them. It seems that strong relationships (ones which are meaningful, supportive and encouraging) as well as broad networks of relationships (which may be more superficial but still contribute to feelings of belonging and familiarity) both have their part to play, so the action ‘Connect’ means to focus on deepening the existing relationships you already have, as well as making and taking opportunities to develop new connections with others through work or the community.

2. *Be Active...*

This action refers to the importance for our mental health and well-being of simply being physically active. It does not necessarily mean that we have to participate in organised physical exercise, such as joining a fitness class or the local football team. Being active may mean simply walking in the countryside, playing in the local park with the kids, or walking the dog, rather than sitting all day at our desks following by sitting all evening in front of a TV. What is important is that we find an activity which suits our level of mobility and fitness, and that we enjoy.

The evidence from positive psychology as well as the medical profession more generally is that regular physical activity is linked to higher well-being and lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups, as well as protecting against cognitive decline in later life.

3. *Take Notice...*

This action encourages us to pay attention to and be more mindful of what is happening in the moment, as well as to savour it and fully appreciate what is already good in our lives. This leads to better self-understanding, and in recognising what is truly important to us, enables us to choose behaviours which are more aligned with our interests, needs and values. The research into the efficacy of positive psychology interventions as well as mindfulness studies suggests that becoming more aware of one's thoughts and feelings rather than being mindlessly 'caught up' in them is beneficially linked to greater well-being, self-control and resilience.

4. *Keep Learning...*

This is about discovering new interests, rediscovering old ones, being curious about life and achieving new things. Learning is not just about expanding our knowledge, it's about growing our self-esteem, competence and confidence as well as offering opportunities to meet new people and make more social connections. Part of the evidence linking learning with well-being is focused on setting goals and working purposefully towards them, and a sense of developing competence which is one of Ryan and Deci's (ibid) three fundamental human needs. Additionally, learning does not need to have a tangible result (e.g. attaining a qualification); psychology research suggests that extrinsic rewards can reduce motivation so doing things just for pure interest or fun is important.

5. *Give...*

This action encourages us to look outwards and see our happiness in terms of connections with the wider community. Giving is about doing something nice for someone else, whether we know them or not. It could be as simple as smiling or thanking someone. It could involve volunteering our time or expertise or joining a community group. It could be about organising community social activities such as a street party or summer barbecue. There is an element of reciprocity and 'do as you would be done to' in giving, but the whole point is that we do things for others because we want to, not because we have to or because we expect something in return. The evidence for giving, be it random acts of kindness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), expressing gratitude (Emmons & Shelton, 2002) or volunteering (Schwartz & Sendor, 1999), is clear. When it is intrinsically motivated, doing good for others is good for us too not just in terms of feeling good, but because it helps build broader and deeper social connections, which also contribute to our happiness.

Neil Thin (Scotland)

Dr. Neil Thin is a Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology and Director of Undergraduate Teaching for the School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He specialises in the application of multidisciplinary happiness

and well-being research in public policy and practice and for over 20 years has worked in the field of international development, working towards the reduction of poverty and the promotion of justice and well-being in poorer countries.

It is probably fair to say that, since his background is not in positive psychology directly, Thin brings a richer understanding to the field than a typical positive psychology researcher whose expertise and experience is likely confined to psychology. He takes neither an internalist ('happiness arises from altering belief or values or psychological states') nor externalist ('happiness arises from circumstances') view of happiness. Instead he advocates an interactionist perspective, acknowledging that it is the *combination* of internal and external variables that gives rise to happiness. Such an approach is echoed by the recent work of Professor Peter Warr (University of Sheffield's Institute of Work Psychology) who advocates a combination of environment-centred and person-centred frameworks to fully understand workplace happiness (e.g. Warr, 2013).

In his early work (Thin, 2005) Thin argued that whilst the study of happiness has always been a central concern of social anthropology, historically happiness has not been given the recognition it deserved. Indeed, it would appear that in the late nineties and early noughties, anthropologists had a similar reaction as psychologists to the suggestion that happiness was worthy of rigorous academic research. As far back as 2005, Thin stated that social anthropology could enhance psychologists' and economists' happiness research, which in his view was '*ethnocentric, measurement-obsessed...and pathological*' (2005, p. 2). A Google search for 'anthropology of happiness' returns 20,200,000 hits at the time of writing, compared to Thin's 33 in 2004. Clearly, his message is sinking in; the discipline of anthropology is embracing happiness scholarship.

Thin's, 2012 book *Social Happiness: Research into Policy and Practice* emphasises the need for policy makers, community builders and social organisers to consider happiness scholarship explicitly. Amongst the domains for the practical applications of happiness research, Thin considers parenting, schooling, working, shopping and ageing. At the same time, chapters on the effects of happiness and unhappiness, correlations and causal theories of happiness, and how happiness is measured are refreshingly to the point about research problems that are sometimes ignored, even by well-established and well-respected academics. Being up-front and honest about these criticisms and objections to happiness research is incredibly useful to scholars and practitioners alike; it prepares those who are new to positive psychology and wanting to apply it 'in the real world' for the inevitable scepticism that will be encountered along the way. The book does not oversimplify; in fact, Thin makes a very good case for the complexity of happiness scholarship and the difficulties inherent in applying positive psychology to social policy. On the one hand, we have to acknowledge people's individual views about the quality of their lives and on the other we need to measure happiness and disseminate happiness research precisely because our ability to understand and act on what is good for us is limited. Whether we are researchers, practitioners or simply members of the public with an interest in the topic, as the late Chris Peterson would have it, '*happiness is*

not for sissies' (2006, p. 249). For a complete list of Thin's research, see https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Neil_Thin

Ilona Boniwell (England)

Professor Ilona Boniwell's contribution to the world of applied positive psychology has been significant. Not only is she considered one of the first positive psychologists in the UK (working in the area since 1999), staying at the forefront of the academic discipline and practical application of positive psychology in the world, she has developed and/or directed various cutting-edge positive psychology based projects such as *SPARK Resilience Programme* and the International Expert Working group for the Royal Government of Bhutan and the United Nations.

Boniwell graduated with a first class honours degree in psychology in 2000 and in 2006 completed her PhD on satisfaction with time use and its relationship with subjective well-being at the Open University, UK whilst raising two children alone. Immediately after completing her doctorate she established the MSc in Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) at the University of East London (UEL), the first programme of its kind in Europe and the second in the world after the University of Pennsylvania. Boniwell was the UEL MAPP programme director from 2006 until 2012, during which time she also supervised both MSc and PhD theses. Some notable European positive psychology researchers and practitioners have come from the first years of this programme, including Bridget Grenville-Cleave, Lucy Ryan, Francesca Elston, Miriam Akhtar, Mads Bab, Katie Hanson, Fiona Parashar, James Butcher, Yannick Jacob, Jen Rolfe, Chris Samsa and Marina Fielder. The second author graduated from the first cohort at UEL and was fortunate enough to be taught by Boniwell. Together they co-wrote *The Happiness Equation* (Grenville-Cleave & Boniwell, 2008), now reissued with the title *Live Happy: 100 Ways to Fill Your Life with Joy*.

In 2014, Boniwell established the International Masters in Applied Positive Psychology (iMAPP) at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), which takes place in Cambridge, UK and at the Centre d'Etudes Diplomatiques et Strategiques in Paris. Now in its seventh year, the iMAPP is geared towards applying positive psychology in business, education and communities, covering topics as broad as Positive Psychology Coaching, Positive Performance, Positive Society, Positive Child Development, The Neuroscience of Well-being and Positive Psychology for Practitioners. The iMAPP is unique in offering students the flexibility to choose their programme pathway from an extensive options portfolio, aligning it with their previous educational experience and professional background. The intensive week-long study modules can be taken in the same or different geographical locations, Paris and/or Cambridge (all in English), over 1 to 3 years. Students of the iMAPP programme are often in senior and executive posts in their organisations and well-established in their respective professions. They bring ideas about expanding and enhancing their careers and organisations through applied positive

psychology, which can be explored and advanced under the guidance of tutors whose expertise is both practical and academic. The second author, Bridget Grenville-Cleave, leads the popular *Positive Psychology for the Practitioners* Module on the ARU iMAPP programme, drawing on her extensive consultancy and training experience (www.workmad.co.uk) as well as her many volumes (*Positive Psychology in Sport and Physical Activity: An Introduction* (Brady & Grenville-Cleave, 2018), co-edited with Dr. Abbe Brady; *101 Activities for Happiness Workshops* (Bourner et al., 2014) co-authored with Professor Tom Bourner and Dr. Asher Rospigliosi; *A Practical Guide to Positive Psychology: Achieve Lasting Happiness* (Grenville-Cleave, 2012); *100 Ways to Happiness* (Grenville-Cleave & Boniwell, 2008), co-authored with Dr. Iona Boniwell).

In 2002 Boniwell founded the European Network for Positive Psychology, a non-profit organisation that aims to share knowledge and research on positive psychology; she was the ENPP's first Chair, directed its first European Conference and is still an active member of its Steering Committee, leading on the quality standards of positive psychology education. The ENPP organises a bi-annual European Conference on Positive Psychology, complementing the World Congress in Positive Psychology, which is organised by the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) where Boniwell was the first vice-chair and has served on the Board of Directors since 2009.

Boniwell's academic interests include the psychology of time, eudaimonic well-being and various aspects of applied positive psychology. She is the author of numerous peer-reviewed articles on topics as wide-ranging as mindfulness, coaching, time management and time perspectives, internet access, flow and evidence-based positive education programmes (for a complete bibliography, see https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Iona_Boniwell/publications). Boniwell was successful in attracting several significant grants for both positive psychology research and applied projects. She has authored or edited seven books including the popular *Positive Psychology in a Nutshell* (Boniwell, 2015, third Ed.), textbooks such as *Positive Psychology: Theory, Research and Applications* (Hefferon & Boniwell, 2017), which is recommended reading for post-graduate MAPP programmes, and the influential *Oxford Handbook of Happiness* (David et al., 2013), an important text in promoting the evidence for 'happiness'. Also in 2013 she coordinated and edited a substantial report (Boniwell, 2013a) for the government of Bhutan at the request of the UN on the Happiness-Based Public Policy (involving over thirty international scholars, including Martin Seligman, Ed Diener and Mathieu Ricard).

Boniwell has pioneered the application of positive psychology to education, parenting, coaching and leadership. She developed several influential educational curricula for children and adults, such as a comprehensive well-being curriculum for the Haberdasher's Federation of Schools (Boniwell et al., 2016), on which she collaborated with Bridget Grenville-Cleave, and a part of which is available as a book—*Personal Well-Being Lessons for Secondary Schools* (Boniwell & Ryan, 2012). This practical volume that includes lesson plans, lesson descriptions and associated PowerPoint has been translated into several languages and is

implemented by hundreds of schools around the world, including the world famous St Peter's School in Australia. Together with Aneta Tunariu, she also developed and runs the *Face Up Programme*, aimed at the development of resilience of young gang members in troubled neighbourhoods (Boniwell & Tunariu, 2011), and contributed to the *Philosophical Dialogues Programme* aimed at the prevention of youth radicalisation from a resilience and well-being perspective (Tunariu, Ruffion & Boniwell, 2017). Together with Laure Reynaud, she had created the *PEPS (Positive Education for Parents and Schools) Programme*, a skill-building ten four-hour session positive parenting intervention (2016) and *Pathways to Success*, a teacher-led individual positive coaching protocol (2017; both originally in French). Out of all her educational curricula, Boniwell is perhaps best known for her *SPARK Resilience Programme*, a universal school-based positive education intervention (Boniwell & Ryan, 2009, 2010) that builds on cognitive-behavioural therapy and positive psychology concepts with the explicit goal of fostering emotional resilience and associated skills, as well as preventing depression (Pluess & Boniwell, 2015; Pluess et al., 2017). Organised around the SPARK acronym, the programme teaches children to break down their responses to stressful situations into five components: Situation, Perception, Autopilot, Reaction and Knowledge. Through the use of hypothetical scenarios, children are taught how everyday Situations, as a function of their individual Perceptions, tend to trigger their Autopilot (i.e. automatic emotional responses). Children are instructed to identify their subsequent behavioural Reactions and observe what Knowledge they gained from the experience. To help students understand these concepts, they are introduced to the “parrots of perception”—imaginary creatures representing common maladaptive cognitive distortions. The programme teaches students how to challenge their interpretation of adverse situations and consider other alternatives by putting their parrots “on trial”, understanding and modifying their automatic emotional responses, and learning to control negative behavioural reactions. Alongside this, students are introduced to the skills of assertiveness and problem solving, and are helped to build their “resilience muscles” through identifying their strengths, social support networks, sources of positive emotions and reflection on previous experiences of resilience and self-efficacy (Boniwell & Ryan, 2009). SPARK has been extensively implemented in the UK, France, Netherlands, Japan and Singapore, with the large international charity *Partnership for Children* choosing the updated version of the programme as one of their flagship projects.

For the past ten years of her career, Boniwell has been passionate about making positive psychology truly applied and relevant to the fields such as coaching, training and leadership development. She has written numerous articles and developed original approaches to coaching and training for flow, strengths, time use, time perspective and positive leadership (e.g., Wesson & Boniwell, 2007; Elston & Boniwell, 2011; Boniwell et al., 2014a; Boniwell et al., 2014b; Boniwell & Smith, in press). Recently, she has become passionate about the use of “tangible tools” in positive psychology coaching and training, and developed multiple original tools such as the *integrated well-being dashboard* (Boniwell, 2016), *positive actions cards* (Boniwell, 2017), *strengths cards* (Boniwell, 2013b), *positive transformation*

cards (Boniwell, 2018), *mindfulness cards* (Boniwell, 2019), *the happiness box* (Boniwell & Reynaud, 2015) and *HEX* (Bab & Boniwell, 2016b).

These tools are based on sound theoretical and empirical foundations and are now subject to research trials on their effectiveness. Most of these tools are a result of an extensive synthesis of existing literature (i.e. all existing meta-analyses of positive interventions) and framework development. The sixty-four positive actions cards detailing evidence-based interventions are organised into seven categories, using the ACTIONS acronym. A stands for *Active interventions*, concerned with sport and physical activity; C stands for *Calming interventions*, concerned with mindfulness and meditation; T is for *Thinking* or taking stock, working through and integrating past events, whether negative or positive, into our present situation; I is for *Identity related actions*, concerned with personal strengths and one's representation of oneself; O is for *Optimisation*, actions that enable us to set goals, look to the future, and to potentially improve the current situation; N is for *Nourishing*, actions concerned with self-soothing, taking pleasure and care of ourselves; finally, S is for *Social actions*, to do with establishing and maintaining positive relationships. Practitioners are advised on a range of strategies for optimal card utilisation, taking into account the person-activity fit.

In 2012 Boniwell founded Positran (www.positran.eu), a niche consultancy specialising in achieving transformation through the application of positive psychology and neuroscience to the training of positive psychology coaches and corporate trainers, as well as consultancy and organisational interventions. Positran runs highly successful train the trainer programmes, promotes tangible tools designed by Boniwell and her colleagues, and offers comprehensive organisational needs diagnostics and corresponding solutions, such as *SPARK Resilience in the Workplace*, *Positive 360*, *Positive Job Crafting* and *Lego Serious Play for Positive Psychology*. The latter approach builds on the pioneering work of a Danish Positive Psychology practitioner Mads Bab, also one of Boniwell's first MAPP graduates, who has developed the Hands-On Thinking Method and brought positive psychology theories together with the innovative approach of Lego Serious Play. Bab and Boniwell have recently co-authored *Exploring Positive Psychology with Lego Serious Play* (2016a)—a guide to “playing” positive psychology. Boniwell has worked with many businesses and organisations around the world, including SNCF, EDF, L'Oréal and Goldman Sachs. Currently, with the help of Grenville-Cleave, Boniwell consults the Prime Minister's Office in Dubai, UAE around the development of the toolkit for workplace positivity and organisational well-being assessment based on the Positive Organisational Profile model she originally developed with Dr. Evgeny Osin (Boniwell et al., [under review](#)). The Happiness and Wellbeing at the Workplace survey is being applied to 50,000 public sector employees in the Emirates, with the data used to guide concrete evidence-based actions to improve workplace functioning.

Boniwell's vision for positive psychology is to integrate the world of research with the art of practice. Guided by her top strengths of learning, explaining and creativity, she says that she has probably learnt as much, if not more, from her students (usually coming from coaching, training, HR, management and education)

and professional clients, as they have from her. Her dream is transforming one-to-one work, education and work through the interactive loop of the science applied to practice and practice tested by research. As a colleague and former student, it would be fair to say that through her teaching, writing, coaching, consultancy and media work in positive psychology, Boniwell has transformed the lives of thousands of individuals in the UK, Europe and beyond.

Mark Williams (England)

Mark Williams is Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology and Wellcome Principal Research Fellow at the University of Oxford Department of Psychiatry, and Founding Director and Honorary Senior Research Fellow of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre (<https://oxfordmindfulness.org/>). He is former director of the North Wales Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice (now the Centre for Mindfulness Practice and Research at the University of Bangor: <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/>) where, with John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn, he co-developed Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) which is similar to the programme that Kabat-Zinn developed in the 1970s to deal with stress. Mark Williams is the author and co-author of several highly influential books on the topic of mindfulness including *Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy for Depression* (Segal et al., 2002) as well as the international best-seller *The Mindful Way Through Depression* (Williams et al., 2007). He is one of the premier researchers in the field of mindfulness worldwide, pioneering its development and dissemination both within the medical and health professions as well as amongst the general public. His particular interest is in relapse, because recurrence is a major problem for people who suffer from depression. The World Health Organisation reports that depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, with an estimated 350 million people of all ages affected. If we were to take into account the families, friends and colleagues of those sufferers, the number of people touched by depression would be far greater.

According to Williams, what makes mindfulness such a powerful intervention is the fact that it is preventative—learning to be more mindful in our day-to-day living can develop skills which will be helpful before depression threatens. This is why the UK's National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommends guided MBCT as a primary treatment particularly for the prevention of relapse in depression (Kuyken et al., 2016). Good mindfulness practitioners will tell you that regular practice matters. That said, Williams is also clear about not over-claiming the benefits of mindfulness. Like all 'new' treatments, it's important not to see mindfulness as a cure-all for every type of mental illness. He would be the first to acknowledge that more research into the benefits of mindfulness needs to be carried out.

On this front, Williams is currently leading the UK's biggest mindfulness in schools RCT, called MYRIAD (My Resilience in Adolescence: <http://www.myriadproject.org>), which started in January 2015 using the .b mindfulness in

schools programme as a Mindfulness Training (MT) intervention. The .b programme is based on the evidence-based 8-week MBCT course, adapted for children and teenagers for use in a mainstream classroom setting.

The aims of the MYRIAD trial are:

1. To investigate whether MT improves resilience in adolescents and whether there are different cognitive and affective outcomes at different stages of development;
2. To establish whether MT in schools is effective and cost effective;
3. To discover how best to deliver a MT curriculum in schools.

Provisional evidence from the MYRIAD project is encouraging, with interim results due shortly, and final results in 2021–2022.

Michael Pluess (England)

Chartered psychologist Michael Pluess is Professor of Developmental Psychology at the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences at Queen Mary University of London. Previously he held a post-doctoral position with Ilona Boniwell and taught on the University of East London MAPP programme. His research interests concern what has become known as ‘developmental plasticity’, in other words, how our experiences growing up shape our psychological development, and in particular how individual differences impact the degree to which psychological development is affected by these environmental influences. Indeed, it would seem that people are more sensitive and some less sensitive to environmental influences, whether negative or positive (Pluess & Belsky, 2013; Pluess & Boniwell, 2015).

The genetic component to happiness has been recognised for many years. The first ‘twin study’ (Tellegen et al., 1988) suggested that about 40% of the difference in happiness between people was explained by heritable factors. A meta-analysis (Bartels, 2015) combining all the twin studies supports this conclusion, suggesting that on average the genetic factors account for 40% and environmental factors 60%. The largest molecular study of the genetics of happiness (Okbay et al., 2016) however identified three gene variants related to happiness, but they accounted for only about 1% of the difference. Comparing this result to twin studies, Pluess explains that although happiness has a genetic component, this is made up of many gene variants with very small effects, which are difficult to measure, rather than a single ‘happiness gene’. Pluess points out that some people have a genetic sensitivity, which makes them more likely to feel happy when they experience something positive, compared to other people who are genetically less sensitive to the same positive experience. He has introduced the term ‘vantage sensitivity’ (Pluess, 2015) to refer to an individual’s general tendency to benefit from positive influences of the environment, just as ‘vulnerability’ refers to the tendency to succumb to negative effects of adversity. Similarly ‘vantage resistance’ refers to the failure to benefit from positive influences, just as ‘resilience’ refers to the ‘failure’ to succumb to the negative effects of adversity. Given the emerging

evidence for vantage sensitivity and resistance, it is essential that positive psychology researchers and practitioners are aware of (and potentially account for) behavioural, physiological and genetic endogenous factors in their work. For a full bibliography of Pluess's publications, see <http://www.michaelpluess.com>.

Alan Carr (Republic of Ireland)

Professor Alan Carr, chartered psychologist and fellow of the British Psychological Society and the Psychological Society of Ireland, is professor of clinical psychology at University College Dublin (UCD) where he is director of the professional training programme in clinical psychology and former head of the UCD School of Psychology (2012–2019). His research interests lie in the fields of clinical psychology, family therapy and positive psychology. He is also a practising couples and family therapist. Having supported the training of over 100 doctoral students, he has received awards for his contribution to clinical psychology training and research, as well as for his mental health and family therapy research. He has made a significant contribution to positive psychology in the Republic of Ireland. Carr is a prolific author, having written over 20 volumes and 240 papers in peer-reviewed journals. For a complete bibliography, see <https://people.ucd.ie/alan.carr>. His hugely successful introductory textbook *Positive psychology: The science of happiness and human strengths* was first published in 2004, with the second edition in 2011 (Carr, 2004, 2011). A third edition is in press at the time of writing. This text is required reading for the UCD undergraduate module in clinical psychology, appears on the syllabus for many post-graduate MAPP programmes and has been translated into numerous languages, including Chinese, Polish, German, and Spanish. In 2019 he published a positive psychology book for a general readership: *Positive psychology and you: A self-development guide* (Carr, 2019). In the field of clinical psychology, Carr's highly influential *Handbook of Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology*, which is now in its third edition (Carr, 2015) incorporates a strong focus on protective factors as well as risk factors in addressing child and adolescent clinical problems. Carr practises as a therapist at Clanwilliam Institute in Dublin, which was the first institute of couple and family therapy to be established in Ireland. His integrative model of couple and family therapy is strengths-based and strongly influenced by solution-focused and resilience-oriented approaches to systemic practice. It is described in his book: *Family Therapy: Concepts, process and practice*. Both his approach to clinical psychology and couple and family therapy therefore have strong resonance with positive psychology.

Carr's research team has also investigated personal and contextual factors that contribute to well-being in adolescence (Nevin et al., 2005) and the effectiveness of a positive psychology group therapy programme for major depressive disorder in adults (Carr et al., 2016). In their study of adolescents they found that adolescents with greater well-being had greater personal strengths (adaptive problem-solving, self-esteem, and optimistic attributional style) and greater social resources

(perceived social support and adaptive family functioning) than those with lower levels of well-being. An interim report on a trial of a positive psychology group therapy intervention for depression showed that the Say Yes to Life programme (SYTL—Finnegan & Kenneally, 2013; Carr & Finnegan, 2015) was more effective and cost-effective than routine individual psychotherapy.

Say Yes to Life programme

The SYTL programme was primarily devised by Linda Finnegan, a clinical psychologist and integrative and humanistic psychotherapist working at St James Hospital in Dublin, in consultation with a number of colleagues and academics including Alan Carr. SYTL is a 20-week therapy programme based on CBT and positive psychology principles, facilitated by clinical psychologists in groups of around 8 to 14 individuals. Table 5.3 below outlines the content of the 20 sessions, indicates the source of the material and the type of skills each session intends to develop.

The interim results of the SYTL RCT trial are very promising. The first key finding was that more than twice as many SYTL treatment-completers were recovered 3 months after therapy compared to treatment as usual (TAU) treatment-completers (72% compared to 28%). The criteria were that individuals (i) no longer met DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for mild depression, (ii) scored below clinical cut-off scores on well-validated self-report and observer-rated measures of depressive symptom severity, and (iii) showed reliable change on the three measures of depressive symptom severity. The second key finding was that the average cost per individual in the SYTL group was significantly (39%) lower than that of the TAU group. Since SYTL is a group therapy programme, it was therefore much more cost effective to run than the TAU intervention, which involved individual therapy. Further research using group therapy in a control group is required to determine whether the content adds to the cost-effectiveness over and above the advantages associated with the delivery format (Carr et al., 2016).

Looking to the future, Carr's research programme and clinical practice aim to integrate theory and research findings from positive psychology into the practice of clinical psychology generally, and couple and family therapy specifically (Carr, 2012a, 2012b).

Felicia Huppert (England)

Felicia Huppert, Emeritus Professor of Psychology at University of Cambridge, is the founder and director of the Well-being Institute at the University of Cambridge, UK. Like many people who were drawn to positive psychology in the early years, Huppert was working in the field before it had a name. With a background in neuropsychology and epidemiology, her research focused on positive ageing,

Table 5.3 Component sessions of Say Yes to Life programme (adapted from Carr et al., 2016)

No.	Session Title	Theory	Skills (1) Developing a Positive Perspective (2) Challenging a Negative Perspective (3) Coping with Life Challenges (4) Enhancing Well-being
1	Introduction	CBT & PP	Forming a therapeutic contract (1)
2	Recognise your Resilience	PP	Identifying personal strengths (1)
3	Reach Beyond	PP & CBT	Identifying possibilities, potential and goals (1)
4	Challenge Your Thinking (1)	CBT	Cognitive restructuring (2)
5	Challenge Your Thinking (2)	CBT	
6	Talk Back to Negative Self Talk	CBT	Self-talk (2)
7	Let Laughter In	PP	Using humour constructively (3)
8	Speak from the Heart	PP	Communicating and giving compliments (3)
9	Worry Your Worries	CBT	Managing anxiety (3)
10	Face your Anger	CBT	Managing anger (3)
11	Accept Yourself	CBT	Dealing with perfectionist beliefs (3)
12	Learn to Live Well with Loss	CBT	Facilitating healthy grieving (3)
13	Nourish your Relationships	PP	Strengthening adult attachments (3)
14	Assert Yourself	PP	Assertiveness training (3)
15	Decide to Forgive (1)	PP	Facilitating forgiveness (4)
16	Decide to Forgive (2)	PP	
17	Be Thankful	PP	Facilitating gratitude (4)
18	Connect with Your Community	PP	Strengthening social networks (4)
19	Rediscover Nature	PP	Savouring positive experience (4)
20	Close	PP & CBT	Reviewing lessons learned (4)

positive mental health, and the measurement of well-being. It is interesting for new students, researchers and practitioners in the field of positive psychology to be aware that this work was not encouraged by the Department of Psychiatry where she was employed at the time, since they believed it detracted from their focus on serious mental disorders. Underlying Huppert's persistence was the work of the great British epidemiologist, Geoffrey Rose, who demonstrated that the prevalence of any common disorder was related to the population mean of the underlying risk factors (see Rose, 1992). This meant that common diseases or disorders should be seen not as an individual problem but in the context of the population, and the most effective way to reduce the number of people with the disorder was to shift the population mean in a positive direction. Two papers applying the Rose model to mental health for the first time were published by Huppert and colleagues in the mid-90s (Anderson et al., 1993; Whittington & Huppert, 1996) and Huppert's diagram showing the psychological benefits of population shift has been widely cited.

In the early 2000s, aware that the positive psychology movement would cross the Atlantic, and keen to ensure that it would be based on strong scientific foundations, Huppert organised a Discussion Meeting at the Royal Society of London, one of the world's foremost scientific bodies. This prestigious meeting resulted in the seminal 2005 book, "The Science of Well-being", and the subsequent launch of the Well-being Institute at the University of Cambridge. Huppert was appointed 'lead expert' on well-being for the UK Government's Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Well-being (2006–2008), an ambitious undertaking which identified the determinants of well-being and interventions to enhance well-being, and led to the "Five Ways to Well-being" (mentioned above) which has been adopted in many parts of the world. Felicia Huppert was made an Emeritus Professor in the University of Cambridge in 2012, and remains Director of the Well-being Institute. She now spends most of the year in Sydney, working with internationally renowned colleagues in the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE). She continues to advise Governments and international bodies on the measurement of well-being, and on policies to enhance well-being.

The measurement of well-being has been a long-standing interest, including her early work showing that the presence of positive well-being had different determinants and consequences than the absence of ill-being (Huppert & Whittington, 2003). Her most influential work on well-being measurement was the first ever attempt to define well-being in a strictly systematic way. Recognising that positive well-being was not the absence of ill-being but its opposite, Huppert and So (2013) listed all the psychological symptoms of the common mental disorders (anxiety and depression) in the DSM and ICD classifications, and defined their opposites. This resulted in a multidimensional well-being construct known as the 10 features of flourishing: competence, emotional stability, engagement, meaning, optimism, positive emotion, positive relationships, resilience, self-esteem, and vitality. In a study of 43,000 people across Europe, they showed remarkable differences in national profiles on these ten features, even when countries had similar scores on overall life satisfaction. The policy implications of such findings are profound—policy-makers who wish to improve well-being need to target the specific features on which nations or demographic groups are doing poorly, while at the same time supporting the features on which they are doing well.

Huppert's research contributions include developmental aspects of well-being, such as the role of well-being in childhood and of parental behaviour on later well-being in adulthood (Huppert et al., 2010; Richards & Huppert, 2011). She was also one of the initiators of the Mindfulness in Schools Project (<https://mindfulnessinschools.org/>), which has demonstrated beneficial effects of mindfulness training on symptom reduction and well-being among adolescents (Huppert & Johnson, 2010; Kuyken et al., 2013), and is a collaborator on the MYRIAD project (<http://myriadproject.org/>), a randomised control trial taking place in 76 schools with around 6000 children in the UK. Huppert's latest research examines the separate and combined effects of mindfulness and compassion training in children and adults, in education and healthcare settings, e.g. (<http://www.happinessandwellbeing.org/huppert/>).

Huppert was elected Chair of the European Network for Positive Psychology from 2004 to 2006, and a Member of the Board of Directors of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) from 2007 to 2011. She has been a keynote speaker at numerous Australian, European, and international positive psychology conferences. Her mission is to broaden the scope of positive psychology to help create vibrant, integrated communities, and a more compassionate and peaceful world. Huppert is currently working with a worldwide group of positive psychology academics and practitioners, including Marten de Vries, Sue Roffey, David Roffey, Dóra Guðmundsdóttir, Vanessa King and Bridget Grenville-Cleave, on a project to expand the application of positive psychology from the individual to the collective. Their book, *Creating the world we want to live in: How positive psychology can build a brighter future* was published by Routledge in 2021 (Grenville-Cleave et al., 2021).

Sue Roffey (England)

Sue Roffey has been a teacher, educational psychologist, academic, qualitative researcher and author. She is currently honorary associate professor at University College London and Western Sydney University, Associate Fellow at Exeter University and Director of Growing Great Schools Worldwide. She is also a Fellow of the British Psychological Society and the Royal Society of Arts, member of several advisory groups and along with Pasi Sahlberg and Richard Ryan, an ambassador for Positive Schools. Roffey is based in London having lived in Australia for 17 years where she established Wellbeing Australia in 2005. She considers her work with Aboriginal communities to be amongst the most profound learning experiences of her life (Dobia & Roffey, 2017).

Roffey continues to work internationally to provide consultancy and training on all aspects of school and student wellbeing. In recent years this has included China, Singapore, Iceland, Australia, Indonesia, Switzerland, New Zealand and South Africa as well as the UK.

Roffey's work with vulnerable, often challenging, young people and their families has given her a strong social justice perspective. She became affiliated to the Centre of Critical Psychology at the University of Western Sydney in 2002. This increased her understanding of the role of society and politics in wellbeing, and that the root of many social ills lies in the misuse of power. She now combines the strengths- and solution-focused approach of positive psychology with community psychology and identifies as a social activist. What can we change to make children's lives better, rather than expect them to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps? What policies do families need that support them in their vital role in bringing up the next generation? What do we know about resilience and positive adaptation that schools can put in place? How can we promote whole-child, whole-school wellbeing that values diversity and prepares young people to live life well for themselves and others?

In addition to the above, Roffey has made the following contributions to the field of positive education. She is a passionate advocate for ‘double-whammy’ kids. These are students who experience adversities in their lives and then struggle to settle, learn and be compliant in school. They often get punished and even excluded. Her many books on behaviour in school (Roffey, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2019a, 2019b; Roffey & O’Reirdan, 2001, 2003) promote a strengths, solution-focused and relational approach, and eschew a behaviourist model based in reward and sanctions. Acknowledging the stresses on teachers, she also aims to support teachers in their demanding role, putting teacher wellbeing at the heart of whole school wellbeing. These are amongst the issues addressed in her chapter on disadvantaged students, written with Dr. Denise Quinlan, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Education* (Quinlan & Roffey, 2021).

Roffey’s edited book *Positive Relationships: Evidence Based Practice Across the World* (2012) is unique in that it covers relationships in many contexts, including friendships, couple relationships, parent-child, professional, at work and in school. It was from this source that Roffey first developed the ‘ASPIRE’ principles, bringing together evidence from many researchers together with practitioner experience. These principles apply to the pre-requisites of healthy relationships and also provide a pedagogy for social and emotional learning (SEL) delivered in Circle Solutions (Roffey, 2020). ASPIRE is an acronym for the following:

- Agency: This comprises self-determination, having a voice, making your own decisions and not being controlled by others. It is demonstrated by a non-didactic approach to SEL, giving students activities that enable them to reflect on issues rather than being told what to think.
- Safety: Healthy relationships are physically, emotionally and psychologically safe. In Circles students talk about issues, never incidents, and work together, not individually. Students choose whether or not to speak and can ‘pass’ if they do not feel comfortable.
- Positivity: This encompasses positive verbal and non-verbal communication, the promotion of positive feelings and the value of having fun together. Circles are strengths- and solution-focused with activities often presented as games.
- Inclusion: The importance of belonging for psychological wellbeing is now firmly established. In Circles students are regularly mixed up so they get to know others outside their usual social circle. Circles provide a way of promoting values that inhibit bullying and racism. Students are given activities that enable them to take responsibility for the emotional climate of their class.
- Respect: This is demonstrated by listening to each other and not jumping to judgement. In Circles each person is expected to listen to what others have to say without interruption or talking over them. You may disagree with what someone is saying, but not put them down.
- Equity: In order for everyone to have equal opportunities to participate it may be necessary to be flexible or put additional things in place. In Circles everyone is as important as the next and the facilitator is a participant in all activities to both model what is expected and to learn from students.

As well as developing Circle Solutions for delivering safe and supportive SEL, Roffey has identified twelve dimensions of SEL. These address not only skills but also attitudes and perceptions that promote shared humanity, ethics and a sense of meaning and purpose.

In her most recent projects, she has co-created the [Wellbeing Stories](#) that put positive and negative thinking into characters for 8–11 year olds. Each story comes with a teacher and parent toolkit. Roffey is also one of seven authors of *Creating the world we want to live in: How positive psychology can build a brighter future* (2021) in which she focussed on Childhood, Education and Relationships. In this book, as well as in her many other publications, Roffey is committed to clear, jargon-free communication, making the value and practices of positive psychology accessible to as many people as possible.

Conclusion

As early as 2003, Richard Lazarus asked, ‘Does the positive psychology movement have legs?’ (Lazarus, 2003). Back then, positive psychology as a concept was barely on the radar in the UK but in the intervening two decades, the science and practice have flourished. The ambitious, pioneering and entrepreneurial efforts of academics like Ilona Boniwell, Alex Linley and Alan Carr have established positive psychology as a field of study and practical application in its own right. They have brought it to the attention of scholars in other disciplines, such as sport, construction and design, and to practitioners in a wide range of professions including GPs, teachers, therapists and coaches. In 2006, Linley and colleagues (Linley et al., 2006) considered how positive psychology might develop, asking whether it would be marginalised and disappear, become fully integrated into psychology, or something in between. Although we still await the first accreditation by the British Psychological Society of a positive psychology Masters degree programme in the UK, both the science and practice of positive psychology have confidently passed the point of no return and we are hopeful that it will continue to flourish in this decade and beyond.

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Chapter 6

Region of Northern Europe (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, & Sweden)



Karolina Aleksandra Ścigała, Jesper Dammeyer, Christoph Schild, and Ingo Zettler

Cultural, Political, Societal, and Geographic Backgrounds for Positive Psychology in Northern Europe (the Nordic Countries)

The Nordic countries described herein encompass Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, as well as the associated countries/territories the Åland Islands (part of Finland), Greenland (part of Denmark), and the Faroe Islands (part of Denmark). Three of the countries—Denmark, Norway, and Sweden—are also known as Scandinavia. Whereas all the Nordic countries share cultural and societal similarities, the Scandinavian countries also share similar languages. People from Denmark, Sweden, and Norway can somewhat easily communicate with each other via using their respective mother tongues.

The Nordic countries cooperate politically—and then, in turn, culturally, financially, and societally—through the organization Nordic Council which was formed in 1952. Further, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden are members of the European Union (EU), and Denmark, Iceland, and Norway are members of the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO). Altogether, the population in the Nordic countries is about 25 million people, with Sweden having around ten million, Denmark, Finland, and Norway each around five million, and Iceland around 330,000 citizens. Protestant Christianity is the dominating religion in this region, though the degree of secularization is high (Zuckerman, 2009). The countries are politically stable and known as strong welfare states, a form of government in which the state plays a significant role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of its citizens. In the following, the several characteristics of the Nordic countries are sketched, which are part of explaining the populations' relatively

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Table 6.1 Demographic overview of the Nordic countries with respect to size of area, number of inhabitants, name of capital city, main official language, and form of government

Country	Area [in km ²]	Inhabitants [in 2015]	Capital	Form of government
Denmark	43,094	5,745,526	Copenhagen	<i>Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy</i>
Finland	338,145	5,488,543	Helsingfors	Unitary parliamentary republic
Iceland	103,000	332,529	Reykjavik	Unitary parliamentary republic
Norway	385,199	5,252,166	Oslo	<i>Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy</i>
Sweden	449,964	10,004,076	Stockholm	Unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy

Note. Information is taken from the countries national webpages and statistics offices

high levels of happiness and subjective well-being in corresponding investigations. The presentation in this chapter has been based on the structure of Chap. 7 (Western Europe).

The Nordic countries share a climate with dark and cold winters and bright summers. Whereas Iceland, Norway, and partly Sweden are dominated by mountains, Finland and especially Denmark consist of flat landscapes. The climate can be harsh in some regions with long, dark, and cold winters, and bad weather conditions. At the same time, at least in the recent decades, the Nordic countries have not suffered from severe natural disasters. Table 6.1 provides an overview on the Nordic countries demographic characteristics.

All countries are representative democracies. Whereas Denmark, Norway, and Sweden have active royal monarchs, Finland and Iceland have presidents. All of the Nordic countries follow the rules of market economy and have relatively high gross national products (GNP) and low unemployment rates (see Table 6.2 for details). The countries have mixed industries of all kinds including farming and fishing industries, but also low and high tech industries. Norway has currently a very strong economy due to a high production of oil and gas in the North Sea over the last decades. By contrast, Iceland was significantly affected by the global financial crisis in 2008–2011, though it has recovered quickly since then.

All of the Nordic countries are known as active members of the United Nations (UN), and are proactive in working for the implementation of human rights worldwide (Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), United Nations (1948)). The Nordic countries are also active in peace keeping activities and international diplomacy.

The countries are also—in relative terms—proactive and successful in working against economic inequality, which should be illustrated with examples from Sweden: Despite an increase in income inequality between the earners since the 1990s, Sweden is one of the OECD countries being most equal. In 2012, the difference in income between the top and the bottom 10% income earners was 6.3 times. Relatedly, the redistributive effect of Sweden's tax and benefit system (people earning more money pay relatively more tax than people having and/or earning

Table 6.2 Overview of the Nordic countries with respect to Unemployment Rate, GDP per capita, Corruption perception, Educational attainment, Human Development Index, PISA Science score, Life expectancy, and Average happiness score

Country	Unemployment rate (percent)	GDP per capita (EUR)	Corruption perception (international rank)	Educational attainment (percent with above primary and lower secondary level)	Human Development Index (HDI) (score/international rank)	PISA Science (score/international rank (OECD))	Life expectancy (men/women years)	Happiness World Database (score/international rank)
Denmark	4.5	53,638	1	67.4	0.923/4	502/21	78.6/82.5	8.4/2
Finland	9.4	38,223	3	No data	0.883/24	531/5	78.5/84.1	7.9/8
Iceland	4.0	51,051	14	65.9	0.899/16	473/39	81.0/83.6	8.1/4
Norway	4.4	75,600	6	70.9	0.944/1	498/24	80.4/84.0	8.0/7
Sweden	7.4	50,331	4	79.3	0.907/14	493/28	80.3/84.0	7.8/11

Note. Information is taken from [Focus-Economics.com](#), [Transparency International \(2016\)](#), [Norden.statbank.dk](#), [OECD \(2016a\)](#), [United Nations Development Programme \(2015\)](#), and [Veenhoven \(2016\)](#)

less money) is also above the OECD average (OECD, 2016b). Next to aiming to limit economic inequality, gender equality is another area in which the Nordic countries tend to be forerunners through active politics and legislation. Easy and cheap access to nurseries and kindergartens, for instance, overall helps both parents of a child to stay at the labor market. And, indeed, across the countries, between 92 and 98 per cent of all children aged 3–5 years are in daycare institutions—with the exception of Finland where the figure is 74 per cent (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2015).

As part of the welfare state model of governance, the Nordic countries strongly emphasize equal and free access to education. In general, no tuition fees have to be paid and cheap loan or even state stipends are offered to all students (in case of Denmark, for instance, see Uddannelses- og Forskningsministeriet, 2017). Correspondingly, the level of educational attainment is higher as compared to the EU norm: Between 66 and 79 per cent of the citizens have attained an education at least at secondary level (Norden Statbank, 2015). The quality of the educational system is in general found to be fair to good. For instance, in the 2015 survey among 15 year old students in science by The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Finland (mean score 531, rank 5), Denmark (mean score 502, rank 21), Norway (mean score 498, rank 24), Sweden (mean score 493, rank 28), and Iceland (mean score 473, rank 39) performed minimum at the OECD average of 493 (OECD, 2016a; see also Table 6.2).

With regard to safety and criminal rates, the Nordic countries again show relatively fair to good indices as compared to most other countries (e.g., von Hofer et al., 2012). In particular, experienced risk by the citizens is low: Citizens in the Scandinavian countries have reported low levels of feeling at risk for being burgled as well as high levels of safety in the street after dark (van Dijk et al., 2007). Further, compared to other countries in Europe, people in the Nordic countries have relatively high trust in the police and believe that the police is doing a good job (European Social Survey, ESS, 2010). Conceptually related, high public trust is also reflected in a generally high level of trust to state institutions/administration and a low level of perceived corruption. On the Corruption Perception Index 2016 (Transparency International, 2016), Denmark was ranked 1 (out of 176 countries), Finland 3, Sweden 4, Norway 6, and Iceland 14.

Also part of the welfare state model of governance is free and equal access to health care for all citizens. Life expectancy is between 82 and 85 years of age for women and between 78 and 81 years of age for men in all of the Nordic countries (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2015). Further, the Human Development Index (The United Nations Development Programme, 2015) aggregates information on (1) life expectancy at birth, (2) expected years of schooling, (3) mean years of schooling, and (4) gross national income (GNI) per capita to a composite index. Among all countries in the world, Norway has ranked the highest score (rank 1, index of 0.944), followed—from the Nordic countries—by Denmark (rank 4, index .923), Sweden (rank 14, index .0907), Iceland (rank 16, index .899), and Finland (rank 24, index 0.883). Thus, all of the Nordic countries are among the top half of countries with “very high human development” (United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

Finally, and of special relevance for positive psychology, the Nordic countries all have a high score on the World Database of Happiness (Veenhoven, 2016). In this index, citizens in the different countries have to respond to the question “Taking all together, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your life-as-a-whole these days?” on a scale ranging from 0 to 10. Among the Nordic countries, Denmark had the highest score with 8.4 (rank 2 out of 159 countries), followed by Iceland 8.1 (rank 4), Norway 8.0 (rank 7), Finland 7.9 (rank 8), and Sweden 7.8 (rank 11; see also Table 6.2). Several of the characteristics mentioned above have in research studies shown to be associated with the high levels of happiness. For instance, good access and high levels of education, equality, low levels of corruption, quality of governance, and political freedom have found to be positively associated with happiness (Veenhoven, 2015).

Overall, the Nordic countries perform well on many economical, health, political and societal characteristics, which have been suggest to affect people’s levels of happiness (Veenhoven, 2015) and other important positive psychological outcomes. Correspondingly, many positive psychology researchers in the Nordic countries are interested in investigating how specific aspects of the Nordic countries’ welfare state model of governance are associated with individual subjective well-being. Another example is research in promoting subjective well-being among students in the primary and secondary school—a focus strongly emphasized in the aims of the new Danish school reform (Ministry of Education, 2014). Next, we introduce main positive psychologists in the Nordic countries.

Methods

Participants

In order to provide an overview of the state of Positive Psychology in Northern Europe, we prepared a survey targeted at positive psychologists in this region. To identify positive psychologists, we searched among various research groups associated with universities in the Northern countries and, from the title and/or self-description presented on the internet, potentially working in the field of Positive Psychology. Additionally, we searched among authors who have published in leading Positive Psychology journals (e.g., *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *Journal of Positive Psychology*). Finally, at the end of the survey, we presented a list of the positive psychologist identified by us, and asked the participants if they know other researchers associated with the field of Positive Psychology in Northern Europe that have not been identified by us. On the base of our search, we sent an invitation to 32 positive psychologists (or research groups), out of which 12 participated in the survey (including two reminders). The following presentation is mainly based upon this survey. Importantly, though, please note that the list of the introduced researchers below is not exhaustive at all, and that our search allows us to provide a tentative overview of the field only.

Measures and Procedure

We set up an online survey using the open-source survey platform formr (www.formr.org; Arslan et al., 2018). First, participants were provided with general information about the book chapter, and they were asked to provide consent to participate in the survey. Following that, they were asked if they consider themselves to do research in Positive Psychology. All of the participants replied ‘yes’ to this question. Afterwards, we asked participants about their country of origin, the university in which they obtained their PhD, and the field of their PhD. Next, participants were asked to indicate their research interests and publications in the field of Positive Psychology, and to sketch the state, development, and current challenges of Positive Psychology in their country. Following that, we asked participants to list: associations related to Positive Psychology that they belong to (for a list of associations; see Table 6.3), journals related to Positive Psychology that they are/were editors of, courses related to Positive Psychology that they teach, and any other information relevant for the book chapter. Then, participants could describe their point of view concerning the state and challenges of Positive Psychology in Europe—we have integrated these comments in our discussion about the field at the end of this chapter. Finally, participants were provided with the list of positive psychologists we identified for the book chapter, and asked if they would like to recommend any other researcher to be invited to participate in the survey.

Results

In the following, we describe researchers in the field of Positive Psychology from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Each section includes information about researchers who provided answers in our survey, and more general information about other identified positive psychologists. As noted above, it is not an exhaustive list, and other researchers associated with the field can be found, e.g., among the co-authors of the cited references or on the websites listed in the ‘Resources’ section at the end of this chapter. Below, we present *Hans Henrik Knoop*, *Poul Nissen*, *Frans Ørsted Andersen*, and the *Happiness Research Institut* (Denmark); *Sigrún Aðalbjarnardóttir* and *Dóra Guðrún Guðmundsdóttir* (Iceland); *Jari Hakanen*, *Anne Makikangas*, and *Frank Martela* (Finland); *Rolv Mikkel Blakar*, *Erik Carlquist*, *Jarle Eid*, *Sigurd William Hystad*, *Hilde Eileen Nafstad*, *Ragnhild Bang Nes*, *Espel Røysamb*, *Joar Vittersø*, and *Bente Wold* (Norway); and *Bengt*

Table 6.3 Overview of existing positive psychological associations

Name	Website
European Flow Research Network (EFRN)	https://efrn.webs.com/
European Network for Positive Psychology (ENPP)	http://enpp.eu/
International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA)	http://www.ippanetwork.org/

Brülde, Krister Bykvist, Daiva Daukantaitė, Danilo Garcia, Laszlo Harmat, and Carolina Lundqvist (Sweden; for an overview, see Table 6.4). We aimed to update the information as good as possible, but would like to note that it is likely that in the time span of the publication process some of the researchers took on other responsibilities, got promoted, changed the university, conducted research with a different focus (in and outside Positive Psychology) etc.

Denmark

Hans Henrik Knoop is an Associate Professor at Aarhus University. He obtained his PhD in Psychology at the Danish University of Education. His research work focuses on flourishing and well-being in education (e.g. Knoop, 2011, 2013, 2016), the work life (e.g. Knoop, 2014), and the society (e.g. Knoop & Delle Fave, 2013). He is a member of the Council of Advisors of the *International Positive Psychology Association* and an Executive Board Member of the *European Network for Positive Psychology*. From 2010 to 2014, he was the President of the *European Network for Positive Psychology*. Furthermore, he is a member of the Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*. Additionally, he is one of the coordinators of the master program in Positive Psychology at the Aarhus University, and he supervised two PhD theses on resilience and character strengths, respectively. He has also given numerous talks in and outside Denmark, invited by both public and private institutions.

Poul Nissen is an Associate Professor at Aarhus University. He obtained his PhD at the University of Lund in Sweden. His research interests involve psychological assessment and intervention (e.g., Nissen, 2011a; Nissen et al., 2014) with an emphasis on tools assessing talent development (e.g., Nissen, 2011b; Nissen & Lemire, 2017). Furthermore, he teaches at the master program in Positive Psychology at the Aarhus University (specifically “*Individual Strengths and Well-being*” and “*Learning Environments in the Perspectives of Positive Psychology*”).

Frans Ørsted Andersen is an Associate Professor at Aarhus University where he also obtained his PhD in Educational Psychology. His research interests include Nordic comparative educational research (e.g., Andersen, 2010), development of new methods in Positive Psychology (e.g., Nissen et al., 2014), and flow research (e.g., Andersen, 2016; Harmat et al., 2016). He is also a member of the European Positive Psychology Network, the European Flow Research Network, and *Positiv Psykologi i Virkeligheden* (a Danish Alumni Network related to Positive Psychology). Furthermore, he is a teacher at the master program in Positive Psychology and Educational Psychology at the Aarhus University.

Additionally, we would like to mention the *Happiness Research Institute*, an independent think tank in Copenhagen. Their main research field includes happiness, subjective well-being, and quality of life (Andreasson & Birkjær, 2018; LEO Innovation Lab & Happiness Research Center, 2017).

Table 6.4 Overview of selected positive psychologists presented in the chapter at hand

Name	Email	Website(s)	Location
Anne Makikangas	anne.makikangas@tuni.fi	https://www.tuni.fi/en/anne-makikangas	Finland
Bengt Brölde	flov@flov.gu.se	https://www.gu.se/english/about_the_university/staff?languageId=100001&userId=xbrube	Sweden
Bente Wold	bente.wold@uib.no	https://www.uib.no/personer/Bente.Wold	Sweden
Carolina Lundqvist	carolina.lundqvist@liu.se	https://liu.se/en/employee/carlu42	Sweden
Daiva Daukantaite	daiva.daukantaite@psy.lu.se	https://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/lucat/user/662aa2933b6cc9858411746fc94bda9e	Sweden
Daniilo Garcia	daniilo.garcia@icloud.com	https://celam.gu.se/svenska/om-oss/personal/daniilo-garcia	Sweden
Dóra Guðrún Guðmundsdóttir	dora@publichealth.is	https://www.landlaeknir.is/am-embættid/starfsfolk/nanar/item/107/	Iceland
Erik Carlquist	erik.carlquist@psykologi.uio.no	https://www.sv.uio.no/psi/english/people/aca/enikc/	Norway
Espel Røy samb	espen.roy.samb@psykologi.uio.no	https://www.sv.uio.no/psi/personer/vit/espenro/	Norway
Frank Martela	frank.martela@gmail.com	https://frankmartela.com/	Finland
Frans Ørsted Andersen	frans@edu.au.dk	http://pure.au.dk/portal/da/fran@dpu.dk	Denmark
Hans Henrik Knoop	knoop@edu.au.dk	https://pure.au.dk/portal/da/persons/hans-henrik-knoop(309c5cfb-5430-4dc1-aa41-5c80651b924b).html	Denmark
the Happiness Research Institute	info@happinessresearchinstitute.com	https://www.happinessresearchinstitute.com/	Denmark
Hilde Eileen Nafstad	h.e.nafstad@psykologi.uio.no	https://www.sv.uio.no/psi/english/people/aca/hnafstad/index.html?vrtx=tags	Norway
Jari Hakanen	jari.hakanen@ttl.fi	https://www.ttl.fi/en/henkilo/jari-hakanen/	Finland
Jarle Eid	jarle.eid@uib.no	https://www.uib.no/personer/B.Eid	Norway
Joar Vittersø	joar.vitterso@uit.no	https://uit.no/om/enhet/ansatte/person?p_document_id=42316&p_dimension_id=88120	Norway
Krister Bykvist	krister.bykvist@iffs.se	https://www.iffs.se/en/research/researchers/krister-bykvist/	Sweden
Laszlo Harmat	laszlo.harmat@lmu.se	https://lmu.se/en/staff/laszlo.harmat/	Sweden

Poul Nissen	pn@mbg.au.dk	https://pure.au.dk/portal/en/persons/poul-nissen(f7a1f833-0117-497e-b031-37354c4a1fb2).html	Denmark
Ragnhild Bang Nes	r.b.nes@psykologi.uio.no	https://www.sv.uio.no/psi/personer/vit/rbnes/index.html	Norway
Rolv Mikkel Blakar	r.m.blakar@psykologi.uio.no	https://www.sum.uio.no/english/research/networks/norlarnet/research/researchers/rolv-mikkel-blakar/	Norway
Sigrún Aðalbjarnardóttir	sa@hi.is	http://uni.hi.is/sa/en/	Iceland
Sigurd William Hystad	sigurd.hystad@uib.no	https://www.uib.no/personer/Sigurd.William.Hystad	Norway

Finland

Jari Hakanen is a Research Professor at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. He obtained his PhD in Social Psychology at the University of Helsinki. His interests revolve around positive and work psychology. He is especially focused on job crafting (e.g., Hakanen et al., 2017), burnout (e.g., Hakanen & Schaufeli, 2012; Hakanen et al., 2008), and positive gain spirals at work (e.g., Hakanen et al., 2008, 2011). He is actively involved in teaching—giving around 30 lectures and workshops annually in various organizations and universities around Europe.

Anne Mäkikangas is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Tampere. She completed her PhD in Psychology at the University of Jyväskylä. Her research interests include positive personality traits and dispositions (e.g., Mäkikangas et al., 2013), job crafting (e.g., Mäkikangas, 2018; Mäkikangas et al., 2016, 2017), and employee well-being (with emphasis on work engagement and flow at work, e.g., Mäkikangas et al., 2010). She is involved in teaching on job crafting and on a positive psychology view on personality in Personality Psychology as well as in Work and Organizational Psychology courses.

Frank Martela is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Helsinki. He obtained his PhD in Applied Philosophy and Organizational Research at the Aalto University in Finland. His research interests involve, among others, meaning of life and work (Martela et al., 2018; Martela & Steger, 2016), prosocial behavior (Martela & Ryan, 2016), and self-determination theory and basic psychological needs (Martela & Riekk, 2018). He is involved in teaching courses related to positive psychology at the Aalto University—specifically, “*Human potential*” and “*Designing life: Finding motivation, direction, and meaning to life and work*”.

Iceland

Concerning Iceland, we would like to name *Sigrún Aðalbjarnardóttir* who is a Professor at the University in Iceland interested in, among other things, teachers’ professional development and the social and civic development of children (e.g., Aðalbjarnardóttir, 2010; Aðalbjarnardóttir & Selman, 1997). Additionally, we would like to name *Dóra Guðrún Guðmundsdóttir*, affiliated with the Directorate of Health in Iceland, who works on topics such as relation between happiness and economic crisis (Guðmundsdóttir, 2013) and between positive psychology and public health (Guðmundsdóttir, 2011).

Norway

Rolv Mikkel Blakar is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Oslo where he also completed his PhD in Social Psychology. His area of interest involves societal psychology with a focus on how ideological development is reflected in changes in the language of public discourse (newspaper language; e.g., Carlquist et al., 2017; Nafstad et al., 2013), and everyday understanding of well-being related concepts (e.g., Carlquist et al., 2017, 2018).

Hilde Eileen Nafstad is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Oslo where she also completed her PhD in Social-Developmental Psychology. Her research field include historical and philosophical perspectives that have contributed to the development of Positive Psychology (e.g., Nafstad, 2015), ideologies (Nafstad et al., 2013), well-being (Bahl et al., 2017), and analysis of public discourse (Carlquist et al., 2017; Türken et al., 2016). Additionally, she is a member of the *International Positive Psychology Association* (IPPA) and of the *European Network for Positive Psychology* (ENPP), and a board member of the *Journal of Happiness Studies*.

Espel Røysamb is a Professor at the University of Oslo where he also completed his PhD in Psychology. His research field includes various aspects of subjective well-being with a particular focus on genetic and environmental predictors of well-being (Røysamb & Nes, 2018; Røysamb et al., 2003), and also linking relationship quality (Dyrdal et al., 2011; Gustavson et al., 2014) and personality to well-being (Røysamb et al., 2018).

Joar Vittersø is a Professor at the Arctic University of Norway who obtained his PhD in Psychology at the University of Oslo. His work focuses on the concept of wellbeing and the meaning of a good life, including links between personality traits and subjective well-being and happiness (Vittersø, 2001; Vittersø & Nilsen, 2002). Furthermore, his work also focuses on the cultural variation in subjective well-being (Biswas-Diener et al., 2005; Huppert et al., 2009).

Bente Wold is a Professor and a Dean at the University of Bergen where she also obtained her PhD. Her research work focuses on health promotion and health promotion evaluation (Wold & Mittelmark, 2018), and on positive youth development and health behaviors (Løvoll et al., 2016; Wold et al., 2013, 2016).

Furthermore, we would like to mention *Erik Carlquist* who is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oslo focusing on, among other topics, the meaning of well-being and related constructs (Carlquist et al., 2017, 2017, 2018). Also, we would like to name *Ragnhild Bang Nes* who is an Associate Professor at the University of Oslo whose work includes well-being (Nes et al., 2014) and genetic aspects of happiness (Nes, 2010; Nes & Røysamb, 2017). *Sigurd William Hystad* is an Associate Professor at the University of Bergen interested in psychological hardiness and resilience (Hystad, 2012; Hystad & Bye, 2013; Hystad et al., 2015). *Jarle Eid* is a Professor at the University of Bergen who is also interested in hardiness and resilience (Eid et al., 2004; Eid & Morgan, 2006).

Sweden

Bengt Brülde is a Professor at the University of Gothenburg interested in, among other topics, theories of happiness and a good life (Brülde, 2007a, 2007b, 2010). *Krister Bykvist* is a Professor at the Stockholm University whose work involves theories of happiness (Brülde & Bykvist, 2010; Bykvist, 2010) and well-being (Bykvist, 2002). *Daiva Daukantaite* is a Senior Lecturer at Lund University. Her research includes subjective well-being (e.g. Daukantaite & Zukauskienė, 2012) with a focus on women's subjective well-being (e.g., Daukantaite & Bergman, 2005; Daukantaite & Zukauskienė, 2006). *Danilo Garcia* is an Associate Professor at the University of Gothenburg and a director of the Blekinge Center of Competence in Blekinge, Sweden. His research focuses on the relation between personality traits and individuals' well-being and happiness (e.g., Garcia, 2011; Garcia & Erlandsson, 2011). *Laszlo Harmat* is an Associate Senior Lecturer at the Linnaeus University whose research includes flow experience (e.g., Harmat et al., 2016) and music psychology (e.g., Eriksson et al., 2017). *Carolina Lundqvist* is an Associate Professor at the Stockholm University. Her work focuses on well-being and quality of life among elite athletes (e.g., Lundqvist, 2011; Lundqvist & Kenttä, 2010; Lundqvist & Raglin, 2015; Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014).

Discussion About Positive Psychology in the Northern Countries

Discussing the state and outlook of Positive Psychology in the Northern countries is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, there is, compared to other countries, a large focus on people's well-being in the Northern countries from a cultural, political, and societal perspective. Correspondingly, it is well accepted that there should be—and, in fact, it is expected that there *are*—political and organizational efforts to support people's well-being, in line with core themes within Positive Psychology. On the other hand, this general acceptance of Positive Psychology themes might make it also more difficult to shed light on the field of Positive Psychology. For instance, researchers across many psychological fields in the Northern countries conduct research around people's happiness, health, stress, and well-being (e.g., in Educational or Organizational Psychology, let alone Clinical Psychology), without considering themselves to represent or to be rooted in Positive Psychology. Thus, the state of Positive Psychology in the Nordic countries might be perceived as rather either positive—its core themes are well reflected in the media, public discussions, research in general etc.—or critical—not too many researchers and organizations identify themselves as Positive Psychologists.

That the Nordic countries successfully emphasize the role of people's well-being can be seen in the fact that all Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden are ranked relatively high across different international happiness' (or similar

constructs') indexes, although the exact ranks might differ from survey to survey. The overall relatively high levels of happiness (and related outcomes) can, at least partially, be explained by different cultural, political, societal, and geographic characteristics of the Nordic countries. For instance, at least in the recent decades, the Nordic countries have suffered relatively seldom from severe natural disasters. Further, for years now, the countries have aimed to limit both economic and gender-related inequalities, and have been, compared to other countries, relatively successful in this. From a political-societal perspective, there is a huge acceptance to invest efforts aiming to facilitate people's well-being (e.g., increasing work-life balance), also in considerations of other potentially important aims that politics or organizations could target in particular. For instance, in a recently conducted school reform concerning the Danish primary school system, a very strong focus has been put on supporting children's well-being. Reflecting this societal perspective, many researchers in the Nordic countries work with themes related to Positive Psychology (e.g., work engagement), disseminate knowledge to society, and there are corresponding Master programs. So, what are the challenges of Positive Psychology in the Nordic countries?

In the following, we will describe three main, rather general, challenges—as well as ideas to overcome them—, derived from our search of Positive Psychology researchers in the Northern countries and the responses of the participants in our survey (see above). The first challenge is that the actual number of researchers being easily recognized as positive psychologists—e.g., via publications in corresponding journals or self-descriptions on their website—is relatively low, as compared to the number of researchers working obviously related to Positive Psychology. Thus, researchers who self-identify themselves as Positive Psychology researchers might aim to bridge the gap to researchers working on similar topics, but from a different angle. This might make Positive Psychology research conducted in the Northern countries more visible in corresponding journals or at corresponding conferences.

Second, and relatedly, the (self-identifying) Positive Psychology researchers within the Nordic countries are not always connected to each other that well, as indicated, for instance, by relatively few shared publications with researchers from different institutions (yet alone countries), symposia at international conferences, or the (relative) lack of joint organizations, websites, project proposals etc. Consequently, researchers might aim to strengthen collaborations, both with other Positive Psychologists as well as with researchers from (at first glance) other fields.

Finally, given the popularity of Positive Psychology themes in the Nordic countries in general, some people label themselves (or their work) within this theme and counsel politics or organizations, write (self-help) books to the public audience, or otherwise function as experts, without necessarily providing evidence-based knowledge. Thus, it seems crucial for Positive Psychologists in the Nordic countries to make clear which ideas and interventions have been found to work scientifically, to provide proper guidance to people and society at large. Clearly, this problem—communication of evidence-based knowledge, as compared to not (yet) evidence-based knowledge, so that people and organizations can differentiate this—applies to many scientific fields across the globe. However, it appears to (also) be a

particular challenge of Positive Psychology in the Northern countries, because topics from the field are so appealing to people and organizations that it is seldom asked for the scientific evidence if someone presents an idea on how to facilitate people's life.

Overall, this chapter aimed to provide an overview of Positive Psychology in the Nordic countries. Clearly, the provided information are not more than a first toe-hold and have not covered all researchers, research groups, and initiatives (in a sufficient detail). However, it might serve as a starting point for exploring which researchers—and at which universities—internationally visible, evidence-based Positive Psychology is being conducted. Crucially, the political and societal surrounding (including, e.g., impressive National registers comprising important real-life data of the citizens across most Nordic countries) have and can further strongly facilitate Positive Psychology-based research and practical interventions.

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Chapter 7

Region of Western Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland)

Claudia Harzer and Marco Weber

Background to Positive Psychology in Western Europe

The present chapter focuses on the region of Western Europe, specifically on the nations of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Briefly summarized, this region can be characterized as being very balanced; for example, climate is moderate, health and educational standards are well developed, and economic and political systems are comparatively stable. Hence, people in this region are relatively rarely confronted with threatening conditions. In the following, more details about these characteristics will be presented.

All of them (with the exception of Switzerland) are members of the European Union (EU). Although Switzerland is not a member of the EU, it is a member of the Schengen area, and therefore granting free movement to all EU citizens, and vice versa (Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission, 2016).

Austria and Switzerland are quite mountainous countries and are located within the Alp region. Belgium, France, and Germany are best described by having a mixed landscape including (at least one) seacoast, hills/mountains, and flat areas. Finally, the Netherlands is a very flat country located at the seacoast. Compared to other regions on the globe, the nations covered in the chapter at hand are confronted with rather moderate weather and climate conditions; for example, severe storms, droughts, and cold/heat waves are relatively rare. France, stretching from the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, is the largest country in the EU (area of about 630,000 km²), and therefore, the largest country in the region covered in this chapter; Belgium is the smallest country in this region (area of about 30,000 km²). The German population consists of about 81,000,000 citizens, which is the largest population of any EU country; Switzerland consists of about 8,300,000 citizens having the smallest population in the region of interest. In sum, the region of

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Table 7.1 Overview about the countries Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland with respect to size of area, number of inhabitants, name of capital city, official language(s), and form of government

Country	Area [in km ²]	Inhabitants [in 2015]	Capital	Official language(s)	Form of government
Austria	83,879	8,576,261	Vienna	German	Federal parliamentary republic
Belgium	30,528	11,258,434	Brussels	Dutch, French, German	Federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy
France	633,187	66,415,161	Paris	French	Semi-presidential republic
Germany	357,376	81,197,537	Berlin	German	Federal parliamentary republic
Netherlands	41,542	16,900,726	Amsterdam	Dutch	Parliamentary constitutional monarchy
Switzerland	41,285	8,327,000	Bern	German, French, Italian, Romansh	Federal democratic state

Note. Information is taken from Communication Department of the European Commission (2016)

interest in this chapter can be described by a total landmass of about 1,200,000 km², and by a total population of about 193,000,000 citizens (effective in 2015; see Communication Department of the European Commission, 2016). Table 7.1 provides a complete overview on the area, the population, the respective capitals of the nations (all of which are world-famous cities), official language(s), and form of government.

Brussels as the capital of Belgium could also be mentioned as “the capital of the EU”, as the Parliament of the European Union is located there. German is the official language in four countries (i.e., Austria, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland), French is the official language in three countries (i.e., Belgium, France, Switzerland), and Dutch is the official language in two of them (i.e., Belgium, the Netherlands). Inspecting those official languages, it becomes obvious that there are cross-border similarities between these countries, which may also be relevant for the science of Positive Psychology. Although all six nations are democratic states with slightly different forms of governmental systems, two countries have active royal monarchs (i.e., Belgium, the Netherlands; for details see Table 7.1).

All six countries follow the rules of market economy. The unemployment rates of these six nations of Western Europe are relatively low (i.e., around or mostly below the EU average); France showed the highest rate among the six nations of interest (10.4%), while Germany and Switzerland showed the lowest rates (both 4.6%), while the remaining countries were in between (effective in 2015; Eurostat, 2016; see Table 7.2). Other European nations like Iceland (4.0%) or Norway (4.3%) showed the lowest rates, while nations like Spain (22.1%) or Greece (24.9%) showed the highest unemployment rates in Europe. The average unemployment rate among the members of the EU is 9.4% (effective in 2015; Eurostat, 2016).

Table 7.2 Overview about the countries Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland with respect to unemployment rate, PISA scores, frequency of lifelong learning, Human Development Index (HDI), expected healthy life years at birth, average happiness score in happiness world database

Country	Unemployment rate 2015 ^a	PISA 2015 ^b	Lifelong learning ^c	HDI ^d	Healthy life years at birth 2014 ^e	Happiness world database ^f
Austria	5.7	497/485/495	14.4	23/0.885	57.6/57.8	7.2
Belgium	8.5	507/499/502	6.9	21/0.890	64.5/63.7	7.2
France	10.4	493/499/495	18.6	22/0.888	63.4/64.2	6.4
Germany	4.6	506/509/509	8.1	6/0.916	56.4/56.5	7.2
Netherlands	6.9	512/503/509	18.9	5/0.922	63.3/59.0	7.6
Switzerland	4.6	521/492/506	32.1	3/0.930	61.4/57.7	8.0

Note. Information is taken from Eurostat (2016), OECD (2016), United Nations Development Programme (2015), and Veenhoven (2016). Averages in PISA scores in maths/reading/science = 490/493/493 (OECD, 2016)

^a% at labor force. ^bScores in maths/reading/science. ^c% of the population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training. ^dRank/index. ^eMales/females in years. ^fAverage happiness on a scale from 0 to 10

All six nations are member states of the United Nations (UN), and therefore, pledge and foster the human rights proposed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR; United Nations, 1948). Among human rights like freedom, security, and privacy, also the right of education (i.e., article 26; see United Nations, 1948) has been declared. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA; conducted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, 2016) is designed to compare educational achievements across the globe. With respect to skills in mathematics, reading, and science, PISA results showed that the countries of the region covered in this chapter scored on the upper half of the ranking (mostly above or at least on OECD average, with only one exception), speaking for well-established educational systems.

Germany and the Netherlands ranked slightly higher than Belgium and Switzerland, while France and Austria comes in last among those six nations with respect to PISA results (see OECD, 2016; for details see Table 7.2). Another education-related aspect is the frequency of activities linked to lifelong learning within countries. Lifelong learning includes all formal or non-formal active learning activities with the intention and goal to learn to improve one's own knowledge, skills, or competencies (but needs to be distinguished from cultural or sporting activities). About 32% of the Swiss population (aged 25 to 64 years) participated in 2015 in such education and

training activities (Eurostat, 2016). The Dutch and French follow with about 19%, the Belgian rank last with about 7% (see Table 7.2).

With respect to the expectation of a healthy life, females in France can expect 64.2 healthy years (at birth), while females in Germany can expect 56.5 healthy years (effective of 2014; Eurostat, 2016). All the other countries range in between. On the other hand, males in Belgium can expect 64.5 healthy years (at birth), but males in Germany can expect 56.4 healthy years (effective of 2014; Eurostat, 2016). On average, males/females living in the EU can expect 61.4/61.8 healthy years at birth, respectively (effective of 2014; Eurostat, 2016). The United Nations Development Programme (2015) aggregated information on (1) life expectancy at birth, (2) expected years of schooling, (3) mean years of schooling, and (4) gross national income (GNI) per capita to a composite index (i.e., the Human Development Index). Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Germany scored among the top 10 nations worldwide, whereas the remaining three countries were still in the group of “very high human development” (for details see Table 7.2). For comparison reasons, Norway ranks highest (index of 0.944), and Niger ranks lowest (rank 188, index of 0.348) (United Nations Development Programme, 2015).

Happiness is among the top research topics in Positive Psychology. The World Database of Happiness (Veenhoven, 2016) provides information about how people over the world enjoy their life-as-a-whole (on a scale ranging from 0 to 10). Switzerland was the happiest, and France the least happy country among the six nations of interest in this chapter (for details see Table 7.2). However, compared to the top scorer (i.e., Costa Rica, happiness score: 8.5) and the lowest scorer (i.e., Tanzania, happiness score: 2.5; Veenhoven, 2016), all six nations can be called “quite happy nations”. This result is not that surprising and might stem from factors, which have been mentioned earlier in this chapter. All six countries of interest in this chapter are stable democracies (which stands for political safety), and all show relatively low unemployment rates speaking for a working economic system (which stands for economical safety). Furthermore, good mandatory education (as a key to a successful life) is on their agenda leading to a relatively good standing in international comparisons, and with respect to physical health, the expected time of healthy years at birth is quite high. To conclude, all six nations are highly developed nations, as demonstrated by the ranking in the Human Development Index.

Policies directly related to the idea and research topics of Positive Psychology are proposed by the European Commission (Directorate General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission, 2005, 2008). For instance, in 2005 the European Commission stated: “Promotion of mental health and prevention of mental ill health address individual, family, community and social determinants of mental health, by strengthening protective factors (e.g., resilience) and reducing risk factors [...]. Schools and workplaces, where people spend large parts of their time, are crucial settings for action” (Directorate General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission, 2005, p. 8). Furthermore, within the context of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-Being (Directorate General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission, 2008, p. 2) it has been acknowledged that “the

level of mental health and well-being in the population is a key resource for the success of the EU as a knowledge-based society and economy.”

In congruence with such premises psychology as an empirical science needs to address such assumptions. Research within the field of Positive Psychology specifically addresses topics like mental health and well-being broadly construed. Therefore, the present chapter is aimed at providing a tentative overview about the research activities that are directly related to these topics from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

Major Positive Psychologists in Western Europe: Theory, Research, Assessment, and Practice

In the following we would like to present the procedure we utilized to identify a selection of positive psychologists in Western Europe (i.e., Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland). It should be noted that the list of names presented in the chapter at hand is not exhaustive but provides a tentative overview about persons linked to Positive Psychology. It should be noted that these individuals usually work within teams comprised of colleagues, employees, doctoral and/or master students who also contribute to the field, but a comprehensive list cannot be provided within the scope of the present chapter.

In order to identify a selection of positive psychologists in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland relevant national and international Positive Psychology associations and their board members or country representatives were identified (e.g., L'Association Française et francophone de Psychologie Positive [AFfPP], European Network for Positive Psychology [ENPP], Swiss Positive Psychology Association [SWIPPA]). Furthermore, keynote speakers and presenters who attended the European Conference on Positive Psychology (ECP) as well as authors of several scientific articles, book chapters, and/or books linked to Positive Psychology, who stem from the countries of interest for the present chapter, were collected. These individuals were invited to fill in an online survey to provide key facts about their research and work within the area of Positive Psychology. The survey included questions regarding self-identification as positive psychologist, education and experiences, current position and affiliation, nationality, novel contributions with respect to Positive Psychology theory, research, assessment tools, and interventions as well as recommended readings. Furthermore, there was the possibility to nominate other individuals to be considered as relevant positive psychologists for the region covered in the present chapter. In the following we will present a summary of the information gathered for a selection of individuals who are actively engaged in positive psychological research in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

Austria

In this section we introduce a selection of Austrian positive psychologists. We are fully aware that this list is tentative in nature, but a comprehensive list of all Austrian positive psychologists cannot be presented within the scope of the present chapter. In the following we will present *Markus Ebner*, *Stefan Höfer*, and *Philip Streit* in more detail. Further positive psychologists from Austria can be found on the websites of the respective associations presented in the resources section of this chapter, but can also be identified among the co-authors of the cited references.

Markus Ebner, born in Austria, received his master's degree in psychology and Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Vienna, Austria. He is both a practitioner owning a company for research and management consultancy (www.positive-leadership.at) and has been a lecturer at various Austrian universities including the University of Vienna, University Klagenfurt, University of Applied Sciences Vienna, and University of Applied Sciences Graz. Since 2008 his research interest is on positive leadership and positive organizational culture, and he is teaching this topic at the Universities of Vienna and Klagenfurt, Austria, as well as offers trainings for companies interested in positive leadership. Recently, he developed a positive leadership model, linked to Martin Seligman's PERMA-Modell (2011; Ebner, 2016, 2018).

Stefan Höfer, born in Austria, received his master's degree in psychology and Ph.D. in health psychology from the University of Vienna, Austria. Between 2002 and 2005 he was postdoctoral Marie Curie Research Fellow at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. From 2005 to 2007 he was assistant professor, and since 2007 he is associate professor at the Medical University of Innsbruck. He received the Eli Lilly Quality of Life Award (honors developments and innovative applications of measures, for example, for the assessment of quality of life) and the CAST IT Business Award in 2005 as well as the Austrian Communication Award in 2012.

His main research focus is on health and well-being of medical students and physicians (e.g., Jurkat et al., 2011; Ring et al., 2007). He is also interested in the quality of life and well-being of cardiovascular patients (see www.macnew.org; Höfer et al., 2004, 2005). Among his major contributions to the field of Positive Psychology are the validation of the German versions of the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving (CIT) and the Brief Inventory of Thriving (BIT) (Hausler et al., 2017) as well as of the International Well-Being Index (IWI; Renn et al., 2009).

We also would like to mention *Philip Streit*, Ph.D., who was born in Austria. He studied psychology and sociology at Karl-Franzens University Graz, Austria, where he also received his Ph.D. in psychology/sociology. He lectures at several Austrian universities like Styrian University of Education and University of Applied Sciences Graz, and founded the Academy for Child, Youth, and Family in Graz, Austria. He is member of the board of directors of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA), and was vice president of the German-speaking Association of Positive Psychology (DACH-PP; www.dach-pp.eu). He actively engaged in dissemination of Positive Psychology specifically in Austria, but also more globally

across Europe. He is founder of the Austrian Positive Psychology Association (APPA; www.appa.or.at) and of the Institute of Positive Psychology and Mental Coaching (IPPM; www.ippm.at). Moreover, he is founder of Seligman Europe (www.seligmaneurope.com), a network and Internet platform on Positive Psychology in therapy, coaching, parenting, and leadership. This network regularly organizes symposia, talks, and seminars on Positive Psychology at different locations across Europe.

Finally, we would like to mention *Tatjana Schnell*, who is professor at both the University of Innsbruck, Austria, and the MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, Norway. One of her central research interests is meaning in life (Pollet & Schnell, 2016; Schnell et al., 2015).

Belgium

In this section we introduce a tentative selection of Belgian positive psychologists. In the following we will present *Mia Leijssen* and *Hein Zegers* in more detail. Further positive psychologists from Belgium can be found on the websites presented in the resources section of this chapter, but can also be identified among the co-authors of the cited references.

Mia (Maria) Leijssen, Ph.D., is professor of Person-centered/Experiential/Existential Psychotherapy at the University of Leuven, Belgium, and a psychotherapist. For her development of a multicultural language to address well-being qualities, she received the Belgian award for Spiritual Care in 2016. She did a great deal of research on existential well-being taking in consideration different realms of human experiences (i.e., personal, physical, social, and spiritual; e.g., Leijssen, 2014). Additionally, she is interested in other positive psychological constructs like resilience, posttraumatic growth, meaning, and mindfulness (e.g., Dekeyser et al., 2008; Vanhooren et al., 2015, 2016). She is actively engaged in disseminating the topic of Positive Psychology in Belgium and more globally in several ways. For example, she got a Massive Open Online Course on the prestigious edX platform: Existential Well-being Counseling: A Person-centered Experiential Approach (www.edx.org/course/existential-well-being-counseling-person-kuleuvenx-ewbcx) attended by more than 12'000 participants. Furthermore, she (co-)authored numerous articles and books primarily in Dutch, but also in English language.

Besides Mia Leijssen, we would also like to mention *Hein Zegers*. He is country representative for Belgium of the European Network for Positive Psychology (ENPP), is co-founder and was executive member of the Students of the International Positive Psychology Association (SIPPA), and member of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA). His interests include well-being and meaning (Zegers, 2010, 2017). He is actively engaged in disseminating the topic of Positive Psychology in several ways. For example, on the website www.evidencebasedhappiness.org he offers various information on Positive Psychology (e.g., in form of a research blog, and videos) in Dutch, English, French, and German

language. Furthermore, he is co-founder and editor of the *Dutch Journal of Positive Psychology* (*Tijdschrift Positieve Psychologie*).

France

In this section we introduce a selection of French positive psychologists. Also this list is tentative in nature, as we cannot present a comprehensive list of all French positive psychologists within the scope of the chapter at hand. In the following we will exemplarily present *Antonia Csillik*, *Charles Martin-Krumm*, *Jean Heutte*, *Rébecca Shankland*, and *Jacques Lecomte* in more detail. All of them are engaged in the French and Francophone Positive Psychology Association (L'Association Française et francophone de Psychologie Positive, AFfPP; www.psychologie-positive.com) and/or collaborated in a number of publications. Further positive psychologists from France can be found on the websites of the respective association presented in the resources section of this chapter, but can also be identified among the co-authors of the cited references.

Antonia Csillik, Ph.D., is associate professor in clinical psychology at the University of Paris Nanterre, France. She is vice-president of the French and Francophone Positive Psychology Association (AFfPP), and member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT). She received an award from The French Association of Cognitive and Behavioural Psychotherapy (AFTCC) for her Ph.D. thesis. Her research interests are in psychotherapy effectiveness (especially client-centered approaches) and positive behavior change, and in protective factors against the development of psychopathology (dispositional mindfulness, trait-hope, psychological mindedness) and subjective well-being (e.g., Csillik et al., 2012; Légal et al., 2016). She also worked on French adaptation and validation of relevant measures of positive psychological constructs. Among her main achievements is her research on motivational interviewing (e.g., Aguerre et al., 2015; Csillik, 2013, 2015).

Charles Martin-Krumm, Ph.D., is professor at the Ecole de Psychologues Praticiens de Paris - Institut Catholique de Paris, France. He is the president of the French and Francophone Positive Psychology Association (AFfPP), and was chair of European Conference on Positive Psychology in Angers in 2016. His main research interests are about optimism, hope, passion, emotions, flow, and how they may have an impact on motivation, well-being, and performance in cognitive and motor tasks (e.g., Martin-Krumm et al., 2003, 2005, 2015a, 2015b, 2017).

Jean Heutte, Ph.D., is professor at the University of Lille, France. He is member of the Board of Directors of the French and Francophone Association for Positive Psychology (AFfPP), and the European Flow-Researchers' Network (EF-RN). His research is focused on optimal experience theoretical modeling (autotelism-flow) as well as on the social and conative dimensions of volition in educational contexts, notably the personal and collective conditions necessary for the emergence of well-being (e.g., Fenouillet et al., 2015; Heutte et al., 2016).

Rébecca Shankland, Ph.D., is professor at the Université Lumière Lyon 2, France. Her research studies focus on the comparison of mechanisms and effects of mindfulness based and positive psychological interventions in educational, organizational and therapeutic settings. She has (co-)authored scientific articles (e.g., Besançon et al., 2015; Shankland & Rosset, 2016) and books (e.g., Shankland, 2014) on Positive Psychology.

In addition to the above mentioned positive psychologists we would also like to mention the honorary president of the French and Francophone Association for Positive Psychology (AFfPP): *Jacques Lecomte*, Ph.D.; he is one of the leading Francophone experts in Positive Psychology, and is particularly interested in the social implications of Positive Psychology in many fields (education, public health, work, environmental protection, etc.; e.g., Lecomte, 2010, 2012, 2017). He is actively engaged in disseminating the topic of Positive Psychology in France in several ways (e.g., numerous scientific publications and interviews to the public media). Furthermore, he (together with Fabien Fenouillet) provides information on the topic of Positive Psychology (e.g., important dates, a list of experts, and links to interesting resources) on the French website www.psychologie-positive.net.

Germany

In this section we introduce a tentative selection of German positive psychologists. In the following we will present *Claudia Harzer*, *Corinna Peifer*, *René T. Proyer*, *Bernhard Schmitz*, and *Marco Weber* in more detail. Further positive psychologists from Germany can be found on the websites of the respective associations presented in the resources section of this chapter, but can also be identified among the co-authors of the cited references.

Claudia Harzer, born in Germany, received her master's degree in psychology from the University Bielefeld, Germany, and her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Zurich, Switzerland. She worked as teaching and research associate as well as visiting professor at several universities (University of Bielefeld, Germany; University of Zurich, Switzerland; University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany; University of Kassel, Germany; Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany; University of Greifswald, Germany). Since 2018, she has been affiliated with both the Technical University (TU) of Darmstadt, Germany, and the University of Greifswald, Germany. From 2013 to 2014 she held an 18-months post-doctoral fellowship for prospective researchers (awarded by the Swiss National Science Foundation; SNSF) for a research stay at the University of South Carolina, USA. She has served on the boards of national and international societies (including the European Network of Positive Psychology as country representative for Switzerland and the German Psychological Society as representative of junior scientists in the Section Work, Organizational, and Business Psychology). She is member of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA), the European Network on Positive Psychology (ENPP), the Swiss Positive Psychology Association

(SWIPPA), and the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology (EAOHP). Moreover, she is member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Positive School Psychology*.

Her main research interests can be located in both basic research (e.g., Harzer, 2016) and applied research (e.g., Harzer, 2017; Harzer et al., 2017, 2021) on character strengths and mental health in working context broadly construed. This includes but is not limited to the role of character strengths and their application at work for job performance, perceiving job as a calling, positive experiences at work (e.g., job satisfaction, meaning), and coping with stress (Harzer & Ruch, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016). Furthermore, her research interests focus on the assessment of positive psychological constructs like character strengths, orientations to happiness, meaning at work, and applicability of character strengths in various contexts (e.g., Harzer, 2012; Harzer & Ehrlich, 2016; Harzer & Ruch, 2013; Ruch et al., 2010a, 2010b, 2014a). Among her main achievements were the definition and operationalizing of character strengths-related person environment fit (Harzer, 2012). Her research methods include cross-sectional designs like survey studies based on self- and peer ratings as well as longitudinal designs like positive interventions and diary studies. In 2013, Claudia Harzer has been awarded the Dissertation Award in Recognition of an Outstanding Contribution to Positive Psychology Research by the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA).

She actively contributed to the dissemination of Positive Psychology in several ways. She has published in scientific journals (e.g., *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *Human Performance*), and delivered talks internationally on her research topics at academic conferences and as invited speaker at different universities and companies. Furthermore, she frequently offers bachelor and master degree courses to introduce students to Positive Psychology and core constructs since 2006. Additionally, she frequently supervises theses of bachelor, master, and doctoral students with topics linked to Positive Psychology. Finally, she disseminates her findings to the broader public via press releases and interviews in public media.

Corinna Peifer, born in Germany, received her master's degree and Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Trier, Germany. She was a fellowship holder in the international research and training group (IRTG) on psychoneuroendocrinology of stress from 2009 to 2012. From 2012 to 2015 she was a teaching and research assistant at the University of Trier and the Leuphana University, Germany. From 2015 to 2020, she was junior professor of applied psychology in work, health, and development at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany. Since 2020, she is professor at the University of Lübeck, Germany. In 2015, Corinna Peifer has been awarded an Honorable Mention Award in Recognition of an Outstanding Contribution to Positive Psychology Research by the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA).

Corinna Peifer is country representative for Germany in the European Network of Positive Psychology (ENPP). She was co-founder of the European Flow Researchers Network and, together with Stefan Engeser, organized the first network meeting. Furthermore, she was co-founder and is vice-president of the German Association

for Positive Psychology Research (DGPPF), and co-organized the first conference of the DGPPF in Trier, Germany. She regularly has presented her research findings at national and international conferences on Positive Psychology (e.g., World Congress on Positive Psychology, European Conference on Positive Psychology).

Her research interests are inspired by the field of Positive Psychology and can be located at the interface between Positive Psychology, work psychology, and psychobiology including flow, stress-management, work-related stress, recovery, and well-being. Among her main achievements, she described a model of an inverted u-shaped relationship between flow and physiological arousal, which is inspired by the Yerkes Dodson Law and by an integration of Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Channel Model and Lazarus' Transactional Stress Model (Peifer, 2012; Peifer et al., 2014b). Furthermore, she studied the relations between flow and stress from a psychophysiological perspective (Peifer, 2012; Peifer et al., 2014b, 2015; Tozman & Peifer, 2016), and the relations between work-related stressors and flow (Peifer et al., 2014a; Peifer & Syrek, 2015).

René T. Proyer, born in Austria, received his master's degree in psychology from the University of Vienna, Austria, and his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Zurich, Switzerland. From 2002 to 2006 he worked as teaching and research assistant at the University of Vienna, Austria, and at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. From 2006 to 2014 he was senior teaching and research assistant and from 2011 to 2014 he was leader of the project "Positive interventions: Empirical studies on enhancing satisfaction with life" at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. Since 2018 he is professor for individual differences and psychological assessment at the Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany.

He is honorary member of the Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA), and member of the executive committee of the European Association of Psychological Assessment (EAPA). He is associate editor of *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, *BMC Psychology: Personality and Individual Differences*, and *Journal of Well-Being Assessment* as well as member of the editorial board of *Current Psychology*, *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, and *European Journal of Humor Research*. Furthermore, he has served as associate as well as guest editor of *Frontiers in Psychology*, and *Psychological Test and Assessment Modeling*, and was editor in chief of *HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research*. René T. Proyer (co-)authored about 150 journal articles and book chapters as well as 4 books. He is member of several societies linked to Positive Psychology; for example, the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA), the Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA), and the International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS).

Among Rene T. Proyer's extensive research agenda are achievements such as the development of a new structural model of adult playfulness (OLIW-model; Proyer, 2017). Furthermore, he is interested in new individual differences variables for how people deal with laughter and ridicule (Ruch & Proyer, 2008, 2009; Proyer, 2018). Moreover, his research focuses on the effects of positive psychological interventions (e.g., targeting character strengths, happiness, humor; e.g., Buschor et al., 2013; Gander et al., 2016, 2017; Proyer et al., 2014, 2015a, 2016a, 2016b; Proyer et al.,

2013, 2015b; Wellenzohn et al., 2016a, 2016b). For the assessment of playfulness in adults he developed one-dimensional (Proyer, 2012) and multi-dimensional measures (Proyer, 2017). Besides his research, he contributed to the dissemination of Positive Psychology by delivering talks internationally on his research topics at academic conferences and as invited speaker on different occasions. Furthermore, he frequently offers courses to introduce students to Positive Psychology. Additionally, he frequently supervises theses of bachelor, master, and doctoral students with topics linked to Positive Psychology.

Bernhard Schmitz, born in Germany, received his master's degree in mathematics from the University of Düsseldorf, Germany, and in psychology from the Technical University (TU) of Berlin, Germany. He got his Ph.D. at the Free University of Berlin, Germany, and his habilitation at the TU Berlin, Germany. He worked at the Max-Planck-Institute for Human Development in Berlin, Germany, when Paul B. Baltes, Peter M. Roeder, and Jürgen Baumert were directors. As guest-professor or invited speaker he taught at the University of Potsdam, Germany, University of Helsinki, Finland, University of Zurich, Switzerland, University of Vienna, Austria, University of Oxford, UK, and University of Hongkong. Furthermore, he is an approbated psychotherapist. Bernhard Schmitz is emeritus professor of educational psychology, and still affiliated with the Department of Psychology of the TU Darmstadt, Germany.

Among his main positive-psychological research interests are topics like art-of-living, well-being, self-regulation, positive emotions, and diaries and time-series analyses (e.g., Schmitz, 2016; Schmitz et al. 2018; Schmitz & Wiese, 2006). He was editor of the German psychology journal *Psychologische Rundschau*, and member of the editorial boards of *Metacognition and Learning* as well as *Learning and Instruction*.

More than ten of his students finished their studies with a doctoral degree; moreover, three of his former students have now full professorships. More than thirty students finished their bachelor/master theses about the topic of art-of-living and related research questions; one doctoral dissertation dealt with coaching of art-of-living.

Marco Weber, born in Germany, received his master's degree in psychology from the University of Bielefeld, Germany, and his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Zurich, Switzerland. He was teaching and research associate as well as visiting professor at several universities (University of Bielefeld, Germany; University of Zurich, Switzerland; University of Education Schwäbisch Gmünd, Germany; University of Kassel, Germany; Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany; University of Greifswald, Germany). Since 2018, he has been affiliated with both the Technical University (TU) of Darmstadt, Germany, and the University of Greifswald, Germany. From 2013 to 2014 he held an 18-months post-doctoral fellowship for prospective researchers (awarded by the Swiss National Science Foundation; SNSF) for a research stay at the University of South Carolina, USA. He is member of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA), and the European Network on Positive Psychology (ENPP). Furthermore, he is member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Positive School Psychology*.

His research focuses on the relations between and the assessment of determinants and indicators of individuals' well-being and mental health broadly construed across the life span (e.g., Jiang et al., 2018; Weber et al., 2015) in different nations with a current focus on children and adolescents. Among the determinants he studies are character strengths (e.g., Weber, 2012), and among the indicators he focuses on are different aspects of subjective well-being like global and domain specific life satisfaction as well as positive and negative affect (e.g., Weber, 2015; Weber & Huebner, 2015; Weber et al., 2016). Among his main achievements were the examination of the role of 24 character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) in relation to different outcomes in individuals' lives (e.g., global life satisfaction, domain-specific satisfaction, general self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, classroom behavior, satisfaction in romantic relationships etc.; e.g., Proyer et al., 2012; Ruch et al., 2014c; Weber, 2018; Weber & Ruch, 2012a, 2012b; Weber et al., 2013b). He adapted the Values-in-Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth (VIA-Youth; Ruch et al., 2014b; Weber, 2012), and the Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (SLSS; Weber et al., 2013a) for its use in German-speaking countries, and developed a measure on "positive classroom behavior" (Weber & Ruch, 2012a). More recently, he presented the school-related engine model of well-being (Harzer et al., 2021), postulating that well-being at school is a complex interplay of input, process, and outcome variables being reciprocally associated between students and teachers. In 2013, Marco Weber has been awarded an Honorable Mention Award in Recognition of an Outstanding Contribution to Positive Psychology Research by the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA).

Marco Weber actively contributed to the dissemination of Positive Psychology in several ways. He has published articles in scientific journals (e.g., *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *Child Indicators Research*, *Journal of Adolescence*), and he presented his research findings at international conferences. Furthermore, he offers academic courses on Positive Psychology, and supervises bachelor and master theses linked to Positive Psychology.

In addition to the above mentioned positive psychologists we would also like to mention: Michael Eid, Maike Luhmann, Ralf Schwarzer, and Ann Elisabeth Auhagen. *Michael Eid*, Ph.D., is professor of methods and evaluation at Freie Universität Berlin, Germany, and has linked psychological methods to the field of Positive Psychology (e.g., Eid, 2007; Eid & Diener, 2006). *Maike Luhmann*, Ph.D., is professor of psychological methods at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany, and studies relations between subjective well-being and life events (e.g., Luhmann et al., 2012). *Ralf Schwarzer* (emeritus professor of psychology, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany) is a health psychologist and is well-known (among other topics) for his research on self-efficacy for decades (e.g., Schwarzer, 1992). Furthermore, he is editor of the journal *Applied Psychology: Health and Wellbeing*. *Ann Elisabeth Auhagen* holds a Ph.D. in psychology, and published one of first books on Positive Psychology in German language (Auhagen, 2008).

The Netherlands

In this section we introduce a selection of Dutch positive psychologists. In the following we will present *Ruut Veenhoven*, *Marianne van Woerkom*, *Jan Auke Walburg*, *Ernst T. Bohlmeijer*, and *Linda Bolier* in more detail. Further positive psychologists from the Netherlands can be found on the websites presented in the resources section of this chapter, but can also be identified among the co-authors of the cited references.

Ruut Veenhoven, Ph.D., is one of the most productive positive psychologists in the Netherlands and Europe. He was born in the Netherlands, received his master's degree in sociology, and his Ph.D. in social sciences from the Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and later worked at the University of Utrecht, and the Erasmus University Rotterdam. He is also accredited in social psychology and social-sexology. Until his retirement in 2007 he was professor of social conditions for human happiness at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. He still is extra-ordinary professor at North West University, South Africa, and associate of Erasmus Happiness Economics Research Organization. He is fellow of the International Society for Quality Of Life Studies (ISQOLS), and holds both the Distinguished Researcher Award and Distinguished Service Award awarded by the ISQOLS. He was member of the board of directors of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA). He is founding editor of the *Journal of Happiness Studies*, and has been on the editorial boards of several journals linked to Positive Psychology (e.g., *Dutch Journal of Positive Psychology*, *Psychology of Wellbeing*, *Happiness and Wellbeing*). His main research interest is happiness, and aims at providing information on the basis of which individuals and policy makers can make more informed choices. He has also developed a self-help tool for monitoring one's happiness and the effects of using that tool on happiness (i.e., Happiness Indicator; www.happinessindicator.com; e.g., Bakker et al., 2015). Among his main achievements is the development of a theory of happiness known as the Livability Theory (Veenhoven, 2009). Furthermore, he is director of the World Database of Happiness (www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl), which is utilized to gather research findings on life satisfaction facilitating research synthesis on this subject. Ruut Veenhoven contributed to the dissemination of Positive Psychology in several ways additionally to his above-mentioned activities. For example, he has taught in a Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) course in Philadelphia, USA. Furthermore, he has presented on several Positive Psychology conferences. Since 2015, an annual "Ruut Veenhoven award" for outstanding happiness research is granted.

Marianne van Woerkom, Ph.D., was born in the Netherlands, and is associate professor at Tilburg University, the Netherlands. She is member of the editorial boards of, for example, *Dutch Journal of Positive Psychology* and *Human Resource Development International*. She regularly (co-)authors scientific articles and publishes in journals like *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, and *International Journal of Human Resource*

Management. Her research interests include individual strengths and development in the work-context (e.g., van Woerkom & Meyers, 2015).

In the following we will focus on three scientists from the University of Twente, who are actively engaged in positive psychological research: Jan Auke Walburg, Ernst T. Bohlmeijer, and Linda Bolier. *Jan Auke Walburg*, Ph.D., was professor of Positive Psychology at the University of Twente, the Netherlands. He was editor in chief of the *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, and the *Dutch Journal of Positive Psychology* (www.tijdschriftpositievepsychologie.nl) as well as board member of the European Network for Positive Psychology (ENPP). He also was chair of European Conference on Positive Psychology in Amsterdam in 2014. He published books like a Dutch Handbook of Positive Psychology (Bohlmeijer et al., 2013) and articles (e.g., Bolier et al., 2014b) mainly in the field of integral applications of the principles of Positive Psychology in systems like schools and communities.

Ernst T. Bohlmeijer, Ph.D., is professor of psychology at University of Twente, the Netherlands. Among his main research topics is mental health promotion. He (co-)authored numerous scientific articles and books. He was editor of the Dutch Handbook of Positive Psychology (Bohlmeijer et al., 2013). He developed several interventions aiming at enhancing resilience and well-being, and reducing distress based on Positive Psychology, acceptance and commitment therapy, and compassion focused therapy (e.g., Bohlmeijer et al., 2015; Lamers et al., 2015).

Jerina Marlinde (Linda) Bolier, received her Ph.D. in Positive Psychology and e-health at the University of Twente, the Netherlands. She is research associate at the Trimbos Institute, the Netherlands. She is associate editor of the *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, and co-author of books in Dutch like the *Dutch Handbook of Positive Psychology* (e.g., Bohlmeijer et al., 2013), and of Dutch and English language articles and book chapters. She is country representative for the Netherlands in the European Network for Positive Psychology (ENPP), was involved in organizing the seventh European Conference on Positive Psychology in Amsterdam in 2014, and was member of the organizing committee of several Dutch conferences on Positive Psychology. In 2015, Linda Bolier has been awarded an Honorable Mention Award in Recognition of an Outstanding Contribution to Positive Psychology Research by the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA). Furthermore, in 2009 she has been awarded with the second prize for technical innovation of the Dutch Open Health 2.0 Challenge. Her research interests focus on mental health promotion and prevention, e-mental health and public mental health as well as development and implementation of interventions. For example, she conducted positive psychological interventions targeting mental fitness, well-being, and workplace mental health (e.g., Bolier et al., 2013a, 2014a; Verwer et al., 2016), an economic analysis of a positive psychological intervention (e.g., Bolier et al., 2014a), and a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of Positive Psychology interventions (e.g., Bolier et al., 2013b).

In addition to the above mentioned positive psychologists we would also like to mention *Fredrike P. Bannink*. She is the author of several books (in Dutch, English, and German) on applications of Positive Psychology (e.g., Bannink, 2009, 2015,

2017). Furthermore, *Maria Christina Meyers*, Ph.D., is assistant professor at the University of Tilburg, the Netherlands. Her research interests focus on strengths interventions (e.g., Meyers & van Woerkom, 2016; Meyers et al., 2013, 2015).

Switzerland

In this section we introduce a selection of Swiss positive psychologists. Again, this list can only be tentative in nature. In the following we will present *Willibald Ruch*, *Guy Bodenmann*, *Alexander Hunziker*, and *Pasqualina Perrig-Chiello* in more detail. Further positive psychologists from Switzerland can be found on the website of the Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA) presented in the resources section of this chapter, but can also be identified among the co-authors of the cited references.

Willibald Ruch, Ph.D., is one of the most productive positive psychologists in Switzerland and Europe. He was born in Austria, received his master's degree and Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Graz, Austria, and later worked at a number of universities in Germany and the UK. Between 1992 and 1998 he held a Heisenberg Fellowship, awarded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), and since 2002 he has been chair and full professor of personality and assessment in the Department of Psychology at the University of Zürich, Switzerland. He has served on the boards of several international societies (including the International Positive Psychology Association [IPPA], the European Association of Psychological Assessment [EAPA], and International Society of Humor Studies [ISHS]) and was president of the ISHS twice. He has been a member of the editorial board of a dozen scientific journals, co-editor of two book series, and (co-)authored about 250 journal articles and 5 books. He actively contributed to the development of Positive Psychology in several ways. For example, he was participant of the Akumal think tanks, leader of a pod, contributor to "Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification" (i.e., the chapter on humor in Peterson & Seligman, 2004), presenter at the Gallup Washington Positive Psychology summits, invited keynote speaker at international conferences, founder and first president of the Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA), and he organized a postgraduate course on Positive Psychology at the University of Zurich. In 2015 he has been awarded the IPPA fellowship.

Willibald Ruch has always been interested in studying positive phenomena. He studied humor since his Ph.D. on common structures in humor appreciation and personality in 1980. He was interested in Positive Psychology since its beginning (e.g., attended an Akumal think tank in 2001 and the international summits in Washington). His interests remain in the field of humor and laughter (e.g., cheerfulness) and positive interventions (e.g., training of humor). He has developed novel theories on humor appreciation (e.g., Ruch & Hehl, 1998) and exhilaration (e.g., Ruch, 1997), provided thoroughly developed measures for the core constructs of these theories (e.g., Ruch, 1992; Ruch et al., 1996, 1997; Ruch & Proyer, 2009), and

conducted cross-sectional, experimental, and intervention studies to examine these phenomena (e.g., Gander et al., 2016; Ruch et al., 2013; Zweyer et al., 2004). His more recent interest in Positive Psychology is in character strengths and virtues and their role in the life of children and youth as well as adults. He and his team also work on training of character strengths, assessment of positive emotions, humor, laughter and cheerfulness. Among current and former members of his team are, for example, Ursula Beermann (e.g., Beermann & Ruch, 2009), Richard Brunsch (e.g., Brunsch et al., 2016), Fabian Gander (e.g., Gander et al., 2016), Angelika Güsewell (e.g., Güsewell & Ruch, 2015), Sonja Heintz (e.g., Heintz & Ruch, 2015), Jennifer Hofmann (e.g., Hofmann et al., 2015), María Luisa Martínez-Martí (e.g., Martínez-Martí & Ruch, 2017), Tracey Platt (e.g., Platt et al., 2013), and Lisa Wagner (e.g., Wagner et al., 2016). Further former members of his team were Claudia Harzer, René T. Proyer, and Marco Weber, which are presented as representative positive psychologists in Germany within the scope of the present chapter.

In the following we will briefly introduce further Swiss academics who can be linked to the field of Positive Psychology, because Positive Psychology is among a broader range of their research interests. *Guy Bodenmann*, Ph.D., is professor of clinical psychology at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. He is the director of the Clinical Training Program for Psychotherapy in Children and Adolescents, director of the Clinical Training Program for Couple Therapy, and director of the postgraduate training for school psychology. He is the president of the Academy of Behavioral Therapy in Children and Adolescents (AVKJ). He teaches in the bachelor, master, and Ph.D. program as well as in different postgraduate clinical trainings in Switzerland, Germany, France, and Italy. He developed the Couples Coping Enhancement Training (CCET), and the coping-oriented couple therapy approach. His major research interests are, for example, the efficacy of couple therapy and relationship education (e.g., Bodenmann et al., 2014), parental education and child well-being (e.g., Bodenmann et al., 2008) as well as stress and coping in couples and families (e.g., Bodenmann et al., 2015). He is honorary member of the Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA).

Alexander Hunziker, Dr. oec. Publ., is professor and lecturer (e.g., for positive leadership; happiness and behavioral economics) at the University of Applied Sciences in Bern, Switzerland, and heads the Executive MBA Program for Public Management. He studied economics with a minor in psychology and received his Ph.D. in management science at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. His current interests lie in positive leadership, mindfulness, and resilience as well as in the question how results from Positive Psychology research can be applied into actual practice of companies. He is also a consultant for change projects, and develops educational and training programs (e.g., positivity training as module of Bachelor in Business Administration program, see Hunziker, 2015; management training in positive leadership; positivity training as a means of organizational development). He is member of the Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA).

Pasqualina Perrig-Chiello, Ph.D., is an emeritus professor since fall 2016. From 2003 until retirement she was professor of developmental psychology at the University of Bern, Switzerland. Her research interests were in lifespan development,

for example, with respect to well-being, vulnerability, and growth (e.g., Perrig-Chiello et al., 1998, 2015). She is honorary member of the Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA).

Additionally, we would like to mention *Christoph Steinebach*, Ph.D., who is professor of applied psychology at the University of Applied Sciences Zurich, Switzerland. He is, among other topics, interested in resilience in youth (Steinebach & Gharabaghi, 2013; Steinebach et al., 2012).

Future of Positive Psychology in Western Europe

While preparing this section we were thinking about Martin Seligman's introducing words of his TED talk in 2004, when he was asked about the state of psychology at that time. We would like to borrow his words by adapting them to the status of Positive Psychology in the region of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland: *It's good – but not good enough*. In the following we will discuss this in more detail.

What is good? In all countries covered in this chapter, Positive Psychology is alive, and research covers a wide range of topics. National associations (e.g., AFfPP, APPA) have been established connecting interested researchers and practitioners. Furthermore and in addition to the World Congress on Positive Psychology (organized by the International Positive Psychology Association), regional conferences (e.g., the SWIPPA Congress) and the European Conference on Positive Psychology (ECP) provide a platform for the exchange of current knowledge in positive psychological research on a regular basis (please see the websites of the associations presented in the resources section of this chapter for latest news on upcoming conferences). In addition to researchers, many practitioners (that are not focused on in the current chapter) present their ideas and observations at such conferences. Furthermore, the practitioners attend paper sessions, and thereby, gain knowledge on the latest developments in positive psychological research, which is then transferred to practice by them.

What is not good enough and could be better? Possible answers, ideas, and suggestions to this question are discussed in a threefold way by addressing topics that can be roughly categorized into academic-, public-, and policy-related aspects.

The current state of the *academic* psychological training still shows a negativity bias, that is, students learn a lot about what can go wrong, but unfortunately less about what can go right in individuals' lives. However, one major goal of Positive Psychology is to complement the traditional psychology by additionally focusing on positive experiences, traits, and institutions (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Consequently, academic psychology programs at universities need to be enriched by systematically incorporating Positive Psychology into the curricula of bachelor, master, and doctorate programs. In order to strengthen Positive Psychology in universities, faculty positions specifically dedicated to Positive Psychology are needed. Such professorships need to become as "normal" as professorships for

clinical psychology, I/O psychology, social psychology, and so forth. However, this needs additional financial resources to create new faculty positions for the employment of professors and lecturers of Positive Psychology.

Another, more formal way of strengthening Positive Psychology is the foundation of national Positive Psychology associations in addition to the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA; www.ippanetwork.org) and the European Network for Positive Psychology (ENPP), which enable networking among researchers and practitioners in the field of Positive Psychology. To our knowledge, most of the nations of interest in the present chapter already have such associations. For example, there are the Austrian Positive Psychology Association (APPA), the French and Francophone Association of Positive Psychology (AFfPP), the German Association on Positive Psychology Research ([Deutsche Gesellschaft für Positiv Psychologische Forschung], DGPPF), and the Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA). Furthermore, there is the German-speaking Association of Positive Psychology (DACH-PP), an association providing a network for positive psychologists from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. For future purposes it is important that the websites of these associations provide the information in both the specific nation's official language(s) but also in English language, as this is the most common scientific language in psychology. This would foster both dissemination of information within a country but also across countries and continents.

A *public-related aspect* is the language of the publications. Going through the published research papers, we realized that the utilized languages are quite mixed. Some of the literature written by the authors from the countries of interest in the present chapter has been published in English language. However, a huge number of the publications are written in nation-specific language (e.g., in French, Dutch, or German). This impedes the dissemination of knowledge enormously. Hence, we suggest that all publications aimed at academic readers (e.g., faculty, researchers, students) should be published in English language what helps disseminating the knowledge across Europe but also globally. Ideally, a "European Journal of Positive Psychology" will be founded to enable academic discourse among European researchers but also among researchers across the globe. For applied research there is already the *European Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*. On the other hand, publications for practitioners (e.g., coaches, psychotherapists, teachers, physicians) and the general public might be written in country-specific official language(s) to foster dissemination on that level (as an example, see the *Dutch Journal of Positive Psychology* [Tijdschrift Positieve Psychologie]).

Another *public-related aspect* relates to the way research results are communicated to the general public. We often realize that the "fancy" label "Positive Psychology" is used for a huge amount of publications with titles like "eight steps to a better life" or likewise. In some cases this could be problematic, because the content of such "self-help books" is often not evidence-based, but the titles suggest being related to what we call Positive Psychology. This can be criticized, because Positive Psychology, in the way researchers define it, is a theory-driven science relying on empirical data. As a consequence it is important for academics to share research results with public media explaining the aims and methods of Positive

Psychology, and “translating” the empirical results from scientific language to a more general language. This helps fostering practical applications of the knowledge gained by positive psychological research.

With respect to *policy* and *politics* there are some issues we would like to mention. Supported by the large and very promising research base that already exists to date (as on the one hand presented within this chapter and on the other hand within the whole handbook at hand), we encourage policy makers to foster the integration of Positive Psychology into the general academic training programs of psychologists as described in more detail above in the section on academic-related suggestions to strengthen Positive Psychology.

We have mentioned earlier that there are policies in Europe (e.g., European Pact for Mental Health and Well-Being; Directorate General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission, 2008, p. 2) highlighting the importance of “mental health and well-being in the population as a key resource for the success of the EU”. However, an inspection of the respective committees forming such policies indicated that there seems to be an underrepresentation of psychologists in general and positive psychologists more specifically. From our perspective, such policy-making processes can enormously gain when experts of the field of Positive Psychology would complement such committees.

A lot of research is enabled by those policies and related funding. For example, in 2013 a “Joint Action Mental Health and Well-Being” (e.g., www.mentalhealthandwellbeing.eu) was launched with financial support from the EU Health Programme. However, it seems like positive psychologist are rarely (if ever) part of the respective research and working groups. From our point of view, future endeavors in comparable projects should consider the strong evidence-based knowledge of the positive psychologists from the countries of interest in this chapter. Furthermore, many more governmental funding opportunities are needed that are directly related to the field of Positive Psychology.

Resources

This section provides an overview about positive psychological associations of Austria, France, Germany, and Switzerland (see Table 7.3). To the best of our knowledge, there are currently no specific associations in the Netherlands and Belgium. Furthermore, the contact information of the positive psychologists introduced in the chapter at hand is presented (see Table 7.4). Finally, a list of recommended readings is presented for those who want to get first insights into the scope of research of the presented positive psychologists from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

Table 7.3 Overview about existing positive psychological associations of the region

Name	Website	Country
Austrian Positive Psychology Association (APPA)	www.appa.or.at	Austria
European Network for Positive Psychology (ENPP)	www.enpp.eu	Europe
French and Francophone Positive Psychology Association (L'Association Française et francophone de Psychologie Positive; AFfPP)	www.psychologie-positive.com	France
German Association for Positive Psychology Research (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Positiv-Psychologische Forschung; DGPPF)	www.dgppf.de	Germany
German-speaking Association of Positive Psychology (Deutschsprachiger Dachverband für Positive Psychologie, DACH-PP)	www.dach-pp.eu	Germany
Seligman Europe	www.seligmaneurope.com	Austria
Swiss Positive Psychology Association (SWIPPA)	www.swippa.ch/en/	Switzerland

Reading Recommendations

We asked the respective positive psychologists to provide us with recommendations for reading in order to get first insights into their scope of research interests. In the following we present their and our reading recommendations:

Austria

- Ebner, M. (2018). Positive Leadership und Positive Psychologie im interkulturellen Kontext [Positive leadership and positive psychology in cross-cultural context]. In B. Covarrubias Venegas, & K.-D. Thill (Eds.), *Personalmanagement: Internationale Perspektiven und Implikationen für die Praxis* [Human resource management. International perspectives and practical implications] (pp. 283–303). Wiesbaden, Germany: Springer.
- Ebner, M. (2016). Positive Leadership und Coaching [Positive leadership and coaching]. *Coaching-Magazin*, 3. Retrieved from www.coaching-magazin.de/wissenschaft/positive-leadership-und-coaching
- Ebner, M. L., Korunka, C., Frank, H., & Lueger, M. (2008). Intrapreneurship in der beruflichen Erstausbildung: Versuch einer begrifflichen Klärung und Operationalisierung [Intrapreneurship in vocational educational training: An attempt of a definition and operationalization]. *German Journal of Research in Human Resource Management*, 22, 291–311.

Table 7.4 Overview about selected positive psychologists presented in the chapter at hand

Name	First name	Email	Website(s)	Location
Auhagen	Ann Elisabeth	kontakt@ann-elisabeth-auhagen.de	www.ann-elisabeth-auhagen.de	Germany
Bannink	Fredrike P.	www.fredrikebannink.com/bannink/lang/en-en/contact/	www.fredrikebannink.com/bannink/?lang=en-en	Netherlands
Bodenmann	Guy	guy.bodenmann@psychologie.uzh.ch	www.psychologie.uzh.ch/de/fachrichtungen/kpsych/team/bodenmann.html www.researchgate.net/profile/Guy_Bodenmann	Switzerland
Bohlmeijer	Ernst T.	e.t.bohlmeijer@utwente.nl	www.utwente.nl/bms/pg/mw/bohlmeijer www.researchgate.net/profile/Ernst_Bohlmeijer	Netherlands
Bolier	Jerina Marlinde (Linda)	lbolier@trimbos.nl	www.trimbos.nl/over-trimbos/medewerkers/profiel/?medew=1388 www.researchgate.net/profile/Linda_Bolier	Netherlands
Csillik	Antonia	acsillik@u-paris10.fr	www.researchgate.net/profile/Antonia_Csillik	France
Ebner	Markus	ebner@ebner-team.com	www.positive-leadership.at	Austria
Eid	Michael	eid@zedat.fu-berlin.de	www.ewi-psy.fu-berlin.de/einrichtungen/arbeitsbereiche/psymeth/mitarbeiter/meid/index.html	Germany
Harzer	Claudia	harzer.c@gmail.com	www.researchgate.net/profile/Claudia_Harzer	Germany
Heutte	Jean	jean.heutte@univ-lille1.fr	www.researchgate.net/profile/Jean_Heutte	France
Höfer	Stefan	stefan.hoefer@i-med.ac.at	www.i-med.ac.at/www.macnew.org www.researchgate.net/profile/Stefan_Hoefer	Austria
Hunziker	Alexander	alexander.hunziker@bfh.ch	www.researchgate.net/profile/Alexander_Hunziker	Switzerland
Lecomte	Jacques	jacques.lecomte442@orange.fr	www.psychologie-positive.net/spip.php?article8 www.psychologie-positive.net	France
Leijssen	Mia (Maria)	mia.leijssen@kuleuven.be	www.researchgate.net/profile/Mia_Leijssen	Belgium
Luhmann	Maike	maike.luhmann@rub.de	www.pml.psy.rub.de/personen/luhmann.html.de	Germany
Martin-Krumm	Charles	charles.martinkrumm@gmail.com	www.charles-martin-krumm-psypos.blogspot.com www.researchgate.net/profile/Charles_Martin-Krumm	France

Meyers	Maria Christina	M.C.Meyers@tilburguniversity.edu	www.researchgate.net/profile/Maria_Christina_Meyers	Netherlands
Peifer	Corinna	corinna.peifer@uni-luebeck.de	www.researchgate.net/profile/Corinna_Peifer	Germany
Perrig-Chiello	Pasqualina	pasqualina.perrigchiello@psy.unibe.ch	www.entwicklung.psy.unibe.ch/ueber_uns/personen/perrigchiello www.researchgate.net/profile/Pasqualina_Perrig-Chiello	Switzerland
Proyer	René T.	rene.proyer@psych.uni-halle.de	www.psych.uni-halle.de/abteilungen/differentiell/ www.researchgate.net/profile/Rene_Proyer	Germany
Ruch	Willibald	w.ruch@psychologie.uzh.ch	www.psychologie.uzh.ch/de/fachrichtungen/perspsy/ueber-uns/team/ruch.html www.researchgate.net/profile/Willibald_Ruch	Switzerland
Schmitz	Bernhard	schmitz@psychologie.tu-darmstadt.de	www.researchgate.net/profile/Bernhard_Schmitz	Germany
Schnell	Tatjana	tatjana.schnell@uibk.ac.at	www.uibk.ac.at/psychologie/mitarbeiter/schnell www.sinnforschung.org www.researchgate.net/profile/Tatjana_Schnell	Austria
Schwarzer	Ralf	ralf.schwarzer@fu-berlin.de	www.ralfschwarzer.de	Germany
Shankland	Rébecca	rebecca.shankland@univ-lyon2.fr	www.researchgate.net/profile/Rebecca_Shankland3	France
Steinebach	Christoph	christoph.steinebach@zhaw.ch	www.researchgate.net/profile/Christoph_Steinebach	Switzerland
Streit	Philip	dpst@ikjf.at	www.ikjf.at/www.ippm.at	Austria
van Woerkom	Marianne	m.vanwoerkom@uvt.nl	www.tilburguniversity.edu/webwijs/show/m.vanwoerkom.htm www.researchgate.net/profile/Marianne_Woerkom	Netherlands
Veenhoven	Ruut	veenhoven@ese.eur.nl	www.researchgate.net/profile/Ruut_Veenhoven	Netherlands
Walburg	Jan Auke	j.a.walburg@utwente.nl	www.researchgate.net/profile/Jan_Walburg	Netherlands
Weber	Marco	m.weber@mail.de	www.researchgate.net/profile/Marco_Weber5	Germany
Zegers	Hein	hein.zegers@gmail.com	www.essencing.com www.evidencebasedhappiness.org	Belgium

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Chapter 8

Positive Psychology in Southern Europe (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain)

Chiara Ruini

Historical Background to Positive Psychology in Southern Europe

The field of Positive Psychology in Southern Europe presents a peculiar trend. From a scientific viewpoint, the field is relatively new and somewhat behind Northern American or Australian rapid developments (Ruini & Fava, 2014). From a theoretical viewpoint, however, the philosophical roots of positive psychology are intrinsically embedded in Southern Europe cultural history. The ancient Greeks and Latin philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Seneca and Socrates developed their frames of thoughts in Greece, Italy and inside the Mediterranean area. This means that the concepts of hedonic well-being and eudaimonia that nowadays characterize the major thematic fields of positive psychology research, could be distilled from the cultural background of this region of the world (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

Both concepts of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being have specific philosophical background deriving from Greek traditions: the eudaimonic is certainly more linked to an Aristotelian approach, whereas the hedonic is more linked to Aristippus's and Epicurus's theories (Ryff & Singer, 2008). The former underlined the importance of pleasure, regardless of its cause. According to the hedonic philosophy, happiness can be defined as the total amount of pleasure experienced in life. Similarly, epicurean philosophers equated happiness with "pleasure in tranquility", and "pain avoiding" (*aponia*). Contemporary utilitarian philosophy reframed these Greek approaches by affirming the principle of utility. It states that thanks to each individual's attempt to maximize pleasure and self-interest, the good society is built.

In overt contrast to this approach, other ancient philosophers as Aristotle, Plato and Socrates stated that happiness is something more noble, and argued that pleasure

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comes from exercising individual virtues in a process of self-realization. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, written in 350 B.C., Aristotle asserted that human beings are basically virtuous and aspire to the highest of all goods: eudaimonia. He used this term to refer to activities of the soul in accordance with virtue. Accordingly, each person receives a call to know and live in line with his *daimon* (a sort of spirit/energy given to all individuals), thereby progressively actualizing an excellence (from the Greek “*arête*”). By a traditional Greek philosophical perspective, in fact, to reach true happiness individuals must follow a basic admonishment: “know thyself and become what you are” (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Aristotle’s deeper message about virtues was that it involves achieving the best that is within the individual, each according to his/her unique talents and capacities, and this achievement leads to happiness. Importantly, Aristotle admonished to seek “that which is intermediate”, avoiding excess and extremes. Those of virtuous character thus engage in deliberate actions chosen to avoid excess or deficiency, whether they are extremes of pleasure or pain, fear or confidence, vanity or humility. In fact, the pursuit of well-being may be so solipsistic and individualistic to leave no room for human connection and the social good; or it could be so focused on responsibilities and duties outside the self that personal talents and capacities are neither recognized or developed (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Other similar formulations of happiness derived from the work of Plato and Epicuro. Plato emphasized the balance between reason, spirit and appetites, whereas Epicure’s concept of *ataraxia* referred to freedom from worries or anxiety through the ability of maintaining balance and serenity in both enjoyable and challenging times (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

Thus, in the contemporary Western society, happiness is defined by either the hedonic or the eudaimonic perspective, that governed ethics, social and cultural functioning starting from the Southern Europe region of the world.

Major Positive Psychologists of Southern Europe: Theory, Research, Assessment, and Practice

Even though current positive psychology research is indeed underrepresented in this region of the world, compared to what is occurring in USA, Canada, or Australia, or compared to the growing research in Asian countries, Southern Europe has several groups of researchers within the positive psychology perspectives. Although many private initiatives, associations, and practitioners are applying a positive psychology approach in their works, in this chapter the focus will be placed on academic professors and groups that are actually conducting evidence-based research in this field. Furthermore, these groups founded the national associations of Positive Psychology in their countries. In the next sessions, these groups of research will be presented, according to their specific country and following an alphabetical order.

Greece

The main Greek contributions to positive psychology research and practice are represented by the work of Anastassios Stalikas, currently professor at the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences Education. After obtaining his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, at the University of Ottawa, he was associate professor at the department of Educational and Counselling at McGill University. Since 2018 he has been serving as the President of the Greek Association of Positive Psychology (www.positiveemotions.gr). His main clinical, educational and research interests focus on the application of the principles of Positive Psychology in creating positive organizational culture, leadership, motivation and productivity growth. He is also interested in studying the psychotherapeutic process and in particular the important role of positive emotions. In a recent work Stalikas et al. (2015) described the broaden-and-build theory and its contribution to psychotherapy theory, research and practice. They focus on the concepts of broadening, undoing, and building and their potential contribution to psychotherapy. In fact, positive emotions have been implicated in the development of coping resources and resilience for psychological health across various significant settings (such as the psychotherapeutic one), and therefore they should be integrated in the psychotherapeutic work (Fitzpatrick & Stalikas, 2008). Positive emotions have important roles also across various life events. For instance, in another investigation Stalikas examined the influence of positive emotions on women during their transition into motherhood (Moraitou et al., 2011). Authors found specific positive emotions such as joyfulness, pride, and interest after childbirth. Participants between the ages of 30 and 34 experienced a greater variety and intensity of positive emotions before and after childbirth. In turn, a negative relationship was found between the experience of positive emotion intensity and post-natal depressive symptomatology. Factors such as education level, whether the birth was planned or not, and environmental and partner support were found to relate significantly to the manifestation of positive emotions. These findings have potential implications for preventing post-partum depression, a clinical phenomenon which is rapidly spreading also in southern Europe countries.

Finally, Stalikas examined the role of positive emotions in work and organizational settings. In a recent investigation (Galanakis et al., 2011) Stalikas et al. applied the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions as an alternative approach to prevent occupational stress. They examined the relationship between positive emotions and strain in a sample of 2775 professionals. The results indicate that the experiencing of positive emotions is negatively correlated with occupational strain and that overall and discrete positive emotions predicted individual strain over and beyond stressors. Within organizational settings, Stalikas also found that sharing positive emotions can enhance teamwork and effective problem solving in various Greek organizations (Galanakis & Anastasios, 2007).

Finally, his recent work consists of validating the *Differential Emotions Scale* (DES) in Greek individuals (Galanakis et al., 2016). The scale was modified in order to include the specific evaluation of positive emotions. Results from this research

showed that the psychometric properties of the scale are good. However, the factor analysis disconfirmed previous findings and showed a three factor structure. Authors commented on this difference by attributing it to cultural elements in the Greek population.

In conclusion, Professor Stalikas and collaborators have also contributed with important work to positive psychology in Greece and Southern Europe more broadly, by integrating positive psychology into clinical practice and providing new assessment tools for measuring positive dimensions.

Italy

The SIPP (Italian Society of Positive Psychology) is a non-profit society with the aim of promoting research in Positive Psychology areas, such as: identification of human potential and resources; biopsychosocial aspects of cognition, emotions, and positive experiences; subjective well-being, self-esteem, creativity, and spirituality; explanatory styles, social relationships, and coping abilities; and well-being in specific populations. The SIPP aims at fostering the dissemination and teaching of theoretical and applied advancements in the field of Positive Psychology by providing professionals with training programs and courses. In pursuing these goals, SIPP organizes and takes part in national and international congresses, conferences, seminars, courses, and meetings. In addition, it promotes the publication of paper and electronic articles, journals, and books. Its website is <http://www.psicologiapositiva.it>. The current President of SIPP (as of 2018) is Prof. Chiara Ruini from the University of Bologna. A former President and one of the most prominent leaders of the SIPP is Prof. Antonella delle Fave, from the University of Milan; this institution also is the affiliated university of past SIPP President Dr. Andrea Fianco. The main Italian contributors to positive psychology research in this country are active members of SIPP. Chiara Ruini, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Bologna, Department of Psychology. Since 2006 she has been teaching the course “Clinical Applications of Positive Psychology” for students attending the Master Program in Clinical Psychology. Chiara Ruini has authored more than 80 articles published in peer-reviewed international journals, has edited a book entitled *Increasing Psychological well-being across cultures* (Ruini & Fava, 2014) for the Springer series (Positive Psychology across Cultures) and serves the Editorial Boards for international journals such as *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, the *Psychology of Well-being*, *Theories Research and Practice*, the *Journal of Happiness and Wellbeing*. Her research interests are concerned with positive psychology, clinical psychology, resilience, and psychotherapy. As a clinician, she devoted attention to the integration of positive psychology research into the clinical domains, and she recently published a book entitled *Positive Psychology in the Clinical Domains: Research and Practice* where the main applications of positive interventions are illustrated (Ruini, 2017). Themes such as psychological well-being, quality of life, resilience and their main applications in clinical domains (positive

psychotherapy, well-being therapy, strength-based interventions, mindfulness) are reviewed with a peculiar attention to the balance between positivity and psychological distress or psychopathology. Together with Prof. Giovanni Fava from the same University, she developed the Well-being Therapy—WBT (Fava, 2016; Fava & Ruini, 2003; Ruini & Fava, 2012), one of the first positive interventions specifically devoted to patients with affective disorders (anxiety and depression). WBT was tested in several controlled investigations and was found to be effective in promoting eudaimonic well-being and in preventing relapses in mood and anxiety disorders (Fava et al., 2004; Ruini & Fava, 2009; Ruini & Ryff, 2016).

Another line of research where Prof. Ruini has devoted her work is health psychology and psychosomatics: she has investigated the role of psychological factors involved in positive adaptation to chronic illnesses (post-traumatic growth, gratitude, meaning in life). Ruini and Vescovelli (2013) examined the role of gratitude in a breast cancer sample and its correlations with post-traumatic growth (PTG), psychological well-being, and distress. They also compared patients reporting higher levels of gratitude versus those reporting lower levels of gratitude and found that the former displayed higher levels of PTG, positive affect and lower symptomatology, compared to the latter. However, the two groups did not differ on psychological well-being. Furthermore, gratitude was significantly and positively correlated to PTG, to positive relations, and negatively related to anxiety, depression, and hostility-irritability. Since the majority of cancer patients reported low gratitude, the authors suggested the importance of developing clinical interventions aimed at increasing gratitude in patients with oncological illnesses. In another related article (Ruini et al., 2013) the authors compared breast cancer survivors to healthy women reporting other stressful events and found that survivors reported significantly higher levels of PTG and distress, and lower levels of PWB compared to healthy women. Thus, PTG levels were higher in cancer survivors and associated with decreased psychological distress and somatisation. These results carry important implications for clinical assessment, as well as for planning interventions to improve well-being and resilience in oncology. Together with another group of positive psychologists working in Spain (see next section) Ruini recently summarized the clinical and psychological correlates of PTG in cancer (Casellas-Grau et al., 2017) and found that the medical variables associated with the illness (i.e., time since diagnosis, type of treatment, stage of cancer, etc.) showed surprisingly few associations with PTG. The authors concluded that PTG in cancer should be investigated adopting a medical, psychosomatic approach, with more consideration to the variables related to the illness and the body as a source of threat, with fear of recurrences as potential moderator for PTG.

Recently, Prof. Ruini was also involved in research projects for the promotion of well-being in special populations: older adults (Positive Aging and its interventions) and children/adolescents. In these domains she developed preventive interventions (i.e., the promotion of well-being to prevent the onset of psychological distress), as well as new treatment protocols derived from positive psychology research. Concerning older adults, two pilot interventions have been recently developed and tested. One intervention involved American community dwellers, who received a

program entitled: “Lighten UP!” (Friedman et al., 2017). It is an eight-week program consisting of a 90-min group session designed to teach participants to identify and savor positive experiences across multiple domains of eudaimonic well-being. At the end of the eight weeks, participants reported significantly increased PWB, life satisfaction, and social well-being along with lower levels of depression and fewer physical symptoms and sleep complaints. These gains were particularly robust for individuals with lower pre-program levels of PWB. The second recent intervention for the promotion of positive aging was tested in nursing homes (Cesetti et al., 2017). Authors documented that older adults living in nursing homes are more vulnerable than those living in the community since they presented more depression and less well-being. A short group intervention based on fairytales and performed inside the nursing homes yielded improvements in well-being and sleep quality in these older adults.

Concerning younger populations, Ruini et al. (Ruini et al., 2009; Tomba et al., 2010); developed a school program for the promotion of eudaimonic well-being in adolescents and teenagers. This short group program yielded beneficial effects in terms of well-being, anxiety and somatisation, which lasted over six month follow-up. Recently, this program has been adapted and applied to children with affective, behavioral and eating disorders. In all these clinical case series the promotion of well-being produced improvements also in psychopathology (Albieri et al., 2009; Ruini et al., 2015; Vescovelli et al., 2017). Thus, Ruini and colleagues provided important contributions to the development of Positive Psychology in Southern Europe by the development of positive interventions. This line of research points to the integration between positive and clinical psychology (Ruini, 2017).

Another Italian positive psychology contributor is Prof. Antonella delle Fave, who leads a large research group at the University of Milan. After getting an MD degree, she specialized in clinical psychology and devoted her research activities to the investigation of well-being indicators, with a particular attention to cultural and diversity issues. The main research areas concern flow and optimal experience and its applications in various settings, from health, to school and work psychology (Bassi & delle Fave, 2012; Bassi et al., 2014a, 2014b). In an interesting investigation (Bassi & Delle Fave, 2012) the authors aimed at understanding the characteristics of optimal experience in academic activities and findings showed that during school-work as optimal activity (high challenges and high skills) students mostly reported low levels of self-determination. Subsequently, the Milan group analyzed optimal experience in association with personality traits, hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in adolescence (Bassi et al., 2014b). They found that the trait openness to experience was the sole personality factor predicting the occurrence of optimal experience, and that no personality factors were predictive of type of activities adolescents associated with optimal experience. These findings point to the promotion of optimal experience among adolescents through the support of curiosity and openness to new experiences.

Delle Fave developed further research and intervention projects in the domains of health and education, and supervised international cooperation programs to promote resource implementation in conditions of disability and social maladjustment.

Together with international partners she launched and implemented the “Eudaimonic and Hedonic Happiness Investigation”, aimed at identifying well-being components across cultures (Delle Fave et al., 2011). This international group developed a new assessment tool: the *Eudaimonic and Hedonic Happiness Investigation*. It is an instrument consisting of open-ended questions addressing objects such as the respondent’s definition of happiness and what is perceived as most meaningful in life. The instrument also includes ratings of happiness levels and meaningfulness in different life domains. Thus, delle Fave’s line of research provided important innovations also in the field of positive psychology assessment.

Her group is currently conducting research and intervention projects on well-being promotion in conditions of chronic and degenerative diseases among patients and caregivers, exploring the potential of an integrated treatment approach (Bassi et al., 2014a, 2016; Fianco et al., 2015). In one investigation (Fianco et al., 2015) authors assessed Italian caregivers and found that those perceiving high burden reported higher levels of depression-related emotions, lower life satisfaction and lower resilience than participants perceiving low burden. They also found that the best predictor of perceived burden was life satisfaction, followed to a lesser extent by resilience, while depression-related emotions did not provide significant contribution. Findings suggest that burden and well-being are co-existing in caregivers’ experience and their joint assessment would allow for the identification of personal and relational resources that can be usefully included in interventions addressed to caregivers. Similarly, Bassi et al. (2014a) documented the coexistence of well-being and distress in individuals with multiple sclerosis (MS) and in their caregivers. Compared to healthy populations, MS individuals reported higher depression, and lower general well-being; caregivers presented higher depression and lower general well-being; and medical professionals reported the best ill- and well-being profiles. However, after controlling for demographic differences in age and education, hierarchical regressions highlighted that general well-being of MS patients substantially leveled off, and it can counterbalance the negative effects of disease or caregiving. In a subsequent study (Bassi et al., 2016) the same group of investigators found that well-being in MS patients and in their caregivers was positively associated with their belief that they understood the disease, and inversely associated with their representations of the disease and with negative emotions. In addition, among patients, well-being was inversely associated with the number of symptoms they specifically attributed to their illness, while among caregivers, well-being was positively associated with beliefs that treatment could control the disease. These investigations have several important implications for implementing psychosocial intervention to sustain patient’s and caregivers’ well-being during the course of MS or other chronic conditions.

Finally, delle Fave contributed as field editor and author to *The Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. She served as President of the International Positive Psychology Association (2009–2011) and of the European Network of Positive Psychology (2006–2010). Since 2010 she is Editor in Chief of the *Journal*

of Happiness Studies, one of the main scientific journals devoted to publish research on positive psychology, with a multidisciplinary approach.

Portugal

The main Portuguese contributions to positive psychology research and practice are represented by the work of Professor Teresa Freire, from the University of Porto and by Prof. Luis Miguel Neto and his wife Prof. Elana Marujo. Luís Miguel Neto was Assistant Professor at Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas (School of Social and Political Sciences), University of Lisbon. He studied at the University of Massachusetts, USA, where he received his Ed.D. in Family Therapy, and he got a post-graduate degree on Systemic Family Therapy from Sevilla University in Spain. Together with Prof. Marujo, Prof. Neto recently launched the Platform for Public Happiness at Lisbon University, where he was the Scientific Coordinator of the Executive Master in Applied Positive Psychology. He was a co-founder, vice-president and member of the Scientific Committee of the Portuguese Association on Positive Psychology/Associação Portuguesa de Estudos e Intervenções em Psicologia Positiva (APPEIP). Neto and Marujo recently co-organized the first and the second Portuguese Positive Psychology Conference, on the theme of Positive Communities and Relational Goods: Co-constructing Felicitas Publica (Public Happiness). Pro Marujo is also member of the Board of Directors of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA).

Both investigators pioneered the teaching of Appreciative Inquiry, Social Constructionistic models, Systemic and Positive approaches in Portugal and Europe. In one of their investigations (Marujo & Neto, 2010) they described an intervention aimed at integrating positive psychology and community psychology. The intervention was implemented with populations living under the poverty line in the Portuguese Azores Islands. Throughout participative and appreciative interventions, and under a community development positive focus, the project enhanced optimism, hope, sense of humor and positive emotions in general. Therefore, they connected recent scientific data from positive psychology and from community psychology into a critical, appreciative, and generative practice involving transformational changes co-constructed between mental health professionals and poverty populations. Another community project (D'Araújo et al., 2016) entitled "The Wednesday Tea Project (Chá das Quartas)" involved a group of elderly women experiencing high levels of loneliness and isolation in their small village in Portugal. The Wednesday Tea Project is based on positive psychology methodologies and consists of ritualized sessions that encourage participatory group dynamics. The authors used various narrative practices that gave these women the opportunity to celebrate life after the age of 80, while also allowing the community to be part of and to benefit from the process.

Relying on her skills as family therapist, Marujo aimed at combining together traditional family and couple interventions with positive psychology approaches.

Marujo and Neto (2007) developed a positive preventive program in order to promote family well-being and happiness in its life context. The program used teleconferences and internet chats with experts in order to get in touch with each family from different countries and reduce problems in participation. This project provided families with scheduled exercises aimed at developing individual, relational and parental skills linked with happiness, optimism, hope and creativity, as much as at creating more pleasurable, positive and efficacious emotional climates and communicational patterns within the family. Also, children were involved and provided with weekly happiness focused assignments. The preliminary results confirmed the feasibility of this virtual training and these new technologies as a frame for creative and innovative psychological interventions to collectively create and increase happiness, positive emotions, and well-being directly in the family context.

Subsequently the same group (de Fátima Perloiro et al., 2012) developed a specific intervention aimed at enhancing optimal couple's functioning using positive psychology concepts and strategies. Thus, authors developed a therapeutic protocol model characterized by specific ways of questioning and specific time dimensions (past, present, future). Questions are based on three concepts: (a) Questions that introduce positive information (e.g. "What is your biggest strength as a couple?"); (b) Questions that induce the search for solutions (e.g. "What does your wife has to do in order to make you happy?"); (c) Questions that follow appreciative inquiry characteristics—being positive, provocative, applicable, collaborative and motivated to identify the best qualities of the couple (e.g. "Tell me about a moment when you both felt you were an exceptional couple").

A specific focus on time dimensions is also included: the past, the present and the future of the relationship. Authors created a group of questions devoted to different time periods of the relationship, to explore and improve partners' affiliation: (a) considering past, the work centered on gratitude to help the couple to feel connected and thankful for their shared experiences ("Think about the moments when you were dating: What are you proud of saying/doing at those moments?"; "How these years as a couple made you grow as a person, even when experiencing more troubled times?"); (b) considering present, therapists should enhance couple's optimistic view of their current shared experiences (following Seligman's explanatory style research); (c) when working on future, therapists should develop hope for the future of the relationship. The model appeared to be clinically helpful for couples in promoting a more positive communicative style focused on optimism and hope, but there have not been any controlled trials yet.

The other relevant group of Portuguese positive psychology investigators is headed by Prof. Teresa Freire, from the University of Porto. She performed several important studies on optimal experience and leisure activities (Freire, 2006) and developed a short assessment tool to measure leisure attitude (the *Leisure Attitude Scale* (Teixeira & Freire, 2013)). It has strong psychometric properties and it evaluates the personal attitude toward leisure activities. It was found that positive attitudes tend to be associated with greater engagement in leisure.

More recently Freire investigated adolescent clinical populations and described positive intervention strategies. She reported that interventions based on positive psychology promote a more balanced approach that takes into consideration the negative and positive aspects of experience and aims to enhance well-being (Freire et al., 2014). Her research group developed a new intervention, the Optimal Functioning Therapy for Adolescents, which suggest that the focus of treatment for depressed adolescents should integrate symptom reduction and well-being enhancement to achieve optimal functioning. Helping young people be happier and more engaged in their lives is considered an important new perspective for clinical psychology practice. The same considerations could be applied to another vulnerable age group, which is older age. In this setting Freire investigated optimal experience in relation to loneliness (Ferreira & Freire, 2010). Authors found that personal strengths and well-being are key ingredients for successful aging, despite age related loss and declines.

Finally, together with Prof. Antonella delle Fave in Italy, Freire investigated well-being adopting an international perspective (delle Fave et al., 2011). This international group examined the lay definitions of happiness in various countries and found that the concept of inner harmony predominated among psychological definitions, and family and social relationships among contextual definitions with little variation by age and gender, across all included countries (delle Fave et al., 2016). Whereas interpersonal relationships are widely acknowledged as basic happiness components, inner harmony is substantially neglected. Nevertheless, it is consistent with several conceptual frameworks of happiness provided by philosophical and psychosocial disciplines. At the methodological level, these cross cultural findings suggest the potential of a bottom-up, mixed-method approach to contextualize psychological dimensions within culture and lay understanding of happiness and well-being. Thus, the collaboration between various European positive psychology investigators resulted in new advancements in defining happiness and well-being and in implementing new methodologies for evaluating these constructs within a cross cultural approach.

Spain

The main Spanish contributions to positive psychology research are represented by the work of Carmelo Vazquez, Professor of Psychopathology at the Complutense University of Madrid, and his team of collaborators. Prof. Carmelo Vazquez devoted efforts to the study of positive emotions, in relation to psychopathology. In several studies his research group has documented the existence of positive biases in the processing of information. This line of research shows that positive illusions and memory bias play a very important role in mental health (Vázquez, 2015). In one important recent investigation (Romero et al., 2016) authors evaluated self-esteem and memory bias in a group of depressed patients and compared their scores to non-depressed individuals. They found that participants diagnosed with depression

showed lower levels of both explicit and implicit self-esteem and they also recalled a greater number of depressed self-referent adjectives and lower recall of positive self-referent information, compared to non-depressed participants. These findings suggest an association between implicit and explicit self-esteem in depression that may result in negative cognitive processing, as reflected by self-referent memory biases. Within the field of depression, Vazquez and his colleagues (Covadonga Chaves et al., 2016) also applied a therapeutic intervention based on positive psychology and compared its efficacy to standard cognitive behavioral treatment. After the randomized trial, authors found significant differences between treatment groups in either severity of depressive symptoms or positive and negative affect, and satisfaction with life. Importantly, even within the most severely depressed participants, no differences between the two treatment modalities emerged. This paves the way for the application of positive psychotherapy even among acute forms of psychopathology.

In collaboration with an international group of investigators, Vazquez also recently developed a self-report instrument that combines together hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being, with the aim of providing an integrative assessment. The *Pemberton Happiness Index* (PHI) (Hervás & Vázquez, 2013; Paiva et al., 2016) makes an interesting distinction between remembered well-being and actual experience of well-being in present life. PHI contains eleven items that measure remembered well-being (general, hedonic, eudaimonic, and social well-being) and ten items related to experienced well-being (i.e., positive and negative emotional events that possibly happened the day before); the sum of these items produces a combined well-being index. Initial results from this cross-cultural, international validation study provided support for the good psychometric properties of the PHI (i.e., internal consistency, a single-factor structure, and convergent and incremental validity) and authors suggest that it could be used as an instrument to monitor changes in well-being in individuals and communities. Also in this case, Vazquez contributed to advances in positive psychology by providing new, integrative assessment methods.

Finally, Prof. Vazquez investigated human resistance to adversity in clinical and psychosocial settings. In this regard, he participated with some organizations (such as Médecins Sans Frontières—Spain) in intervention projects in critical incidents, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, terroristic attacks or oncological settings. In one article, Vazquez and his collaborators (García et al., 2016) adopted a positive psychology perspective and investigated the predictors of post traumatic growth (PTG) in 349 adult men and women who experienced the earthquake and tsunami on February 27, 2010 in Chile. Results showed a direct influence of the subjective severity, problem-focused coping, and deliberate rumination on the development of PTG. The authors concluded by underlying the relevant role of cognitive processes such as deliberate rumination and behavioral processes such as problem-focused coping in the presence of PTG. A similar concept (benefit finding) was also recently investigated in a group of children with life-threatening illnesses. Since suffering from illness is usually associated with challenge and growth, Vazquez et al. (Chaves et al., 2016) hypothesized that changes in life satisfaction in a sample of ill children

would depend on to what extent they developed positive resources. The findings of this research revealed that health-related functioning problems were associated with negative changes in life satisfaction over time. Moreover, increases in benefit finding and character strengths (i.e., love and gratitude) predicted positive changes in life satisfaction over time. Thus, the development of positive psychological resources in children experiencing high levels of stress may promote desirable psychological outcomes. Similar conclusions were replicated in a group of seriously-ill children who received a positive intervention (i.e. granting a wish) aimed at promoting positive psychological and physical changes (e.g. reduced nausea and pain; Chaves et al., 2016). Wish intervention significantly increased levels of positive emotions, satisfaction with life, personal strengths, and reduced rates of nausea compared with the waiting list group. Mothers in the wish group also perceived positive changes in children's benefit finding and quality of life. Importantly, improvements in well-being, love, gratitude and benefit findings have been observed also in children's parents (Chaves et al., 2016).

In the field of psycho-oncology, Vazquez collaborated with the group of Prof. Christian Ochoa at the University of Barcelona, where the concept of post-traumatic growth has been investigated in cross-cultural studies (Vázquez et al., 2014) and in cancer patients. In these populations Casellas-Grau et al. (2016) found that positive psychological functioning (i.e., well-being, post-traumatic growth, finding benefit and meaning) could be influenced by sociodemographic, medical, and psychosocial characteristics, such as being young, undergoing chemotherapy, and having social support. The perceived impact of breast cancer on a patient, as well as the perceived support from significant others can result in better functioning in women with breast cancer. In another review article, this group of Spanish investigators examined the effects of positive interventions (i.e., mindfulness-based approaches, expression of positive emotions, spiritual interventions, hope therapy, and meaning-making interventions) in breast cancer participants (Casellas-Grau et al., 2014). These specific interventions promoted positive changes in enhanced quality of life, well-being, hope, benefit finding, or optimism. Recently, these authors developed a specific psychotherapy to be applied to cancer survivors: the Positive Psychotherapy for Cancer (PPC) survivors (Ochoa et al., 2017). It aims to facilitate PTG as a way of achieving significant reductions in the symptoms of emotional distress and posttraumatic stress. The PPC group obtained significantly better results after treatment compared to a waiting list group, showing reduced distress, decreased post-traumatic symptoms, and increased PTG. The benefits were maintained at 3 and 12 months' follow-up. Even though results are preliminary, the implications are important for psycho-oncology and related disciplines.

Thus, investigators adopting a positive psychology perspective in Spain produced important advancements in the field of positive interventions with clinical populations, both involving mental illnesses (i.e., depression) or physical illnesses (cancer and other life threatening conditions). The role of resilience, well-being and PTG have been deeply investigated in these settings.

Future of Positive Psychology in Southern Europe

As described in the first part of the chapter, positive psychology in southern Europe may be not as diffused as in other parts of the world, as North America or Australia. However, positive psychology is actually flourishing in this region of Europe, as described by the various research presented in the previous pages. These pages are in no ways exhaustive of the full reality of researchers, practitioners and psychologists who work using a positive psychology approach in Southern European countries. In writing this chapter, the main exponents and representatives of universities or national societies of positive psychology have been briefly described, but there are many other private practitioners, or societies and associations that are applying positive psychology methodologies for assessing and promoting well-being and personal resources in individuals, communities, and organizations in Southern Europe.

Furthermore, considering the author's background, the emphasis has been placed on general, clinical and health psychology, whereas other lines of research, such as social and community psychology, or work psychology have been scarcely described. This is a major limitation of this work, since many new applications and research in positive psychology are emerging just in these fields in many of the Southern Europe countries.

According to the literature presented here, positive psychology in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain has been applied in clinical settings, ranging from mental health, psychotherapy and counseling to medical domains such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and other chronic illnesses. Patients and caregivers in these countries derived benefits from the promotion of positive emotions, resilience and well-being during the course of their illness, whether mental or physical. These beneficial effects of evaluating and promoting positive emotions and positive functioning have been applied to different age populations, from children to adult and aging individuals. In all cases, the positive psychology approach shed new lights on the experience of the illness and on individual's positive resources.

Another common line of application of positive psychology is the school/educational settings, where positive emotions, optimal experiences, and well-being have been investigated and/or promoted in children and adolescence. These applications of positive psychology in young populations entail many psychosocial implications. In fact, there is evidence that mental health problems in childhood generate additional costs in adulthood and can have largely hidden costs, such as disrupting education and the opportunity of careers (Beesdo et al., 2009). Recent positive psychology research also showed that positive emotions in children and adolescents seem to play a crucial role (Gilbert, 2012; Gillham et al., 2006, 2011; Vescovelli et al., 2014). For instance, children who report more positive emotions, tend to display better social, school, and familial functioning (Gillham et al., 2011). Positive affectivity in children was found to be associated with better cognitive development, as well as with the use of adaptive coping skills and better behavioral and emotional regulations (Gilbert, 2012). Hence, the applications of positive interventions in

school and in preventive settings in Southern Europe pave the way for building future generations of Southern Europeans who will be more aware of their resources and more focused on maintaining and promoting well-being.

Another age group which has received attention in current research on positive psychology in Southern Europe is older adults. This is in line with the sociodemographic trend of longevity, which is particularly frequent in Southern Europe and in the Mediterranean area. This phenomenon will bring economic, political and social consequences, forcing governments and institutions to reorganize and implement social and health assistance. Within positive psychology research, recent studies are considering the aging process within the perspective of positive aging (Hill & Smith, 2015). Accordingly, personal well-being, self-acceptance and a sense of growth are emphasized, despite the presence of inevitable age-related decline and losses. Recent studies reported how hedonic and eudaimonic well-being are associated with better health profiles, lower morbidity and longer life-expectancy (Ryff, 2014; Steptoe et al., 2009). For instance, some researchers observed an association between higher levels of purpose in life and lower risk of Alzheimer's disease, of cognitive decline (Boyle et al., 2010), of ictus (Kim et al., 2013), of myocardial infarction (Kim et al., 2013) and of mortality (Boyle et al., 2009; Hill & Turiano, 2014). Similarly, it was found a negative link between hedonic well-being and the risk of cardiovascular diseases and mortality (Kimm et al., 2012). Considering these results, impairments of well-being may represent a risk factor for aging populations' psychological and physical health (Ryff, 2014). By an opposite mechanism, thus, the presence and promotion of well-being may represent a protective factor for aging individuals' physical and psychological health (Friedman et al., 2017). Hence, a specific focus on positive aging and the implementation of interventions to promote well-being in later life become essential in this part of Europe in order to help people to live a longer and happier life.

However, one of the main common obstacles to the growth of positive psychology research and intervention in Southern Europe is represented by the paucity of funding. The economic crisis that characterizes particularly this part of Europe led governments to progressively cut funding for research and psychosocial interventions. In fact, when it comes to health care systems or to school/educational systems, the essential programs and services are granted, but innovations or new approaches, such as the ones endorsed by positive psychology, received scarce attention and resources. Even though the European Commission considered well-being as a core theme in the research program "Horizon 2020", many of the single contributors described in this chapter received very little economic resources from it. Thus, in Southern Europe positive psychology needs more funding to be devoted to the assessment, investigation, and promotion of positive functioning and well-being. Only in this way could Southern Europeans fully flourish and lead positive lives, despite their actual sociodemographic, political and economic difficulties.

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Chapter 9

Positive Psychology in Eastern Europe

Ingrid Brdar and Majda Rijavec

Historical Background to Positive Psychology in Eastern Europe

The Czech Republic, Hungary and Croatia share similar history, religion and cultural values that are quite different from those in Turkey. These Central and Eastern European countries, predominantly Christian, were part of the Habsburg Empire until the end of the World War I. After the war the country of Czechoslovakia was formed from the Czech and Slovak lands of the Austrian Empire, Hungary became a republic and Croatia became part of the new Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After World War II, Czechoslovakia and Hungary came under the dominion of the Soviet Union and Croatia became one of the six republics of Yugoslavia. The Czech Republic was founded in 1993 after Czechoslovakia split into two countries: The Czech Republic and Slovakia. After Yugoslavia collapsed, although recognized as an independent state by the international community in January 1992, Croatia was forced to defend its independence by armed struggle until 1995. In the last 28 years, these three countries passed through a transition from communism to capitalism and democracy. Now these countries are part of the European Union (EU) and NATO. The population of The Czech Republic and Hungary is around ten million and Croatia is around four and half million.

Turkey, in contrast, is a Eurasian country with Islam as the majority religion. The land that is now Turkey is one of the oldest continuously inhabited regions on the

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planet, lying for the most part in Asia with the small part in Europe. Turkey was under the rule of the Ottomans for more than six centuries. The Republic of Turkey was founded as a secular state in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. After a period of one-party rule under its founder and his successor, Turkish governments since the 1950s have been produced by multiparty elections. Democracy has been fractured by periods of instability and intermittent military coups (1960, 1971, 1980, 1997), which in each case eventually resulted in a return of political power to civilians. The state is a multiparty republic, with the population of 79 million. The overwhelming majority of Turkish citizens are Muslims and the Turkish state is secular. In 1952, Turkey joined NATO and in 1999, Turkey was formally accepted as a candidate for EU membership.

According to the Human Development Index, the Czech Republic is the most developed country in the region, followed by Hungary and Croatia, with Turkey ranked as least (United Nations Development Programme, 2016). Most indicators show that Turkey is quite different from the other three countries. For example, in Turkey only 54% of the population had at least some secondary education in the last decade, whereas in the other three countries at least 95.8% of the population had the same level of education (Human Development Index; United Nations Development Programme, 2016). On the other hand, people in Turkey evaluate the quality of their lives higher than Hungarians and Croats: Czech Republic ranks 23th, Turkey ranks 69th, Hungary 75th and Croatia 77th (Helliwell et al., 2017). However, happiness ranks in 2020 are somewhat different—Czechs and Croats rank highest (16 and 23, respectively), followed by Hungarians (43), whereas Turkish people rank lowest (78; Helliwell et al., 2021).

These four countries differ in Hofstede et al.'s cultural dimensions (Hofstede et al., 2010). Croatia and Turkey are collectivistic societies, whereas Hungary scores highest on individualism. Compared to other countries (Hofstede et al., 2010), Hungary is a “masculine” society valuing competition, achievement and success. The Czech Republic is an individualist and pragmatic society, encouraging efforts in modern education to prepare for the future. On the other hand, people in this country feel that their actions are restrained by social norms. All four countries prefer avoiding uncertainty, although citizens of Czech Republic are most open to uncertainty.

Croatia

Positive psychology in Croatia emerged a few years after this discipline was founded. The first research paper on life satisfaction and happiness was published in 2002 (Kaliterna Lipovčan et al., 2002). A couple of years later, Croatian scientists presented their research at the second European Conference on Positive Psychology, held in 2004. After the conference, a group of researchers founded the Croatian Network of Positive Psychology. In the following years, there was a rapid growth of interest in positive psychology. In 2008, Croatian researchers organized the fourth

European Conference on Positive Psychology. The conference was well-attended with participants from 39 countries and significant increase of presentations compared to previous conferences.

In 1997, Majda Rijavec published the first book on positive psychology written in Croatian (“*Miracles do happen: Psychology of positive thinking*”). In the following years, two edited books on positive psychology were published (Brdar, 2011; Miljković & Rijavec, 2011). Many popular books were published on various topics such as happiness and good life, positive psychology at work, and the psychology of positive people (e.g. Miljković & Rijavec, 2001, 2004; Rijavec & Miljković, 2006, 2009).

Croatian researchers explore a variety of topics within positive psychology, including quality of life, life goals, positive education and eudaimonic happiness. Over time, the number of researchers has grown and now there are positive research groups at each university. On the other hand, not many practitioners apply positive psychology in their work. Most of them work in schools and apply positive psychology in their work with children and adolescents.

There are no formal study programs in positive psychology in Croatia, but positive psychology courses are offered at graduate and/or doctoral level at most universities. A university textbook on positive psychology, titled “*Positive psychology: Scientific exploration of human strengths and happiness*”, was published in 2008 (Rijavec et al., 2008).

The Czech Republic

The publication of the first paper related to positive psychology can be determined as a formal start of positive psychology in the Czech Republic. In 2001, Jiří Mareš published an article on positive psychology and a couple of years later, Kebza and Šolcová (2003) published an article on well-being as a psychological and interdisciplinary-based concept. In the early development of this field in the Czech Republic, Mareš (2001) and Šolcová (2005) highlighted some limits, constraints and controversies of positive psychology. For example, Mareš pointed out that the effort to study primarily the positive aspects of life can be just as misleading as the excessive focus on the negative aspects of life.

Czech positive psychology mainly stems from health psychology. Jaro Křivohlavý, who was a major proponent of positive psychology, published four books devoted to general issues and various topics, like meaningful existence, gratitude, wisdom and good life (Křivohlavý, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009). Czech researchers have also explored other topics like quality of life, resilience and optimism. They mainly publish in Czech language, which is good for the promotion of positive psychology in their country, but limits the dissemination of their findings to general scientific community.

In response to growing interest for positive psychology, the Czech Positive Psychology Center was established in 2008, with the aim of promoting international

research cooperation. The Center organized two international conferences on positive psychology (2012 and 2013) in Brno, and several seminars, lectures and workshops.

Alena Slezáčková teaches the only university course in positive psychology that is offered as an elective course at the Masaryk University since 2008. At other universities, themes related to positive psychology are taught as a part of courses on psychology, mental health, health psychology or other courses.

Hungary

Positive psychology in Hungary started to develop almost at the same time as this new discipline emerged. This is due to the great influence of Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, one of the founders of positive psychology, and a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Psychological Association. In 1998, the conference of the European Association for Research on Adolescence took place in Budapest with Mihály Csíkszentmihályi and Antonella Delle Fave as keynote speakers on the subject of flow.

In 2002, twelve Hungarian psychologists participated in the first International Positive Psychology Summit in Washington. In 2005, the Positive Psychology Research Group and Laboratory was established at Eötvös Lorand University, Budapest, one of the most respectable and oldest universities in Hungary. In 2012, a special volume of the *Hungarian Psychological Review* was published titled “The world of positive psychology”. The Positive Psychology Group published an edited book (Oláh & Nagy, 2014) “*Flow, emotional intelligence and psychological immunity: Empirical studies in positive psychological perspective*”.

In 2011, a Positive Psychology Division within The Hungarian Psychological Association was founded with more than 100 members. Until 2015, two national positive psychology conferences were organized. Ninth European Conference on Positive Psychology was held in Budapest in 2018.

In a review paper (Magyaródi, 2012) about positive psychology articles in Hungarian journals and books between 2000–2011, it was found that most dealt with coping, subjective well-being, emotional intelligence, optimism/pessimism, life goals and quality of life. Additional topics included sense of coherence, spirituality, humor and post-traumatic growth.

Along with scientific research, several positive psychology programs have been developed by Profil Training Ltd. (for-profit company). These programs include test development and educational applications of positive psychology in close cooperation with research experts from the academic world. In 2014, the Happiness Lessons Program was launched in Hungarian schools, including more than 3200 teachers and psychologists, who are currently delivering and presenting happiness lessons to more than 50,000 children.

Turkey

Soon after this new approach arose in US and UK, the development of positive psychology began in Turkey. Since then, it has witnessed significant developments.

The Turkish Positive Psychology Association was founded to promote research, education, and dissemination of positive psychology in Turkey. The Positive Psychology Institute was founded in 2011 with the mission to help people flourish in their private and professional lives.

Scientific research in positive psychology deals with various topics, including well-being, positive education, positive clinical interventions and positive organizational and workplace development. Several Turkish psychologists living abroad contributed to positive psychology with studies of well-being of Turkish immigrants (i.e., Selda Koydemir).

Positive psychology trainings in Turkey are mostly offered by the trainers of WAPP (World Association of Positive Psychotherapy) and participants are provided with the certificate of WAPP's "Basic Consultant of Positive Psychotherapy" by WAPP's Turkish trainers. These WAPP's trainings in Turkey are being offered to mental health professionals, such as psychological counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatry nurses, and social workers. However, there are also some positive psychology trainings, which are being offered to not only mental health specialists but also other professions.

There are no graduate programs specific for positive psychology in Turkey yet, but several universities offer elective undergraduate and graduate courses on positive psychology in their departments of psychology or psychological counseling and guidance. These courses are mostly instructed by professors who have done research on positive psychology concepts. Some of them got graduate level PP education from other countries like England. However, the majority graduated from psychological counseling or psychology programs in universities.

A substantial number of positive psychology scales were translated and validated. Since 2008, six books on general issues and various themes in positive psychology were published (Akın & Akın, 2015; Demirli Yıldız, 2016; Ergüner-Tekinalp & Işık, 2015; Eryılmaz, 2014; İslamoğlu, 2010; Tarhan, 2016; Tarhan et al., 2012).

Since 2012, *The Journal of Happiness and Well-Being* has been published both in Turkish and in English. In 2016, the first Eurasian Congress on Positive Psychology was held in Istanbul.

Major Positive Psychologists of Eastern Europe

Croatia

Ingrid Brdar

Brief Biography

Ingrid Brdar is a professor at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka. She teaches courses in methodology, communication and positive psychology. Currently, she is the Co-Editor of *the Journal of Happiness Studies*.

She has authored or co-authored over 50 scientific papers, 10 book chapters, two books and edited one book. She has been the principal investigator of several projects investigating determinants of adolescents' optimal development and psychological well-being, and determinants and cross-cultural aspects of the construct of happiness. Beginning in 2008, she has been a member of the core group leading the cross-cultural project "The Eudaimonic and Hedonic Happiness Investigation". It aims at exploring hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being using a mixed-method approach.

She was the Chair of the Scientific Committee of the fourth European Conference on Positive Psychology, held in Croatia in 2008, and a member of the Scientific Committee of subsequent five European Conferences on Positive Psychology and of the third World Congress on Positive Psychology, held in Los Angeles in 2013.

Croatian Psychological Association awarded her "Marulić: Fiat Psychologia" (*Marulić: Fiat Psychology*) for her distinctively valuable psychological book (2008) and for her uniquely valuable contribution to the development and promotion of Croatian applied psychology (2009).

Positive Psychology Contribution

Ingrid Brdar has made novel contributions to positive psychology research, theory and assessment across several domains. Her key research topics include life goals, cultural conceptions of happiness, and character strengths.

She explored the relationship between life goals and well-being from the perspective of Self-Determination Theory and provided support that the substantial positive effect of intrinsic goals on well-being is mediated by satisfaction of basic psychological needs (Brdar, 2006). Extrinsic aspirations are not necessarily detrimental and these aspirations may even contribute to well-being (Brdar et al., 2009b; Rijavec et al., 2006, 2011). However, intrinsic aspirations may probably be affordable only for people who are financially well-off enough; in the poorer cultures financial success is less extrinsic and closer to safety and health-related goals than in the wealthier cultures (Brdar et al., 2009a).

One of her main theoretical contributions is her work on the Eudaimonic and Hedonic Happiness Investigation (EHHI). In 2007, she initiated the cross-cultural project with Antonella Delle Fave with the aim to deepen our understanding of eudaimonic and hedonic happiness in different cultures. The construct of happiness, one of the most controversial issues in positive psychology, is usually conceptualized from the hedonic perspective. However, studies on EHHI data provided support of distinguishing between hedonic and eudaimonic components of happiness (e.g., Delle Fave et al., 2013). Qualitative studies of happiness definitions in 15 countries show that happiness could be conceptualized as an interaction between contextual and psychological aspects of a person (Delle Fave et al., 2011, 2016).

She also developed interest in character strengths, being among the first authors who examined the VIA-IS factor structure (Brdar & Kashdan, 2010). The study of gender differences in character strengths showed that some strengths (intelligence, perspective, valor and beauty) were more related with life satisfaction only for males (Brdar et al., 2011).

She participated in translating and validating the most widely used scales and questionnaires for assessing eudaimonic and hedonic happiness, life aspirations, character strengths, meaning in life, and sources of meaning. She is best known for the validation of the VIA-IS questionnaire in Croatia (Brdar & Kashdan, 2010) and the construction of the Eudaimonic and Hedonic Questionnaire, together with Antonella Delle Fave (Delle Fave et al., 2011, 2016).

Ljiljana Kaliterna Lipovčan

Brief Biography

Ljiljana Kaliterna Lipovčan is the Assistant Director of the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences in Zagreb and a professor of organizational behavior at the University of Zagreb. After she received her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Zagreb in 1989, she took a research position at the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences in Zagreb. She teaches several courses at Croatian Studies at University of Zagreb, at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

She has led several national and international projects (European Social Survey-Round 4; EU COST-ISCH—Individuals, Society, Culture and Health, 2010–2015). She was a member of The National Scientific Council (2004–2007 and 2011–2013), and she served as the President of the National Council for Social Sciences (2004–2007).

Ljiljana Kaliterna Lipovčan has conducted various large-scale investigations of quality of life in Croatia. She has published two monographs and 85 journal articles and book chapters, and edited three conference proceedings. She is a member of the Croatian Association of Psychologists, the Croatian Psychological Chamber and the International Society of Quality of Life Studies (ISQLS).

In 2009, she received a Yearly Award for Science from the Croatian Parliament and Ministry of Science, Education and Sport for co-authoring the Euro foundation's

publication “*Quality of life in Croatia: Key findings from national research*”. In 2008, she was awarded “Marulić: Fiat Psychologia” by Croatian Association of Psychologists for her contributions in applied psychology.

Positive Psychology Contribution

Ljiljana Kaliterna Lipovčan has several research interests, such as subjective indicators of quality of life, psychosocial aspects of aging populations, and the impact of work and working environment on stress. Her main contribution to positive psychology is the development of national indicators of quality of life. She started to work on this topic in 2002. From 2015 to 2019 she led the research project “CROWELL Croatian longitudinal survey of well-being”, which aimed at explaining the relationships between well-being and life outcomes, as well as fluctuations in well-being related to individual differences.

She is best known for her research on well-being using large-scale representative samples of Croatian citizens. She was the first researcher in Croatia who provided data on national indicators of well-being. In 2001, she measured life satisfaction and happiness in the Croatian population for the first time (Kaliterna Lipovčan et al., 2002). Since then, she has conducted eight surveys aimed at exploring happiness, general life satisfaction and satisfaction with different life domains in Croatia. These studies were part of large-scale public opinion surveys conducted by the Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences (for example, Prizmić-Larsen et al., 2011). In 2007, she co-authored the comprehensive review of national research, *Quality of Life in Croatia*, which was published by Eurofound (Bejaković & Kaliterna Lipovčan, 2007). She also published data on trends of quality of life in Croatia for the next six-year period (Kaliterna Lipovčan et al., 2014).

In one of her studies on a representative sample of Croatian citizens, she explored what differs/differentiates between happy and unhappy people (Kaliterna Lipovčan & Prizmić-Larsen, 2015). Happy people were younger, and had higher income and higher education than unhappy ones. When controlling for age, income, and education level, happy individuals were more satisfied with personal and national well-being domains, they reported higher trust in people and institutions and were more active in leisure activities and community life than the unhappy people were.

Majda Rijavec

Brief Biography

Majda Rijavec is a professor at the Faculty of Teacher Education at the University of Zagreb. She teaches graduate and postgraduate courses in educational psychology, positive psychology, organizational psychology, methodology and psychology of tourism. She authored or co-authored 43 books in popular psychology, 13 book chapters, over 90 scientific papers, two university textbooks and numerous popular

articles. She co-authored a university textbook on positive psychology, and the book “*Positive Psychology at Work*” (2009) and co-edited the book “*Positive Psychology in Education*” (Miljković & Rijavec, 2011). She is one of the founders and the president of the Croatian Network of Positive Psychology and a national representative in European Network of Positive Psychology.

She participated in several scientific projects dealing with adolescents’ well-being, academic flow and professional development of teachers. She was the principal investigator on two scientific projects on flow in education.

She widely cooperates with state institutions in educational and business sectors, as well as with non-profit organizations on issues related to leadership, teaching and well-being. She devotes time to the promotion of psychology in media and making scientific psychological knowledge available to public through lectures and articles.

In 1997, she was awarded by the Croatian Psychological Society for exceptional achievements in the promotion of psychology, and the Annual National Award for promotion of psychology by the Croatian Ministry of Science. In 2009, she received an award for psychological book of the year.

Positive Psychology Contribution

In 2002, she conducted her first study on life goals and well-being and published the first paper in Croatia about positive psychology. From that point, her research in positive psychology developed in several directions: life goals and well-being, character strengths, forgiveness, meaningful work and academic flow.

In the area of life goals, she investigated the role of intrinsic and extrinsic life goals in well-being in relation with psychological needs (Brdar et al., 2009a; Rijavec et al., 2006). Unlike in Western countries, both extrinsic and intrinsic life goals contribute to well-being, but intrinsic ones are far more important in that process. Although all three pathways to happiness (pleasant, engaged and meaningful life) have unique contribution to subjective and psychological well-being, extrinsic life goals are related more to pleasant life and intrinsic ones to meaningful life (Brdar et al., 2009b).

In the field of character strengths, she found that strengths of heart contribute the most to well-being (Miljković & Rijavec, 2008) and that different strengths predict life satisfaction of men and women (Brdar et al., 2011).

In the area of flow research, she found that students with low verbal fluency might benefit from cognitive training, which can facilitate their flow in learning experiences, leading to higher grade point average (Ljubin Golub et al., 2016). Although flow experienced during academic activities related to university is less frequent, it is more important for students’ well-being than flow during activities in other areas of life (Rijavec et al., 2016).

She was among the first researchers in the world studying the work orientations of teachers. She found that the great majority of teachers in Croatia and Slovenia still perceive their work as a calling (Rijavec et al., 2016), thus contributing to higher life and job satisfaction.

Another contribution of Majda Rijavec is development of the questionnaire *Beliefs about Costs and Benefits of Forgiveness*. Her research showed that believing in benefits of forgiveness rather than in costs could improve well-being by increasing life satisfaction and lowering negative affect (Rijavec et al., 2013).

The Czech Republic

Vladimír Kebza¹

Brief Biography

Vladimír Kebza was a professor at the Faculty of Business and Economics, Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague and a professor of clinical psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, Charles University in Prague where he earned his Ph.D. in psychology. He taught courses in general psychology and health psychology. He was a lecturer at the Medical Faculty, Charles University (1996–2005) and at the Faculty of Economics and Management, Czech University of Life Sciences (2000–2005).

His main research interest was in the field of mental health. In his research, he focused on psychosocial determinants of health, well-being and its deficiencies, optimal development, and psychological aspects of health-related behavior. He authored the book “*Psychosocial determinants of health*” (Kebza, 2005) and co-authored or coedited seven books (e.g., “*Psychosocial contexts of personal well being*”: Blatný et al., 2005 and “*Depressive disorders in the consulting room of the general practitioner*”: Paclt & Kebza, 2006). He has published more than 120 papers cited within the Web of Science.

Vladimir Kebza was a principal investigator and coordinator of 15 grant projects at the national level and 10 grant projects funded by the European Commission.

Vladimír Kebza participated in the organization of several international conferences. In 2012, he was the president of the 26th Conference of the European Health Psychology Society organized in Prague, and member of Scientific Committee at several international conferences (e.g., tenth European Congress of Psychology, Prague, 2007; 25th Annual Conference of the European Health Psychology Society, Crete, 2011; and the 27th Conference of the European Health Psychology Society, Bordeaux, 2013).

In 2004, he received the Czech National Psychiatric Award and in 2006, he was honored with the Award of Rector of the Charles University in Prague for the best publication in the field of psychology.

¹Vladimir Kebza died in 2017, after the chapter was sent to the book editors.

Positive Psychology Contribution

His research covers three main topics: well-being, resilience, and intervention and prevention of some health-related problems. His work contributed to the understanding of the concepts of well-being and resilience (Kebza & Šolcová, 2011) and development of novel interventions and prevention of depression (Paclt & Kebza, 2006), as well as burnout syndrome and several health-related problems (Kebza & Šolcová, 2015).

Together with his colleagues, he explored well-being of the Czech population (Blatný et al., 2005; Kebza, 2005; Kebza & Šolcová, 2003). The findings showed that the concept of well-being is complex and includes not only cognitive, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual components, but also mental and physical resilience. One of the well-being components relates to eudaimonia. However, fully developed eudaimonia (well-being), and mental health are not available through too easy, dishonest and morally indefensible success (Kebza, 2005). Another empirical study focused on the identification of possible predictors of well-being in a representative sample of the Czech adult population (Šolcová & Kebza, 2005). The results indicate that well-being can be predicted by perceived health state, self-efficacy, locus of control, and education level. Although education is generally not associated with well-being, the results showed that university and high school education contribute to higher subjective well-being.

The research conducted with Iva Šolcová was focused on exploring the prototypical and main concepts of resilience (Kebza & Šolcová, 2011). The authors concluded that in early childhood resilience is linked with motivation, personality characteristics, aptitudes and situational variables. On the other hand, resilience in adulthood comprises two components: (1) control and competence (control over one's individual life, competence, and efficacy), and (2) vitality and well-being (energy, involvement, dedications, and commitment).

Alena Slezáčková

Brief Biography

Alena Slezáčková is an associate professor at the Department of Psychology and Psychosomatics, and the Department of Medical Ethics of the Faculty of Medicine at Masaryk University in Brno. She graduated from the Masaryk University with a degree in psychology and received her doctorate in clinical psychology in 2010. In 2008, Alena Slezáčková was appointed as the research associate at the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University. She teaches health psychology, educational psychology, and positive psychology.

She has been involved in several national and international research projects. Since 2007, she has participated in four research projects financed by the Czech Science Foundation. She is the principal investigator of an international project on social capital and well-being. She has been the country coordinator of the

International Wellbeing Study and of the annual international research project Hope Barometer. She has published 18 journal articles and seven book chapters. In 2012, she published a book titled "*Positive Psychology Guidebook*" in Czech language.

Alena Slezáčková founded the Czech Positive Psychology Centre to promote positive psychology in the Czech Republic. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) and the country representative in the European Network for Positive Psychology. She has served as a member of the editorial boards of five academic journals.

She participated in the organization of four international conferences. She was a conference chair of the two International Conference on Positive Psychology in the Czech Republic, held in Brno in 2012 and 2013. She was a member of the Scientific Committee of the sixth European Conference on Positive Psychology (Moscow, 2012) and a member of the Organizing Committee of the 15th European Conference on Personality Psychology (Brno, 2010).

Positive Psychology Contribution

Her research is focused mainly on well-being, character strengths, life values and hope. In her research on character strengths, she explored the relationship of the use of character strengths with flourishing and academic motivation among university students (Slezáčková & Bobková, 2014). The findings showed that flourishing students are driven by intrinsic motivation and that they use their character strengths. She also participated in the study of the perceived importance of virtues across 14 countries (Van Oudenhoven et al., 2014). Strong evidence was found for national differences in the importance of virtues. Whereas some virtues are country specific (such as generosity in France, ambition in Austria, wisdom in Czech Republic, faith in Malaysia, and peace and certainty in Mexico), there are also some universal virtues (e.g., honesty, respect, kindness, openness, and tolerance).

Another contribution of Alena Slezáčková is her findings related to children's life satisfaction and sources of their happiness and personal wishes. A study of their interests, sources of happiness and wishes emphasize the importance of interpersonal relationships, which are among the main sources of happiness and personal wishes for the future (Slezáčková et al., 2015). She also explored psychosocial determinants of life satisfaction in elementary school children (Slezáčková et al., 2015). It was found that although general life satisfaction does not change with age, two specific components of life satisfaction decrease with age (satisfaction with their own body and appearance). In addition, the quality of relationships with peers and adults is an important source of life satisfaction in pubescence.

Iva Šolcová

Brief Biography

Iva Šolcová is a senior researcher at the Institute of Psychology of the Czech Academy of Sciences. She is a director of the Prague Branch of the Institute (since 2003). After finishing her studies of psychology in Charles University of Prague, she started her career as a clinical psychologist. Since 1985, she has been working at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, initially at the Institute of Physiology (1985–1991), and from 1992 at the Institute of Psychology.

Her main research interests include stress resistance, resilience, psychosocial determinants of health and salutoprotective factors in different contexts and over time. Since 1985, she has been exploring space psychology. Her work in this field has been recognized by international scientific community by electing her for a member of the prestigious International Academy of Astronautics. She has published more than 220 publications (more than 90 in high-impact or highly appreciated peer-reviewed scientific journals).

She was a principal and/or co-principal investigator in 13 funded projects. She has been a national coordinator of the three worldwide studies and several international projects. In 2004, she was awarded the National Psychiatric Award by the Professor Vondráček's Foundation for the best theoretical and research work on the theme of psychological stress.

She was the Executive Editor of the journal *Československá psychologie* (1997–2011), and since 2011, she is the Editor-in-Chief of this journal. She is also a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Adiktologie*. As a member of the scientific committee, she participated in the organization of the tenth European Congress of Psychology (2006–2007), organized in Prague.

Positive Psychology Contribution

Iva Šolcová is best known for her research in resilience, well-being, and stress-related growth. One of her contributions to positive psychology theory is her research on the development and the structure of the concept of resilience. Her study on early roots of resilience in a longitudinal study (Šolcová et al., 2016) showed that active behavior in early childhood positively predicts adult resilience. Moreover, perceived warmth and involvement in parenting are positively related to resilience in adulthood. Data on resilience in adulthood (Šolcová & Kebza, 2011) suggest that a two-factor model (Competence-Control and Vitality/Well-being) may well represent the construct of resilience.

Another contribution of Iva Šolcová comes from her research of internal and external factors associated with well-being. In the student sample (Šolcová & Kebza, 2005), values (conformity, security and benevolence) and basic psychological needs

(autonomy, competence and relatedness) were important for well-being. The independence of self-concept emerged as another core determinant of well-being.

In a population study, Šolcová and Kebza (2013) concluded that lower education decreases the likelihood to experience well-being. Greater investment in education and access to education for all citizens at the same time can be taken as an investment in people's happiness.

Šolcová and colleagues also explored the phenomenon of personal growth and improved psychological functioning after a shared experience of highly challenging situation. In the MARS 500 experiment, the longest hi-fidelity spaceflight simulation to date, it was found that the majority of crewmembers were capable of personal growth in the condition of demanding and stressful simulation of extended space flight and that social growth was the most marked (Šolcová & Vinkhodova, 2015). In another highly demanding situation, a transoceanic cruise on a sail-powered freighter (after the crew spent five weeks of isolation and confinement in extreme conditions), the members displayed positive growth, with cognitive and social growth being most prominent (Šolcová & Tavel, 2017).

Hungary

Tamás Martos

Brief Biography

Tamás Martos is currently a full professor at the University of Szeged, Institute of Psychology. He started his psychological training at the age of 28, when he already had his first degree in architecture. He graduated in 2003, and got a job at the Psychological Institute of the Pazmany Peter Catholic University shortly after he had given up his successful architectural practice. Since then he received his Ph.D. (2010), held teaching and research jobs at different universities as well as conducting private practice as an individual, family and group counselor.

He was one of the founders of the Division for Positive Psychology in the Hungarian Psychological Association in 2011. Since 2016, he has been the head of the Division.

Positive Psychology Contribution

Tamas Martos' research covers three main themes that are distinct but also interrelated. First, he was strongly inspired by the concepts of the Self-determination Theory (SDT) and used these concepts for his scientific investigations on goals and personal projects. He tried to apply these concepts on a relational and social level as well. Second, he approached psychology of religion from a positive psychological point of view, exploring how and to what extent the religiosity and spirituality may

(or may not) contribute to human flourishing. Finally, he advocated and performed a systematic work of translation and adaptation of positive psychological measures in Hungarian.

He adapted and validated the Aspiration Index in order to measure the importance of intrinsic (growth, affiliation and community contribution), extrinsic (wealth, fame and physical appearance) and health-related life aspirations (Martos et al., 2006). His studies included one of the largest samples with the Aspiration Index worldwide—a nationally representative cross-sectional sample of 4841 Hungarian adults. Previous research with the Aspiration Index suggested that the importance of intrinsic life goals is in positive association with indicators of well-being, whereas an orientation toward extrinsic life goals is connected with decreased positive functioning. The work by Martos and Kopp (2012, 2014) extended the scope of previous research by analyzing the role of financial status. Results indicated that the relationship between life goals and well-being is the same for poorer and richer respondents, suggesting that the basic assumptions of Aspiration Index research are also valid when tested at a societal level.

The concept of goal pursuit as a basic human mode of functioning is represented also in another line of research, the study of religiosity and its connections to positive human experiences. Previous research that has linked well-being, meaning in life and religiosity, usually relied on simplistic unidimensional models. Therefore, in a series of studies, he explored different modes and pathways of this connection. Results showed that life appears more meaningful when religiosity is present and its character is complex and open (Martos et al., 2011, 2013).

In recent years, he became a part of networks of scholars in the field of positive psychology as well. Foremost, he worked in the international EHHI (Eudaimonic and Hedonic Happiness Investigation) collaboration, led by Antonella Delle Fave that had already resulted in a paper on cultural variations of happiness definitions (Delle Fave et al., 2016).

In a series of papers he translated, validated, and published several well-known positive psychological measures (e.g., Martos et al., 2006, 2014). He is also the scientific partner for Profil Training Ltd. and Eszter Kovács, CEO. They have collaborated on the development and publishing of a new model and assessment tool for optimistic explanatory mindset.

Attila Oláh

Brief Biography

Attila Oláh is a professor emeritus at the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the Eötvös Lorand University, Budapest (ELTE). He obtained his doctoral degree in psychology in 1993 from ELTE. He is the leader of the Positive Psychology Research Group of the Faculty of Education and Psychology, and the leader of the Positive Psychology Module of the Psychological Doctoral School of the Eötvös Lorand University.

His research interest is on coping and stress, psychological immunity, measurement of emotional intelligence and post-traumatic experience in childhood. In the field of positive psychology, he studies flow (social flow, EEG markers of the flow experience), global well-being, psychological immunity, protective factors and positive traits of personality. He published two books in English about flow, coping and positive traits of personality (Oláh, 2005; Oláh & Nagy, 2014), four books in Hungarian and 52 articles related to his research projects in positive psychology.

He organized several scientific conferences in Hungary. For instance, he was the Local Program Chair of the sixth Biennale Conference of the European Association for Research on Adolescence, the member of the organizing committee of the first International Positive Psychological Summit in Washington, DC, in 2002, and the member of the Scientific Committee of the third World Congress on Positive Psychology, in 2013 in Los Angeles. He is presently the Dean of the Faculty of Psychology and Education of ELTE, Budapest and President of the Hungarian Psychological Association.

Positive Psychology Contribution

Attila Oláh is well known for his research on flow experience in interpersonal context. His study (Magyaródi & Oláh, 2015) of the most common solitary and social flow activities expanded the Dynamic Interactionism-related Flow Theory. Work and sports were found to be the most common flow-inducing social activities. Analyses reveal that optimal experience during a social interaction is determined by the perceived level of challenges, the perceived level of cooperation, the immediateness and clarity of the feedback, and the level of the skill. This study may contribute to broadening the purpose of positive psychology as it focuses on the interpersonal level in relation to flow experience, which, in turn, may also support a higher level of well-being.

Furthermore, in a biological study of the spectral EEG activity of flow and antiflow states (boredom and anxiety) he and his colleagues found that generally under the flow condition the overall cortex activity is lower than in the anxiety condition, but higher than in the boredom condition regarding delta, theta, beta, and gamma spectra (Soltész et al., 2012).

Another contribution of Attila Oláh is development of the Psychological Immune System Theory (Oláh, 2004) grounded in positive psychology. He defined the Psychological Immune System (PIS) as a multidimensional but integrated unit of personal resilience resources or adaptive capacities that provide immunity against damage and stress. He developed Psychological Immune Competence Inventory (PICI) with 16 scales for measuring protective personality traits (psychological antibodies: i.e. positive thinking, sense of control, sense of coherence, creative self-concept, sense of self-growth, etc.) which are integrated in the PIS. Research with this scale indicated that culture which implants psychological immunity contributes to life extension even more than material investment (Oláh et al., 2010).

Máté Szondy

Brief Biography

Máté Szondy is a clinical psychologist, family therapist and an assistant professor at Karoli Gaspar University in Budapest. He was born in 1979 and earned his doctoral degree in psychology in 2009 from Eötvös Lorand University, Budapest.

As a psychologist, he started his professional career at the Correctional Institute of Budapest, then at an orphanage home. He has been working in private practice since 2010. His clinical psychologist training at the Semmelweis University was based on Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. After that, he completed training of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. He integrated the methods of third-wave of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy with the theory and practice of Family Therapy.

In 2003, he taught one of the first university courses on a positive psychology topic in Hungary (The Psychology of Subjective Well-Being). Since then he taught courses about optimism, forgiveness and mindfulness. He was the founder of the Division for Positive Psychology of the Hungarian Psychology Association in 2011 and the head of it until 2016. He organized Mindfulness Symposium, the very first scientific event about mindfulness in Hungary in 2014. So far, he has written four books about the psychology of happiness (2010), mindfulness (2012), forgiveness (2014) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Szondy & Bartha, 2016), and dozens of articles to disseminate knowledge about positive psychology. He believes that the science of the psychology has to get out from the “ivory tower” of the academia and that the messages of (positive) psychology have to become the part of the common knowledge. Because of this, he has placed great emphasis on publications available to the wider public.

Positive Psychology Contribution

In his work, Máté Szondy has aimed to integrate and balance practice and research. As a clinical psychologist, he has worked in private practice where he mainly has used the mindfulness and acceptance based methods of the third wave of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. In his view, the attitude of mindfulness-based methods can protect us from the potential dangers of the “happiness fetish”. He believes in the integrative view of positive psychology and clinical psychology suggesting that to have a full life we have to be able to experience and accept both the bright and the dark side of human existence.

He wrote several review papers on optimism. In the first one, he argued that a negative relationship exists between optimism and immunity if the stressor is uncontrollable or the stressor persists despite coping efforts (Szondy, 2004). In the second, he argued that positive emotions and strengths could get a more and more important role during the process of therapy (Szondy, 2011).

Turkey

Hasan Bacanli

Brief Biography

Hasan Bacanli is a professor at Yıldız Technical University, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, in İstanbul. He was born in 1961. After graduating from Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences in 1982, he earned his master degree in 1984 and doctorate degree in 1990. He worked as a guidance teacher at Mardin Guidance and Research Centre (1985–1986), as a research assistant at Selçuk University (1986–1992), and from 1992–2002 he worked at Gazi University, Faculties of Technical Education and Education. He was the Dean of Faculty of Education at Biruni University in 2014–2015.

In 1994, he was a visiting scholar at the Ohio State University in Columbus, USA. He was a member of the Ministry of Education, Board of Education in 2003–2004. He is a member of the Green Crescent Science Council and UNESCO Turkey National Committee.

Hasan Bacanli authored five books in Turkish, including *Educational psychology* (2013) and *Learning social skills* (2008). He has published articles in various journals on self and personality. He has defined his subject as “the social and cultural influences on self”. His interests include thinking training (Quadruple Thinking Model) and values education (Value Consciousness Approach). He has also worked on the experience and perceived causes of loneliness and coping with it. Within positive psychology, he has researched topics such as hope, humor and well-being.

Positive Psychology Contribution

Hasan Bacanli contributed to novel positive psychological theories by attempting to merge positive psychology and transpersonal psychology. He introduced a concept “huzur” (*tranquility*) that stems from Self-Discrepancy Theory (Bacanli, 2016). He proposed that sustainable happiness could be achieved by integrating real, ideal and moral selves. Any incongruence among the selves produces anxiety and guilt. Moreover, sustainable happiness can be achieved by accepting, respecting and fostering the partner’s self-conception on moral self. His latest interest has been to introduce Islamic positive psychology into positive psychology theory and research.

Another contribution to positive psychology is his research about hope. He conceptualized and tested the Quadruple Thinking Model by adding hopeful thinking to Lipman’s model of perfect thinking (Critical, Creative, Caring thinking). According to his model, perfect thinking can be performed only with a hopeful beginning (Bacanli et al., 2011). The theory states that in education it is necessary to make students critical without being destructive, creative enough to balance imaginations and reality, careful enough to see themselves and others at the same level,

and hopeful enough to realize these. In that way, right thinking systems will be as useful for humanity as for any specific country.

He also contributed to positive psychology in the field of humor, personality and well-being (İlhan & Bacanlı, 2007). His study showed that personality traits, such as extroversion and neuroticism, and self-efficacy have most influence on well-being, while only self-enhancing humor had effects on subjective well-being indirectly via the mediating role of self-efficacy.

He also provided a more recent adaptation and validation for the Turkish form of the Dispositional Hope Scale (DHS) that was developed by C. R. Snyder (Tarhan & Bacanlı, 2015). His study about defining the concept of hope revealed the importance of positive expectations, giving meaning to life and setting achievable goals (Tarhan & Bacanlı, 2016). Hoping is not a passive waiting; making an effort is necessary to achieve goals, especially while dealing with challenges.

M. Engin Deniz

Brief Biography

M. Engin Deniz is a professor at Yıldız Technical University, Department of Educational Sciences, Division of Guidance and Psychological Counseling in İstanbul. He received his master's and doctoral degrees in counseling and guidance from Selçuk University at Konya, Turkey. He has authored or co-authored 14 books and approximately 80 journal articles. He has undertaken teaching and research work in the field of positive psychology, developmental guidance, social skills and child psychology. He has successfully completed two research projects of the The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey and the project of European Union. He has been ranked 531st out of the 2000 most successful scientists in Turkey.

He was one of the founding members of the Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association. He was the Dean of the Faculties of Education and Technical Education at Düzce University (2012–2015).

He edited and wrote some parts in five books including *Development in early childhood* (2017) and *The program book of developing life skills for risk groups* (Deniz et al., 2012). Some of his research topics in positive psychology include compassion for others, self-compassion, mindfulness, emotional intelligence, well-being, and life satisfaction.

Positive Psychology Contribution

He contributed to positive psychology mainly with the construction of novel positive psychology assessment tools and establishment of novel positive psychology interventions. Together with his colleagues, he adapted the Self-Compassion Scale (Deniz et al., 2008) and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Özyeşil et al.,

2011). These scales were widely used in Turkey in research related to well-being and mental health as well by counselors and psychiatrists in their work with clients.

His research on social safeness and psychological vulnerability in Turkish youth revealed the important role of life satisfaction (Satici et al., 2016). It suggested that psychological counselors and other professionals might wish to develop programs to enhance life satisfaction, which will ultimately help to increase one's level of perceived social safeness, while strengthening resilience.

He has developed a life skills psycho-education program for at-risk groups based on positive psychology (Deniz et al., 2012). At the time of this writing, he is involved in compassion-focused psycho-education program for university students.

His research on compassion, mindfulness and social connectedness has important practical implications for experts in helping professions (Deniz & Sümer, 2010; Satici et al., 2016). These studies suggest that both prevention and counselling interventions should be applied to increase the self-compassion of students with high levels of depression, anxiety and stress. They also stress the importance of programs based on mindfulness and focusing on building social connectivity as well as addressing loneliness to increase students' subjective well-being level.

Ali Eryılmaz

Brief Biography

Ali Eryılmaz is an associate professor at Yıldız Technical University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Sciences, Division of Guidance and Psychological Counseling. He graduated from Kırklareli 60th Year High School for Health/Nurse Professions in 1995. He continued his education at Gazi University Faculty of Education Counseling and Guidance Department until graduation in 2001. He earned his master's degree in 2004 and his doctoral degree in 2009 in the educational psychology program at Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey.

He completed his basic and master education degree in positive psychotherapy from the World Positive Psychotherapy Association in the years between 2001 and 2010. He started his career as a nurse at the Ministry of Health (1996–2003). Later he was employed as a nurse (1996–2003), as a counselor in Pursaklar High School for Health Professions and Ankara High School (2003–2010) and as a counselor in the Turkish Armed Forces (2011–2012).

He taught courses in positive psychotherapy, positive psychology, developmental psychology and individual and group counseling at both undergraduate and graduate levels. His academic interests include topics such as subjective well-being, positive psychotherapy, motivation at school, class engagement, and initiating romantic intimacy. He published many articles in national and international journals. In addition, Ali Eryılmaz has three books including *"The reference guide of happiness for everyone: The positive psychology from theory to practice"* (2014), and two more books on individual psychological counselling.

Positive Psychology Contribution

Ali Eryılmaz developed two models of adolescents' subjective well-being. These models propose that for the subjective well-being of high school students, a combination of strategies for increasing well-being, reasons for living and satisfaction of needs is essential (i.e., Eryılmaz, 2012). Therefore, school psychologists, teachers and school administrators should organize learning environments to satisfy the needs of adolescents.

His research is focused on personal and environmental factors that affect adolescents' subjective well-being, among others self-esteem and optimism, family structure, school burnout, positive future expectations, life goals and subjective well-being increasing strategies, teacher types and academic achievement. In a series of studies, he investigated how adolescents protect their subjective well-being with mental control, relations with their environment and the need for religious beliefs (i.e., Eryılmaz, 2015a). Quantitative findings showed that participation in religious activities is linked to higher life satisfaction and positive affect. Qualitative findings showed that high school students have better subjective well-being when involved in religious activities.

Ali Eryılmaz developed several positive psychology scales such as a four-dimensional Adolescents' Subjective Well-being Scale (Eryılmaz, 2009) and Adolescents subjective well-being increasing strategies scale (Eryılmaz, 2010). The former includes receiving positive reactions from the environment, implementing religious beliefs, giving positive reactions to the environment, satisfying demands, and preserving subjective well-being.

He conducted several programs for increasing well-being using homework, individual counseling practices and peer counselling. The evaluation of these programs showed they raised the subjective well-being levels of university students (Eryılmaz, 2015b). He also developed a teaching method aimed to increase subjective well-being levels of university students and to increase their engagement in the classroom in terms of cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects (Eryılmaz, 2015c). This teaching method increased the subjective well-being and academic achievement of university students and increased their engagement during the lessons.

Future of Positive Psychology in Eastern Europe

How Can Positive Psychology Help People Living in this Region Live More Positive Lives?

All countries in this region struggle with various economic and political problems, as well as with specific crises. According to Brdar et al. (2009a), the transition with its accompanying economic changes generated big social and political diversities,

which resulted in increased unemployment, rising social inequalities, social disorganization, and heightened corruption. All these changes happened in a relatively short time and people could not adapt so quickly. The rapid transition resulted in increased stress and increased short-term adult male mortality rates. Life satisfaction dropped and only recovered somewhat by a few years later. According to data from the World Values Surveys (Wave 3, 1995-1998; Wave 4, 1999-2004; Wave 5 2005-2008), people in Eastern European countries had significantly lower life satisfaction than people in Western European countries. Turkey, on the other hand, is additionally faced with such problems as political turmoil, terrorist attacks and a great number of refugees. Keeping these problems in mind, in this region there are several possible pathways for positive psychology to improve the lives of people living there.

Building Optimism and Other Strengths

Positive psychology does not promise miracles, but offers empirical evidence that can improve people's lives. Among positive psychologists, there is much creativity and enthusiasm that is a much-needed approach to life for people in this region. Various forms of popularizing positive psychology scientific findings (such as public campaigns) can increase public awareness about the importance of positive emotions, character strengths, the benefits of positive thinking, the relationships between well-being and health, and other topics, which can be applied in daily life.

Building Positive Community

Each country in the region could benefit from findings in positive psychology related to building positive community. In this region, Turkey and Croatia are more collectivist cultures, while Hungary and Czech Republic are more individualistic ones (Hofstede et al., 2010). In collectivist cultures, people are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty. In the period of transition, elements of individualism were introduced in collectivist countries resulting in a contradictory set of individualistic and collectivist values (i.e., in Croatia; Tomić-Koludrović & Petrić, 2007). Old group ties started to loosen and many people felt like they were losing social support networks and not being able to develop new close relationships. Positive psychology could help people to build more positive relationships in family, neighborhood, school or workplace.

Further, some countries witnessed violence or terrorism (i.e., in Turkey). Positive psychology, which emphasizes empathy, compassion, altruism, hope and resilience would be helpful in getting over some problems related to these situations, especially if these ideas are disseminated by members of academic community.

Research has shown that economic growth matters for increasing well-being. However, in the long run, social capital (as measured by social trust, participation in groups and associations and social gatherings) matters more (Bartolini et al., 2015). In all regions, trust in people is rather low (World Values Survey, Wave 3). Positive psychology can help with building trust and social connections (i.e., with promoting volunteering and raising awareness about benefits of kindness and generosity).

Further, positive psychological science can contribute to reinforce those naturally existing human niches (specific communities, social institutions, families, schools, and working teams) that are already functioning in a positive way. We need much more to study how living niches can be supported and how can the growth, which is inherent in all living systems, be understood and nurtured.

Breaking Down Prejudices towards Psychotherapy and Counselling

Prejudices towards psychotherapy and counselling are still present in all countries in the region. For a great number of people, seeing a therapist equates with “being mad” or seriously disturbed. Since positive psychology is focused on individual strengths (not weaknesses), it may help people to more easily seek help from the therapist.

Developing Positive Psychology Programs for Children, Youth and Other Vulnerable Groups

Children and youth are especially vulnerable groups in all countries in this region. Movement toward a free market economy in all countries and greater individualism has focused attention away from the role of society to protect and provide care for the most vulnerable members of society, especially children. Therefore, in the field of education, all children and youth would benefit from incorporation of a positive psychology courses in curricula at all levels of education.

Prevention programs based on positive psychological principles have been developed in the countries of the region on smaller or larger scales. These programs do not operate in the context of “pathology model” but in the context of prevention by helping children and youth to enhance functioning, competence, resilience and overall mental health. Enhancing these positive psychology programs for all vulnerable groups, such as older people or immigrants and refugees, and structuring them in a more systematic way is needed.

Major Obstacles that May Prevent Positive Psychology from Growing

Some of the major obstacles that are currently preventing positive psychology from growing apply to all behavioral sciences, whereas some of them concern only positive psychology. Nevertheless, all these obstacles hinder the development of the field.

The vast majority of research in behavioral sciences has studied samples from Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD) societies (Henrich et al., 2010). These societies are among the least representative populations for generalizing research findings to all people and all other cultures. This leads to a biased picture of positive psychology. Some obstacles to positive psychology growth, like language barriers and financial issues, also lead to less dissemination and less application of positive psychology knowledge.

Negative Attitudes of Academic Community and General Public

Critiques of positive psychology, justified to a greater or lesser extent, lead to negative attitudes in the academic community and general public. One source of negative attitudes is the term “positive psychology”, implying that the rest of psychology is negative. Such dichotomous thinking is widely spread within the academic community. The other major critique concerns the focus on strong sides of individuals, while missing out their weak sides (e.g., Held, 2002).

Perceived commercialization of positive psychology can also be a source of negative attitudes, because “professionals” without sufficient knowledge, like entrepreneurs and life coaches, apply research findings and positive psychology interventions.

Mental Health Professionals

Psychiatry is the major profession in the mental health services. The status of psychiatrists is institutionally-based and they work in both private and state specialty hospitals. In some countries, psychologists are also included in health care teams based in community centers and in hospitals. However, in some countries the qualifications of mental health professionals do not include psychologists. For example, in Turkey only psychiatrists are approved mental health professionals. Other mental health professionals need to be supervised by psychiatrists. Such a position prevents the development of positive psychology in the field of mental health.

Financial Issues

There are large differences across countries in financial support for research and interventions in the field of positive psychology. Many researchers in poorer countries have problems in accessing major databases, books, international conferences and support for publication fees. Thus, financial issues have an impact on the quality and quantity of the research and on the application of the findings. Money enables higher quality and quantity of research.

Moreover, because wealthy societies are more interested in the quality of life, research findings that can increase well-being are more likely to be applied. Whereas developed and affluent cultures place greater importance on self-expression, post-materialist values and quality of life, poorer cultures prioritize materialist values that emphasize economic and physical security (Inglehart, 2007).

Cultural Values

Culture shapes the way people pursue happiness (Ford et al., 2015). Collectivist cultures prioritize the needs of a group or a community over individual needs (for example, Kagitcibasi, 1997). Hence, group or community happiness is more important than individual happiness. On the contrary, individualistic societies encourage people to pursue personal happiness. These two aspects of culture are related to ways people think about themselves and sources of happiness (Markus & Kitayama, 2010) and to their construal of happiness (Uchida & Ogihara, 2012). In individualistic cultures, people have independent self-construals, whereas interdependent construal of the self is typical for collectivist cultures. Croatia and Turkey are more collectivist countries than Czech Republic and Hungary, which are more individualistic countries (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Many of the notions associated with a positive psychology are deeply ingrained within Western cultures, and do not necessarily apply to other cultures. Since the majority of studies originate from Western countries, the aspects of well-being important for other cultures may be neglected.

Language Barrier

Researchers in many countries are generally well-informed about the development of positive psychology in Western countries and literature published in English. Considering that a large number cannot read non-English publications or publish their papers in English, they actually do not contribute to the general knowledge. On the other hand, researchers increasingly publish in English due to the pressure to

“publish or perish”. Consequently, fewer and fewer publications are available to national professionals and practitioners.

Things that Need to Be Realized in Order to Enable Positive Psychologists to Gain a Stronger and More Effective Presence

In the history of psychology, a number of different approaches were developed, but only some of them have survived. Positive psychology is now on the turning point that can result either in its growth or in its withering. The success of positive psychology in the future depends on overcoming the major obstacles that may prevent positive psychology from growing. Setting the right goals for the future is equally important.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, one of the founders of positive psychology, addressed this issue in his paper “The promise of positive psychology”: “. . . if we don’t want this perspective to be extinguished as quickly as meteors are extinguished, we need to make sure that it is based on sound principles and good research.” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009, p. 204). He suggested that in the future we need to go beyond individual well-being and highlighted three main goals for positive psychology: helping social justice, helping the planet, and helping complexity of consciousness.

In the following text we will try to suggest solutions to major obstacles addressed in the previous paragraph.

Negative attitudes of academic community and general public Researchers and practitioners should always keep in mind critiques and criticisms of positive psychology. Appreciation of criticism would not only mitigate negative attitudes but also encourage positive attitudes. The researchers should clearly explain the advantages and limitations of positive psychology and address the major critics of positive psychology in their public speeches. It is also important that only well-educated practitioners apply research findings and positive psychology interventions. Therefore, national positive psychology associations should decide on requirements for approved professionals in positive psychology and regulate their education.

Financial issues One solution to this problem is cooperation with international institutions that could provide financial support for international research projects. Positive psychologists need to encourage institutions, which are financed by public funds, to support positive psychology research, because it can enable people to live lives that are more positive.

Mental health professionals and language barrier Cooperation with researchers from other disciplines (e.g. medicine, sociology and economics) can provide a wider perspective. Furthermore, worldwide cooperation of positive psychologists would contribute to positive psychology knowledge. It can expand the research from the WEIRD societies (Henrich et al., 2010) to more representative samples in other

cultures. Moreover, international cooperation could be one way to resolve the language barrier. Researchers from different countries can work together on positive psychology projects and publish joint papers. However, it is also important to publish in national languages to keep practitioners informed on contemporary knowledge in the field. Therefore, countries should stimulate scientists to also publish in a national language and adequately evaluate such accomplishments.

Cultural values Positive psychologists need to learn more about values in other cultures. Different cultures can learn from each other. For example, collectivist cultures emphasize interconnectedness and the welfare of the group over individual well-being. In such cultures, relationships with other members of the group play a central role in each person's identity. On the other hand, individualistic cultures emphasize the importance of individual identity and individual well-being. Whereas individualistic cultures could promote social well-being, collectivist cultures could consider the importance of individual well-being.

Resource Page for Readers

Leading Active Positive Psychologists

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Chapter 10

Positive Psychology in Russia

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Russia has always had strong intellectual traditions. Since the 1930's some ideological isolation was added to this; for this reason, for better or for worse, psychology in Russia through the last 80 years has been influenced by the world mainstream psychology less than in other European countries and was more based on indigenous grounds.

Happiness has never been the focus of human strivings in Russia. A popular line by Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837), who is acknowledged as the Russian poet most representative of the “Russian soul,” culture, and mentality of modern age, goes: “There is no happiness on Earth, only peace and will.” Since the Russian population at large has never lived in comfortable conditions, it is a bearable level of difficulty, rather than enjoyment, that is considered “normal” in this country. When the first author visited the U.S.A. and used his standard way of approving things by saying “not bad,” it surprised American colleagues for whom only “fine” was OK. But if one’s reference point is “bad,” then “not bad” is definitely good. If “good” is taken for granted, the whole scale is different. As articulated by a person from Poland (where the mentality is rather close to the Russian one in this respect): “When Americans say it was great, I know it was good. When they say it was good, I know it was okay. When they say it was okay, I know it was bad” (quoted after Wierzbicka, 2004, p. 41). Levontina & Zalizniak (2001, p. 297) go on to state, “Indeed, the difference between the Russian *sčastliv*, *sčast’e* and the English *happy*, *happiness* is so great that it makes one doubt whether it is right to regard these words

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as translation equivalents.” They note that, unlike English “happiness,” which denotes an everyday emotion, the Russian “schastye” refers to an existential ideal, and the Russian word “dovolen” (“content”) would be a closer equivalent to “happy”.

However, another aspect of positive living, namely, meaning, was highly relevant in Russia at all times. Meaning was at the center of discussions of Russian religious philosophers of the late 19 h-early twentieth century. The most prominent of them was Nikolai Berdyaev. These philosophers criticized the utilitarian statement that human life is about happiness, stating instead that it is about meaning. Their argumentation on this topic was very close to the one put forth by Victor Frankl several decades later (see Leontiev, 2005 for details). In Russian psychology the role of meaning in the regulation of activity and cognitive processes was systematically investigated in the 1970s–1980s. This then relates to another important original tradition, rather influential in Russia today, of the psychology of self-regulation.

We shall begin with the historical and cultural context influencing both the intellectual tradition and everyday mentality of Russians. The second section of the chapter will discuss the role of positive emotions in Russian life and culture based on available survey data and cross-cultural findings. The third section will provide a brief review of recent research relevant to Positive Psychology.

Positive Ideas in Russian Intellectual Tradition

The folk conceptions of happiness in traditional Russian culture are emotionally ambivalent. The Russian word for “happiness” is “schastye”, which is etymologically related to “uchast”, “one’s lot” (see Dzhidaryan, 2013). The dialectic relationship and interplay of positive and negative sides of life in Russian mentality is perfectly articulated in proverbs and sayings, such as “There would be no happiness if unhappiness did not help it,” “There is no evil without some good in it,” and “Escaping from grief—meeting no happiness.” Happiness thus appears as a result of overcoming difficulties and suffering, a kind of compensatory award.

Philosophical analysis of the Russian notion of happiness describes it as an interplay of the concepts of joy, fate, and activity (Lapukhina, 2006). The emotional aspect of happiness refers to a merry celebration of enjoyment that people strive to share with their fellows. The irrational nature of Russian happiness is manifested in its reliance on fate, God, or good luck. Predestination is also important, as illustrated by another proverb: “Don’t come handsome into the world, but come happy.” However, personal activity is also seen as important in attaining and maintaining happiness: “Everyone is a blacksmith of one’s happiness” (Kupchenko, 2012). In other words, Russian happiness is hardly possible without some activity.

For centuries, Orthodox Christianity dominated Russian intellectual life to a much greater degree than its Catholic and Protestant counterparts did in Western Europe. Before the nineteenth century, one can hardly find any philosophical endeavors in Russia transcending the religious agenda, let alone developing

independently of it (though the issues of Russian identity and national destiny were combined with it in some cases). The great Russian writers (above all, Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky) were more broad-minded and influential than Russian philosophers in their discussion of philosophical and psychological issues. This is why the work of many Russian philosophers of the early twentieth century stems from Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, rather than from the Western European philosophical tradition.

Tolstoy's *My Confessions* was probably the first intellectual analysis of the problem of meaning in European thought. The book was completed in 1882 but was prohibited from being published because of the author's critical stance toward the official religion, and it was only in 1906 that it appeared in print for the first time. In mature adulthood, at the peak of his success and happiness, the author (then a very popular writer with growing international fame, financial security and a loving family) found himself facing the question, "What is the meaning of life?" (Tolstoy, 1983, p. 115). After a long period of seeking some answer, Tolstoy made two main discoveries that he explicated in this essay. First, many thinkers had tried to figure out what a good life should be, aiming to arrive at a universally valid answer. Tolstoy had also tried this approach (and failed) until he came to a realization that the question about the meaning of life can only be posed with respect to an individual life of one's own. The second insight was that meaning is a matter of living, rather than that of reflection; meaningful living is a precondition for a meaning of life. Tolstoy concluded: "What is necessary for making sense of life is, first of all, that the life itself be not meaningless and not evil, and then, after this, the reason to understand it" (ibid., p. 147).¹ These two insights also underlie some of the later psychological theories of life meaning (Adler, 1980; Frankl, 1973).

Probably the deepest source of Tolstoy's philosophical insights is his *Philosophical Journal*, which contains the notes made by the writer for himself between 1901 and 1910, the year of his death (Tolstoy, 2003). The starting point of his meditations was the distinction between inauthentic life, which lacks the genuine properties of living but is nevertheless called "life" by the majority, and the "isles" of authentic life. In fact, Tolstoy distinguished three, rather than two, kinds of life: "(1) vegetative, unconscious life; (2) life in the awareness of oneself as a separate being; (3) life in the awareness of oneself as a divine essence within the limits of a person" (Tolstoy, 2003, p. 22). The question *Why live?* is the central one; all of a person's beliefs stem from the answer to this question (ibid., p. 30).

Dostoyevsky's intellectual agenda was, in part, similar to that of Tolstoy. He also denied passive happiness, devoid of meaning and effort: "People should understand that there is no happiness in idleness, that ineffective thought will fade, that one cannot love one's neighbor without giving to him, that living without contributing is abominable and that *happiness consists in the pursuit of happiness, rather than in happiness itself*" (Dostoyevsky, 1989, p. 136).

¹All the translations from Russian sources are made by the authors.

Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky gave a strong impetus to the generation of philosophers active at the turn of the century. The so-called Russian religious philosophy of the late 19th—early 20th centuries grew from Orthodox Christian roots and took the form of a mighty stream of moral philosophy teachings, starting from the 1890s. In the early 1920s, all of the outstanding representatives of this tradition were forced to emigrate. Although they continued their work in exile until the 1950s, their most important writings date back to the period between 1890 and 1930. The most prominent of these authors, who failed to draw a borderline between philosophical and religious discourse, were Vladimir Soloviev, Rev. Sergey Bulgakov, Lev Karsavin, Evgeny Trubetskoi, Semen Frank, Lev Shestov, Vassily Rozanov, Nikolai Losskiy, and Nikolai Berdyaev; they represent the whole spectrum of discourses, from mystical and irrational ones to those modern and rational. Many (though not all) teachings within this tradition explicitly depart from the Christian ideal, seen as the only alternative to utilitarian ethics. A common theme for many of these authors was the criticism of the utilitarian “striving for happiness” principle of human conduct; the principle of striving for meaning was proposed instead.

The criticism of the utilitarian moral philosophy based on the idea of *eudemonia* takes a substantial place in the writings of many representatives of this tradition. No ethics can be deduced from the pursuit of happiness principle, because the concept of happiness, like those of utility and pleasure, has no moral nature in itself (Vladimir Soloviev, as quoted by Tareev, 1901/1994, p. 134). Many authors considered the idea of happiness as being too indefinite to be a guiding principle of human conduct. Mikhail Tareev stated that all kinds of mutually contradictory teachings followed from the happiness principle (Tareev, 1901/1994, p. 134), Rozanov noted that this principle does not state what object should activity focus on, in order to provide satisfaction. “‘Happiness’ is a general term, in which an indefinite multitude of separate goals are merged together, the goals that a human being sets for him/herself every minute and feels satisfied, i.e. happy, when reaches them’ (Rozanov, 1892/1994, p. 41). Berdyaev (1931b/1993) has even called happiness “the most meaningless of all human words. No criterion and no measure for happiness does exist, and no comparison of the happiness of one person to the happiness of another is possible” (p. 77).

Not only logical considerations, but also, paradoxically, ethical ones made the idea of happiness unacceptable for moral philosophy. Berdyaev points at the inevitable conflict between freedom and happiness (*ibid.*, p. 99), at the connection of the striving for happiness to the fear of losing it. “Eudemonistic ethics, be it earthly or heavenly eudemonism, is, in the end, the ethics of fear, for the person is anxious about the happiness of one’s own and that of others; the happiness is subject to dangers from all directions and is bought at the price of opportunism in judgment and action. If I have set happiness as the goal for myself, I am doomed to fear all the time” (*ibid.*, p. 157). Moreover, a stable and enduring happiness is hardly possible in our world; hence, people who are too happy, quiet, and satisfied, appear as shallow, limited in their strivings, indifferent to human suffering, and self-satisfied. “Bliss, the state of paradise, bothers us as a stop in the movement of the spirit, as the cessation of the endless striving and seeking, as self-satisfaction and indifference to the grief of

others and to the existence of hell. The state of paradise means nurturance from the tree of life and ignorance of the good and the evil. . .” (ibid., p. 247–248).

Some of the teachings belonging to this tradition proposed meaning as the guiding principle, alternative to that of pleasure or happiness. This fundamental opposition was most clearly conceptualized by Vassily Rozanov (1892/1994): “Twofold may be human life: unconscious and conscious. The former is conceived as life governed by *causes*; the latter as life governed by *a goal*” (p. 21). In the context of unconscious life, consciousness plays a technical function, helping to define the ways of conduct and find the easiest paths; in conscious life, consciousness plays a central part, as it chooses the direction of the succession of acts and arranges them according to a plan.

Goal and meaning are often seen in this tradition as essentially the same. “Questioning on the meaning of life is the same as questioning on the valuable life goal” (Vvedenski, 1896/1994, p. 98). Having analyzed the notions of meaning and goal from the logical standpoint, Alexander Vvedenski concluded that meaning of anything lies necessarily beyond the thing itself. “It is logically justified to believe in the meaning of life only in case we believe that our life is a way leading us to an absolutely valuable goal located outside our life and fulfilled through its mediation” (ibid. p. 100). This transcendent quality is an important feature of life meaning, or life goal. “A judgment from the standpoint of meaning always presupposes elevation over the object of judgment” (Berdyayev, 1931b/1993, p. 37). This is why human beings may bear suffering, inasmuch as the latter has meaning: “The suffering, meaning and goal of which are within awareness, is quite different from the suffering without goal and meaning” (Berdyayev, 1931a/1992, p. 91). In a special paper (Leontiev, 2005) we analyzed the similarity of these arguments to V. Frankl’s later criticism of the pleasure principle.

The Soviet era (1917–1991) was the time of monopolistic Marxist ideology. The ideological control became total in the early 1930s, though the pressure on non-Marxist thinkers started earlier. It was an ideology of collectivism and of self-sacrifice for the sake of the future ideal Communist society. Everyone was to become happy once Communism would be established; before this, an awareness of contributing to this process was enough. There were no other valid reasons to be happy and this was a reason for a Russian to be happy, no matter how hard the circumstances. A meme coined by a character from a very popular movie *Pokrovsky Gate* (filmed in the 1980s but describing the 1950s), goes: “One should live for conscience, not for enjoyment.” A more or less notable economic improvement and emerging interest for individual consumption that facilitated a more hedonistic worldview only became apparent in the 1960s.

In the USSR until the 1990s, social conformism was seen as good and critical thinking as bad; hence, there was no space for positive ideas in psychology. At the same time, the ideas of meaning, activity, and self-regulation as mechanisms underlying specifically human forms of conduct have been at the center of post-war Soviet psychology, based on Lev Vygotsky’s ideas of higher, mediated, forms of human functioning, Nikolai Bernstein’s models of self-regulation, and Alexei N. Leontiev’s activity theory approach and his theory of personal meaning.

What Is Russian Happiness? Positive Emotions and Emotional Regulation in Russian Mind

Visitors to Russia often form the impression that Russians are restrained or even gloomy: shopkeepers, subway-riders, public officials tend to be stony-faced and often bad-tempered. Travel blogs keep asking the question “Why Don’t Russians Smile?” (Golubeva, 2014; Sternin, 2015). Such experiences and anecdotes raise the question of whether Russians are universally less happy, compared to members of Western cultures.

In international comparative studies Russia typically demonstrates below-average well-being scores (Diener, 2000; Diener & Oishi, 2004) that are also significantly below the expectations based on economic indicators alone (Inglehart et al., 2008). Systematic country-level research on well-being in the USSR was impossible for political reasons: according to Communist party propaganda, all Soviet citizens were expected to welcome their life with “a feeling of deep satisfaction” (Dushenko, 1996). The only available findings from the Tambov region (later shown to be representative of the country as a whole) indicate that in 1982 the reported levels of life satisfaction in the USSR were quite high, on par with Western European countries, such as Spain and West Germany, only slightly below the levels of the USA and Sweden, and significantly above the expectations based on GDP.

However, life satisfaction declined throughout the 1980s and 1990s (from above 7 to 4.4 on an 11-point scale), placing Russia among the world’s least-satisfied countries by the end of the 1990s (Inglehart et al., 2008). This drop can be explained by the traumatic experience of economic decline and social upheaval associated with the downfall of the Communist system (e.g., changing expectations, insecurity, rising social inequality); a similar picture was seen in many other ex-Communist countries. In a contrasting finding, however, Inglehart’s (2010) data suggest that the effects of socioeconomic transition in these countries on happiness and life satisfaction were quite different, with very little detrimental effect on happiness. However, most studies use either life satisfaction as a proxy for SWB or combine happiness with life satisfaction in an overall SWB index, demonstrating a pronounced negative trend.

In Russia this negative well-being trend reversed at the end of the 1990s (Inglehart, 2010). Recent findings from representative samples show that levels of life satisfaction in Russia have been steadily rising (Helliwell et al., 2016; Veenhoven, 2017), with the improvement of economic situation, but the present levels are still below those seen in Soviet times. Although economic indicators offer a tempting simple explanation for the dynamics of Russian well-being (Veenhoven, 2001), the average living standards and life expectancy in contemporary Russia are comparable to or above the late-USSR levels (Yasin et al., 2011; Ovcharova et al., 2014). Why then are the well-being levels still much lower? Economists observe this discrepancy in many countries and typically describe it in terms of paradoxes (Graham et al., 2010), such as the “paradox of unhappy growth” (growth is associated with rising inequality and insecurity) or the “happy peasant and frustrated

achiever paradox” (growth is associated with frustration as a result of rising expectations).

Indeed, on the one hand, Russian levels of income inequality are quite high; about half of the Russians are not satisfied with their income (Ovcharova et al., 2014). On the other hand, traditional Russian culture views economic troubles as a normal situation, expressed in sayings like “Не в деньгах счастье” (“Happiness is not about money”), “Не имей сто рублей, а имей сто друзей” (“A hundred friends is better than a hundred rubles”), “Не до жиру, быть бы живу” (“You have to be happy with what you’ve got, since richness is unattainable”). One socioeconomic study has found a paradoxical association of rising unemployment with rising life satisfaction, suggesting that individuals lower their expectations when they observe suffering of their peers (Eggers et al., 2006). Future expectations emerge as more important predictors of subjective economic well-being in Russians than do past material well-being levels, especially in low-income groups (Khashchenko, 2012a, 2012b). These findings suggest that Russians have a range of coping strategies to adapt to economic troubles. Other social factors that are associated with well-being globally and may explain the relatively low levels of well-being in Russia include social support, generosity, freedom to choose, perception of corruption (Helliwell et al., 2010, 2016).

Early SWB studies attempted to explain Russian well-being mainly by socioeconomic variables, typically coming to the conclusion that Russians are not less happy than people in other countries, given their economic situation (e.g., Veenhoven, 2001). However, some recent empirical findings suggest that Russians may be particularly gloomy, after all, and that at least some of the paradoxes and discrepancies between the findings of studies using different proxies for well-being (happiness, affect balance, life satisfaction) can be explained by the unique characteristics of the Russian cultural context.

Across different studies, Russian respondents appear to share some characteristics with both Western and Eastern cultures; Russia is neither individualist, nor collectivist (Naumov & Puffer, 2000). Russians tend to define happiness in terms of luck and fortune (Oishi, 2010). Compared to countries like New Zealand and Brazil, Russians show a higher fear of happiness (Joshanloo et al., 2014). They believe that it is less attainable, less controllable, and more fragile than do Americans (Lyubomirsky, 2000). Compared to Americans, Russians believe that fate or chance has more control over their goals, and are more pessimistic in evaluating their perceived chances of goal attainment (Savina, 2013). There is a strong focus on security and power values (Magun & Rudnev, 2010) and a high uncertainty avoidance (Naumov & Puffer, 2000), suggesting that Russians may focus on avoiding possible future troubles more than on achieving goals. Pursuing goals with an avoidant mindset was not negatively associated with life satisfaction in Russians, unlike Americans (Elliot et al., 2001), indicating in Russia trying to avoid trouble may be a more adaptive strategy. Such a focus on the potential future negative events and their avoidance should entail negative emotions.

Some empirical evidence shows important differences in emotional processing between Russia and other countries. Compared to Americans and the British,

Russians demonstrate higher levels of emotional complexity, suggesting that they are more likely to experience a wider range of both positive and negative emotions, which are also more likely to come in combination, although these tendencies are even stronger in East Asians (Grossmann et al., 2016). Two studies by Grossmann et al. (2012) indicated that Russian students, compared to Americans, spent more time looking at negative than at positive pictures and that identification with Russian culture in bicultural students from Latvia facilitated recognition of negative words. Grossmann and Kross (2010) found that in Russians, compared to Americans, self-reflection was associated with fewer depressive symptoms, and reflecting on a negative affect entailed less distress and more adaptive construals. They also found that Russians were more likely to self-distance from their emotions, which could explain the different effects of self-reflection in these two cultures. These findings suggest that Russians may indeed have a higher tendency to brood, compared to Americans, but brooding and rumination are not as detrimental for the Russians' well-being.

Another potential explanation for the “gloomy Russians” hypothesis are cultural differences in emotional expression rules. In a 1993 study, American students described stereotypical Russians as cold and restrained (Stephan et al., 1993). Many Russian and foreign authors have noted the notorious reluctance of Russians to smile. Sternin (2000) argued that a smile for Russians is meant to be very sincere and must have a very concrete and logical reason (“Laughter with no reason is a sign of stupidity,” as a Russian saying goes); any ambiguity about why someone smiles could lead to confusion and worry in others. According to Gasparyan (2011), when the causes of smiling or laughter are unclear, Russians typically err on the negative or cynical side when guessing the reasons, whereas Americans tend to assume that a smiling or laughing person is just happy or having a good time. Based on her content analysis of *Anna Karenina*, Lev Tolstoy's famous novel, Stefanenko (2014) suggests that tendency to inhibit smiling emerged in the twentieth century. When asked about indicators of a happy person, Russians students rate activity and vigor higher than smiling (Kachur, 2014). In a recent study (Krys et al., 2016) Russia emerged as one of the few countries where a smiling person was rated as less intelligent than a non-smiling one; Russians also tended to rate a smiling person as less honest.

Do Russians control their emotional expression, and if yes, do they control negative emotions as well as positive ones? Historical accounts from 1940s and 1950s described Russians as emotionally expressive and alive (see Wierzbicka, 1998). Wierzbicka's linguistic analysis indicates a wide repertoire of emotional expressivity terms existing in the Russian language, but positive connotations for both metaphors of emotional expressivity and emotional control (Ibid.). Kitayama and Markus (1994) believe that Russians are high in emotional expressivity. A review by Jurcik et al. (2013) suggests that Russians are have a rich emotional life and are less inhibited with respect to reporting and expressing negative emotions than are Americans. However, Mondry and Taylor (1998) suggest that newer generations of Russians may place higher value on emotional control.

Empirical studies of emotional expression and emotional control produce a mixed picture. A study in American older adults found that Eastern Slavs were more likely

to report and express negative emotions, compared to other cultural groups (Consedine & Magai, 2002). In a comparative study of 33 countries by Matsumoto et al. (2008) using student samples Russia emerged as one of the least emotionally expressive nations. In another study, where participants were asked to select which of six display categories people “should” do in various situations and categories: express, de-amplify, amplify, mask, qualify, or control (Matsumoto et al., 1998), Russians selected the “emotional control” category more frequently than did Asians or Americans. However, this effect was moderated by social context, suggesting that Russians exercise less control over their negative emotional expression with strangers, but more control with people they know, compared to both Americans and Asians. A later study specifically found that Russians control the expression of several positive and negative emotions (surprise, fear, disgust, happiness) more than do Americans and Japanese (Matsumoto et al., 2005).

Three recent studies by Sheldon and colleagues (2017b) focused on comparing inhibition of happiness and unhappiness in USA and Russian student samples. Although Russians and Americans did not differ on subjective well-being (SWB), a consistent pattern was found, showing that Russians, compared to Americans, reported greater inhibition of the expression of happiness, but not of unhappiness, and this effect was mainly confined to stranger setting and was quite weak in the friends/family setting. The degree of happiness inhibition with strangers was negatively correlated with SWB in the U.S. samples but was unrelated to SWB in the Russian samples, suggesting that expression of happiness plays a less adaptive role in Russia. These findings suggest that Russians may not be less happy than Americans, but they tend to inhibit their expression of happiness, particularly to strangers, which is similar to findings from collectivist cultures. A recent comparative study of emotion control values in Russia and in more collectivist and traditionalist Azerbaijan (Pankratova & Osin, 2015) found that Russians ascribed less value to emotional control, but reported higher self-efficacy with respect to controlling their own emotions.

Are Russians happy or unhappy? According to World Happiness Report (Helliwell et al., 2016), on average Russians fare relatively well, although their level of happiness is still relatively low (rank 56 out of 157), compared to most developed Western countries. The level of happiness equality is also quite low (rank 81 out of 157); large within-country differences may partly explain the inconsistent findings in SWB from studies using non-representative Russian samples. Socioeconomic data suggest that Russians have a range of valid reasons to be less satisfied with their lives, compared to people in other developed Western countries. The differences in affect balance may be explained by cultural features and emotional expression norms: compared to most other Westerners, Russians have a rich emotional life, pay more attention to negative emotions, and are less inhibited about expressing them. However, the levels of emotional control are also high, particularly with respect to positive emotions and in social settings. This explains why Russians are often described as reserved and even hostile with strangers, but very warm and friendly with their friends.

The Growth of Positive Psychology in Russia in the Twenty-First Century

Information on the positive psychology movement started to penetrate the Russian psychological community in 2002. The first author of this chapter, who was at that time a Professor in the Psychology Department at Lomonosov Moscow State University, was invited as a speaker to the First Positive Psychology Summit in Washington D.C. in 2002. Since then, the dissemination of positive psychology in Russia has been and still is mostly associated with him and his research team, though it would not be correct to label him as a positive psychologist. Positive psychology refers mostly to an agenda, rather than a single theoretical approach; specific approaches within this field can vary widely, from straightforward positivist ones, devoid of any philosophical presumptions, to evolutionary and even existentialist ones, based on the ideas of self-determination, self-organization, agency, and meaning. Positive psychology, like the most of Russian psychology, is leaning to the latter pole, paying due to the complexity of higher forms of human conduct.

D. Leontiev's professional socialization was influenced by Lev Vygotsky's and Alexey Leontiev's Cultural-Historical Activity Theory Approach (CHAT) (see Leontiev, 2020). Among the key themes of this approach were the development of higher forms of human mediated self-regulation and personal meaning as a component of consciousness, regulatory mechanism of human activity and the basic constituent of personality. Besides CHAT, D. Leontiev has been strongly influenced by existentialist thought, having in his young years established good personal contacts with Victor Frankl and James Bugental, and later with the new generation of leaders of existential psychology. The focus of his academic interests was the issue of personal meaning; both his Ph.D. thesis (1988) and Dr.Sc. thesis (1999) were devoted to a comprehensive theory of personal meaning. Besides, his interests in 1980s–1990s included psychology of art and empirical aesthetics, personality assessment, and psychology of advertising.

Since 2005, D. Leontiev has been giving introductory courses on Positive Psychology for graduate psychology students at Moscow State University and at some distant Russian universities. Despite the recognition of cultural differences between the US and Russia, Positive Psychology was met with a strong interest. At the same time he initiated research work in some relevant fields, having created an informal research group focusing on the issues of self-determination and personality potential at the department of Psychology of Lomonosov Moscow State University, where five Ph.D. theses on these topics were defended between 2004 and 2007. The group also developed Russian versions of a number of popular assessment tools, including Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), VIA inventory of strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), General Causality Orientations Scale (Deci & Ryan, 1985), Hardiness Personal Views Survey (Maddi & Khoshaba, 2001), Attributional Style Questionnaire (Peterson et al., 1982), Life Orientation Test (Scheier & Carver, 1985) and others. Some tools have been adapted by other scholars,

e.g. Psychological Well-being Scales (Ryff, 1989) by Tatyana Shevelenkova and Pavel Fesenko (Russian State University for Humanities).

During this pre-institutional period (that is, in 2006–2011 there were no formal research units focused on positive psychology issues) the work of the group followed several research directions:

1. Positive personality development during adolescence. The concept of positive personality development (Leontiev, 2006) refers both to the direction of developmental processes and to their qualitative properties, using the degree of approaching and applying specifically human capacities and potentialities (rather than subhuman ones) as an objective criterion of development, progressive emancipation from symbiotic ties as its general direction, and personal autonomy as its goal. The relevant research focus was on the development of freedom and responsibility as the bases of self-determination during the transition from childhood to adulthood (Kaliteevskaya & Leontiev, 2004; Kaliteevskaya et al., 2006). Several patterns of developed or underdeveloped self-determination mechanisms were detected in varied samples of adolescents and young adults, reflecting the success or failure of transition from being determined to being self-determined that underlies personality maturity.
2. Buffering role of positive personality resources in challenging conditions. Since 2009 a special research group has been working with physically challenged adolescents and youth in inclusive high school and university settings, aiming to reveal compensatory mechanisms and buffering patterns that serve as psychological resources for overcoming the challenge of disability (Lebedeva, 2012; Leontiev et al., 2017). Physical disability leads to a “radical reorganization of all personality that brings new mental forces to life and directs them” (Vygotsky, 1983, p. 563). It does not limit developmental opportunities, but rather requires extra effort and resources compared to the situation of regular development. We found that personality resources contribute more to pathways of personality development in physically challenged students than in “conditionally healthy” ones. A model of the pathways of personality development in challenging conditions, as distinct from both normal and abnormal development, was proposed (Leontiev, 2014).
3. Choicework. Choice is treated as a form of internal work (activity). A number of studies have shown that both the process of choice and its outcome strongly depend on the way this inner work is organized (or skipped completely in cases of spontaneous choice). In order to reveal it, new research techniques of Argumentation Analysis and Subjective Quality of Choice (Leontiev et al., 2020) were developed. The studies showed that preference for highly uncertain settings over fairly predictable ones is characteristic of individuals with high autonomy, optimism, hardiness, life meaning, and self-efficacy (Mandrikova, 2006); that positive traits predict a more elaborate and mindful structure of choice (agentic choice), which, in turn, predicts higher satisfaction with choice (Fam & Leontiev, 2013); that “everyday” and “fateful” choices are carried out in different ways and have different predictors, with a stronger contribution of personality variables for

- “everyday” choices than for “fateful” ones (Fam, 2015; Fam, et al., 2017). The findings of these studies are summarized in a monograph (Leontiev et al., 2015).
4. Personal meaning theory. This theory (Leontiev, 1999, 2007, 2013) further develops the activity theory approach (Leontiev, 1978) and relational views on meaning (Baumeister, 1991; Nuttin, 1984). Meaning is viewed not as a special object of analysis, but rather as a network of ties that link an object in question to meaningful contexts. To understand the meaning of A, we are to transcend the A and to investigate whether and in what ways A is connected to the person’s motivation, attitudes, and worldview at large. To use an IT metaphor, meaning is analogous to a hyperlink, and like a hyperlink it cannot exist as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as a part of a comprehensive network. Meaningfulness, that is, being meaningfully connected with what is important for the person, is one of the three orthogonal criteria of what is good; the other two are positive affective balance and deliberate controllability (Leontiev, 2016).
 5. Self-regulation and personality potential. Self-regulation refers to the basic principle of goal-directed activity of a living organism that accounts for moving from worse outcomes to better ones, based on the corrections of activity, according to the perceived discrepancies between the desired and the actual state of affairs (see Leontiev, 2012). Personality potential refers to the type of personality organization that is capable of effective autoregulation in various life domains. A series of studies were carried out, aimed at revealing the structure of personality potential and exploring its role in self-determination, goal attainment, and coping with difficulties (Leontiev, 2011, 2016). In a series of studies of chemistry students at Moscow State University, some personality potential variables were shown to predict academic success together with achievement and motivation variables (Gordeeva et al., 2011).

Although there were no other dedicated research units or programs at this period, there were both theoretical and empirical publications relevant to the positive psychology agenda, including works focused on the problems of happiness in Russian culture and society by Inna Dzhidaryan (Institute of Psychology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow), subjective well-being by Rail Shamionov (Saratov State University), optimism/pessimism and hope by Sergei Enikolopov (Mental Health Research Center, Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, Moscow) and Kuanyshbek Muzdybayev (Sociological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg), wisdom by K. Muzdybayev and Lyudmila Antsyferova (Institute of Psychology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow), and others. However, most of these publications did not place any special emphasis on positive psychology at large.

Positive Psychology Laboratory at HSE University

A new period began when D. Leontiev and several members of his group organized a small Laboratory of Personality Development of Physically Challenged Students at the Moscow State University for Psychology and Education (2009–2012), as well as a larger laboratory of Positive Psychology and Quality of Life Studies at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, presently HSE University (2011). This allowed more sustainable and coherent research projects to be developed.

A milestone event in the history of positive psychology in Russia was the sixth European Conference on Positive Psychology (Moscow, June 2012), organized by the staff of the Laboratory of Positive Psychology and Quality of Life Studies with D. Leontiev as the Chair. Both the HSE University and Lomonosov Moscow State University were involved. Over 400 participants from all over the world took part in the conference. The keynote speakers were Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, Richard Ryan, Carol Ryff (USA), Dmitry Leontiev (Russia), Michael Eid (Germany), Ranghild Nes (Norway), Shalom Schwartz (Israel), Robert Vallerand (Canada), and Leo Bormans (Belgium).

In 2014 the group working within the HSE received government funding from the university, and the Laboratory of Positive Psychology and Quality of Life Studies was upgraded to the International Laboratory of Positive Psychology of Personality and Motivation (headed by Dmitry Leontiev with academic supervisor Ken Sheldon). Now the staff of the lab includes about 20 scholars, including doctoral and Master's students, and about 10 informal team members. Among the leading researchers of the lab are Tamara Gordeeva, Ph.D., Evgeny Osin, Ph.D., Elena Rasskazova, Ph.D., Elena Ovchinnikova, Ph.D., Anna Lebedeva, Ph.D., Anna Fam, Ph.D., Vasily Kostenko, Ph.D., Alena Zolotareva, Ph.D., and Martin Lynch, Ph.D.

The main line of research carried out in the Laboratory refers to relationships between motivation, goal setting, meanings, personality resources, and well-being indicators.

Basing on the lab staff resources, in 2020 Master's program in Positive Psychology has been launched at HSE university (Program director V. Kostenko, Academic supervisor D. Leontiev).

Development of a Novel Positive Psychology Theory

This theoretical work is rooted in Cultural-Historical Activity Theory Approach, on the one hand, and Self-Determination Theory and Flow Theory, on the other hand. We claim to bridge these approaches, developing theoretical models that would integrate the existing findings.

1. A 3D eudaimonia model (Leontiev, 2016) distinguishes three criteria of the desirable: positive affective balance, effortful deliberate control over activity

processes and outcomes, and meaningfulness as connectedness with comprehensive contexts and distant perspectives. From an evolutionary perspective, it would be highly advantageous for any living species to find rewarding those experiences that would provide momentary pleasure in an activity that requires effort, and has long-term positive consequences. In different activities these three criteria may converge or diverge; their frequent convergence (covariation) makes their differentiation a methodological problem. A combinatorial model of experiences (Leontiev, 2015a) distinguishes pleasure, meaning, and effort as primary elements of every experience irreducible to each other that can be present in all possible combinations: the absence of all three produces the experience of void, the presence of all three the experience of engagement and their pairwise combinations the experiences of commitment, enjoyment, and flow. All of them are phenomenologically distinguishable and measurable (Osin & Leontiev, 2017; Leontiev et al., 2018; Klein et al., 2019). This model gives a more detailed explanation of the flow experience and develops flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

2. Autocommunication theory provides an explanation of positive personality development through the mechanisms of self-reflection and positive solitude. It is methodologically based on the differential model of self-reflection (Leontiev & Salikhova, 2010; Leontiev & Osin, 2014); and multidimensional model of loneliness experiences (Osin & Leontiev, 2013; Leontiev, 2019); both models are implemented in original assessment instruments (see below). Positive forms of self-reflection are both theoretically and empirically distinct from negative ones. It has been shown that their actual differentiation begins at a definite personality development stage, when positive forms of self-reflection become predictive of personality development stage, unlike negative ones (Kostenko, 2017; Kostenko & Leontiev, 2018). Positive forms of loneliness experience are also distinguished from negative ones. Their connection with personality development stage and positive self-reflection is established. The key explanatory construct of the theory is autocommunication, or communication with oneself; positive self-reflection is viewed as a condensed and reduced form of this autocommunication, and solitude as a supporting condition. This is why individuals at higher stages of development with strong positive self-reflection skills value solitude, unlike the majority who are unable to make use of it due to lack of positive self-reflection skills.

Generation of Novel Positive Psychology Research

A number of large-scale studies have been made through 2014–2016 on the basis of samples from Tomsk State University, Omsk State University, Altay State Pedagogical Academy, Higher School of Economics, and University of Missouri (USA) for cross-cultural comparisons.

A study by Rasskazova et al. (2016) studied the effects of high-level and low-level need satisfaction on well-being. According to Maslow's (1943) theory

of needs, people do not become sensitized to “higher” level needs until they have satisfied their “lower” level needs, but, according to the Self-determination theory (SDT) model, meeting high-level psychological needs is non-contingently beneficial. In two large-scale studies using samples of employees from Russian energy companies, they measured low-level need-satisfaction (felt security and felt financial satisfaction) and high-level need satisfaction (of basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness). In both studies, both the lower level and higher level need-satisfaction sets had strong main effects upon many positive work outcomes, including intrinsic motivation, organizational commitment, and SWB. However, in one of the studies Maslow’s “prepared to benefit” hypothesis was supported, in that satisfaction of high-level needs had slightly larger effects on outcomes when combined with satisfaction of low-level needs.

Another project inspired by existential theorizing focused on empirical integration of the concepts of freedom and responsibility. In three large-N cross-cultural studies Sheldon and colleagues (2018) tested the premise that psychological freedom (aka autonomy) and personal responsibility are complementary, rather than conflicting, and the further premise that freedom causes responsibility, rather than vice versa. In all studies, (a) supporting autonomy in an experimental context increased responsibility-taking after failure, whereas emphasizing responsibility did not; (b) measures of dispositional autonomy and dispositional responsibility were positively correlated; (c) and responsibility-taking was lower in Russia, a country typically ranked lower in world freedom indices. The last study also found that Russians were only inclined to take more responsibility than Americans when it was requested by family or friends, but not demanded by authorities or by strangers.

Attention has also been paid to validation of the relative autonomy continuum (described in Self-Determination Theory), whose psychometric structure and validity has recently been questioned. Sheldon and colleagues (2017a) derived a comprehensive relative autonomy index containing six subscales and 24 items, by conducting a paired paraphrase content analysis of existing measures operationalizing the continuum. The measure was administered to multiple U.S. and Russian samples, assessing motivation to attend class, study a major, and take responsibility. A range of analyses, including item-level and scale-level multi-dimensional scaling, confirmatory factor analyses, and simplex/circumplex modeling re-affirmed the psychometric validity of the relative autonomy continuum in multiple independent samples from two countries using different situations. Validation analyses using subjective well-being and trait autonomy as criteria showed that an aggregate relative autonomy index provides an unbiased and efficient indicator of the overall quality of motivation.

In a clinical context, Rasskazova (2012) conducted a study exploring the hypothesis that subjective appraisals of quality of life, satisfaction, and happiness result from a decision-making process and may be based on different subjective criteria in different people, especially in patients with mental disorders. Using the Quality of Life and Enjoyment Questionnaire (version for mental illnesses, Ritsner et al., 2005) and Lyubomirsky’s General Happiness Scale, Rasskazova (2012) compared the contribution of the quality of life in different domains to the general appraisal of

life satisfaction and subjective happiness in the three groups of young men (17–28 years old): non-psychotic depressive patients ($n = 76$), patients developing remission after the first psychotic episode ($n = 90$) and respondents without mental illness ($n = 185$). Although all domains are in different degrees important for the general appraisal of satisfaction and happiness, emotional sphere and functioning during the day are more important to the lives of those with non-psychotic depression compared with the two other groups (Rasskazova et al., 2017). Patients in remission after a psychotic episode were less oriented to the emotional and social domains, as well as financial well-being, than participants from the other two groups. Thus psychological analysis of patients should take into account not only the level of the quality of life, but also the criteria for its appraisal.

A series of studies by Gordeeva and colleagues investigated the predictors of academic achievement in university students. Attributional style research has focused mainly on how people explain negative events, such as rejection or failure, and mainly as a predictor of negative outcomes, like depression or anxiety. Optimistic attributional style for positive events, in relation to positive outcomes like well-being and academic achievement, has received comparatively little attention. Recently, Gordeeva and her colleagues (Gordeeva & Osin, 2010; Gordeeva, et al., 2020) conducted a series of three studies (including longitudinal ones) of optimistic attributional style, measured both for positive events (making global/stable attributions for positive events) and negative events (making specific/unstable attributions for negative events). They found that across the samples of early adolescents ($N = 182$), high-schoolers ($N = 202$), and college students ($N = 151$), separate factors for optimistic attributional styles for positive and negative events emerged in the data, factors independently predicting student well-being. However, only optimistic attributional style for positive events reliably predicted the students' academic achievement in cross-sectional and longitudinal perspective. Although most prior research has focused on attributional style for negative events because of clinical psychology's traditional interest in helping people cope with problems, it appears that explanations of positive events are just as important, not only for limiting depression and negative well-being, but also for promoting positive affect and positive well-being. The finding that both styles matter means that the "best" type of attributional style to have, from a well-being perspective, is a compound one in which one is able to both minimize the psychological ramifications of bad outcomes, and maximize the ramifications of good outcomes.

Another avenue of studies in the International Laboratory is related to human motivation and, in particular, different types of intrinsic motivation. Three types of intrinsic motivation were differentiated, learning motivation, competence motivation, and growth motivation, which are important predictors of positive outcomes, such as academic achievement and well-being of schoolchildren and college students. Recently, a phenomenon of interplay of intrinsic and self-respect motivation was found by Gordeeva and colleagues (Gordeeva et al., 2016). It was shown that gifted children had strong and dominant intrinsic motivation which stimulated their persistence and academic achievement, whereas regular students also needed self-esteem motivation and introjected motivation in order to be persistent and successful

at school. Overall, these findings help to understand the role of self-esteem motivation that can partly compensate the lack of flow and interest experiences and stimulate effort and persistence, which are important for achievement in different domains. These findings develop the idea of the continuum of motivation proposed in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Empirical studies of the effects of quality of motivation on goal achievement (Suchkov, 2017) show that the extent of goal autonomy, or self-determined motivation behind the goal, is an important goal characteristic. The correspondence of a goal to the implicit motive reflecting the need for autonomy predicts the strength of the intention to achieve this goal, which, in turn, predicts the actual effort spent achieving the goal at later time. Higher effort invested is associated with higher progress, which predicts an increase in well-being in a longitudinal perspective.

There were also a number of research projects developed by other Russian scholars with relevance for Positive Psychology, but often without a direct reference to it.

Valery Khashenko (Institute of Psychology of Russian Academy of Sciences) focuses his studies on the field of subjective economic well-being (EWB). He has created a theory of EWB and an inventory for its assessment, with a five-dimensional structure, which includes economic optimism/pessimism, economic anxiety, subjective income adequacy, financial deprivation, and current wealth. He investigated various predictors of EWB, including lay theories of EWB, subjective scales of EWB, economic identity, constructs and types of economic values (Khashchenko, 2012a, 2012b).

Sofya K. Nartova-Bochaver (currently at the HSE University) is known for her studies of psychological sovereignty as a phenomenon of one's self-positioning at the frontiers of one's psychological space. The concept of psychological sovereignty bridges environmental psychology with personality psychology, phenomena of psychological privacy and psychological space with the phenomena of authenticity and autonomy (Nartova-Bochaver, 2008, 2017). Her recent studies are dedicated to home environment, emotional evaluation of home and home attachment as resources of well-being and predictors of mental health and emotional resilience in adults. The authors use the concept of friendliness of environment as its relevance for the person's need satisfaction and to classify the types of environment along with this dimension (Nartova-Bochaver et al., 2015, 2016). She is also involved (as well as Evgeny Osin) in cross-cultural studies of well-being (Żemojtel-Piotrowska et al., 2017).

Construction of Novel Positive Psychology Assessment Tools and Positive Psychology Interventions

The members of the laboratory keep working on Russian-language validation of assessment tools relevant to Positive Psychology tasks, as well as developing their modifications and original instruments. In particular, in addition to the tools listed

above, recently validated instruments include Quality of Life Enjoyment and Satisfaction Questionnaire (Endicott et al., 1993), PANAS (Watson et al., 1988), COPE (Carver et al., 1989), MAAS (Brown & Ryan, 2003), Subjective vitality scales (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), Scale of Inner Dialogue (Oleś, 2009). A large body of work is being done on the validation of Russian version of Washington University Sentence Completion Test (Hy & Loevinger, 1996).

The original inventories developed by the group include the Differential Self-Reflection Inventory (DSRI: Leontiev & Osin, 2014), Differential Test of Aloneness (DTA: Osin & Leontiev, 2013), Flow in Professional Activity (FPA: Leontiev, 2015a), Experiences in Activity (Leontiev, 2015b), Decision Making about Treatment (DMT: Tkhostov & Rasskazova, 2013), and the Subjective Quality of Choice (SQC: Leontiev et al., 2020). Alena Zolotareva created an original Differential Perfectionism Inventory (Zolotareva, 2012, 2013) based on the distinction of two forms of perfectionism, positive (normal) and negative (maladaptive). Some other relevant instruments mentioned earlier include the Economic Well-Being Inventory (Khashchenko, 2012b), Sovereignty of Psychological Space Inventory (Nartova-Bochaver, 2008, 2017), and the Functionality of Home Environment Inventory (Nartova-Bochaver et al., 2015). This list of available tools cannot be comprehensive, as there is no standard way of telling positive psychology assessment tools from others, and the work on many other new measures is ongoing. The same is true for positive psychology interventions. To date, we cannot refer to any publications presenting positive psychology interventions with rigorously measured effects, but work in this direction is ongoing at the International Laboratory of Positive Psychology of Personality and Motivation. In particular, we are working on choicework training (Dmitry Leontiev & Anna Fam) and the forms of facilitation of inner dialogue (Dmitry Leontiev & Vasily Kostenko).

Future of Positive Psychology in Russia

Apparently, due to the ambivalent attitude toward pursuit of happiness in the Russian culture (as described above), the ideas of positive psychology have been met by Russian academic community with some suspicion. Positive psychology could not escape the confusion with “positive thinking”, a glamour ideology of wearing rose-colored glasses at the expense of facing real life. A number of prominent Russian psychologists have criticized positive psychology on philosophical, ethical, or religious grounds based on this misunderstanding. However, with time an understanding of the true message and potential of positive psychology has been spreading in the Russian academic community. The number of scholars who find important resources for research and applied work in positive psychology is growing very fast, though the development of Positive Psychology training programs and curricula is still at its earliest stage.

The general Russian public, on the contrary, has welcomed the ideas of positive psychology with great enthusiasm, and they are visible in the activity of mass media.

A highly popular Russian version of *Psychologies* magazine systematically covers positive psychology topics, publishes interviews with positive psychology leaders, and sponsors thematic events. Many other magazines and electronic media, ranging from mainstream (“*Mayak*”) to highbrow ones (“*Svoboda*”), have also covered positive psychology topics. A number of relevant books are available in Russian translation (*Psychology of Happiness* by Michael Argyle, *Happiness* by Richard Layard, *Psychology of Ultimate Concerns* by Robert Emmons, *Learned Optimism*, *Authentic Happiness* and *Flourish!* by Martin Seligman, *The Paradox of Choice* by Barry Schwartz, *Positive Psychology in a Nutshell* by Ilona Boniwell, *Flow*, *Creativity*, *Evolving Self* and *Finding Flow* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, etc.). We have been seeing an increasing demand for positive psychology in business, business education, business consulting and coaching, especially in the last two years. Business forums, Executive MBI programs and magazines like *Harvard Business Review* (Russian edition) are highly interested in positive psychology issues, especially motivation, engagement, flow and emotional intelligence.

A special feature of the Russian attitude toward life, deeply rooted in Russian culture and history, is a relatively low value ascribed to human life, both of one’s own and of others. Only 150 years have elapsed since the end of slavery in Russia and only 70 since the end of the disastrous World War II, where the country lost tens of millions of its citizens; not to mention those lost in the fire of the revolutions of 1917, the Russian Civil War and in the Gulag. No wonder that for many decades since the end of WWII the only aspiration of the masses has been “let there be anything but war.” In addition to this, the totalitarian Soviet and authoritarian Post-Soviet regimes have been producing and reproducing learned helplessness, or the lack of people’s capacity to control their lives. Probably it is the low value of life—finding life hardly worth living—that underlies critically low life expectancy (especially in men), and extremely high rates of suicide, lethal incidents, alcoholism, drug abuse, violent crime, abortions, and other phenomena indicative of social ill-being. This witnesses to the potential of positive psychology for Russia: the movement can serve as an antidote to these negative trends, to improve the situation by helping people to value their life and to find ways to make it worth living.

This low value of life is at the same time an obstacle to a more positive way of living and a challenge for it. There are no easy or short-cut ways to attain this goal. The mission of positive psychology is to reveal to people the diverse opportunities for a better, more pleasant, meaningful, and self-determined life, which can serve as a goal for investing one’s efforts and personality resources. Our International Laboratory of Positive Psychology of Personality and Motivation sees its general mission in increasing the value and attractiveness of life for the Russian people by helping them to find ways to shape it actively. Our goals for the next few years are focused on the development of positive psychology training programs of a different scale and on disseminating positive views of human motivation based on Self-Determination Theory. This is closely related to the future perspectives of positive psychology in Russia. We believe that the future to be planned and created is the only future we can meaningfully talk about.

Resource Page for Readers

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Chapter 11

Positive Psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa

Angelina Wilson Fadiji and Marié P. Wissing

Positive Psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa

History of Positive Psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa

Despite the evidence showing the relevance of positive psychology research for different aspects of individual and community life, few countries in sub-Saharan Africa have explored this important area of scholarly work. To provide context, in the next section we will highlight some more recent information on the historical background of sub-Saharan countries across Western, Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, taking into consideration important social, political and economic similarities between these countries.

For a broad perspective it is necessary to take into account that the Central, Eastern, Southern and Western African regions had, from a historical point of view, many phases of sun and shadow. Unknown to many in the Western world, these regions had in ancient and pre-colonial times, just as other regions in Africa, great civilizations, kingdoms, cultures, rich gold and salt mines, strong economic trade practices and great educational achievements. For example, the Ancient Ghana Kingdom, the Kingdom of Axum, the Ethiopian Empire, the Kingdom of Kongo,

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[Kingdom of Mapungubwe](#), and the [Mutapa Empire](#) all were thriving civilizations at one time. In addition, the city of Timbuktu (now a world heritage site) in the West African country Mali, established a large and one of the first universities in the world (University of Sankoré), harbouring one of the largest libraries (unfortunately to a great extent destroyed in recent years) next to Egypt's Library of Alexandria.

Political Turmoil and a Struggle for Independence

Historically, all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with the exception of Ethiopia, were under a range of colonial rule from the British, French, Germans, Portuguese or the Dutch. All these countries had to fight for independence, the earliest being in 1957 when Ghana gained independence from the British and provided the impetus for other African nations to struggle for independent rule and local governance (Gocking, 2005).

Historically, five phases are distinguished in South Africa; namely, (i) the pre-colonial era in which the Khoisan peoples were the first known inhabitants living in the south western African areas, and whose descendants (the Khoi and San peoples) are still part of the South African rainbow nation. Thereafter, various African groups migrated southward (today known as [Nguni](#), [Sotho-Tswana](#), [Venda](#), [Lemba](#), and [Shangaan-Tsonga peoples](#)) and settled in various areas of the now known South Africa before the European settlers came. (ii) The colonial era followed, which firstly saw Portuguese explorers, then Dutch colonization (from 1652) and thereafter from the British Empire (1795 on and off until 1910) with many wars among British, Boers, Zulus, Xhosa and others. (iii) The post-colonial era was marked by the formation of the Union of South Africa and the beginning of segregation laws and discrimination against black people. Much of the colonial and post-colonial eras was marked by violent territorial disputes and clashes of cultures between indigenous people and the European settlers. (iv) The so-called apartheid era started in 1948 and was an extension of discriminatory laws which started during the Dutch and British colonialization. The white National Party government which took power further legalized racial segregation and apartheid. (v) The post-apartheid era started in 1994 after South Africa's first democratic elections following intense negotiations among groups, and was marked by the election of the well-known president Nelson Mandela as the first president of a free South Africa, redress via the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, and the so-called rainbow nation integrating all its peoples of diverse heritages and cultures.

Kenya, the nation with one of the largest economies in East Africa, was also previously under British colonial rule and obtained independence in 1963. After independence, Kenya's economy flourished for a while and began to decline from 1991 to 1993 due to a multiplicity of factors including bad governance (van Zwanenberg & King, 1999). A similar story can be told for Uganda.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is a modern state that emerged out of British colonial rule in the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1914, this colony was

created through the amalgamation of the protectorates of the Northern and Southern Nigeria, the Lagos colony as well as the abolishment of the Egba Kingdom that encircled Lagos (Bourne, 2015). In 1960, Nigeria obtained independence from the British colonial masters led by Nnamdi Azikwe and under the leadership of President Tafawa Balewa (Bourne, 2015). Historically, the political climate of Nigeria has been one plagued by several upheavals including intermittent military rule and a civil war between 1967 and 1970. Just like in Nigeria, the Republic of Ghana, formerly referred to as Gold Coast, is also a western African nation that obtained independence from the British colonial masters in 1957 (Gocking, 2005). The modern day Ghana formerly comprised of the Ashanti Kingdom, coastal regions and the northern territories. After independence in 1957 and becoming a republic in 1960, Ghana came under several military regimes that seemingly crippled the economy.

Zimbabwe, formerly known as Rhodesia, was also under the colonial rule of the British. In 1953, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (present day Zambia) and Nyasaland (present day Malawi) formed a federation that was dissolved after 10 years as a result of much political crisis and turmoil (Godwin & Hancock, 1993). While Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland became independent states, Southern Rhodesia remained under British rule until 1965, when they declared independence and became a republic under the governance of Ian Smith (Godwin & Hancock, 1993). This breakaway was due to pressure from the British for a black-majority rule in the country, which Ian Smith and other white Rhodesians were opposed to. Further incursions and anti-government violence led to the agreement of black-majority rule and independence as Zimbabwe in 1980.

The Botswana region was for a long time a so-called British protectorate (Bechuanaland) which was incorporated into the Cape colony in 1895 under the British government, but finally became independent as a separate country from Britain in 1966. Namibia (like South Africa) has been plagued by conflicts and several years of colonial rule. Namibia had been under German colonization (then named German South-West Africa/Deutsch-Südwestafrika) from 1884 to 1915. Then it was invaded by the Western Allies in the World War I and its administration taken over by the [Union of South Africa](#) which was then a part of the [British Empire](#). In 1990, it became an independent country known as [Namibia](#).

Political Climate and Economic Issues

In Eastern Africa, there was recognizable economic growth such as the case of Kenya and Uganda's economy within the period of 1991 to 2011 and this was well-above the average of most sub-Saharan countries. However, there has been a decline to due to high population growth and inflation rates (van Zwanenberg & King, 1999).

The political economy of Nigeria is currently characterized by a high level of corruption designed to solely benefit the ruling elites and impoverish the majority of

the population (Bourne, 2015; Papaioannou & Dalrymple-Smith, 2015). This perceived opportunistic position seemed to stem from the indirect rule of the colonial masters that was based on a system of oligarchy where some individuals regarded themselves as more privileged with the right to rule the rest of Nigeria. The years after independence have been characterized by high levels of corruption, political, religious and ethnic violence, poverty and lack of management of the massive endowments of natural resources (Papaioannou & Dalrymple-Smith, 2015). Despite this trend, there has also been some economic growth and infrastructural development in capital cities and the business hubs of the nation such as Lagos and Abuja.

Cocoa and gold represent the major natural resources and source of export trade in Ghana. After independence, pervasive corruption crippled efforts to continue with the trend of development during the colonial era. Ghana has been caught in a cycle of debt and currency overvaluation (Berry, 1994). By the 1980s, the economy was in an eventual state of collapse, due to a major decline in cocoa and gold production.

Also in Zimbabwe, we find that there is immense agricultural and mineral resources endowment; however, unfavorable weather conditions, low prices, poor management and violent implementation of land reforms have negatively affected the agriculture-based economy (Country Watch Inc., 2015). As a result of the land restructuring and reallocating of lands to the majority blacks, there has been a collapse of the commercial agriculture, food shortages, reliance on import and inflation (Country Watch Inc., 2015). There has also been an increase in crime, police violence and other human right abuses.

Social Life

Most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are multilingual and have a diversity of religious beliefs including Christianity, Islam and African traditional religions. The English language and Christianity were inherited from colonial masters and these have remained to date. South Africa is a multilingual state, with 11 official languages spoken across the country. A number of languages including Shona and Setswana are shared across Southern African countries. Religious composition of South Africa is similar to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In Eastern African countries, English and Swahili are the official languages, while in Western African countries English and French are the official languages accompanied by indigenous languages unique to each country.

Culture and the Positives of Life

Despite the above indicated histories of political strife, hardships, poverty and corruption, it is important to also recognize the richness of the varied cultures with the associated music, dance, songs, poetry and stories, the practices of caring

(*Ubuntu*—an African wisdom of how to be human), sharing and meaning-carrying religious beliefs that marked these African countries. All these countries shared a historical and more collectivist cultural orientation in which the (in) group is more important than the individual (Nwoye, 2017). Nowadays collectivist and relatively more individualist cultural orientations are found to exist side-by-side in many countries with the latter more in urban areas, whereas collectivist orientations are still more prominent in rural and poorer areas (Philips & Wong, 2017).

Conclusion

It is against the backdrop of this political, economic, social and cultural history that positive psychology has developed in Eastern, Central, Western and sub-Saharan Africa. An overview of the history shows more similarities compared to differences across countries. Differences mainly exist in specific details and intensity of political disturbances, economic decline and corruption. One major observation by scholars is that South Africa, compared to other African nations, has made recognizable strides in development, however it is has still not lived up to its fullest potential (Visser, 2005). One of the resulting impacts of the political and economic trends is poverty and a lowered quality of life of individuals.

We suspect that there are cultural and indigenous views on health and well-being with notions and constructs conveying meanings and connotations of functioning well in humans which are different from constructs and notions in the West. Therefore, we will also take note of some relevant, probably more indigenous, ideas in this review of research on positive psychology and well-being as found in this region.

Positive Psychology in South Africa

In South Africa various research groups are nowadays active in the field of positive psychology (PP). Before the larger research teams developed research on well-being, psycho-social health and relevant constructs such as salutogenesis and resilience had been conducted by Deodandus Strümpfer, and by Marié Wissing and Chrizanne van Eeden in the early 1990's. Strümpfer had been a strong leading pre-PP figure developing a focus on health and well-being in a broad sense. He coined the construct of *fortigenesis* referring to the origins of strengths (Strümpfer, 1990, 1995; Strümpfer & Wissing, 1998). Another early contributor to a focus on positive aspects was Tyrone Pretorius. He developed the Fortitude Questionnaire (Pretorius, 1998) in order to assess the extent to which a person is able to handle stress and has strength to manage such stress. It includes three subscales measuring the evaluation of self and abilities, evaluation of social support from family and evaluation of support from the community in general.

In recent times groups doing research in positive psychology and its applications are mostly linked to universities from where master's degree students in multidisciplinary contexts take it further into practice. Researchers are from various professional backgrounds such as clinical, counselling, educational, organizational or general psychology. Such research groups are for example: At the University of Pretoria (UP) Liesel Ebersöhn, Irma Eloff, Linda Theron, Nomfusi Bekwa, Ronél Ferreira and others mainly focus on resilience research especially in under-resourced educational contexts. At University of South Africa (UNISA), Llewellyn van Zyl, Sanet van der Westhuizen, Frans Celliers, Rian Viviers and others are conducting research with a main focus on facets of organizational well-being and coaching. Diverse PP topics with a focus on well-being and coping are covered by researchers from the University of the Free State (UFS) by Lindi Nel, Pravani Naidoo, Henriette van den Berg, Ancel George, Magriet van Dijk and Anja Botha. At the University of Johannesburg Tharina Guse (currently based in University of Pretoria) and her team conducted well-being research especially on adolescents in the city and on PP interventions. Guse and students also conducted various interventions amongst others hypnotherapeutic interventions for fostering psychological well-being among previous victims of child sexual abuse (Guse & Fourie, 2013). Well-being research at the University of Stellenbosch by Awie Greeff and his team focused specifically on families. Solomon (Oupa) Makola at the Central University of Technology (CUT) in Welkom studied the experience of meaning and well-being, especially in student groups. The first large research groups in positive psychology in South Africa were established at the North-West University (NWU) in Potchefstroom by clinical, counselling, organizational and educational psychologists of whom also worked in multi- and transdisciplinary teams with other health professionals. Well-being researchers from the NWU include Ian Rothmann, Jaco Pienaar, Marius Stander, Marié Wissing, Chrizanne van Eeden, Q. Michael Temane, Itumeleng Khumalo (now at UFS), Lusilda Schutte, Johan Potgieter, Karel Botha, Sammy Thekiso, Tertia Oosthuizen, Alida Nienaber, Vera Roos, Doret Kirsten, Shingarai Chigeza (now at UP), and initially also Linda Theron (now at UP) together with many other colleagues and students. Research projects focused on the nature, measurement and enhancement of psychosocial well-being in individuals, groups, community, organizational and biopsychosocial health contexts, urban and rural areas; or focused on self-regulation, recreation, intergenerational relations, etc., and covered all developmental life phases. Karel Botha is in particular known for his research together with student teams on self-regulation. Validation of many measures for use in the African contexts is also a strong focus especially by Wissing, Khumalo, Schutte and Temane.

Positive Psychology in Kenya

Positive psychology research in Kenya has taken on a slower pace compared to South Africa but similar to other sub-Saharan African countries. As a result of the

HIV pandemic, most mental health research has been directed at understanding coping strategies, self-efficacy, self-esteem and experience of support among HIV patients and their care-givers. References to psychological well-being and mental health were actually measured as symptoms of psychological distress, depression and anxiety. However, pockets of positive psychology research have been identified such as the work on meaningfulness (Goodman et al., 2017) and other contributions by Selvam (2015), which we discuss in-depth in later sections.

Positive Psychology in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe (just like the case of Kenya), most of the research on positive psychology has been related to HIV/AIDS orphans and the resources available for them to cope with this stressor. There has been minimal research conceptualising well-being from a positive psychology perspective with only pockets of sparse contributions from a few authors Eloff et al. (2008), noted that positive psychology in Zimbabwe was only implied in research and not explicit. In this paper, it was indicated that professionals in Zimbabwe were not aware of the historical development of positive psychology but were of the opinion that it is currently being practiced and was similar to the empowerment approach (Eloff et al., 2008).

Positive Psychology in Namibia

Positive psychology research in Namibia has focused largely on work-related well-being in different contexts (schools and health institutions) and three noteworthy authors are Martina Perstling, Ian Rothmann (from South Africa) and Manfred Janik. Perstling and Rothmann (2014) also reflected on the relationship between South Africa and Namibia with respect to their subjective well-being amidst the experience of similar struggles such as human rights, reconciliation and equality. Common themes of research in this context include the experience of meaning, national levels of subjective well-being, job satisfaction, engagement and employee turn-over.

Positive Psychology in Zambia

The HIV/AIDS pandemic also impacted on the research landscape in Zambia. A common research focus was the mental health of the victims of this pandemic with measurements of mental health including mostly negative indicators. It was common to find cross-cultural research with Zambia as one of the samples in a number of well-being studies (e.g., White, 2017). She argues for a relational approach towards

understanding subjective and psychological well-being using cross-cultural samples from Zambia and India. In all we could not identify any local positive psychologists but we have discussed the work of a Canadian researcher Mark Holder and colleagues, which explores religion and spirituality as ingredients for Zambian children's well-being.

Positive Psychology in Nigeria

In our attempt to identify studies on psychological well-being and positive psychology in Nigeria, we found that the term “psychological well-being” and mental health were used only loosely and were measured as an absence of psychopathology. This trend made it difficult to identify studies that explored mental health in a positive sense and not just the absence of distress. This trend points to a major research gap within this context. However, there are some studies that have explored topics such as post-traumatic growth, resilience, happiness, work engagement, social support, gender differences in subjective well-being and positive interventions, for example Chukwuorji and Ajaero (2014), Ifeagwazi et al. (2015), and Chukwuorji et al. (2017). Chukwuorji and colleagues validated the Hausa-version of the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (Chika Chukwuorji et al., 2019). A review of the landscape shows that positive psychology concepts are commonly explored in relation to other psychological constructs.

Positive Psychology in Ghana

Similar to the trends of research on positive psychology in Nigeria and other African countries, we could not identify noteworthy researchers grounded in positive psychology research who have contributed to intervention, theory and assessment in Ghana. What we found was a reference to some positive psychological indicators and their relationship with psychological distress (although the term well-being or quality of life is used). For instance, Salifu Yendork and Somhlaba (2016) determined the influence of positive psychological factors on quality of life of orphans living in orphanages. Perception of support and resilience was found to increase quality of life among orphans in Ghana. The exception to this trend of exploring psychological well-being as the absence of diseases is evident in the work by Addai et al. (2014), Wilson and Somhlaba (2016b) and Glozah (2015).

The gap in positive mental health research has been identified by Wilson and Somhlaba (2017a), who noted that although there has been general advancement in mental health promotion research in the West and some parts of sub-Saharan Africa (predominantly South Africa), such progress has not been replicated in Ghana. In this article, the authors indicated that there is still a preoccupation with research on psychopathology and a lack of understanding of positive mental health.

Positive Psychology in Tanzania

Positive psychology in Tanzania is only in its infancy and as a result we were able to identify the work of only Dr. Janvier Rugeira. The psychological well-being research landscape has mainly covered the prevalence of well-being in higher education settings. Other studies have highlighted the role of religion and spirituality in the experience of well-being. There is also evidence on the applicability of positive psychology intervention program in university settings. However, the concept of psychological well-being and positive psychology is still quite new in this context.

Major Positive Psychologists of Sub-Saharan Africa

In this section, we identify and discuss the scholarly work of major positive psychologists and groups in sub-Saharan Africa. In the Central, Eastern, Southern and Western African regions strong individual researchers in positive psychology can be identified, but many also worked in research teams, and therefore it is actually more appropriate to refer to research groups rather than only individual researchers. This is especially the case in South Africa where research on well-being started before the official announcement of positive psychology as a new area of scientific endeavor in 1998 and 2000. Not all positive psychologists identified in the various regions met the criteria of developing a novel theory, assessment tools or interventions, however they have made important contributions to research in positive psychology in their countries. Again instead of one psychologist per country, we have provided a general review of significant empirical work of two to four authors per country in order to provide a good overview of the work being carried out in sub-Saharan Africa. We have also highlighted important research that has been carried out in the region by researchers from the West. Other indigenous perspectives on functioning well that we believe may be related to notions from positive psychology research need to be explored deeper than can be presented in the current review.

Among all the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa is the country with a greater number of known positive psychologists and significant advancements in research and theory in this field. There are many noteworthy positive psychologists but because of space limitations we will only discuss the work of a few of them who have contributed to theory, research, assessment and intervention in positive psychology.

South Africa

Professor Marié P. Wissing

Biography of Professor Marié P. Wissing

Marié Wissing, obtained a Drs (doctorandus) at the Free University of Amsterdam and a DPhil at the Potchefstroom University for CHE (NWU), and lectured at various universities in South Africa as well as in Europe. She was the director of the School for Psychosocial Behavioural Sciences until 2009, and is currently a senior researcher in the Africa Unit for Trans-disciplinary Health Research (AUTHeR) of the NWU. Professionally she is a clinical psychologist with teaching experience in general psychology, clinical psychology, neuropsychology, industrial psychology and positive psychology for which she developed several curricula in South Africa. She developed with Chrizanne van Eeden the first master's degree in Positive Psychology in South Africa which is also internationally recognized. She conceptualized psychofortology (i.e. the science of psychological strengths; *forté* = strengths) in 1997 as a new sub-discipline in psychology in South Africa before the international development of positive psychology came to the fore. Her current research focus is on the understanding, measurement and promotion of psychosocial well-being and strengths in diverse contexts from a bio-psycho-social health perspective. Her research programme in psychofortology/positive psychology includes several funded team research projects. This research programme consists of projects building upon each other, with the current FORT 3 project focussing on the prevalence of levels of psychosocial health, its dynamics and relationships with biomarkers of (ill) health in South African social contexts, as well as in particular now exploring meaning, goals, relational well-being, positive societies and cultures of positivity with a view to further theory development in this regard. She is a National Research Foundation (NRF) rated researcher, and obtained strong funding for her research projects also benefitting students and colleagues. She is a core member of a large multi-country international Eudaimonic-Hedonic Happiness Investigation project. Wissing and a team from the NWU organised the first Positive Psychology Conference in Africa in 2006, and she acted as a committee member for the organization of several international conferences.

She is on the editorial boards of various top journals in the disciplinary field of positive psychology and to date published 13 chapters in scientific books and 95 articles in accredited peer reviewed scientific journals. She edited a book, titled *Well-being Research in South Africa*, published in an international series by Springer and a handbook on positive psychology in a South African context for students. She delivered many international and national conference presentations, including key-notes in South Africa and Europe. Many masters and doctoral students (115 in total) completed their studies under her supervision or co-supervision, and several more are in process.

Positive Psychology Contributions

One of the first theoretical contributions of Wissing was the coining of the term *psychofortology* (Wissing & Van Eeden, 1997) to indicate the development of a new scientific (sub-) discipline focusing on psychological strengths. The thrust of this paradigm is that there is a need to understand the nature, manifestations and also ways to enhance psychological well-being and facilitate the development of individual inherent capabilities (Wissing & Van Eeden, 1997). This term reflects the current focus of positive psychology research, which is the identification of strengths and positive experiences influencing psychological well-being. Psychofortology informed subsequent work on understanding the dimensions of general psychological well-being and how well-being should be measured in the South African context.

Another important theoretical contribution is the relationality-meaning model (Wissing, 2014) conceptualizing processes relating to the giving of meaning *to* life, experiencing of meaning *in* life, and values contributing to the meaning *of* life. Although this model is in its infancy, it holds much promise for understanding relationships in the context of meaning-making. The relationality-meaning model suggests that relationship is at the heart of experiencing meaningfulness in life. This model further purports that connections between people and their contexts shapes the opportunities and platforms for the experience of meaning (Wissing, 2014). This complex system of interaction allows for the understanding of meaning and relationality from an interconnectedness perspective where intrapersonal, interpersonal and community level social exchanges influence life experiences that form the basis for meaning in life.

This proposed relational-meaning model is premised on the fact that meaning in life supports and enables a relational meaning in life, which in turn provides an avenue for meaning to life through effective relational values. Different forms of relatedness, both horizontal and vertical, tend to be intricately linked together providing a relational ontology for the experience of meaning in and of life and giving meaning to life (Wissing, 2014).

Wissing (2014) suggests that the initial steps towards the development of this model should be the development and validation of measures of relational well-being since these are currently poorly researched. There is also the need to consider the complexities associated with the dynamics proposed in the relational meaning model. In addition, it is also necessary to explore the content of values expressed by those with high levels of meaning in life, which is likely to be linked to positive relational aspects (Wissing, 2014).

After the initial coining of the term psychofortology, new research based on the science of psychological strengths and positive psychology emerged. Some of the work of Wissing with other colleagues included testing a model of general psychological well-being in the South African context, where such research was non-existent (Wissing & Van Eeden, 2002). A second-order factor analysis of the hypothesised model revealed a relatively strong multidimensional model of general psychological well-being. The emerging model indicated affective, cognitive and

behavioural components of well-being. Other dimensions of psychological well-being included domains of life in the context of relationships, work and recreation. The dimensions of psychological well-being also reflected western descriptions of facets of well-being such as Deci and Ryan's (2000) components of Self-Determination Theory (SDT; autonomy, competence and relatedness). In addition to these facets, sense of coherence, satisfaction with life and affect-balance also emerged as important indicators of psychological well-being.

Further studies led to the conceptualization of a hierarchical model of psychosocial health. Analyses showed a higher order secondary factor named 'general psychological well-being' which was similar across individualist and collectivist contexts, and different patterns of unique primary factors for individualist and collectivist contexts in South Africa (Wissing & Temane, 2008). Among the white individualistic group, the two unique primary factors identified, were (i) intra-interpersonal well-being indicators (positive affect, sense of coherence, satisfaction with life, perceived social support, constructive thinking) and (ii) self-efficacy and behavioural readiness. Among the black collectivist sample, the first unique primary factor was labelled (i) intra-psychological well-being with affective, cognitive and conative components (Wissing & Temane, 2008), and (ii) the second unique primary factor social satisfaction which was indicated by satisfaction with life, experience of support and positive automatic expectations (Wissing & Temane, 2008). These findings represent preliminary attempts to conceptualise well-being from an African perspective. Although Western measurement tools were employed, the emerging dimensions in the factor structure provide some theoretical knowledge on how well-being is structured in this context.

Another line of novel research, which has been carried out in the South African context is the determination of the prevalence of flourishing, moderate and languishing mental health across different groups. Wissing and Temane (2013a) found that 13.9% of rural adults and 60.8% of a multicultural group of students were flourishing. In addition, 1.5% of a multicultural group of teachers and 9% urban adults were found to be languishing. Van Schalkwyk and Wissing et al. (2010) also found in a predominantly white sample ($N = 665$) of secondary school learners in South Africa that 42% were flourishing, 53% were moderately healthy and 5% were languishing.

The relationship between positive mental health and biological markers of health has also been investigated in South African samples. Mare et al. (2011) using functioning well (SOC) and feeling good measures (Affectometer 2 and Satisfaction with Life Scale), investigated the psychosocial health of participants with and without HIV/AIDS before their status was known and revealed to them. Mare et al. (2011) found that both participants from rural and urban areas who were infected with HIV scored lower on functioning well than those not diagnosed with HIV. Surprisingly, rural participants infected with HIV experienced higher levels of positive affect.

Nutritional components and indices of well-being have also shown differential patterns across rural and urban areas, implying that the relationship between nutrition, context and dimensions of psychosocial well-being is not simplistic (Thekiso

et al., 2013). In relation to this finding, life satisfaction was found to be positively associated with waist circumference and body mass index (BMI) only in urban samples.

Linked to the international study on Eudemonic Hedonic Happiness Investigation (EHHI; Delle Fave et al., 2011), Coetzee et al. (2010) found that family and spirituality as life domains were the most important sources of meaning in a multi-cultural South African sample. The EHHI project was aimed at exploring well-being indicators of happiness and meaningfulness in various countries using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Coetzee et al. (2010) found that flourishers and languishers differed in levels of happiness for all domains of life with the exception of health. There was a difference in family, growth, spirituality and community life domains in degree of meaning experienced by languishers and flourishers.

In collaboration with other experts in the field a new tool for measuring psychological well-being, the General Psychological Well-being Scale (GPWS) was developed (Khumalo et al., 2010). This is an 18-item scale that was developed from the findings of Wissing and Van Eeden (2002), which showed that sense of coherence, satisfaction with life and positive affect are key indicators of general psychological well-being in the South African context. This scale demonstrated good psychometric properties among a Setswana-speaking sample in South Africa (Khumalo et al., 2010). The GPWS taps into positive and negative affect, the extent to which an individual judges their life to be meaningful and comprehensible as well as their satisfaction with life. Conclusions drawn from this research include the fact that happiness and meaning (hedonic and eudemonic well-being) are different but related aspects of well-being as demonstrated in different life domains. Another crucial conclusion was that happiness and meaning are more integrated across domains of life for flourishers as compared to languishers (Khumalo et al., 2010).

Although we highlight just one new scale that has been designed for measuring well-being in the South African context, we would like to indicate that a number of other western scales measuring psychological well-being have been validated. This includes the validation of the Mental Health Continuum-Short Form (MHC-SF; Keyes et al., 2008—the MHC-SF was validated originally by Keyes, Wissing and colleagues in South Africa), Sense of Coherence Scale (SOC; Antonovsky, 1993), the Affectometer (AFM2; Kammann & Flett, 1983), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985). The SOC, AFM2 and SWLS were initially validated in a South African context by Wissing and colleagues (cf. Wissing et al., 2008, 2010). The initial validation studies in South Africa showed that the hypothesized three-factor structure of the MHC-SF was valid in a Setswana-speaking context with acceptable levels of reliability scores (Keyes et al., 2008). The MHC-SF was also found to correlate with positive affect, generalised self-efficacy, satisfaction with life, coping strategies and sense of coherence (Keyes et al., 2008). The initial validation studies in South Africa also indicated that the SOC had acceptable reliabilities across different race groups. However, the scale showed a mediocre fit for the single-factor model (Wissing et al., 2008). Concurrent validity of the SOC Scale was also confirmed in this group. The satisfaction with life scale showed similar factorial validity and concurrent validity across both white and black

samples (Wissing et al., 2008, 2010). However, there was a poor model fit as indicated by the RMSEA index.

Other scales including the Meaning of Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger et al., 2006) have been found to be applicable for measuring meaning in life in the South African context. The hypothesised two-factor structure was confirmed in South African samples (Temane et al., 2014; see also Schutte et al., 2016). In addition, the six clusters in the Values-In-Action (VIA) character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) was tested and was found not to be replicated in a small ($N = 256$) African sample (Khumalo et al., 2010). Instead, these authors found an emic factor pattern consisting of three components: integrity in group context, intrapersonal and relationship strengths. In a larger study of the VIA, van Eeden et al. (2008) found that instead of the six clusters, a unidimensional and homogenous model was more applicable.

Research on the validation of psychological well-being scales in the South African context has shown that some instruments are applicable but there is a dire need for the development of new instruments that are culturally and contextually applicable. One of the recommendations of Wissing and Temane (2008) is the need for a conceptual understanding of psychological well-being from an African cultural perspective with such research being accompanied by tools to adequately capture these constructs.

In recent times validation of measurement scales in the South African and other contexts had been conducted with application of modern psychometric techniques by a team of which Wissing was part, which took scale validation to a new level. For example, validation of the MLQ by Schutte et al. (2016), the Stress Overload Scale (SOS) by Wilson et al. (2017), the MHC-SF by Schutte and Wissing (2017), and the Basic Psychological Needs Scale (BPNS) by Schutte et al. (2017).

As part of the scholarly work of Wissing, a number of intervention studies had been conducted in her research projects. For instance, interventions to promote flourishing among adolescents in Western Cape was designed and implemented against the theoretical model of Keyes (2005) and the strengths perspective (Park & Peterson, 2006) by Van Schalkwyk and Wissing (2013). Other specific needs such as a sense of purpose, positive emotions and relationships, self-confidence and coping skills were also incorporated into the design of the intervention (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013). The intervention programme was divided into ten sessions, which were translated into mundane activities that occurred in the daily life of adolescents. A quasi-experimental design was used with the control group being exposed to a generic youth programme.

Results of the study showed that the well-being intervention resulted in an increase in the number of flourishing adolescents in the experimental group as well as a decrease in languishers in this group (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013). It was suggested that although there were only few differences across groups in successive assessments, the observed differences in the experimental group was due to the potency of the intervention programme which lasted over a period of 6 months (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013). Qualitative evaluations also showed that

adolescents found the intervention to be a new and alternative approach to life by focusing on their strengths and not on all that is wrong.

Further example of intervention programmes is the combination of hypnotherapeutic and individual strengths in the promotion of psychological well-being among post-natal mothers (Guse et al., 2006). The hypnotherapeutic intervention resulted in a significant impact on mothers' psychological well-being two weeks after the intervention and subsequent follow-ups. Positive feelings towards babies, life satisfaction, sense of coherence, subjective experience of confidence, and a reduction in symptoms of depression were found to be the resultant impact of the well-being interventions (Guse et al., 2006).

A theoretically-based positive youth development programme was also developed, implemented and evaluated finding positive outcomes including hope, problem-solving efficacy and social efficacy (Brink, 2011; Brink & Wissing, 2012, 2013).

Professor Linda Theron

Biography of Professor Linda Theron

Professor Theron obtained her doctoral degree in educational psychology at the University of South Africa and is currently working at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. Linda Theron's resilience-focused research has contributed to a more profound understanding of why some South African children and young people do well in life, despite the odds being stacked against them. In particular, she is credited with flagging how sociocultural context and historical legacy shape the resilience processes of black South African youth and highlighting the complex contributions of teachers, education, and traditional African values to these processes.

In 2013, the Education Association of South Africa awarded Linda a research medal in acknowledgment of her resilience-focused research with South African youth and teachers. Further evidence of respect for her work lies in an invitation by Springer publishers for Linda to lead-edit a volume detailing how culture enables and constrains the resilience processes of young people worldwide. This volume, showcasing 17 contributions from African, North and South American, Australian, Asian, and European scholars (and their co-authors), was published in 2015. Proof of Linda's scholarship is also evident in her leadership, principal co-investigation and co-investigation of funded research projects that have leveraged R5, 362800.00 (since 2005). As a result, Linda has a track record of productive networks with high-profile resilience-focused researchers in Brazil, Canada, Colombia, China, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, and South Africa. Her scholarship has attracted 34 masters/Ph.D. students (supervised to completion) and three postdoctoral fellows. Since 2005, her funded resilience projects have facilitated funding for many of their studies and directed their research foci. She has co-authored two books on resilience in the South African context.

As part of what she understands her research mandates to be, Linda has purposefully transformed research findings into curricular content, as well as user- and/or community-friendly products (e.g., resilience-supporting programmes; guidelines for teachers and educational psychologists; short-learning programmes accredited by North-West University)—these products include an activist, social change agenda. She has also documented the research methodologies that facilitated meaningful youth and community engagement.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Socio-ecological processes of resilience represent one of the important theoretical works of Professor Linda Theron. This theory highlights the environmental, contextual, social and cultural factors that come into play in the process of “forging adaptive trajectories despite adversity” (Masten, 2001; Theron et al., 2011). Theron et al. (2011) argued that most of the research on resilience had been conducted in the West and did not adequately accommodate socio-cultural factors that influence the resilience process. The socio-ecological theory of resilience provides a lens for understanding how youths manage resilience-enhancing resources within the context of reciprocating ecologies (Theron et al., 2011). These factors include personal, familial and extra-familial resources. Culture has been identified as one of the ecological interactivity that could promote resilience and foster adaptive behaviours through resources such as the extended family, religious organisations and ethnic social systems (McCubbin & McCubbin, 2005). The utility of culture as an ecological process necessary for resilience is foregrounded in the fact that experiences and behaviours are influenced by unique cultural traditions that might be endemic in resilience.

It is worth reiterating that most of Professor Theron’s research has been conducted in the school context among learners and teachers in low-income and at-risk communities in South Africa. As part of her work on resilience among the youth in South Africa, Theron et al. (2011) found that relatedness was a key resilience process in the townships of South Africa. South African youth displayed relatedness through bonds with extended family members and the experience of sharing and reciprocal support. The culture of sharing, especially at school made it easier for South African youths to negotiate their basic needs. Other bonds such as interactions in religious settings also served to foster agency and a source of support.

Using qualitative methodologies, Professor Theron’s research has also been targeted at unearthing contextually-relevant definitions of resilience. Theron et al. (2012) noted that based on strong spiritual, kinship, and collective beliefs and practices in Basotho context in South Africa, a resilient youth was an individual deeply connected to active support systems. These support systems, which included family, peer groups and social support services were conduits for the expression of varied practical and emotional assistance. An important finding from this study was that resilience in the South African context could be understood as a synergy between systems that worked collaboratively to provide robust support. Another

contextual definition of resilience is captured in the importance of values. These values included living positively and being respectful to God and the community (Theron et al., 2012). This conceptualisation reveals the Africentric focus on the interaction between the individual and the community (Prozesky, 2009).

Further research in the South African context has demonstrated how children engage in positive adjustment during the first grade of schooling (Kumpulainen et al., 2016). In this article, children's social ecologies were found to be critical in assisting children living in risk-filled contexts to positively adjust in school. Using a variety of data gathering techniques, key results of the study showed that quality relationships, availability of resources and expression of autonomy were characteristics of the school ecology that aided positive adjustment. Quality relationships included interactions with the extended family, teachers and the local women who cooked the food provided by the government. Support was in the form of the provision of basic needs, assisting with homework and offering emotional support (Kumpulainen et al., 2016). The social ecology of the school and the community where participants lived emphasised the crucial nature of education for the growing child. A significant aspect of the study was the use of an ecological perspective in data collection in order to explore the role of key stakeholders in facilitating the positive adjustment of the child. This study demonstrates the importance different ecological systems in fostering the well-being of children at schools.

A group intervention program referred to as the Resilient Educators (REds) was designed to promote resilience among South African educators especially those affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Theron, 2014). This program was targeted at enhancing empowerment among South African educators affected by the pandemic. The REds program is an interactive module comprising facts on the pandemic, the giving and receiving of support to learners from loved ones infected and affected by HIV, ways to remain psychosocially well and cope with stigma as well as how teachers could function resiliently in spite of the illness. Using a qualitative methodology, Theron (2014) aimed at changing educator's perception of the pandemic after voluntarily participating in the REds intervention program. The sample comprised 15 participants who were asked to provide symbolic drawings of the pandemic before and after the intervention.

Theron (2014) found that there was a change in educator's perceptions of the pandemic from one of vulnerability to a phenomenon that could be managed. Symbols of grief, loss and unpredictability were replaced by hope, empowerment, compassionate sadness, mastery and acceptance, and tolerance. The immediate post-test findings of positive meanings associated with the pandemic was believed to be necessary in enhancing the functioning of educators in different domains of life. A delayed post-test also revealed positive perceptions such as partnership, hope and tolerance. Theron (2014) concluded that intervention programs on resilience could move an individual from a position of vulnerability to self-empowerment and others' empowerment.

Impact of the REds intervention program is also evident in a study among ten Lesotho teachers (Wood et al., 2012). Wood et al. (2012), using narratives and symbolic drawings, found that teachers infected by HIV/AIDS after the intervention

were now able to make use of ecologically situated protective resources. In addition, teachers were now more likely to perceive themselves as agents of change and also able to form resilience-promoting attachments. The REds program has been found to be successful in a number of other studies (Theron et al., 2009, 2010) and hold much promise for increasing resilience among individuals infected with HIV/AIDS.

Professor Ian Rothmann

Biography of Professor Ian Rothmann

Professor Ian Rothmann is an industrial/organisational psychologist at the North-West University, who graduated with a Ph.D. in industrial psychology at the same university. His research journey began with the topics of stress, burnout and work engagement and has evolved towards flourishing of people in work and organisational contexts. Ian Rothman works at understanding the prospering of people at work, the antecedents and outcomes thereof and intervention programmes that could contribute to prospering of individuals and organisations. Professor Rothmann has published about 183 articles in several peer-reviewed journals and book chapters including *Positive psychology in institutional context* and *From South West Africa to Namibia: Subjective well-being twenty-one years after independence*. He is affiliated with a number of international organisations including Society of Industrial/organisational psychology, Academy of Management and the International Society for quality of Life studies. He has supervised 138 master's students and 41 doctoral students. He is a recipient of a number of research awards and recognitions for his scientific contributions to the field. Since a number of his scholarly work related to positive psychology took place in Namibia together with Dr. Martina Perstling and Dr. Manfred Janik, his positive psychology contribution is discussed in the section on Namibia under Dr. Perstling's and Dr. Janik's contribution sections."

Kenya

Professor Sahaya Selvam

Biography of Professor Sahaya Selvam

Sahaya G. Selvam is currently an associate professor and the programme leader of the master's degree in Counselling Psychology at Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya. His academic preparation includes undergraduate degrees in Philosophy, Sociology, and Religious Studies, and two master's degrees in Philosophy of Religion and Psychology of Religion, and Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of London.

It was during his master's studies in psychology of religion at Heythrop College, University of London that he came in contact with positive psychology. His special area of focus revolves around the conceptualisation of character strengths in religious and cultural domains, particularly in the African context. From his academic preparations in philosophy and theology, Selvam often attempts to evaluate the psychological conceptualisation of character strengths, and critique them from philosophical and religious perspectives (see for instance, Selvam & Poulson, 2012).

His doctoral work, also at the University of London, explored the mediating role of character strengths in a Christian-mindfulness based intervention attempting to facilitate recovery from addictive behaviour. This project involved not only a systematic literature review, but also an empirical study carried out among university students in Nairobi. On his return from London, together with his commitments in academic administration, Selvam continues to work on empirical projects. Recently he completed a study that was funded by Tangaza University College, involving some African anthropologists in a Delphi process, arriving at a list of character strengths relevant for the contemporary African youth. He hopes to develop a training manual on "character grooming" for young people in Africa. This follows his success in a life-skills training project that he had launched in East Africa prior to his studies in London.

Positive Psychology Contributions

One of the theoretical questions that his work endeavored to answer was the possibility of positive psychology being a theoretical framework for the study of religion in psychology (Selvam, 2011). In this paper, Selvam (2011) argues that in the selection of the VIA-Strengths, Peterson (2006) was of the opinion that these strengths should be readily available across cultures and religious traditions, creating the possibility to understand certain religious experiences under the umbrella of positive psychology. Selvam (2011) further proposes that cultural sensitivity that is associated with the study of religious phenomena in psychology resonates with the way positive psychological research is currently being carried out. This is because positive psychologists tend to look to other cultures and historical eras for perspectives on virtues (Haidt, 2003; Maltby & Hill, 2007).

Regarding the measurement of religious constructs Selvam (2011) intimates that the scientific rigor in positive psychology offers much possibility. For example, the inclusion of spirituality items on quantitative questionnaires. Additionally, the use of qualitative methods in cross-cultural studies in positive psychology could also be applied in the study of religious constructs in different contexts.

Another important theoretical contribution was explication of the psychology of hope from both religious and positive psychological perspectives. From a psychological perspective, Selvam and Poulson (2012) explore hope as optimism as described in VIA-Strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004); as the interaction between agency and pathway thinking in pursuit of specific goals (Snyder, 2002); as a sense

of purpose targeted at fulfilling a higher purpose (Damon, 2008); and finally as an ultimate concern (Emmons, 1999). These ultimate concerns are rooted in religion and spirituality because they offer meaning to human strivings and provide a unifying framework for understanding the role of religion in an individual's life. Selvam and Poulson (2012) note that the psychology of hope seems to be progressing from a purely existential perspective (optimism) towards a more religiously anchored view of hope as described by Emmons (1999).

Drawing from the psychology of hope and psychology of religion, Selvam and Poulson (2012) argue for an interdisciplinary approach to the understanding of hope as positive psychology could avoid a reductionist approach by learning from religion. Looking at hope from a religious perspective allows positive psychology to understand hope not as naïve optimism but a future-oriented phenomenon that provides direction for action. This is an idea that resonates well with Snyder's agency and pathway thinking as well as Damon's sense of purpose. A dialogue between both perspectives would enable psychology to have a more critical perspective on hope, which could include hope-for the afterlife, which has been argued in many religious writings to include the life of the "now" (Verney, 1989).

In exploring religion and positive psychology, Selvam (2015) provides a review of scholarly work on addiction and spirituality research. The focus of this review was to identify potential mediators of the association between spirituality and recovery from addiction in terms of character strengths. Using a method of qualitative systematic review, wisdom, integrity, vitality, humility, forgiveness, kindness, love and hope emerged as character strengths mediating this relationship. Selvam (2015) noted that these strengths seemed to be supported by indigenous religious traditions and could form the basis for grouping these character strengths as a mid-level construct and as a model to be tested in the context of spirituality and addiction research. Other strengths that surprisingly failed to emerge included self-regulation, curiosity and open-mindedness. Further research is however required to understand this pattern of findings.

Moving from the Christian religion, Selvam and Collicutt (2013) explored the presence of the VIA-strengths in African traditional religions. As previously indicated, the ubiquity of character strength across cultures and traditions was a key requirement for it to be included in the VIA-strengths (Peterson, 2006). African traditional religions (ATR) have been referred to as a collection of beliefs, codes and primeval experiences of individuals in Africa in their search for the sacred and unknown (Selvam & Collicutt, 2013). These authors indicated that the African culture is intertwined with their religious expressions (cf., Mbiti, 1969). Using data set from MaryKnoll Institute for African Studies, the authors sought to determine the presence of character strengths in traditional cultural domains.

Strengths of wisdom and knowledge, specifically love of learning and perspective emerged as key character strengths found in traditional domains of 'formation and education' and 'initiation into adulthood rites', respectively. On this finding, Selvam and Collicutt (2013) noted that the acquisition of knowledge takes place in the broader space of the whole community. Pertaining to the strength of courage, persistence, integrity and vitality emerged as key for the domain of 'elderhood and

funeral rites'. The most recurring strength was spirituality, which has been classified as transcendence strength. In almost all the cultural domains beginning from 'pregnancy', 'naming', to 'elderhood and funeral rites', there was always a form of spirituality (Selvam & Collicutt, 2013). Elderhood rites also emerged as the domain with the most character strengths stretching across all the virtues. It would seem that an elder was expected to have wisdom, courage and even be a mediator between the people and God.

Closely related to character strengths and spirituality, Selvam (2015) explored the potential of the Christian contemplative practice in reducing alcohol misuse and facilitating the character strengths of self-awareness, self-regulation, and humility. The sample included two case studies of Christians in Nairobi who exhibited addicted behavior, particularly alcohol misuse (Selvam, 2015). These individuals were trained in a Christian contemplative practice that is likened to mindfulness interventions in positive psychology. The intervention comprised the labyrinth walk, Jesus prayer and a mindful journaling.

The findings of the study showed that there was drastic reduction in the drinking pattern for one participant and a noticeable difference for the second. During the interventions, participants felt closer to God and were more drawn to Christian practices. There was also an increase in character strengths of self-awareness, responsibility, kindness, spirituality and self-regulation. From the findings of the study, Selvam (2015) proposed a three-dimensional model of spirituality that is related to Christian contemplation. This includes an inward movement to the self, upward movement towards God and outward movement towards others. Selvam (2015) suggests that these dimensions could be another form of classification of an underlying dimension of the character strengths.

Zimbabwe

Dr. Magen Mhaka-Mutepfa

Biography of Dr. Magen Mhaka-Mutepfa

Dr. Mhaka-Mutepfa completed her Ph.D. in psychology at the School of Public Health, University of Sydney, Australia focusing on the resilience of grandparents fostering orphans in Zimbabwe. She currently works at the University of Sydney, Australia and has produced a number research publications including 9 book chapters and 11 peer-reviewed articles. Her research focuses on school psychology, religion, resilience, and protective factors for well-being.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Regarding HIV/AIDS and positive psychology research, Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014a) adopted a strengths perspective in exploring the health and well-being of grandmothers that provided care to orphans. They explored the role of personal resources, social resources, object resources and energy in ensuring the well-being and quality of life of grandmothers who provide care for HIV/AIDS orphans. Well-being was defined as the absence of psychopathology, presence of healthy patterns of behaviour and adequate functioning in various domains of life (Norris et al., 2008). The World Health Organisation Quality of Life-Brief version (WHOQOL-BREF) was used to assess well-being across different domains. These authors argued that it was important to know the health status of these carers who have been left with the burden of taking of the young ones amidst challenges such as aging and limited resources.

Using a sample of 241 grandmothers, Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014a, 2014b) found that personal resources such as high self-esteem and mastery predicted physical health, while coping skills in addition to the other two personal assets positively impacted the mental health of grandmothers. This was because when grandmothers had a positive attitude towards care-giving they tended to view this responsibility as a challenge not a burden, which in turn fostered well-being. Mhaka-Mutepfa and colleagues (2014a, 2014b) further argued that the extent to which there was a balance between the demands of care-giving and the resources available to the grandparent determined the health of the care-giver (cf., Hughes et al., 2007). Moreover, social resources such as support from extended family, friends and religious organisations were found to be instrumental in enhancing the well-being of the care-givers. Also important was a healthy physical environment as was evident among grandmothers that lived in urban areas as compared to rural areas because of some of the opportunities that living in an urban area afforded them (Mhaka-Mutepfa et al., 2014a, 2014b). These included access to menial jobs, rental income and financial support from other children who were still alive.

In addition to exploring the impact of protective factors on health and well-being among grandparent care-givers, Mhaka-Mutepfa and her colleagues (2014a, 2014b) also explored the impact of these protective factors on resilience among this group. Age, income and personal assets were associated with higher personal competence for resilience. The acceptance of self and life component of resilience was found to be predicted by type of residence, esteem, mastery, social networks and being spiritual. Income and age emerged as a predictor of resilience because younger care-givers were able to work and effectively provide for the needs of the orphans (Mhaka-Mutepfa et al., 2014a, 2014b).

Personal assets of self-esteem, higher self-efficacy, a meaningful life, problem-solving skills and mastery were responsible for increase in resilience and the ability to cope with the stress of taking care of the grandchildren (Mhaka-Mutepfa et al., 2014a, 2014b). Moreover, support from friends, family and religious organisations were indicated as social assets that facilitated the acceptance of self and life components of resilience and overall role satisfaction. Among all the sources, family

support was found to be the most reliable form of support. Mhaka-Mutepfa et al. (2014a, 2014b) also noted that resilience was influenced by good physical health because it allowed grandparents to offer proper care-giving.

Apart from the vulnerable groups of orphans, disabled children are another group in Zimbabwe requiring extra care and support as a result of the stigma and challenges they face (Mark & Verrest, 2014). Mark and Verrest (2014) used the well-being framework by McGregor (2007) to explore the assets that care-givers of disabled children capitalised on to protect and provide for the needs of the disabled. This well-being framework emphasises the need to understand poverty from the objective and subjective circumstances of the individual as well as existing influential social structures. In this framework, well-being is understood as an interaction between the resources as well as needs and meanings attached to the achievement of goals with all these being shaped by the society (McGregor, 2007).

The sample of the study comprised 61 female care-givers of disabled children and questions ranged from characteristics of the disabled child, resources available, existing needs and strategies employed. The findings of the study showed that there was no external support for disabled children mostly as a result of Zimbabwe being a weak state that failed to cater for the socio-economic needs of disabled children (Mark & Verrest, 2014). Strategies adopted by female care-givers included reducing the effect of poverty, learning new skills that would enable them to provide medical care to the child and also training these children to be independent. When the strain of care-giving became overwhelming and burdensome, female care-givers were found to engage in faith-based acceptance of their current situation (Mark & Verrest, 2014).

Professor Elias Mpofu

Biography of Professor Elias Mpofu

Professor Mpofu is a distinguished visiting professor at the University of Johannesburg, and is a professor of rehabilitation counselling at the University of Sydney, Australia. Formerly professor of rehabilitation services at the Pennsylvania State University, he is also affiliate professor of rehabilitation psychology at the University Wisconsin-Madison, and Graduate Faculty at the University of Kentucky. He was awarded his doctoral degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Professor Elias Mpofu is the editor of the *Journal of Psychology in Africa* and the *Australian Journal of Rehabilitation Counselling*, and is the consulting editor of eight other journals, including *Psychological Assessment*, the flagship assessment journal of the American Psychological Association. He has authored and co-authored over 200 works the last 2 decades. Professor Mpofu's research interests coalesce around community-oriented services;—their design, implementation and evaluation in local and international community settings.

Positive Psychology Contributions

A relatively old study by Mpfu (1999) focussed on the effect of modernity on subjective well-being among college students in Zimbabwe. We included this study because it is the only study in Zimbabwe that we were able to identify that has explored subjective well-being from a positive psychology perspective. In exploring subjective well-being, the findings of this study showed that college students were more satisfied with the domains of family, friends, self and food but not so much with recreation and finances (Mpfu, 1999). There was also a higher frequency of positive emotions of affection, joy and pride as compared to negative emotions of anger and fear. Mpfu (1999) indicated that as a result of modernity, college students felt that there was a need to be more emotionally expressive, which was juxtaposed with the cultural expectation of experiencing or expressing less positive emotions. The influence of modernity seemed to be effectively managed against traditional values such as limited emotional expressiveness. Mpfu (1999) also found that younger Zimbabwean college students who were more modern in their outlook experienced greater satisfaction with lives, noting that their personal world views were aligned with the current modern world views. On gender differences, female college students were found to have higher levels of satisfaction with life in comparison with their male counterparts (Mpfu, 1999). One explanation offered for these findings was the current political climate of affirmative action that offered females more opportunities for advancement. This was accompanied by social privileges now open to female that could have influenced their judgements of satisfaction with life.

Namibia

Mrs. Martina Perstling

Biography of Martina Perstling

Mrs. Martina Perstling graduated with a master's degree in clinical psychology at the University of Namibia. She currently works at the school of medicine of the University of Namibia as a lecturer. She has worked closely with renowned South African organisational psychologist, Professor Ian Rothmann. Some of her scholarly works include exploring the relationship between secondary traumatic stress and well-being as well as a book chapter on the subjective well-being of Namibians after the experience of apartheid.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Perstling and Rothmann (2012) provided empirical evidence on the relationship between secondary traumatic stress, psychological well-being and life satisfaction of social workers. The premise of this study is that social workers experience secondary traumatic stress through their daily interactions with victims of traumatic experiences, which could in turn impact their psychological well-being. Perstling and Rothmann (2012) therefore sought to determine whether secondary traumatic stress was related to purpose in life, environmental mastery, self-acceptance and life satisfaction.

The findings of their study showed that secondary traumatic stress was negatively related to environmental mastery, self-acceptance and life satisfaction of social workers in Namibia (Perstling & Rothmann, 2012). The results of the study also revealed that higher levels of life satisfaction were accompanied by environmental mastery, purpose in life and self-acceptance. The findings of the study reinforced the idea that psychological well-being constructs are closely related to life satisfaction (Perstling & Rothmann, 2012). In addition, these findings demonstrated that secondary traumatic stress predisposed individuals to occupational hazards that could negatively influence their psychological well-being.

Perstling and Rothmann (2014) also explored the state of Namibia with respect to Namibians' subjective well-being after the experience of apartheid. These authors indicated that the few existing studies on well-being surprisingly indicated that social workers had average scores on well-being despite surviving a post-war society with trauma issues such as poverty, HIV/AIDS and a disabled population (Perstling & Rothmann, 2012). In addition, Perstling and Rothmann (2014) indicated that research showed that students and social workers experienced almost equal levels of life satisfaction, which could imply that majority of Namibians experienced an average level of life satisfaction.

Dr. Manfred Janik

Biography of Dr. Manfred Janik

Dr. Janik obtained his doctoral degree in clinical psychology at the University of Namibia and is currently working at the same institution as a senior lecturer. His research interests include topics such as hope, life satisfaction, well-being and motivation. He has a number of published articles in the area of work-related well-being.

Positive Psychology Contributions

On work-related well-being, Janik and Rothmann (2015) explored the role of work-role fit, job enrichment, supervisor and co-worker relationship as well as

psychological meaningfulness on the intention to leave among teachers in Namibia. These authors argued that the general dissatisfaction with work tended to influence the high turn-over among teachers in Namibia. The results of their study showed that work-role fit and psychological meaningfulness had direct impact on the intention to leave, while work-role fit and job enrichment predicted psychological meaningfulness (Janik & Rothmann, 2015). In addition, psychological meaningfulness was found to mediate the relationship between intention to leave and work-role fit, indicating that meaningfulness plays a significant role in the retention of teachers (Janik & Rothmann, 2015).

In a related study, Janik (2013) determined to what extent Namibian educators' work-related well-being and intention to resign were influenced by work-role fit and psychological conditions. Janik (2013) found that work engagement was determined by work-role fit, job enrichment and psychological meaningfulness. Organisational commitment was predicted by work-role fit, job enrichment, co-worker relations, supervisor support, sense of coherence, psychological meaningfulness and autonomy. In addition to work engagement as an indicator of work-related well-being, educator turnover was found to be predicted by poor work-role fit, lack of personal resources, weak sense of coherence and lack of psychological meaningfulness (Janik, 2013).

Following these findings, Janik and Rothmann (2016) determined that certain relational factors were influential in predicting psychological meaningfulness and work engagement. These factors included supervisor relations, co-worker relations and emotional exhaustion. The authors indicated that quality and trusting relationships between educators and their supervisors as well as co-workers was instrumental for psychological meaningfulness and availability as well as work engagement. Janik and Rothmann (2016) argued that the importance of relationships at work was grounded in the tendency for colleagues to form an in-group identity (cf., Capozza & Brown, 2000) with members of their group, which in turn could promote organisational success. Moreover, the care and support of co-workers have been found to stimulate meaningfulness in other research contexts (Frost et al., 2000). This is because the employee feels respected, valued and useful to the current work environment. Similar findings emerged among a sample of academics in the University of Namibia (Marques, 2013).

One of the few studies by other authors explicitly focussing on this particular cultural group is that of Martin and Cooper (2016). They studied life satisfaction specific in the Himba group in Namibia. Their findings showed that the Himba people in rural areas had significantly higher levels of life satisfaction compared to the Himbas in urban areas, and that both Himba groups had significantly higher satisfaction with life scores than a comparative (in age and gender) group from the UK. These findings are contrary to typical findings in the west that showed that more wealthy cultures tended to have higher subjective well-being than people in poorer cultures.

Zambia

Professor Mark Holder

Biography of Professor Mark Holder

Professor Holder earned his doctorate at the University of California at Berkeley and completed his postdoctoral training at the [Brain](#) Research Institute at UCLA where he conducted brain transplants to reverse impairments caused by brain injuries. Holder is now an associate professor at the University of British Columbia Okanagan, where he studies the science of [happiness](#). He has authored more than 80 scientific publications and leads a research [team](#) that is identifying factors (e.g., spirituality and [personality](#)) that contribute to happiness in vulnerable populations including children, people living in challenging regions of the world (e.g., Zambia and Northern India), and people with personality disorders (e.g., [psychopathy](#)), emotional processing disorders (e.g., alexithymia) and acquired brain injury. His team is also investigating strategies to enhance happiness in adults through experiences with [nature](#) and changing their implicit theories of well-being.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Holder et al. (2016) arguing that cross-cultural research on religiosity and spirituality among the youth is limited, aimed at determining the relations among the dimensions of well-being (life satisfaction and happiness), spirituality and religiousness among children and adolescents in Zambia. The present study served as an extension of a study on religion among Canadian children. Holder et al. (2016) argued that Canada is becoming less and less religious while vulnerable populations such as Zambia seemed to become more religious.

Using a sample of 1293 children and adolescents in Zambia, Holder et al. (2016) found that spirituality was a strong predictor of children's life satisfaction and moderate predictor of adolescent happiness and life satisfaction. None of the demographic variables (age, gender or school grade) and religious variables emerged as strong predictors of happiness and life satisfaction especially among children. The findings of this study also demonstrated that despite social and economic challenges, children and adolescents reported high levels of happiness comparable to children in Canada.

Another study conducted by a western researcher in Zambia is that of Gaines (2014). He reported on the testing of the inner well-being model developed by the Wellbeing and Poverty Pathways Project team and tested in another developing country (White et al., 2013) in a rural Zambian context. This seven-domain, model of economic confidence, agency/participation, social connections, close relationships, physical/mental health, competence/self-worth, and values/meaning as

interlinked dimensions of inner wellbeing showed a good fit compared to a single-factor model in this group.

Nigeria

Biography of Dr. Victoria Bada

Dr. Bada is a developmental psychologist in the Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria, where she has been teaching since 2011. She obtained Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from University of Ibadan in 2002, *M.Sc. in* Developmental Psychology in 2006, Diploma Certificate in Primary Rational Emotive Behavioral/Cognitive Behavioral Training from Albert Ellis Institute, New York in 2011, and PhD in Developmental Psychology from University of Ibadan in 2015. She joined as a teaching Assistant at Psychology Department of University of Ibadan, offering self-less service to the Department thereby supervising and mentoring undergraduate students of the Department of Psychology. She is a member of many professional associations, among which are the Nigerian Psychological Association (NPA), Nigerian Association of Developmental Psychologists (NADP), International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development (ISSBD), and International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP). She has published in her area of research and currently has over seventeen (17) publications, mostly in the aspect of psychological well-being. She is the current editor of the departmental magazine '*The Ibadan Psychologist*', and she has served in varying administrative capacities across Departmental and University levels.

Positive Psychology Contributions

One of the studies on psychological well-being in Nigeria has focused on understanding the psychological factors that were necessary for promoting psychological well-being among the spouses of incarcerated male prisoners (Bada et al., 2013). Based on the findings from a sample of 109 female spouses, Bada et al. (2013) argued that problem-focused coping strategy was directly related to the psychological well-being of female partners of prisoners. When these partners were able to focus on how to gather resources to manage the stress they were faced with, psychological well-being was more likely to increase. A noteworthy aspect of this study is the reference to Ryff's Psychological Well-being Theory (Ryff, 1989), which is absent from most research in Nigeria. The authors used the Goldberg (1988) scale, which does not measure psychological well-being as has been theorized in positive psychology. Unfortunately, this is the pattern in most positive psychology research in Nigeria. In addition to coping strategies, perception of the availability of support emerged as important for these women. It was evident that

these women needed to receive love and care from significant others in order to lessen the effect of the absence of their loved ones.

Related to this finding, a different study among female partners of incarcerated males demonstrated that religion, social support and educational attainment were important predictors of psychological well-being (Bada, 2014). In their study, these authors noted that the presence of support from significant others helped spouses to manage the challenges of having a husband in prison. In addition to social support from significant others, the authors suggested that teachings in the Christian faith seemed to act as a protective shield for females with incarcerated partners. It is possible that faith in a higher power provided hope and strength to view their experience as a test that they could overcome. Educational attainment also emerged as a crucial determinant of psychological well-being because education seemed to facilitate a rather realistic perception of the situation as well as providing the skills to manage the difficulties posed by the absence of the husband (Bada, 2014).

Related to the importance of educational attainment for the well-being of female partners of prisoners, Bada et al. (2013) tested the impact of a psycho-education program on psychological well-being of these partners. The psycho-education program was designed to assist participants to manage stressors using dysfunctional coping and distorted beliefs training. This program enabled participants to identify their cognitive distortions and also how to positively influence their thinking regarding their current situation. Using a quasi-experimental design with 16 participants, Bada et al. (2013) found that the psycho-education was effective in improving psychological well-being among partners of incarcerated males.

Dr. Aaron Agbo

Biography of Dr. Aaron Agbo

Dr. Agbo is a lecturer at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and his research interests include meaning and sources of happiness, validation of scales and statistics. After the mandatory national youth service popularly known as NYSC (National Youth Service Corps), he proceeded to the same university in 2007 where he obtained a Masters Degree in Experimental Psychology in 2008. He further enrolled for Doctor of Philosophy in Experimental Psychology and was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in Experimental Psychology in 2013. He has published 6 articles in peer-reviewed journals. Some of his works relevant to positive psychology is reviewed below.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Research on a typical PP facet, namely happiness, had been conducted by Agbo and colleagues in the Nigerian collectivist context. Agbo et al. (2012) conducted a socio-cultural analysis on happiness in Nigeria, which is seemingly paradoxically

relatively high as shown in other large multi-country studies, despite the fact that poverty reigns in Nigeria. They concluded that religion plays a more important role in happiness in Nigeria, than economic, democratic and development factors. However, religion as a source of happiness is a consolatory reaction amidst hardships and does not really reflect satisfaction with life. They accentuate the difference between communion and interdependence, and argued the importance of not just lumping countries together in making conclusions about happiness and its determinants. Agbo and Ome (2016) also explored the lay conceptions of happiness and its determinants in a group of Igbo students in Eastern Nigeria. They were asked to define happiness in their own words and indicate the things they think make people happy. Analyses showed that participants defined happiness with reference to both affect and cognition, with more words referring to affect. The students defined happiness mostly with reference to the self and not with a focus on others, which is often assumed in studies conducted from a western perspective in collectivist communities. Gender differences were found and indicated that females more often express interdependent views of happiness, whereas males had a more individualist focus. The things that were regarded as mostly making people happy were participation, affection, and leisure activities.

Other studies in positive psychology in the Nigerian context is highlighted in the following paragraphs. Post-traumatic growth is another area of research that is closely related to positive psychology and has been explored in the Nigerian context. Ifeagwazi and Chukwuorji (2014) explored the relationship between religious commitment and post-traumatic growth among a sample of 478 students in Delta State Polytechnic. This study was premised on the fact that adults who had strong intrapersonal and interpersonal religious commitments, as expressed in their depth of knowledge of spiritual concepts and emotional ties with others of similar religious orientations would have inner resources necessary for post-traumatic growth (Ifeagwazi & Chukwuorji, 2014). Intrapersonal religious commitment increased post-traumatic growth because such commitments provided platforms for development that was beneficial after the experience of a traumatic event.

In relation to the findings of the importance of emotional ties derived from religious commitment, which in turn enhances post-traumatic growth, Chukwuorji et al. (2015) found that family support was key for ensuring successful ageing among the Biafra war generation. These groups of individuals were witnesses to the Nigerian civil war between 1967 and 1970 and suffered trauma from the extermination and losses associated with the war. Although successful ageing is not directly linked to psychological well-being, some of its indicators are similar to well-being such as having a positive outlook of the future and being in a pleasant mood (Chukwuorji et al., 2015). The authors indicated that adequate family support predicted successful ageing in the Biafra war generation. Interestingly, apart from benefits of mutual relationships, the well-being of the elderly seemed to also be predicated upon the provision of instrumental support for younger members of the household (Chukwuorji et al., 2015). This finding points to the importance of an interconnectedness model of interpersonal relationships where support is not only received but also given in order to facilitate well-being. The above mentioned studies

in Nigeria linked to mental health and well-being highlight the importance of relationships and religious beliefs as sources of functioning well, as is also found in many other African studies.

In a study with Nigerian undergraduate students Onyedibe et al. (2015) explored the relationship between coping, emotional intelligence and psychological well-being measured with scales developed in the West, and found the expected association between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being as measured with the Ryff scale. Ugwu et al. (2016) conducted semi-structured interviews with women at a local market in a city in South-Eastern Nigeria about their daily lives. They used an interpretative phenomenological perspective and established that work-life balance were linked to notions of good progress across roles, proper time allocation to roles, as well as harmony and/or synchrony across roles which the authors indicate to be slightly different from the popular understandings.

Ghana

Dr. Angelina Wilson

Biography of Angelina Wilson

Dr. Wilson obtained her master's degree in health promotion and development at the University of Bergen, Norway. As part of her master's programme, she explored the resources for well-being among female porters living in Accra. This was followed by a Ph.D. in psychology at Stellenbosch University exploring aspects of mental health among Ghanaian adolescents in the Northern region. As part of her post-doctoral fellowship, Angelina was nominated to join the Eudaimonic Hedonic Happiness Inventory team investigating the manifestation of well-being across different cultures. Her research interest is in the area of well-being in deprived contexts among adolescents and older individuals and has published scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals and made a number of conference presentations both locally and internationally. Dr. Wilson is currently working at the Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa, at the level of a research specialist. She is involved in a well-being project that taps into improving well-being in a context of inequality and poverty.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Using a sample of 717 adolescents from the northern region of Ghana, hope, perceptions of support and life satisfaction emerged as significant predictors of emotional well-being but not emotional distress (Wilson, 2015). The findings of the study demonstrated that even in impoverished contexts, positive experiences such as being hopeful, perceiving that support would be available when needed and

positive judgments of an individual's current life situation were necessary in facilitating well-being.

In order to provide further insights into the manifestations of positive experiences in other contexts, Wilson and Somhlaba (2016b) carried out an in-depth study of hope and life satisfaction. In a qualitative exploration of hope and life satisfaction among 18 adolescents from the northern region of Ghana, Wilson and Somhlaba (2016b) found that although hope was a personalized cognitive construct, it also had strong relational dimensions. Hope was engendered through interactions with friends, family and teachers. The authors indicated that the advice and encouragement received from these significant others enabled them to carve out a pathway and create feelings of agency from their present position of lack to the desired future. As seen in previous studies (Addai et al., 2014), religion emerged as crucial for engendering hope, because God was seen as a source to which adolescents could turn to for answers in academic and economic domains (Wilson & Somhlaba, 2016b).

In line with quantitative western research on life satisfaction for example, Danielsen et al. (2009) and Edwards and Lopez (2006), Wilson and Somhlaba (2016b) found that being connected to others and the experience of school-related support were crucial for the evaluation of the adolescent's life as satisfactory. As expected, performing well in school was also described as essential to being satisfied with life. Noteworthy from these findings is the crucial role of support, which was accompanied by the need for the provision of material resources. This finding points to the important role of context in understanding positive experiences. In a more affluent region, it is possible that the provision of material resources would not emerge as crucial for judgments of satisfaction with life as evident in the work of Sarriera et al. (2014).

As evident in previous research in the Ghanaian context (Glozah & Pevalin, 2014), social support seems to be an important construct influencing well-being of children, adolescents and adults alike. As a result, Wilson and Somhlaba (2016a) qualitatively explored the dynamics and perceptions of support among adolescents living impoverished contexts in Ghana, in order to determine how these are related to well-being. Interestingly, social support and social ties were not inherently useful in themselves but rather their utility for well-being was dependent on the quality of interactions across different networks (Wilson & Somhlaba, 2016a). These authors also noted some problematic social interactions including face-saving when seeking instrumental support. The authors argued that as much as there was a dire need for instrumental support, adolescents took cognizance of social exchanges that undermined their self-esteem and feelings of adequacy (Wilson & Somhlaba, 2016a).

Apart from indicators of psychological well-being, there is research evidence on the role of demographic variables of age, gender and religious affiliation in the relationship across well-being constructs. For instance, the mediating role of gender in the relationship between hope, perceptions of support and life satisfaction and positive mental health has been explored using a socio-cultural lens among a sample of 717 adolescents in the northern region of Ghana (Wilson & Somhlaba, 2017b). A

key finding of the present study was that there were gender differences in relationship across the constructs and with positive mental health. The authors found that hope predicted life satisfaction only among females. In addition, life satisfaction was found to be related to emotional well-being only among male adolescents. One of the key explanatory factors for the findings of this study was the socio-cultural connotations of what it means to be a male or female in the Ghanaian context. Based on previous studies in this context (cf., Buchanan, 2014), the authors intimated that the male position of privilege seemed to provide a pathway for their well-being.

A common phenomenon in the northern region was the minimal regard and investment given to girl-child education compared to males. Girls were regarded as the property of their future husband's households and as a result investment in their education was a futile effort. Moreover, school-related support was mostly targeted towards the males in the family to the detriment of females when there were limited resources (Buchanan, 2014). This position of disadvantage could have resulted in adolescent females deriving satisfaction mainly when they were able to find alternative pathways to the attainment of their goals and a confidence in their ability to achieve set goals (Wilson & Somhlaba, 2017b).

Other noteworthy findings from this study included the fact that males and Christian adolescents had higher levels of hope than females and Muslim adolescents. Males and Muslim adolescents were also found to score higher on emotional well-being than their female and Christian adolescent counterparts (Wilson & Somhlaba, 2017b). However, there were no significant age differences for hope, perceptions of support, life satisfaction, emotional well-being and distress. Given that these normative data on the indicators of positive mental health among adolescents were exploratory and the first of its kind among adolescents in the northern region, the authors strongly argued that there is a need for further research in order to fully understand the relationship between demographic variables and positive mental health in this context.

Although no new scale measuring positive psychological attributes has been developed in Ghana, there has been scale validation of important constructs that tend to predict well-being. One of which is social support. The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet et al., 1988) was validated among a sample of school-going adolescents (Wilson et al., 2016). This scale was found to have good psychometric properties. The original three-factor structure was replicated and the emerging Cronbach alpha was .81.

Other studies in positive psychology in the Ghanaian context is highlighted in the following paragraphs. An indirect attempt to explore well-being in its positive sense is evident in the work of Glozah (2015), who was concerned with qualitatively exploring health and well-being among adolescents using a psychosocial perspective. The findings of the study showed that health and well-being were understood as being able to function optimally, which included feeling of mental strength, ability to take decisions and a general sense of vitality (Glozah, 2015). Other conceptualisations of health and well-being included reference to being able to engage in sporting activities and not being ill with malaria. This study contributes

to the understanding of well-being from bottom-up approach, which is currently an under-researched area in positive psychology.

A direct attempt at subjective well-being research in Ghana comes with the work of Addai et al. (2014). This study has focused on exploring the predictors of happiness and life satisfaction in this context (Addai et al., 2014). This work represents one of the few studies that have explored well-being from a positive perspective. Using the World Value Survey, these authors identified some of the important predictors of happiness and life satisfaction in the Ghanaian context. These predictors included economic, cultural, social capital and health variables. Unsurprisingly, religious variables emerged as important predictors of happiness and life satisfaction. The authors argued that religion tends to provide social support and a sense of meaning in life, which seemed to have a positive impact on happiness and subjective well-being (Addai et al., 2014). Unexpectedly, individuals at a lower socio-economic status were found to be happier than the middle and upper class. For example, individuals in the Northern region (a poorer region) were found to be happier than those in economically advanced South.

Other findings of this study showed that social capital in the form of community engagement was positively related to well-being in the Ghanaian context. Being a collectivist society, relationships form a key aspect of structure of the society. This finding has been corroborated in other studies among orphans (Salifu Yendork & Somhlaba, 2015) and adolescents (Amoah & Jørgensen, 2014; Glozah & Pevalin, 2014; Owusu et al., 2011).

On the whole, Addai et al. (2014) found that Ghanaians were less satisfied with their lives although they were happy. This finding points to a clear distinction between affective and cognitive dimensions of subjective well-being. This finding also showed that although Ghanaians are generally easy-going people, due to the economic hardships, individuals tend to be less satisfied with their life. The presence of material deprivation and crime seemed to have a rather significant impact on the life satisfaction of this Ghanaian sample.

Tanzania

Dr. Janvier Rugira

Biography of Dr. Janvier Rugira

Dr. Janvier Rugira is a lecturer in Psychology at the University of Johannesburg. His research focuses on positive psychology, cross-cultural psychology in Africa as well as the development of students' support services and well-being. Dr. Rugira's current project focuses on the contextual manifestation of well-being across different cultures. Dr. Rugira holds a master's degree in Counselling Psychology from Daystar University (KE) and a Ph.D. in Psychology from Northwest University

(Potchefstroom, South Africa). His doctoral thesis focused on the development and evaluation of a psychological well-being programme for university students.

Positive Psychology Contributions

In Tanzania we could only identify the work of Janvier Rugira. He determined the prevalence of well-being in Tanzanian students using Keyes' MHC scale (developed in the West; Rugira et al., 2013). Rugira et al. (2013) also developed a well-being program based on Ryff's (1989) theorizing on well-being. This study showed that mental health scores increased after participation in the intervention program.

Indigenous Perspectives and Positive Psychology

In Cameroon Nsamenang, although not a positive psychology researcher, has done important work on development from an African perspective that is worth mentioning because it highlights important points on functioning which resonates with the well-being framework. Nsamenang (1992, 2006) propounded the theory of social ontogenesis, which espouses that human development is closely linked to the social ecology in which the development takes place. Using impressionistic data from Nso people of Cameroon, Nsamenang (1992) argues that social–ecological contexts and cultural systems interact with biology to nurture development in children.

Social ontogenetic stages of development comprise seven stages of social selfhood. These include the period of the newborn, social priming, social apprenticing, social entrée, social internment, adulthood, old age and death. Each of these stages comes with developmental tasks that are defined by cultural expectations. In the work of Nsamenang (2006, p. 295), development is defined as the “acquisition and growth of the physical, cognitive, social and emotional competencies required to engage fully in family and society”. Nsamenang (2006) argues that we do not only need other humans but we also have the social responsibility to learn from these other humans in attainment of full personhood. Self-definition cannot be achieved without reference to other communities in terms of interconnectedness and the various roles we perform in relation to others.

Some researchers suggested that collectivism as construed in Western and East Asian studies is not exactly the same in an African context. Wissing and Temane (2013b) opine also that the Africa-version of cultural collectivism is different from the Asian manifestations of collectivist orientations, and that this influences the way well-being is expressed. For example, in an African context expressions are more ‘sunny’ whereas in Asian contexts they are more tempered.

Future of Positive Psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa

Benefits of Positive Psychology

Even with the challenges and the seemingly delayed progress in positive psychology in Sub-Saharan Africa, current work has shown that positive psychology has benefited people in this context. There is a great potential for positive psychology to develop further in the sub-Saharan regions especially because of the ‘naturalness’ of *Ubuntu*, connectedness, appreciation of wisdom and spirituality in these regions. These facets may be so integral to human life that they are accepted as self-evident and not something that need to be researched from a distance. Of course, hardships, war, poverty and famine in these regions focus attention more on survival needs at the moment and with better economic and democratic developments a stronger focus on well-being aspects may be expected. But even in these circumstances the strength of relationships and connectedness fulfill a preventive and promotive function for well-being even though research on these topics may be lacking. A benefit of PP in this region, as in others in the world, is especially its non-threatening character, catching on with the best in people instead of trying to remediate what is wrong with them—while still taking cognizance of both sun and shadow in life, the positive and the negative. Research in PP also enriches the multi- and transdisciplinary understanding of health and epidemiology of health and well-being (e.g. Vorster et al., 2000).

Why is Positive Psychology Late in Sub-Saharan Africa

Compared to the West, positive psychology research is lagging behind, and a worthwhile question would be why this is the case—especially in view of the nearly ‘natural’ inclining to be human and others-oriented. However, asking this question in the above manner presupposes that countries in sub-Saharan Africa have not made any strides in understanding the positive aspects of human nature, which is tantamount to exploring the indicators of psychological well-being. We suggest that in addition to trying to explore the reasons behind the minimal research on positive psychology in sub-Saharan Africa, we need to look at to what extent positive psychology principles have effectively opened up to theoretical understandings of well-being from the rest of the world—especially Africa.

We argue that positive psychology theories have been largely based on testing Western samples with the results being extrapolated to the rest of the globe (cf. Delle Fave et al., 2011; Henrich et al., 2010). We do however acknowledge that there has been extensive exploration of positive psychology theories in Asian contexts (Donaldson et al., 2015; Hashim, 2013). Based on the work of major positive psychologists highlighted in the preceding sections, it is clear that most research consists of western constructs being tested in Africa using a top-down approach of

presupposed hypothetical relationships across the constructs. There seems to be a paternalistic approach in the use of the principles of positive psychology that is not fully accommodating of theoretical and conceptual views from indigenous perspectives. With the case of cross-cultural studies in positive psychology (for example, Brannan et al., 2012; Schwarz et al., 2012), there is the tendency to conclude that there are cultural differences in the relationship across positive psychology constructs, however these constructs are hardly qualitatively explored to have a better understanding of what it means in the context in which it is been used. Positive psychology appears to be late in sub-Saharan Africa perhaps because psychology and positive psychology from the West had been ignorant in accommodating the uniqueness of other contexts in the theorizing of psychological and subjective well-being.

Another noteworthy issue is whether sub-Saharan Africa is actually late or if positive psychology has failed to identify other conceptualisations of psychological well-being that is unique to the African context. Has positive psychology considered other contextually-relevant indicators of well-being and mental health that are presented in other ways rather than the well-established theoretical frameworks? For instance, research on communal well-being (Amoah & Jørgensen, 2014; Wilson, 2012), maintaining trust and religion (Addai et al., 2013), and development (Nsamenang, 2006) could be explored to see how they resonate with pre-established positive psychology constructs and what impact these have on the psychological well-being of the individuals in this context. In order to conclusively say that positive psychology has delayed in this context, it would be worthwhile to explore mental/psychological well-being from the African perspective. An exploration of psychological well-being from an African perspective would explain where the seeming lacunae in research exists.

Further reflections on why positive psychology seems to be delayed in sub-Saharan has pointed to the direction of the current preoccupation with illness (Bird et al., 2010). The burden of disease, war and the concomitant challenges of lacking resources (Kleintjes et al., 2010) have resulted in researchers' and practitioners' focusing on reduction of distress without opening up to the possibility of promotion of well-being that could have resultant impact on the level of the burden of disease. Moreover, the lack of adequate evidence on the implication of understanding and promoting positive mental health (Wilson & Somhlaba, 2017a, 2017b) has resulted in little or no investment on this area of research.

The Way Forward

Clearly there is a lot to be done in positive psychology research in the sub-Saharan African region. One of the areas requiring attention is the development of theories of psychological well-being that are contextually relevant. Such theories should not only test preexisting constructs of well-being but should also take into account the African tradition and cultural perspectives that might play a role in the experience of

well-being. Actually, much more research should be conducted in sub-Saharan regions, but also across the world, on the role of culture in psychosocial well-being and experienced quality of life, especially with a qualitative bottom-up approach. Such studies will contribute to a deeper scientific understanding of well-being and the dynamics involved, but may also inform public policy at national levels that can pave the way for application and promotion of psychosocial health and well-being.

Based on evidence from existing research in this region, we suggest that it is necessary to take into consideration the socio-ecological context in which such theories would be employed. Key considerations include the interactions across systems in an ecological context, cultural underpinnings of interrelations, and meanings and social constructions of functioning and well-being. Other transient ecological conditions include political climates, economic issues and values across the life span.

Also pertaining to theory development, there would be a need for a bottom-up approach to research. More qualitative studies targeted at exploring what mental/psychological well-being means in the African context is crucial to developing contextually-relevant theories. The bottom-up approach would also aid in unearthing cultural values that might not be captured when using a top-down approach to theory development.

Given the lacunae in research on novel assessment tools, we suggest that this is another area of priority. In order to ensure the validity of new theories that would be developed using a bottom-up approach, psychological instruments must be created and tested. It is possible that some of the existing western scales could be relevant to measuring psychological well-being but these must be validated in the African context. For most of the research carried out in the countries across the region, there is the tendency to use preexisting tools without determining their psychometric strength for measuring the specified construct in the present context. In validating preexisting tools, consideration must also be given to language and translation issues that might affect the applicability of the scale in the current context.

Among all the relevant constructs that emerged as related to mental health, religion and social support seemed to cut across most studies. Future positive psychology research in sub-Saharan Africa could explore even further what about religion makes it so critical for psychological well-being. Questions on religiosity, spirituality and religious processes and how they interact with different aspects of well-being could be explored. Positive psychology could also consider what forms of theories could emerge from a study of religion with a positive lens. Can there be a theoretical framework of religion and positive psychology? Further distinctions between spirituality and religion is also required in the context of research in Africa.

Only pockets of intervention research were identified among the work of major positive psychologists in the region. There is therefore a dire need for research demonstrating that positive psychology interventions do work. However, the designs of these interventions should be grounded in theories that have been tested and are found to be relevant to the African context. As much as we do encourage the use of well-defined and pre-established intervention programs from the West, these need to

be adapted to the needs and cultural values of the African context. Information on what psychological well-being means in this context should guide the design of interventions and choice of methods for implementing such interventions. The corporation and participation of stakeholders in the design and implementation of interventions must be duly considered.

In order to encourage a complementary approach to the promotion of mental health, which includes not only the reduction of risk factors but also the enhancement of positive experiences, evidence of “what works is necessary”. Such evidence could also ensure the attention of policy-makers towards investing in large scale research on understanding and promoting the psychological well-being of the population.

Conclusion

In summary, there is already rich evidence of positive psychology research in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. There are some well-developed pockets of research, especially in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana, but also smaller units and individuals working in this field elsewhere in Africa, some mostly applying western constructs in these African contexts rather than exploring indigenous understandings of well-being. There is also some evidence of research on well-being without reference to specific constructs or theories from traditional western PP, and some differences with findings from western contexts highlighted. The important role of culture in understandings of well-being is now starting to emerge, especially in some Nigerian studies. Another trend that was found while reviewing existing studies was the use of outcome measures that do not capture mental health and psychological well-being from a functioning well or positive psychological theoretical perspective, indicating that well-being and mental health is currently still often conceptualized in research as the absence of illness rather than the presence of positive aspects.

Some of the studies revealed that the current political and economic climate has implications for subjective well-being. For example, in Zimbabwe the failure of the government to support disabled children increased the burden on their care-givers with a resultant negative impact on well-being. In addition, policies that support female empowerment in Zimbabwe seemed to have implication for their subjective well-being. However, we find a contradictory trend in Zambia, where children and adolescents had high levels of happiness despite the economic situation in Zambia. This finding is similar to some observations in Nigeria, and was replicated in Ghana using the World Value Survey but we must indicate that the life satisfaction of Ghanaians was characterized as rather low. In Namibia also, despite the aftermath of the apartheid the nation seemed to be experiencing average levels of satisfaction with life as seen in the sample of social workers and college students.

In the above sections we also refer to several studies conducted by western psychologists in small or large multi-country studies on aspects of well-being in several African countries. These studies were mostly conducted with measures

developed in the West and mostly refer to subjective well-being in terms of affect and satisfaction with life. On the one hand, these studies are part of globalization and they are informative of psychosocial well-being in these countries. However, on the other hand, the question can be asked if this is a new form of (academic) colonization in the cases where African scholars are not included as major role players and co-authors, and when contextual and cultural factors apart from basic socio-demographic factors are not taken into account. Time will tell.

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Chapter 12

Positive Psychology in the Arab World



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Positive Psychology (henceforth PP) concepts and applications are increasingly attracting researchers and decision making alike in modern societies. If we agree that ‘happiness’ is one of the core concepts of PP, one can exemplify the existence of this trend in the Arab region in the decision of the Emir of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to nominate a ‘Minister of State for Happiness’. At the occasion, the UAE Vice President declared that “Happiness and positivity in the UAE are a lifestyle, a government commitment and a spirit uniting the UAE community. The government system is evolving to realize the goals that every human seeks: Happiness for him and his family” (UAE Cabinet, 2016).

Notable also is that this Emir chose a 24-year-old lady, Ohood bint Khalfan Al Roumi, as the new Minister. In a conservative monarchy such a choice seems unusual. Nevertheless, the expressed commitment to cater to people’s happiness, may be motivated by some other reasons, such as improving women’s representation at the governmental level; a positive move towards youth in times of the Arab Spring revolts initiating change within the Arab World; or even more importantly for the sake of this chapter is that this decision may also indicate to a political openness to modern social sciences, represented mainly in the new scientific field of PP. Indeed, with such a decision PP seems to be gaining official legitimacy and reaching new territories within the scientific arena. This is expected to motivate researchers to explore the yet unknown boundaries of personal and social life of Arab populations.

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It should be reminded that since acquiring official recognition, back in the nineties, as a nascent scientific discipline, PP has been advancing rapidly in the Western parts of the world. However, very little is known on the state of this discipline in other global regions. The present chapter aims to fill in some of this gap. It principally aims to review the situation of PP in the Arab World. Our narrative will be divided into a number of sections: Firstly, we will sketch out some of the characteristics of the Arab world and the historic roots of PP in this region. Then, we will move to a general overview of Arab psychological sciences to discuss the general situation of PP. Next, we will introduce the reader to the main themes studied so far by Arab positive psychologists, and review topics such as positivity, happiness, well-being and some more recent issues. Afterwards, we will introduce some of the Arab psychologists who enriched the field of PP in the Arab World. We will conclude with a number of recommendations on how to further strengthen this important discipline.

It should be noted that while preparing this chapter, the authors had two choices, either to present the state of PP in each of the 22 independent Arab states that make the Arab World or adopt an approach based on the Arab region as a single entity. Our decision was to adopt the second approach. The main reasons are that this region generally shares the same language of Arabic for the teaching and publication of psychological works. Moreover, generally the same major peer-reviewed journals which are based in a handful of countries, such as Egypt or the Gulf States, publish works of all Arab researchers. Notable also is that the major associations of psychologists are based in the same small number of Arab countries and are open for contributions across the Arab World. It is also known that Arab countries have been historically linked and continue to share the same main problems and challenges. Therefore, we feel that discussing the state of PP in the region as a whole will give us the opportunity to explore in depth the major topics researched by Arab psychologists and find out the contribution of these latter in the face of the major problems of the region.

In this chapter, PP means the scientific inquiry of a panoply of subjects related to the study of human strengths, personal growth and individuals' and communities' thriving for happiness and self-fulfillment (e.g., Compton & Hoffman, 2012). Compared to mainstream psychology, this nascent discipline seeks ways to understand and further personal and societal flourishing in all human conditions alike, whether in times of good health and high well-being, or in times of conflict, infirmity, disease and so forth.

Historical Background to Positive Psychology in the Arab World

The 'Arab World' or the 'Arab nation' generally refers to the community of the 22 states which share the use of the Arabic language and are part of the 'Arab League', founded back in 1945. This entity of countries stretches from the Arabian

Sea in the east to the Atlantic Ocean in the west, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the north till the Indian Ocean in the southeast. These lands comprise geographic points that link the continents of Africa, Europe, and Asia. The majority of Arab populations are part of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) which have been strongly linked historically, partly because of the centuries-old, well-established land and sea networks found throughout the region, and the belongingness to the Arabo-Islamic civilization (Tiliouine & Meziane, 2017).

The Arab region has been at the heart of the world's major events since antiquity and has been known for globally influential civilizations. Amongst these latter: the Phoenicians who reigned over the coastal areas of the Mediterranean Sea from 1550 BCE to 300 BCE (Before the Common Era). The Babylonians also reigned during the beginning of the second millennium BCE. They developed the advanced Code of Laws, urban planning, the 60-minute hour system, and agricultural cultivation skills. In North Africa, which is a major part of the Arab World, the architectural oeuvres of the Pharaohs (3100 BCE—870 BCE) continue to inspire people from everywhere. Their neighbours of the Nubian lands (800 BCE—to about 320 CE, Common Era), helped link the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa to the rest of the world and enriched human culture and knowledge. Carthage (575 BCE—146 BCE), Numidia and the other Berber dynasties controlled the southern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea and reached deep into the sub-Saharan regions. At later dates, Romans succeeded some of their most important architectural and intellectual achievements in this region. Famous intellectuals such as St Augustine who reformed the Roman Church were natives of the east of current Algeria (Estes & Tiliouine, 2014; Tiliouine, 2014b; Tiliouine & Meziane, 2017).

Furthermore, the Arab World has been the cradle of the monotheistic Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The teachings of these religions continue to exert a major impact on the present global civilisation. But, because Islam is considered by Muslims as the last revealed and the most authentic religion, the majority of the region's inhabitants are Muslims. The Prophet of Islam, Mohammed (born in 570 CE in present-day Saudi Arabia), succeeded in only 23 years in laying down the basics of a strong new nation and united the entire Arabian Peninsula into a single Islamic polity. His companions spread Islam across three continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe), which, in turn, led to what is referred to as the Golden Age of Islam (see more details in: Renima et al., 2016). Some of the major successes of this period include the establishment of Arabic as the language of science and as the unifying language for the Islamic world; the compilation of the Prophet's sayings (the *Hadith*); and the translation and expansion of important intellectual works into Arabic, including those of major Greek philosophers. Islam's schools, the *madrassas*, proliferated during this period and succeeded in delivering high-quality education at primary, secondary, and postsecondary levels (see a short review in Tiliouine, 2014c). The world's first universities emerged in North Africa: Al-Qarawiyyin in Fes, Morocco (859 CE) and Al-Azhar in Egypt (970–972 CE). By comparison, Europe's earliest universities were not established until 1088, with the founding of the University of Bologna in Italy (Tiliouine, 2014c). Recent estimates of the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita for the countries of the Arab region in the tenth century indicate they were among the wealthiest regions of

the world compared with those of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Western Europe for the same period (Tiliouine & Meziane, 2017).

Among the factors that led to the subsequent decline of the Arab World is the fall into classicism intellectually, plunging into recurrent internal conflicts, and the devastating foreign invasions. These latter include the destruction of the Abbasid capital Baghdad by the Mongols in the year 1258 and the Crusade Wars led by Western Christians (initiated in 1096 and continued for two centuries until 1291). It also comprises the frequent destructive incursions of the Spanish forces in North Africa, which followed the fall of Andalusia in present-day Spain. The Muslim Ottoman Empire helped fighting these foreign forces, but ended up as the major ruler of most of the Arab land.

With the slow decline of the Ottomans, Arab territories started to fall again victim to Western colonial powers that sought principally to exploit the peoples and resources of their new colonies. France and Britain were particularly adept at this approach to colonisation, but, over time, Spain, and Italy adopted similar approaches to the Arab lands they occupied, e.g., the Sykes-Picot secret agreements of 1916 (Tiliouine & Meziane, 2017; Tiliouine et al., 2016).

Then, another phase of turmoil began. In the midst of the liberation battles, and exactly in 1948, Israel declared an independent state on the Palestinian land and expelled about one million Palestinians as political refugees in neighbouring countries (Sitta, 2016). Palestinians were replaced by thousands of Jews who immigrated to the newly established State of Israel from all over the world. Many wars were subsequently fought between the Arab states and Israel, which was backed by the United States and other Western powers (Sitta, 2016). This conflict is yet a source of tensions in the whole Arab region with some disastrous repercussions on the well-being of all inhabitants of the region (Jabr & Berger, 2016), which in turn may potentially endanger world peace in the future.

It should be added that the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the European colonization which was followed with bitter wars of independence, led to reshaping the Arab World map. Though not all Arab countries are represented, Table 12.1 shows that some of the Arab states acquired independence just recently (Bahrain in 1971, UAE in 1972, Algeria in 1962 and Yemen in 1990). Currently, types of polity diverge across the region with 8 of the 17 countries being led by monarchies. All over the Arab World, population growth has increased sharply between 1950 and 2014 (Table 12.1, adapted from Tiliouine & Meziane, 2017).

Presently the total population of the Arab World is estimated at 422 million people who overwhelmingly belong to the Islamic faith (Column 7, Table 12.1), with Egypt being the most populated country. Furthermore, the median age of Arab population is low, which indicates that the majority of the population is young (more than 50% are under the age of 25). This has put a lot of pressure on governments' budgets to provide education opportunities, adequate health care, and employment opportunities.

In their systematic analysis of social development in the Arab World in the 2000–2011 period, using the World Index of Social Progress (WISP), Estes and Tiliouine (2016) concluded that the Arab top performing countries on the WISP

Table 12.1 Demographics of Arab Countries ($N = 17$)

Country	Region	Type of Polity	Date of Independence	Population (millions) 1950	Population (millions) 2014	Percent Muslims 2011	Population Growth Rate 2013	Median Age, Years
Bahrain	West Asia	Constitutional monarchy	1971	0.1	1.3	81.2	2.6	31.6
Iraq	West Asia	Republic	1932	5.3	36	98.9	2.3	21.5
Jordan	West Asia	Constitutional monarchy	1946	0.5	6.7	98.8	0.1	21.8
Kuwait	West Asia	Constitutional monarchy	1961	0.2	3.3	86.4	1.7	28.9
Lebanon	West Asia	Republic	1943	1.4	4.1	59.7	-0.04	29.3
Oman	West Asia	Absolute monarchy	1650	0.5	4.1	87.7	2.1	24.9
Palestine	West Asia	Occupied	Occupied	0.9	4.6	97.5	2.7	18.2 (Gaza), 22.4 (West Bank)
Qatar	West Asia	Absolute monarchy	1971	0.3	2.3	77.5	4.2	32.6
Saudi Arabia	West Asia	Absolute monarchy	1932	3.2	30.8	97.1	1.5	26.4
Syria	West Asia	Republic	1946	3.6	23	92.8	0.1	23.3
United Arab Emirates	West Asia	Absolute monarchy	1971	0.07	9.4	76.0	2.9	30.3
Yemen	West Asia	Republic	1990	4.3	26	99.0	2.5	18.6
Algeria	North Africa	Republic	1962	8.8	38.7	98.2	1.9	27.3

(continued)

Table 12.1 (continued)

Country	Region	Type of Polity	Date of Independence	Population (millions) 1950	Population (millions) 2014	Percent Muslims 2011	Population Growth Rate 2013	Median Age, Years
Egypt	North Africa	Republic	1922	21.8	87.7	94.7	1.9	25.1
Libya	North Africa	Republic	1951	1.0	3.3	96.6	4.8	27.5
Morocco	North Africa	Constitutional monarchy	1956	9.0	33.5	99.9	1.0	28.1
Tunisia	North Africa	Republic	1956	3.6	11	99.8	0.9	31.4

Notes: (1) Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, and Sudan are part of the Arab League of nations but not included in Table 12.1; (2) Data from Tiliouine and Meziane (2017)

were: Qatar, Kuwait, Tunisia, Lebanon, Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, and Bahrain. The majority of these countries continued to build on their earlier social accomplishments. The presence of large reserves of high quality petroleum (Kuwait and Qatar), comparative ease of access to international financial markets (Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar), and a favorable geographic location along the Mediterranean Sea (Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, and oil revenues in Algeria), all combined to accelerate the pace of social development that is occurring within this group of Arab states. Comparatively small populations and the existence of established land and water transportation networks also figure prominently in the rapid development changes observed for these countries. At the same time, substantial gains were recorded for other countries (i.e., Mauritania and Saudi Arabia). Estes and Tiliouine's analysis (2016) identified Iraq, Sudan, and Yemen as the most poorly achievers on the WISP. The situation of these latter countries, along with Syria and Libya seem to have worsened after the Arab Spring because of the terrorist insurgency and foreign interventions.

Of more importance in the present chapter is the state of social sciences in this region, with PP being one of its disciplines. Briefly, it should be noted that because Arab countries are highly diverse with respect to their social, demographic, economic, and political profiles, the status of social sciences differs greatly. In his recent report: *'Social Sciences in the Arab Region: Five Years after the Arab Uprisings'*, Amer (2016) indicated that only a few countries contain the majority of university-based social science research centers. Eighty-nine percent of the university research centers are found in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Iraq, with Egypt and Algeria combined accounting for 57% of these centers. The largest number of scholars and the greatest number of university degrees are offered in Egypt and Algeria (44% of the region's master's degrees and 39% of Ph.D.'s; Amer, 2016). We expect, therefore, that the major part of scientific works in PP would be produced in these major countries

As a summary of this section, it should be reminded that the Arab World is going through a harsh period of turmoil. Many factors contribute to worsen the situation. On the one hand, the world and regional superpowers continue to exert their hegemony over this region. On the other, the internal fragile situation is characterized by widespread mismanagement of internal affairs, and the existing political systems are ignoring democratic aspirations of the populations. All these combined factors led to the resurgence of extremist and terrorist activity, next to the growing needs of a young population. Despite all these factors, it is encouraging to know that many sciences, PP included, have been regarded as a good opportunity to help alleviate current challenges. Hence, the following sections of the chapter propose to look closely at the role assigned to psychological sciences and their achievements in this region

Psychological Sciences in the Arab World

It should be noted in the beginning of this section that modern psychology gained acceptance and has been taught and practiced in the Arab World for a good period of time. Historical records report that some psychology courses were introduced in many Arab universities in late 1800s and early 1900s such as those in Egypt and Lebanon (Ahmed, 1992; Ahmed, 2012; Amer et al., 2015; Khoury & Tabbarah, 2012). However, independent departments of psychology within these universities did not see light in the Arab Middle East until 1950s, such as the one created at Ain Shams University, Egypt in 1950 (Ahmed, 2012) and a similar one at Lebanon's American University of Beirut 1 year after (Khoury & Tabbarah, 2012). It may also be relevant to note that many of the pioneering university professors received their training in Western countries.

Among the leaders in this field in Egypt, one finds Moustapha Soueif (born in 1924). He headed the Psychology Department at Cairo University during the 1970s and supervised research and published extensively in this area. Amongst his famous books: *الأسس النفسية للتكامل الاجتماعي: دراسة ارتقائية تحليلية* (*Psychological Foundations of Social Integration: A Developmental Analytical Study*; 1960); *نحن والعلوم الإنسانية* (*Social Sciences and Us*; 1969), both published by the Anglo-Egyptian Library of Cairo (Psychology Committee, 2015). A second example is that of Kamilia Abdelfettah who took her B.A. in psychology from the University of Ain Chams in 1954, her master's degree in psychology from the same university in 1961, and her Ph.D. in 1967 in Egypt (Psychology Committee, 2015). Finally, Ibrahim Abdel-Sattar, who was selected Outstanding International Psychologist by APA for 2014, took his B.A. in Psychology from Ain Shams University in 1962, and his M.A. and Ph. D. from the University of Cairo, Egypt, in 1974–1976 (Psychology Committee, 2015). Abdel-Sattar followed his postdoctoral studies in clinical research and practice at the University of Michigan, USA in 1974 (Psychology Committee, 2015).

Many of this generation of leading scholars were behind the spreading of Psychology in other Arab countries, mainly to the Arab Gulf states. In these latter countries, the first major independent Department of Psychology was established in 1957 in Ryadh University, Saudi Arabia. However, it is by 1970s that almost all major Saudi universities instituted their psychology departments (e.g., Ibrahim, 2012). It is also around this period that the UAE established an undergraduate program in psychology within the United Arab Emirates University, and the Emirates Psychological Association (EPA) was founded in 2003 in Dubai by the Ministry of Social Affairs (Al-Darmaki & Yaaqib, 2015). Oman, Yemen, Bahrain, and neighboring Arab states also followed this trend and presently a large number of students prepare degrees mainly in the educational and clinical fields of psychology.

In the Arab Maghreb which was subjected to French colonization, with Algeria being the first colony in 1830, psychology teaching and research was deeply influenced by the trajectories of French Psychology in its teaching, theoretical quests and its practical techniques. Psychology courses designed for teachers were known very early—by the middle of 1800s. Psychological approaches accompanied the

work of earlier ethnographers who sought to ‘understand local populations’ cultures and ways of life in order to assist in the ‘assimilationist’ mission of the French coloniser (Tiliouine, 2014c).

However, many psychologists condemned these segregationist and racist intentions and put themselves in the forefront of combat of colonial oppression. One of the most known figures is Frantz Fanon, a psychiatrist who fought colonial stereotypes and policies in Algeria. Despite that he died at the young age of 36 (in 1961), his books (such as, *Peau noire, masques blancs*, 1952; *Les damnés de la terre*, 1961) founded a revolutionary thinking within psychology. On this path emerged Mahfoud Boucebci, an Algerian psychiatrist who led initiatives towards strengthening human rights, scientific analyses and combating stereotypes. He was assassinated in 2003 at the age of 66 by Islamic extremists at the height of the Algerian security crisis of the 1990s. Boucebci left behind many monographs: *Psychiatrie, société et développement* (1979), *Maladie mentale et handicap mental* (1984), *La Psychiatrie tourmentée* and *L’effet Dagma* (1990), which continue to inspire psychologists in the Arab region.

In the neighboring Tunisia and despite that the Tunisian Society of Psychology was founded in the fifth of September, 1957, the first full Department of Psychology was not instituted until 1970s, and in the beginning psychology was also taught in relation to educational fields. Morocco also opened its first Department of Psychology in the 1970s.

However, because the arrival of psychology in the Arab World was accompanied by the European colonial expansion and has been deeply influenced by Western conceptualizations and paradigms, this young science was and continues to be looked at with some suspicion in the Arab region (Amer et al., 2015). Psychology teaching and research clashed with the long standing local cultures, religious beliefs and local realities. This suspicion and resentment have been in part shared with many other psychologists from third world countries or simply developing countries. Many of them looked at psychology, as formulated, as an individualistic science which since the very beginning did not fit the existing social order issued from a collectivistic cultural model. The international movement calling for ‘the indigenisation of psychology’ has therefore gained many supporters in the Arab World (e.g., Allwood & Berry, 2006). For instance, the distinguished Sudanese psychologist Omar Khaleefa has been influential in this area. Since the 1990s, he has published in both Arabic and English on the need for an indigenised psychology in the Arab World. In his paper, ‘The Imperialism of Euro-American Psychology in a Non-Western Culture: An Attempt Toward an Ummatic Psychology’, Khaleefa (1997) discussed extensively the need for an *Islamic Psychology* which he called “*Ummatic Psychology*” (p. 45), from the Arabic word *Ummah* or Nation of Muslims. It seems that these ideas continue to echo amongst Arab psychologists with many reprints being published by psychology associations, such as Arabpsynet (www.arabpsynet.com/).

Countries’ ideological choices have always impacted the way science is constructed and practiced. Moghaddam (as cited in Allwood & Berry, 2006) explained that when the Shah was ousted from Iran after the Iranian Islamic

revolution led by Khomeini in 1978: 'The attack on the Shah was associated with an attack on Western world-views, particularly in psychology and economics' (p. 257). Pressure has been put on psychologists to find an alternative to the traditional culturally insensitive Western models. More adapted theoretical frameworks, mainly in terms of religion were needed. Hence, the movement called 'the *Islamisation of Psychology*' continues to grow not only in Iran, but also in the Arab World and other Islamic countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, etc. (e.g., issues of the *Journal of Islam in Asia*).

Resentment towards a typically 'Westernised Psychology' was further accentuated by other reasons in the Arab World. Most important ones are feelings of defeat felt by Arab masses after the creation of the state of Israel, backed by major Western powers, its continuous expansion in Arab land and the recurrent wars in the region since 1948 (Tiliouine & Meziane, 2017). Moreover, as Amer et al. (2015) explained, another obstacle to the growth of psychology in general has been the dominance of the medical model. Legitimacy is gained only by offering clinical services such as psychological testing and counselling within the psychiatric context. Nevertheless, the volatile contexts of many Arab countries require more than ever before the commitment of psychologists to the yearnings of the Arab populace.

Regarding this point, Farah (2012), the Jordanian counseling psychologist insisted at the height of the Arab Spring that these dramatic changes required that Arab psychologists should come out from their isolation and reconsider a new role at the academic and professional levels as a response to these mandatory changes. Their new possible role includes making psychology more relevant to daily life and to empower people for positive change (Farah, 2012). This is true if we consider the huge number of marginalised, displaced and refugee populations. Cases of Palestinians, Syrians, Iraqis, Yemenites and Libyans are striking examples. The situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic has also brought to surface new needs for an increasingly committed psychological science to help children, families and people in general lead a healthier and a safer way of life.

Positive Psychological Quests in the Arabo-Islamic Tradition

Many references discussing the historical roots of modern PP mention Moses Maimonides (1135–1204) as a main founder of PP (e.g., Compton & Hoffman, 2012). Indeed, the contributions of this brilliant scholar have been numerous. Maimonides attracted scientists' attention to the impact of both positive and negative emotions on people's health. He specifically put stress on the destructive consequence of chronic anger and sadness. He also pointed out to the benefits of aesthetic experiences to improve human well-being. Moreover, he advocated that mindfulness through staying focused on the present moment rather than remaining preoccupied with past events or future worries maintained good health. Maimonides is also considered among the first scholars to call for the development of character strengths, which modern PP has expanded (Compton & Hoffman, 2012). Although

Maimonides belongs to the Jewish faith, he lived all his life in the Islamic region (died in Cairo) where he was a highly respected intellectual. For many Arab intellectuals, Maimonides is a good representative of the intellectual fervour which characterised the Islamic Golden Age (Renima et al., 2016), and the scholarly advances made in Arabic language. His famous book *Dalalt al-Ha'irin* (Guide to the Perplexed) was originally written in Arabic (Goodman, 1998). In accordance with this, the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2014) recommended that Maimonides' writings should be understood within their 12th–thirteenth century Islamicate context. This encyclopedia entry presented evidence of the deep influences on this scholar by the writings of al-Farabi (ca. 870–950), Avicenna (Ibn Sina, 980–1037), al-Ghazali (1058–1111), and Averroes (Ibn Rushd, 1126–1198). In turn, these leading figures who continue to greatly impact later generations of Muslim scholars, benefitted from ideas and views on man, society and ethical issues discussed by early Greek philosophers. Arabs translated many Greeks' works starting from the ninth century, preserved, commented and shared them all over the three continents where Muslims ruled.

Considering the impact of these seminal scholars, it is curious to see that the treatise of al-Farabi or Alpharabius (870–950) entitled “*The Attainment of Happiness*”, which discussed lengthily how individuals and nations could reach happiness, acquired new readership and has been reprinted many times and is made freely accessible on the internet in recent years. al-Farabi was deeply inspired by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. With regard to happiness, a major topic of modern PP, he discussed four kinds of happiness: Theoretical virtues (knowledge naturally embedded in humans and those acquired through meditation, investigation and inference, instruction and study), deliberated virtues, moral virtues, and practical arts. al-Farabi's view of happiness is only one of the many Muslim scholars' views on how happiness should be constructed and pursued. For instance, when looking at the Islamic voluminous intellectual productions, Tiliouine (2014a) distinguished between philosophers' views of happiness, those of Sufists', and those of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). While the latter insist on applying *Sharia* law as a way to attain societal well-being, Sufists prefer a more personalised approach through cultivating and purifying one's soul. However, philosophers prefer to see happiness in using the intellect or simply ‘reason’ in one's life. These views seem to coexist until today (Tiliouine, 2014a). Similarly, the Islamic scholar al-Ghazali of the eleventh century wrote an important book, entitled: ‘*The Alchemy of Happiness*’. This work influenced many later scholars who borrowed even the title for their published works, such as Husein Ahmed Amin (1998) with his book titled “*The Book of the Alchemy of Happiness*”.

Amongst the other topics which were already present in the Islamic legacy can be found in works of al-Balkhi who was the first scholar to distinguish between psychological and mental illness, or in modern times neurosis and psychosis (Ibrahim, 2012). For al-Balkhi, neurosis can be classified in four emotional disorders: Fear and anxiety, anger and aggression, sadness and depression, and obsessions. He proposed healing techniques which were much in advance compared to what was practiced at his time.

Ibrahim (2012) further indicated that Arab scholars presented detailed analyses of positive constructs such as happiness, hope, helping, and optimism many centuries ago. However, today's Arab positive psychologists are urged to equip themselves with modern research methods to explore in detail this highly rich and enlightening legacy of psychological ideas and practices. Some more discussions of the historic roots of PP in Arabic writings are needed to further enroot this discipline within the local contexts.

Positive Psychology in the Arab World: An Overview

Positive Psychology as a nascent psychological discipline cannot divorce itself from the pressures and challenges facing the mother discipline. However, as mentioned earlier, there are many indications that PP is relatively less subject to categorical rejection, as was the case at least with the Freudian psychological model. Some reasons can be found in the following points:

1. Many Muslim intellectuals find in it a confirmation of principles strongly embedded in the Islamic teachings since the outset.
2. PP recognises the role of spirituality amongst its list of human strengths (e.g., Peterson, 2006). In an Islamic context, 'spirituality' has been simply equated to 'religiosity'. Therefore, the Islamic religious institution as a whole is at ease with the new conceptualisation.
3. Moreover, in times of recurrent violent conflicts, Arab intellectuals have found PP as a science aiming to advance positivity, resilience and hope, and an opportunity to reconcile with their peoples' yearnings to democracy, justice and a brighter future.

Some of these points will be further discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

Let us start with one remark. Many religious think-tanks (e.g., Sheikh *Muhammedal-Ghazali's influential book: Renew your life*), media programs, and also policies (such as the case of UAE mentioned in the beginning of this chapter) are making use of some of the central concepts which have been coined out or reformulated and invigorated by PP movement. The list of virtues and strengths proposed in this movement (e.g., Peterson & Seligman, 2004) is frequently quoted by intellectuals with a traditional religious background. For them, having recognized spirituality or religiosity amongst the list of human strengths is there to attest that the interpretations of Freudian and Marxist psychologies of religion are wrong.

However, many users of PP concepts frequently do not seem to draw any demarcation line between results issued from scientific enquiries on the one hand, and pseudoscience on the other. To illustrate, Neuro-Linguistic programming (NLP) and some other practices which were born in 'Personal Development' propositions have been confused with PP. NLP, as an approach to communication, personal development, and psychotherapy, developed in the US during the 1970s and has been highly contested scientifically in the West (Witkowski, 2010). Nevertheless,

such pseudosciences seem not to lose their appeal in the Arab World. Many magazines are posting on the internet presenting NLP as a 'new science' which is able to study personal experience to improve the ability of a person to maximize his potentials. Furthermore, many Arab institutions, including universities, along with media, blogs, and YouTube entries frequently post calls for participation in seminars and workshops for diverse fields of businesses, parenting, education etc. under the combined heading of NLP and PP.

One of the leading advocates of NLP in the whole Arab World was the Egyptian Ibrahim Elfiky (1950–2012) who published at least 8 books in few years. Unfortunately, some of the NLP advocates, such as Elfiky, associate PP to their plea. A lot of work remains to be done by positive psychologists in order to inform and convince the Arab public for the confusion that is reigning between science and pseudoscience.

Regarding the current situation of PP research, many reviews and diagnoses have been published in peer reviewed journals. As early as 2008, Eloff from South Africa, Mustapha Achoui from Algeria and their colleagues from some other African countries (Eloff et al., 2008) conducted an exploratory research to examine the state of PP in six African countries. They recruited 37 psychologists, mostly university lecturers, in African universities from Algeria ($n = 15$), Lesotho ($n = 1$), Malawi ($n = 1$), Nigeria ($n = 3$), Uganda ($n = 10$) and Zimbabwe ($n = 7$). The objective was to assess the status of and prospects for positive psychology in their respective countries. They concluded that the practice of PP was only emerging and currently limited in Africa and that such practice remains implicit, rather than explicit and much linked to indigenous knowledge systems. They ended up with an optimistic note on the future of PP in the continent of Africa as a whole.

Furthermore, in the first issue of the *Middle East Journal of Positive Psychology* Rao et al. (2015) found no more than 53 articles which were explicitly linked to the PP movement from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region during the period from 1999 to 2013. This represents less than 4% out of a total of 1336 articles found in the international publications list they identified from the electronic databases of Academic SearchTM Premier, Business Source Premier®, ERIC®, PsycINFO®, and PsycARTICLES®. Out of the 53 articles, 46 were empirical studies, while seven were conceptual ones, and 33 used quantitative methods, while eight used qualitative methods, and five used mixed methods approaches.

According to Rao et al. (2015) the country with the most authors publishing PP research was Israel followed by Iran, then Turkey. These results, however, are based exclusively on publications written in English language, while the Arabic language is the main tool of research and teaching in the largest part of the Arab world. French also is an important vehicle for teaching and research in many parts of the Arab World, mainly the Maghreb countries (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia). So, despite the fact that the largest part of these publications are not included in international databases, they constitute the prime source for teaching and research in the region and therefore should not be ignored as a good indicator of scientific achievements.

In the same issue of the same journal *Middle East Journal of Positive Psychology*, Salama-Younes (2015) entitled his paper: ‘*Positive Psychology: Applications, Concepts and Future Perspectives in Arab Countries*’. The author avoided going into an extensive examination of the current state of PP in the region. Rather, he preferred to sketch out his own projects of future multi-country studies. He briefly cited a few founding Arab psychologists, such as Abdel Khalek and Al Ansari in the area of adapting international measurement tools or the design and construction of researches in the diverse areas of psychology including PP. Of importance, he noted that Arab researchers’ efforts in reproducing international PP measures has been encouraged by the fact that most of these tools are short measures with a small number of items and frequently using 5-point to 10-point response scale.

It is worth noting that the task of reviewing Arabic works related to PP is complicated. One major reason is the lack of specialized libraries that collect, store and easily retrieve published items to make them available to reviewers. The authors of this chapter approached libraries of psychology of three major Algerian universities (Algiers, Constantine, and Sétif). They searched amongst peer-reviewed journals of human sciences for papers with particular resonance the field of PP. We could count a minimum of 89 published papers during the period between 2000 till the end of 2006 (see the extensive bibliographic list attached to this chapter, *in Arabic*). At least, this number is far larger than the 53 papers published in English in peer reviewed journals which Rao et al. (2015) identified in all MENA countries including Turkey, Iran and Israel.

An initial examination of these 89 papers indicates that they fall into the following categories: 42 papers focusing either on measurement tools development, translation and or adaptation, 23 papers reporting empirical studies of PP constructs and positive aspects in individuals and institutions, and 24 papers presenting some literature review and introducing PP mainly assembled and translated from the published works in English. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient elements to rely on to conduct a systematic study for the time being because many issues of each journal were missing. However, the available information will constitute the main sources for our description of the state of PP and its main trends in Arab nations in subsequent sections.

Major Topics in Arab PP

In the following part of this chapter we review some of the major research themes which have attracted the attention of Arab positive psychologists.

Positivity: On the general concept of positivity, a wide range of publications are found, varying from those devoted to the large public of readers to the more specialized works. For instance, amongst the books aimed to the large public, one finds ‘*A Call to Positivity with the Self and Others*’ دعوة للإيجابية by Mohamed Fethi (2011).

The Egyptian psychologist Salah Mekheimer (1922–1988) founded a strong tradition in the Arab World in studying positivity. This amazing humanist psychologist, viewed positivity as the essence of human life. For him, positivity enables humans to pursue their lives and without it, humans become helpless and unproductive (from Mekheimer's book: *مفهوم جديد للتوافق: A new conceptualization of adjustment* (The Anglo-Egyptian Library, 1978: 10–11).

Building on concepts developed by Mekheimer and subsequent discussions, many researchers focused on studying aspects they attributed to positivity, such as emotional stability, ego power, self-assertiveness, self-efficiency, creativity and self-esteem. For instance, Samia el- Kettan (1981) argued in her study of 'Assertiveness' *إدري طلبة وطالبات المرحلتين الثانوية والجامعة دراسة لمستوي التوكيدية* that positivity should be represented in three levels. The first one is the sense of balance which is fundamental to all human beings. The second one is productive positivity which may enable people to become creative. Amongst the indicators in this level are self-confidence, sense of initiative, productivity and self-actualisation. The third level is creative positivity which involves a strong motivation to experience challenge and seek novelty in one's life.

Following this line of discussion, many empirical works were conducted to explore positivity in Arab samples, being mostly university students. For instance, Fera (2006) conducted a field work to identify the main elements of positivity *(الطلبة الجامعيين في الجامعات الفلسطينية بقطاع غزة. دراسة لمستوي الايجابية لدى)* in Palestinian students of the Gaza Strip (N = 684). He confirmed the factorial structure of positivity as creativity, self-esteem, assertiveness, emotional stability and transcendence. Moreover, he found no statistical differences between males and females in creativity and assertiveness, but found significant statistical differences between genders in self-esteem. These were in favour of females, while emotional stability and transcendence were in favour of males.

Using a sample of 247 students of different genders, Alouane and Nawadjha (2016) *(الذكاء الوجداني وعلاقته بالإيجابية لدى طلبة جامعة الأقصى بمحافظات غزة 2016)* explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and positivity among the students of Al-Aqsa University. They constructed a scale of positivity and also borrowed the Emotional Intelligence Scale designed by Othmann and Abed Elsameea (1998). The study revealed a statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence and positivity. Additionally, there were statistically significant differences in emotional intelligence and positivity attributable to gender in favour of females; and similarly strong differences attributable to specialisation in favour of students from scientific majors over those from humanities majors. Finally, results of the case studies showed that the low level of positivity for some individuals was associated with wrong parental education practices and the economic, social and cultural status of families.

Undoubtedly, the tragic events known as the Arab Spring has stimulated reconsidering positivity, again as a central concept to bring about individual and societal renewal. For instance, the renowned Egyptian psychologist Abdel-Sattar Ibrahim published his book titled *Positivity and the making of optimism: Psychological perspective on 'the Egyptian Spring Revolution'*. Ibrahim basically reported

on a field study completed during the 18 days before the Fall of Mubarak political regime. He used content analysis and individual case study methodologies. He asserted that this study was probably the first comprehensive study done in Egypt aiming to understand positive and negative psychological aspects of the Egyptian Spring Revolution of January, 2011. This research is a good example to follow in the future and to produce comprehensive reviews of what has been achieved so far by Arab positive psychologists to build future advances on more solid grounds.

Happiness research:

Happiness constitutes one of the central themes to which Arab psychologists have devoted many efforts. Aided with a long tradition in studying this subject, a growing interest in the media (social media included), self-development programmes and the movement of PP, a great number of postgraduate students prefer to prepare their university works on this topic. These factors have encouraged the revival of interest of publishers in this area as well. Hence, many ancient books on this theme were reprinted and apparently are acquiring readership as they are freely accessible on the internet. New happiness publications range from large volumes to short empirical research reports. Empirical studies have involved different population segments and have been fairly diverse in terms of research tools and analysis techniques.

Within this trend, the classical book of Michael Argyle: *The Psychology of Happiness* (Methuen, 1987) was translated into Arabic as early as 1993. The translation was achieved by Youssef Abdelkader, lecturer of Psychology at Cairo University and published by the National Council of Culture and Arts and Literature, Kuwait. Moreover, there is no doubt that the translation of the seminal book 'Authentic Happiness' (Seligman, 2002), less than 3 years after its publication in 2005 by Safa Al-Assar inspired in the empirical study of happiness. This trend in translation studies continued, with for instance the translation of the book of Verra Peiffer (*Inner Happiness*, 2002) was conducted in 2004 by Jarir Bookstore in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Original Arab books devoted to happiness and psychological health are also numerous. Amongst the classical ones is '*Happiness and the improvement of mental health: The responsibility of individuals in Islam and psychology*' by Morsi (2000). The book discussed at length mental health and the role of happiness in improving it from an Islamic point of view. It should be noted that books are available at university bookshelves without any distinction between those aimed to popular self-development and those having a rigorous scientific nature.

Arabic empirical studies with diverse country samples, social backgrounds and age have been regularly appearing in the broad social sciences peer-reviewed journals, even before the official recognition of PP as a discipline in the USA. For instance, Nayyel and Khamis (1995) studied a sample of 60 elderly, equally divided on the basis of gender. They proposed a measure of happiness and tried to link responses to feelings of anxiety, depression and types of personality as measured by Eysenck (1965). Amongst the important findings were that elderly men felt happier and less depressed than elderly women. Such an issue deserves explanation in future research.

Also among the leading researchers, we find Abdel-Khalek and his associates. He first published a paper titled 'Happiness and personality: Correlations and predictors'

(Abdel-Khalek & Mourad, 2001), then co-authored a paper on levels of happiness in Kuwaiti samples in 2003 (both papers published in Arabic in the journal *Psychological Studies*, Cairo). At the international level, Abdel-Khalek published extensively on topics related to happiness. One of his widely quoted articles was published in 2006. It explored the accuracy of measuring happiness by a single item (*Do you feel happy in general?*). Because of a high temporal stability, high correlations with both the Oxford Happiness Inventory (Hills & Argyle, 2002) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), its good convergent validity (a high and positive correlation with optimism, hope, self-esteem, positive affect, extraversion, and self-ratings of both physical and mental health), and an adequate divergent validity (significant and negative correlations with anxiety, pessimism, negative affect, and insomnia), Abdel-Khalek concluded that measuring happiness by a single item was reliable, valid, and viable in community surveys as well as in cross-cultural comparisons. The cited scales were all translated into Arabic by Abdel-Khalek (2006) and were made available to Arab students and researchers who subsequently produced a big number of works in Arabic.

Abdel-Khalek has continued in the same line of exploring happiness and associated concepts in Arab samples for many years. More recently, he collaborated with Lester (Abdel-Khalek & Lester, 2017) to explore associations between religiosity, generalised self-efficacy, mental health, and happiness in Arab college students ($N = 702$). They found high correlations between the studied constructs and concluded that male students have significantly higher mean total scores on self-efficacy and mental health than their female counterparts did. They commented that participants who saw themselves as religious tended to see themselves as self-efficient and having greater levels of mental health and happiness.

The Omani based researchers Rizvi and Hossain (2016) reviewed research which examined the relationship between religious belief and happiness. They quoted 21 works in which Abdel-Khalek was either the single or the first author, between 2006 and 2015 in this area. Rizvi and Hossain concluded that regardless of the type of religion, gender, nationality or race the association between religion and happiness proved strong and that the most religious Muslims were found to be the happiest ones.

Happiness was also explored with relation to a variety of other topics in different samples. For instance, Jan (2008) explored links between happiness (as measured by the Oxford List of Happiness of Argyle, 2001), religiosity, social support, and marital adjustment in 764 Saudi women. She found positive associations between happiness, religiosity, social support, marital adjustment, economic status and state of health of respondents. However, the most important predictor of happiness in this study was the level of religiosity, followed by social support and marital adjustment, respectively.

It seems that because of the renewal of interest in religiosity worldwide as a consequence of the spread of PP, as well as the issue of Islamic religiosity having been recently at the heart of discussions on extremism and terrorism, Arab psychologists started early to explore the topic in some depth. But again, comprehensive

reviews are needed to weigh the findings in a systematic way, mainly of studies published in Arabic language.

Quality of Life and Subjective Well-being: Happiness and religiosity have been extensively studied with relation to the general theme of quality of life (QOL). At first glance, it is apparent that the translation of the World Health Organization (WHO) measure of quality of life, known as WHOQOL-BREF (Whoqol Group, 1998) into Arabic motivated a good number of researchers to develop works on this line. Abdel-Khalek for instance translated and used it during the 1980s. However, no systematic review of the results has been published so far in this area.

Furthermore, the study of subjective well-being (SWB) has also proliferated. Some relied on translations of international works, such as those of Ed Diener (see Chap. 2). However, it should be noted that this research is much fragmented. One reason is that in Arabic, there is no single concept which straightforwardly translates SWB into this language. For some researchers, it is equated to ‘psychological welfare’ الرفاه, ‘good life’ الحياة الطيبة, ‘pleasant life’ الحياة الممتعة or simply ‘state of rest’ الارتياح, or even psychological quality of life ‘جودة الحياة النفسية’. Nevertheless, SWB was studied with relation to a variety of constructs such as resilience, hope, academic achievement, violent behaviours, self-esteem, affects, and life orientation. These research studies were mostly based on self-report questionnaires in student samples.

Large-scale surveys of general populations’ well-being in the Arab World are scarce. However, amongst the few published works in the region starting from 2003 and aided with members of the research unit Laboratory of Educational Processes & Social Context (Labo-PECS) of the University of Oran, Algeria, Tiliouine made the first attempt to measure subjective well-being of the Algerian population using, among other measures, the Personal Well-being Index (PWI; Tiliouine et al., 2006). The PWI score has been computed from the average satisfaction ratings across seven domains; standard of living, personal health, achievements in life, personal relationships, personal safety, community connectedness, and future security. A new eighth domain, concerning satisfaction with religiosity/spirituality, was added in a following study by Tiliouine (2009).

Later the same measure was used in a series of six general population surveys that took place in an equal time interval of 18 months. The results indicated that since 2005 the population’s PWI mean scores have been remarkably stable (Tiliouine, 2014b). This result was linked to the improving economic prospects and the stability in the country following the official steps of ‘*National Reconciliation*’ after the armed struggle of the 1990s which killed around 200,000 people and caused billions of damage. The results support the vulnerability of populations’ well-being when social turmoil dominates people’s lives, as has been the case of Egypt and Tunisia where positive affect was low, and feelings of despair were amplifying (Tiliouine, 2014b). The results indicated also that many other factors determine SWB. Religious practice and satisfaction with Islamic religiosity/spirituality were found to be closely linked with high well-being scores, mainly in the middle aged participants (Tiliouine, 2009; Tiliouine et al., 2009). Additionally, state of health was not found to mediate such a strong relationship (Tiliouine et al., 2009). Religiosity had

a buffering effect not only on subjective well-being, but also on psychological well-being or eudaemonic well-being. In a sample of university students, Tiliouine and Belgoumidi (2009) found that the importance of religion resided in the fact that it provided its followers with a meaning in life, a frame of reference, or a philosophy in life.

Furthermore, Tiliouine (2012) investigated the relationship between subjective well-being, satisfaction with life, personal well-being (by PWI), positive and negative affect, psychological needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness), meaning in life and Islamic religious practice in the Algerian population. He examined the distributions of these constructs in a large sample of 3173 subjects who participated in the fourth Algerian Well-being Survey and estimated to what extent these constructs were affected by household incomes. He also estimated the mediating effect of demographic variables (gender, age, education and location) in the contribution of the studied constructs on each other. The results indicated that these constructs were significantly inter-correlated and almost similarly distributed in the studied population. The results also showed that the demographic variables were all negatively affected by low incomes and proved that generally and beyond demographic factors, SWB measures predicted better needs satisfaction, meaning in life and religiosity than the opposite direction (Tiliouine, 2012). When normative ranges of PWI in Algeria were calculated and compared to their counterpart normative ranges in Australia, as an example, the domain of community connectedness showed a similar trend; health was very close, but achievements in life and future security were much lower. Meanwhile, safety and personal relationships seemed to have a much larger magnitude in the Algerian case. It has been concluded that the sense of community belongingness remains similarly high in both countries, but problems linked to underdevelopment impinge on Algerians' perceptions of their future has a cost on their personal relationships. However, the presence of a cultural bias effect, leading people to differ in their response style to survey questionnaires should not be excluded. For instance, the Chinese PWI normative range was 61.2–67.1, which is much lower than in Australia (73.7–76.7). The Algerian range lies between those, but is narrower (66.4–68.8) (Tiliouine, 2014b).

Further research on subjective quality of life should attract more attention on the part of Arab social scientists. Its results would help gain solid knowledge on the dynamics of these societies and would certainly give a way to much adapted strategies and policies to the real needs and aspirations of the people of this region.

In Lebanon, Ayyash-Abdo (an Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology in the Lebanese American University of Beirut, with particular interests in PP, developmental counseling, and cross-cultural psychology) and Alamuddin (2007) examined the predictors of SWB in college youth. The authors explored personality constructs of self-esteem, optimism, and positive affect in relation to SWB in 689 college youth, using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWB: Diener et al., 1985), the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS: Watson et al., 1988), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R: Scheier et al., 1994). One of the findings was the high correlations between SWB and the studied constructs in the desired direction. Moreover, men

had higher scores on positive affect than did women. The authors concluded that demographic variables predicted satisfaction with life less than the internal personality constructs did. From the same country of Lebanon, Mayssah El Nayal (Psychology Department, Beirut Arab University) collaborated on many papers exploring life satisfaction in Arab populations and self-esteem among young adults.

Moreover, recently, Kharnoub (2016) from Syria published a paper on psychological well-being, emotional intelligence and optimism in a sample of 147 university students in *مجلة اتحاد الجامعات العربية* 'Review of Arab University Union'. She translated and used Ryff's Psychological Well Being (PWB) Scale—MIDUS-II version. She found a significant positive relationship between the different components of PWB Scale and the remaining factors. She also proved that emotional intelligence and optimism were the most important predictors of PWB.

Palestinian psychologists are particularly active in this area of research with many publications online concerning resilience, hope, positivity, emotional intelligence, well-being, feelings of safety, self-enhancement and neighbouring constructs. Palestinian researchers often justify their interest in this area by the situation of insecurity and hardship imposed on their population by the colonisation of their territories by Israel. PP concepts are called in to help to understand and alleviate these difficult situations.

Within this same line, some new breakthroughs are registered by positive psychologists in the UAE. Notable are joint works published by Lambert D'raven and her team. Views of happiness were found in Arab samples to surpass the individualistic and selfish discourses to more of a collective state enhanced through relationships with family and social groups. Religion and the adequacy of governance issues were brought in by the respondents in defining their perspectives of happiness (D'raven, & Pasha-Zaidi 2015). There are some equally interesting findings in subsequent papers. D'raven, and Pasha-Zaidi (2016) found that the PERMA model (involving: Pleasant life, Engaged life, Meaningful life, Positive relationships and Achievements as basic pathways towards pursuing happiness by individuals) overlapped in a consistent manner with the local Emirati culture. Furthermore, efforts such as those of Lambert et al. (2015) on the way to develop more adequate frameworks towards an Indigenous Positive Psychology would help enroot PP in Arab contexts and may attract the attention of Arab scholars and professionals in the field of PP.

A lot of information can be gained by positive psychologists about well-being, satisfaction with life, happiness and affects of Arab populations from internationally led studies, such as those conducted by the Arab Barometer (<http://www.arabbarometer.org/>), and Gallup Polls (www.gallup.com) (e.g., Tiliouine, 2014a). However, local research capacities should be further developed and implicated to strengthen decision making processes based on scientific evidence. An example of an early rare large scale survey of well-being is the Moroccan survey of well-being which was conducted by the governmental agency, *Haut Commissariat au Plan (High Commission for Planning)* in 2012 which involved a sample of 3200 subjects who were above the age of 15. Expectedly, the largest number of Moroccans link life satisfaction to acquiring an appropriate residence, well-equipped house, and having

adequate social services close to where they live in this a yet developing country (Souidi, 2012). Our impression is that Moroccan economists are the most involved, compared to other social scientists, in studying well-being determinants in their country (e.g., Zeidan, 2012/3).

To illustrate further the variety of Arab contexts in which PP concepts are called in, we end up by citing a recent paper by Slemon (2015) from Syria. Slemon in a paper for the Tchrine University reviewed PP concepts, such as resilience, meaning in life and flow and questioned their applicability on the Syrian army personnel who were fighting against the 'terrorist' insurgency in the Syrian land. She recommended that PP concepts should be extended to such situations of turmoil to help for boosting combat capacities of the national armed forces.

Though our account on the development of PP in the Arab world has been very brief, our illustrations show that PP constructs have attracted the attention of Arab individual researchers as well as some academic institutions and some policy oriented agencies. Research topics, sample characteristics and measurement tools also vary greatly. No doubt, the acquired knowledge is having repercussions not only in local but also in larger international contexts. Nevertheless, there are many shortcomings which should be seriously addressed to benefit from the advantages of this young science. The future of PP should not rely only on the voluntary and personal initiatives of researchers. Arab official academic and policy making institutions engagement is much needed to finance, monitor and apply the evidence to be gained from these efforts.

Major Positive Psychologists of the Arab World

In the following sections, we introduce some of the Arab psychologists who enriched the field of PP either through translating international works or producing completely new materials in Arabic language to give the reader a sense of how this discipline is evolving in this region. However, we do not intend in any way to classify these researchers and works with regard to their importance, the quality of the contents, or even the extent of their readership. Unfortunately, no records are made available by any credible Arab institutions or organization with relation to these matters.

Reyad N. Alaasemy

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Alaasemy earned a B.A., then a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Damascus University. He took his Ph.D. in the same discipline from Cairo

University in 1998. He has held a teaching position in the University of Damascus continuously since 1999.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Alaasemy published more than 20 books in the field of Psychology and psychological therapies. The following books are specifically devoted to PP: *The positive psychological health*, *Applications of Positive Psychology in psychological counseling and therapy* and *Scales of Positive Psychology*. He also supervised many master's and Ph.D. theses in PP.

Ahmed Abdel-Khalek

Brief Biography of the Researcher

The Egyptian researcher Ahmed Abdel-Khalek graduated from Alexandria University, Egypt. He took his B.A in Psychology. in 1963, then his M.A. degree in 1970 on the objective assessment of personality. His PhD thesis analyzed personality traits. Abdel-Khalek started a teaching profession of Psychology in 1975 in this same university, until he moved in the nineties to Kuwait. He is one of the most productive Arab psychologists, with 369 listed published papers, 23 authored books and 4 edited books in the area of psychology (from 1979 to 2012). His interests started in the areas of personality assessments, death anxiety research and clinical applications in which he contributed many books and journal papers.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Abdel Khalek turned to PP by the beginning of the year 2000. Since, he contributed in international discussions and cross-cultural research. His paper about measuring happiness by a single item (Do you feel happy in general?) (Abdel-Khalek, 2006) attracted the attention of researchers internationally and is widely cited. Abdel Khalek's publications and cross-cultural research cover among other topics: Subjective well-being, optimism, Islamic religiosity, mental health, happiness, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and affects. Abdel-Khalek is currently working on a new scale which he calls: The love of life scale.

Mustapha Achoui

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Mustafa Achoui graduated from Psychology in 1977 from Algiers University, and then earned his Ph.D. in Organisational Communication from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York in 1983. He is currently the Vice Dean of Planning, Research and Development in the Arab Open University, Kuwait.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Achoui authored many Arabic introductory works of Psychology and its disciplines, including PP. He has important contributions in the areas of Islam and Psychology, management sciences, and happiness and satisfaction with life research. He collaborated in many PP cross-cultural studies.

Mohamed Said Abu Halawa

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Abu Halawa is an Egyptian psychologist. He graduated from the University of Alexandria. Abu Halawa is an active member of the Arab Psychologists Network (<http://arabpsynet.com/>), with specific interests in promoting PP works. He currently teaches Psychology in Egyptian universities.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Abu Halawa authored numerous monographs introducing the PP science and its concepts, mainly the concepts of resilience, optimism and flow. Abu Halawa, published in 2014 his monograph: *علم النفس الإيجابي: ماهيته ومنطلقاته النظرية وأفاقه المستقبلية (Positive psychology: Its meaning, theoretical requirements and future horizons)*. In this book, he briefly introduced the history and scope of PP, positivity, positive emotions and traits, flow, human strengths and self-actualization and discussed the future of PP. In another monograph, published online in 2013, he devoted efforts to the notion of flow. In this monograph, he traced back the history of the concept and its relevance to advance creativity, happiness, and psychological resilience. He concluded by presenting works of the famous psychologist *Mihály Csikszentmihályi* from 1990 to 2004.

Safaa El Asar

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Safaa El Asar belongs to the early generation of Egyptian psychologists who played an important role in advancing the discipline through her teaching and research not only in her home country Egypt (since 1960), but also Qatar University from 1973 to 1983. She earned her B.A. in Psychology in 1959, and her Ph.D. in 1968 from Ain Shams University. Her Ph.D. was entitled ‘An experimental study on decreasing anxiety in a sample of secondary school girls’ (Psychology Committee, 2015).

Positive Psychology Contributions

Amongst the books which seem to have an enduring effect on the advancement of PP notions to Arab readers, one can find the translation of a whole series of volumes by El Asar and her team. These books include Martin Seligman’s ‘*Authentic Happiness*’ (2002); Lisa Aspinwall and Ursula standing’s ‘*A Psychology of Human Strengths: Fundamental Questions and Future Directions for a Positive Psychology*’ (2003); Sam Goldstein and Robert Brooks’ ‘*Raising Resilient Children: Fostering Strength, Hope, and Optimism in Your Child*’ (2002); Shane Lopez and Charles Richard Snyder’s edited book: ‘*Positive Psychological Assessment: A Handbook of Models and Measures*’ (2003).

Said M. Farhati

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Farhati earned his Ph.D. in Educational Assessment and Evaluation from the University of Mansoura, Egypt. Since 1995, he started a teaching and a research career, mainly in the National Center For Examination & Educational Evaluation (Egypt), the University of Mansoura and Ain Shams University. His earlier interests were in educational evaluation, preschool education, and learned helplessness in children.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Farhati shifted to PP issues through translating works of the leading American psychologist Martin Seligman in 2009. In 2012, he published his book: العجز - تقدير الذات الأيمن النفسي - الثقة بالنفس - المهارات الاجتماعية تعلم : علم النفس الإيجابي للطفل (*Positive Psychology of the child: Learned helplessness, self- valuing, psychological safety, self-confidence, social skills*). Child PP seems yet an area which has not attracted many book writers in the Arab World. In 2016, Farhati

co-edited with Mohamed Rashidi a book titled: *Positive Psychology* and collaborated on a translation of Carr's book (2004) *Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness and Human Strengths*.

Also published in the area of the psychology of optimism, and the psychology of flourishing. He supervised a big number of theses in the area of PP.

Mostepha Higazi

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Mostepha Higazi is one of the most influential intellectuals in the Arab World. He was born in Cairo, and holds a Ph.D. in engineering and strategic management of crises from the University of Southern California. He taught management and strategic thought and institutional development at the University of Southern California. He is a renowned international expert in every field of strategic consulting, economic and social entities, corporate governance, investment management, institutional psychological and sustainable development and a member of the Advisory Committee of the World Bank. In the domain of psychology, he is known for his translation into Arabic of Freud's book "*Interpretation of Dreams*". Higazi published also the following books: "*Speech or Death*" and "*The Problems of the Contemporary Arab Thought*." (Wikipedia, 2017).

Positive Psychology Contributions

Higazi published in 2012 a book entitled: إطلاق طاقات الحياة: قراءات في علم النفس الإيجابي (*Freeing Life Energies: Readings in Positive Psychology*, 2012) in which he presents the foundations of PP. He called for freeing Arab human energies that have been wasted and repressed, whether in adult or youth. He points out the harm that autocratic systems of governance are doing, as they do not care much about enhancing productivity and competitiveness to meet the needs of their populations. The author finds in PP theses a huge step forward towards these goals. In the remaining chapters he warned against negative thinking and its destructive effects. Then, he discussed optimism and hope and that people should be trained to combat widespread feelings of pessimism and helplessness. One of the chapters was devoted to motivation and human strengths, then he moved on to the problematic topic of leadership from a positive perspective. The last part discussed positive emotions and positive thinking and their role in physical and mental health.

Abdel-Sattar Ibrahim

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Abdel-Sattar Ibrahim earned his B.A. Psychology degree from Ain Shams University, Egypt in 1968, and then moved to Cairo University where he took both his Master's and PhD degrees. He taught Psychology in Egypt, USA and many Gulf States' universities.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Ibrahim wrote more than 12 books in Arabic and English languages. His books in English include *Foundations of Human Behaviour in Health & Illness* and *Cultural Considerations in Mental Health Practices: An Arab Experience* (both with Dr. Radwa Ibrahim in 1996) (Arabpsynet, n.d.). He is among the Arab psychologists who opt to extend PP principles to therapy. For instance, he published in 2011 his book: دليل المعالج النفسي: للعلاج المعرفي الإيجابي عين العقل: دليل المعالج النفسي (A guide to users of cognitive positive psychological therapy).

Bachir Maamaria

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Maamaria graduated from the University of Oran, Algeria with a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology. He led a teaching career in the University of Batna, Algeria.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Maamaria's prominent research in PP has been focused on introducing this science to Arab readers and the psychometric verification of numerous translated PP measures in Algerian samples, such as measures of hope, happiness, meaning in life and emotional intelligence.

His monograph علم النفس الايجابي اتجاه جديد لدراسة القوى والفضائل الإنسانية (Positive Psychology: A New Field to Study Human Strengths and Virtues, 2015) was reprinted and made available to the large public through Arabpsynet (<http://arabpsynet.com/>) and is freely accessible on the internet.

Salah Mekhaimar

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Mekheimer began his life as an army officer. He took part in the World War II and lost his sight in the battlefield. After leaving the military, he graduated from Ain Shams University as a psychologist, and then prepared his Ph.D. of Psychology in Sorbonne University, France. He returned to Egypt to teach psychology in Ain Shams University. His legacy counts about 40 books in diverse fields of psychology.

Positive Psychology Contribution

Mekheimer specifically devoted four of his books to the concept of positivity, all published by the Anglo-Egyptian Library of Cairo:

- مفهوم جديد للتوافق (*A new concept of adjustment*, 1978).
- في إيجابية التوافق (*On positivity and adjustment*, 1981).
- الإيجابية كمعيار وحيد وأكد تشخيص التوافق عند الراشدين (*Positivity as the sole and sure criterion in the diagnosis of adult's adjustment*, 1981).
- الإيجابية كمعيار وحيد و أكد للصحة النفسية (*Positivity as the sole and sure indicator of psychological health*, 1984).

Habib Tiliouine

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Tiliouine graduated from the University of Oran where he earned a B.A. in Counseling Psychology. He then prepared an M.A. (Education) in the Psychology of Education in Leicester University, Great Britain (1986). He then returned to teach in the University of Oran, and prepared his Ph.D in the area of Teacher Education. His subsequent research and publications covered many areas: Quality of life in Islamic societies, well-being research, child development and well-being, educational reforms and management. He created in 2001 the research unit known as: *Laboratoire Processus Educatifs et Context Social (Labo-PECS)*.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Tiliouine conducted seven large scale surveys on the well-being of the Algerian adult population, and five large works on children's well-being (age 8–14). Some of these latter were the result of an international collaboration with Children's Worlds (iscweb.org). He also co-edited (with Richard Estes from Pennsylvania University)

a large volume on *'The State of Social Progress of Islamic Societies'* (Springer, 2016) and collaborated in the preparation of World Happiness Report of 2017 (Helliwell et al., 2017). He is currently co-editing the 'Handbook on children's risk, vulnerability and quality of life' for Springer Publishers (2021). Tiliouine received the 2015 Research Fellow Award of The International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) for his international contributions.

Moreï Salama-Younes

Brief Biography of the Researcher

Moreï Salama-Younes is an associate professor in Psychology, Sociology and Evaluation Department, Helwan University, Cairo, Egypt. He is also associate member in the research centre: *Centre de Recherche sur l'Éducation les Apprentissages et la Didactique* of the Occidental University of Bretagne, Rennes, France. In France, from 2001 to 2011, he qualified as an associate professor at French universities many years and for different domains. Moreover, he earned two Ph.D. degrees from this university, one in Sport Psychology titled 'Adaptation and Validation of French Children's Attributional Style Questionnaire and its Prediction on Sport and School Performances' and the second in Social Psychology, titled 'Socio-Cognitive Studies for Fundamental Needs'.

Positive Psychology Contributions

Younes enriched the Arab library with many PP introductory manuals. In 2011, he titled his book: علم النفس الايجابي للجميع (*Positive Psychology for All, 2011*), published in Cairo. He claims that this is the first PP book in the Arab World. Next to the theoretical foundations and a review of foundational literature of the discipline, the author discussed positive psychological interventions such as the study of human strengths and virtues and the concept of training in PP in the academic and professional areas. From 2002 to 2013, he prepared many research articles/papers, chapters and communications in Arabic, English and French languages on Positive and Exercise Psychology. Currently, he is more interested in the effect of practicing different activities (such as sports, music, arts, etc.) that may enable a person to use his/her own strengths and virtues to improve feelings of well-being and health.

Future of Positive Psychology in the Arab World

Looking back at the history of the implementation of psychology within the academic arena in Arab countries, one would safely conclude that the early generation of Arab psychologists, despite the limited resources they had, succeeded in laying down strong foundations of the science in major areas of modern health care, education, industry and so forth. They relied not only on translations of ready-made international tools and measurement techniques, but also on finding the links between these areas of study and the long legacy of earliest Muslim scholarship. Maybe the issue of the indigenisation of psychology which they raised has not been resolved yet, and we do not expect that it will be resolved soon. However, this should not in any way halt new generations armed with new technological advances, new life views and challenges, to move forward foreseeing the future and adapting themselves to its requirements. The use of universal scientific enquiry to examine life issues is the only guarantee towards an everlasting change in the desired direction. The idea that science is Western is false, some of its techniques indeed adopt Western built frameworks but scientific enquiry is universal, and is the common heritage of all the human species.

The good opportunity that Arab PP should seize is that PP is less exposed to societal resistance as have been some earlier psychology tendencies, such as the Freudian model. As explained earlier, PP was brought in times when the Arab World has been going through an unprecedented volatility. Nevertheless, and despite the apparent overlap with some pseudo-sciences, such as NLP, which they should lift, positive psychologists should vary their techniques and conduct genuine research projects. These latter should extend over many years, instead of the one shot empirical studies which characterise Arab PP works in present times. Long term cross-sectional and follow up studies are very rare. So are those using new techniques such as online large surveys, techniques based on careful observation and recording, in-depth interviews and focus groups, new techniques such Experience Sampling Method and Day Reconstruction Methods.

These research themes of PP should be prioritised according to Arab populations' struggles for justice, an improved quality of education, universal health care, understanding extremist behaviour, violence, recurrent cases of suicide, drug addictions, towards all that lead to an open and developed society. Combating the effects of the new pandemics and ways of improving healthy personal and community lifestyles are currently of extreme importance. Similarly, development studies which create experimental situations and test new programs should be encouraged. Of course, the institutional implication is needed to finance this type of research and also to disseminate the results. The Arab World has immense resources, a part of which should be devoted to exploring new scientific horizons. The strategic value of knowledge production and dissemination in modern societies is beyond contest.

The volume of research that has been produced in the Arab World in Arabic language is immense, though underestimated as it remains fragmented, scattered and unexploited. As a first step, credible databases should be created in order to allow

students and researchers to conduct systematic reviews of these works. The rich legacy of earlier Arab and Muslim scholars should not be excluded from these efforts. Positive approaches have existed long before the existence of the modern discipline of PP in this region.

Some other recommendations are enlisted below:

1. Specialised databases should be devoted to measurement tools of PP which should be carefully indexed and made available to users.
2. Translating international works should be conducted by competent people and institutions and with tight respect of copyright regulations.
3. Specialised dictionaries should be devoted to PP concepts.
4. Specialised peer reviewed journals should be created in order to communicate research results and theoretical papers.
5. Conceptual and theoretical efforts should be given some priority and more visibility.
6. Specialised research agendas are needed to help young researchers to posit their works within the field and help them advance their research to the yet unexplored areas.
7. Empirical studies should diversify their analytical tools, such as the use of advanced statistical inferential techniques. So far the large majority of studies are descriptive, correlational and explorative in nature.
8. Arab researchers should cooperate further among each other and with international colleagues in cross-national studies to gain experience, acquire international visibility and improve credibility of the results.
9. Samples should be diversified as up to now most research is done with students' samples.

However, it should be reiterated that this chapter has reviewed just a small part of scientific works which were conducted in the Arab World for the sake of illustration. Despite this, we can safely conclude that PP has attracted the attention of researchers and practitioners in the Arab World since its beginnings. More important is that there is room to further enrich this trend and diversify the scope of this new science in a region where scientific enquiries are much needed in order to develop more positive frameworks of human development.

Resource Page for Readers

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Chapter 13

Positive Psychology Research in Israel: Current Reality and Future Vision

Anat Shoshani and Mario Mikulincer

Introduction

The Middle East is considered to be a field laboratory for the empirical study of topics related to stress and trauma. Protracted exposure to political violence, terrorism, and war have made the region the focal point of works on post-traumatic stress and psychopathology (Slone & Shoshani, 2014a). Armed conflicts fueled by national and ethnic antagonisms have become the hallmark of the Middle East. War, terrorism, and hostilities that result mostly from the Arab-Israeli conflict, the instability in the Gulf region, and the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have engendered extended periods of political instability and mass casualties. Complex regional demographics and multicultural populations have led to inter-ethnic and religious conflicts, including the bloody war between the Sunnis and the Shiites (Kam, 2014). The Middle East is divided into rich and poor countries, and between militarily and economically powerful countries and weaker countries that are unable to defend themselves. Some countries in the region have accumulated powerful weapons of mass destruction, and the region as a whole is characterized by an atmosphere of distress, fury, and fear (Slone & Shoshani, 2008a). Since the end of World War II, no other region in the world has had such a high concentration of political violence covering the whole spectrum from limited conflicts to full-scale wars, terrorist acts and guerilla warfare, and counter-terrorist military operations. The use of military force has become an inherent part of life and is virtually taken for granted and even considered legitimate in certain cases (Kam, 2014).

However, in recent years, winds of change, both in the world of psychology as well as in the region's political climate, have made the Middle East increasingly

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open to positive psychology as a foundation for promoting positive change at the individual, community, and inter-group levels. In the last 20 years, there has been a pervasive shift in psychology from human problems and pathology and how to remedy these ills to greater interest in well-being and life satisfaction and how to foster psychological growth and a more harmonious, happy, and peaceful world (Seligman et al., 2005). In the Middle East, we have witnessed the emergence of the Arab Spring, which was characterized by waves of social protests, political turbulence, and voices of change that spread throughout the entire region. These events have elicited renewed hope for change, peace and stability, and greater well-being in the Middle East (Dabashi, 2012). The need to adopt a hopeful, constructive and positive approach to these complex socio-political events makes positive psychology a natural springboard for the issues facing the region. However, research on positive psychology and its applications in the Middle East have been slow to develop.

Israel is also seen as a natural laboratory for the study of traumatic and post-traumatic reactions (Klingman et al., 1993). Continuous exposure to high levels of inter-group violence and hostilities that characterize the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has turned the country into a test bench for examining psychological responses to stress as well as for developing psychological interventions aimed at increasing individual's resilience and coping skills. Research has focused on the detrimental effects that exposure to high levels of conflict, war, and political violence have on Israeli and Palestinian children's psychological functioning and well-being, which are manifested in posttraumatic stress (PTS) and a wide range of both overt and covert psychiatric symptoms (Guttman-Steinmetz et al., 2012; Shoshani & Slone, 2008b; Slone & Shoshani, 2008b, 2017). At the same time, research has relied on the insights and knowledge coined in positive psychology in order to develop effective interventions against stress-related emotional problems. As a result, Israel strikingly differs from other Middle East countries in the unprecedented surge of research and implementation of positive psychology in the educational system.

During the last three decades, numerous psychological interventions have been developed in school settings aimed at reducing and preventing children's psychopathological responses to exposure to political violence (Slone et al., 2013; Slone & Shoshani, 2006a, 2006b). Studies assessing these interventions have highlighted a wide array of protective and resilience factors that improve children and teens' coping abilities and sustain a positive, hopeful attitude in face of traumatic events. For these reasons, positive psychology interventions have been integrated into the Israeli educational system to help reduce psychopathology, build resilience and psychological strengths, and promote well-being and tolerance toward out-groups. Schools have increasingly been identified as the optimal context for supporting and promoting students' emotional and social wellbeing (Slone & Shoshani, 2014b).

One outstanding example of these positive psychology interventions is the Maytiv program for teachers and students in kindergarten and elementary, mid-level, and high-level schools (Shoshani & Guttman-Steinmetz, 2014). This program was developed by the Maytiv Center (Hebrew for "doing good"), an international academic center for research and practice in positive psychology, and has served over 5000 teachers and 200,000 children and adolescents in the Israeli educational

system during the last 7 years. Each year, this program is implemented in about 100 schools in Israel.

Given both the prolonged and intense exposure to political violence, terrorism, and war, and the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions in the country, Israel has become one of the world's largest laboratories for research and application of 'positive education': the growing application of positive psychology in school settings. This chapter describes the positive psychology revolution in the educational system of Israel, reviews the pioneering roots of positive psychology research in the Middle East, and advocates empowering schools and community institutions as optimal settings for strengthening mental health and wellbeing in areas of stress, conflict, and war.

The Positive Education Revolution in Israel

Imagine a school where the teacher calls student's parents to say a kind word about their child and to tell them how their child helped someone that day, participated well in class, or even just that he/she is a lovely child. Imagine a school that has a sign at the entrance that reads, "Love without thinking about what you will get in return". Imagine a class that begins with each student describing something good that happened to him or her the day before. Imagine a report card noting the child's character strengths, or teachers who personally mentor students in achieving their scholastic, social, and emotional goals. Imagine the school walls decorated with posters that express positive messages, and math, language and history classes incorporating positive role models and messages that encourage investment, perseverance, and grit in studying.

These examples, and many others like them, epitomize the types of positive psychology-based practices that children and their teachers experience in hundreds of schools involved in the Maytiv program in the Israeli educational system. The program is based on the belief that happy, optimistic, and emotionally stable students, who believe in their own abilities to fulfill their goals and their skills to realize their heart's desires, will like to be at school, learn better, and then reach higher academic achievements. The program focuses on factors that past studies have consistently found to mitigate distress and enhance emotional stability, happiness, resilience, self-discipline, self-actualization and life satisfaction, and their application in teachers' and students' lives as well as in the school's daily routine.

Maytiv was founded in 2010 at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya, Israel by four psychology scholars. Dr. Tal Ben Shahar is a well-known Positive Psychology teacher, lecturer, and best-selling author. Dr. Ariel Kor is an entrepreneur and researcher, who has launched several successful educational, social, and philanthropic initiatives in the fields of character education, positive psychology, and spirituality. Prof. Mario Mikulincer is an internationally renowned researcher in the fields of interpersonal relations, attachment, stress, and coping. Dr. Anat Shoshani is a prominent researcher in the fields of children's resilience and

wellbeing, and an expert in the development of community-based interventions in Israel. The Maytiv positive education program was developed by Dr. Ben-Shahar and Dr. Shoshani, two of Maytiv's founders, who are both recognized positive psychologists in Israel and international experts in the field of positive education.

Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar is an internationally renowned American and Israeli teacher, and author of numerous works in the fields of positive psychology and happiness. His Positive Psychology course at Harvard University attracted the largest student body of any course ever taught at the University. Upon returning to Israel, Dr. Ben-Shahar taught numerous positive psychology courses at IDC Herzliya, a leading academic institution in Israel, and was one of the founders of Maytiv in 2010. Dr. Ben-Shahar is the author of several books on Positive Psychology, one of which, "Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment" (2007), became an international bestseller and has been translated into 25 languages. In recent years, Dr. Ben-Shahar has co-authored several children's books in Hebrew about famous figures such as [Helen Keller](#) and [Thomas Edison](#), where he applied core components of positive psychology and character education. In 2011, Dr. Ben-Shahar co-founded 'Potentiallife', a company that offers positive psychology programs to business and non-profit organizations around the world.

Prof. Anat Shoshani is an assistant professor in the School of Psychology at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya and the academic director of Maytiv. Prof. Shoshani acquired her extensive practical experience in implementing and studying community-based interventions during her PhD studies at Tel Aviv University, where she developed methods to enhance resilience and positive health outcomes for young people confronted with protracted conflicts (e.g., Shoshani and Slone [2008a](#); Slone & Shoshani, [2006a](#), [2006b](#), [2008a](#), [2008b](#)). After joining IDC Herzliya in 2010, her research continued to concentrate on maximizing resilience among children, teens, and their families. Prof. Shoshani's work focuses on variables that positive psychology has identified as protective factors, such as character strengths and virtues, positive relationships, meaning in life, and positive experiences, and examines their role in promoting children's resilience, well-being, and mental health (e.g., Shoshani et al., [2014](#), [2016a](#), [2016b](#); Shoshani & Slone, [2013](#)). Prof. Shoshani has also published a series of papers on the correlates and outcomes of the VIA classification of character strengths and virtues in children and adolescents (e.g., Shoshani & Aviv, [2012](#); Shoshani & Slone, [2013](#); Shoshani & Slone, [2016](#)). She is also widely known for her pioneering research in the field of positive education (Eldor & Shoshani, [2016](#), [2017](#); Shoshani & Eldor, [2016](#); Shoshani et al., [2016a](#); Shoshani & Steinmetz, [2014](#)).

The Maytiv Program: Its Structure and Impact on Israeli Children

The Maytiv positive education program is an extension of Seligman's (2011) PERMA Model for well-being and adjustment in school settings (Kern et al., 2014; Norrish et al., 2013). The model is made up of five essential elements that enhance flourishing and lasting wellbeing: Positive emotions, Engagement, Positive Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement, which together create the acronym "PERMA". In extending this pioneering model, the Maytiv program focuses on eight major components that are implemented in a stepwise manner over the course of the intervention:

1. Developing emotion regulation skills (expression and reinforcement of positive emotions and management of negative emotions),
2. Fostering gratitude and appreciation,
3. Cultivating flow experiences and enjoyment while learning,
4. Fostering healthy interpersonal relationships,
5. Promoting acts of kindness, care, and compassion,
6. Utilizing character strengths and virtues in daily life,
7. Cultivating resilience factors and persistence skills, and
8. Identifying and pursuing meaningful self-concordant goals.

The program is comprised of two parallel positive psychology curricula: one for students and one for teachers. Since the homeroom teachers are the natural facilitators of change in schools and have the greatest potential to influence their students' perspectives and skills (O'hara & McNamara, 2001), Maytiv instructors deliver the program to teachers and teachers implement the students' curriculum in their own classrooms. Specifically, the teachers' curriculum is delivered by Maytiv instructors to teachers in the form a professional development workshop. Then, after each session, teachers instruct their students using the students' curriculum with age-appropriate lesson plans and activities.

Both the teacher training and the student curriculum comprise 15 90-minute sessions that occur every 2 weeks, such that the teacher's session precedes by 1 week the students' session that teacher deliver in their classroom. At the beginning, teachers also receive two introductory sessions on positive psychology, and are equipped with a textbook that includes the students' curriculum material, including detailed session plans and activities, for each of the 15 sessions, thereby ensuring standardization of the intervention. In addition, teachers are given a USB storage device with PowerPoint presentations and multi-media materials, such as songs and short clips, for each of the 15 students' sessions.

Since the students' curriculum encourages learning beyond memorization of the material and its purpose is to educate emotions, guide attitudes, and inspire action, students' sessions follow a five-step plan that the teachers adhere to when delivering them. Each session starts with two to three stories that serve as the springboard for delivering the main session's messages. Each session also contains one to two

exercises or activities that are completed individually, in pairs, or groups. After each exercise, teachers are trained to encourage students to engage in a discussion that revolves around several guided questions that refine and enrich their understanding of the subject matter. In the next stage, students have the opportunity to write about the discussion, the exercise, or the story. The final stage encourages students to take the ideas and insights from the session and apply them in their lives. Taking action is a crucial step in internalizing and assimilating the material.

The teacher workshop starts at the beginning of the school year. The first month of the training consists of two introductory sessions to positive psychology. From the second month of the program onward, the workshop specifically focuses on the core concepts that will be later delivered by teachers in the students' sessions. For example, if the next students' session deals with positive emotions, the teacher training's session covers this topic by giving a comprehensive overview of the concept. They are exposed to relevant theories and empirical research, participate in experiential activities, hear stories, and learn about possible applications of the concept in their own personal life as well as in the school setting. The second half of the session focuses on instructional methods for delivering the session to students. At this stage, teachers begin implementing the students' curriculum in their classroom. They learn a certain topic in the training session, practice and assimilate the material in their personal and professional life throughout the week, and teach the topic in their classroom the following week. In the next teacher training session, they discuss and share their experiences with their colleagues and learn about a new topic.

The Maytiv Program: Evaluation Studies

The Maytiv program has been empirically assessed in two published studies conducted in Israel (Shoshani et al., 2016b; Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2014). Both studies were longitudinal evaluations lasting 2 years and were designed to examine the effectiveness of the Maytiv school program on the subjective wellbeing and social, emotional and academic functioning of middle school students. In the first study (Shoshani & Steinmetz, 2014), 537 mid-school students who participated in the program were compared to 501 mid-school students in the same age group and grade range from a control school. Then, in a two-year longitudinal design, the study assessed changes from baseline at the end of the program and one-year follow-up in mental health and subjective wellbeing. Findings showed statistically significant decreases in depression and anxiety symptoms in the intervention group, whereas psychiatric symptoms in the control group increased significantly. The intervention also strengthened students' self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism only in the intervention group but not in the control group.

The second study implemented a within-school randomization of 70 classrooms (2517 students) in six middle schools that were randomly assigned to intervention and control groups (Shoshani et al., 2016b). Although the emphasis in the Maytiv program is on emotional and social aspects, findings also indicated that the program

had a significant positive impact on the students' scholastic achievement as expressed in their grade point averages [GPAs]. Moreover, students participating in the program, compared to control students, exhibited a significant increase in their self-efficacy, learning investment (studying for tests, preparing homework), school belongingness, positive emotions, and quantity and quality of social ties with peers.

An example of the change that occurred in students because of the Maytiv program is captured in Einat's story, the principal of a school located in a suburban tourist town in the central area of Israel faced with high unemployment. At the beginning of the program, the teachers asked every student to write down what they wanted to be when they will grow up. The answers included professions such as taxi driver, mechanic, supermarket cashier, and hotel floor manager. After 2 years of running the program, the teachers again asked the same students to write down what they wanted to be when they will grow up, but this time the answers included professions such as surgeon, pilot, astronaut, school principal, mayor, and even prime minister. The program's motto is to believe in children, their abilities and their strengths, and thus make them believe in themselves. The conceptual shift from focusing on the weaknesses and problems of the child to focusing on the child's strengths fills children with faith and hope and permeates all aspects of their performance, in the academic, emotional and social areas as well as their perceptions of life.

The change in the school was also felt among the teaching staff. The program prompted a dialogue among teachers characterized by openness, listening, focusing on strengths, and mutual support. This change is particularly noted in the atmosphere within the teachers' room and their ability to cope with educational tasks by focusing on strengths and subjective wellbeing. Findings from both studies documented the range of benefits derived from evidence-based positive-psychology interventions in promoting children's mental health, subjective wellbeing and adaptive functioning.

Notable Positive Psychologists in Israel

Prof. Hadassah Littman-Ovadia and Dr. Shiri Lavy

Prof. Hadassah Littman-Ovadia and Dr. Shiri Lavy are Israeli researchers who are perhaps best known for their collaborative research on the interface between positive psychology and organizational psychology, and their studies on character strengths at the workplace. Prof. Hadassah Littman-Ovadia is an associate professor of Psychology at Ariel University in Israel. She is the chair of the Career and Organizational Psychology graduate program. Her studies focus on career counseling and development, mindfulness, as well as the VIA character strengths and their use at the workplace. In work in conjunction with the VIA Institute, Dr. Littman-Ovadia is involved in a number of large international projects on character strengths and virtues. Dr. Shiri Lavy is an assistant professor in the Department of Leadership

and Education Policy at Haifa University in Israel. Her work centers on close relationships at work and positive psychology factors, such as character strengths, positive emotions, and meaning in life, and their associations with work and life satisfaction.

Prof. Littman-Ovadia and Dr. Lavy first worked together to assess the reliability and validity of the Hebrew adaptation of the VIA Inventory of Strengths for adults (Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2012a). Since then, their individual and joint publications have shown that both recognition and daily appeals to character strengths in vocational settings are related to greater well-being, vocational satisfaction, and a meaningful experience in life and work (Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017; Littman-Ovadia & Steger, 2010). They have explored several important factors that promote the implementation of strengths at work, such as supervisor support, and the relevance of specific strengths to actual work performance (Lavy et al., 2016; Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017). They also pinpointed a number of underlying mechanisms that can help account for the associations between character strengths and job satisfaction and productivity, including positive emotions, engagement, and sense of meaning at work (Lavy & Littman-Ovadia, 2017; Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2016; Littman-Ovadia & Steger, 2010; Steger et al., 2013). In a recent study, strength of perseverance emerged as the component that had the strongest positive association with work performance and the strongest negative association with counterproductive work behaviors (Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2016). They also underscored the role of cultural differences in the endorsement of specific strengths and their contribution to well-being (Littman-Ovadia & Lavy, 2012b). These research initiatives have significantly contributed to the application of character strengths and virtues at the workplace.

Prof. Oren Kaplan and Dr. Yael Israel-Cohen

Prof. Oren Kaplan is the Dean of the School of Business Administration and an associate professor of Business and Psychology at the College of Management in Israel. He specializes in trauma-related and anxiety disorders, preventive and positive psychology, mental resilience, and coping with stress. Prof. Kaplan and Dr. Yael Israel-Cohen, a post-doctoral fellow at Northwestern University who specializes in Israel Studies, have co-authored several articles on risk and protective factors in the aftermath of exposure to terrorism, war, and political violence. In their studies dealing with times of war and missile attacks in Israel, they identified several risk factors that can lead to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including high arousal of positive and negative affect after trauma (Israel-Cohen et al., 2014) and negative affect and hope before the attacks (Israel-Cohen et al., 2016a, 2016b). They also explored several protective factors that can buffer traumatic stress, including gratitude (Israel-Cohen et al., 2015), perceived social support and religiosity (Israel-Cohen & Kaplan, 2016; Israel-Cohen et al., 2016), life satisfaction (Israel-Cohen, Kashy-Rosenbaum, & Kaplan, 2016a), and positive future orientation (Israel-Cohen,

Kashy-Rosenbaum, & Kaplan, 2016b). Their studies have shown that positive psychology factors can function as protective factors in highly stressful and traumatic situations.

Positive Psychology Research in Israel and the Middle East: Current Status and Challenges

Aside from the growing field of school-based positive psychology interventions in Israel, psychopathology and personal, interpersonal, and inter-group conflicts and problems are still the main focus of psychological research in the Middle East (Rao et al., 2015). The benefits of positive psychology in promoting better and healthier lives in Middle Eastern countries and individuals remains understudied. Positive psychology practices in the Middle East tend to import Western ideas and viewpoints about what is considered optimal functioning in individuals and communities and what people should aspire to become. This creates a Western bias that impoverishes the understanding of cultural variations in what constitutes optimal human functioning (Leong & Wong, 2003).

However, a number of research endeavors have been undertaken to assess whether positive psychology concepts and theories are suitable for Middle Eastern contexts, whether they need modifications, or should be viewed in terms of culturally relevant positive psychological phenomena. For instance, the association between social support and subjective wellbeing has been well documented in Western countries (Diener, 2000). However, in a cross-cultural study that compared American, Jordanian, and Iranian samples, perceived family support was found to predict higher subjective well-being (higher positive emotions and life satisfaction and lower negative emotions) in the three samples, but perceived friends support predicted some of aspects of wellbeing only in Jordan and the U.S. but not in Iran (Brannan, Biswas-Diener, Mohr, Mortazavi, & Stein, 2013). This lends empirical support to the theoretical argument that, in contrast to individualistic cultures, familial ties in more collectivistic societies have more importance than other social relationships for individuals' subjective well-being.

In another cross-national comparison of the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001) in Sweden and Iran, positive emotions predicted flourishing among Swedish youth, whereas a balance of negative and positive emotions predicted flourishing in Iranian youth (Kormi-Nouri et al., 2013). This study culturally contextualized the idea about the desirability of positive affect and the undesirability of negative affect, while highlighting the need for more nuanced insights about the factors that underlie subjective wellbeing in different cultures.

Some studies in the Middle East have aimed to translate and validate measures of positive psychology constructs developed in Western countries or to replicate studies in Middle Eastern contexts. For instance, Littman-Ovadia and Lavi (2012a) translated the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) into Hebrew,

validated its factorial structure, and replicated past findings about associations between different strengths, such as hope, love, gratitude, and zest for life satisfaction. Abdel-Khalek and Snyder (2007) formulated an Arabic version of the Snyder Hope Scale and validated it on a sample of Kuwaiti students. This study replicated previous findings on the association of hope with positive affect, life satisfaction, and optimism. In another replication study, Kuppens et al. (2008) examined the relationship between emotions and life satisfaction in 46 countries including Kuwait, Iran, and Turkey. Negative emotions were found to be more negatively associated to satisfaction with life in individualistic cultures, whereas positive emotions were more positively associated to life satisfaction in cultures that value self-expression. More recently, several studies have replicated the well-established association of religion and spirituality with subjective wellbeing in Middle Eastern countries (Koenig et al., 2012).

Another particularly important area of research in the Middle East involves the exploration of new positive psychology constructs. For instance, Shoshani and Russo-Netzer (2017) proposed three pathways for cultivating meaning in life during childhood, and developed a Meaning in Life questionnaire for children (MIL-CQ). Scores in this scale showed associations with life satisfaction, positive affect and mental health among Israeli children. Freidlin et al. (2017) developed the idea of optimal use of character strengths and showed that overuse and underuse of character strengths are associated with depression and social anxiety. Ghorbani et al. (2008) developed a scale assessing Integrative Self-Knowledge (ISK), a construct closely related to mindful self-awareness, and validated it on samples from the United States and Iran. Şimşek and Yalınçetin (2010) developed a Personal Sense of Uniqueness scale (PSU), validated it on several samples of Turkish university students, and showed that the construct is strongly related to mental health and fulfillment of basic psychological needs.

Mikulincer et al. (2006) examined the experience of forgiveness and gratitude in romantic relationships from an attachment perspective in an Israeli sample, and showed that insecure attachment orientations (higher attachment avoidance or attachment anxiety scales) are related to distortions in both of these virtues in close relationships. In addition, several researchers in the field of positive organizational behavior have conceptualized and developed novel constructs and practices that enhance optimal functioning in organizational contexts such as the Feedforward Interview (FFI) (Kluger & Nir, 2010), Listening Circles (Itzhakov & Kluger, 2017), and Strength-Based Performance Appraisal (SBPA) (Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011).

Other important and interesting studies have extended positive psychology approaches to study topics that emerge indigenously in the specific social, political and cultural contexts of the Middle East. For instance, Slone and Shoshani (2006a, 2006b, 2008a, 2008b) developed several school-based prevention programs for strengthening the Israeli community during war and conflict. Their interventions were constructed, applied, and empirically evaluated at several points in time during wars and acts of terrorism that are part of the intractable conflict in Israel. These studies identified a number of sources of resilience that are at the disposal of children

in times of war, such as life meaning, social support, and internal locus of control. In addition, they identified the role that several clusters of character strengths and virtues play in moderating the relationship between conflict exposure and psychiatric symptoms among Israeli adolescents (Shoshani & Slone, 2016). Similarly, Hobfoll et al. (2009) examined resilience and chronic distress among both Jews and Arabs in Israel at two points in time during a period of rocket attacks and terrorism. They found that resilience was predicted by social support, high socio-economic status, being part of the Jewish majority in the country, and less loss of psychosocial resources. In another study, Hobfoll et al. (2012) examined life engagement among Palestinians who were chronically exposed to trauma and violence and found that loss of psychosocial resources was related to lower life engagement, whereas education level, social support, religiosity, and age predicted more engagement in life tasks.

Several studies have pointed to the moderating effects of positive reframing of stressful and traumatic circumstances. A sense of hope has been identified as a valuable asset that facilitates reframing of negative life events by evoking expectations for a better future (Shoshani, Mifano, & Czamanski-Cohen, 2016a). Gratitude emerged as a protective factor against post-traumatic stress symptoms by promoting appreciation of life and decreasing negative emotions (Israel-Cohen et al., 2015). Religiousness has also been found to serve as a protective factor during war and political conflict by promoting a broader sense of meaning in life (Slone et al., 2009). These studies have highlighted the relevance of positive psychology constructs to understand psychological responses to the social and political context of the Middle East.

Conclusions and Future Directions

While the desire for good health and wellbeing remains a driver and a key topic in positive psychology research in the Middle East, the main predictors of interest are religion, spirituality, character strengths, and social and family support. Nevertheless, commonly studied well-being factors (i.e., hope, optimism, positive emotions, gratitude, grit, flow, kindness, engagement) in positive psychology research around the world have only received scant attention in studies conducted in this region. This may reflect the social meanings and cultural values imbued to specific positive psychology constructs in Middle Eastern countries. Further research on topics emerging indigenously in the Middle East, together with more studies on understudied positive psychology concepts, hold a promise for developing the field in a manner that is sensitive to the cultural nuances of the Middle East context.

Policy development in the Middle East has yet to fully utilize the growing worldwide body of research on positive psychology and wellbeing. However, the appointment of a Minister of Happiness in the United Arab Emirates to promote national wellbeing initiatives and implement policies that foster people's ability to fulfill their potential and flourish may constitute a beginning. Further research in this

area can contribute to the design of positive psychology-based policy in Middle Eastern countries.

In terms of well-being practices, many positive psychology-based initiatives and interventions in Middle Eastern countries have been developed for workplaces, health centers, and education institutions. For instance, in Kuwait, a non-profit organization called Alnowair operates organizational wellbeing programs across the country and carries out national campaigns to spread the ideas of positive psychology (Rao et al., 2015). Nevertheless, many such initiatives remain small, local, and understudied. A systematic examination of these impressive efforts can help develop evidence-based interventions and provide practical and valid solutions to societal issues in the Middle East.

Governments across the world are gradually recognizing the importance of promoting subjective well-being at the individual, family, and community levels. In the Middle East, with its prolonged conditions of insecurity and stress, positive psychology-based interventions, such as the Maytiv programs, may constitute cost-effective preventive, therapeutic, and educational strategies that can be easily applied and scaled up for promoting wellbeing. The educational system, with its access to children and adolescents across demographic groups, is a crucial player in establishing preventive programs that can enhance children's subjective wellbeing, resilience, and ability to cope with the threatening context of the Middle East.

Efforts in the Middle East should also be directed toward the development of interventions that encourage and cultivate the expression of the most positive aspects of humanity such as kindness, compassion, caring and love of others, tolerance of differences, and concern for all human beings. In this way, positive psychology may pave the way for the emergence of peace, harmony, and stability in a region with a history of conflict, violence, and atrocities.

Resource Page for Readers

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Chapter 14

Positive Psychology in South Asia



Girishwar Misra and Indiar Misra

The region of south Asia refers to the southern part of Asian continent. It is formally comprised of sub-Himalayan seven SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) countries including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Afghanistan. The present appraisal of developments in the field of positive psychology in the region of South Asia is selective and offers a preliminary account based on the review of published resources about these countries. It may also be noted that higher education in general and the discipline of psychology in particular has yet to consolidate its base in most of these countries. Their concerns for building physical infra structure and meeting the primary needs are more prominent. In most of these nations the challenges of removing poverty and increasing literacy are priority issues on their national agendas and policies directed toward human development. Therefore there is paucity of researches and studies directly related to the contemporary concepts and academic practices of the field of positive psychology. Also the historical and cultural similarities and differences within these nations as well between SAARC countries and rest of the world are in quite different order. As a strategy to comprehensive and differential perspective this chapter is planned to give more details about three countries; i.e. India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and provide brief descriptions about rest of the four countries as very limited work is available.

It is estimated that South Asia is inhabited by 1.749 billion people forming one fourth of the world's population. This makes it one of the most densely populated geographical regions of the world. It has also been cradle of one of the oldest civilizations of the world. The region is economically less developed and characterized by collectivist cultural orientation. This makes group orientation,

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interdependence, stable family life and institutions of marriage and kinship as prominent features of society.

There have been significant traditions of learning and business in this region. However, the experience of two centuries of colonization has been the common legacy which has shaped their trajectories of societal development in peculiar ways. Political freedom for these countries is a relatively recent phenomenon which took place during the first half of the twentieth century. They are currently shaping as democratic republics with their own elected governments though present varying scenarios in terms of political emphases. They formed the core of the British Empire between the period roughly spanning between 1857 and 1947. Thus India follows a federal parliamentary constitutional republic, Sri Lanka is a unitary semi presidential constitutional republic and Pakistan proclaims to be a federal parliamentary Islamic republic. Currently India is the largest and fastest growing economy in the region (US\$2.180 trillion) and makes up almost 82% of the South Asian economy; it is the world's sixth largest economy in nominal terms. Pakistan has the next largest economy (\$304.3 billion) and the fifth highest GDP per capita in the region. [Sri Lanka](#) is the fourth largest economy in the region.

While concerns for happiness and the good life have occupied the attention of the philosophers and social reformers of this region since long ago, the field of positive psychology in the modern sense is quite new to them. This situation owes largely to the uneven growth of teaching and research in the discipline and profession of psychology in general as well as the varying levels and conditions of socio-economic development in these countries. Against this backdrop this chapter makes an effort to present the history and current scenario in positive psychology in the region of south Asia. The chapter is organized in three sections.

Section "The Socio-Cultural and Historical Context" details the physical, political and social features of these countries. Section "Academic Scenario of Psychology in the Region" presents an account of the history of psychology in the region. Section "Development of Positive Psychology: Country Trends" shares the trends in the developments of positive psychology in each of these countries separately. Finally, Section "Pakistan" offers an integrative summary of the trends and draws some conclusions about the future of positive psychology by articulating the opportunities and challenges.

The Socio-Cultural and Historical Context

In unique ways India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka share a history of intimate connections. However, they have traversed diverse routes of development as modern nations. As hinted earlier all of them were colonies and had to undergo socio-political turmoil during their freedom struggles. Responding to local realities and global concerns has posed many challenges. After gaining political independence the socio-political scenarios have developed in different directions and been marked by complex political and economic issues impacting these countries. This has led to three quite

distinct trends. A brief summary of the situation in these countries seems to be in order.

India is by far the largest country covering around three-fourths of the land area of the entire subcontinent. It has the largest population and stands as world's largest democracy. In ancient period the country was rich and contributed considerably towards the world economy. India became a democratic country in 1947 after British rule of about two centuries. It has maintained its journey of parliamentary democracy successfully and has been engaged in a planned way with the task of nation building in terms of scientific-technological advancements, educational development, agricultural development and expansion and creation of infrastructure for industrial and societal development. Following a secular path the country has been growing with diversity in language, religion and cultural practices. During the last three decades, national policies have gradually moved towards liberalization, privatization and globalization. However, population growth, unemployment and poverty continue to be major problems. In recent years concerted efforts have been made and the economic growth of the country has registered remarkable gains.

Pakistan was formed out of India through the partitioning of the country in the year 1947 to respond to the demands of Muslims in the region. This homeland for Muslims in South Asia is bordered by Afghanistan, China, India and Iran. The country considers itself as an Islamic democracy. It has a history of intense internal conflict leading to division of the country in 1971, which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh. There has been intermittent military rule in the country, and conflicts with neighboring countries have been a recurring source of unrest and tension in this region. Terrorist activities and fundamentalist upheavals are also taking a heavy toll. The military expenses of the country lead to denial of welfare activities resulting in poverty, unemployment and migration. Pakistan's governance is one of the most conflicted in the entire region. The military rule and the unstable government in Pakistan have been a serious problem for decades.

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean inhabiting Tamil and Sinhala speaking people. The majority of its population is Buddhist by religion, but there are Christians also. The country was under Portuguese control and later came under the British rule (GIVE YEARS). A nationalist political movement arose in the country in the early-twentieth century and independence was granted in 1948. It became a free country in 1960 and now has a presidential form of democracy. There was a civil war with the Tamil dominated people in the region of Jaffna. The political situation in Sri Lanka has been dominated by an increasingly assertive Sinhalese nationalism, and the emergence of a Tamil separatist movement under Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ilam (LTTE), which was suppressed in May 2009. Several efforts have been initiated for reconciliation. The country has emerged from its war to become one of the fastest growing economies of the world. In 1977 the free market economy was introduced to the country, incorporating privatization, deregulation and the promotion of private enterprise. The country is frequently exposed to landslides, Lightning strikes, coastal erosion, flooding and storms. Moreover, Sri Lanka was hard hit by the 2004 Asian tsunami, which caused a loss of some 39,000 lives and several thousand lost their homes or livelihoods. Overall, between 60,000 and 100,000 people were killed and

294,000 people displaced during this disaster the country is doing very well along the parameters of social and economic development. It has been able to control population growth and has successfully adopted several measures of social welfare. The literacy rate is very high and general health status of the public is good. The country has also witnessed generally steady rate of growth. It is one of only two South Asian countries rated “high” on the [Human Development Index](#) (HDI).

Academic Scenario of Psychology in the Region

In terms of teaching and research programs offered, availability of research facilities and research priorities developed, and quantity of publications produced, the South Asian countries are at different stages as of this writing. Pakistan and Sri Lanka are at an earlier stage of development than India. Psychology in modern India started in 1915 with the establishment of a psychology department at Calcutta University. In the last hundred years India has shown steady growth in terms of expansion of teaching facilities, research, publication and professional development. Pakistan, which was a part of India, had a psychology department at Lahore. Now several universities have been set up and psychology is being taught at bachelor’s and Master’s levels. Some universities have doctoral programs also. While there are some peer reviewed journals they are of limited circulation. In Sri Lanka there is still no full-fledged university department of psychology to offer a master level course. It is taught at undergraduate level leading to bachelor of science and bachelor of arts degrees.. Some psychology courses are taught as part of courses in the disciplines of education, sociology and philosophy. Some diploma courses are also offered in the areas of counseling psychology and clinical psychology. There are some academic programmes in psychology jointly run in collaboration with foreign universities. M. Phil. in clinical psychology is also offered in a school of medicine.

Development of Positive Psychology: Country Trends

India

As the concerns for subjective well-being (SWB) and happiness have deep roots in the Indian philosophical traditions and religious practices the current introduction of positive psychology and its concepts to the academia was responded to with considerable enthusiasm. It could gain momentum as an important domain of research in recent years. It may be recalled that formal training in modern psychology started at Calcutta University in 1915 under the British rule. After gaining political independence in 1947 the rapid expansion of higher education and need to address health concerns have led to building a variety of psychology-related institutions at national and state levels. Psychology was expected to play a major

role in societal development as it directly connects with the domains of health, industry and education. In its disciplinary journey psychology has become increasingly diversified and has encompassed a wide range of themes and subfields. Positive psychology is a relatively recent arrival on its horizon. However, a concern for health and well-being has been an integral part of the indigenous disciplines of Ayurveda (science of life) and Yoga (See Misra & Paranjpe, 2012; Paranjpe & Misra, 2012). Currently positive psychology has assumed the status of an integral part of academic curriculum at bachelor level courses in psychology. At master level the courses on positive psychology are introduced as a part of academic training in the fields of health and clinical psychology. In addition to the dominant themes in this area researchers have addressed culturally relevant conceptual and applied issues. They have also endeavored to go beyond urban middle class samples and have examined well-being, lay meanings and correlates of happiness in rural samples and marginalized sections of the Indian society. Attempts are in progress to theorize the indigenous notion of happiness and well-being that go beyond the Euro-American notion of individualized self and well-being and draw more from the perspective of consciousness, harmony, mental peace, relational self and social welfare, which are more inclusive and non-egoistic in nature (see Mascolo et al., 2004; Misra, 2005, 2010, 2013; 2014a, 2014b; Rao, 2014; Salgame, 2006a, 2006b, 2014; Sunderrajan et al., 2013). Currently positive psychology has assumed a major place in the academic programs. The salient trends of research in the field of positive psychology may be summarized as follows.

Several attempts have been made to understand the lay notions of happiness (Pandey, 2006; Shyam & Singh, 2006; Sinha, 1969a, 1969b; Verma & Sinha, 1993) and it has been observed that the conceptualization of happy life involved immediate economic concerns, psychological needs of prestige and status, current concerns, and future goals. They often echo the notion of 'development as freedom' (Sen, 1999) and go beyond hedonic terms to encompass relational themes (Mehrotra & Tripathi, 2011; Srivastava & Misra, 2011). Also, there are developmental changes in the notion of happiness. The younger people reported that the major sources of happiness were 'being in the company of family and friends' and 'successful completion of tasks and studies' (Srivastava, 2008). Bhattacharya (2011) observed that happiness covers several themes such as a sense of peace, being with loved ones, achievement and happiness in small things, and having a purpose in life. The youth valued emotional well-being (experiencing positive emotions of various kinds) as the most frequently cited feature of mental health (Mehrotra et al., 2012). Well-being is intimately related to self, identity and changes taking place with globalization (Sharma & Sharma, 2010a, 2010b). In contrast, the experience of well-being among the elderly was determined by social network size, living status, marital status, age, education, income, number of living children and re-employment status etc. (Mehrotra & Tripathi, 2011).

Studies on older adults have indicated that the level of family integration was important for satisfaction in the retired elderly (Butt & Beiser, 1987; Sharma et al., 1996). Biswas-Diener and Diener (2006, 2009) explored life satisfaction in participants in slum housing, commercial sex workers, and the homeless on the streets.

Their work has pointed out the importance of social relationship as significant aspect of life satisfaction. Agrawal et al. (2011) found that being married, having higher education, and being of higher income as well as working on a full time job were associated with higher level of life satisfaction and lower level of negative affect. Aishwarya et al. (2011) have noted significant changes in the level of gratitude among young adults undergoing as a course in blessing. An ongoing study of happiness in different areas of the metro city of Kolkata by Suar (2018) has indicated that depending on the existing physical, social, and economic conditions, the priority of predictors for happiness differ. While the three important positive correlates of happiness in order of their priority were relationships, transport services, and security services relationships become the most important contributor to happiness in all area.

The psychological dispositions of self-efficacy (Rao & Mehrotra, 2006), authenticity (Misra & Sharad, 2011), extraversion, lower neuroticism, openness to experience, consciousness (Bhattacharya et al., 2006; Sahoo et al., 2005), secure attachment, ego strength (Mukherjee & Basu, 2008), forgiving (Bhole, 2011), optimism (Puri & Nathawat, 2008), hardiness (Nathawat & Joshi, 1997), meaning in life, trait hope and coping repertoire in midlife adults (Bhattacharya et al., 2008), and identity consistency (Dhar et al., 2010) are found to be key predictors of happiness and life satisfaction. Researchers have also paid attention to assessment of positive psychological dispositions. Singh et al. (2016) have developed measures of mindfulness, resilience, spirituality, well-being, flow and interpersonal and intra-personal strengths. Nathawat and Kumar (1999) have demonstrated the positive influence of meditational interventions on health and well-being. A critical appraisal of the studies suggests that the role of macro level variables, structure of psychological and social well-being, positive institution and spirituality need further research (Mehrotra & Tripathi, 2018).

In recent years positive psychology in India has witnessed an upsurge of interest. It is reflected in the number of studies, organizing seminars, launching interventions and publications (see Chauhan & Nathawat, 2011; Mehrotra & Tripathi, 2011, 2018; Saini, 2014; Srivastava & Misra, 2011). *Psychological Studies* (Springer), the official journal of the National Academy of Psychology, India brought forth a special issue on the theme of positive psychology (Misra, 2014a, 2014b) in 2014 (Vol 59, No.2). The National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) at Bangalore has a special unit with a focus on positive psychology. It runs an interactive portal entitled <http://www.youthspring.net> which aims at nurturing youth well-being. The Indian Association of Health Research and Welfare <http://www.iahrw.com> is publishing *Indian Journal of Positive Psychology* and *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing* since 2010. It is hoped that the field of positive psychology shall contribute to help people flourish and realize its academic goals and contribute to social welfare. There are some institutions which are dedicated to nurturing the spirit of health and well-being through research, teaching and extension work. They include Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhan Sansthan (S-VYASA) Bangalore (<http://www.svyasa.edu.in/>), Indian Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur (<https://www.iihmr.edu.in/>) and Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi

(<https://phfi.org>). It may be noted that a major impetus for health and well-being has come from declaring 21st June as International Yoga Day by the United Nations (<http://www.un.org/en/events/yogaday/events.shtml>). The media, particularly TV, is regularly airing programs on health and well-being and they are becoming very popular. The universities are encouraged to set up Yoga departments.

Pioneers in Positive Psychology

Kiran Kumar Salagame

Salgame is a psychology professor with a long career at Mysore University, Mysore. Trained at NIMHANS Bangalore as a clinical psychologist he has dedicated himself to the study of indigenous psychological perspectives rooted in the Indian culture. He has extended positive psychology in the context of religio-spiritual traditions of India (Kiran Kumar, 2006). He argues that the Indian traditions analyze the issues of human nature and behavior at two levels i.e. empirical and transcendental. Accordingly the notions of happiness and well-being adopt varied pathways. It can be “hedonistic,” “collectivist,” or “transcendental.” They encompass “bio-psycho-social” and “spiritual dimensions” and “identity sense.” The pursuit of and one’s evaluation of well-being, *sukha* (pleasure) or *ānanda* (bliss), relates to three key notions i.e. identity, basic quality and life goals. One’s locus of identity may be situated at any level in the scheme of multilayered existence consisting of five sheaths or *pancha koshas* (body centered *annamaya*, vital *prānamaya*, mental *manomaya*, intellectual *vijñānamaya*, and ecstatic *ānandamaya*). People’s dispositions may reflect the dominance of one of the three basic qualities or *gunas* or *their combination* (*satva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*). People may opt for the pursuit of one of the four life goals called *purushārthas* (*dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*). They influence personal, collective, and existential well-being. He observes that contemporary positive psychology is a movement that focuses more on *annamaya*, *prānamaya*, and *manomaya koshas*; *rajas* and *tamas gunas*; and *artha* and *kama purushārthas* (Salagame, 2013, 2014, 2015). It has to incorporate the *vijnanamaya kosha* and the characteristics associated with *satva guna* and *dharma*. It has to go a long way before conceding *ānandamaya kosha* and the notion of *moksha* and distinguishing *ānanda* from *sukha*. Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychologies are a step in this direction.

Seema Mehrotra, Ph.D. is Professor at National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore. She has developed a self-care app for individuals with Depression called PUSH-D (Practice and Use Self Help for Depression) which incorporates strategies drawn from cognitive behavioral, positive psychology, interpersonal therapy approaches and self-help resources on enhancing wellbeing (<https://echargeamentalhealth.nimhans.ac.in/pushd/>). She has also developed an app called Wellness Check to monitor various aspects of well-being (Psychological, emotional and social wellbeing, engagement in eudemonic and hedonic behaviors)

and distress) to provide auto generated feedback and suggestions on maintaining and enhancing wellbeing (<https://echargementalhealth.nimhans.ac.in/Wellness-Check/>). A web platform to enhance youth social wellbeing and contributions for mental health (youthspring.net) has also been developed. She also launched an initiative called Youth Pro (2011) which is meant to enhance youth engagement for the cause of mental health, broaden the lay conceptualization of mental health to include wellbeing and de-stigmatize help seeking for mental health. She also runs a positive mental health consultation clinic called FLOURISH at NIMHANS Center for Wellbeing. She is Coordinating a 1- month full time certificate course (P3REACH: Positive Psychological Perspective—Research, Education and Communication for Health) and developed a research based universal mental health promotive intervention for youth: Feeling Good & Doing Well. Runs a manual-based 5- days' Training of trainers' program on the same, on yearly basis. She has also developed two other research based intervention modules that incorporate positive psychological perspectives: SMART: An intervention program to promote respectful and safe riding behaviors in youth & Engage to Change: A youth Engagement program to enhance social wellbeing. She has been supervising doctoral students an interface between the fields of mental health and positive psychology (adaptation to major life events, Goals and wellbeing, positive affect regulation and happiness, wellbeing at work, volunteering and wellbeing, personal growth processes, positive youth development etc.). She has developed and adapted tools to assess emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, self-perceived character strengths.

S. S. Nathawat, Ph.D. is Professor Emeritus, Head Amity Center for Positivism & Happiness, Amity University Rajasthan, Jaipur. Trained at NIMHANS, Bangalore he is working towards enhancing positivity in life and making life worth living. He has organized three International Conferences on Positivism. He has been advocating positive psychology as the Editor of *Indian Journal of Clinical Psychology* in the past (Nathawat, 1996, 1999). His presidential address dealt with promoting mental health through positive psychological capital (Nathawat, 2008). He has been publishing on psychological well-being (Nathawat & Joshi, 1997). He has jointly edited a volume entitled *New Facets of Positivism* published by Macmillan (Chauhan & Nathawat, 2011) Globalization of Positive Psychology (Nathawat & Dadarwal, 2013).

His centre runs programs to promote positivity in association with agencies like The Art of Living, Ramkrishna Mission, Chinmay Mission, Vipassana Centers etc. To initiate the action plan for providing training in developing positivism through workshops, symposiums, seminars, conferences etc. To introduce papers of positivism and positive psychology at Graduate and Post—Graduate levels. To start human value and virtue based courses. Initiate Human Value based Activities in subjects (i.e. Care Centers, NGOs, geriatric populations, disabled & street children and persons of deprived class etc.) to improve their quality of life and sense of satisfaction. A Ph.D. program in the field of Positivism. The studies are being conducted on appreciative enquiry, wisdom, Self-Compassion, psychological capital, Gratitude, Flourishing in “Psychological Well-being, Signature Strength, and Spiritual intelligence.

Other researchers active in this area include Jitendra Kumar Singh (jksinghhdipr@gmail.com), S.S. Nathawat (ssnathawat@jpr.amity.edu), Akabar Husain (profakbar6@gmail.com), Kamlesh Singh (singhk.iitd@gmail.com), Jitendra Mohan(mohanjitendra@hotmail.com), NilanjnaSanyal(sanyal_nilanjna2004@rediffmail.com),GirishwarMisra (misragirishwar@gmail.com) and DamodarSuar (ds@hss.iitkgp.ernet.in).

Sri Lanka

The study of psychology in Sri Lanka has yet to gain the status of an independent discipline in the university system (Zoysa & Ismail, 2002). As noted by Asanka (2017) psychology teaching was launched in Sri Lanka in early 1980 as a part of teaching program in philosophy. More recently it has been connected with counseling and education. A 4 year degree in Psychology is offered at University of Peradeniya, University of Jaffna, University of Kelaniya and University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The courses are primarily adaptations from the existing Euro-American teaching programmes. In recent years psychologists are emphasizing the need to introduce the Buddhist analysis of the mind, the key Buddhist teachings of volitional action, causality and therapeutic applications has been voiced (Asanka, 2017).

Several interdisciplinary studies on the themes of positive psychology have been reported. Social capital was found to be related to collective management of resources in various groups including farmers (Pretty, 2003; Uphoff & Wijayaratna, 2000). Also, collective action may lead to improvements in system performance and efficiency. Gamage, Kwuppuge and Nedelea (2016) found that personal savings with the formal financial sector, participation in community activities, and network with the outside community have a positive and significant effect on the well-being of households. At the same time, participating in community activities, membership in community associations and networks with the outside community were significant factors in general satisfaction of people living in urban areas. Buddhiprabha (2017) observed strong positive relationships of empathy, warmth, sense of comfort, guidance, provision of financial assistance when in need and confidentiality with well-being among adolescents. Positive relationships with teachers had positive impact on the psychosocial well-being of adolescents.

The post war problems of health and well-being are figuring prominently in these works. Catani et al. (2008) have reported that the Tamil school children in Sri Lanka's north-eastern provinces experienced at least one war-related event and aversive experience out of the family violence spectrum. The war has resulted in trauma for a large section of the people. The children too report PTSD and major depression (Catani et al., 2008). The physical health deficit in Tamil school children persists in the post-conflict period (see Hamilton et al., 2016). Wickramasinghe and Ahmad (2013) found that access to the Internet has significant direct positive

influence on subjective well-being. Also, it indirectly influences SWB through social capital and connectedness.

Diener and Tov (2007) and Gunawardena (2015) noted that person-level SWB was associated with more confidence in the government and armed forces, greater emphasis on post-materialist values, stronger support for democracy, less intolerance of immigrants and racial groups, and greater willingness to fight for one's country. Happy people are not completely blind to the conditions of their society, though, and their endorsement of peace attitudes are sensitive to the conditions for peace.

The prominent Sri Lankan psychologists attending to positive psychology include Gayani P. Gamage, Piazali De Zoysa (ptdz@slnt.lk). Raveen Hanwella, Department of Psychological Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo is taking keen interest in promoting positive psychology. The Open University of Sri Lanka also offers courses in positive psychology in health sciences. Institute of Mental Health (inst.colombo.sl@gmail.com) is focusing on important International Conference of Applied Psychology in 2017. A strong need for psychologists is felt to assist war's victims. In 2008 a conference was organized with the support of APA and the British Psychological Society.

Pakistan

On the eve of independence in 1947 psychology was taught at two places in Pakistan: the Government College, Lahore and Forman Christian College, Lahore. The first independent psychology department was established at Karachi University by Dr. Qazi Muhammad Aslam. Psychology achieved independent status at the Government College, Lahore (University of the Punjab) in 1962. The psychology department at the University of Sindh became independent in 1960. The Pakistan Psychological Association was founded in 1964. The National Institute of Psychology, Islamabad came into existence in 1978. The advanced Centers of Clinical Psychology at the Universities of the Punjab and Karachi were established in 1984.

The field of positive psychology has started receiving attention only in recent years. For example, there are some interesting trends indicating gender differences in well-being. Pakistan is a patriarchal society in which women have a subservient and subordinate role. While Muslim experiential religiousness had direct linkages with meaning in life and general well-being, the relationships were stronger among women than men (Khan et al., 2015b). Sahar and Muzaffar (2017) found a positive relationship between positive emotions and resilience. Also, girls were slightly more resilient and socially adjusted than boys. Autonomy selectively predicted happiness among Pakistani women. Thus while education, decision-making authority, and possession of assets contributed to happiness, possession and utilisation of assets and going alone outside the house and "labor force participation did not (Ali & Haq, 2006). The minority Hindu and Christian adolescents had low self-esteem as compared with majority Muslim adolescents (Shahid et al., 2012).

Umar et al. (2016) found that happiness was unequally distributed by class status in relation to materialistic values. The lower-class participants were happier than their middle and upper-class counterparts. The upper-class participants were more materialistic than middle- and lower-class participants. There was no significant gender or residential difference in happiness, though male respondents were more materialistic than females. Saeed et al. (2017) found that psychological capital and emotional intelligence were positively related to job performance among teachers in Peshawar. The current welfare economics considers capabilities as a person's opportunity and ability to generate valuable outcomes, taking into account relevant personal characteristics and external factors (Sen, 1992, 1999). Hasan (2013) noted that the capabilities e.g. autonomy) are the most stable predictors of happiness. Additionally, Farid et al. found that females prefer relationships over materialistic values than males.

Akram and Rana (2013) examined the role of positive schooling in the personality development and enhancement of the SWB of Pakistani children. The major themes included interactive classroom environment, proficient teaching staff, students' overall satisfaction with schools and the effects of schooling on cognition, behaviour, and social skills. These effects contributed significantly towards enhancing the SWB of children. Ashraf and Sitwat (2016) have indicated the critical role of personality factors in determining happiness. They found that the people with both high and low extraversion used problem-focused coping, self-control and accepting responsibility, but those with low extraversion used more escape-avoidance coping, and they had also high levels of negative emotions. Leslie (2012) showed that one's family devaluation had more negative emotional and social consequences for the honour-oriented Pakistani than for the less honour-oriented European American participants. Emotional intelligence predicted self-efficacy and SWB among university teachers (Farhan & Ali, 2016). School-age adolescents reported an overall moderate level of psychological well-being with males having lower physical activity but greater well-being reports than females (Khan et al., 2015a).

Shahbaz and Aamir (2008) reported that the happiness of the poor is highly influenced by macroeconomic shocks prevailing in the economy. Economic growth or a rise in GDP per capita decreases the level of the happiness of the poor due to an upper-echelon phenomenon over a long span of time. Inflation influences the purchasing power of poor segments of the population and affects happiness negatively for both the long-term and short-term. Enhancement in remittances seems to push happiness or welfare levels of the poor upward significantly. Increases in indirect taxes, especially sales taxes, are associated with low levels of happiness of poor individuals in a small developing economy like Pakistan. Trade openness improves happiness rankings of poor segments of the population through direct and indirect channels. Finally, a low level of happiness is associated with low urbanization over a short period of time. Haq (2009) found that literacy rate, net primary school enrollment and gender equality in education are positively correlated with subjective satisfaction in education facilities. Economic status of the households and communities are important variables in subjective perception of

well-being. The results indicate substantial variation in objective well-being among districts of Pakistan.

Hasan (2013) has indicated that capabilities are the most important and stable determinants of happiness. Jabeen and Khan (2016) analyzed the determinants of individual happiness by using the data from World Values Survey (WVS) for three different waves, which are 1994–1998, 1999–2004, and 2010–2014. The percentage very happy individuals in 1994–1998 was 28%. It has increased to 45% in the recent wave. However, happiness is lower for males, married persons and for aged people, as well as for persons having children. Results suggest the need for policy makers to adopt social programs to increase people's income and to improve the health status of individuals.

The prominent psychologists engaged in this work include Tayyab Rashid, University of Punjab, Rubina Hanif, National Institute of Psychology, Quad – I—Azam University Islamabad. Kausar Suhail and Raiha Aftab are also contributing to the growth of positive psychology in Pakistan. The Virtual University of Pakistan has developed Open courseware for Positive psychology. Pakistan Psychological Society had organized an International Seminar on Health, Happiness and Positive Psychology in November 2017.

Developments in Other Countries

Bhutan

Bhutan is a low income country with a population of 672,425 people (2005 census). Majority of the population is rural (69.1%) and are followers of Buddhism and Hinduism. They belong to Drupka ethnic community of Tibetan and Bhutanese origin. They speak Dzohgkha language. The Life expectancy is estimated at 66 years and the rate of literacy is 60%. Bhutan came into lime light when it adopted well-being policy and held Gross National Happiness (GNH) as a major component of its national planning (see Burns, 2011; GNH Commission, 2006). GNH indicators of Bhutan included the following factors: health, education, living standards, time use, environmental quality, culture, community vitality, governance and psychological well-being. The country ranks eighth on wellbeing on a list of 178 countries (White, 2007). In another work it ranked 26th out of 164 countries (Diener & Tay, 2015). In a recent work Biswas-Diener et al. (2015) used data through the Gallup World Poll (Gallup Organization, 2007). The sampling was done in summer of 2013. Bhutan ranked first in terms of environmental well-being and ranks moderately high on social wellbeing, it scored fairly low in terms of overall psychological well-being.

Maldives

It is a small island state located in the Indian Ocean, has 192 islands with a population of 3,10,000. Dhivehi is the main language of the country. Sinhalese is the largest ethnic group followed by Dravidian, Arab and African communities. Majority of them are Muslim and follow Islam. Unpredicted Natural calamities and inherent vulnerabilities make the life of Maldives people tough. The country applies Islamic laws. Maldives got independence from the British in 1965. It has been a republic since 1968. Tourism and Fisheries are the key economic activities. It is significant to note that Maldives ranks a better position in comparison to other south Asian countries on the Human Development Index(HDI). It is at 101st position in 2017. Significant progress in the field of education has been noted. The literacy rate of Maldivian population was 70.7% in 1977. It has increased to 98% in year 2014. The census of 2014 informs that 96% Maldivian population has attended school.

Afghanistan

It is a country caught in war and conflict for more than thirty years, is still suffering with internal and external strife. The life condition in Afghanistan is extremely harsh. In 2017, The United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan recorded 10,000 civilian casualties. Though the country has a young population but their life conditions are adverse. It was found that half of the Afghan population aged 15 years or older is facing problems related to mental health e.g. depression, anxiety and post traumatic disorder. It is a country of very low literacy rate (36%). According to Asia Foundation's Survey people of the country cited national problems in the following sequence: Insecurity (43%), Corruption (24%), Unemployment (22%), Economy (13%) and Educational facilities. Psychology is taught at university level but positive psychology has yet to gain entry to the domain of research.

Nepal

It is a land locked country, expanding over 1,47,181 square kilometers. Geographically it is divided into three regions: Mountain, Hill and Tarai. According to 2011 census Nepal's population is 26,494,504. Its 7% population resides in mountain zone, 43% live in hills and rest of population live in Tarai. The census data of Nepal grouped its population into eleven broad categories: Brahmins, Chhetris, Terai middle castes (Yadav), hill Dalits, Terai dalits, Newars, other hill indigenous peoples, Tharu, Muslims and other minorities group (Pondel, 2014). Nepali is the national language. It is spoken by 51% of the population. There are about 12 other language groups in Nepal. Nepali is the medium of instruction in the schools. English is taught as second language. There are six universities in Nepal: Tribhuvan University, Mahendra Sanskrit University, Lumbini Bauddha University,

Kathmandu University, Purbanchal University and Pokhara University. Gross enrolment ratio at tertiary level is 11.8 while it is 71 at secondary level and 134 at primary level.

Bangladesh

It is a deltaic land of about 55,000 square miles with a vast population of over 160 millions 85% of whom are Muslims. It is well-known as one of the poor countries of the world with per capita income of US\$625 only. Geographically, it is located in between India and Myanmar with Bay of Bengal in the south. Until August 14, 1947 this country was under the British rule of India for two centuries when it was known as East Bengal. Following the partition of India in 1947 it formed the eastern wing of Pakistan and appeared in the map as East Pakistan. In March 1971 Bangladesh emerged as an independent country following a liberation war. So the development of psychology as a scientific discipline in Bangladesh goes back to its inception during the British rule in the Indian subcontinent through Pakistan regime (1947–1971) to Bangladesh as an independent country since 1971. Currently Psychology in Bangladesh is being studied in many public and private universities and colleges. With increasing demand for psychological services separate Departments of Clinical Psychology and Educational and Counseling Psychology are established in some universities. Currently, four public universities viz., the University of Dhaka, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University and Jagannath University have full-fledged Department of Psychology.

Bangladesh Psychological Association, another journal named *Bangladesh Journal of Psychology* was introduced. In 1991 a non-government organization named Centre for Psycho-Social Research and Training (CPSRT) initiated another journal titled *Bangladesh Psychological Studies*. *Jagannath University Journal of Psychology* is a new addition in the list of professional journal since 2011. Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Association (BCPA) was started in 1999. It has been renamed as Bangladesh Clinical Psychological Society (BCPS) since 2010. *Clinical Psychology for quality life* is the vision statement of this society information in this regard.

It may be noted that psychological services are being developed primarily in the area of mental health (Adair et al., 1995; Begum, 1987, 1990, 1991). Other sectors like psychological testing, environmental planning, leadership training and development, crime detection, selection and placement of employees and many others remained ignored (Moghni, 1987). In other words, the services of professional psychologists are extremely inadequate in meeting the needs of this country with a vast population of 116 millions. On the whole the development of psychology shows that its growth has been slow and irregular. With advances in science and technology like internet some of these problems have been overcome. However, the availability of these facilities in different institutions is uneven and far from being adequate.

Bangladesh, a country born on the basis of 'Bengali' national identity, became an independent sovereign nation in 1971. It is one of the densely populated region of the world with 1278 people Km². The primary language is Bengali. It represents a

symbol of national identity. The total estimated population of Bangladesh is 163 million among which 86% people belongs to Muslim religion, 12% is Hindu, 1% Buddhists and 0.5% Christians. In year 2016 Bangladesh's literacy rate was 72.276% that is increased by 26.10% from 2007 when the literacy rate was a mere 46.60%. At present there are 29 government Universities and 50 private universities exist in Bangladesh.

Concluding Comments

The present appraisal shows that the field of positive psychology is taking shape as a field of research and application in India, but the situation in Sri Lanka and Pakistan is lagging behind. The reason lies in the societal context as well as the stage of disciplinary development in these countries.

According to *UNDP Human Development Report-2016* (UNDP, 2018), the Human Development Index (HDI) rank for Sri Lanka is 73, followed by India (131) and Pakistan (147). The GDP Per Capita are \$11,048, \$5730 and \$4745, respectively for Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan. Life expectancy at birth is estimated at 75 years, 68.3 years and 66.4 years, respectively for Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan. Gross income per capita in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan are US\$10,789, US\$5663 and US\$5031, respectively. The report presents interesting data on some key aspects of life pertaining to positive psychology. The values of overall life satisfaction on a 10-point scale did not show much variation. They were 4.6, 4.3 and 4.8, respectively for Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan. Percent satisfaction for freedom of choice for males were reported to be 87%, 72%, and 59% respectively. In contrast, the females showed 88, 78 and 58% satisfaction in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan respectively. Endorsement for the confidence in the judicial system were 77, 74 and 59% for Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan, respectively. Trust in national government was endorsed by 74, 69 and 46% participants in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan, respectively. Percent satisfaction with standard of living was 73, 63, 63 in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan respectively. Confidence in judicial system was affirmed by 77, 74 and 59% participants in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan, respectively. Satisfaction with health care quality was 81, 62 and 41% participants in Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan, respectively.

An interesting issue is that emerges from the HDI report of 2016 relates to a paradox. The judgments of the people about their happiness in these countries are quite similar, but the level of socioeconomic development is quite varied. This brings in the question of subjectivity in the judgment about happiness. Also, the worldview and orientation towards life coupled with unique schemes of informal support from the kinship group seem to be operative. . . In particular the income disparities and group linked discriminations make the quest for equality and equity more important. Social justice, therefore, at times poses challenges for personal growth. This indicates the need to build cultural positive psychology.

Changes in globalization could change the composition of trade flows, capital flows, and economic management, which in turn, could accelerate or restrain growth. India's growth has been spearheaded by exports of modern services and less by goods exports. Modern service trade tends to be more resilient compared with goods trade. Modern service trade tends to be more resilient compared with goods trade. Changes in capital flows are also not likely to have a big impact on growth in South Asia, as South Asia's investments are largely driven by domestic savings. Its dependence on foreign capital is low. South Asia has attracted capital flows that are less volatile. As South Asia undergoes structural transformation, the region is well positioned to bounce back with global economic recovery.

South Asian countries account for 365 of the world's poor, nearly half of its malnourished children, and suffer from a number of developmental and infrastructure gaps. A disproportionate concentration of the deprived populations in the sub region that accounts for a quarter of the world's population means that the global achievement of the SDG s will not be possible without South Asia achieving them. The progress has been uneven across and within countries. Economic growth, job creation, industrialization, inequality, peace and justice and the ecological sustainability. Asia also raises questions about the role of collectivism on the experience of happiness. The balance between individualism and collectivism in determining intrinsic aspirations can change across cultures.

A mature and effective disciplinary approach to the problems of enriching human life is certainly a complex issue and cannot be handled in a unidisciplinary manner. Many countries within the region of South Asia have been experiencing violence and instability, and while economic development has taken place there exists a sizable chunk of the population that lives below the poverty line. It is hoped that the study of positive psychology would facilitate building strengths at individual as well as societal levels. This would require attention to local cultural aspects of life, and by doing so it will also enrich the field of positive psychology also. So far the developments in positive psychology have largely attended to micro-level variables and processes. It is time to address the blending of such approaches with macro-level variables and processes, in an increasingly globalized world where interdependence and cooperation are essential.

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Chapter 15

Positive Psychology in Southeast Asia



Weiting Ng and Emily Ortega

Historical Background to Positive Psychology in Southeast Asia

In the field of positive psychology (PP), the theory, research, and practice of PP in Southeast Asia has yet to reach an advanced stage but there is great promise for further growth in this field. However, the stigma of positive psychology still exists in the region. Mere mention of the term often stirs a skeptical reaction, with many still misunderstanding that positive psychology is all *fluff*. In Southeast Asia, the field of PP is poorly understood and perhaps, even misunderstood. Part of the reason for this misunderstanding stems from the definition of the core concept of happiness. Buettner (2011) best explained the attitude of Asians toward happiness; to Asians, “striving for personal happiness appears to be a vaguely impolite and selfish concept that falls somewhere near the bottom of a list of lifetime goals” (p. 114). This misunderstanding of happiness is evidently dominant in Southeast Asia, as the late founding father of Singapore, Lee Kwan Yew, explained that he was a 6 out of 10 in terms of happiness but would never be a 9 as he “would be complacent, flabby, and walk into the sunset” (Buettner, 2011, p. 84).

Southeast Asia is populated by about 600 million people from eleven countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and Timor-Leste (Jones, 2013). Southeast Asian nations share much in common such as a tropical climate and multicultural societies. It is estimated that 1000 out of the 6000 languages spoken in the world are from Southeast Asia (Andaya, n.d.). Early religious influences in Southeast Asia came from Confucian philosophy, Buddhism, and Taoism, as well as Hinduism and Islam (Andaya,

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n.d.). The countries of Southeast Asia are as diverse as their cultures in terms of economic development, with Singapore and Brunei being two of the wealthiest countries in the region and even in the world, while Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar are the poorest in the region (Jones, 2013). Additionally, urbanization levels greatly differ with 100% of the Singapore population living in urban areas, while only 20% of Cambodians live in urban areas (Jones, 2013).

This chapter will examine how the economical differences and differing definitions of happiness influence the development of PP in Southeast Asia. In addition, this chapter will provide an overview of PP in Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore by highlighting the leading PP researchers in each of these countries.

Economical Differences in Southeast Asian Nations

Of the eleven Southeast Asian nations, Diener, Diener, and Diener (1995) included four countries, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand, in their study of factors predicting subjective well-being. They found that Singapore had the highest GDP growth and purchasing power, whereas the Philippines had the lowest GDP growth and purchasing power. The nations in Southeast Asia are diverse, with GDP growth ranging from -2.3% to 8.7% , and with Singapore being the only developed country (ASEAN, 2015).

Evidence of the diversity of Southeast Asian nations and their differing well-being levels can be seen in Gallup poll that found some 20% of the population in Asia were thriving, but there emerged a big gap between developed and developing Asian countries, with countries like Thailand and Singapore having 46% and 34% of their respective populations thriving, in stark comparison to a mere 2% of the population in Cambodia (Ray, 2012). Specific numbers of the population percentages in Southeast Asian countries found to be thriving, struggling, and suffering are ranked in Table 15.1 (Ray, 2012).

On average, the international thriving rate was found to be about 25% worldwide and only four countries from Southeast Asia, Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, and Malaysia, were above the global average, with Philippines, Indonesia, Laos, and Cambodia featuring below the global average. No data was available for Brunei, Myanmar, and Timor-Leste.

Despite the fact that a large proportion of their people were struggling and suffering, Filipino workers were the most satisfied with their jobs in the whole of Asia. In 2014, the Philippines' GDP grew substantially, posting a growth rate of 6.1% and was touted as the second fastest growing economy in Asia, with China taking top spot (Taruc, 2015). This is in stark contrast to the earlier GDP growth rate in 1995 (Diener et al., 1995), but the income inequality gap continues to widen as the rich become richer and the poor are almost oblivious to the notion of wealth (Taruc, 2015).

Table 15.1 Southeast Asian Countries Global Well-Being in 2011 (Ray, 2012)

Country	Thriving	Struggling	Suffering
Thailand	46%	49%	5%
Singapore	34%	60%	5%
Vietnam	30%	65%	5%
Malaysia	26%	68%	6%
Philippines	20%	63%	17%
Indonesia	15%	75%	9%
Laos	3%	77%	20%
Cambodia	2%	72%	26%

The large income gap does not just exist in the Philippines, but is a reality throughout Southeast Asia. There is a significant difference in income inequality in the three middle-income countries, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines, as compared to the three wealthiest Southeast Asian countries, Singapore, Brunei, and Malaysia (Bock, 2014). In fact, income inequality has been identified as one of the key characteristics of countries in the Southeast Asian region (Carpenter & McGillivray, 2013). This vast difference across countries in Southeast Asia has not gone unnoticed, with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) establishing an initiative in 2001 to narrow the gap by promoting development in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam (ASEAN, 2001).

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1954), humans have basic needs that are universal across cultures and fulfilment of these levels of needs enhances well-being. Tay and Diener (2011) examined needs and subjective well-being in 123 countries around the world and a commonality in the data was that needs fulfilment was consistently related to subjective well-being across all nations, with positive emotions linked with social and respect needs while negative emotions were linked with fulfilment of basic needs, respect, and autonomy. Life evaluation was also highly associated with the fulfilment of basic needs, with 82% of the participants low in need fulfilment, evaluating their life at or below neutral (Tay & Diener, 2011). In closer context, Southeast Asia had the highest scores for the relationship between life evaluation and fulfilment of basic needs when compared to the other regions, even higher than East and South Asia. As Southeast Asian nations also showed the strongest associations between fulfilment of basic needs and negative emotions, Tay and Diener's (2011) results seem to indicate that the people in Southeast Asia link life evaluation and the experience of negative emotions closely with the fulfilment of their basic needs. Being deprived of basic needs would therefore influence their subjective well-being.

Although people tend to attain basic needs before all other needs, fulfilment of the various needs do not necessarily follow Maslow's fixed hierarchy (Tay & Diener, 2011). Other needs such as mastery, social relationships, and physical needs are just as important for the attainment of subjective well-being, although an individual's subjective well-being is also impacted by the country's basic need fulfilment (Tay & Diener, 2011). Therefore, it can be argued that well-being in Southeast Asia is likely

to be varied since the income gaps and percentages of population thriving are very different across countries. Some people may be at the self-actualization stage while others may be struggling to attain their basic needs.

Different Understanding of Happiness

In terms of happiness within Southeast Asia, Helliwell et al. (2016) examined reports from 2013 to 2015 of 157 countries around the world on happiness and the Southeast Asian countries were ranked as follows: Singapore 22nd, Thailand 33rd, Malaysia 47th, Indonesia 79th, Philippines 82nd, Vietnam 96th, Laos 102nd, and Myanmar 119th. In terms of standard deviation of happiness (i.e., happiness inequality), Southeast Asia and Western Europe were found to have less inequality compared to other regions such as the Middle East and North Africa as well as Latin America and the Caribbean (Helliwell et al., 2016). This happiness ranking again reinforces the stark differences in wealth across the nations.

As Asian countries become increasingly globalized, research has shown that people who are more globalized tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and their lives (Tsai et al., 2012). Yet, a 2016 survey of over 67,000 workers in Asia found that Singaporeans were the least happy while Filipinos scores the highest on the job satisfaction index (Rodrigues, 2016). Although an estimated 34% of the population is thriving, Singaporeans do not seem to be happy with their jobs. Ironically, a 2016 United Nations survey found Singapore to be the happiest amongst all countries in the Asia-Pacific region, but only when happiness is measured based on objective measures such as GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, social freedom, and absence from corruption (Helliwell et al., 2016). These conflicting findings are evident of the different definitions of happiness, not just anecdotally amongst the people of Southeast Asia, but also academically in operational definitions of happiness in research studies.

Boniwell (2012) explained that happiness can be viewed as hedonic and eudaimonic, as championed by Greek philosophers Aristippus and Aristotle respectively. Aristippus labelled hedonic happiness as “pleasure in the moment”, that is, short-lived happiness that is centered on sensory pleasure (Boniwell, 2012). This type of happiness is the first type of happiness that commonly springs to mind for most people in Southeast Asia. As Buettner (2011) states, Asians generally view the pursuit of happiness to be selfish and as implied by the late Lee Kwan Yew, happiness and productivity cannot co-exist. Contrary to hedonic happiness, Aristotle postulated that eudaimonic happiness is all about true happiness that is found in doing things in life that are truly worth doing (Boniwell, 2012). This concept of eudaimonic happiness is fast gaining ground with the younger generations in Southeast Asia and the following sections on positive psychology research on youth in the different Southeast Asian countries lend support to this.

Stemming from hedonic happiness is hedonia, operationalized as subjective well-being, which is believed to comprise life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative

affect (Diener, 1984). The definition of hedonic well-being is still debatable in the research literature, with many proposing that well-being should not be based on immediate gratification (Ryff, 1989; Waterman, 1993). Likewise, eudaimonia, or psychological well-being, has garnered less research support with less agreement on the components of eudaimonia (Huta & Waterman, 2014). Ryff (2014) believes eudaimonia is all about positive functioning and is a broader type of well-being. Hedonia and eudaimonia have been found to be highly correlated, suggesting overlap between the two constructs, although there has been a lack of discriminant validity between the two terms (Disabato et al., 2016).

Research on culture and emotion has also consistently demonstrated that culture shapes one's emotional experiences. European American cultures tend to promote the goal of maximizing positive emotions and minimizing negative emotions, whereas East Asian cultures emphasize balance in emotions (e.g., Kitayama et al., 2000; Mesquita & Walker, 2003). European Americans may be motivated to maximize their positive emotions because doing so serves to promote and maintain their positive self-evaluation, which is paramount to their well-being (Heine et al., 1999). In contrast, maintaining a positive self-view is not as important as gaining and maintaining the positive evaluations of others in many East Asian cultures. Hence, there is less motivation for East Asians to enhance positive emotions; instead, they seek to control and moderate their emotional experiences and behave in accordance with the group's expectations and cultural standards (Kitayama et al., 1997; Lehman et al., 2004).

Major Positive Psychologists of Southeast Asia: Theory, Research, Assessment and Practice

Positive Psychologists in the Philippines

Some of the earliest works in PP in Southeast Asia were done in the Philippines, particularly on values. An early study on Filipino youth found that trust in God, parental obedience, desire for success in life, honesty and justice, as well as maintaining good relationships with others were important values that families imparted to the youths (Porio et al., 1975).

In terms of the development of PP as a discipline in the Philippines, the origins can be traced back to Malaysia, where Ateneo de Naga University in the Philippines worked in partnership with the Asian Center for Applied Positive Psychology in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to host its inaugural National Convention on Positive Psychology in 2013. In the Philippines, the next direction for PP is focused on incorporating positive psychology education into the schools, with emphasis on building individual strengths and motivation for learning (National Convention on Positive Psychology, 2016).

Biographies

Roseann-Tan Mansukhani is an Associate Professor of Psychology at De La Salle University whose research focuses on identity, values, and positive character in Filipino youths. She has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Steneo de Manila University.

Maria Luisa Guinto-Adviento is an Assistant Professor and Research Director at the University of Philippines, Diliman. As the pioneering Sport Psychologist in the Philippines, she serves as a committee member on the Asian South Pacific Association for Sport Psychology. Beyond sports, she focuses on psychosocial interventions using positive psychology to help people through crises and disasters, and also consults with management teams on well-being and performance enhancement at the workplace. Adviento holds a Ph.D. in psychology from Ateneo de Manila University.

Development and Generation of Positive Psychology Research and Theory

Focusing on values, Mansukhani and Resurreccion (2009) conducted a qualitative study on Filipino youths and discovered that spirituality was found to be a source of happiness and associated with thriving. This is in line with the overall framework for the traditional Filipino value system that was proposed in 1997 that included character (relational, emotional, and moral), values, and spirit (Jocano, 1997).

Using positive psychology as a framework for understanding community resilience in post-disaster situations, Adviento and Guzman (2010) sought to shift the focus of disaster survivors to their strengths and psychological capabilities through positive psychology, rather than rely on the traditional psychological approaches that focus on cost, problems, and psychopathology. Their research uncovered ten positive characteristics that had helped survivors of Typhoon Ondoy to not just cope with the devastating effects of the typhoon but to even rise above it (Adviento & Guzman, 2010). The ten characteristics as identified by Adviento and Guzman (2010) are:

1. Adaptation to nature
2. Empathy, care, and concern for the other
3. Collective responsibility for each other
4. Trust
5. Endurance
6. Cheerfulness and sense of humor
7. Courage and bravery in the midst of fear
8. Resourcefulness
9. Gratitude
10. Faith in God

Interestingly, out of the ten positive characteristics identified, three characteristics are social in nature. This community spirit has been identified as a key component to Filipino's resilience (Bankoff, 2003). Following this research study, Adviento and Guzman have since gone on to apply research into practice, developing psychosocial interventions into a program to enhance the lives of children who experienced disasters. *RePLAY, ReLIVE, ReCREATE: Community Engagement Through Sports* provides psychosocial relief for Filipino children to help get them back to their normal lives after a devastating disaster (Reyes, 2015).

Positive Psychologists in Malaysia

Biographies

Intan Hashimah Mohd Hashim has a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Warwick and is currently an Associate Professor at Universiti Sains Malaysia, teaching and researching in the area of social psychology and positive psychology, especially how relationships influence happiness and well-being.

Nor Ba'yah Abdul Kadir holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from London and is an Associate Professor from the School of Psychology and Human Development at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and has a research interest positive and negative affect as well as well-being.

Noraini M. Noor is a Professor from the psychology department at the International Islamic University Malaysia and has co-authored a chapter in Themes in Peace Psychology Research. Her research interests are on well-being, specifically on women's well-being in the Malaysian context. Noor holds her Ph.D. from University of Oxford in Psychology.

Shariff Mustafa is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and also serves as Director of the Counselling and Career Center. He has looked at happiness and personality amongst academics in Malaysia as well as emotional intelligence in home, academic, and corporate environments. Mustafa has a Ph.D. from Queensland University of Technology and has written books on counselling in Bahasa Melayu.

Sulynn Choong has a Masters in Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania with over 30 years of experience consulting with senior leaders regionally and internationally. Choong is also a charter member of the International Positive Psychology Association, Visiting Scholar at University of Pennsylvania, and faculty member of the Positive Psychology Centre, Singapore. She works as a positive change consultant, working with mostly CEOs to enhance performance through her company, Human Capital Perspectives. She conducts numerous talks, and workshops under the Asian Center for Applied Positive Psychology and is a contributing author to the book *Resilience: How to Navigate Life's Curves*.

Generation of Positive Psychology Research

Positive psychology in Malaysia, like in the rest of Southeast Asia, is still in the infancy stage, with researchers calling for an integration of PP into the Malaysia education system as academic performance has been linked with PP (Thing et al., 2015). PP can be considered to have formally started in Malaysia in 2000 with a small group of PP researchers comprising of Nor Ba'yah Abdul Kadir from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Intan Hashmiah Mohd Hashim from Universiti Sains Malaysia.

In a study on adolescents in Malaysia, Intan (2013) found five main factors that influenced happiness: household income, parent's educational level, father's income, number of siblings, as well as family and spiritual factors. Within the 1766 adolescents surveyed, cultural differences emerged, with Chinese and Buddhist participants reporting lower levels of happiness compared to participants of other religious and ethnic groups (Intan, 2013). Perhaps this difference could be because the Chinese and Buddhist participants had a hedonic definition of happiness (refer to later discussion on the study on Buddhist Thais, Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014).

Along a similar line of work, Kadir's and Noor's research investigates the predictors of happiness in Malaysia. Kadir studies adolescents, and also examines the indicators of well-being among Malay single mothers in Sarawak, as well as subjective and psychological well-being amongst the Malaysian population. For instance, her study on youths-at-risk in Kuala Lumpur found specific factors that significantly predicted positive and negative emotions (Kadir, 2016). Looking at an older population of employed women in Malaysia, Noor (2006) found that the roles that women play in their work, marital, and parental lives, together with negative affect, were the most important in determining well-being.

Other researchers in Malaysia have examined the links between personality and well-being. One study examined the relationships between the big five personality traits and happiness in more than three hundred academics in a Malaysian University. The findings indicated that the academics generally reported average levels of happiness, and this experience of happiness was positively influenced by extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness, while negatively associated with neuroticism (Aziz, Mustaffa, Samah, & Yusoj, 2014).

One of the positive psychologists, Sulynn Choong, who founded the Asian Centre for Applied Positive Psychology in 2009, adopts a more applied approach instead of focusing on the theory and research of PP. Her work centers on the practice of PP, and she conducts workshops and seminars focused on helping leaders and individuals re-discover their strengths and attain self-actualization (MAPP Alumni, n.d.).

Positive Psychologists in Thailand

Biographies

Vasontara Yiengprugsawan is a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian National University's Research School of Population Health. She has a Ph.D. from the Australian National University and is an Honorary Senior Lecturer at University College London looking at longitudinal studies in aging. She is actively involved in the Australian Centre on Quality of Life and is a primary researcher in the International Wellbeing Group. Yiengprugsawan was also on the editorial team for the 2014 Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Wellbeing Research.

Sombat Tapanya is one of the leading researchers in PP in Thailand, and is a member of the International Positive Psychology Association, representing all of Southeast Asia on the board. Tapanya's research interests are focused on the youth in terms of violence prevention, decision-making, positive discipline, and resilience. Tapanya has a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of New Brunswick, Canada, and is currently Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychiatry at Chiang Mai University's Faculty of Medicine.

Positive Psychology in Thailand

Positive psychology research in Thailand has focused mostly on well-being. Early studies found that overcrowding contributed to chronic stress amongst the people in Thailand and was a threat to their psychological well-being (Fuller et al., 1996). Subsequent research has since moved away from the more socioeconomic issues of well-being, to focus more on positive and negative affect. Knodel et al. (2013) found that the well-being of elderly Thai people improved from 2007 to 2011. Additionally, they found that happiness ratings declined with age while the reported average negative feelings increased with age (Knodel et al., 2013).

A longitudinal study of over 60,000 Buddhist Thais found that factors that were associated with the experience of unhappiness included being female, single, former and/or current smokers, alcohol consumption, low social interaction, and poor self-assessed health (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014). Participants who were unhappy in 2009 also reported lower life satisfaction, not only concurrently (in 2009), but also 4 years earlier (in 2005). Those who reported being unhappy in 2009 were also more likely to die in the subsequent 4 years (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014). Previous research based on samples from Finland and Germany suggest that unhappiness was linked to mortality. The present findings provide longitudinal evidence to show that the relation between happiness and mortality applies not only to affluent countries, but holds true as well for middle-income Asians in a non-affluent country (i.e., Thailand). This suggests that happiness improves longevity, across cultural boundaries (Yiengprugsawan et al., 2014). Interestingly, this study focused on the concept

of hedonic happiness based on Dalai Lama's premise that humans strive to seek happiness and avoid suffering.

From a political perspective, the Thai government is at the forefront in terms of the adoption of positive psychology principles in its policies. The National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) introduced well-being in its development policy in 1997, with the specific aims of improving well-being of its citizens (McGregor et al., 2007). Despite the importance of well-being in Thailand, economic inequality is growing wider in Thailand and this is believed to be causing a bigger gap between well-being aspirations and achievements (McGregor et al., 2007).

Positive Psychologists in Indonesia

Positive psychology research in Indonesia started in Surabaya in 2014 with its first positive psychology conference. As the field is newly established, there are not many research papers published in English thus far.

Biographies

Nurlaila Effendy, a lecturer from Widya Mandala Catholic University Surabaya, is one of the pioneers in the PP movement in Indonesia, and is pushing for positive psychology to be established as a formal group within the Indonesian Psychological Society. She serves as a scientific committee member on the second Eurasian Congress of Positive Psychology.

Kwartini Wahyu Yuniarti is a psychology faculty member at Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta. She earned her Ph.D. at Universitat Hamburg and does research on cross-cultural topics in positive psychology. She also examines emotional experiences of Indonesian adolescents and trust amongst students with teachers and amongst children with parents.

Universitas Gadjah Mada's Center for Indigenous and Cultural Psychology focuses on eight specific research areas of achievement, happiness, self, trust, community relationships, friendships, romantic relationships, and marriage. Heading the center is Wenty Marina Minza, who holds a doctoral degree in behavioral and social sciences from University of Amsterdam, Minza is also a psychology lecturer at the Gadjah Mada University and conducts research on trust, polyculturalism, resilience, and happiness.

Positive Psychology in Indonesia

Effendy and Putri (2016) conducted a preliminary study in Indonesia administering the PERMA Profile that encompasses positive emotion, engagement, relationships,

meaning, and accomplishments to 625 adults in Surabaya. The PERMA Profile showed good reliability with the Indonesian population. In addition, they discovered that residents of Surabaya had average citizen well-being despite low scores for engagement and meaning. The specific factors of occupation and marital status were also found to be determinants of flourishing (Effendy & Putri, 2016).

Positive psychology research in Indonesia that has been published in English has focused on cross-cultural differences, for example, looking at a cross-cultural examination of happiness (Primasari & Yuniarti, 2012; Yuniarti, 2014). Another cross-cultural study on adolescents in Indonesia and Germany found that togetherness with family and loved ones was a main source of happiness for both cultures. However, although accomplishment was an important factor of happiness for Germans, it was not important for Indonesians (Yuniarti, 2014). The importance of social relationships for happiness is further supported by another study that focused on Indonesian teenagers. The study revealed that the three main sources of happiness were relationships with family, friends, and loved ones, self-fulfillment, and a spiritual relationship with God (Primasari & Yuniarti, 2012).

Positive Psychologists in Singapore

Biography

Christie Napa Scollon is an Associate Professor of Psychology in the School of Social Sciences at [Singapore Management University](#) since 2008. She served as Associate Dean of the School of Social Sciences from 2014 to 2016. Prior to joining SMU, Dr. Scollon was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Texas Christian University from 2004 to 2008. She holds a Ph.D. in Social/Personality Psychology from the [University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](#). Dr. Scollon is the 2015 recipient of the Lee Kong Chian Fellowship for Research Excellence and the 2009, 2014, and 2015 winner of the School of Social Sciences Teaching Excellence Award and the 2016 winner of the School of Social Sciences Innovative Teacher Award. She currently serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Social and Personality Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *Journal of Research in Personality*, and *Journal of Positive Psychology*. Dr. Scollon studies subjective well-being, or what most people call ‘happiness’. Under this broad umbrella, she has focused on several questions such as, “What a good life is”, “What are the cultural differences in happiness and emotions, and why are some societies happier than others?”, “How do our memories impact our overall life satisfaction?” and “How do we store information about emotions?” She has authored several research articles on topics related to subjective well-being and culture and emotions.

Culture and Well-Being

Cultural differences in self-construal (as discussed earlier) translate into actual differences in emotional experiences. Between-culture comparisons showed that European American cultures experienced pleasant emotions more frequently than Asian cultures (e.g., Asian American, Japanese, Indian, and Korean), but experienced unpleasant emotions less frequently (Scollon et al., 2004; Suh, 2002). Furthermore, as East Asians engage more in holistic thinking, which is guided by a dialectical style, they are able to accept seeming contradictions (Nisbett et al., 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). Hence, for them, it is acceptable to experience emotions of opposite valence—what matters more is to seek balance in emotional experiences. Indeed, as predicted by East Asian dialectical cultural model, experiences of positive and negative emotions were positively correlated for Chinese, Koreans, Asian Americans, and Japanese, but not for European Americans (Schimmack et al., 2000; Scollon et al., 2005).

To further understand the role that culture plays in shaping emotional experiences, Scollon and colleagues examined how people across cultures desire emotions that are consistent with their values (Tamir et al., 2016). Across eight countries (United States, Brazil, China, Germany, Ghana, Israel, Poland, and Singapore), emotions that are consistent with the values endorsed are more desired. For example, the more people endorsed self-transcendence values (e.g., benevolence), the more they wanted to experience self-transcending emotions (e.g., empathy and compassion). This value-based account of desired emotions thus demonstrates cultural consistency (i.e., value-consistent emotions are more desired across cultures). Nevertheless, there is also cultural variation in desired emotions and values endorsed. For instance, participants in Singapore tended to endorse conservation values (e.g., humility, conformity) more than those from European American cultures (e.g., Germany, United States) did. This research thus extends the extant literature by demonstrating that culture not only influences emotions via self-construals and cognition, but also through shaping what values people endorsed, which in turn influences the desirability of emotions (Tamir et al., 2016).

Work by Scollon has also examined whether there are cultural differences in how emotions are cognitively represented in memory. Koh et al. (2014) hypothesized that individuals in interdependent cultures would have stronger associations of emotional memories within interpersonal relationships than those in independent cultures because emotions are more socially embedded in interdependent than independent cultures. Indeed, they found that Singaporeans showed stronger associations of emotions within friendships than Americans did. Moreover, Singaporeans showed lower emotional consistency across relationships than Americans. Importantly, the study revealed that the effect of culture on cognitive representation of emotions was mediated by consistency between relationships. In a culture where there was higher emotional inconsistency (Singapore), emotions within relationships were more strongly associated, as compared to a culture where there was greater emotional consistency (USA) (Koh et al., 2014). These findings illustrate the impact of cultural differences in cognitive representations of emotions on the recollection of emotions,

which could help researchers better understand how memories influence people's self-reported retrospective emotional experiences.

Culture not only influences emotional experiences, desirability of emotions, and cognitive representations of emotions, but also affects perceptions of life quality. Wirtz and Scollon (2012) found cross-cultural differences in how material success influenced perceptions of a target's life quality. A target high in material success was judged by Singaporeans to have higher life quality than a target low in material success, whereas Americans were not affected by the target's material success. This research demonstrates that various cultures may weigh or value material wealth/success differently, such that some cultures view it as vital to well-being or quality of life, whereas other cultures may not. In summary, not only has Scollon's research focusing on culture and emotion generated considerable findings demonstrating cross-cultural differences in (the experiences, cognitive representations, and desirability of) emotions, it has also highlighted the potential for future research in this area.

Biography

Weiting Ng is an Associate Professor with the Psychology Programme in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, SIM University (UniSIM), Singapore. She joined UniSIM in 2008, and manages the undergraduate psychology and Master of Applied Research in Social Sciences programmes at UniSIM. Courses that she has taught include Emotion, Personality and Individual Differences, and Positive Psychology. Dr. Ng obtained her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her research interests span the areas of well-being, emotion regulation, and personality differences. Questions she focuses on include examining how the predictors of well-being are differentially related to the various facets of well-being, and how and why the impact of well-being predictors varies across cultures. Dr. Ng also examines personality differences in emotional experiences and emotion regulation, and in the use and effectiveness of regulation strategies. Integrating across both areas, she explores how regulation strategies and positive interventions can be used to enhance well-being, and how personality and culture impact their efficacy. She has published many research papers on these topics, including book chapters and journal articles in leading journals, such as *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Journal of Research in Personality*, *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, and *Journal of Happiness Studies*. She also serves as a reviewer for several journals, including *Personality and Individual Differences* and *Journal of Happiness Studies*.

Determinants of Well-Being Across the World

Tremendous strides have been made in the field of subjective well-being (SWB) in the last few decades, with researchers examining how well-being is linked to key

aspects of life, including mental and physical health, wealth, quality of life, and social relationships, and uncovering the causal links between well-being and its correlates (De Neve et al., 2013). As researchers, the citizenry, and policymakers start to recognize the importance of well-being, especially with correlational, longitudinal, and experimental findings converging on the conclusion that higher well-being leads to more successful life outcomes in the work, social, and health domains (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005), there is growing research on what the determinants of well-being are. Work in this area has revealed that factors such as material wealth, personality, and psychological needs are important predictors of SWB (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010; Tay & Diener, 2011), whereas life circumstances account for only about 10% of the variance in happiness (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Similarly, dispositional variables are important predictors of SWB (Lucas & Diener, 2000). Meta-analyses examining the associations between the Big Five personality dimensions and well-being confirmed that they are closely associated with various SWB measures such as happiness, life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, and quality of life (Steel et al., 2008).

These well-being correlates however, are not equally important for all SWB facets. Research has revealed that material wealth, whether measured by subjective indicators such as financial satisfaction, or by objective indicators such as income, is closely related to life evaluation, and people with higher incomes report higher life evaluation (Diener et al., 2010; Ng & Diener, 2014;). However, material wealth is only weakly associated with positive and negative feelings; furthermore, having a higher income does not improve affective well-being beyond a certain point (Kahneman & Deaton, 2010). Instead, affective well-being is strongly predicted by psychological factors such as personality traits or the fulfillment of psychological needs (e.g., respect, autonomy, mastery, and social support) (Diener et al., 2010; Steel et al., 2008). As compared to those lower in psychological needs, people who feel more respected, have more autonomy, and receive more social support, experience more positive feelings and less negative feelings (Diener et al., 2010; Tay & Diener, 2011). Findings based on large-scale international surveys (e.g., Gallup World Poll) had confirmed that across nations of varying affluence levels, income and financial satisfaction were the strongest predictors of life evaluation. Conversely, for affective well-being, respect was the strongest predictor of positive feelings, while financial satisfaction and respect were both important predictors of negative feelings (Ng & Diener, 2014). These findings highlight that people do not necessarily pursue their needs in a fixed hierarchy, with basic biological needs taking precedence over social or self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1970). Instead, respect matters much more to positive feelings than income does (even though income is essential for fulfilling basic needs), even in the poorest countries in the world.

In addition to teasing apart the differential associations between material wealth and various SWB facets, subsequent research examined whether national characteristics, such as societal wealth, exerted moderating influences on the effects of money on happiness. According to Inglehart's (1997) theory of value change, people shift their focus from materialist needs to post-materialist needs (e.g., self-expression and free choice) as societies progress in economic development, toward affluence. This

value change would influence which determinants are important to SWB, and how important they are. Indeed, concordant with the notion that post-materialist needs matter more to happiness than material concerns in economically developed societies, Delhey (2010) found that the post-materialist values of autonomy and job creativity were more important than the materialist value of financial satisfaction for life satisfaction in wealthy nations, whereas the reverse was true in poorer nations. Extending the previous work, Ng and Diener (2014) examined whether the effects of material concerns and psychological needs on SWB would be contingent on the wealth of a country. They found that societal affluence moderated the effects of material wealth and psychological needs on SWB. Income and financial satisfaction exerted stronger effects on life evaluation in richer nations than in poorer nations. Similarly, autonomy, respect, and social support were more closely associated with SWB—life evaluation and negative feelings (and positive feelings to a smaller extent)—for those in affluent than poor nations. This research has thus debunked the traditional belief that being rich matters more to an individual's happiness for those living in poor rather than in affluent nations.

Other than examining what the moderating influences underlying the determinants of well-being are, Ng's research also aimed to uncover the mediating pathways that could explain the links between SWB and some of its key predictors. For instance, might the effects of personality on well-being be mediated by material evaluations? Using the dataset from the World Values Survey (Singapore), mediation analyses showed that the associations between personality and affective well-being were mediated by material concerns. Consistent with previous research (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Watson & Clark, 1992), Ng (2015) found that individuals who were higher in neuroticism experienced more negative emotions than those lower in neuroticism, while people who were more extraverted experienced more positive emotions than those lower in extraversion. Importantly, people's subjective evaluations of their financial state (as measured by their financial satisfaction, satisfaction with standard of living, and perceived income status) mediated the associations between personality traits (neuroticism, agreeableness, and extraversion) and positive or negative emotions. Those who were higher in neuroticism were less satisfied with their financial situation and standard of living, and in turn experienced more negative emotions. Likewise, people who were more agreeable were more satisfied with their standard of living and in turn experienced less negative emotions. Finally, perceived income status also mediated the link between extraversion and positive emotions. Individuals who were higher in extraversion evaluated their income status more favorably, and in turn also experienced greater positive emotions (Ng, 2015). These findings illustrate how personality traits not only directly impact SWB, but can also exert indirect mediating effects on SWB by affecting people's subjective evaluations of their financial situation.

Positive Interventions and Personality: The Moderating Role of Neuroticism

According to one conceptual model, well-being is determined by three primary factors—intentional activity, circumstances, and set point (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Intentional activity includes positive psychology interventions (PPIs), which are volitional activities aimed at promoting positive feelings, positive behaviors, or positive cognitions, and accounts for 40% of the variance in well-being. The set point accounts for 50% of the variance in well-being and is genetically determined, suggesting that personality plays a paramount role in influencing well-being. Indeed, studies have found that personality traits such as extraversion and neuroticism share common biological underpinnings with SWB, which may explain the close personality-SWB associations (Lykken & Tellegen, 1996; Weiss et al., 2008). Other than these direct influences on well-being, personality can also indirectly influence well-being by affecting the type of coping and emotion regulation strategies used and their effectiveness.

As confirmed by previous studies (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007), there are personality differences in the use and effectiveness of coping and emotion regulation strategies. For instance, neuroticism is associated with the use of problematic coping strategies like withdrawal and negative emotion-focused coping, whereas extraversion tends to be related to more effective coping strategies, such as positive reappraisal and problem-focused coping (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007; Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Extending this research, Ng investigated the moderating role of neuroticism and found that neuroticism moderates the effectiveness of regulation strategies on negative mood repair. Low- but not high-neuroticism individuals successfully decreased their negative emotions when they positively reappraised unpleasant real-life or hypothetical events (Ng & Diener, 2009). In addition, individuals lower in neuroticism were less susceptible to the detrimental effects of maladaptive strategies and more able to maintain their well-being compared to those higher in neuroticism (Ng, 2012). Dampening pleasant events (by re-evaluating them to look for negative aspects) decreased positive emotions among high- but not low-neuroticism individuals. These findings illustrate that neuroticism can indirectly promote or impair well-being by affecting the efficacy of regulation strategies (e.g., reappraisal, dampening) on down- or up-regulating negative and positive emotions.

Further research by Ng clarifies that individuals high in neuroticism are not necessarily doomed to negativity. There are findings suggesting that the neuroticism-positive emotion association is moderated by situational context, and that high-neuroticism individuals are capable of feeling as much positive emotions as low-neuroticism individuals in pleasant situations, although the former feel less positive than the latter in unpleasant situations (Ng, 2009). This research paves the way for subsequent work by proposing an alternative way of boosting high-neuroticism individuals' well-being—via increasing positive emotions instead of the traditional method of decreasing negative emotions. Indeed, subsequent studies support the feasibility of using this alternative method (Ng, 2012). There are certain positive interventions (e.g., savoring or gratitude-listing) that high-neuroticism

individuals can use successfully to sustain their positive affect. For example, Ng (2012) found that savoring pleasant events allowed people, even high-neuroticism individuals, to feel positive. Similarly, listing things in their lives that they were grateful for helped them maintain (or regain) their affect balance after a positive (or negative) mood induction, relative to not using any strategy. There are also techniques that high-neuroticism individuals can use to boost the efficacy of regulation strategies or PPIs. For example, techniques like daily practice of positive cognitive strategies can improve the effectiveness of the strategies. Participants who practiced positive reappraisal daily for one week felt less negative toward unpleasant daily events compared to those who focused on the unpleasant events, or those who did not use any strategy (control condition) (Ng & Diener, 2013). This suggests that with the right strategies or training, individuals high in neuroticism are still capable of maintaining or improving their affective well-being, although it is more difficult for them to boost their affective well-being, especially in negative situations.

Building on research showing that the PPI, exercising gratitude was more effective and increased happiness more for individuals who were more extraverted and higher in openness to experience relative to those lower in these traits (Senf & Liao, 2013), additional studies revealed that neuroticism exerts similar moderating influences on the effects of PPIs. Studies by Ng (2016a) found that neuroticism moderates the sustainability of positive interventions' happiness-enhancing effects. In one study, participants counted their blessings or listed acts of kindness daily for one week. Although the beneficial effects of the interventions endured a week after participants stopped performing the activities; this only applies to low-neuroticism individuals (who reported greater happiness than those who performed a neutral control activity), and not high-neuroticism individuals (Ng, 2016a). That is, the happiness-enhancing effects of positive interventions are more enduring for low- rather than high-neuroticism individuals.

To explore if the deleterious moderating influence of neuroticism can be mitigated, participants in another study were instructed about the positive activity's happiness-enhancing effect. In the initial session, participants were asked to visualize and write about their best possible selves and to continue using the strategy as and when necessary or possible. The beneficial effect of this activity endured for 3 weeks, even for individuals high in neuroticism. High-neuroticism individuals who used the "best possible self" strategy reported higher happiness than their control counterparts 3 weeks after the initial session (Ng, 2016a). This suggests that awareness of a positive intervention's benefit may increase participants' motivation to continue with the activity on their own or strengthen their belief in the positive activity's efficacy. In turn, continued use of the activity could produce more enduring effects.

In recapitulation, Ng's research has contributed toward developing a framework that recognizes how personality exerts moderating and mediating influences on the effects of regulation strategies and positive interventions on well-being.

Biography

William Tov is an Associate Professor of Psychology in the School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University (SMU), Singapore. He joined SMU in 2008, and he has taught graduate courses on Multivariate Statistics, and Psychology of Emotion, as well as undergraduate courses on Research Methods, and Psychometrics & Psychological Testing. Dr. Tov obtained his Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Tov's research interests span the areas of well-being and personality in everyday life, cultural and societal influences on well-being and personality constructs, and policy implications of well-being measures. He has published several book chapters and journal articles on these topics, in journals such as *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Cognition and Emotion*, *Journal of Personality*, and *Psychological Assessment*. He also serves as a reviewer for several journals, including *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *Psychological Science*, and *Psychology of Well-Being*.

Measurement of Well-Being

Self-reported SWB can be influenced by a number of factors, including information accessible at the point of judgments, as well as people's semantic beliefs about their personality (Robinson & Clore, 2002; Schwarz & Strack, 1999). Tov (2012) sought to determine how everyday experiences influence self-reported SWB, as well as clarify the role that memory plays in influencing the affective and cognitive evaluations of well-being. Unlike general SWB, which pertains to life satisfaction and emotional experiences in general, retrospective SWB refers to satisfaction and emotional experiences over the past few weeks or months. The analyses revealed that ratings of the emotional intensity of events after they recently occurred (proximal intensity ratings) predicted retrospective SWB, although distal ratings (based on recollections after a longer, intermediate period) of the events did not. Retrospective SWB in turn, mediated the effect of daily experiences on global SWB (Tov, 2012). These findings suggest that recent-past representations (which reflect the overall pleasantness or unpleasantness of a given period of time) mediate the relations between daily experiences and retrospective SWB. Furthermore, daily experiences not only influenced people's affective well-being, but also influenced how satisfied they were with their current situation. This research demonstrates that judgments of life satisfaction are not simply influenced by contextual effects, but also by relatively stable sources of information. It thus serves to further corroborate the validity of well-being measures.

In subsequent research further investigating the validity of self-reported well-being measures, Tov et al. (2013) evaluated the correspondence between self-reported measures of well-being and open-ended diary responses. Using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) program, the emotional content and life content of written diary entries was analyzed and compared to self-reported

emotional experience and satisfaction with specific life domains. Analyses revealed that LIWC emotion codings corresponded with self-reported emotional experiences—LIWC negative (and positive) emotions were respectively associated with greater daily, retrospective, and global negative (and positive) emotions. Similarly, frequencies of positive and negative events (as derived from the LIWC) predicted self-reported domain satisfaction (in the domains of family, friends, academics, health, leisure, and money) (Tov et al., 2013). This research supports the validity of LIWC codings and highlights the possibility of using open-ended responses as measures of well-being.

Extending the work beyond studying the measures of SWB, Tov and Lee (2016) examined the distinctions between eudaimonic well-being and hedonic well-being. Hedonic well-being focuses on pleasure and enjoyment of life, and it can be assessed by life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Kashdan et al., 2008). Conversely, the eudaimonic perspective of well-being emphasizes the expression and fulfillment of inner potentials (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryff, 1989). This focus on self-actualization implies that striving for excellence and leading a meaningful and purposeful life may sometimes entail forgoing short-term happiness or experiencing negative emotions. Across five diary studies and a large cross-sectional survey, Tov and Lee (2016) examined the extent to which meaning and satisfaction can be differentiated in everyday life. They found that both meaning and satisfaction correlated strongly with each other. However, although meaning and satisfaction both correlated with positive and negative affect, the latter covaried more with affect than the former did. This supports the notion that satisfaction is more closely related to hedonic well-being than meaning is. Finally, they also found evidence of a positivity dominance (instead of a negativity dominance), as people weighted PA more heavily than NA when judging meaning and satisfaction.

In summary, Tov's research focuses on the measurement of SWB and the validity of SWB measures, and his work has contributed toward a deeper understanding of how distinct types of well-being are measured and their validity.

Biography

Eddie Tong is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology, at National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore. Dr. Tong has been a faculty member at NUS since 2006, and holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Michigan. His research interests focus on the processes interfacing emotion and cognition. Specifically, he studies the cognitive processes (e.g., appraisals, moral judgment, and attribution) associated with specific emotions (e.g., joy, pride, anger, sadness, gratitude, humility, and hope). Dr. Tong has published extensively on these topics, in journals such as *Journal of Personality, Emotion, Cognition and Emotion*, and *British Journal of Social Psychology*. He also serves on the editorial boards of *Motivation and Emotion*, and *Emotion*.

Appraisals and Positive Emotions

One of the main areas of Tong's research focuses on how emotions could be differentiated by cognitive appraisals. Appraisals use dimensions such as pleasantness, control, and certainty to evaluate events that elicit emotions. In a recent study, Tong (2015) examined how well appraisals differentiated positive emotions, and how individual specific positive emotions differed on appraisals in two cultures (Singapore and USA). Using 13 appraisals (e.g., pleasantness, relevance, goal attainment, effort), Tong (2015) found that these appraisals correctly classified 13 positive emotions (amusement, awe, challenge, compassion, contentment, gratitude, hope, interest, joy, pride, relief, romantic love, serenity) well above chance. Moreover, there were differences in the appraisal profiles among certain positive emotions. The study also found no significant cultural differences (between Singapore and USA) in the appraisal-emotion relationships. This research, which focuses on positive emotions, is thus consistent with previous research examining appraisals and negative emotions (Scherer, 1997).

Studying the appraisal profiles of emotions could be one way of enabling researchers to better define what constitute as "positive" emotions in positive psychology. An emotion cannot simply be categorized based on its valence (e.g., pleasant vs. unpleasant). There are other criteria that should be considered when judging whether an emotion is positive or negative, especially in view of cultural differences in how well-being is conceptualized. An emotion that is "inherently unpleasant" (in valence) could engender positive outcomes or enhance one's eudaimonic well-being, and therefore can contribute toward maximizing optimal human functioning, which forms the overarching goal of positive psychology.

Future of Positive Psychology in Southeast Asia

The field of positive psychology, in Southeast Asia as a whole, is still in its infancy stage. In countries like Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia, interest in PP is growing. However, academic scientific research in those countries is not as established compared to other countries (e.g., Japan, USA). Therefore, there exists huge potential for researchers to study the resident populations in these nations. For instance, one area that researchers can focus on is to identify if there are predictors or influences of well-being that are unique to the local residents. This would enable governments and policymakers to formulate policies and strategies that can benefit the majority, rather than benefit only segments of the population. Positive interventions may also be more efficacious if they can be tailored for individuals, and such customizations can only occur if there is a deeper understanding of people's personality traits, values, or motives. Finally, researchers can also examine if the findings obtained with European American (or East Asian) samples would be replicated with the indigenous populations in Southeast Asian nations.

Considerably more PP research has been generated in Singapore, thus the field of PP in Singapore is at a relatively more advanced stage than that of its regional neighbors. Much work has been conducted on Singaporean samples, ranging from areas focusing on cognitive representations and appraisals of emotions, mediating and moderating influences on well-being predictors, personality and positive interventions, to the validity of well-being measures. Yet a large basis of this work is still grounded in European American research. For instance, much of the cultural research conducted in Singapore focused on cross-cultural comparisons between Singapore and United States. It may be timely for future work to focus more on Singaporeans, so that positive psychologists can gain a better understanding of how optimal functioning is defined in Singapore. Recommendations for fostering human flourishing can then be more suited for its citizenry, taking into consideration not only the socio-demographics and economic factors, but also the cultural values and socio-political context. For example, racial harmony is pivotal in Singapore, while safety (/security) and low corruption are factors that substantially contribute to the well-being of Singapore residents. This highlights the potential and importance for ethnographic research not only in Singapore, but in the other Southeast Asian countries as well.

A central aspect of the Western notion of well-being revolves around egoism, which is motivated by hedonism, that is, the pursuit of happiness and pleasure. Western cultures have an individualistic viewpoint of happiness and emphasize autonomy and self-enhancement. An alternative perspective of well-being within Western models of happiness is the eudaimonic perspective. Eudaimonic well-being emphasizes self-realization and the expression and fulfillment of inner potentials (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Individuals should follow and achieve their goals as happiness results from striving toward self-actualization. Nevertheless, the Western eudaimonic view of well-being still differs from Eastern conceptualizations of well-being, which tend to be more collectivistic and focus on the social aspect and self-transcendence (Heine et al., 1999; Joshanloo, 2014). Hence, interpersonal harmony is essential to those in collectivistic cultures. Eastern traditions of happiness also focus on virtues (e.g., compassion, wisdom) and they recognize that suffering and negativity can contribute to well-being. These cultural variations in the conceptualization and understanding of well-being underscore the need for research to be conducted in various cultures, rather than being purely based on research findings from Western European and American cultures.

As the field of PP has been largely shaped by Western notions of well-being and lacks measures that reflect Eastern notions (such as sufferings and social harmony), further research could contribute toward developing measures that are more appropriate for Eastern or collectivistic cultures (Ng, 2016b). For example, previous work has supported the conclusion that social relationships and support are important to well-being across cultures (Diener et al., 2010; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). But in view of the emphasis on social harmony in collectivistic cultures, as well as how well-being is embedded in the evaluations of others (rather than one's own positive self-view), could social relationships/harmony be more important to happiness in Southeast Asian countries? Recent developments in PP have also revealed that

negative emotions may not be universally detrimental, as culture moderates their adverse effects on health (Kitayama et al., 2015). Likewise, it is possible that happiness may not be universally or equally beneficial for all. Further research can therefore help to address these questions. Hence, it is vital that positive psychologists study PP in various cultures and promote the research and practice of PP in these countries. Findings from these countries not only offer a culture-specific perspective of PP and flourishing in these nations, but can advance the development and growth of the field of PP, allowing for a more encompassing viewpoint in the understanding, measurement, and practice of PP.

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Chapter 16

Region of Far East Asia I (Mainland China and Taiwan)



Hongfei Yang and Shujen Lee Chang

Major Historical, Social, Economic, and Political Similarities and Differences in Mainland China and Taiwan

Mainland China, officially the People's Republic of China (PRC) is the world's **most populated country**, with over 1.38 billion people ("China Population", 2016). It exercises **jurisdiction** over 22 **provinces**, five **autonomous regions**, four direct-controlled municipalities (Beijing, **Tianjin**, **Shanghai** and **Chongqing**), two mostly self-governing **special administrative regions** (**Hong Kong** and **Macau**), and claims sovereignty over **Taiwan**.

Mainland China and Taiwan have the same traditional culture in which most social values are derived from **Confucianism** and **Taoism**. Moreover, other important cultural strains such as Buddhism and Christianity have also been influential. In the past three decades, Mainland China has achieved great economic growth and its economic level is quite compatible with that of Taiwan. The economic cooperation and interdependence between the two sites have been significantly promoted after the opening of the "Three Direct Links" (namely, direct mail, transportation and trade links) in 2008 (Zhang, 2015).

However, the PRC is a sovereignty state governed by the Chinese Communist Party after 1949. Taiwan is not a sovereignty state but with a multi-party system after 1987. Mainland China is still in its process of industrialization whereas Taiwan has

Hongfei Yang is the author of the positive psychology in Mainland China. Shujen Lee Chang is the author of the positive psychology in Taiwan.

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Table 16.1 The number of articles on positive psychology in Mainland China 2001–2016

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of articles	1	3	9	0	12	45	78	165
Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number of articles	196	183	352	440	612	582	638	681

become an industrialized area since 1970s. The cultural differences between the two sites are still controversial. Some researchers hold that the cultures of the two sites have the same origins and have no significant differences, whereas others hold that there are significant cultural differences regarding political systems, diversity of cultures, and the heritage of **Confucianism**, etc. Interestingly, there are some cultural differences in the society of psychology. For example, some psychologists in Taiwan practice the “folk custom therapy” such as “awaking-soul” derived from Taoism and “previous life therapy” derived from Buddhism. The “folk custom therapy” is unacceptable in Mainland China and no psychologist uses it there. Similarly, psychologists in Mainland China are required to hold Marxism in their research and practice whereas psychologists in Taiwan are not.

Historical Background to Positive Psychology in Mainland China

Quite soon after the birth of positive psychology in the United States in the beginning of this century, some Chinese psychologists started to introduce it to the region by making presentations and publishing articles. For example, Hongfei Yang learned positive psychology when he was a visiting scholar under supervision of Dr. Ed Diener in the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2002. After he came back to China, he added positive psychology to his course of psychological counseling and mental health. He also made presentations such as “*From Negative Psychology to Positive Psychology*” (<http://www.docin.com/p-5746723.html>), and “*The Psychology of Happiness*” (http://jrzb.zjol.com.cn/html/2008-04/07/content_2169374.htm) for students, teachers, business managers and government officers.

In January 2003, the first article introducing positive psychology was published, i.e., “Positive Psychology: Idea and Action” (Miao & Yu, 2003). Since then, papers on positive psychology have been published every year. A subject search of the Chinese database *Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure* (CNKI) in June 2017 revealed 4052 articles on positive psychology published from 2001 (with only 1 article) to 2016. As Table 16.1 and Figs. 16.1 and 16.2 indicate, the positive psychology literature has been burgeoning since 2006 in terms of numbers.

Importantly, the China Positive Psychology Association (CPPA, see <http://chinappa.org>) was organized in August 2013. The association sets its goal upon scientific research and application of positive psychology in the broadest manner, promoting the communication and development of psychological knowledge to

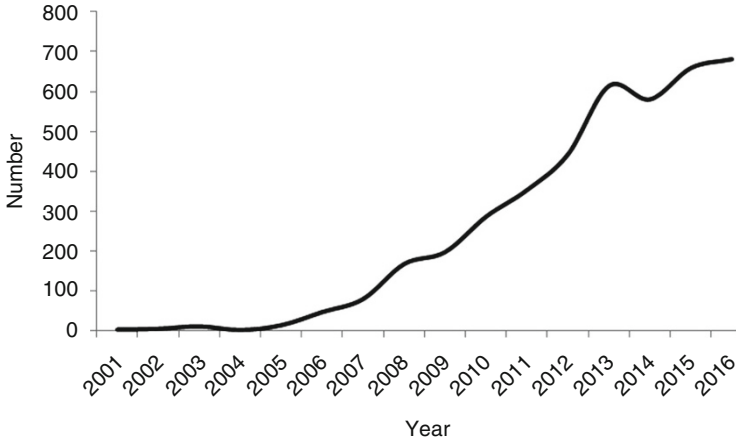


Fig. 16.1 The number of articles on positive psychology in Mainland China 2001–2016

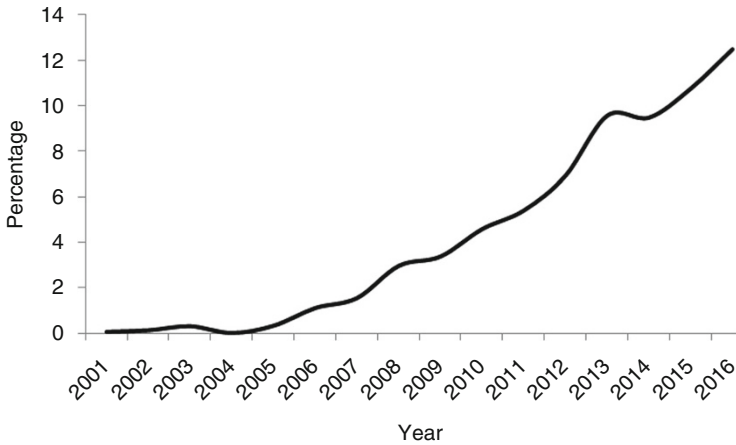


Fig. 16.2 The percentage of articles on positive psychology in Mainland China

benefit Chinese and ultimately improving individual and general psychological well-being. Relatedly, three China International Conferences on Positive Psychology have been organized in 2010, 2013 and 2015 consecutively by the Department of Psychology, Tsinghua University, co-hosted by the International Positive Psychology Association, with the support of the Tsinghua University and the Ministry of Education in China.

Major Positive Psychologists of Mainland China: Theory, Research, Assessment, and Practice

Kaiping Peng

Professor Kaiping Peng is the chairperson of the Psychology Department of Tsinghua University which was founded in 2008 as part of the Berkeley-Tsinghua collaborative project. He also directs the Culture and Cognition Lab and the Berkeley Program of Psychological Studies in China at UC-Berkeley. He is the Chair of China Positive Psychology Association (CPPA) and Beijing Positive Psychology Association (BPPA). He is a tenured faculty member at the Department of Psychology of the University of California at Berkeley. He received his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1997. He had been the head of the social/personality psychology area in Berkeley, executive committee of the Institute of East-Asian Studies, and steering committee for the Diversity Research at UC Berkeley.

The central theme of his research interests is the intricate relationship between cultures and social cognition. He is well-known for his study on dialectical thinking. For example, in the paper awarded with Otto Klineberg Prize, he and colleagues provided evidences that Chinese exhibited greater ambivalence in their self-reported and open-ended self descriptions than did European Americans, and dialecticism mediated the association between culture and decreased psychological well-being. The research found that dialectical cultures more comfortably acknowledge and accept contradictory appraisals of the self. Embracing the good and bad in all things (yin/yang) is regarded as normative and adaptive in East Asian dialectical cultures (Rodgers et al., 2004).

Recently, Peng has been making great effort to promote the development of positive psychology in China. In 2013, the Behavior and Big Data Lab (BBD Lab) of Tsinghua University was established. As the lab leader, he has led a series of studies on Chinese happiness. First, he and colleagues proposed a seven-indicator model for the assessment of Chinese happiness (i.e., emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning and achievement, expression symbol and happy events). The first five indicators were proposed by Seligman and the last two indicators were added based on Chinese culture (Peng, 2014). Second, they conducted a nationwide survey. The results showed a turning point of happiness regarding its relations with economic development, i.e., after the income per capita GDP reached US\$3000, the increase of happiness stopped. The happiest cities include not only some rich cities but also some poor cities, indicating that happiness is not synchronized with the growth of the national economy. Third, they conducted a study on the happiness in Sina-microblog (a popular communication website) in year 2013. The results showed that important positive and negative social events have effects on different dimensions of happiness. For example, after Ya-an earthquake on April 20, the amount of positive emotion went down but the amount of relationship and meaning went up.

Additionally, they conducted a study on family's psychological needs and their impacts on family happiness (Liu et al., 2016). Based on a national questionnaire survey of 1139 Chinese families, they identified five psychological needs ranging from the lower to the higher level, i.e., existence and reproduction, safety and health, harmony, glory and prosperity. Lower-end needs were found to be significantly related to the happiness of family whose dominating need was at the lower end, whereas higher-end needs were found to be significantly related to the happiness for those families whose dominating need was at the higher end. According to this theory of Family's Psychological Need Hierarchy, the following approaches should be taken to achieve family happiness in China: incorporating people's happiness into the system of government performance appraisal, widely disseminating and promoting the achievements of the science of happiness, remodeling family moral culture and advocating responsibility-based relationship and implementing different kinds of happiness programs to students of different ages at school.

Importantly, Peng has made great contributions to the development of CPPA in 2010, BPPA in 2015, and the organization of 3 China International Conferences on Positive Psychology. The missions of the CPPA and BPPA are to switch the focus in China from the gross domestic product to happiness, and from the culture of competition to the common good by promoting research and application of PP. The first international conference held on Aug. 7 and 8, 2010 on the Tsinghua University campus in the academic heart of Beijing, attracted 207 academic papers from 38 countries and drew more than 1000 scholars, teachers, business leaders and students.

Fumin Fan

Fumin Fan is a professor, doctoral program advisor, and vice-president of the Department of Psychology at Tsinghua University. She is the supervisor of Beijing Positive Psychology Association. Her major contribution to PP is to apply it in group counseling.

First, Fumin Fan investigated the effects of positive psychological group counseling on the mental health of college students from low income family in two colleges (He & Fan, 2010). Forty undergraduate students were recruited from each college (80 in total) and randomly assigned to two intervention groups and two control groups. The intervention groups were provided a 5-day group counseling program focusing on positive cognitions (e.g., positive view of low income), feelings (e.g., positive emotional reaction to low income), character strengths (e.g., love and gratitude), and behaviors (e.g., time management). They underwent positive group counseling for six sessions, covering "Making new friends," "Gratitude," . . . etc. The pre-test results did not show significant differences between intervention and control groups. The post-test results showed that the intervention groups increased significantly in mental health and subjective well-being whereas the control group did not. And the 2-month and 6-month follow-up test results showed that the intervention

groups kept their increased levels of mental health and subjective well-being after the intervention ended. The results indicated that group counseling based on positive psychology can improve the level of mental health and subjective well-being.

Second, Fumin Fan investigated the longitudinal effect of social and self-comparisons on subjective well-being (SWB; Liu & Fan, 2010). In part 1 of this study, social comparison, self-comparison, and subjective well-being were measured longitudinally over 6 weeks. The results showed that the social comparison was not correlated with SWB, whereas up-self comparison was negatively correlated with SWB. Moreover, social comparison did not predict the change of SWB whereas self-comparison did.

In part 2 of the study, an intervention group of ten undergraduate students underwent two 3-h sessions of positive group counseling over a week period. Individual and group activities in this intervention were similar to He and Fan (2010). The results showed that the SWB increased significantly in 6 weeks though it did not increase significantly in 2 weeks.

Third, Fan and her student investigated the effectiveness of hope intervention on the academic adaptation of university freshmen (He et al., 2015). Similar to the other interventions described here, group counseling on topics such as hope, motivation, and learning methods significantly increased academic adaptation, learning motivation, learning ability, teaching model adaptation, and learning attitude compared to controls. Six-week follow-up test results showed that the intervention group had kept the significant increase. These findings suggest that the hope intervention is effective to improve academic adaptation in university freshmen, especially for learning motivation, learning ability and teaching model adaptation.

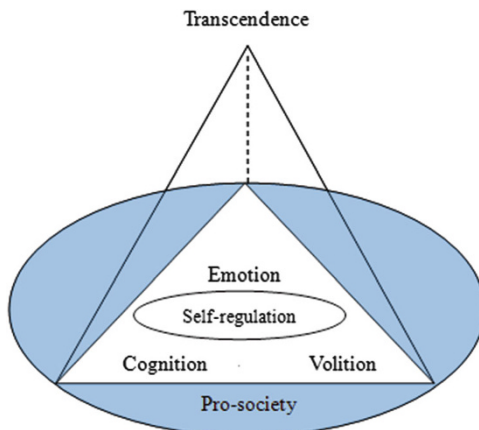
Wangjin Meng

Wanjin Meng is a professor and the director of the Research Institute of Morality, Psychology and Special Education at the National Institute of Education Sciences (NIES) in China. His major research interest is positive psychology and education. He established the theory and practice of Positive Mental Health Education (PMHE) in 2007, which is a localization and innovation of positive psychology in China (Meng, 2016).

PMHE emphasizes the application of positive psychology to develop positive attitude and shape a positive life. It focuses on realizing students' psychological potentials and improving their mental quality. It requires participation of all teachers, covering all disciplines. Its ultimate goal is to improve mental health and enhance the awareness and capacity of happiness.

Based on Confucius *Golden Mean* and Taoist's *Yin-Yang* theory, Meng (2014) proposed that positive mental health is a state of dynamic psychological balance (DPB). The *Golden Mean* indicates that when pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy have not transformed from the heart into behaviors, it is called "Zhong" (in an agreeable and perfect state). When they have transformed from the heart into behaviors and

Fig. 16.3 Positive mental character structure



conformed to natural law, it is called “He” (in a harmonious state). “Zhong” and “He” make everything grow and develop prosperously. Yin-Yang theory insists that nature is nothing but Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang and their interaction are principles for everything to exist, develop, and wither away. Accordingly, people’s mental health is a dynamic unity of opposites in mind, i.e., psychological balance.

Furthermore, Meng identified six dimensions of character strengths for Chinese (i.e., cognition, emotion, volition, pro-society, self-regulation and transcendence). Cognition, emotion and volition tap the personal strengths for individual development. Pro-society and self-regulation tap the interpersonal strengths for social development. Transcendence taps the personal strengths for self-realization and surpassing oneself in life. He also proposed a “Six-in-One” structure to unify them (see Fig. 16.3). This structure shows horizontally three fundamentals of psychological process, i.e., cognition, emotion, and volition. Importantly, self-regulation and pro-society are essentials for positive mental health. Vertically, the top level is transcendence referring to beliefs and hopes.

Accordingly, he and colleagues developed four positive mental character scales for Chinese teachers, college students, high school students, and elementary school students respectively (Meng et al., 2009; Meng et al., 2014, 2016; Zhang & Meng, 2011). All the four scales contains six subscales addressing the above six dimensions and consists of 21, 20, 17, 13 positive characters respectively. With these scales, they conducted nation-wide research and developed a national database on students’ positive mental characters (Task Force, 2011).

Of note, Meng and colleagues believe that PMHE is the foundation of happy life (Chen, 2007, 2010), and happy China should let education be happy first (Meng et al., 2012). They proposed criteria for happy school, class and classroom. The happy school criteria are comprised of six indicators, i.e. people-oriented, positive and progressive, loving teaching and loving learning, knowing how to teach and how to learn, teaching better and learning better, and meeting special needs. The happy class criteria are comprised of eight indicators, i.e., love culture, harmonious organization, positive psychology, joyful growth, loving teaching and loving

learning, knowing how to teach and how to learn, teaching better and learning better, and meeting special needs. The happy classroom criteria are comprised of three indicators for teachers (i.e., loving teaching, knowing how to teach, teaching better) and three indicators for students (loving learning, knowing how to learn, and learning better). Guided by these criteria, happy education in experimental schools has made much progress (Jiang & Li, 2012; Mao, 2012). For example, in an elementary school, all new students were required to develop a “good habit plan.” To fulfill this plan, they needed to focus on one good behavior (e.g., to say “thanks” and “sorry”) a day. In a few months, parents reported that their children had developed many good habits. In another example in a junior high school, all teachers were organized to do physical exercise such as basketball, volleyball, dancing etc. to improve physical health. As a result, their satisfaction with life was significantly improved after one semester.

Furthermore, some experimental schools have become national or provincial level models. For example, Beijing No. 19 Middle School has represented national education in the program of Happiness in China at the United Nations Headquarters website. On May 22, 2017, the International Happiness Education Consortium (IHEC) was established in Beijing. Dr. Meng was elected as the president. The mission of IHEC is to promote happiness education in China and other countries.

Additionally, Meng and colleagues conducted research on Chinese dyslexia, mathematics and second language learning disabilities. They developed the “Enjoy Learning System” and practiced it successfully. For example, they showed that the Reading-Facilitating Technique of the system could effectively improve the reading comprehension ability of students with dyslexia (Wang et al., 2015). Event-related potential research showed that information-processing capacity and efficiency in math and English language learning among students with learning disabilities also improved with this program (Guan et al. 2016; Yao et al., 2015).

Regarding the future of PMHE, Meng insists that it will be advanced in five aspects: (1) moral virtues, (2) modern key competencies, (3) core values of Chinese socialism, (4) happiness of normal people, and (5) potential development of genius and talents.

Zhanjun Xing

Zhanjun Xing earned his doctoral degree in at Psychology Department of East-China Normal University in 2003. From 2003 to 2005, he was a post doctor of Chinese Academy of Social Science. He has put research focus on quality of life and public policy, subjective well-being and personnel evaluation since 2000. Now he is a professor, the dean of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences and the director of the Life Quality and Public Policy Research Centre in Shandong University.

Xing developed the Subjective Well-being Scale for Chinese Citizens (SWBS-CC, Xing, 2002, 2008). The PMCS-CC consists of 20 items rated on a 6-point

Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). The SWBS-CC is made up 10 subscales measuring feeling of physical health (three items, e.g., “I always feel very uncomfortable with some parts of my body (reversed)”), feeling of mental health (three items, e.g., “Facing unhappy events, I will be in terrible mood for long time (reversed)”), feeling of objective values (four items, e.g., “The goal I set encourages me, and does not frustrate me”), feeling of self-acceptance (three items, e.g., “I like my personality”), feeling of being knowledgeable (three items, e.g., “I am happy that my ideas have been becoming mature”), feeling of growth (three items, e.g., “The knowledge I learned in my life with age makes me strong and brave”), feeling of social confidence (three items, e.g., “I am very confident in the development of our society”), feeling of mental balance (three items, e.g., “Compared with people around me, I feel that I suffer much more loss (reversed)”), feeling of interpersonal relationship (three items, e.g., “I feel that others have more friends than I do (reversed)”) and feeling of family atmosphere (three items, e.g., “I am satisfied with my family income”). He conducted a large-scale subjective well-being survey research in six Chinese capital cities and achieved a national norm (Xing, 2008).

Xing found that income had a positive correlation with subjective well-being of urban residents. The subjective well-being of high-income groups was significantly higher than that of low-income groups. But regional wealth level was not associated with subjective well-being. Seven years’ consecutive studies showed that the well-being index of Chinese citizens was not synchronized with the growth of national income (Xing, 2011). In another study, Xing also found that Chinese Christians scored higher on all ten subscales of the PMCS-CC than citizen norms, indicating that spiritual beliefs play an important role in subjective well-being (Liao & Xing, 2009).

Recently, in order to provide research evidence for government’s policy-making, he proposed an output index model of citizen’s happiness. The model comprises 12 first-order factors and 3 second-order factors. Residential environment includes safety, residential conditions, and consumption. Basic survival conditions include housing, transportation, social relationship, and income. Quality living includes health, exercise, travel, cultural leisure and social participation. He also developed a scale to measure all these factors which needs further study to validate (Xing et al., 2015).

Biaobin Yan

Biaobin Yan is a professor of the Business School in Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. He obtained his doctoral degree (applied psychology) from the South China Normal University. His research interests include positive psychology, organizational behavior and human resource management. Since 2000, he has published over 40 articles on subjective well-being. Importantly, he proposed the

concept of well-being intelligence and developed the Well-being Intelligence Scale for Chinese College Students (Yan et al., 2011).

Well-being intelligence was defined as the ability to perceive and experience well-being, express and assess well-being based on some internal criteria, and regulate well-being (Yan et al., 2012). Accordingly, the Well-being Intelligence Scale for Chinese College Students (WIS-CCS) was developed. The WIS-CCS consists of 75 items rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all like me*) to 5 (*very much like me*). The WIS-CCS is made up four subscales measuring four operational abilities to obtain Well-being. The first subscale, Perception and Experience of Well-being, measures personal well-being (five items, e.g., “Even though life is a bit boring, I still feel happy and calm”), personal emotion (five items, e.g., “I feel guilty when I blame somebody wrongly”), social well-being (four items, e.g., “I am pleased about the revolution and development of the society”) and personal development (five items, e.g., “I always feel happy about a new idea and an action”). The second subscale, Expression of Well-being, measures personal well-being (five items, e.g., “my friend see me as a happy man”), personal emotion (four items, e.g., “I can easily express my happiness and sadness”), social well-being (six items, e.g., “I always appreciate this satisfying society”) and personal development (four items, e.g., “I am happy to apply my ability in my work”). The third subscale, Assessment of Well-being, measures personal well-being (five items, e.g., “I am happy with my life”), personal emotion (five items, e.g., “My happiness is an emotion shown naturally”), social well-being (four items, e.g., “If I can live again, I still hope to live in this society”) and personal development (five items, e.g., “I am a person with a goal in my life”). The fourth subscale, Regulation of Well-being, measures personal well-being (four items, e.g., “I always think that some part of my life is better than before”), personal emotion (four items, e.g., “I can still keep calm when I am sad”), social well-being (five items, e.g., “It is a great honor to make contribution to society”) and personal development (five items, e.g., “I can feel happiness when I make progress”).

Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the construct validity of the scale fits well and that the criterion validity and the empirical validity were satisfactory. The reliability and validity of this scale was also very satisfactory when the scale was applied to the groups of adults and middle school students (Yan et al., 2011).

Studies also found that well-being intelligence was moderately correlated with emotional intelligence. It was highly correlated with emotional management and emotional development ($r = 0.59$ and 0.68 respectively). It was moderately correlated with emotional expression, emotional comprehension and emotional application ($r = 0.30-0.44$). The correlation between other dimensions of well-being intelligence and the five factors of emotional intelligence lied in the interval of 0.2 and 0.4. Further analysis discovered, however, the correlation between well-being intelligence and Raven’s Progressive Matrices was not significant (Yan, 2011).

Well-being intelligence showed significant correlations with variables such as sports fondness ($0.16, p < .001$), level of health ($0.19, p < .001$), academic performance ($0.17, p < .001$) and family economic status ($0.20, p < .001$), but did

not show significant correlations with variables such as grade and family location (Yan, 2013).

A cross-sectional study showed that well-being intelligence increased from the age of 23 to 40. Specifically, the levels of expression of well-being, assessment of well-being and regulation of well-being decreased slowly from the age of 15–23, and increased sharply to the age of 40. As for the female, the developmental tendency of these three abilities was a little different. They increased rapidly from 23 to 28, then decreased slowly. However, for the male, the developmental tendency of these three abilities increased from 23 to 36. In addition, the level of the female's perception and experience of well-being increased slowly from the age of 15 to 40, and the level of the male fluctuated greatly till the age of 36 and increased sharply from the age of 36 (Yan & Zhang, 2012).

In addition, well-being intelligence has a significant impact on employee performance, organizational commitment, team psychological safety, and team work performance (Yang & Lin, unpublished manuscript; Yan & Zeng, unpublished manuscript).

Future of Positive Psychology in Mainland China

Studies have shown that Mainland China's life satisfaction has followed the trajectory of the central and eastern European transition countries—a U-shaped swing followed by a nil or declining trend. Though the output per capita has increased dramatically from 1990s, the life satisfaction has not improved as expected. It is noteworthy that in 1990, the proportion of respondents reporting a high level of life satisfaction (i.e., a value of 7–10 on a scale of 1–10) in the top third of the income distribution was similar to that in the bottom third (68% vs. 65%). By 2007, the proportions were different (71% vs. 42%) with a slight increase for the top third but significant decrease for the bottom third. Thus, Mainland China has moved from the most egalitarian country to the least one in terms of life satisfaction mainly due to the sharp increase of the income inequality.

Undoubtedly, the government has to make great efforts to shorten the income gap between the top third and the bottom third by formulating more just policy. However, considering that life satisfaction is independent of income at least to some degree, positive psychology may help Mainland Chinese to live a better life.

First, positive psychology may help Mainland Chinese to reconstruct traditional virtues. For example, the five traditional Chinese virtues, i.e., *Ren* (仁, benevolence), *Yi* (义, righteousness), *Li* (礼, manners), *Zhi* (智, wisdom), *Xin* (信, honesty) are similar to the virtue-personality system in positive psychology. As shown in Table 16.2, the five virtues consist of some sub-virtues, thus forming a hierarchical system of virtues (Liu & Zhang, 2013). Regarding the development of virtues, Confucianism focuses on self-cultivation, family regulation, and devoting oneself to the world (Confucius, trans. 2013). Similarly, Taoism insists that people should

Table 16.2 Chinese traditional five virtues

Five virtues	<i>Ren</i>	<i>Yi</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Zhi</i>	<i>Xin</i>
Sub-virtues	Kindness, Love, Filial piety, Respect siblings ...	Loyal, Courteous, Brave, Forgiveness ...	Sincerity, Patience, Peace, Amiable ...	Hard-working, Patience, Self-examination, Conscience ...	Be faithful, Sincere, Calm and steady ...

constantly strive for virtues because “the movement of heaven is full of power, thus the superior man makes himself strong and untiring” (“I Ching”, trans. 2013).

Second, positive psychology may help Mainland Chinese to improve their happiness. Confucianism holds that happiness is closely related to one’s achievement and contribution to family and society, thus encouraging people to strive for the highest goals one possibly can. In contrast, Taoism insists that happiness comes from *PingchangXin* (common mind) , which is a belief that everything cannot be impertunate and that one should let nature take its course. *PingchangXin* also refers to feeling calm when granted with favors as well as when subjected to humiliation. The dynamic balance between goal-striving and *PingchangXin* is the most important process for the complementation of Confucianism and Taoism (Yang, 2006).

Third, positive psychology may help Mainland Chinese to develop positive families and organizations. Confucianism views positive family as the primary positive organization, which provides an avenue for the development of virtues and happiness. Social organizations such as schools, companies, communities and countries are the extension of family. Importantly, the positive pattern of *GuanXi* (interpersonal relationship) originates in learning filial piety, respecting siblings and parenting with love in family. This pattern is encouraged to be used in other social organizations, e.g., to respect teachers as parents, love classmates as brothers and sisters, etc.. Furthermore, the different roles that individuals play in positive organizations should be: (1) that the top leaders own Taoists cultivation, focusing on “*Wuwei* (nothing)”; (2) that the middle leaders need the demeanor of the Confucian, knowing the impossibilities but persevering, and focusing on “ability”; (3) that the junior leaders need Mohist’s ascetic prudence, identification with the superior and co-operation, focusing on “having”. In this way, everyone is clearly aware of his/her position in the organization, and the organization’s goal can be reached (He, 2012).

Overall, it is possible and also necessary to develop Chinese positive psychology which will be more acceptable for Chinese people. In this way, positive psychology will provide a new perspective of Chinese culture for Chinese. And Chinese culture will get refreshed in the area of positive psychology. However, there are some obstacles that are currently preventing positive psychology from growing further or faster in Mainland.

First, because of the “publish or perish” tradition in academic society, positive psychologists are more likely to do research which can be published quickly such as cross-sectional surveys and/or lab experiments than to do longitudinal intervention research. For a similar reason, indigenous study of psychology has been lacking in worthy successors for years, for young students and scholars do not like to spend

much time on studying traditional culture without guarantee of publication, particularly in high-impact journals. Relatedly, psychologists are rarely willing and/or able to write popular articles about positive psychology, thus preventing positive psychology from becoming a popular science.

Second, the industrialization of psychological services in Mainland China is still in its infancy compared with that of US, Canada, Western European countries and Japan. For example, the vocational training of psychological counselors in Mainland China started in 2001 and over 300,000 persons have achieved the professional certifications of second and third levels (Ying, 2015). The first level certification of psychological counselors has not been offered yet. If one psychological counselor is needed for every 1000 residents, Mainland China needs about 1.3 million psychological counselors. Moreover, the qualifications of professionals are intermingled regarding their major backgrounds and supervised experience. For example, many trainers are teachers from departments of psychology who do not have experience in psychological counseling. Most of the practitioners have no supervisors. In order to guarantee the qualification of psychological counselors, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of The People's Republic of China stopped the certification test of psychological counselors in September 2017. Professional associations such as China Psychological Society will carry out the certification test in future.

Third, the medical model is still dominant in psychological services, especially in communities. For example, psychiatrists serve as counselors in many hospitals. They help outpatients with mental disorders by medication. Moreover, many psychological counselors showed ignorance of the prohibitions of psychotherapy and diagnosis of metal disorder. For example, only 24% of respondents in a survey among psychological counselors knew these prohibitions in the Mental Health Law (Zhang et al., 2015).

Against this background mentioned above, the following actions need to be taken in order to enable positive psychologists to gain a stronger and more effective presence in Mainland China so that the Chinese people can live more positive lives:

First, positive psychology should be included in both undergraduate and graduate programs for students of psychology. There are about 273 departments of psychology among 2552 universities and colleges in Mainland China (The Ranking List of China's Universities, 2016). However, to date, only few of them (e.g., the Department of Psychology at Tsinghua University) have a positive psychology course for undergraduate students, though many psychology teachers in Mainland China talk about it in their teaching and research work. A subject search in June 2016 of the database CNKI revealed 930 theses on positive psychology by year 2015. These began with just 1 thesis in 2001. In terms of dissertations, what began with just 2 in 2003 grew to 45 by 2015. As Table 16.3 and Fig. 16.4 show, the number of theses increased rapidly after 2005 whereas the number of dissertations did not, indicating that master degree programs have made much more contribution than doctoral programs to positive psychology. However, the proportions of theses and dissertations of positive psychology in Chinese psychology generally are very small and similar to each other, indicating that the increase of theses of positive psychology is

Table 16.3 Number (%) of theses/dissertations on positive psychology in Mainland China

Year	Thesis			Dissertation		
	Psychology	Positive psychology	%	Psychology	Positive psychology	%
2001	465	1	0.22	23	0	0.00
2002	829	0	0.00	70	0	0.00
2003	1432	4	0.28	86	2	2.33
2004	2038	5	0.25	167	0	0.00
2005	2732	13	0.48	157	1	0.64
2006	3908	14	0.36	241	2	0.83
2007	5687	23	0.40	285	2	0.70
2008	6079	39	0.64	303	1	0.33
2009	6245	43	0.69	321	4	1.25
2010	6910	57	0.82	335	4	1.19
2011	8690	107	1.23	341	9	2.64
2012	9493	150	1.58	367	3	0.83
2013	9882	167	1.69	345	8	2.31
2014	9908	179	1.81	292	5	1.71
2015	10,151	170	1.62	274	9	3.28
2016	9126	156	1.71	207	8	3.86

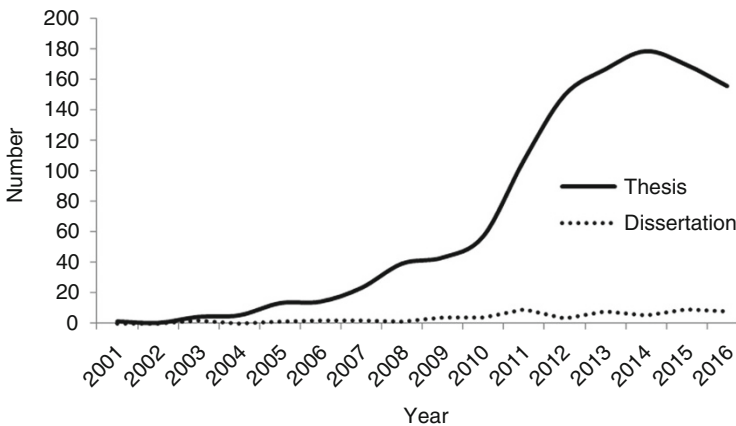


Fig. 16.4 Number of theses/dissertations on positive psychology in Mainland China

mainly due to the enlarging recruitment of master degree students. Consequently, Chinese psychologists need to pay more attention to developing positive psychology curriculum at the undergraduate level and more positive psychology programs at the graduate level.

Second, positive psychology should be included in the national training program of psychological counselors. As psychological counseling aims to help persons with different issues such as mental disorders, adaptiveness and personal growth, the training program should cover both negative and positive psychology. However, to

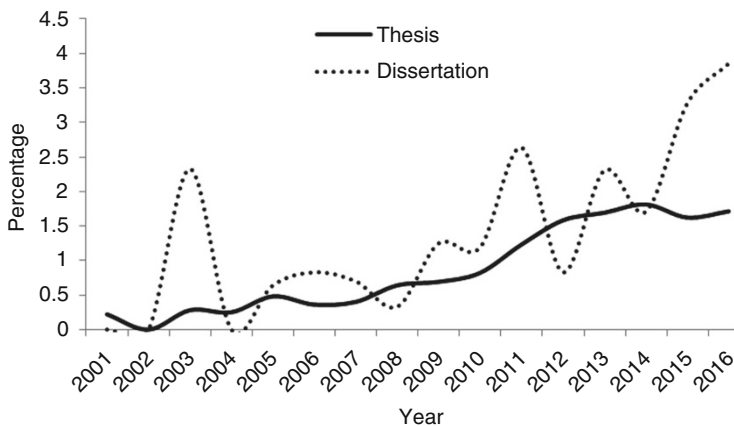


Fig. 16.5 Proportions of theses/dissertations on positive psychology in all psychology theses/dissertations in Mainland China

date, the training program has been focusing on pathological process of mental disorders and methodologies of treatment, ignoring the importance of virtues and happiness in mental health. Specifically, there are seven courses in the program, i.e., *Introduction to Psychology*, *Social Psychology*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Mental Health and Disorders*, *Psychometrics*, *Counseling Psychology* and *Ethics of Psychological Counseling* (Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2005). Consequently, future training may profit from adding a course of *Positive Psychology* or adding positive psychology in the current courses and examinations (Fig. 16.5).

Finally, positive psychologists need to collaborate with government in order to promote psychological services in community, army, company and other organizations. In the past 20 years, school psychologists have successfully gotten the support from the Ministry of Education (the MOE). For example, the MOE issued the “*Some Suggestion to Improve Mental Health Education for Primary and Middle School Students*” in 1999 and the “*Outline of the Guide of Education of Mental Health in Middle and Primary Schools*” in 2002. The MOE also issued “*Outline of the Guide of Education of Mental Health in Colleges*” in 2001. As a result, mental health education in schools and universities has been developing rapidly. And positive psychology has been widely accepted in this area. For example, we conducted a subject search of the database CNKI by using “positive psychology + a specific group of persons” on June 9, 2016. The results were presented in Table 16.4. As the table shows, the number of articles of positive psychology about students was ranked as the first one, followed by those about teachers and workers. Thus, to promote the research and application of positive psychology among individuals other than students with the support of government is an important task for psychologists in Mainland China.

Table 16.4 The number (%) of articles of positive psychology about different group of persons

Subject words	Numbers	%	
Positive psychology	Students	1104	65.48
	Teachers	304	18.03
	Workers	145	8.60
	Nurses	38	2.25
	Parents	35	2.08
	Policemen	29	1.72
	Peasants	11	0.65
	Patients	9	0.53
	Kindergarten children	8	0.22
	Government officers	8	0.47
	Soldiers	8	0.47
	Community residents	7	0.42
	Doctors	2	0.12
	Total	1686	100.00

Table 16.5 Amount of peer-reviewed journal articles on positive psychology in Taiwan 2000–2016

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Articles	10	16	6	13	22	38	49	51	54
Year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Articles	68	64	95	105	130	114	111	106	

Historical Background to Positive Psychology in Taiwan

The happiness level in Taiwan has been ranked high in the world and progressed stably among 157 countries, from 42nd in 2013, 38th in 2015, to 35th in 2017, as reported by the United Nations (UN, 2013, 2015, 2017). Positive psychology also attracted the attention of psychologists in Taiwan at its birth. A key words search of Taiwan's journal literature database, Chinese Electronics Public Service (CEPS) databases and PsycInfo, ScienceDirect, EBSCO, and JSTOR databases in June 2017 revealed 1052 articles on positive psychology from year 2000 (with 10 articles) to 2016.¹ As Table 16.5 and Fig. 16.6 indicate, the amount of peer-reviewed journal articles on positive psychology in Taiwan grew rapidly in the last decade and reached the highest peak of 130 articles in 2013.

¹The key word included Taiwan, happiness, well-being, positive psychology, positive emotion, mindfulness, life satisfaction, and quality of life.

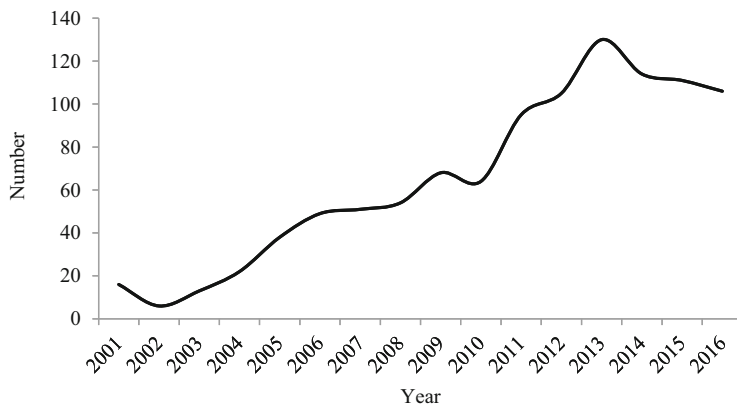


Fig. 16.6 The number of peer-reviewed journal articles on positive psychology in Taiwan

Major Positive Psychologists of Taiwan: Theory, Research, Assessment, and Practice

Luo Lu

Dr. Lu investigated various aspects of subjective well-being (SWB). Her studies include (a) individual factors related to SWB, (b) the cultural and social aspects of SWB, (c) SWB of adolescents and older people, (d) SWB in work places, and (e) a widely used measurement, Chinese Happiness Inventory (CHI), for assessing the general conception of SWB in Taiwan.

Individual Factors Related to SWB Lu (2010b) explored sex and age differences of 24,012 respondents from 39 studies conducted during 1993–2009 in Taiwan and reported that higher happiness was found in women, married people, the middle-aged, and people with either below average or very high levels of education. Lu (2000) inspected conjugal congruence in subjective well-being (SWB) and four role experiences (spousal, parental, filial, and worker) of 222 Taiwanese adults (111 married couples) and found that conjugal congruence in role experiences was associated with conjugal congruence in SWB and personal well-being; whereas conjugal discrepancies in role experiences were associated with conjugal discrepancies in SWB and husbands' happiness. Lu (1995) also examined the psychosocial factors associated with the subjective well-being of 581 Taiwanese adults and found that mental health was positively associated with extraverted personality and social support, but negatively associated with neuroticism and stress; life satisfaction was positively associated with age, education, and social support, but negatively associated with neuroticism and stress; happiness was positively associated with age, extraversion, and social support, but negatively associated with neuroticism.

Cultural and Social Aspects of SWB Lu (2001) explored the cultural definition of happiness in Taiwanese folk views and found that (a) the definition of happiness included a satisfaction and contentment mental status, positive emotions and feelings, a harmonious status, freedom from illness, as well as achievement and hope; (b) the state of happiness existed under the conditions that an individual was satisfied/content, was the agent of his own happiness, weighted spiritual enrichment more than material satisfaction, and kept a positive stance for the future; (c) happiness and unhappiness were two distinct opposite entities, depending on each other for contrast and meaning with dynamic constant changes; and (d) to achieve happiness, an individual should have the wisdom of discovery, contentment, gratitude, giving, and self-cultivation. Lu et al. (2001) examined the relationships between cultural values and experiences of happiness in two distinct cultures, an Eastern culture (439 college students from Taiwan) and a Western culture (344 college students from the United Kingdom); findings showed stronger relationships in Taiwanese culture than that in UK culture. Lu and Gilmour (2004) analyzed the conceptions of happiness embedded in the two distinct cultures of Asia and Euro-America. Findings showed that the different features of the conceptions of happiness were predominant in both cultures; the Asian social-oriented SWB put greater weight on role obligation and dialectical balance; the Euro-American individual-oriented SWB put greater weight on personal accountability and explicit pursuit. Lu (2010a) described in detail about the two different but cohesive social-cultures as the roots of the concept of happiness held by the modern Chinese people and developed the Individual and Social-Oriented Subjective Well-being (ISSWB) scales, which includes Individual-Oriented SWB—Personal Accountability (ISWB-PA), Individual-Oriented SWB—Explicit Pursuit (ISWB-EP), Social-Oriented SWB—Role Obligations (SSWB-RO), and Social-Oriented SWB—Dialectical Balance (SSWB-DB) subscales.

SWB of Adolescents Chen and Lu (2009a), investigated the relation between general happiness and academic factors of 11,061 senior high school students from a nationally representative sample in Taiwan. Findings showed that general happiness was positively associated with teacher academic and classmate support, English and mathematics teacher-perceived academic performance, organizational processes, and school satisfaction, but negatively associated with objective academic achievement and disturbance in class. Chen and Lu (2009b) explored the relationship between time participating in after-school-activity in the 11th grade year and their academic achievement and psychological well-being in the 12th grade year ($N = 10,347$). Results showed that time in cram schools, institutions specializing in training students to pass the entrance examinations of high schools or universities, was negatively associated with psychological well-being, although positively associated with academic achievement. Time on school-based extracurricular activities was not associated with academic achievement or psychological well-being. Time on part-time job and TV watching was negatively associated with academic achievement; on the other hand, more time on Internet games was associated with less depression symptoms.

SWB of Older People Lu et al. (2010) examined the relationship between attitude toward aging and well-being of 316 people aged 60 and older (age Mean = 69.65, SD = 8.11). Results showed that older people generally had positive attitudes toward aging, which were associated with well-being after control for social support and community participation. Higher happiness was associated with younger age and more social support, community participation, as well as positive attitudes; but, more depressive symptoms were associated with older age, fewer social support, or less positive attitudes toward aging.

SWB in Work Places Lu et al. (2011) found in a study with 380 employees in three major cities (Beijing, Hong Kong, and Taipei) that work well-being was positively associated with Chinese work values but negatively associated with work stressors. Chang and Lu (2007) found in a qualitative study with 47 employees in eight focus groups that common work stressors were job characteristics, interpersonal relationships, home-work interface, and career development, which might be increased or decreased by the perception and attribution about the organizational culture. Leung et al. (2011) found that worker perceived support for innovation (high or low), role stress (conflict or ambiguity), and innovative performance were inter-correlated. Workers with high support perception showed a positive relationship between role conflict and performance (both self-rated and supervisor-rated), but role ambiguity did not. On the other hand, workers with low support perception had a upright U-shape relationship between role stress (both conflict and ambiguity) and performance (both self-rated and supervisor-rated).

Measurement—Chinese Happiness Inventory (CHI) Chinese Happiness Inventory (CHI) is the first comprehensive instrument to suitably measure general subjective well-being in Taiwan. Dr. Lu developed the CHI from a social-cultural psychological approach to measure the contemporary Taiwanese conception of subjective well-being, which integrates two distinctive cultural rudiments including the social-oriented East Asian culture and individual-oriented Euro-American culture (Lu, 1998, 2005).

CHI is comprised of two parts. Part I consists of 20 items which were derived from a qualitative study carried out in Taiwan. It is made up of six subscales, namely, Harmony of Interpersonal Relationships (four items, e.g., “I do not feel interested in being with family members”), Being Praised and Respected by Others (two items, e.g. “I have never received any respect from others”), Satisfaction of Material Needs (two items, e.g., “I always have enough money to do what I like to do”), Achievement at Work (three items, e.g. “My job often gives me a sense of accomplishment”), Downward Social Comparisons (three items, e.g., “My fortune is worse than others”), and Peace of Mind (six items, e.g., “My life is very much as I wished”). Part II consists of 28 items which is the revised version of the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) for Chinese. It is made up of seven subscales: Optimism (six items, e.g., “I feel that the future is overflowing with hope and promise”); Social Commitment (four items, e.g., “I am no more interested in other people than usual”); Positive Affect (five items, e.g., “I am very happy”); Sense of Control (four items, e.g., “I feel I am in total control of all aspects of my life”); Physical Fitness (three items, e.g., “I

feel very healthy nowadays”), Satisfaction with Self (four items, e.g., “There is a gap between what I would like to do, and what I have done”); and Mental Alertness (two items, e.g., “I do not find it easy to make decisions”). The four codes represent four levels of subjective happiness. The higher score indicates higher level of subjective happiness. The CHI has been validated in different groups of participants aged between 18 and 75 years (Chiang et al., 2016). Short forms of CHI were also developed for various needs in different studies, including 20-item (Lu & Lin, 1998), 10-item (Lu, 2006), and 5-item CHI (Lu, 2008).

Kaiping Yao

WHOQOL-100 Questionnaire Dr. Yao and the WHOQOL Taiwan Group joined the World Health Organization Quality of Life Project to develop the Taiwan version of WHOQOL-100 questionnaire that measures various aspects of Taiwanese QOL, including psychological, cultural, social, and environmental factors (Lin et al., 1999; WHOQOL Taiwan Group, 2000, 2005). The WHOQOL (WHO, 1994) consists of 100 items measuring 4 general questions (e.g. “How would you rate your quality of life?”) and 6 domains, namely, physical (12 items, e.g. “To what extent do you feel that (physical) pain prevents you from doing what you need to do?”), psychological (20 items, e.g. “How much do you enjoy life?”), independence (16 items, e.g. “How well are you able to get around?”), social relationship (12 items, e.g. “How satisfied are you with your personal relationships?”), environment (32 items, e.g. “How safe do you feel in your daily life?”), and spirituality/religion/personal beliefs (four items, e.g. “To what extent do you feel your life to be meaningful?”) domains. The WHOQOL-100 is on five-point Likert scales (1–5 point; e.g. “Very satisfied—Very dissatisfied”, “Not at all—Extremely”, “Not at all—Completely”, and “Never—Always”).

Sub-cultural Differences in WHOQOL Yao and Wu (2009) analyzed the sub-cultural differences among the three Chinese versions of the WHOQOL-100 for China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The results showed that, for national items, there was one common item (personal relations) among the three versions. For domain items, the three versions shared similar facets in language, fate notion, Confucianism influence, and attitudes toward food and eating. However, the Taiwan and Hong Kong versions had many similar facets, which the China version did not have. For example, both Taiwan and Hong Kong versions included 12 national items, 9 of which were fairly similar to Taiwan version regarding the personal relationship, spirituality/religion/beliefs, being respected/accepted, and eating/food facets. The practical social support facet was included in Taiwan version while the sleep and rest facet was included in the Hong Kong version.

WHOQOL-BREF Questionnaire WHOQOL-BREF, brief versions of WHOQOL-100, were developed. Yao et al. (2002), in a study with a random sample of 1068 subjects from 17 hospitals in Taiwan, developed a 28-item WHOQOL-BREF.

Furthermore, Wang et al. (2006), in a study with 13,083 adults, further developed a 19-item WHOQOL-BREF.

WHOQOL-BREF in Web and Audio Forms Various versions of WHOQOL-BREF were further developed for assessing health-related QOL, including WHOQOL-BREF in web and audio forms and for adolescents, older people, and patients. For the web version, Chen et al. (2008) found that domain scores of the web and paper versions were highly correlated without significant differences. Chen et al. (2008) in a follow-up study with 1016 adults showed that the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's α) of web version WHOQOL-BREF ranged from 0.60 to 0.83 and concluded that the web version WHOQOL-BREF could be used to evaluate health-related QOL. For the audio version, Chien et al. (2007) in a study with 228 Taiwanese-speaking older people developed an audio-play-assisted oral interview of WHOQOL-BREF specifically for Taiwanese-speaking older people. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's α) ranged from 0.68 to 0.80 for domains.

WHOQOL-BREF for Adolescents and Older People The applicability of WHOQOL-BREF in various forms were validated for adolescents and older people. For adolescents, Chen, Wu, and Yao (2006) validated the WHOQOL-BREF with 365 junior high school students; findings showed that the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's α) ranged from 0.73 to 0.83 for the four domains and concluded that the WHOQOL-BREF was applicable in assessing QOL of adolescents. For older people, Chien et al. (2009) investigated agreement between the Chinese-written form and Taiwanese-oral form of the WHOQOL-BREF in a study with 53 Taiwanese-speaking older people who can also read Chinese. Results showed moderate to high agreement (intraclass correlation coefficient ranging from 0.65 to 0.81) in three out of the four domain scores, which indicated substantial equivalence between the two forms of the WHOQOL-BREF.

WHOQOL-BREF for Patients WHOQOL-BREF was further validated for patients with various diseases. Yao and Wu (2005) in a study with 13,010 participants validated the WHOQOL-BREF with patients having one of the five diseases: liver, sinusitis, hypertension, peptic ulcer, and pulmonary diseases. Findings indicated that the same constructs in the 1st- and 2nd-order factors were shared between different disease groups and their corresponding healthy groups, also shared among different disease groups. This study concluded that the WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire was applicable for measuring health related QOL of patients with these diseases. Hsiung et al. (2011) in a study with 680 HIV-infected people in Taiwan developed WHOQOL-HIV BREF with internal consistency ranging from 0.67 to 0.80 for the five domains. Findings showed that the WHOQOL-HIV BREF was found to be suitable for assessing the QOL of HIV patients. Chang et al. (2015) in a study with 490 community-dwelling older adults found the mediation effects of depression on the results of WHOQOL-BREF and suggested to consider depressive symptoms in measuring the QOL of community-dwelling older adults. Yao et al. (2009) interviewed 352 patients with hip fractures to validate the WHOQOL-BREF after adding three specific hip-fracture items and findings indicated the applicability of

WHOWOL-BREF in assessing the QOL of patients with hip fractures. Gau et al. (2010) in a study with 229 mothers of children with asthma found that the WHOQOL-BREF had internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's α) ranging from 0.63 to 0.84 and was clinically applicable in measuring the QOL of mothers of children with asthma.

Chia-Huei Wu

Dr. Wu has examined gender and longitudinal measurement invariance of life satisfaction in Taiwanese populations. In addition, Dr. Wu also has investigated the importance weighting of quality of life (QOL) measures.

Measurement Invariance Wu and Yao (2006a) examined the measurement invariance of the Taiwan version Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) across gender through one-factor and two-factor models. Participants included 476 college students. Findings showed strict factorial invariance of SWLS-Taiwan version across gender. Wu et al. (2009b) investigated the longitudinal measurement invariance in the Satisfaction with Life Scale through two studies. Study 1 involved 236 college students who completed SWLS-Taiwan version twice in a 2-month interval and found partial strict invariant across time. Study 2 involved 242 adolescent athletes who completed SWLS-Taiwan version three times in 6 months and found partial strong invariant. Findings suggested SWLS-Taiwan version having satisfactory longitudinal measurement invariance.

Importance Weighting in QOL Wu et al. (2009a) explored if importance weighted domain scores would be stronger than unweighted domain scores in predicting global scores of life satisfaction. They analyzed the domain satisfaction, domain importance, and global satisfaction scores of 1063 adults in Taiwan from three datasets in life ($n = 237$), self ($n = 269$), and job satisfaction ($n = 557$). Results showed that importance weighted domain satisfaction scores, compared to unweighted domain satisfaction scores, had a weaker predictive effect for global satisfaction scores. Findings suggested that importance weighting did not empirically enhance on life satisfaction scores. Wu and Yao (2006b) involved 332 undergraduate students in Taiwan to investigate the relations among item importance, perceived have—want discrepancy, item satisfaction, and global satisfaction in QOL based on the range-of-affect hypothesis. Results supported the range-of-affect hypothesis and showed that the interaction of item importance and perceived have—want discrepancy successfully predicted item satisfaction. However, the interaction of item importance and item satisfaction failed to predict global satisfaction. Findings suggested that item importance was incorporated into item satisfaction judgment, but had little influence in global satisfaction. Wu (2008) studied 167 college students in Taiwan to explore the relations among importance weighted domains of QOL in the within-subject context and to compare prediction effects of weighted to unweighted satisfaction scores toward SWB, based on the range-of-

affect hypothesis. Results supported the range-of-affect hypothesis and showed that high importance items, compared to low importance items, had stronger relations between item have—want discrepancy and item satisfaction for an individual. Furthermore, weighted satisfaction scores, compared to unweighted satisfaction scores, did not better predict QOL and life satisfaction. Findings suggested that importance weighted satisfaction might not contribute to QOL and SWB as expected. Wu and Yao (2006c) investigated if importance weighted scores and unweighted scores would be different in predicting global life satisfaction. Participants included 130 undergraduate students in Taiwan. Correlation and moderated regression analyses results showed neither was importance weighted scores nor unweighted scores associated with the scores of SWLS-Taiwan version. Findings suggested that importance weighting did not necessarily incorporated into life satisfaction. Wu et al. (2014) investigated the prediction of importance weighting QOL toward subjective well-being (SWB) with 146 college students in Taiwan and China. Results showed that importance weighted four domain scores of QOL accounted little variances in the three indices of SWB, indicating no significant predictive effects. Findings suggest that importance weighting in QOL did not contribute to SWB substantially.

Po-Wen Ku

Dr. Ku and his colleagues contributed to the positive psychology by developing a measurement for assessing SWB of older people and investigating the longitudinal relations between SWB and leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) in older people in Taiwan.

Measurement: Chinese Aging Well Profile (CAWP) for Older People Ku et al. (2007) identified the unique contributions of physical activity toward enhancing the seven dimensions of SWB, including physical, psychological, developmental, material, spiritual, sociopolitical, and social well-being, through qualitative interviews with 23 older people (age 55–78). Then, Ku et al. (2008) developed an instrument, Chinese Aging Well Profile (CAWP) for assessing the SWB of older population through qualitative interviews and psychometric testing on 1960 older people (age ≥ 50). The CAWP (31 items) consisted of seven dimensions, including physical, psychological, independence, learning and growth, material, environmental, and social well-being. The findings indicated that the CAWP could serve as a useful measurement for social, cultural and demographic influences on the subjective well-being of the Chinese speaking older population.

SWB and Physical Activities: Longitudinal Outcomes of Older People Ku and his colleagues further investigated the longitudinal relation of older people's SWB with physical activities in different frequencies, intensities, and social contexts. Ku et al. (2016) analyzed the data of 1268 older people (age ≥ 70) from a nationally representative dataset of 1999 and 2007, and found that higher frequencies of both

leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) and leisure-time sedentary behaviors (LTSB) were associated with higher scores of well-being 8 years later. Especially, participants with higher frequencies of LTPA and LTSB involving in walking, gardening, group-exercise, reading, social-chatting, and TV-watching also reported higher SWB. Findings suggested that both active LTPA and LTSB may subsequently enhance the SWB of older population. Ku et al. (2016) investigated the longitudinal association of physical activity in different intensities (moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, light physical activity, & sedentary behaviors) and dimensions of SWB. They interviewed 295 older adults (age ≥ 65) in 2012 and 2013, in an 18-month interval. Results showed that both moderate-to-vigorous and light physical activity were associated with multiple dimensions of SWB 18 month later, but sedentary behaviors were not associated with any dimensions of SWB. Findings suggested that active physical activity may improve the dimensions of SWB of older people. Ku et al. (2014) investigated the cross-sectional and longitudinal associations of SWB with physical activities in different social contexts, including leisure, home, and work place. The data of 307 older people in Taiwan from a survey dataset of 2009 and 2012 were analyzed. Results showed that LTPA had positive associations with all five dimensions of CAWP of well-being. Physical activity at home had a positive association with social well-being only. Physical activity related to work was not associated to any dimension of well-being. Findings suggested that LTPA might greatly improve the quality of life of older people.

Hui-Chuan Hsu

Dr. Hsu investigated the longitudinal relation between successful aging and life satisfaction of older people in Taiwan. In addition, Dr. Hsu happiness and various social factors of older people in longitudinal studies.

Successful Aging of Older People Hsu (2006) explored the conceptual factors of successful aging from older people's perspective. She analyzed the interview data of 584 older people (age ≥ 65) from the Successful Aging for the Elderly in Taiwan Survey, a proportional-to-size sampling survey in one county in Taiwan. Results identified five factors, including health, autonomy, mastery over life, enjoyment of life, and family and social support. She concluded that older people in Taiwan valued health and independence the most, followed by interrelated economic security and family support. Hsu (2015) analyzed data of 2584 participants (age ≥ 60) from the Taiwanese Longitudinal Survey on Aging in 1993–2007 to identify the predictors of later successful aging. Results showed that age, education, physical health, depressive symptoms, and health examinations were the predictors of successful aging. Meanwhile, multi-morbidity trajectories were associated with physical health, cognitive function, depressive symptoms, and life satisfaction in later stage.

Life Satisfaction of Older People: Longitudinal Studies Hsu (2010) investigated the relations among life satisfaction, subjective economic status, and successful

aging of older people in Taiwan. She analyzed the 4-wave interviewed data of 874 participants (age ≥ 60) from the Survey of Health and Living Status of the Elderly in Taiwan in 1993–2003, a national representative longitudinal survey. Results showed that life satisfaction decreased rather slightly across time. Life satisfaction trajectory was associated with cognitive function, depressive symptoms, social support, and concurrent economic satisfaction, but not childhood economic status. Hsu (2012) examined life satisfaction's trajectories and covariates of older adults in Taiwan through analyzing the data of 2584 participants (age ≥ 60 , 1993–2007) from the Survey of Health and Living Status of the Elderly in Taiwan. Results indicated four life satisfaction trajectories, including high-declining (12.5%), increase (25.9%), middle (39.7%), and low (21.8%). Predictors of a higher life satisfaction trajectory included higher education, healthier physical and psychological status, more social support, and higher economic satisfaction. Predictors of an increase in life satisfaction included maintaining good physical health and emotional management, having a spouse, and having higher economic satisfaction.

Happiness and Social Factors of Older People: Longitudinal Studies Hsu and Chang (2015) investigated the relation between happiness and social connections of older adults in Taiwan. She analyzed the data of 4731 participants from Taiwan Longitudinal Study on Aging (TLISA) in 1999–2007, a nationally representative sample of older adults (age ≥ 60). Results showed that happiness was stable across time and was related to participating in social events at the beginning, but offset over time. She concluded that for enhancing the happiness of older people, the quality of social interaction was more important than the quantity of social interaction. Hsu (2017) explored the association of parental self-rated health and well-being with parent-child relation and filial piety, a core value in traditional Chinese society. She analyzed the data of 208 parent-children pairs (age ≥ 34 , 2005–2011) from the Panel Study of Family Dynamics in Taiwan in 2005–2011, a national representative longitudinal survey. Results showed that parent-child relationship served as a significant predictor toward health for both father and mother and the life satisfaction of mothers. A positive association was found between filial piety and mother self-rated health, but a negative association was found between filial piety and father self-rated health.

Lung Hung Chen

Dr. Chen validated a measurement for assessing gratitude. Also, Dr. Chen investigated the relations among gratitude, life satisfaction, and well-being of adolescent athletes.

Measurement: Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ)—Chinese Version Chen et al. (2009) validated the Chinese version of Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ; McCullough et al., 2002) for assessing dispositional gratitude. Participants were 608 college students in Taiwan. The Chinese version of the GQ had satisfactory validity with

positive correlations with optimism, happiness, agreeableness, and extraversion, as well as high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$).

Gratitude and Well-Being of Adolescent Athletes Chen and Kee (2008) investigated the association between gratitude and well-being of athletes in two studies. Study 1 surveyed 1169 adolescent athletes to explore the relation between dispositional gratitude and well-being and found that dispositional gratitude served as a positive predictor toward team satisfaction and life satisfaction, but a negative predictor toward athlete burnout. Study 2 involved 265 adolescent athletes and results showed that sport-domain gratitude served as a positive predictor toward team satisfaction, but a negative predictor toward athlete burnout. These findings verified the relation between gratitude and well-being of adolescent athletes. Chen (2013) in a study with 291 adolescent athletes and found a positive relation between gratitude and athlete well-being, as well as the mediating effects of social support from coach and teammate.

Gratitude and Life Satisfaction of Adolescent Athletes Chen, Wu, et al. (2015) conducted weekly surveys on 29 student athletes in 10 weeks to examine the relation between gratitude and life satisfaction with ambivalence over emotional expression (AEE) as the mediator across time. Results showed that weekly gratitude served as a positive predictor toward weekly life satisfaction, but this association became weaker when higher AEE presented concurrently. Chen and Chang (2014) conducted a cross lagged study in a 3 month interval with 293 adolescent athletes and found no prediction of gratitude at Time 1 toward athlete burnout at Time 2. But athlete burnout at Time 1 was negatively related to gratitude at Time 2, indicating burnout experience might reduce gratitude. Chen and Wu (2014) conducted two-time surveys in a 6-month interval with 232 adolescent athletes and found that athletes with both higher levels of gratitude and affective trust in coach at Time 1 increased self-esteem in Time 2, 6 months later. Findings indicated that affective trust in coach served as a moderator in the relation between gratitude and self-esteem of adolescent athletes.

Life Satisfaction and Related Factors of Adolescent Athletes In addition, Chen and colleagues studied life satisfaction of adolescent athletes from various aspects. Chen et al. (2010) found that satisfaction-with-event was significantly related to flow and satisfaction with life, indicating that satisfaction with leisure activities contributed to overall well-being in a study with 434 audience ($M_{age} = 35.60$, $SD_{age} = 11.76$) of an acrobatics show completed the surveys immediately after viewing the show. Findings supported the bottom-up theory of satisfaction that satisfaction with events (lower level satisfaction) affect satisfaction with domains and overall life satisfaction (higher level of satisfaction). Chen, Kee, et al. (2015) found a positive relation between gratitude and life satisfaction of adolescent athletes with team cohesion as a mediator, in a study with 300 adolescent athletes. Chen et al. (2016) found a positive relation between gratitude and life satisfaction while mindfulness strengthened this relation in a study with 190 collegiate athletes. Chen and Wu (2016) found that gratitude decreased experiential avoidance while perceived

autonomy coach support served as a moderator in a time-lagged study in a 5-month interval with 140 male collegiate athletes. Chen et al. (2017) found a reciprocal longitudinal relation between team satisfaction and life satisfaction of adolescent athletes, while the relation between team satisfaction and life satisfaction remained consistent across waves, in a 3-wave longitudinal study with 238 adolescent athletes who completed surveys in Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3 with a 3-month interval.

Future of Positive Psychology in Taiwan

To further promote positive psychology in Taiwan or to enhance the psychological well-being of Taiwanese, three actions are recommended: (1) encouraging more people to participate in physical activity and more frequently, (2) encompassing positive psychology courses into educational system and training employees for better SWB, and (3) facilitating research on positive psychology rooted in the social-cultural context in contemporary Taiwan.

Physical Activity

As evidenced by a large number of studies, physical activity benefits multiple aspects of psychological well-being (Chang et al., 2013; Fan & Chen, 2011; Hsu et al., 2016; Ku et al., 2014; Page et al., 2003) and physical health (Potter et al., 2011; Sattelmair et al., 2009). Promoting physical activity is an effective strategy for enhancing psychological well-being, or even viewed as a “win-win” policy for both psychological and physical health (Mutrie & Faulkner, 2003). Physical activity is specifically important for adolescents who are situated in the critical stage of developing mental maturity and physical health and for older people who often are facing physical health problems, which most likely would simultaneously induce mental health problems. Physical activity may also function to enhance positive emotions and to prevent and treat existing mental or physical illness (Faulkner et al., 2015). Besides, participating in physical activities enhances the possibility of expanding interpersonal relationships and gaining more social support to increase psychological well-being.

Physical activity has not received significant empirical attention in Taiwan. Although physical activity courses are included in grade-school curricula, they often are replaced by the subjects required for the entrance examinations to colleges or senior high schools. Thus, students have less time to exercise physically during school days. School leaders should ensure that physical activity courses are maintained. Also, school leaders and public health institutions should design more large-scale physical activity events to encourage children and parents to build better family ties and have opportunities to meet people for developing psychological

well-being. It is believed that quality time with loved ones may promote psychological well-being.

Currently, there have been many community centers established island-wide for older people in Taiwan. These centers should establish more innovative physical activity programs to meet the specific needs of older people, such as programs with the length, strength, or types of physical activity fitting their physical capability and the types of activity matching their interests. The design of these programs should also encourage people to initiate and maintain participation in physical activity for long-term goals. To increase the psychological well-being nationwide, the government should build more public facilities and parks in where people can easily access to participate in events, meet people, and join in physical exercise programs.

Employees in Taiwan often work long hours, the fourth longest working-hours among the international community in 2015 and after employees in Singapore, Mexico, and South Korea (Focus Taiwan, 2016). Such a phenomenon tends to cause work stress and impair employee SWB (Lu, 2011; Lu et al., 2011). Longer working time does not necessary lead to higher productivity; instead, it most likely links to higher turnover rate, lower motivation, or less creativity. Leaders of organizations in Taiwan should carefully rethink the efficiency and performance of their employees and organization. Particularly, they should consider strategically in restructuring their organizational working-hour policies and encouraging their employees to participate in physical activity.

Education and Training

Positive psychology has just been introduced to Taiwan recently. At this stage, promoting positive psychology to people in Taiwan may be further achieved through education. The government may incorporate positive psychology courses into educational systems and train teachers to teach students. Students with happier or better mental status tend to develop healthier characteristics of psychological well-being, such as higher academic performance, stronger confidence and resilience, better interpersonal relationships, and more practical and meaningful life goals (China Post, 2013). Similarly, employees with healthier well-being tend to perform better and create more benefits for their organizations.

Research on Positive Psychology

Research provides the foundation for positive psychology programs to progress effectively and benefit people. Thus far, Chinese Happiness Inventory (Lu, 1998, 2005) and the Taiwan version of World Health Organization Quality of Life questionnaire (Lin et al., 1999; WHOQOL Taiwan Group, 2000, 2005) have been developed to measure the subjective well-being of contemporary Taiwanese. These

measurements enable further studies in positive psychology. The next step is to establish scholarly journals, professional associations, and research centers to encourage more research and professional practice. So far, there are no known journals in Taiwan devoting to positive psychology particularly. Scholars in Taiwan should establish journals covering basic research and professional application of positive psychology. These journals may provide forums for scholars to publish their research findings, to which professionals may refer and design innovative applications to facilitate people in developing psychological well-being. Besides, there are few professional associations and research centers in Taiwan dedicated to promote positive psychology. The government and institutes may establish more professional associations and centers to host events for advancing research and stimulating ideas for professional applications in positive psychology through frequent scholarly and professional interaction.

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Chapter 17

Positive Psychology in South Korea and Japan: Current State of Affairs and Future Potential

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Positive psychology emerged as a recognized area of inquiry at the turn of the twenty-first century (see Seligman, 1998; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), and since that time the field has grown steadily. As a result, scholars, professionals, and laypeople alike know more now about the nature of positive psychological functioning and the personal, societal, and institutional conditions that cultivate it. Additionally, the study and application of positive psychology has spread globally, a fact evidenced by the existence of this volume and the high quality positive psychological research being conducted in numerous nations throughout the world. Judging from the number of publications generated by South Korea and Japan scholars on this topic, these nations have emerged as leaders among the Asia Pacific region in the conduct and communication of rigorous positive psychological research, and it is the purpose of this chapter to describe the state of positive psychology in South Korea and Japan.

Sink and McMahan contributed to the Korea section and Karasawa, Hashimoto, and Jung wrote the Japanese section.

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South Korea

In what follows, we (a) provide a brief description of South Korea, addressing the major historical, social, and economic conditions that are relevant to the study and application of positive psychology in this country, (b) identify and discuss the work of several prominent Korean positive psychologists, and (c) provide an integrative discussion on the future of positive psychology in Korea, with emphasis placed on the potential for positive psychology to improve the lives of those living in this populous nation, as well as the potential for South Korean positive psychology to enrich and inform the field in general. Finally, we provide several resources for those interested in additional information regarding positive psychology in Korea.

Geographical, Economic, and Social Context for Positive Psychology in Korea

South Korea (officially the Republic of Korea) is a sovereign nation located on the Korean Peninsula in East Asia (United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2014). Geographically, South Korea's closest neighbors are North Korea (officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea), Japan, and China. South Korea¹ has a large population, with an estimated 2017 population of approximately 51 million people and an estimated population density of over 500 people per square kilometer (Korean Statistical Information Service, 2016; The World Factbook, 2017). The country is highly urbanized, and 92% of the population is located in major metropolitan areas (e.g., Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Incheon, etc.). In addition, nearly half of the overall population of Korea is concentrated in the Seoul National Capital Area (National Indicator System, 2016), the second largest metropolitan area in the world.

The urbanization of Korea was driven primarily by rapid economic expansion during the late twentieth century, a period known by Koreans as the "Miracle on the Han River" (Kleiner, 2001). During this period of time, Korea had one of the world's fastest growing economies and, despite a major stock market crash in 1997, it continues to be one of the fastest-growing developed countries in the twenty-first century (International Monetary Fund, 2016). As a result of this development, Korean citizens enjoy a relatively high standard of living, as indicated by their high standing on the human development index (United Nations Development Programme, 2015). Additionally, among member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Korea ranks above average on civic engagement, personal security, and jobs and earnings (OECD, 2014).

Korea also ranks above average on the education of its citizens when compared to other OECD countries, and 65% of Koreans aged 25–34 hold bachelor's degrees, the

¹South Korea will hereafter be referred to as "Korea."

most of any OECD country. Koreans highly value education as it is considered a necessity for socioeconomic success. In result, Korea has a history of investment in infrastructure to support educational endeavors, and correspondingly research conducted within the education sector is well-supported, particularly that which is conducted at the prestigious “SKY” Universities (i.e., Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University). Support of research in positive psychology is no exception here, and several prominent centers, institutes, and laboratories dedicated to the conduct and communication of cutting edge positive psychological research are now operating at institutions of higher education across the country (e.g., the Center for Happiness Studies at Seoul National University). Moreover, professional organizations aimed at supporting, communicating, and applying research within positive psychology have become more common (Ju et al., 2016). Because of these developments, Korea is quickly becoming a leader in positive psychological thought in the Asia Pacific rim, and as described in detail below, many Korean researchers affiliated with the positive psychology movement are extending the field, both within their country and internationally.

Although there is much to commend in South Korean society, positive psychologists in this country must help address the serious challenges facing its educational system, particularly in connection with the mental health and well-being of its young people. Kim and Kim’s (2016) review of mental health literature indicated that too many South Korean pupils experience high levels of stress and frustration (43%) associated with the entrance-examination educational climate. Some 37% of South Korean youth report feeling so depressed that it interferes with their daily functioning. Over 19% of students considered suicide, and a sizable group were victims of bullying. In a sample of 377 third grade Korean students, researchers found that this group of young children were particularly vulnerable to somatic complaints and impulsiveness compared to children from China and Japan (Hourii et al., 2012). Finally, a recent study reported even more dire conclusions, arguing that South Korean students generally have very low subjective well-being levels (Kwon et al., 2017).

Major Positive Psychologists in Korea: Theory, Research, Assessment, and Practice

As outlined earlier, academic and practical positive psychology in South Korea continues to advance at a rapid pace. Consequently, it is difficult to overview the numerous and varied contributors to this movement. While we were unable to fully vet the Korean-language positive psychology literature, and thus may have inadvertently overlooked some very worthy scholars, we have compiled here a group of researchers who represent Korean positive psychology in a manner any reader should find impressive. We focus here on several prominent scholars who (a) clearly identify with aims of positive psychology, (b) are relatively well

published in English language research journals, and (c) have substantially impacted policy and practice.

Moon, Yong-lin²

Dr. Moon, like many Korean scholars and positive psychologists, received his doctoral training in the US. Information provided by the University of Minnesota (2016) and University of Oklahoma (2015) documents Moon's many accomplishments. He earned a Ph.D. (educational psychology/measurement) in 1987 from the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development. He has authored numerous publications in both English and Korean, including two seminal works on educational policy: *Future Direction of Korea's University Education* and *Education Reform for the 21st Century* (see Moon, 2007, for summary of his thoughts). Although not cited regularly in contemporary Korean positive psychology circles, his scholarly publications address a variety of topics allied with the ends of positive psychology, including civic education, moral development, and educational policy. He has received many honors and accolades in US and in his own country, such as the induction into the 2007 International Adult Continuing Education Hall of Fame (University of Oklahoma, 2015). In 2013, he was awarded the Distinguished Leadership Award for Internationals from the University of Minnesota.

For many years, Moon in his various official educational leadership positions suggested that positive psychology has much to contribute to Korean primary and secondary educational curriculum, pedagogy, and policy development. For example, Moon served as the Minister of Education for the Seoul City Schools and Minister of Education and Human Resources Development for South Korea, and during this time saw the value of promoting well-being and positive emotions in students. As an academic within the College of Education, Seoul National University (SNU), he also published on this topic, suggesting that happiness research should be included with educational reform (Moon, 2007). The University of Oklahoma e-publication suggested that "Moon's efforts have mobilized a society to focus more on the societal needs of children and their protection and development" (n.p.; see <http://halloffame.outreach.ou.edu/2007/moon.html>).

Perhaps Moon's views on positive psychology were best represented in his talk given at the 2009 World Congress on Positive Psychology in Philadelphia. As abridged by Davis (2009), Moon spoke on the Contribution of Positive Psychology to Korean Society, conceptualizing the topic through the notion of "frames of meaning." Individual to relational/familial to societal functioning are steeped in meaning-making processes. How meaning is framed accounts for the varieties of human relationships, positive institutions, and the manner in which people demonstrate character strengths and personal assets. Within the context of Buddhism,

²Yong-lin Moon appears to be no longer active in the Korean positive psychology community.

Taoism, and Confucianism (ideologies/worldviews or spiritualities that continue to impact Korean society), he addresses the ways happiness and virtues are manifested and experienced. In subsequent research, American and Korean positive psychologists supported Moon's conjectures, indicating that culture matters in exploring happiness and well-being within national contexts (Layous et al., 2013). In short, these underlying cultural dimensions and spiritualities frame meaning and well-being, much as Judeo-Christian values have contributed, in part, to these positive qualities in North American society.

Choi, Incheol

For nearly 2 decades, Dr. Choi has been a major contributor to positive psychology research and practice in Korea and in the West. According to his biography published on Seoul National University's (SNU) Department of Psychology webpage, Choi completed his MA and PhD in 1998 at the University of Michigan. He is a professor of social psychology and Director of SNU's Center for Happiness Studies. Prior to taking on the professorate at SNU, he was an associate professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Choi's research in social cognition and positive psychology is substantial, publishing with multiple authors in rigorous psychological journals. His corpus spans a variety of inter-related topics such as social perception, subjective well-being (SWB), happiness, optimism, prosocial behavior, cross-cultural views of well-being and self-concept, relationships, causal attribution, positive and negative emotions, and pleasure and meaning.

To provide a flavor of Choi's recent publications associated with positive psychology, Choi and his co-researchers investigated the relationship between positive emotions and happiness, applying them to everyday decision-making (Kim et al., 2016; Sul et al., 2013, 2016). Specifically, two studies examined the interplay between subjective well-being (SWB), social-buffering, hedonic editing (i.e., how people select to combine or separate multiple events in particular ways to enhance their happiness or SWB), and daily life outcomes (Sul et al., 2013, 2016). Choi and his colleagues found that individuals who report higher SWB are better decision makers when it comes to achieving their own happiness. In more technical language, "happiness can be maximized when people possess accurate knowledge regarding what will enhance their happiness in real life (experienced utility) and then apply that knowledge to choose the hedonically optimal option (decision utility)" (Sul et al., 2013, p. 1425).

Not surprisingly, some of Choi's writings are consonant with Moon's application-based writings on "frames of meaning" and culture's influence on happiness and meaning. An English language synopsis of Choi's (2007) book, *The Psychological Frame for Self Revolution*,³ speaks to the parameters of the mind,

³At the time of writing, Choi's work was not available in any English language outlets.

with all its prejudices, pride, and error-prone thinking. Choi posits that humans develop a sense of happiness when they are able to modify their frame or the window of their mind. One's self-frame is in a sense one's orientation to self-development.

The practical concepts presented in the book are consonant with his journal publications. For instance, Choi and Choi (2003) addressed humans' tendencies toward biased judgments and fallacious thinking. Using the metaphor of a "fault tree," which is a list of potential causes designed to assist people locate a reason when something goes awry (p. 205), his research suggests that plausible alternatives not on the list are often not considered. Choi and Choi suggested that participants bring to the research setting a number of conversational assumptions (frames or schemas) that influence their responses on questionnaires. Choi and Choi cautioned survey-based investigators who use close-ended response options to elicit participants' attitudes that they may not be obtaining a full range of examinee responses. Obviously, this line of research has implications for positive psychology research, where survey methods are heavily used.

Perhaps Choi's most important contributions to positive psychology to date are related to the advancement of happiness and well-being in Korean children and youth and the application of his research agenda to positive education programs. At SNU's Center for Happiness Studies, Director Choi is charged with actualizing its practical vision, namely to foster happiness in Korean school teachers, children, and adolescents as well as to promote the use of positive values in their daily lives (see <http://www.snuhappiness.kr>). The Center's staff identify best practices derived from happiness education research and then develop evidence-based SWB lessons and materials to be used in teacher training courses and South Korean schools. Seoul's Metropolitan Office of Education has incorporated into its mission statement the need to promote student happiness across the region's schools. The Office of Education is also using the Center's happiness research and materials in the "Joyful Seoul Education" initiative. Undoubtedly, Choi's work has impacted positive psychology at the academic and practical levels.

Park, Nansook

Nansook Park, a native of South Korea, is one of the most foremost scholars in positive psychology. Dr. Park earned undergraduate (psychology) and master's (clinical psychology) degrees at Seoul's Yonsei University. She completed her PhD in school psychology at the University of South Carolina, Columbia and later decided to stay in the US as an academic. In 2012, she became a tenured full professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Michigan. She is also the director of the Michigan Positive Psychology Center at the University of Michigan. Her publication list is impressively long—well over 100 works, with most of them addressing themes related to positive psychology. Much of her works were in collaboration with one of the world's leading positive psychology scholars, the now deceased Dr. Chris Peterson. Including her many honors and awards from

prestigious US academic and international organizations (e.g., China), Park has received at least 20 major grants that largely examine various facets of positive psychology. She is also a Fellow with the American Psychological Association and International Positive Psychology Association. Given Park's notoriety, it is not surprising that her influential works have been featured in American and Korean media. Finally, not only does Park serve as an ad hoc reviewer for multiple high level journals, as of 2013 she was serving as the associate editor for *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-being* and consulting editor for the *Journal of Positive Psychology*.

More specifically, the body of Park's work in positive psychology address a plurality of interrelated topics including personality and social contexts, attitudes, character strengths, positive education, morals, values, health, happiness or SWB, and resiliency (e.g., Park, 2009, 2015; Park & Peterson, 2006). Similar to the other key positive psychologists, her primary research interest relates to the advancement of positive development and well-being across the lifespan in varying cultural contexts (Park, 2015). Much of her work has centered on SWB (i.e., happiness, life satisfaction) in children and youth. Park (2004) and her colleagues have also been instrumental in the construction and validation of the widely used self-report Values in Action Inventory (VIA) with child and adolescent samples in the US and internationally (see also Park & Peterson, 2006; Ruch et al., 2014). They provided substantial evidence that upright or good character is multifaceted, comprised of a constellation of positive traits or character strengths that are exhibited in a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Park & Peterson, 2008a, 2008b).

The practical significance of Park's work for human services personnel and educators is immense. For example, Park and colleagues documented the salient relationships among various character strengths (e.g., zest, love, gratitude, and hope) and life satisfaction, revealing that various developmental assets displayed in childhood can predict future SWB (e.g., Park, 2009). She and her team have created and disseminated practical materials to foster these characteristics in school-age children and adolescents (Park & Peterson, 2008a, 2008b). Perhaps most importantly for the expansion of positive psychology and positive education into Korea, Park has made multiple journeys to the country to speak on their research interests to schools (Park, 2015). Her visits have supported the efforts of various schools to organize their educational processes and procedures around the essential themes of positive psychology (e.g., SWB, resiliency, hope).

Suh, Eunkook M.

To complete our discussion of leading positive psychologists, another prolific contributor to positive psychology in Korea and internationally is Dr. Eunkook Suh. He is a professor in the Department of Psychology at Yonsei University (2003–present) in Seoul and oversees the Happiness and Cultural Psychology Lab. Prior to this academic post, he was a tenured associate professor of psychology and social behavior at the University of California, Irvine (1999–2003). Suh has served

on multiple editorial journal boards, including, for example, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* and *Journal of Happiness Studies*. Currently he is an editorial board member of three journals. In terms of his academic education, Suh has two master's degrees (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1994 and Boston University, 1990) and a PhD (1999) from University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Concerning his rich scholarship, Suh is co-author of numerous articles with some of the leading positive psychologists in the US and internationally, including Ed Diener, Richard Lucas, and Shigehiro Oishi. Following in the research tradition of other leading Korea positive psychologists, his work focuses on the ways the self and culture contribute to one's SWB or happiness. Among Suh's influential publications, *Culture and Subjective Well-being*, a book he co-edited with Diener in 2000, is probably the most widely known and cited (Diener & Shu, 2000). In his own right, Suh (e.g., Shu, 2007a, 2007b) has contributed substantially to the SWB literature. For example, Suh's (2002) research demonstrated that individuals possess multiple views of themselves that are affected by their cultural context. Studying participants from Korea and the US, he found a positive relationship between consistency in self-view and one's level of self-knowledge. Curiously, Korean respondents regarded themselves as more malleable in varying situations, but their SWB was less predictable from levels of their identity consistency.

In a follow-up conceptual paper, Suh (2007a) expanded the parameters and scope of the 2002 investigation, exploring the question of why the self is context-sensitive and the potential negatives of an excessively context-oriented self. In Suh's explanatory model, he posits that the highly context-sensitive self has a strong need for belonging, which in turn leads to three major self-tendencies: motivational/behavioral (e.g., person feels less pressure to be happy and is avoidance-oriented), cognitive (e.g., person experiences more social comparison and relies on external, social information), and emotional (e.g., person places less value on being happy). As an outcome of these propensities, individuals with highly context-sensitive selves tend to report lower levels of SWB. Suh suggested this research explains why East Asians (e.g., Koreans), who tend to be more context-sensitive, report lower SWB than their Western counterparts. In terms of influencing the trajectory of positive psychology, Suh's model has implications for SWB research in cross-cultural settings. Specifically, this casual model helps account for national differences reported in previous large-scale SWB research (Diener et al., 1998; Diener & Suh, 1995). Moreover, the model has explanatory power for other culturally situated positive psychology research conducted in Korea and elsewhere (e.g., Ha & Kim, 2013; Kim et al., 2003).

Major Issues and Opportunities for the Future of Positive Psychology in Korea

Despite the fact that, as indicated above, positive psychology has become firmly rooted in the science and application of psychology in South Korea, several issues should be addressed to ensure continued development of the field and a prominent role of positive psychology in Korea in the future. These issues are: (a) the establishment of a clear identity for Korean positive psychology and the development of a unified association supporting activities in positive psychology; (b) the utilization of positive psychology to capitalize on strengths and address problems that are unique to Korea; and (c) the clarification of the nature of positive human functioning in Korea as a means of better understanding human well-being. In what follows, these issues are discussed in turn.

Development and Coordination of Positive Psychology in Korea

South Korea has increasingly produced high-quality rigorous research within positive psychology. Further, the incorporation of positive psychological principles into applied areas of psychology and related fields (e.g., counseling, coaching, etc.) is also becoming more frequent. However, research laboratories, centers, and institutes that address issues related to positive psychology are operated independently by universities or organizations, and there is currently no existing large-scale professional association and/or organization facilitating communication, visibility, and coordination of positive psychology within Korea. For example, while the Korea Psychological Association (KPA) has divisions for the major subfields within psychology (e.g., Clinical, Counseling, Social, Personality, Health, etc.), as well as divisions for more specific areas (e.g., addiction, coaching, consumer psychology, etc.), a division for positive psychology does not exist. Given that positive psychology is a relatively new area of inquiry, it is perhaps unsurprising that this is the case, and this is not an issue that is unique to Korea. Notably, the American Psychological Association, the largest professional organization in the nation where positive psychology in its current form was conceived, similarly does not include a division dedicated to positive psychology. As in the United States, Korean positive psychologists have been trained in the more conventional areas of psychology (e.g., Social, Developmental) and are more likely to maintain membership in organizations focused on these areas.

The development of a professional association dedicated to Korean positive psychology would be beneficial for several reasons. First, it would assist with defining the identity of Korean positive psychology, which would clarify the role of this field within the broader context of Korean psychology and likely provide a sense of cohesiveness and shared mission among researchers and practitioners within this area. Second, through the pooling of resources and the generation of

revenue through various means (e.g., membership fees), the association can implement initiatives aimed at increasing interaction among and communication between Korean positive psychologists, such as the establishment of an annual conference and/or a professional journal. Third, professional associations typically sponsor outreach-oriented educational events, such as continuing education opportunities, and findings within positive psychology and techniques for the application of these findings may be effectively spread to those in other disciplines via these events. In this way, the development of a professional association will likely enrich the professional lives of Korean positive psychologists and also help to expand the footprint of positive psychology in Korea.

Positive Psychology as a Means of Capitalizing on Strengths and Addressing Problems

A basic, key mission of positive psychology, and the field of psychology in general, is the application of knowledge in order to improve human functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). One way to improve human functioning is through the encouragement and nurturance of strength, while yet another way is through the prevention and effective treatment of disorder. Current empirical research indicates that the application of positive psychological principles can improve human functioning through both means (see Bolier et al., 2013; Seligman et al., 2005; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009).

All nations face unique challenges to the health and well-being of their populations, and the targeted application of positive psychological principles may be one route by which risks can be mitigated, social problems can be reduced, resilience can be encouraged, and a high level human functioning can be achieved. There is reason to suspect that the application of positive psychology Korea may assist in addressing challenges that the country currently faces. For instance, as mentioned previously, suicide is a major problem in Korea, with suicide rates quadrupling in the last few decades (see Kim & Park, 2014; Kwon et al., 2009; Park, 2012). At current, Korea has the highest suicide rate of any of the OECD member countries (OECD, 2014) and one of the highest suicide rates of all nations in the world (World Health Organization, 2016). Although the causes of the high national suicide rate in Korea are likely multifaceted and complex, and a corresponding solution to the problem similarly so, the two most common general reasons for committing suicide provided by suicide attempters in Korea are (a) external sources of stress and (b) psychiatric symptoms (e.g., depressive symptoms; Lim et al., 2014).

Critically, a growing body of literature indicates that engagement in positive activities (e.g., practicing generosity) is associated with decreased stress and higher levels of well-being (see Layous et al., 2014), and interventions aimed at the cultivation of positive behaviors may effectively prevent the types of stress and

negative symptoms that put Koreans at risk for suicide. In other words, suicide rates may be reduced in Korea through the application of positive psychology-based programs aimed at risk factor prevention. Moreover, additional evidence indicates that positive psychology interventions, alone or in conjunction with other types of intervention, are an effective treatment strategy for many of the conditions that put people at risk for suicide (see Huffman et al., 2014; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). In short, although positive psychology is not a panacea for the suicide problem in Korea and any comprehensive solution to the issue will take place at both individual and societal levels, utilization of the empirically-supported prevention and treatment strategies developed by positive psychologist may help make this problem more manageable.

The widespread application of positive psychology may not only assist in addressing challenges faced by Koreans, but also facilitate capitalization on the existing strengths of this nation. As noted above, Koreans are highly educated, with 97% of all school-aged individuals graduating from high school, and a majority of young adults obtain university degrees (ICEF Monitor, 2014). Korean students consistently rank highly in international comparisons on literacy, science, and math (Chung, 2009; Education, 2012). Moreover, Korean investment in education has seemingly benefitted the economy, as per capita gross national product has risen in tandem with Korean graduation rates (Suh, 2007b). Taken together, these facts indicate that Korea excels in the education of its citizens.

However, the Korean educational system has received criticism on some fronts, and despite consistently achieving positive educational outcomes, the manner in which these outcomes are achieved may not be optimal. Specifically, it is suggested that Koreans overemphasize educational performance and competition at the expense of student well-being (see Hunt, 2015). This criticism may have merit, as cases of depression and suicide have increased dramatically among school-aged Koreans in recent years (Hong, 2011; Korea Health Promotion Foundation, 2014), and a majority of Koreans aged 13–24 years indicate that they experience significant school-related stress (Ministry of Gender and Family Equality, 2015).

Positive psychology may inform efforts to address this criticism and optimize the functioning of the Korean educational system. For example, a great deal of research indicates mastery-oriented educational goals tend to be more effective than performance- or success-oriented goals at producing both positive academic and positive psychosocial outcomes (e.g., Burnette et al., 2013; Tuominen-Soini et al., 2012; Utman, 1997). More generally, encouraging the kinds of adaptive approaches to education identified in empirical work in positive psychology and related fields may at once (a) prevent negative psychological responses to schooling and (b) increase an already high level of academic performance. Further, and as described in the preceding section, positive psychology interventions may assist in the treatment of existing negative school-related outcomes in Korean students.

We have suggested at least two ways that the application of positive psychology might improve the lives of the Korean population. It should be noted, however, that using positive psychological principles to reduce suicide and to improve an already strong educational system are just two examples of the numerous potential benefits

of applying positive psychology. It should also be noted that the relationship between the activities of positive psychologists and the well-being of a population is not likely unidirectional. As positive psychological research and practice increase and produce tangible positive outcomes, the visibility and perceived utility of this field should also increase, leading to increased allocation of resources and the development of infrastructure that support the activities of the positive psychology community. In other words, further work in positive psychology will not only benefit the Korean population in general, but it will also benefit Korean positive psychologists in particular.

Understanding and Promoting Well-Being in Korea

In what has been presented above, we have suggested that positive psychology may be a viable path to flourishing and high-level psychosocial functioning in South Korea. It should be explicit, however, that despite the major advances that positive psychologists have made towards understanding and promoting optimal human feeling and functioning, relatively little is known about how culture shapes and impacts these processes (Henrich et al., 2010; Tsai & Park, 2014). Existing evidence suggests that the very nature of what it means to live well varies across cultures, and people from different cultures often define well-being in markedly different ways (Bencharit & Tsai, 2016; Lu & Gilmour, 2004). Despite this, the field of positive psychology relies heavily on definitions of positive functioning, associated measures of positive functioning, and interventions aimed at increasing positive functioning that have been developed primarily in the West, and less attention has been paid to the understanding and accurate measurement of well-being in other cultures. This raises the problematic possibility that current information regarding well-being around the world may be inaccurate due to the imposition of Western cultural values when conceptualizing and assessing this construct in non-Western contexts. Given this, a priority for future research on positive functioning in Korea should be to empirically investigate the nature of what it means to be well and how best to promote well-being in Korean populations.

There are multiple measures that align themselves with positive psychology and are validated in the Korean language. For example, using positive psychology theory and research, Seo et al. (2011) developed the brief, user-friendly Korean Version of the Life Perspectives Inventory for use with adolescents. The LPI assesses qualities of nonsectarian adolescent spirituality (Present-Centeredness, Connection with Higher Power, Meaning Making). As the title implies, the 6-item Academic Major Satisfaction Scale (Sovet et al., 2014) is available for researchers and practitioners interested in assessing college and university students overall academic major satisfaction. The academic major satisfaction items moderately correlate with positively with life satisfaction, positive affect, career decision self-efficacy. Another sample tool, the Happy Life Inventory, is designed to appraise happiness in Korean adults. Possessing 98 items and 16 factors (e.g., self-acceptance, personal growth,

autonomy, positive attitude, helping others, as well as four interrelated relationship skills), it is more challenging to administer in clinical settings.

To be effective, interventions aimed at increasing well-being should be consistent with the surrounding culture in at least two ways: (a) the intervention should pursue an outcome that is consistent with prevailing cultural views regarding the nature of positive functioning; and (b) the processes or activities by which the outcomes are achieved should make sense within the surrounding cultural context. We currently know little regarding Korean definitions of positive functioning and well-being, and as a result, the preferred outcome of Korean-specific positive psychology interventions is somewhat unclear. Research from other East Asian nations may provide some insight here, as existing evidence suggests that individuals from these countries view well-being differently when compared to their counterparts in the United States (Oishi, 2010). For example, when compared to individuals from the United States, individuals from China and Japan indicate greater acceptance of negative affective states as part of well-being (e.g., Sims et al. 2015; Uchida & Kitayama, 2009). Given that Korea is similar in many respects to China and Japan and, in particular, shares many philosophical traditions that shape thinking about complex issues such as the nature of well-being (e.g., Taoism), it is possible that Korean conceptions of well-being are similar to those found in other parts of East Asia. However, there is also a great deal of cultural variability among countries in this part of the world, which prevents any firm conclusions regarding whether findings observed in China and Japan generalize to Korea.

It is also unclear as to whether positive psychology interventions that have been developed primarily in the United States produce similar outcomes when implemented in other parts of the world, and initial evidence suggests that activities aimed at increasing well-being may differentially impact individuals from different cultures. For example, Americans⁴ show more positive emotional responses when practicing gratitude interventions than Koreans do (Layous et al., 2013), presumably because Koreans are more prone to experience mixed emotions in response to this activity (e.g., gratitude and indebtedness). Moreover, because East Asian cultures, relative to Western cultures, are more likely to endorse the belief that one's happiness and well-being is largely a matter of luck or fortune (see Oishi, 2010), individuals from these cultures may feel like they have less control over their well-being and consequently exert less effort towards increasing well-being. Due to this lack of effort, positive psychology interventions may be less effective. To assess the extent of these issues, additional research regarding Korean conceptions of positive functioning and the efficacy of interventions aimed at increasing positive functioning in Korea is imperative. This research will not only inform efforts to understand and promote positive psychological functioning in Korea in particular, but also add to our understanding of the nature and promotion of well-being in general.

⁴The term "American" is used narrowly here to refer specifically to those from the United States.

Resources

For those readers who would like to know more about positive psychology in Korea, the following resources are provided.

Contact Information for Korea Positive Psychologists

- Incheol Choi, PhD, professor of social psychology and Director of Seoul National University's Center for Happiness. Email: ichoi@snu.ac.kr; Telephone: 02-880-6437, 02-880-6399. Website: <http://www.happiness.snu.ac.kr/> Address: Seoul National University, College of Social Sciences, Department of Psychology, M406 No. 16 East, 220 East Lake 642, Seoul 151-746, South Korea.
- Nansook Park, PhD, professor of psychology, director of Michigan Positive Psychology, University of Michigan. Email: nspark@umich.edu; Telephone: 734.763.3166. Address: University of Michigan, Department of Psychology, 1004 East Hall 530 Church Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1043
- Eunkook M. Suh, PhD, professor of psychology, Yonsei University. Telephone: +822-2123-2446. Address: Department of Psychology, 50, Yonsei-ro, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul 120-749, South Korea.

Websites

Citizen Happiness Research Center Contact: Dr. Seung Jong Lee, professor at the Graduate School of Public Administration at Seoul National University. E-mail: slee@snu.ac.kr. Website: <http://gspa.snu.ac.kr/en/node/217>

Purpose: The website indicates the following: "Citizen Happiness Research Center was established as a part of the National Research Foundation of Korea's SSK (Social Science Korea) project; the center's ultimate goal is to increase and improve citizens' happiness in terms of methods and strategies that can be implemented at a national administration level. In researching the ways and methods to reach this goal, the center is also studying the roles that the government can take in this process."

Flourishing S(E)OUL: Positive Psychology in Korea Website: <http://www.meetup.com/FLOURISH-Positive-Psychology-in-Seoul/>

Purpose: This is a website for individuals to connect about positive psychology in Korea. It provides basic information on positive psychology and a place for online discussion.

Korea Counseling Center Inza Kim, Director. Email: kcc8608@kccrose.com. Address: 70 Gyeongin-ro 71gil, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, South Korea. Telephone: +82-2-790-9361-2. Website: <http://www.kccrose.com/?ckattempt=1>

Purpose: according to the website, KCC's intent is "to discover the meanings of human existence based extensive research on education, psychological counseling and related academic areas. We aim to provide effective counseling, training, researching and education in order to help individuals achieve personal growth so that they many lead happy lives and become contributing members of families, schools, society and the world." This organization is quite large and is networked around the country and abroad. It is actively involved in disseminating positive psychology-related information within the Korean counseling community and beyond. The Center is also strongly connected with William Glasser's work in Reality Therapy and Control Theory.

Japan

Within the psychological community, including that of Japan, positive psychology is considered an important development of the twenty-first century. Japan is not only an economically wealthy nation, but, with an average life expectancy of 83.7 years as of 2016, it is also a nation with high longevity. A rich and varied diet, a safe society with a low crime rate, and a well-instituted medical insurance system underlie this reality. However, some surveys, such as those conducted by the Cabinet Office of Japan (2012) or the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al., 2004), suggest that despite having such a well-organized social infrastructure and the conditions for one to enjoy a rich life, the satisfaction level of the Japanese population is not that high.

Of course, this does not mean Japan lacks much interest in happiness. When King and Queen of the Kingdom of Bhutan visited Japan in November 2011, the media focused on reporting the activities of the royal couple and attempted to show what Bhutan is like because people had shown great interest in such news. While Bhutan cannot be considered economically wealthy, 97% of its citizens replied "I am happy" in a 2005 survey. Further, Bhutan has a concept called "Gross Domestic Happiness." Based, in part, on the interest regarding Bhutan's level of happiness, the Cabinet Office of Japan established the "Commission on Well-being Studies" in 2010 to promote research for the development of an index on well-being that is unique to Japan. Additionally, it has discussed the definition of happiness and the need to have a happiness index was reflected in the policies.

Psychologists in Japan, and in particular cultural psychologists, have expressed doubt on the conclusion that the Japanese are not happy. Japan's low scores on the happiness scale used in various studies could be explained by the fact that the very concept of happiness in Japan is different from that in the West, and that the factors determining happiness may have been derived from existing cultural biases based on the cultural characteristics of the country where the studies were conducted.

Considering the research evidence that the happiness level is low among the Japanese, and the limitations of these findings, it is evident that the major research theme for positive psychology in Japan needs to pertain to the cultural characteristics of happiness and positive self-perceptions. While insights from Western studies in positive psychology are being incorporated, current research in Japan is developing based on a cultural-psychological approach that considers the cultural characteristics of the Japanese people and society. Additionally, such a stance, in which emphasis is put on culture, can be found in other areas of positive psychology research that go beyond happiness studies.

In this chapter, we will discuss the trends in positive psychology in Japan. More specifically, we will (a) consider the cultural background of Japan and its relations to the emergence of positive psychology, (b) identify major positive psychologists in Japan and discuss their work, and (c) discuss issues and future expectations in the field of positive psychology in Japan. Finally, we will provide contact information of the positive psychologists we introduce and the related institutions.

Cultural Background of Positive Psychology in Japan

Japan is an island nation in the Pacific Ocean, and it is a country with a relatively warm climate, located to the West of the Asian continent. Such geopolitical characteristics have led to the formation of agriculturally based communities with low social mobility. Therefore, it is thought of as a collectivistic culture where collaboration within a group becomes important (Yuki et al., 2007). In such a cultural environment, there would be a greater emphasis on the sense of belonging to a group, and people are motivated to maintain harmonious relationships rather than pursuing personal benefits and individual identity. The pursuit of individuality will rather be a detriment to the existing human relations and may lead to being ostracized. Therefore, conspicuous and/or competitive actions are suppressed, as people lean toward being normal and ordinary. People aim to be balance-oriented and to not disrupt the group's equilibrium. Thus, adapting to a Japanese society involves maintaining cooperative interactions with others.

In this context of collectivism, the interdependent self-construal becomes dominant. Markus and Kitayama (1991) have pointed out that people's minds differ based on what culture they live in, and proposed independent self-construal and interdependent self-construal as the means of cultural self-construal. In the Western cultures, independent self-construal is the dominant perspective on humans. This concept suggests that people think and act based on their own will and goals as well as their individual characteristics, and that controlling the environment is desirable. On the other hand, the concept of interdependent self-construal suggests that people take action to match the intention and emotions of others, and give importance to the relationship with the people around them. In a Japanese culture where consideration of others and relationships are given weight, the sense of interdependent

self-construal in which people think “I exist based on my relationship with others” becomes the dominant thought.

This also relates to the self-effacing tendencies of the Japanese. Japanese have strong self-critical and self-effacing tendency, owing to which they look at themselves in a negative light (Kitayama et al., 1997). Further, there is a tendency by others to respond to those who exhibit self-effacement by strongly denying that expression. Endo (1997) also reports that the Japanese have a “relativistic self-effacement” tendency, where they look at themselves in a negative light and see others in a positive light. These tendencies, however, could be interpreted as one of culturally specific means which enforce relational ties among people. That is, the Japanese can fulfill the self-evaluation motivation, not by directly viewing oneself positively, but by evaluating the relationships they hold with significant others (rather than one’s self) in a positive light.

Based on these arguments about the psychological mechanisms which are characteristic of the Japanese people, cultural psychologists have accumulated data regarding well-being, happiness, and self-perception. They are the contributors to a major trend of positive psychology in Japan.

The other trend that supported the progress of positive psychology in Japan involved an interest in the field of health psychology. Positive psychology and health psychology are intimately related. As Seligman (2008) points out, it is an important challenge to develop inclusive intervention techniques that could lead to further advances in the field of research on the biological, subjective, and functional aspects of health; to comprehensively understand their mutual relationships; and to focus on the promotion of health rather than on treating disorders.

As mentioned earlier, the Japanese population exhibits high life expectancy, and Japan has a substantial health care system in place. Indeed, the Japanese have a great amount of interest in matters of health. Health psychology examines the various issues related to people’s health from the vantage point of psychology, for the purpose of contributing to the betterment of the society. Based on the recent trends in positive psychology, there is also a rise in studies that examine people’s positive emotions and characteristics in relation to health. Hope is now mounting that healthcare services would no longer simply be about physical health, but that they would focus on well-being, such that people are fulfilled and doing well physically, mentally, and socially. Additionally, the well-being perspective centers on issues related to how we live as humans, such as our QOL, our level of satisfaction, and our sense of happiness.

Evidently, the field of positive psychology currently attracts the interest of Japanese researchers in other related domains as well. While the research in this area was led by cultural psychologists and health psychologists, researchers from the fields of social psychology, personality psychology, and clinical psychology have also joined in.

Positive psychology was introduced in Japan in the late 1990s, following the call of Seligman, who was then the president of the American Psychological Association (APA). From then on, researchers took personal interest in the subject and began to engage in research activities. Much like in many other countries, much of initial

research on positive psychology was conducted by health psychologists. The earliest article of introduction was by Kodama (2001) in a magazine for general readers published by the Japanese Association of Health Psychology, and it was Ohki (2002) who, while referencing that article, pointed out the cohesion between the aims of positive psychology and health psychology in the promotion of mental health.

Subsequently, the awareness of positive psychology increased in Japan with symposia planned by organizations such as the Japanese Association of Health Psychology and the Japanese Psychological Association. In recent years, various symposia and workshops relating to positive psychology have been held in psychology-related academic circles. For example, in 2006, a symposium titled “Clinical Positive Psychology: Riding on New Wind” was held during the 70th convention of The Japanese Psychological Association. The 60th Open Symposium held by the Japanese Society of Social Psychology in 2016 was titled “Social Psychology on Happiness,” and the discussions included the regional characteristics of prefectures with a high sense of happiness, the ambiguity of the concept of happiness, and the issues related to measurement of happiness.

In addition to the increased frequency of discussions in academic conventions and symposia, there has also been an increase in publication of academic papers relating to positive psychology. A search on CiNii (which is the database for Japan’s academic papers, books, and magazines) using the term *positive psychology*, yielded 178 returns as of July 2017, and a search using the term *subjective well-being* yielded 618 items. This shows that academic research on positive psychology is accumulating in Japan as well.

Major Positive Psychologists in Japan: Theory, Research, Assessment, and Practice

In this section, we will introduce researchers who have contributed to the advancement of Japanese positive psychology. Particularly, we focus on (1) younger generations of researchers who actively conduct studies on happiness and positive self-perception, in relation to the cultural characteristics of the Japanese we previously outlined, as well as (2) senior researchers who have contributed significantly in establishing the field of positive psychology in Japan. In doing so, we intended to specifically introduce and describe each person’s research findings and academic activities. Thus, we were able to address only a limited number of psychologists. It goes without saying that we do not imply that the field is low in productivity; there are numerous social, personality, and health psychologists who actively engage in studies on well-being, adaptation, life satisfaction, happiness, and positive self-perception. Please also note that regrettably, we had to omit many noteworthy and influential psychologists.

Uchida, Yukiko

Yukiko Uchida is a cultural psychologist and an associate professor at Kokoro Research Center, Kyoto University. She earned her Ph.D. at University of Kyoto in 2003, under the supervision of Shinobu Kitayama who is a leading cultural psychologist.

Uchida has conducted many studies focusing on happiness in Japan. Her works incorporated the outcomes of cultural psychology and considered the uniqueness of happiness in a society where interdependence and balance-orientation are highly valued.

Uchida and Ogihara (2012) argued that cultural differences can be observed in many aspects. They include the way people conceptualize happiness, the predictive factors of happiness, and the relationship between socio-economic environment and happiness. Since the Japanese live in a culture of interdependent self-construal where the people value interpersonal harmony, the maintenance of a good relationship with others greatly impacts one's sense of happiness. For the Japanese, the connection they have with others are important and even when compared to those in North America, whether or not one is able to obtain emotional support from those close to them greatly relates to one's happiness.

Indeed, Uchida and Kitayama (2009) demonstrated that the Japanese tend to position happiness within a relationship, while the Americans lay emphasis on personal happiness. This study requested those in Japan and the United States to write down up to five definitions of happiness. Findings revealed that American participants predominantly describe happiness in a positive sense. Meanwhile the Japanese participants also expressed negative notions about happiness, such as how it can become a source of envy and jealousy and disrupt social harmony. Thus the Japanese people carry more ambivalent or holistic images of happiness relative to the Americans.

Such tendencies contrast with those observed in people from places like North America, where self-respect and personal independence are considered as the important factors in terms of happiness. In North America, happiness tends to be defined as something relating to one's physical and/or social capabilities, or something that can be obtained by maximizing or optimizing an environmental condition one is in. Such happiness is expressed as the "Maximization model" where it is thought that greater sense of happiness can be achieved by possessing ideal characteristics and entering into a privileged condition. In this model, people who have more, such as those with greater capacity, who are healthy, young, and with a high income would be defined as happy people.

However, such a model does not work in Japan. One can observe that, in Japan, the outlook on happiness is based on a perspective of life and a worldview which could be described as a "balance-oriented vision of happiness," where it is thought that happiness changes with time and that both good things and bad things could happen in one's life.

This emphasis on balance may also relate to the low degree of relational mobility. Yamagishi (1998) describes the Japanese society as an assurance-based society with low social uncertainty, and that there is a low sense of mobility in relationships. In such a society, while on one hand, the high orientation towards relationships could help form interpersonal relations, the high cost of social exclusion could also become a source of anxiety toward being rejected by others.

As Kitayama and Uchida (2005) have argued, interpersonal relationships—which generally produces great happiness—can also lead to unhappiness when they go wrong. That is to say, an increase in the number of relationships one has does not necessarily correlate positively with the level of happiness, as indicated in the Maximization model.

In fact, Uchida et al. (2012) examined this point by focusing on people's orientations toward expanding the number of relationships they have. Their key finding was that the effect of the quality and quantity of the relationships depend on the type of orientation. The “open-type” people are those who widely seek human relations. They expand their relationships while maintaining the quality of each relationship, so the number of relationships corresponds with their sense of happiness. “Maintenance-type” people are those who would rather seek a comfortable relationship with a limited number of people. In their case, happiness corresponds to the proportion of satisfactory relationships they manage.

Recently, Hitokoto and Uchida (2015) have proposed the concept of “interdependent happiness,” which is interdependently pursued and attained. They developed a nine-item Interdependent Happiness Scale (IHS) to measure the happiness of individuals who are relationally oriented, and those who value group harmony and social norms.

Uchida is one of the leading figures of positive psychology in Japan, as this impressive list of works on happiness and culture indicates. She has also served as a member of the Commission on Well-being Studies, assembled by the Cabinet Office of the Japanese Government, from 2010 to 2013. She has received many awards including the Outstanding Paper Award and the Award for International Contributions to Psychology from the Japanese Psychological Association.

Toyama, Miki

Miki Toyama is an associate professor at the Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, Tsukuba University. She earned her Ph.D. from Tsukuba University in 2003 for her study on positive illusion of Japanese college students. Since then, she has actively engaged in the research on the effect of optimistic (or pessimistic) self-perception and motivation, academic performance, and well-being.

Optimism can be defined as “a belief that things will go well and that more good events than bad events will occur.” Optimism is one of the central themes in positive psychology as it is intimately connected to mental and physical health. Optimism

studies in Japan have replicated findings of Western studies, such as how optimism improves happiness. However, studies have also pointed out cultural differences in people's optimistic tendencies.

Toyama and Sakurai (2001) have conducted a study focusing on the characteristics of Japanese optimism. Whereas the Westerners tend to show optimistic tendencies in both good and bad situations, their study revealed that the Japanese tend to show optimistic tendencies especially toward negative events. The optimism of the Japanese people is characterized, not by an expectancy that they will encounter an extraordinarily good event in the future, but rather by a positive prospect that they will be able to carry on with their life peacefully while avoiding negative events. Thus, the Japanese possess a type of conservative and defensive optimism. Such tendencies are consistent with the weakness of the self-enhancement bias among the Japanese.

Toyama has created a unique scale for measuring optimism in Japan (Toyama, 2013). Naturally, there are individual differences in optimistic tendencies, and a scale called ELOT (Expand Life Orientation Scale)—developed by Chang et al. (1997)—which independently tests optimism and pessimism is being widely used in the West. Toyama (2013) criticized that the items of the ELOT not only contain expectations and anticipations about the future but also include current cognitive evaluations. Further, in regards to pessimism and optimism, in Japan (and in the East), there may be a strong possibility that optimism and pessimism tend to be considered independently from one another more than they are in the West. Based on these cultural differences, she advocated the need for developing a scale that is better suited for Japan. Subsequently, the J-OPS (Japanese Optimism and Pessimism Scale) was developed in response to such criticisms. This scale comprises ten items each for optimism and pessimism. Research using this scale has shown that optimism influences one's senses of happiness and of fulfillment, and that pessimism affects depression, anxiety, and lethargy.

Since then, using the J-OPS, findings and insights have been derived on the influence of optimism on happiness in Japan. Generally, optimism relates to adaptation, and mental health is affected by the coping mechanism one selects under stress. People who are highly optimistic tend to choose a problem-solving-oriented coping strategy that will help them control emotions. They do not tend to use avoidance strategies in which they ignore stressors or avoid negative emotions.

Toyama (2014) applied this framework and examined the relationship between optimism and coping strategies in Japan. It was found that people who are highly optimistic use approaching coping strategies, and those who are highly pessimistic use avoidance coping strategies, but these features are observed only when the stressful situation is recognized as important for oneself. Additionally, there is an indication that those who are highly optimistic (that is also to say those who are less pessimistic) are better able to make self-adjustments. These results support the model that optimism influences adaptations and mental health through coping strategies.

Based on this scale, an optimism-pessimism scale has been developed for children, with five items for each domain (Toyama, 2016). In a study using this scale,

researchers tested the validity of the model in which optimism and pessimism influence adaptation to school and mental health through coping strategies. In particular, children with a high sense of optimism tend to take engaging coping strategies, such as asking for support and attempting to resolve problems; based on such strategies, they enjoy their school life and have a stronger sense of validation by their teachers and classmates. Though there are other scales for children, such as the YLOT (Youth Life Orientation Test; Ey et al., 2005), research on this area is limited even in the West. Given the contribution this could make on applied tasks such as school adaptation, it would be inevitable to examine the replicability of Toyama's (2016) findings in the West.

As her works indicate, she is one of the leading young researchers in Japan who explored the culturally unique self-perception of the Japanese and its relations to social adaptation.

Shimai, Satoshi

Satoshi Shimai is currently a professor at Kansai University of Social Welfare. He completed his work at the Graduate School of Humanities, Kwansei Gakuin University in 1978, and subsequently earned his doctorate of medicine (MD) from Fukushima Medical University in 1992. His published works have delved into such topics as public health and mental health, the behaviors involved in health promotion, and stress coping; as a researcher, he is among the most active proponents of positive psychology in Japan (e.g., Shimai, 2006, 2009, 2015; Shimai et al., 2004, 2006).

Along with being an eminent health psychologist, he has stood out as a pioneer in developing positive psychology from a health psychology viewpoint. From 2002 to 2003, he visited the University of Pennsylvania, where he was involved in research led by Dr. Martin Seligman, the founder of positive psychology, and Dr. Chris Peterson, who substantively supported Seligman's research. The Seligman laboratory at this time was brimming with energy at the task of launching positive psychology as a discipline. Dr. Peterson was greatly involved in a research project aimed at categorizing, evaluating, and utilizing the "character strengths" of people. This research was an attempt to shed light on human behavior, not in terms of incentives and desires, but based on positive mental traits, such as courage, honesty, hope, and love. Shimai created the Japanese version of the VIA Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), a scale to evaluate those character strengths. This work has been published as Otake et al. (2005). Their investigation into the validity of the Japanese scale revealed that people who report a greater number of individual strengths show greater subjective well-being. In addition, in a study comparing how young adults in Japan and the US respond to the scale, he found that strength rankings and gender differences appear similar between the two groups (Shimai et al., 2006).

Positive psychology contributes to realizing both personal and social goals, and allows individuals to discover their own mental strengths and capitalize on their outstanding qualities. This idea has driven Shimai to expand positive psychology research concepts into a variety of other fields, including public health (e.g., anti-smoking campaigns, stress management in offices and schools) and school education (e.g., bullying, education on the meaning of life and death). Further, he is actively involved in finding evidence for positive psychology interventions, developing intervention-related tools, and producing educational materials to cultivate positive psychology facilitators. The results of his efforts have been published in books (Otake, 2016; Shimai, 2015).

In recent years, Shimai has been working on research on the relationship between body image and mental health. Eating disorders have become a problem in Japan, caused by an intense diet-oriented mindset and excessive dieting in today's youth. Shimai created the Body Dissatisfaction Scale of the Eating Disorder Inventory, or EDI-BD(S), to provide a foundation for tackling this problem. The scale, developed based on the original EDI (Gartner, 1991), measures overall dissatisfaction with one's appearance, and preliminary findings suggest its usefulness in screening healthy adults. In addition, Shimai created the Japanese version of the third version of the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire (SATAQ-3JS), which measures how people internalize and are influenced by media messages, attributed as one cause of a warped body image. His research revealed that the more people believe the body images presented by the media to be ideal, the greater their dissatisfaction with their appearance and the stronger their desire to appear slim.

Shimai established the research field of positive psychology in Japan, and is the researcher who has contributed the most to spreading its ideas. He has organized symposia on the topic of positive psychology with the Japanese Association of Health Psychology (Shimai, 2004) and Japanese Psychological Association (Shimai & Kodama, 2005, 2006; Shimai & Suzuki, 2007; Suzuki & Shimai, 2004; Tsuda & Shimai, 2006), increasingly drawing researchers' attention to positive psychology. In addition, his *Positive Psychology*, published in 2009, is the most important general-audience book on the topic. He has played important roles in social contribution activities, having served in successive positions in the Japanese Association of Health Psychology, Japanese Society of Behavioral Medicine, and Japanese Positive Health Psychology Society, as well as worked as a committee member in the Japan Society of School Health.

Horike, Kazuya

Kazuya Horike is a professor of the Department of Social Psychology, Toyo University. He also is a management council member of the 21st Century Human Interaction Research Center of Toyo University, whose mission is to promote not only the recovery but also the personal growth of people who are in a predicament.

He was nominated as the professor emeritus of Iwate University for his contribution to the academic society. He served as the president of the Japanese Group Dynamics Association from 2000 to 2003, and the vice president of Japan Society of Personality Psychology from 2009 to 2012.

In the early days of his career, his work concentrated mainly on personality psychology. Since the 1990s, he has been studying the relationship between personality and subjective well-being. Although positive psychology was yet to be active at that time, he conducted studies focusing on the relationship between Big five and subjective well-being. One of his early works (Horike, 1999) revealed that Big five is strongly related to subjective well-being. In the paper, he argued that the relationship might be rooted in genetic factors on one hand, but that we also should not ignore cultural factors which might determine the construal of the personality factors such as “agreeableness” and “openness to experience.”

He then extended the research by adopting the idea of “coherent frame of personality.” The concept emphasizes the importance of examining the relationships among the person’s neural, cognitive, and emotional processes, and of considering the person’s consistent behavioral pattern across situations. Based on this approach, he and his colleagues examined how the motivation system starts as brain functions (e.g., BIS-BAS system), leads to cognitive appraisals of situations, and, in turn, determines behavior and subjective well-being. Based on the empirical findings, he argued that subjective well-being (or related concepts such as happiness, life satisfaction, positive/negative emotion) would be dynamically determined by the individual differences in the neural system and the appraisals of the situational characteristics. The situational appraisals include that of one’s own performance in important life domains and of relationships with others, and they appear to be sensitive to the cultural context. Therefore, research on subjective well-being needs to explore the interaction of the personality system and various factors at the neural, cognitive, interpersonal, and cultural level (Horike et al., 2007, 2008).

Another line of his contribution is the improvement of the scale to measure happiness (and well-being) in Japan, Minimalist Well-being Scale (MWS; Kan et al., 2009). MWS was developed to measure happiness among the Japanese based on a cultural-psychological concern that the low scores on the sense of happiness in Japan may, to a certain extent, be attributed to the scales developed in the Western culture. According to Kan et al. (2009), MWS comprises two factors. The first factor relates to gratitude, and it involves thankfulness for one’s own existence and positive feeling about one’s current status. The other factor is comprised of peaceful disengagements, such as not doing anything or enjoying the time alone. However, Horike and Ohshima (2015) conducted a study targeting a broader age range (from the 20s to the 60s), and found that the 12 items of Kan et al. (2009) could be divided into the following three factors: gratitude (e.g., I feel grateful that I am alive), just-as-is (e.g., I feel content in the moment), and peacefulness (e.g., It is comforting to take it easy). These three concepts seem to capture the important characteristics of happiness in Japan and evidently more studies are needed to clarify the factor structure of the scale.

Horike recently turned his attention to the issue of a sustainable society, and argues the importance of understanding the individual differences in the sustainable mind and the sustainable behavior. Deepening the understanding in such aspects would contribute to the promotion of education in sustainable development, and to social interventions aimed at motivating sustainable behaviors. Since sustainable growth is a fundamental condition for our well-being, the topic is definitely among core interests of positive psychology.

Horike developed the ‘sustainable mind (SM) scale’ and the ‘sustainable behavior (SB) scale,’ based on Corral-Verdugo et al. (2010), and examined the relationship among happiness, sustainable mind, and behavior (Horike, 2012, 2013a, 2013b). Horike and Ohshima (2015) found that those who are high in sustainable mind show stronger happiness measured by the MWS, whereas sustainable behavior was only weakly related to happiness. Based on the findings, they argue the need for interventions to reduce the cost of sustainable behaviors to promote well-being in a sustainable society.

Horike has published numerous books and contributed to book chapters on social and personality psychology. His writings have been essential reference for those interested in positive psychology in Japan. Among them, *The Development of Positive Psychology—Its Strength and Future Directions* (Horike, 2010) would be one of the most important readings. Through the editing of this book, he gathered social and personality psychologists who had been discussing the issues on well-being, happiness, and adaptation, and formed a community of researchers who take interest in positive psychology. One of his research focuses had been subjective well-being, and throughout his career he has introduced various concepts and theories of positive psychology to Japanese psychologists. He undoubtedly has played a prominent role in the rise of positive psychology in Japan.

Major Issues and Opportunities for the Future of Positive Psychology in Japan

The research findings offered by Japanese positive psychologists regarding the sense of happiness, self-cognition, and self-evaluation in the Japanese society—which differs from the Western society in terms of the cultural background—point to the fact that the field of positive psychology should emphasize cultural factors and their impact. The purpose and the practical task of positive psychology is to promote the positive functions people have and to increase well-being; therefore, it is essential to take into account the various cultural backgrounds people are placed in and to prepare evaluation tools based on these features, to accumulate empirical knowledge.

Still, we need a careful and in-depth discussion regarding the impact of cultural characteristics. Painting Japan with a broad brush as a collectivistic culture and focusing exclusively on such characteristics could lead to great misunderstandings,

and future studies of positive psychology in Japan should be sensitive to the social and cultural changes that the country experiences. Furthermore, Japanese positive psychologists should present not only studies emphasizing cultural differences, but those focusing on characteristics that are universal across cultures. Indeed, many Japanese psychologists have been conducting empirical studies aiming at the psychological processes common to all human beings.

Based on these considerations, we will first discuss the changes that Japanese society is undergoing and their implications for people's happiness and well-being. Then we will discuss the necessity of disseminating findings to the academic community outside of Japan; we expect that it will contribute to a greater number of valid, impactful findings in Japan, and that the field will play a significant role in the international community of positive psychology.

Changes in the Japanese Society in Recent Years: Implications for Happiness and Well-Being

Due to the recent wave of globalization in recent years, "individualism" has begun to permeate the Japanese culture. Accordingly, researchers examining happiness from a cultural psychological perspective are now paying attention to how such social changes in Japan affect the conceptualization and determinants of happiness and well-being. Uchida et al. (2012), in their aforementioned paper, report that a majority of their study's participants could be categorized as the "open-type"; the authors address the need to verify whether or not the study's findings reflect the characteristics of young people who are becoming more individualistic in recent years.

From a historical perspective, after experiencing a period of rapid economic growth and industrialization after the 1960s, the tendencies of individualism, meritocracy, and competitiveness have become visible. This has led to all sorts of phenomena at various levels in the individuals and in families, as well as in the macro society. At the level of individuals and families, we find changes in lifestyles, as signified by factors such as the advancement of women in the society, reduction in the size of a household, and increase in the divorce rate are evident (Hamamura, 2012). Socially, the traditional full-time, life-long employment system, which gave stability, changed to a performance-based system where workers are evaluated based on achievement and performance. Additionally, we witness major changes in the patterns of employment and the labor market with an increase in dispatched contractors and short-term employment, and the expansion of irregular employment.

These changes have become more apparent over the last two to three decades; however, it has been questioned if people have managed to adapt to such sudden changes in the society. Norasakkunkit and Uchida (2011) have noted that these changes are "not phenomena which equally befall all people." As all people cannot exert their full potential to achieve something under meritism and achievementism, the rise in the disparity between people is one of the characteristics of the

modern-day Japanese society. In the end, the question of whether or not a person is succeeding socially may be related to whether or not they have a stable full-time employment. Only those elites who survive the competition are able to secure a job as a full-time employee in a stable large enterprise and are able to secure a stable income that allows them to maintain a life of abundance. Thus, those who fall out of such a track may be at risk of defining themselves as social failures.

In fact, this situation has created social categories such as *Haken*, literally meaning “dispatch”: A form of employment in which people register in a temporary staffing agency and are then dispatched to work in companies they are introduced to. Another such category is NEET (abbreviation for “Not in Education, Employment, or Training”), which refers to the non-labor force population aged between 15 and 34 years, who neither attend school nor help around the house). Finally, *Hikikomori* are people who have completely withdrawn from work and from the society, who have isolated themselves in their room for more than 6 months. Such terms are now used as common vocabulary in the Japanese society.

Under such conditions, though tendencies towards meritocracy or individualism can be seen in Japan, it is possible that that the nature of this emerging form of individualism may be qualitatively different from that observed in the Western society. Kitayama (2010, 2012) pointed out that Japan’s individualism is interpreted as “doing something alone,” and to the Japanese, the concept of individualism may be closely linked to selfishness, loneliness, and social isolation. In fact, there are findings that support such conclusions. Ogihara and Uchida (2014) argued that, in Japan, those who display higher tendencies towards individualism have fewer close friends. Additionally, what is even more important from the perspective of positive psychology is that having fewer friends may lead to a reduction in happiness.

If individualism in Japan does not mean “mutually respecting the rights and responsibilities of each other as a member belonging to a group,” but rather means doing something alone, then such individualism would likely not help in building or sustaining positive interpersonal relationships. Therefore, in Japan, where interpersonal relationships are an important resource for achieving happiness, perhaps it is inevitable that this form of individualism leads to a decline in happiness levels. Additionally, though globalization has brought changes to the Japanese society and has reduced its collectivistic features, Japanese society and the Japanese may still maintain their relationship-oriented features. Therefore, it would then be necessary to engage in multi-faceted examinations that consider the relationship between the areas of the society that change due to globalization and those that are maintained despite such changes.

Toward a Contribution to the International Academic Community of Positive Psychology

On the one hand, positive psychologists in Japan do realize strongly the cultural issues relevant to positive psychology, and they have successfully shed light on aspects that are unique to Japan. On the other hand, research in the field of positive psychology in Japan has not only been confined to cultural differences. It has also taken into consideration the global trends in the field, consciously conducting studies in areas that are likely universal and common to all human beings.

Horike (2010) mentions that research on positive psychology has mainly focused on the following five areas: (1) positive emotions, (2) positive characteristics and cognition, (3) positive interpersonal relations, (4) positive environment and policy, and (5) positive psychological interventions. Since this chapter focused on reporting the trends in research with an emphasis on characteristics of the Japanese culture, it was not possible to cover other families of research that does not focus on such cultural differences. Consequently, the discussion excluded several studies that were not confined to the Japanese culture. However, it is important to note that studies also aim to make academic contributions to subjects concerning positive psychology with reference to the universal aspects that are observed across cultures. Therefore, the positive psychologists in Japan should engage in sharing such findings globally.

The Japanese have a long lifespan, and they are economically prosperous, and are able to enjoy a rich and safe life. However, when it comes to mental health, Japan faces several social issues. We must therefore urgently identify how economic and social institutions in Japan affect the citizens' mental health and happiness. In this regard, the knowledge gained in the field of positive psychology will likely play an important role. Additionally, it can also be expected that the research findings obtained in Japan will also contribute to understanding the concept of happiness in other nations that belong to the East Asian culture.

Positive psychology should not only develop by gathering findings from health psychology and cultural psychology, but it should also integrate findings from social psychology, personality psychology, educational psychology, and other such fields. In Japan, there has been an increase in young researchers who take interest in positive psychology, and they are certainly making contributions through their research activities. However, currently there is no established association for positive psychology in Japan. To pursue research on people's positive functions, it is necessary to create a platform in which researchers from various psychological fields could gather up and lively discuss on relevant topics. This is one of the issues that the field of positive psychology in our country needs to tackle.

Resources

For those readers who would like to know more about positive psychology in Japan, the following resources are provided.

Contact Information for Japanese Positive Psychologists

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- Miki Toyama, Ph.D., associate professor at the Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, Tsukuba University. Email: mtoyama@human.tsukuba.ac.jp. Website: <http://www.u.tsukuba.ac.jp/~toyama.miki.ga/index.html> Address: Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences, University of Tsukuba, 1-1-1 Ten-noudai, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan 305-8571.
- Shimai Satoshi, M.D., professor at Faculty of Psychology, Kansai University of Social Welfare. Telephone: +81-072-978-0088 (The main office of the university). Website: <http://www.fuksi-kagk-u.ac.jp/faculty/psychology/shimai-satoshi.html> Address: Kansai University of Social Welfare, 3-11-1, Asahigaoka, Kashihara-shi, Osaka, Japan 582-0026.
- Horike, Kazuya, M.A., professor of the Department of Social Psychology, Toyo University. Email: kekehor@toyo.jp; Telephone: +81-03-3945-7224. Website: <http://ris.toyo.ac.jp/profile/en.dcd4801481ce551b9398369b7aab7.html> Address: Faculty of Sociology, Toyo University, 5-28-20, Hakusan, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo, Japan 113-0001.

Websites

Research Institutes

Listed below are institutes where research related to positive psychology are being actively conducted.

- **Kokoro Research Center, Kyoto University.** Website: <http://kokoro.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/index.html>
- **21st Century Human Interaction Research Center, Toyo University.** Website: <http://www.toyo.ac.jp/site/hirc21/>
- **Laboratory of Psychological Science, Kanazawa Institute of Technology.** Website: <http://www.kanazawa-it.ac.jp/wwwr/lab/lps/index.html>

Academic Societies

Many Japanese Psychologists who are interested in issues related to positive psychology belong to the academic societies listed below.

- **The Japanese Psychological Association.** Website: <http://www.psych.or.jp/english/>
- **The Japanese Association of Health Psychology.** Website: <http://jahp.wdc-jp.com/english/>
- **The Japanese Society of Social Psychology.** Website: http://www.socialpsychology.jp/index_e.html
- **Japan Society of Personality Psychology.** Website: http://jspp.gr.jp/about_us.html
- **The Japanese Group Dynamics Association.** Website: <http://www.groupdynamics.gr.jp/english/>
- **Japanese Positive Health Psychology Society.** Website (available in Japanese only): <http://jphp.jp/>
- **The Japanese Association of Educational Psychology.** Website (available in Japanese only): <https://www.edupsych.jp/>

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Chapter 18

Region of Pacific Rim (Australia and New Zealand)

Yilma Woldgabreal

Positive Psychology in Australia and New Zealand

Before outlining the historical background and current state of positive psychology in Australia and New Zealand, a brief mention of similarities and differences between the two nations would seem appropriate. Arguably, no two countries have more commonalities and stronger bond than Australia and New Zealand. Both nations were established by Britain in the last three centuries and built on the invasion of native Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia, and the Maori people and Pacific Islanders in New Zealand. The various colonies which made the modern day Australia and New Zealand stayed under the British administration for a very long time, beginning with the arrival of the first fleet from England to Australia in 1788 (Denoon et al., 2000). However, with the steadily increasing number of settlers coupled with continued progress in the social, economic and political structures of the then colonies, the colonial masters gradually allowed increased autonomy for self-administration. This eventually gave rise to the 1901 Australian Federation consisting of the six colonies (now states). New Zealand was part of the initial talks, however, decided not to join the federation. Interestingly, Section 6 of the Australian Constitution (Definitions) still leaves the door open for New Zealand:

The States shall mean such of the colonies of New South Wales, **New Zealand**, Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, and South Australia, including the northern territory of South Australia, as for the time being are parts of the Commonwealth, and such colonies or territories as may be admitted into or established by the Commonwealth as States; and

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each of such parts of the Commonwealth shall be called a State (Australasian Legal Information Institute, 2016).

Despite the early separation, Australia and New Zealand have maintained comprehensive and close bilateral relationships across several domains, including defence, economic, political and social engagements. For example, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZC) fought side-by-side on the battlefield at Gallipoli during World War I, which to this day remains to be one of the most celebrated historical ties between the two nations (Erickson, 2015). They have also jointly owned important business activities and ventured together on a number of fronts. Examples of these include the ANZ Banking groups, Australian and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce, Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Australian and New Zealand Institute of Criminology, *Australian and New Zealand Medical Journal*, and *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. The list for common initiatives is simply endless and reflects the shared values and bonds between the two countries. Most importantly, the 1973 Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangements between Australia and New Zealand allowed their citizens to visit, live and work in either county without restrictions (Scollay et al., 2011). To date, hundreds of thousands of Australians and New Zealanders cross the Tasman each year as tourists, for work and/or to visit relatives. According to a recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimate, over 647,000 New Zealand citizens currently live in Australia, while there are around 65,000 Australians in New Zealand (ABS, 2015).

It is also important to note that despite the strong connection and common grounds, the two countries have both historical and present circumstances that uniquely define them from each other. Some of these are summarised in Table 18.1.

In spite of these unique defining circumstances, it is indeed fair to say that Australia and New Zealand have more similarities than differences. As noted earlier, individuals, groups and institutions of both nations frequently embark upon common ventures and adopt similar practices. This has been typically the case with the introduction of positive psychology since the movement began in the United States in the late 1990s. In Australia, many tertiary institutions now offer courses specifically designed to advance the science of positive psychology. Examples include the Master of Applied Positive Psychology at the University of Melbourne, the Master of Science in Coaching Psychology (applied positive psychology) at the University of Sydney, and the Institute of Positive Psychology and Education branch at the Australian Catholic University. Australia also inaugurated the Australian Positive Psychology and Well-being Conference in 2009, which has since been held biennially. The purpose of this conference has been to bring together professionals, academics and students with an interest in positive psychology, and to share experiences, ideas and encourage collaboration in research and practices. At the same time, there is a growing interest and support for positive interventions by government and non-government sectors such as schools, health and employment agencies (Vella-Brodrick, 2011).

Table 18.1 Glimpses of Australia vs. New Zealand

	Australia	New Zealand
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founded based on penal colonies of British from 1788 to 1868, with more than 160,000 convicts transported from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales during this period. These convicts were eventually joined by free settlers from Britain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founded based on religious colony, with British missionaries sent to convert Maori people to Christianity from 1814
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24,413,426 (October, 2016) • World population rank 53rd • Urban 89.3% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,576,542 (October, 2016) • World population rank 127th • Urban 87.6%
Indigenous population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders populations are multi-cultural and diverse with estimated 250 tribal languages • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders cultures lack influence in the Australian society • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have lower participation rate in education and labour market, experience significant poverty, overrepresented in the criminal justice system, and suffer from poor health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maori population is relatively mono-cultural and more prominent (e.g., Maori is an official language of New Zealand, taught in schools, used in government departments and broadcasted on television) • New Zealand has a Maori monarch and a Maori war dance for national ceremonial events (e.g., rugby match) • Maori people also overrepresented in the criminal justice system, but have better participation rate in the job market and education systems
Racial groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European 71.7%, Chinese 3.1%, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders 3%, Indian 1.4%, Greek 1.4%, Dutch 1.2%, and other 18.2% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European 71.2%, Maori 14.1%, Asian 11.3%, Pacific peoples 7.6%, and other 8.1%
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English 76.8% (official), Mandarin 1.6%, Italian 1.4%, Arabic 1.3%, Greek 1.2%, Cantonese 1.2%, Vietnamese 1.1%, and other 15.4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English 89.8% (de facto official), Maori 3.5% (de jure official), Samoan 2%, Hindi 1.6%, French 1.2%, Northern Chinese 1.2%, Yue 1%, and other 20.5%
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desert, scorched earth and leached soils, which can be difficult for farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High and reliable rainfall, nutrient rich soils, but winters can be tough as well as occasional earthquakes
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP per capita US\$54,717 • Agriculture 3.7% • Industry 28.9% • Services 67.4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP per capita US\$36,463 • Agriculture 4.2% • Industry 26.8% • Services 69%
Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting is compulsory • Preferential voting system in which candidates are ranked. This results in two major parties (i.e., Labour and Liberal) being dominant and alternating in power • Australia has a senate • Australia does not have seats reserved for its indigenous people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting is not compulsory • Proportional voting system. This results in some dominant parties, but also representation of minorities (e.g., business lobbies, environmentalists) are always ensured • New Zealand does not have a senate • New Zealand has special seats reserved for its native Maori people

In New Zealand, positive psychology evolved in similar ways. It is currently being taught as part of an undergraduate psychology course at the Auckland University and Victoria University of Wellington (Jarden & Jarden, 2016). In particular, positive psychology has been promoted widely since the establishment of the New Zealand Association of Positive Psychology (NZAPP) in 2008. The mission of NZAPP is to promote the science and practice of positive psychology and its research-based applications, and to foster communication and collaboration among researchers, practitioners, teachers, students, and across disciplines, who are interested in positive psychology (NZAPP, 2016). In direct practice, positive psychology has attracted interest from peak national bodies in New Zealand, including the Treasury, Ministry of Education and Mental Health Foundation in relation to the formulation of policies and approaches that seek to increase resilience and improve wellbeing in the general community (Jarden, 2016).

Clearly, positive psychology is making great strides and has been very well received in Australia and New Zealand. This is directly attributed to the work of many researchers and scholars who have continued to explore the field with keen interest in developing and finding out strengths, and designing approaches in which institutions or organisations can use these strengths to promote optimal human functioning. The next section introduces some of these contributors and examples of their work.

Major Positive Psychologists

Some of the most influential positive psychologists in Australia and New Zealand are presented in Table 18.2. Note that this list is not exclusive and that there are many other positive psychologists who have made significant contributions to the ongoing advancement of positive psychology in both countries. Readers interested in exploring further about the work of other scholars are encouraged to refer to the additional resources provided in Table 18.3 at the end of this chapter. For now, only the work of five positive psychologists (Table 18.2) is described in detail due to limited space. All of these selected positive psychologists provided permission for their biographies and contributions to be included in this chapter.

Dianne Vella-Brodrick (Australia)

Dianne Vella-Brodrick (PhD) is an Associate Professor, Deputy Director and Head of Research at the Centre for Positive Psychology at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne. She is the inaugural Director of the Master of Applied Positive Psychology program (2013–2015) and is a registered psychologist and a Member of the Australian Psychological Society and College of Health Psychologists. She founded the Positive Psychology Network in Australia and is

Table 18.2 Top positive psychology researchers/influencers in the region of Pacific Rim

Name	Area of research	Institute	Country	Website
Dianne Vella-Brodrick	Positive education and workplace well-being	University of Melbourne	Australia	http://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person127276
Suzy Green	Applied positive psychology in the education, corporate and community sectors	The Positivity Institute	Australia	http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/public/research/meetourresearchers/SuzyGreen.cfm
Lindsay Oades	Applications of wellbeing in workplaces, health and education systems	University of Melbourne	Australia	http://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person697284
Aaron Jarden	Flourishing, well-being	Auckland University of Technology	New Zealand	http://www.aaronjarden.com/
Maree Roche	Positive psychology at work, leadership and Maori leadership models	The University of Waikato	New Zealand	http://www.waikato.ac.nz/fass/about/staff/mroche

Secretary of the International Positive Psychology Association and Chair of the IPPA Membership Committee. Vella-Brodrick is an Editor in Chief of the *Psychology of Well-Being: Theory, Research and Practice* journal and has been a Director of the 2008, 2010 and 2014 Australian Positive Psychology and Well-being Conferences. She has published widely, and presents regularly at conferences. She serves on numerous research advisory boards, regularly reviews scientific papers for leading journals and has received around \$2.5 million funding for her world class research.

Vella-Brodrick's research interests include the development and evaluation of well-being programs, particularly in the areas of positive education and workplace well-being. She specialises in innovative mixed method designs which utilize the latest technology, experience sampling method and biological indices of well-being. Her research has a special focus on young people. She also integrates ethical and professional practice issues in much of her work and is currently the Ethics Chairperson at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education. Vella-Brodrick also has extensive experience with scale development and psychometric testing having been involved in the development of numerous well-being scales including the Wuzzup app and Wellbeing Profiler.

While Vella-Brodrick's contribution to positive psychology is diverse, she has a particular interest in evaluation and measurement development to examine the impacts of positive psychology interventions on mental health and well-being outcomes for young people. For example, one of her collaborative studies examined the efficacy of internet-based interventions using a randomized controlled trial design which compared three conditions: a strengths intervention, a problem solving

Table 18.3 Resources for readers

Contact details	Area of research	Websites
Anthony Grant, Associate Professor of Psychology The University of Sydney Faculty of Science Office Level 2, Carslaw Building (F07) NSW 2006, Australia Phone: +61 2 9351 6792, Fax: +61 2 9036 5223, Mobile_phone:+61 413 747493 Email: anthony.grant@sydney.edu.au	Coaching psychology, goal attainment	http://sydney.edu.au/science/people/anthony.grant.php http://www.instituteofcoaching.org/anthony-grant-phd
Dianne Vella-Brodrick, Associate Professor The University of Melbourne Level 5, 161 Barry Street The University of Melbourne Parkville 3010 VIC Australia Phone: +61 3 8344 0254 Email: dianne.Vella-Brodrick@unimelb.edu.au	Positive education and Workplace well-being	http://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person127276
Alison Ogier-Price, M.A Working Well in the Work Place Program Manager PO Box 10051, Dominion Road Auckland 1446, New Zealand Phone: 09 623 4812 Email: info@mentalhealth.org.nz	Application of positive mental health to organisations, groups and individuals	http://www.workingwell.co.nz/index.php/about-working-well/meet-the-team/310-alison-ogier-price.html
Aaron Jarden, Ph.D. Auckland University of Technology 55 Wellesley St E, Auckland, 1010, New Zealand Phone: +64 21 300935 Email: aaron.jarden@aut.ac.nz	Flourishing, well-being	http://www.aut.ac.nz/profiles/aaron-jarden http://www.aaronjarden.com/ https://www.workonwellbeing.com/about-wow.php https://www.awesomeschools.com/about-us.php
Erica Chadwick, Ph.D. <i>Mindbranch</i> Founding Director PO Box 33468, Petone, Lower Hutt, NZ, 5046 Phone: +64 21 941 679 Email: erica@mindbranch.co.nz	Human development, flourishing and savouring	http://mindbranch.co.nz/about-us/ http://maustif6.wixsite.com/manukahealthcentre/clinical-psychology
Lea Waters, Professor of Psychology The University of Melbourne Level 5, 161 Barry Street The University of Melbourne Parkville 3010 VIC Australia Phone: +(61 3) 8344 0050 Email: l.waters@unimelb.edu.au	Positive psychology, positive education, positive organisations and positive parenting	http://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person2778 http://www.leawaters.com/about.html http://www.leawaters.com/

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Table 18.3 (continued)

Contact details	Area of research	Websites
Tamlin Conner, Ph.D. University of Otago, Department of Psychology PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand Phone: 64 3 479 7624 Email: tconner@psy.otago.ac.nz	Happiness and well-being; health	http://www.otago.ac.nz/psychology/research/otago028080.html http://www.otago.ac.nz/psychology/staff/tamlinconner.html
Maree Roche, Ph.D. The University of Waikato Gate 1 Knighton Road Private Bag 3105, Hamilton 3240, New Zealand Phone: +64 7 856 2889 Email: mroche@waikato.ac.nz	Positive psychology at work, leadership and Maori leadership models	http://www.waikato.ac.nz/fass/about/staff/mroche
Suzy Green, Ph.D. The Positivity Institute Founder and CEO Level 57 MLC Centre, 19-29 Martin Place Sydney NSW 2000, Australia Phone: +61 2 9223 4981 Email: suzy@thepositivityinstitute.com.au	Applied positive psychology in the education, corporate and community sectors	http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/public/research/meetourresearchers/SuzyGreen.cfm http://www.thepositivityinstitute.com.au/about-us
Mathew White, Associate Professor of Psychology The University of Melbourne Level 5, 161 Barry Street The University of Melbourne Parkville 3010 VIC Australia Phone: +(61 3) 9035 5511 Email: whitem@unimelb.edu.au	Wellbeing and positive education	http://www.positivepsychologyandwellbeing.com/mathew-white
Kate Lemerle, Ph.D. Institute for Applied Positive Psychology PO Box 4045, Springfield QLD 4300, Australia Phone: +(61 7) 3555 7575 Email: pospsych13@iinet.net.au	Wellbeing, and resilience from a cross-cultural perspective	http://appliedpospsych.com/dr-kate-lemerle/
Lucy Hone, Ph.D. 100% Project P.O. Box 19800 Woolston, Christchurch 8241, New Zealand Phone: 021 999 376 Email: nfo@100percentproject.co.nz	Wellbeing and resilience	http://www.100percentproject.co.nz/lucy-hone
Sue Langley, M.A. Founder and CEO, Langley Group	Positive workplaces, leaders and teams	http://suelangley.com/sue-langley/

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Table 18.3 (continued)

Contact details	Area of research	Websites
of Companies 245 Carrington Road, Coogee NSW 2034, Australia Phone: +61 2 9399 398 Email: jacqui@langleygroup.com.au		http://wellbeingaustralia.com.au/wba/positive-psychology-and-emotional-intelligence-training/
Denise Quinlan, Ph.D. The Langley Group Institute 42 William Street, Balaclava VIC 3183, Australia Phone: +61 3 9005 8189 Email: denise@drdenisequinlan.com	Resilience and well-being in education	http://langleygroupinstitute.com/about/denise-quinlan/ http://www.drdenisequinlan.com/
Joseph Ciarrochi, Professor of Psychology Institute for Positive Psychology & Education Australian Catholic University 25A Barker Road Strathfield NSW 2135 Australia Phone: +61 2 9701 4626 Email: Joseph.Ciarrochi@acu.edu.au	Resilience, mindfulness-based approaches that promote social, emotional, and physical well-being	http://ippe.acu.edu.au/people/professor-joseph-ciarrochi/
Paula Robinson, Ph.D. Positive Psychology Institute Suites 416 & 417 St James Trust Building 183 Elizabeth St, Sydney NSW 2000, Australia Phone: +61 2 9264 3474 Email: info@positivepsychologyinstitute.com.au	Wellbeing and Mental Fitness for Individuals, Organisations, Schools & the Community	http://www.positivepsychologyinstitute.com.au/paula_robinson.html
Lindsay Oades, Associate Professor of Psychology The University of Melbourne Level 5, 161 Barry Street The University of Melbourne Parkville 3010 VIC Australia Phone: +61 383440170 Email: lindsay.oades@unimelb.edu.au	Applications of wellbeing in workplaces, health and education systems	http://findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/display/person697284
Fiona Howard, M.A. The University of Auckland Amaki Building 721 - Bldg 721, Level 3, Room 307 Tamaki Campus Gate 1, 261 Morrin Rd, St Johns Auckland 1072, New Zealand	Well-being in clinical practice	https://www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/people/f-howard

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Table 18.3 (continued)

Contact details	Area of research	Websites
Phone: +64 9 923 8420 Email: f.howard@auckland.ac.nz		
Elizabeth Peterson, Ph.D. The University of Auckland Human Sciences Building - East - Bldg 201E Level 6, Room 614, 10 Symonds St Auckland 1010, New Zealand Phone: +64 9 923 9693 Email: e.peterson@auckland. ac.nz	Wellbeing, learning and educational outcome	https://www.psych.auckland.ac.nz/people/e-peterson
The Wellbeing and Resilience Centre of South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) PO Box 11060, Adelaide 5001, South Australia Phone: +61 8 8128 4723 Email: wellbeing@SAHMRI.com	The SAHMRI Wellbeing and Resilience Centre was established based on Dr Martin Seligman's guidance and his PERMA model (Positive Emotion, Engage- ment, Relationships, Meaning and Accom- plishment). It also involves promotion of physical activities, nutrition, sleep and optimism, to measure and build wellbeing	http://www.wellbeingandresilience.com/ https://www.sahmri.org/
Australian Positive Psychology Association (APPA)	The APPA is an Australian on-line net- work of people inter- ested in Positive Psychology. At present there are no fees or subscriptions. APPA organizes national and international confer- ences designed to advance positive psychology	http://psychology-resources.org/explore-psychology/association-organisation-information/country-information/australia/australian-positive-psychology-association-appa/
The New Zealand Association of Positive Psychology (NZAPP)	The NZAPP promotes the science and practice of positive psychology and the application of research-based positive programs and interventions	http://www.positivepsychology.org.nz/
The International Journal of Wellbeing (IJW)	The IJW was launched in New Zealand in	

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Table 18.3 (continued)

Contact details	Area of research	Websites
	2011 and promotes interdisciplinary research on wellbeing. It is an open access publication for academic research. The content is free for everyone to access, and there are no submission or publication fees for authors	http://www.internationaljournalofwellbeing.org/index.php/ijow
Langley Group Companies	The Langley Group is a leading consulting and people development company. It operates in Australia and New Zealand across various locations. Services are based on positive psychology, emotional intelligence and neuroscience to build positive organisations and leaders and get the best from people	http://langleygroup.com.au/ http://langleygroupinstitute.com/diploma-of-positive-psychology-and-wellbeing-australia/ http://langleygroupinstitute.com/diploma-of-positive-psychology-and-wellbeing-new-zealand/
Positive Education Schools Association (PESA)	PESA is a nationally incorporated association that fosters the implementation and development of positive psychology and its applications in education settings	https://www.pesa.edu.au/

intervention and a placebo control group (Mitchell et al., 2009). Participants completed measures of well-being and mental illness before and after interventions, and in a 3-month follow-up. Findings of this study revealed heightened level of well-being among those who completed the strengths-based intervention program compared to the other groups at post-program assessment phase, overall suggesting the role of positive intervention in promoting well-being via a self-guided internet intervention.

More recently, Vella-Brodrick and her team conducted a series of large scale evaluation studies to examine the effectiveness of the Positive Education program implemented by the Geelong Grammar School (GGS) in Melbourne (Vella-Brodrick et al., 2014, 2015). GGS has been using the PERMA model of positive psychology interventions by Seligman (2002) since the late 2000s. PERMA seeks to promote

positive emotions, engaged life, positive relationships, meaningful life, and accomplishment. GGS adopted the PERMA model with dedicated lessons being integrated in the school curriculum to teach emotional regulation, pro-social behaviors, realistic optimism, identification of character strengths and finding life meaning. The aim of this positive education is to mitigate life stressors while building resilience and fostering a sense of well-being among students. The evaluation studies by Vella-Brodrick and colleagues revealed that positive education can indeed protect young people from declining mental health as they progress through middle and senior school, and can enhance elements of well-being relating to hope, life satisfaction, positive affect, engagement and meaning.

With respect to measurement development, Vella-Brodrick and colleagues recently developed a new app called ‘Wuzzup’ as part of a comprehensive evaluation of programs run by the Reach Foundation, a national youth-led or peer support scheme designed to improve young people’s well-being by promoting a range of positive psychological states such as positive emotions, life satisfaction, resilience, meaning engagement, positive relationships, autonomy, competence and strength awareness (Chin et al., 2016). The app was designed to store young people’s momentary experiential encounters by asking them to respond to a range of pre-programmed questions about their affects, naturally occurring social and environmental events (positive or negative), source of triggers, and their subjective evaluation of those experiences. The idea behind this technologically innovative experiential sampling method is to capture real-time feelings, thoughts and actions in response to the occurrence of everyday events. Vella-Brodrick and colleagues utilized the ‘Wuzzup’ app to examine the real-time experiences of female and male young people (between the ages of 13 and 15 years) who participated in the Reach Foundation programs. The app was programmed to randomly prompt participants to sample their experiences based on set questions twice each day—once in the morning, and once in the afternoon for 7 days. The app allows participants to choose from a drop-down list of strategies in response to events experienced. An example of a positive strategy for an event experienced is “*I cherished the moment*”; and a negative strategy is “*I tried to avoid the situation*”. Data were then downloaded from the returned research iPods and analysed. The result demonstrated adequate internal reliability and construct validity of the ‘Wuzzup’ app as a measure of momentary affect and activation states of young people’s positive and negative experiences.

Vella-Brodrick is currently working on rigorous methodological approaches for positive psychology research. She has frequently emphasised that positive psychology has made great strides in developing intervention programs across several domains such as workplaces, schools and sports, however, evaluation studies in these areas have not been able to keep up with the pace at which many of these noble initiatives have evolved (Jarden et al., 2013). For Vella-Brodrick, evaluation studies should focus on the whole measurement approach and should attempt to integrate the biopsychosocial aspects of well-being. This means that interventions should be aimed at achieving not just short-term effects, but also long-term effects to permeate at the deeper biopsychosocial levels that will create more lasting impact on

individuals, groups and institutions. Essentially, she advocates for a multi-method approach for the identification of thoughts and feelings, psychobiological factors and behavioral measures of well-being. To this end, her current work primarily focuses on the development and use of a variety of assessment methods, including self-reports, focus groups, biological and physiological markers, and experience sampling of well-being.

Lindsay G. Oades (Australia)

Lindsay G. Oades is an Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for Positive Psychology, Melbourne University Graduate School of Education. He completed his PhD in Clinical Psychology. Oades also holds a Masters of Business Administration with Distinction, sponsored by the University of Wollongong, culminating in being awarded Commerce Alumni of the Year. In 2013, he received an Australian Government citation for outstanding contribution to student learning. Oades was previously a Member of the Australian Psychological Society, the College of Clinical Psychologists and the College of Health Psychologists. In 2015, he was invited to move from his position (School of Psychology and Sydney Business School) of over 15 years at the University of Wollongong to work at the Centre for Positive Psychology at the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne. Oades has taught applied psychology at undergraduate and postgraduate levels for 20 years in psychology, nursing, business and education in Australia, Hong Kong and Japan. He speaks at conferences around the world, and has published more than 100 peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly book chapters cited over 2300 times (h-index = 24). Oades has been part of teams that have gained over \$2.8 million in competitive research funding, and contract research or consultancies (domestic and international) of over \$594,000 in applied health and education contexts. He has supervised 13 doctoral students successfully to completion. His research interests concern the applications of well-being in workplaces, health and education systems. Oades' recent consultancies include the Australian Mental Health Commission (working on the Contributing Life Project), NSW Mental Health Commission (involved in the development on the Well-being Collaborative), Department of Education and Community (consulting on the development of the NSW Well-being Framework for Schools) and Maudsley International (international global mental health consultancy).

One of Oades' major contributions to the field of positive psychology relates to the development and implementation of a recovery orientated mental health service provision. This work is referred to as the Collaborative Recovery Model (CRM), which is a positive mental health approach to people already with mental illness. The CRM has evolved over a number of years and based on empirically established intervention principles (Andresen et al., 2003). These involve, among others, self-directed or consumer-lead recovery pathways, individualized person-centered engagement processes, empowerment, and a holistic approach encompassing the

various aspects of an individual's life such as mind, body, spirit, and community or peer support. The CRM is primarily designed to facilitate and encourage mental health practitioners to focus on factors that promote the recovery process rather than the traditional medical meaning of cure. The term 'recovery' itself refers to the personal and transformational process of clients living with mental illness as opposed to fixed mindsets around diagnostic labels (Oades et al., 2009). As such, the CRM strongly emphasises the importance of working alliance with clients and promotion of positive psychological states such as resilience, optimism, and hope as part of the intervention process.

Thus, implementation of the CRM typically involves coaching mental health practitioners to develop competency in promoting positive psychological states. The idea is that coaching and encouraging practitioners to embrace collaboration and principles underpinning positive mental health recovery processes would better position them to help clients address negative mental health events without judgement or imposing their own values or beliefs of the recovery process. The CRM essentially assists practitioners to implement collaborative recovery-oriented mental health service provision rather than symptom reduction which is based on the traditional medical model. This is because the recovery-oriented approach has been conceptualised as being a personal journey, which would need to be consistent with clients' attitudes, values, feelings, goals, and skills (Oades et al., 2012). It is a way of promoting a satisfying, meaningful and hopeful life even with limitations caused by the mental illness.

The CRM is very well received and has been implemented across many government and non-government sectors providing mental health services in Australia. Unfortunately, the empirical evidence about the effectiveness of this intervention program is limited. Of the limited evaluation studies, one was conducted by Marshall et al. (2009). This qualitative study examined the experiences of mental health service consumers who were engaged in various recovery-focused support practices. The researchers utilised a self-report questionnaire specifically developed to measure the key aspects of the CRM (i.e. responsibility, collaboration, autonomy, motivation, needs, goals, homework). Participants were adult consumers ($N = 92$) from metropolitan, regional and rural non-government organizations and public mental health services in the eastern Australian states. The results indicated that consumers who received advice and intervention services from CRM-trained workers were more collaborative, willing to complete homework activities designed to assist them to achieve their goals, and frequently took responsibility for their own recovery compared with consumers using traditional services. Although preliminary, these findings provide evidence for the values and utilities of the CRM from the perspectives of service users.

Another qualitative study by Marshall et al. (2010) examined the views of eighteen mental health consumers working with practitioners who had received training in the CRM. Participants were divided in small focus groups and took part in in-depth meetings of approximately 2.5 h each regarding the importance of the CRM in mental health services. Findings from these focus group meetings suggested that consumers were highly motivated, engaged and empowered in the use of the

CRM from the outset. This means that mental health practitioners who draw upon the principles of CRM can increase clients' motivation and commitment to the mental health recovery process. While all the preliminary evidence is encouraging, the need for more rigorous evaluation studies is clear. Without which, the CRM is likely to thrive simply based on its pragmatic appeal without having a solid empirical foundation in terms of its effectiveness.

Suzy Green (Australia)

Suzy Green is a Clinical and Coaching Psychologist. She completed her Professional Doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Wollongong in 2003. After graduation she designed and taught "Applied Positive Psychology" in the Coaching Psychology Unit at the University of Sydney as an Adjunct Senior Lecturer from 2004 to 2014. She currently holds honorary academic positions with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne (Institute for Positive Psychology & Education), Australian Catholic University and the University of Wollongong. Green is also an Affiliate member of the Institute for Well-being at the University of Cambridge and the Black Dog Institute. Prior to that, she was the "Stress-less Expert" for *Australian Women's Health Magazine* for 8 years. In 2009 and 2011, she was the Director of two "Positive Psychology in Education" symposiums hosted by the Coaching Psychology Unit, University of Sydney, and in 2013 she was the Co-Director of the First Australian Positive Education Conference hosted by Knox Grammar School. In 2015 and 2016, she was the Co-Director of the Inaugural Positive Education Conference in Perth hosted by Perth College. Green is the Founder of The Positivity Institute, an organisation dedicated to the research and application of positive psychology for life, school and work. She was the recipient of an International Positive Psychology Fellowship Award and has published in the *Journal of Positive Psychology*. She currently maintains a strong media profile appearing regularly on television, radio and in print.

As highlighted in her biography, Green's research and professional practice has focused on applied positive psychology in the education, corporate and community sectors. At an individual level, she coaches her clients to bring about sustained cognitive, emotional and behavioural changes that facilitate the attainment of desired life goals and the enhancement of personal well-being. At group and corporate levels, her coaching work involves exploring ways in which businesses, executives and workplaces can encourage teamwork and performance by fostering strengths, resilience, ethical leadership and tolerance. Green is, thus, regarded as one of the top leaders in the field of coaching-oriented positive psychology practices in Australia. Her published work involved randomised controlled studies. One of these was conducted using a non-clinical sample of 56 adults (42 females and 14 males of 18–60 years of age) (Green et al., 2006). The non-clinical status of participants was determined based on the Brief Symptom Inventory screening tool (Derogatis & Melisaratos, 1983). They were then randomly assigned to either a 10-week

life-coaching intervention group or a waitlist control condition. All participants completed a questionnaire consisting of measures designed to assess levels of commitment to goal setting behavior, subjective well-being and hope before commencing and 1 week after the completion of the 10-week life coaching intervention. Session contents involved introduction to theoretical underpinnings of strength-based approaches (e.g. hope and well-being), self-reflection exercises and small-group discussions. Results from this randomized trial study revealed that participants who completed the 10-week life coaching intervention had significantly higher scores on measures of goal setting behavior, subjective well-being and hope compared with those in the control group, suggesting that life-coaching interventions can enhance not only individuals' positive psychological states but also their tendency to engage in setting desired life goals.

Another study by Green and colleagues examined the potential role of educational coaching in facilitating goal attainment, enhancing leadership and communication styles, reducing stressful circumstances, and thereby contributing to an overall workplace well-being (Grant et al., 2010). Participants included 50 high school teachers, who were randomly assigned to a coaching or waitlist control group. They completed a range of measures relating to goal attainment, resilience, stress/anxiety/depression, workplace well-being, and leadership styles at Time 1 (pre-program), Time 2 (post-program), and Time 3 (10 months follow up period). The coaching program was delivered over a 20-week period with 1–2 weeks interval. Sessions were based on a cognitive-behavioral, solution-focused framework, with activities focused on identifying participants desired outcomes, delineating specific goals, enhancing motivation by identifying self-efficacy and resilience, monitoring and evaluating progress toward the goals, and modifying goals as deemed necessary. The outcome of this program was encouraging. Compared with controls, the coaching group reported reduced stress, increased resilience, and improved workplace well-being, indicating that coaching professional development interventions may well have utility within education settings as well as corporate environments.

A similar study examined the potential role of coaching intervention in promoting *engagement* and *hope* among primary school students (Madden et al., 2011). The construct of *engagement* is one of the five pillars of happiness in the positive psychology literature (Seligman et al., 2009), with the other four being positive emotions, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments. Engagement is considered to be one of the prerequisites for a person's learning, growth and satisfaction in life. *Hope* is also another positive psychology construct and known for its properties in facilitating pathway thoughts and one's commitment to pursue desired life goals (Snyder et al., 1991). Green and her colleagues sought to examine whether the properties referred to by both of these constructs were malleable and could be developed through coaching strategies. They utilized a sample of 38 male students aged between 10 and 11 years old from a primary school. Students completed self-report measures at Time 1 (pre-intervention) and Time 2 (post-intervention) to determine their levels of engagement and hope. The program consisted of eight sessions and was conducted fortnightly for 45 min. Contents focused on three key

areas of activities and exercises—identification of personal character strengths, identification of personal resources conducive to desired goals, and instilling hope as well as teaching self-regulation skills to achieve set goals. The program concluded with a letter writing exercise about successes, aspirations, and commitment towards identified valued ends. Analysis of the data showed that students' scores on engagement and hope measures were significantly higher at Time 2 (post-intervention) compared to Time 1 (pre-intervention). This was a small scale study and could not have been generalizable, but provided encouraging results with practice implications in terms of the potential utilities of positive coaching for the promotion well-being among primary school children.

Aaron Jarden (New Zealand)

Aaron Jarden lives in Auckland, New Zealand. He began his tertiary study in 1995 and has since amassed a Bachelors of Social Sciences with a double major in Psychology and Philosophy, a Bachelors of Social Sciences with honours in philosophy, and a Graduate Diploma of Applied Ethics—all from the University of Waikato (1995–1999). He then completed a Bachelor of Arts with honours in psychology and a Masters of Arts in psychology from Massey University (2001–2002). In 2003, Jarden completed a Diploma in Computing before moving to the University of Canterbury where he studied a Diploma in Clinical Psychology. He completed his PhD in psychology in 2010 which was followed by a Post-Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching through the University of Otago in 2011. He is currently employed part time as a Senior Lecturer at Auckland University of Technology, and part time as a well-being consultant and social entrepreneur. He is president of the New Zealand Association of Positive Psychology, lead investigator for the International Well-being Study, co-investigator of the Sovereign New Zealand Well-being Index, founder of The Tuesday Program, and co-founder of Heart of Well-being. Jarden's publications cover areas of psychological well-being, personal values, post-traumatic growth, positive psychological assessment, positive psychology interventions, organizational well-being, cross-cultural well-being, positive education, national accounts of happiness, well-being policy, e-health, and e-therapy. He presents at both national and international conferences on these topics.

As his biography suggests, Jarden has made several notable contributions to the ongoing development of positive psychology in New Zealand. He is particularly credited for his role as a co-founder and co-editor of the *International Journal of Well-being* (IJW) which was launched in January 2011. The journal promotes research by providing open access to peer reviewed articles on well-being. The aim is to make research freely available to the public and share knowledge as widely as possible. The journal is also designed to provide unaffiliated scholars with the latest references for their research and publications which they could not have been able to access from institutional databases.

Jarden is also one of the creators of the Assessing Well-being in Education Pty Ltd (AWE) in New Zealand (Jarden & Parker, 2016). The AWE is an innovative approach and designed to assess, track and improve the well-being of students and staff in the school community. The AWE is based on empirically established measures of the various aspects of well-being such as resilience, positive emotions, happiness, flourishing, engagement, and self-determination (Seligman et al., 2009). The assessment is completed online, which generates a summary report and interpretation of scores. A typical summary report describes whether a participant's overall well-being is low or high. It also provides domain specific strengths (i.e. happiness, resilience, satisfaction), and identifies problem areas that might benefit from positive psychological interventions. The assessment is commonly completed on more than one occasion to track changes overtime and to evaluate the efficacy of suggested intervention approaches. Whilst the AWE has been utilized by a growing number of private and public schools in New Zealand and Australia, the efficacy of the overall initiative is yet to be established as an empirically valid intervention.

Jarden and his colleague have extended the same approach to develop the Work on Well-being (WoW) assessment for use by individuals and organisations (Jarden & Oades, 2014). Similar to the AWE, the WoW is based on empirically validated measures covering global well-being (e.g., life satisfaction, resilience and happiness), domain specific well-being (e.g., intimate relationship, family and finances), and workplace well-being (e.g., autonomy and job satisfaction). WoW is completed online and provides an individually tailored report highlighting particular areas of strengths and strategies for ameliorating areas of weaknesses or deficits. It can be administered on more than one occasion to track changes over a period of time. While this approach provides useful information for individuals and organizations, it is in its very early stages of development and remains to be empirically tested.

Maree Roche (New Zealand)

Maree Roche is a Senior Lecturer in Organizational Psychology at the University of Waikato in New Zealand. Her research focus is on positive psychology, with particular interest in positive leadership. She has passion for extending and understanding the benefits of well-being for leaders, organisations and employees. She has been actively involved in many projects and continues to provide consultancy in these areas. She has published in various disciplinary journals, including *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *Personnel Psychology and Leadership & Organizational Development*. She is also the co-editor of the *New Zealand Journal of Human Resource Management*.

Roche's published work specifically covers topics like emotionally toxic work places, re-humanisation of work, work stress, quality-of-work-life, meaning and meaningfulness of work, the study of power and domination, workplace bullying,

sustainability of the human condition at work and concepts such as trust. Roche's most significant contribution to positive psychology relates to her work around the cultural dimensions of organisational Maori leaders in New Zealand and the concept of well-being in a western society (Roche et al., 2015). The results revealed that the various core principles in Maori culture such as *tino rangatiratanga* (autonomy and self-determination), *mana* (respect and influence), *whānau* (extended family), *whakapapa* (shared history), and *whanaungatanga* (kin relations, consultation and engagement) were similar to the conceptualisation of well-being within the framework of the self-determination theory (e.g., autonomy and competence). The study also found differences, especially with Maori leaders' description of well-being pertaining to a collective culture or 'others' as opposed to the "self" which underpins the self-determination theory. This finding does not only highlight the importance of cultural contexts in positive psychology, but also how the western assumptions of well-being may not necessarily or directly be useful for an individual in a collectivist culture.

Future of Positive Psychology in Australia and New Zealand

As highlighted in the proceeding sections, interest in positive psychology is rapidly growing in Australia and New Zealand. This growth can be attributed to several reasons. Firstly, positive psychology is becoming a standalone field of study on its own right. For example, the University of Melbourne offers courses exclusively designed to teach the science of positive psychology at graduate diploma, masters and doctoral levels. The University of Sydney offers a Graduate Certificate in Applied Positive Psychology. The Australian Catholic University has a dedicated branch, the Institute of Positive Psychology and Education. Central Queensland University offers a Graduate Certificate in Positive Psychology. In New Zealand, the Langley Group Institute has been offering a Diploma of Positive Psychology and Well-being. Though not comparable to Australia, positive psychology is also being taught as a single subject at the University of Waikato, Victoria University of Wellington and Auckland University of Technology.

Secondly, the current progress in positive psychology in Australia and New Zealand could not have happened without the push by the field's eminent founders, especially Martin Seligman. He has been a seminal figure for the introduction of several initiatives. In 2012, he was invited by the Government of South Australia to help with new ideas and approaches for the prevention of mental illness. He spent the next 12 months in South Australia guiding the implementation of positive education and mental health promotion initiatives that have since gone from strength to strength. An example of his legacy is the Well-being and Resilience Centre in Adelaide (South Australia's capital), which specifically focuses on researching, measuring and promoting well-being at individual, community and organisational levels. Seligman also visited the rest of the Australian states as well as New Zealand on various occasions to push the public policy agenda around the

creation of flourishing communities based on his ‘PERMA’ model of well-being—positive emotions, engagement, good relationships, meaning and purpose in life, and accomplishment (Seligman et al., 2009). To date, PERMA remains the most popular model for well-being initiatives in Australia and New Zealand.

Thirdly, in parallel with the aforementioned initiatives, the establishment of recurring national conferences dedicated to positive psychology in both countries have been fertile grounds for professionals, academics and students for sharing ideas and advancing the field. These conferences have also created a platform for entrepreneurship with many of these positive psychologists introducing evidence-based services. For example, the Institute of Applied Positive Psychology run by Dr Kate Lemerle in Queensland (Australia), the Positive Institute run by Dr Suzy Green in Perth (Australia), and the Work on Well-being Program run by Dr Aaron Jarden in New Zealand are just some of the entrepreneurship initiatives.

The culmination of all these events has essentially led to the ongoing implementation of positive psychology initiatives in both countries. As outlined in the preceding sections, the positive education program is by far the most successful initiative and has been extensively used by schools to foster student well-being and academic performance through the cultivation of positive emotions, resilience and positive character strengths (Vella-Brodrick et al., 2015; Waters, 2011). Another most recognizable contribution is in the area of organisational behavior. Most government and non-government organizations are now broadening their remit by emphasizing on positive leadership behavior (e.g., building resilience, self-efficacy, ethical leadership and tolerance) to improve productivity, job satisfaction and reduce staff turnover (Green et al., 2006). Positive psychology is also increasingly becoming prominent in public policy making, especially in the domain of mental health to encourage involvement in recreation, physical activity and play, and consequently reduce internalization of risk behaviors such as addiction and suicide.

While positive psychology has been very successful on a number of fronts, it is still a developing field of study. Its scientific base in particular requires ongoing strengthening and quality control (Biswas-Diener et al., 2011). It is fair to say that the implementation of most positive psychology programs and interventions in many western countries (including Australia and New Zealand) have been left largely to the discretion of practitioners and consultants without sufficient attention to regular evaluation studies. This has in turn created inherent problems in aligning the pace of intervention programs with research, and leaving practitioners to make modifications without the backing of empirical evidence. Even those positive psychology initiatives which have been put to empirical scrutiny lack a methodological rigor and are based on small sample qualitative evaluation studies (Green et al., 2006; Marshall et al., 2009).

It is, therefore, incumbent upon positive psychologists to pay sufficient attention to both practice and research as well as commitment to broaden the scope of their inquires (Vella-Brodrick et al., 2015). We also know from previous studies that positive psychology has been linked to the neurobiological pathways through which positive psychological states contribute to physical health. For example, interventions that seek to promote positive psychological states such as positive mood, affect

and optimism have been found to improve immune functioning (Marsland et al., 2007), buffer inflammation or pain (Brydon et al., 2009), and stimulate normal protein synthesis and tissue growth (Low et al., 2011). What happens in the body can affect the brain, and what happens in the brain can affect the body. This means that positive psychological states are not merely fuzzy mental events. They have neurobiological connections that play a large part in the workings of the immune system, and indeed, in the entire synchrony of the overall human organism (for more empirical studies in this area see Sheldon et al., 2011). This line of inquiry and intervention can make tremendous contribution to the scientific foundation of positive psychology, although this has received limited attention among positive psychologists and scholars in Australia and New Zealand. Thus, there is a need to advance the field in this particular domain.

Moreover, the current state of positive psychology in Australia and New Zealand is dominantly orientated toward the concept of human flourishing. However, the field has already entered into its second wave with the increasing recognition that a mere focus on the positive aspects of human life may not necessarily lead to desired life goals and improved well-being (Ivtzan et al., 2015; Kashdan & Biswas-Diener, 2014). This move has positioned positive psychology to acknowledge the “dark side” of human life by focusing not just on the investigation and application of positive interventions, but also to embrace the most difficult and unpleasant aspects of experiences in life. The second wave of positive psychology essentially emphasises the dialectical nature of our behavioral, emotional and cognitive experiences (i.e., mixtures of positives and negatives rather than binary concepts), and the need to embrace human life as a whole from both positive and constructive perspectives.

Although one of the overarching goals of positive psychology has been to explore ways in which institutions and communities can encourage better citizenship by fostering strengths, justice and responsibility, the field has been criticized for being inherently ethnocentric and relying heavily on individualistic framework (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). This has been certainly the case in Australia and New Zealand as much of the work in this area does not attempt to demonstrate how positive psychology is defined in other cultures. If positive psychology is to fare better in multicultural societies such as Australia and New Zealand, it is imperative for the field to be built upon theories and empirical work involving diverse cultural perspectives. Otherwise, lack of adequate understanding of behaviors, attitudes and emotions from a cultural context can lead to misconceptions and inappropriate intervention strategies (Kubokawa & Ottaway, 2009).

Overall, notwithstanding the above limitations, positive psychology is making impressive contributions in Australia and New Zealand. It has continued to capture the attention of diverse groups such as individual consumers, government institutions, non-government organizations and the general public. This could not have happened without the persistent commitment of many positive psychologists who have engaged in the investigation of positive life experiences and application of innovative intervention to promote wellbeing. Hopefully, this work will continue to evolve and help the average person, groups and the community as a whole in making

life worth living as well as embracing the “dark side” of their lives, and learning how positive experiences can be used as buffers against negative life events.

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Chapter 19

A Final Reappraisal: Do We Really Need to Develop Positive Psychology Around the World?

Christina A. Downey, Edward C. Chang, Ingo Zettler, Hongfei Yang, and Mine Muyan-Yilik

Contributors to this volume have illustrated the global reach of the positive psychology movement through highlighting hundreds of researchers striving on virtually every continent to better understand and apply scientific knowledge of the life well lived. These authors have connected the accomplishments of researchers throughout each region to aspects of shared history, language, culture, economics, education, government, and science within each region and nation that have shaped the development of positive psychology in that part of the world; and, where national experiences or differences were relevant, distinguished those factors within regions as well. What has resulted is a massive and diverse picture of positive psychology's adherents and advocates, which nearly every author admitted was but a skim of the surface of work being done throughout each geographic area.

Our objective in assembling this volume, of course, was not only to catalogue what has been done, but also to promote a greater commitment to the growth of positive psychology throughout the world. It is our belief that national investment in positive psychology brings symbolic gains as well as practical ones. Regarding practical benefit, nations abuzz with research, teaching, and practice activity in positive psychology are reaping the rewards of commitments to higher education,

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scientific exploration, and development of human capital that are surely bringing tangible returns through greater health, security, and economic growth and innovation. Basically, if a nation or region is investing in positive psychology, that region necessarily is manifesting a high priority on supporting the many institutions and systems within the region where positive psychology is done, and which demonstrably contribute to greater well-being. The symbolic benefit, in addition, can come in the form of communicating to one's own population and to the world at large an awareness that *lived well-being matters*—that despite macro-level cycles of growth and stagnation, and of security and volatility, the everyday experience of individual people and their social networks remains the foundation of a nation's capacity to flourish. In times when individuals can all-too-easily feel forgotten or used by societal institutions, this message can help to shore up national and regional faith that human beings can work together through social structures to advance our goals. If the potential for applications of positive psychology to improve outcomes is really “almost unlimited” (Wong, 2011, p. 69), then it seems to go without saying that the present decade proceeding into the 2020's is when we must begin to truly tap that potential.

In 1997, noted historian of psychology Kurt Danziger related a personal anecdote that we feel is relevant to the endeavor of this volume, and to the goal of using positive psychology as a venue for global investment in quality of life. He described how he had once had the experience of traveling to Indonesia to meet with a fellow researcher and professor of psychology, with a goal of co-designing a course that would overview the discipline of psychology from each of their cultural frameworks. Each went into the negotiation assuming that certain crosswalks would have to be built among concepts, and understood that their different native languages might have some influence on the sense and reference of their respective terminology. However, as they began to discuss the concepts that each believed their shared course would cover, they discovered to their mutual confusion and dismay that the overlap in what they each considered within the purview of psychology was surprisingly slight. Danziger offered the example of motivation as one of their areas of disconnect. To Danziger (and Western psychology generally) the idea there exist certain “forces” that drive behavior and are uniquely worthy of study is broadly accepted—even taken for granted as basic, unquestionable fact. In contrast, Danziger's Indonesian counterpart did not consider “motivation” a coherent, comprehensible phenomenon at all, let alone a thing that can and should be studied empirically by psychologists. No matter how much Danziger attempted to explain and defend the concept, his peer resisted; and likewise, his peer suggested a range of concepts that held absolutely no meaning or importance to psychology as understood by Danziger. Eventually, they agreed to call the project itself a bust. Danziger reflected at length on this experience, concluding that (1) it behooves us to be aware that different cultures do not draw the same boundary lines among the components of “mind,” (2) that validation of one's own framework as inherently superior to that of others is impossible; and (3) psychological study itself cannot be conducted without a set of a priori understandings regarding what the mind is, as those understandings determine the questions of interest and the appropriate

methods of inquiry (Danziger, 1997). As we have asked researchers around the globe to follow our guidelines for sharing the accomplishments of their most influential positive psychologists, it is crucial that we acknowledge how our request itself imposed a certain structure upon this extremely diverse group of scholars. This, of course, is symbolic of how the predominance of the Western conceptualization of psychology risks narrowing our ability to understand and appreciate how members of various cultures have thrived over centuries.

With that caveat (to which we will return in the closing section of this chapter), we would like to identify and expand upon some observations we made, stimulated by the collective work of our contributors. This “universalist” approach should not be seen as ignoring important issues in positive psychology that are more localized to specific regions, and admittedly is prone to the biases that we bring to our analysis of what they have presented. However, we do wish to make an effort to offer our perspective in the service of promoting the advancement of positive psychology throughout the world.

Broad Attention to Positive Experiences and Traits, with a Tendency Towards Highlighting Comparisons Where They Are Known to Exist

As Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) noted in their seminal paper, the “new” discipline of positive psychology was conceptualized as dedicated to understanding “valued subjective experiences [...] positive individual traits [...] (and) the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship” (p. 5). Indeed, a great many of our contributors reviewed research on subjective experiences such as happiness, well-being, hope, and optimism, frequently noting the various ways in which these experiences are interpreted within the culture, are measured in their regional populations, and how the typical frequency or intensity of these experiences compare to that of other regions and cultures. Similarly, positive traits such as character strengths, courage, and capacity for positive relationship-building appeared with some frequency in this volume’s writings, with different authors often relating specific cultural practices and values to findings regarding the typicality and exhibition of certain positive traits in their populations. Where such traits had been compared empirically across cultures, findings were often noted as well.

Even so, can we be certain we are comparing “apples to apples”? Matsumoto and Yoo (2006) described an evolution in cross-cultural psychological research from basic assessment and recording of differences between cultures, to more recent work that also includes integrative theorizing on findings on differences into a broader model of how culture may or may not predict and explain certain aspects of diverse experience and behavior. These authors lauded this shift as overcoming a number of theoretical and methodological problems of previous research; for example, a shift

from simply describing differences to developing common dimensions of difference (such as individualism vs. collectivism) increased the predictive power of later research. To continue this evolution, these authors advocated for what they called “linkage studies,” empirical investigations of not only the phenomenon that is thought to differ among cultures, and the dimensional models those phenomena relate to, but also proposed mechanisms at play that create those dimensional differences among cultures. For example, what socialization processes may underlie a culture’s tendency towards individualism vs. collectivism? How can we measure those processes empirically?

At each step along this evolutionary process in cross-cultural research, there are greater opportunities to discover differences in understandings of phenomena, which is a main strength of this approach. However, the overview of work offered in the present volume depicts global positive psychology as not having progressed far on this continuum as of yet. With positive psychology developing at vastly different paces in different areas of the world, this is not surprising—but an integrative international positive psychology is a far-flung dream at present. Therefore, as researchers from more areas of the world take advantage of opportunities to engage with one another and compare positive experiences and traits, and begin more focused work on developing more dimensional and integrative approaches to understanding regional differences, it may actually result that the basic phenomena themselves operate so differently as to make the first-level comparison problematic. That is, at a certain point in proposing and investigating a possible model of cultural difference, we may have to conclude that the things we are comparing are so different in nature that the initial comparison itself becomes less, rather than more, meaningful.

Relatively Less Understanding or Clarity Regarding the Civic Virtues and Institutions

Throughout this volume (and perhaps in positive psychology more generally), less attention appeared to be given to the so-called “civic virtues and institutions” that help people engage more positively and productively with their communities, such as responsibility, altruism, and moderation (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). These aspects of psychological life are necessary to develop in ourselves and others, as they support each of us in navigating our complex social worlds in positive ways. In addition, understanding the circumstances within which these tendencies develop—especially situations of pain, loss, hardship, and challenge—may actually provide us a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the virtues themselves (Wong, 2011; Wood & Tarrier, 2010). While a number of authors referred to the concept of *eudaimonic happiness* in their narrative (which can include the idea that contributing to others is an important part of happiness and its durability, though this aspect of the definition is not universally recognized; Disabato et al., 2016), few

chose to (or were able to) share empirical findings on how members of their culture actively develop this type of happiness in others. This is by no means to say that none of our authors shared descriptions of effective programs and interventions that were found to improve well-being. Indeed (and this may reflect some cultural values or opportunities), some authors elected to most strongly recognize scholars from their region who had dedicated themselves to developing, delivering, and studying positive psychology interventions. However, the relative under emphasis in this volume and others on this prosocial aspect of positive psychology is worth careful consideration, especially given the impacts that important societal-level variables such as cultural history, economic conditions, and political environment have had on regional development of positive psychology. If positive psychology researchers have generated less in this category of the discipline than in the other two, what is driving that and what are the consequences?

Regarding causes of this disparity, it may be that the civic virtues category is itself a higher-level category of positive phenomena than experiences and traits. That is, one must first understand what the individual experiences as positive, and then exhibits habitually as positive, before one may knowledgeably explore how the individual develops the positive and then cycles it back out into one's community. If we are still in the earlier stages of documenting basic positive phenomena in cultures throughout the world, then the relative lack of findings on civic virtues and processes may be yet to come as the field continues to grow and mature. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) offered the model of clinical psychology to buttress their argument for the basic need for a positive psychology, but they may also have previewed this developmental progression through the mental illness metaphor. After establishing what constitutes mental illness, rigorous investigations into cause were initiated, and eventually examinations of prevention were undertaken. International positive psychology might simply be young at present.

It may also be the case that the categories outlined by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) and adopted at the start of this section are themselves somewhat contrived, and that the distinction between experiences and traits vs. civic virtues in particular is arbitrary and itself subject to cultural bias. For what does it mean in practice for one to have hope, or optimism, or courage? Presumably, at least part of each of those concepts includes the actions that one takes in the world that are relevant to those ideas. To be hopeful is not only to "feel" hopeful in an emotional sense, but also to do things that reflect positive expectations of oneself, one's surroundings, and one's future. This is in fact the framework that underlies Snyder et al.'s (1991) model of hope as composed of a sense of *agency* (e.g., self-efficacy, effectiveness) and planning of *pathways* (e.g., action steps, goal achievement) to future progress. In another example, the Values in Action character virtues model (Seligman et al., 2005) in some ways bridges between traits and positive social engagement, as individuals are thought to show trait-like stability in some interpersonal tendencies that are identified as virtues (such as kindness, leadership, forgiveness, and social intelligence).

Broadly writ, if "good works" are essential to being able to claim as one's own certain "good experiences" and "good traits" (even if some of the specific works go

unmeasured), then perhaps most of what was reviewed in this volume advances well-being in communities and institutions by their very nature. When we act positively, we both manifest our positive experience and traits, and leave a positive impact on our world. Cultural bias might come in the form of seeking to distinguish these categories from one another, studying them as if they are distinct (which given accepted distinctions among thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in Western psychology, may be more common in individualistic cultures), or in giving primacy to individually-centered vs socially-centered phenomena (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). In more collectivistic cultures where the self is experienced as more embedded in one's context, a distinction between one's "experiences" and one's "actions" might accord less with one's worldview (Uchida et al. 2004). And of course, another cultural bias could be at work in assuming that Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) intended for these concepts to be considered separate categories at all!

Regardless of these (almost philosophical) complexities, it did appear to us that one could perceive some differences across regions in regard to engagement in intentional interventions for enhancing positive functioning. To return to one of our early comments, such differences across regions may reflect disparities in resources, shared cultural beliefs and practices, and/or convictions of those in power that result in generally well-off regions of the world gleaming greater benefit from the applied potential of positive psychology than less-well-off regions do. Thus positive psychology may not be immune to the same types of cyclical processes that recapitulate inequality in other areas of human functioning (such as physical health, mental health, education, economic opportunity, and the like). While this may seem discouraging, it should give researchers greater incentive to consider testing new interventions in relatively-underserved regions of the world with greater frequency. It would seem reasonable to assume that testing appropriately-designed interventions in underserved areas would afford the researcher a greater chance of demonstrating an effect than in areas that are already doing relatively well. Where the floor is low, there is much room to grow. Indeed, interventions that have been attempted in well-served areas may have been hampered by limited opportunity for incremental validity of the intervention to be found; and/or, by inadequacies in the evaluation methodology itself (a problem that has been discussed specifically in regard to positive psychology interventions elsewhere; Wood & Tarrier, 2010). We therefore encourage researchers wishing to test new interventions to think broadly about what their goals are, and in what setting they might implement new programs to more efficiently and effectively examine their potential.

A Need to Attend to Context in What Is “Positive” or “Negative”

In assembling this volume, we observed rather few examples of different authors discussing the same phenomena, but with the opposite—or even a very different—valence. For example, happiness was approached as a positive experience wherever it appeared; there were no authors who provided a discussion of happiness that asserted it to be a harmful experience in any region of the world or culture. There were some discussions of differences in how happiness is conceptualized, perceived, or pursued by people from different cultures (in a notable example, the prototypical Russian approach to happiness was described as including a certain skepticism, resignation, pessimism, or suspicion compared to various other cultures), but for the most part happiness itself was taken to be a mostly good thing. Perhaps with the particular example of happiness, there is nothing surprising about this—it may well be an ontological issue. If ‘happiness’ is the word we use to denote positive feeling, it may by definition be good. However, Gruber et al. (2011) point out that the “dark sides” of happiness may actually be misunderstood. In a unique review of literature, they ask many important questions about the “critical boundary conditions to the benefits of happiness” such as, “Is there a wrong degree of happiness? Is there a wrong time for happiness? Are there wrong ways to pursue happiness? Are there wrong types of happiness?” (p. 223). In their review, these authors note a number of findings that do seem to show that there can be such a thing as too much happiness, ill-timed happiness, and the like, including examples from cross-cultural research indicating that certain groups may differ in consequential ways in their approach to happiness. Other researchers, such as Furnham and Christoforou (2007) and Morris (2004) have also offered specific examinations of how happiness is conceptualized and measured, attempting to determine whether happiness has maladaptive dimensions. (One must ponder whether such research on happiness counts as “positive psychology” or not.) The contributors to our particular volume showed little awareness of, or additions to, such work in their particular regions—but that does not mean the issue is not important to understand from an international perspective.

Separate from happiness, one can generate a great list of other phenomena that do not beg the ‘positivity’ question in this manner, and yet were generally treated in this volume as known goods. Hope, optimism, self-esteem, and kindness might be examples of such concepts. Past scholars, however, have raised concerns that simply taking certain phenomena as unquestioned goods ignores the fact that in certain contexts (such as in situations of clear threat or where others should not be trusted), these experiences or traits might confer risk or harm (McNulty & Fincham, 2012; Pedrotti et al., 2009; Sandage et al., 2003). And what if a character trait typically taken to be a “virtue” is applied in the pursuit of negative goals? One may have exceptional strengths in self-assurance and pathways thinking (meaning they have high “hope”), but have an objective to harm others. Are fascist leaders high in “grit”? Do we want to foster “optimism” in the sociopath? As of now, many of these constructs make certain assumptions about a moral and ethical code being followed

as a baseline for the “good,” but such unstated norms are all-too-easily discarded by those with ill aims. We are not ready to state that positive psychology is negligent at present in regard to these questions, but we do wonder whether enough scholars are approaching such contextual issues responsibly enough. It may be worthwhile for leaders in this discipline to begin discussing how to situate these constructs more clearly, such that possible abuse of research findings is unlikely to pass any muster.

If there is broad agreement that certain phenomena are “mostly good,” how worried should we be about a general lack of controversy on those constructs? It seems to us that the many apparent similarities across cultures in how various phenomena are approached could represent two very different processes at play. First, it may be that Western assumptions about which psychological phenomena to reify and study has permeated work globally and set certain bounds on how positive psychological concepts are approached. Such “psychological colonialism” might confer the benefit of a shared language for positive human experience, but also serve to crowd out traditional understandings that do not correspond to the dominant model. In addition, an unacknowledged motivation to preserve the status quo might make fair investigations of the downsides of “the good” less likely to be undertaken. In an age when being “woke” regarding issues of privilege is gaining greater traction, it is important to plumb such possibilities in a serious manner and engage diverse voices in dialogue about the direction of the field.

Second and alternatively, however, the coalescence of multiple cultures around the goodness of hope, forgiveness, and the like may mean these actually are more good than bad for humankind. As the Values in Action (Seligman et al., 2005) research team demonstrated, for example, a careful search for character traits that appear in treasured, long-standing texts around the world, have connections to diverse cultural traditions, and are viewed within multiple cultures as desirable to both exhibit personally and to develop in the young, has revealed certain cognitive/affective/behavioral tendencies that appear to be valued universally (Dahlsgaard et al., 2005). While the exact understanding, expression, and relative value of these traits differs across cultures, their appearance on the battery affirms that they are endorsed in a diverse range of societies.

We cannot offer a single resolution to this debate, but we do believe that it is important as international positive psychology progresses for researchers to more consistently seek to take a complex look at circumstances within which certain positive experiences, traits, or virtues may actually have a “shadow side.” As elaborated by other scholars (i.e., McNulty & Fincham, 2012), positive psychology is vulnerable to criticism as disregarding the realities of human hardship if there is not evidence of awareness that even “the good” can have disadvantages in the right (wrong?) circumstances.

Circling Back to Danziger (1997)

So, do we need to develop positive psychology around the world; and if so, how should we go about that? The answer from our contributors to the first question is a resounding *yes*—every author made a compelling case for the benefit already incurred, and the future potential envisioned, in broader and deeper investment in positive psychology within each region and nation discussed. Many traced the growth of positive psychology within specific areas, from (for example) a single university course offering or conference hosting, to larger and more ambitious endeavors that had left meaningful impact upon various constituencies. We cannot disagree with the final assessment that positive psychology should be advanced throughout the world. Their evidence is clear.

The more difficult question, of course, is how this should be done. Good intentions and strong convictions are not sufficient to the task. Danziger (1997) and his Indonesian colleague shared a vision for a teaching experience that they both anticipated would be rich, invigorating, and valuable to themselves and their students. Still, try as they might, they ultimately did not succeed in bringing their shared seminar to fruition, as the very thing they wanted to depict to students (their differing cultural understandings of psychology) was what proved impossible to organize into a single coherent framework. We do not believe that the lesson to be learned here is that an international, multicultural, integrative, complicated positive psychology cannot be created or should not be pursued with vigor. Instead, we hope that volumes such as this help to stimulate more conversation among the best minds in the discipline about how the challenge of this work can be approached as its strength. To do this well, we must commit ourselves to patience, tolerance, curiosity, focus, and courage. In these pages are new threads of connection waiting to be tied between researchers, institutions, nations, and cultures. We hope you will be inspired to pluck one and pull, and see where the thread leads.

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Correction to: Positive Psychology in South America



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Claudio Ibanez, Andrea Ortega, Stefano Vinaccia, and Lilian Graziano**

Correction to:
**Chapter 4 in: E. C. Chang et al. (eds.), *The International
Handbook of Positive Psychology*,**
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-57354-6_4

The book was inadvertently published with an incorrect biography for one of the co-authors, Andrea Ortega in this chapter. This has now been corrected in the book.

The updated online version of this chapter can be found at
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