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Commentaries

STRETCH Goals for I-O Psychology

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Gloss, Carr, Reichman, Abdul-Nasiru, and Oestereich (2017) present a compelling argument (or rallying call) for there being a "moral imperative for I-O psychology to *overrepresent* people living in the deepest forms of poverty in both science and practice" (p. 330). We agree. Our research has been dominated by a POSH perspective, and it is incumbent upon us to ensure that our science benefits those who are most affected by poverty. We believe the interest in engaging in humanitarian work psychology is growing among industrial and organizational (I-O) psychologists, yet many of us may not feel prepared to conduct such research and/or we may feel that we lack the skills to do so. Further, as Gloss et al. (2017) note, to the extent that we are unprepared to engage in research that benefits those living in poverty, in particular, we run the added risk of harming the very populations we are wanting to help. As such, the interest is there, but we may be daunted by the method. We argue that in order to heed that rallying call, without harm, we need to develop our own capabilities to engage in this important work.

A novice yoga enthusiast may be intrigued yet intimidated by the prospect of performing a particularly challenging yoga pose, like a flying crow. Yet, with purposeful, guided stretching, the beginning student can work toward performing that pose without harming oneself. In this article, we focus on the practical actions we can take as individuals, and as a group of like-minded scientists, to develop our discipline and ourselves for conducting research that may take us out of our comfort zones. We present a set of recommendations, designed to STRETCH us to meet this challenge: *strengthening* relationships with those who are outside our POSH-view locally, *transformative* experiences, *resource* development, *expanding*

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our methodological tool kit, *teaming* with others, *cultivating* student development, and *heightening* awareness of our assumptions. We describe ways to achieve each below.

Strengthen Relationships With Those Who Are Outside Our POSH View Locally

Heeding the advice we received as students, many of us draw our research ideas from recently published research, as well as our own work and life experiences. Indeed, the folklore of our field is replete with stories of researchers' ideas being sparked from a conversation about a recent article or work situation with a colleague, hastily scribbled on a soggy cocktail napkin. As such, to the extent we are drawing from a decidedly POSH-focused research literature (Gloss et al., 2017) and/or our own largely POSH-work context experiences (for many, but not all of us), it is understandable how the POSH research cycle perpetuates.

So how can we stem this cycle? One initial step we can take is to intentionally strengthen (or seek out) relationships with workers in our organizations, neighborhoods, or communities who are not under the POSH umbrella. Previous research suggests that doing so would help to stretch or broaden our own perspectives (e.g., Doucet, Grayman-Simpson, & Shapses Wertheim, 2013). This strengthening of relationships outside of the POSH context might take the shape of engaging in conversations about work or life experiences with those we already know fairly well, like family members or neighbors. It is likely it will require us to get out of our routines—to shake it up a little. It might take the form of sincere and consistent engagement with local nonprofits that address humanitarian needs, such as food/shelter, or in social/political movements that focus on security-related issues, such as discrimination. That is, by serving regularly at a soup kitchen or food pantry, or tutoring low-income children, we might find we start to develop a basic appreciation of our working poor's perspective in our local community. There are a multitude of ways to do this; the important thing is to have ongoing conversations with those who are not representative of the POSH perspective. This will ultimately broaden the work-related topics we might consider and help us appreciate the boundaries of the work we have done.

Transformative Experiences

Relatedly, industrial-organizational psychologists could prepare for engaging in research outside the POSH realm by seeking out potentially transformative experiences. Based on Mezirow's (1981) model, transformative experiences are those that are significant learning opportunities, such that they allow for the "expansion of consciousness through the transformation of basic worldview and specific capacities of the self" (Elias, 1997, p. 2).

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Several fields have examined how such experiences could be used for vocational preparation and training, such as for social workers (cf. Balestrery, 2016) and medical doctors (Thompson, Lamont-Robinson, & Williams, 2016). Transformative experiences would include what Tung (1981) identified as rigorous predeparture awareness training for international job assignments, such as experiencing a different microculture in one's domestic country (e.g., Native American reservation in the U.S.) or immersion in a setting, such as a city neighborhood, where residents are from primarily a different culture than one's own. For our purposes, the key here is to seek out opportunities and experiences where we would be immersed, as a participant, in decidedly non-POSH contexts. For some of us, this might take the form of spending time working on a manufacturing line (or in fast-food service) or participating in an urban immersion experience or extended travel/study in a lower income country. Although the nature of the experience could take many forms, the key is to use such an experience as a basis for reflection and understanding. We recognize that there might be some inherent risks and safety concerns about some transformative experience opportunities, and we urge potential participants to take these risks into consideration.

Resource Development

Research on non-POSH samples will likely require the development of resources new to many I-O psychologists. Bergman and Jean (2016) suggest that one reason why our research samples are limited is easy access to computers and our reliance on computer-based surveying. Such research is relatively easy to do from our climate-controlled offices. However, reliance on the approach results in the neglect of workers who do not have ready access to computers. Moreover, as researchers we are detached from the context and the individuals who we are studying. The pressure to publish also motivates individuals to conduct research with easy-to-access samples, making the anonymous Mturker an attractive option (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). To address these issues, researchers will need to develop connections and cultivate trust with members of the community who can provide entrée to marginalized populations. Such connections may require considerable time and effort with no immediate payoff in sight. The work may also require situating ourselves out in the field for lengthy periods. For example, Virginia Schein's (2013) work examining women in poverty involved extended time in Nicaragua conducting interviews. Researchers may find that typical funding sources, such as the military, are not well-suited for this type of research, so researchers will need to seek other sources of support. One source may be through Fulbright Fellowships. Each year the Fulbright Scholar program sends scholars abroad to over 125 countries across

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the world, with many awards going to scholars to teach and conduct research in developing countries. Foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which focuses on the reduction of inequity, may also provide grant support to researchers with innovative ideas.

Expand Our Methodological Tool-Kits

As mentioned in the previous section, some of our go-to research approaches in I-O psychology, such as online quantitative surveys, work quite well for POSH samples but are particularly problematic for studying worker populations that do not have as ready access (e.g., equipment, permission, and time) to computers (Bergman & Jean, 2016). Further, given our underexposure to the perceptions of non-POSH workers, we likely are not in a position to appropriately identify the relevant issues to study with a quantitative approach. Arguably, qualitative research approaches are likely to be particularly beneficial for this initial research shift (Bergman & Jean, 2016) as "the purpose of inductive qualitative research is to better understand the worldview of the people one is studying" (Pratt & Bonaccio, 2016, p. 694). Although a review of publications in the top I-O psychology journals indicates that qualitative studies are gaining a foothold in our literature, the overall publication rate is quite low (Pratt & Bonaccio, 2016). As such, perhaps one of the greatest challenges in heeding Gloss et al.'s (2017) call to arms is to develop the requisite skills in qualitative research to do so.

Given our (relatively) novice status as a qualitative discipline, we must be especially careful in the development and implementation of qualitative approaches to ensure the prevention of "the harm that can result from ostensibly well-meaning efforts to help or understand marginalized populations" (Gloss et al., 2017, p. 332). Indeed, the ethnocultural literature is replete with examples of research participants being harmed by researchers and a substantial literature has developed on how researchers might prevent such harm (cf. Bernal, Cumba-Aviles, & Rodriguez-Quintana, 2014). One particularly promising approach that has been offered in the literature is to move toward action research, or participatory action research, to minimize the perpetuation of power differences in research among researchers and participants, to enhance the understanding of the participants' reality, and to ensure the research provides direct benefits to the members of a community (Trimble, Scharron-del Rio, & Casillas, 2013).

Team Up With Others

Another way to stretch our capabilities for conducting non-POSH research is through partnerships with researchers from other disciplines and from other countries. Poverty is exceedingly complex, and no one discipline can determine solutions. Collaborations with researchers from sociology,

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anthropology, economics, and political science can deepen our understanding of the cultural and structural factors that contribute to poverty. Interest groups could be formed within one's university as a starting point, with the objective to focus on local or regional marginalized populations. Teaming up with researchers from other countries, particularly those that are underrepresented, can also help us break free of our POSH perspective. This may include mentorship of novice researchers in developing countries. Cross-disciplinary and cross-national research teams could result in mutual learning exchanges that facilitate shared conceptual frameworks used to inform processes of humanitarian assistance and research with those living in poverty.

Cultivate Student Development

Creating a critical mass of scholars prepared to conduct research on marginalized groups will require faculty to stretch the capabilities of undergraduate and graduate students in addition to their own. Much of the influence on students can occur through role modeling and by getting them involved in non-POSH research projects. Service learning projects can be an excellent way to begin raising student awareness and engagement. For example, these could involve connecting with local shelters for the homeless or food pantries and offering to develop programs associated with core I-O competencies such as training in job interviewing skills. Such activities serve the community while also developing key student skills. Another idea is for I-O faculty to get involved with undergraduate study abroad programs and create opportunities for student experiences with local workers in underrepresented countries.

Heightening Awareness of Our Assumptions

An overarching stretch goal is to maintain an awareness of our latent POSH assumptions. Cultivating the capabilities we have described will require continuously checking our belief systems and ensuring that we give voice to the participants we study. We cannot assume that participants understand terms commonly used, nor can we assume that processes used to conduct research with POSH populations translate to non-POSH contexts. This may include extra care in developing informed consents to ensure that risks and eventual benefits of the research we are doing are appropriately explained to participants (Amerson & Strang, 2015). In addition, the power difference between research and participant may be intensified when working with marginalized communities. In other cases, agreements to participate in research may be based on communal social structures in which elders in the community must grant permission (Amerson & Strang, 2015). Researchers should be aware of how such differences could impact their research.

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Conclusion

Many I-O psychologists share an interest in using I-O psychology for the greater good (Olson-Buchanan, Bryan, & Thompson, 2013) but may lack the knowledge, skills, and abilities for doing so. This commentary offers suggestions for building the capabilities that will enable researchers to take on the challenge of promoting the capabilities of those in poverty. Through efforts to better understand the work experiences of the most marginalized among us we can increase the impact of our science and practice on society and contribute to meaningful change (Allen, 2015).

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Workers in Poverty: An Insight Into Informal Workers Around the World

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Gloss, Carr, Reichman, Abdul-Nasiru, and Oestereich (2017) present compelling arguments on a moral/humanistic need for I-O psychologists to consider workers that are living and working in deep poverty. Their case nicely shifts focus to large percentages of global workers who heretofore have only been represented minimally in the scholarly discourse in our field. I would like to accomplish two goals in this commentary. First, I would like to present a brief historical perspective on why industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology's focus has been on POSH workers. Second, I will provide conceptual extensions to Gloss et al.'s (2017) focal article by presenting some insights into the world of informal workers.

A Historical Perspective on Our POSH Leanings

The state of research in I-O psychology on "POSH" workers is not accidental. It goes back to the earliest era in the history of our field, which needs to be understood within the socio-political context of the time. Consider for instance, the history of I-O psychology. The roots of I-O psychology (at least in the United States, where arguably many of the classic and influential developments of our field have taken place) go back to the Industrial Revolution when there was a large scale shift away from the agrarian economy to industrial labor at the turn of the last century. A POSH worker is grounded in the formal economy, the seeds for which were sown in the late 1800s and early 1900s as a consequence of the massive push on the improvement of worker

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