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Submission Deadlines

International Psychology Bulletin

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For smaller articles (op-ed, comments, suggestions, etc.), submit up to 200 words. Longer articles (e.g., Division reports) can be up to 3,000 words (negotiable) and should be submitted to the appropriate section editor.

Guidelines for submission to peer-reviewed research article or theoretical review sections, please see the next page.

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Submission Guidelines for Peer-reviewed Articles *International Psychology Bulletin*

The *IPB* publishes peer-reviewed research articles that focus on important issues related to international psychology. The review process takes approximately two months.

Please submit the following three documents in Microsoft Word format to Dr. Vaishali Raval at ravalvv@miamioh.edu:

- A cover letter
- A title page with the title of the manuscript, author names and institutional affiliations, and an author note that includes name and contact information of corresponding author
- A blinded manuscript that does not include authors' names or any identifying information

Cover letter

- In your cover letter be sure to include the author's postal address, e-mail address, and telephone number for future correspondence
- State that the manuscript is original, not previously published, and not under concurrent consideration elsewhere
- State that the manuscript adheres to APA Ethical Principles ([Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#)), and all co-authors are in agreement about the content of the manuscript
- Inform the journal editor of the existence of any published manuscripts written by the author that is sufficiently similar to the one submitted (e.g., uses the same dataset).

Blinded Manuscript

- Prepare manuscripts according to the [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association \(6th edition\)](#).
- Check [APA Journals Manuscript Submission Instructions for All Authors](#)
- The entire manuscript should be formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins, and double-spaced submitted as Microsoft Word document. The entire manuscript should be up to 4000 words.
- The first page of the manuscript should include a title of the manuscript (no more than 12 words)
- The second page of the manuscript should include an abstract containing a maximum of 250 words, followed by up to five keywords brief phrases
- The remaining pages should include the text of the manuscript. For research articles, include introduction, method, results, and discussion. The format of a review paper will vary, and may include a brief introduction to the topic, review of the literature, and conclusions and future directions.
- Provide a full reference list as per the [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association \(6th edition\)](#).
- Present tables and figures as per the *Manual*, if you have any, at the end of the manuscript.
- Review APA's [Checklist for Manuscript Submission](#) before submitting your article.

Upon acceptance

Please note that if your article is accepted for publication in *International Psychology Bulletin*, you will be asked to download the copyright transfer form, complete and sign it, and return to the editor (ravalvv@miamioh.edu) before the manuscript can be published.

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Articles

Diversified path to the psychological career: Europe vs. USA

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Sapienza University of Rome

Marzia Giua
*Private Practice
Rome, Italy*

Abstract

Written from the social psychological perspective of social representations, this review paper presents some aspects of the current situation of European psychologists. Opportunities and challenges of academic path and private practice as a psychotherapist are outlined in four countries: France, Italy, Poland and Romania, based on interviews with recent psychology graduates and examination of the official information in original languages in each geo-cultural context. Starting from education, through career choices, numerous possibilities of professional affiliation to the larger context of the general public, a comparison of Europe with the United States brings about a number of surprises and recommendations for enriching intercultural interaction.

Keywords: psychologist, psychotherapist, social representations, psychological associations, European psychology

Introduction

If there were a continuum from unity to diversity in psychology on a given continent, most probably the majority of continents would opt for a position much closer to diversity. In fact, European psychology tends to be considered as diverse as its countries or even regions.

This review paper is written from the theoretical perspective of social representations (Moscovici, 1976, 1988), which used to be considered primarily as a French tradition of research (Farr, 1987) that is slowly becoming a more diffused, genuinely European alternative to the dominant social cognition approach imported from the United States. In line with the indigenous psychology (Kim, Yang, & Hwang, 2006), it pays attention to the context where commonsense knowledge is transmitted and transformed. Since it is impossible to take into account every single European country, four contexts of France, Italy, Poland and Romania have been chosen. While the authors interviewed students who graduated in psychology in each of these countries, they also gathered the official information from national psychological associations and government websites in original languages. Given the diversity among European countries, the choice of

these four contexts was thus due to the authors' linguistic abilities and knowledge about conditions in each country. Such awareness of context appears as necessary when the researchers (who are also products of culture) assess social representations since "it is hard to remove the powerful lenses of individualism from our sense making – in both everyday and research contexts" (Howarth, 2002, p. 258).

Clearly, psychology is not all about research. Therefore, in the contemporary scenario of economic difficulties faced by Europe, this review paper presents some perspectives of young people who decide to embark on the diversified path to the career as a psychologist. It includes the required education, possible further steps, prospective employment and options of professional affiliation, specifically in two cases: of a psychotherapist primarily involved in private practice and of a researcher in academic setting. In the United States, in 1973 it was proposed to use different degrees to designate the practitioner's role (PsyD) from the scientist role (PhD); the former focuses primarily on clinical service and less on research (Norcross et al, 2004) by training students to practice what they learn about the full spectrum of psychological science, while the latter gives the fundamentals of practice, but its primary job is training students to conduct research (Peterson, 1997).

Realizing a bit more about the challenges that European psychologists are facing and being aware of some underlying assumptions that many of them may have concerning the discipline, can be useful when implementing international relations on a professional level or simply travelling to Europe for private reasons and successfully managing personal encounters.

Literature review

The recent literature on the career path of a psychologist in research and private practice that compares the situation in the United States and in Europe is not yet very extensive, probably due to dynamic and ongoing changes in various European countries. Arnett (2008) points out to the need of studies in psychology that are not solely focused on the "rich who get researched", while Donn and colleagues (2000) specifically compare North America with Europe. In terms of psychology and psychotherapy in health care, Van Broeck and Lietaer (2008) propose a review of legal regulations in 17 European countries. Another way to assess differences between the two continents consists of pointing out the competences that a psychologist should possess according to pre-established standards (Bartram & Roe, 2005) and his or her career prospects (Sternberg, 1997). More detailed comparisons of approaches to psychotherapy in Europe and United States include relational (Aron, 2007), experiential (Greenberg, Watson, & Lietaer, 1998), cognitive-behavioral (Hoffman et al, 2012) and psychoanalytic psychotherapy (Jacobs, 2002), to mention just a few. On the other hand, some authors focus on career prospects of psychology students in Europe (Knight & Vainre, 2011) and in the United States (Borden & Rajecki, 2000). Last summer in Canada the topic of this article has been treated by Giua and Dryjanska (2015).

North American standards

The American Psychological Association (APA) provides clear and comprehensive information concerning the career path in psychology (APA, 2011). In the United States, it is possible to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology. While some doctoral programs require a master's degree in psychology, more commonly applicants can enroll in the doctoral programs with a bachelor's degree and work directly on a doctoral degree. The majority of doctoral degrees take 5–7 years to complete, and a one-year internship is necessary in order to become a professional clinical psychologist. According to the APA (2011), "some universities and professional schools offer a PsyD degree in lieu of the traditional research doctoral degree (PhD) or EdD degree. These PsyD degrees, with their emphasis on clinical psychology, are designed for students who primarily want to do clinical work exclusively." Moreover, one has to be licensed as a psychologist to exercise independent practice of psychology anywhere in the United States. The state licensing boards review applicant's educational background and their successful completion of at least two years of supervised professional experience before granting the permission for him or her to take the licensing exam. Information about state and provincial licensing requirements is provided by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB).

Diversity of psychology in four European countries

Four European countries discussed in this review paper include France, Italy, Poland and Romania – diverse contexts that nonetheless present some similarities when it comes to a career path in psychology, often thanks to the processes prompted by the European Union, of which all of these states are members. Each one with distinct language, customs, history and other aspects of culture offers a unique context for the development of self as a psychologist. In line with the recommendations of Hermans (2001), this paper emphasizes increasing complexity and shifts attention from core to contact zones, discussing the social representations of North American psychologists by their European colleagues.

Education

At least in its early stages, the education required of a European psychologist is currently quite similar across different countries, at least concerning the number of years of study required. This fairly recent situation concerns current psychologists in their early thirties and younger. In 1999 almost thirty European ministers responsible for higher education signed a joint declaration – the official starting point of the so-called Bologna Process, aimed at creation of a common European Higher Education Area by 2010. As a result, "governments have developed policies that fit the European agenda towards converging systems of higher education" (Huisman & Wende, 2004, p. 355). Their main focus - the introduction of the three-cycle system (bachelor/master/doctorate), strengthened quality assurance and easier recognition of qualifications and periods of study – brought about the fairly unified length and requirements of the early stages of career in psychology: from three to four years to earn a bachelor degree in psychology, one to two years for a master degree in psychology and a minimum of three years for a doctorate in psychology.

While the Bologna Process regulates quite well the academic career in psychology focused on research (on a doctorate level, a PhD), more ambiguity concerns the private practice career in psychology focused on psychotherapy (on a doctorate level, a PsyD). Typically, the latter have a tougher admission process and the programs tend to be more expensive. It is worth mentioning that while the term "PhD" is familiar to the majority of psychologists, "PsyD" tends to be less known in continental Europe where these types of programs are often known as "specializations" ("spécialisation en psychothérapie" in French, "specializzazione in psicoterapia" in Italian, "specjalizacja" in Polish and "specializare în psihoterapie" in Romanian). In general, European PhD programs in psychology are accredited by the national ministries of education, as opposed to "specialization" programs in psychology (mainly in psychotherapy) accredited by the national ministries of health.

Table 1 summarizes the minimum number of years necessary to complete different types of degrees in psychology, based on national legislation.

Table 1. Comparison of the minimum number of years necessary to get a degree in countries under scrutiny, based on national legislation (Civic Impulse, 2016; Lege nr. 288 din 24, 2004; Loi n° 2013-660, 2013; D.M. 270/04, 2004; Dz. U. 2005 Nr 164 poz. 1365, 2005)

COUNTRY	BACHELOR	MASTER	DOCTORATE
France	≤ 3 years	≤ 2 years	≤ 3 years
Italy	≤ 3 years	≤ 2 years	≤ 3 years
Poland	≤ 3 years	≤ 1.5 years	≤ 2 years; ≥ 4 years
Romania	≤ 3 years	≤ 1 year	≤ 4 years
USA	≤ 4 years	≤ 1 year	≤ 4 years

Career in private practice

In Europe, a person is generally considered as a psychologist upon completion of their master degree in psychology or a minimum of five years of university training (Van Broeck, & Lietaer, 2008). Italy constitutes an exception: holders of a degree must pass a state examination, complete a one-year supervised internship and register as a member of the National Council of Psychologists (“Ordine degli Psicologi” in Italian). Following this first step, those interested in private practice need to obtain a license or a title of a psychotherapist. A close equivalent of the North American PsyD, the “specialization” tends to be awarded by specific schools of thought, such as specialization in cognitive-behavioral therapy, systemic-relational therapy, hypnosis, psychodynamic therapy, etc. Schools that integrate more approaches have become more popular, especially in Eastern Europe, not to mention specific concentrations or sub-specializations that apply a certain kind of therapy to children, adolescents or other specific groups of clients or patients. However, historically the origins of training in psychotherapy in Europe are marked by a “solitary supremacy of psychoanalysis” (Gemignani & Giliberto, 2005, p. 171).

Once the expensive and lengthy supervised training is completed, a young psychotherapist faces the challenge of finding the recipients of his or her services. In France, the situation is particularly unstable (Bernaud, Cohen-Scali, & Guichard, 2007) due to the decrease in state involvement (various French ministries used to clearly define qualifications, recruitment processes, career conditions and monitoring of activities of French psychologists) and the pressure from the European Union to start establishing new standards, often from Northern Europe.

Based on the results of a national survey conducted in 2012-2013 with 1500 Italian psychologists registered as members of the National Council of Psychologists (“Ordine degli Psicologi” in Italian), Bosio and Lozza (2013) reported that the average annual income of recent graduates is slightly above the poverty threshold defined by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT). Simply put, employment opportunities for psychologists are scarce and not very attractive. Due to the financial crisis, it is also difficult to find and/or keep clients in private practice, which results in unemployment and underemployment. Notwithstanding, the number of Italian graduates in psychology has been declared as “very high, considering the Italian population as a whole” (Job, Tonzar, & Lotto, 2009, p. 311), with the increase of approximately 10% per year.

In Poland, where psychology is a fairly new discipline for decades restricted by Marxist philosophical approach (Kaczkowski, 1967), professional psychologists face the challenge of the lack of legal regulations that would protect them from the infiltrations of pseudo-scientific methods and diagnostic tools (Brzezinski, 2014). In turn, this has negative consequences on the social representations of psychologists among the general public. Various myths penetrate Polish society, such as “psychologists always analyze every-

thing and everyone around them”, “every psychologist is a psychotherapist”, “those who study psychology do it to solve their own mental problems”, etc.

Similarly, in Romania the levels of stigma and discrimination against people with mental illness and therefore a shame attached attending psychotherapy are quite high (Evans-Lacko et al., 2012). School/educational psychology tends to be a popular orientation among students since parents often declare to be more willing to invest in psychotherapy for their children rather than themselves (Negovan & Dincă, 2014).

As in Poland, myths and erroneous perception of psychotherapy cause potential patients or clients to turn to other types of therapy, such as complementary and alternative, instead of psychotherapy (Dumitrașcu, 2014).

In general, in Europe there is a plethora of psychotherapy approaches and various entities that offer supervised training. On the other hand, due to negative attitudes of the general public towards the mental healthcare including interventions by psychotherapists, ongoing efforts through large nationally and locally based programs that fight the stigma shall be further implemented and monitored (Evans-Lacko et al., 2012).

Overall, in Europe the differentiation between a psychologist (someone who has a degree in psychology) and psychotherapist (someone who is licensed to run a private practice) is not very clear among lay people. For the most part, they do not realize that it is necessary to be a psychologist in order to become a psychotherapist, and the two terms are used interchangeably, which creates confusion and contributes to some myths about the profession. Moreover, the media have widely contributed to the social representation of a psychotherapist anchored in the figure of a psychoanalyst, the use of a couch and specific setting, making it more difficult to convey to the general public how diverse and dynamic are the numerous approaches to psychotherapy.

Academic career

As a result of the Bologna Process, European psychologists involved in research have a much more linear career path. Mainly affiliated with universities, upon completion of a doctorate program, successful candidates enter highly competitive academic career, usually at first benefitting from post-doc positions or research grants. Across Europe, they dedicate time to research and teaching, publishing results and presenting them at national and international conferences.

What differs them from their counterparts in the United States? A study of personal homepages of European academic psychologists revealed that they almost exclusively offer information about result-oriented research activities and publications. Additionally, it is common for them to provide links that demonstrate a network of academic connections. According to Dumont and Frindte (2005), self-presentation is limited to information about academic work, possibly due to their understanding of personal homepages that follows “the common ethos of science, that is to say, scientific results

should be independent of the scientists who produce them” (Dumont & Frindte, 2005, p. 81).

Another issue concerns the choice between publishing in English (encouraged by many European monitoring and evaluation entities) or native language. Being able to read and write scientific papers in English is a must to join the global discourse, yet at the same time researchers from non-English speaking countries have the duty to publish in their native languages in order not to lose considerable part of their native audience (Brzeziński, 2014).

Thanks to the international language of science and opportunities of funding from the EU (unlike private practice), academic career tends to be more international and involves significant mobility opportunities across Europe. Alongside numerous benefits, some authors nevertheless point out the challenges of this situation, such as transience and risk identified by Richardson and Zikic (2007) as two important dimensions of the “darker side” of pursuing an international academic career.

Professional affiliations

Virtually every European country has some sort of a national entity for psychologists. Their authority, function and character vary considerably within Europe.

Among the four countries considered in this paper, Italy stands out as one with the most developed and complex structure of possible professional affiliations open to graduates in psychology. On the one hand, practitioners are obliged to become a part of the National Council of Psychologists (“Ordine degli Psicologi” in Italian) that requires a five-year diploma in psychology, proof of at least one-year supervised practice, satisfactory grade on the national examination and payment of annual membership fees. On the other hand, those interested in the academic career have an easier path of simply applying for the membership of the Italian Psychological Association (AIP in Italian) following the acquisition of a PhD degree and payment of annual membership fees. While the National Council of Psychologists ensures recognition of a professional (dealing mainly with the Italian Ministry of Health), the Italian Psychological Association (AIP) provides opportunities for the exchange of research during conferences and gives voice to the academic community in discussions with the Italian ministry of education.

The French scenario somewhat mirrors the Italian one, with the Federation of French Psychologists (“Fédération Française des Psychologues et de Psychologie” in French) for practitioners (but also open to academicians and students) and the French Psychological Society (“Société Française de Psychologie” in French) that caters mainly to psychologists in the world of higher education.

In Poland and Romania, national psychological associations recognize respective national diplomas in psychology and offer opportunities for further training, dialogue with governmental entities and professional growth. Polish Psychological Association (“Polskie Towarzystwo Psychologiczne” in Polish) and College of Romanian Psychologists

(“Colegiul Psihologilor din România”) try to appeal to both academicians and practitioners, also providing lists of available opportunities of further training.

Each one of the associations (except for the National Council of Psychologists) publishes scientific journals and belongs to the European Federation of the Psychologists’ Associations. This entity has the ambition to appeal to all psychologists by promoting the EuroPsy, a European qualification standard for psychologists and a registry of European professionals who have achieved it. However, for example in case of Italy the Federation did not partner with the National Council of Psychologists (which would be the best choice, given its authority over examinations and official Italian registry). Moreover, it is not very well known and many psychologists may not see a point of acquiring additional certification beyond national standards, especially since the procedure requires time and money necessary for obtaining official translations and notarized paperwork.

Throughout Europe, specific associations that often (but not always) correspond to the APA divisions exist in an independent way on different levels: regional, national, European and international. For example, in case of psychotherapists, a school that offers specialization in systemic-relational therapy may belong to the European Family Therapy Association. Similarly, academicians usually have a specific area of interest in psychology and tend to be active within that area on different levels. For instance, a social psychologist from Poland may choose to become a member of the Polish Society of Social Psychology (PSPS) as well as the European Association of Social Psychology. A fairly common practice in scientific societies is the requirement of presenting recommendations from two active members in order to apply.

Overall, the world of associations and societies is quite complex. There is no simple rule that would apply to all countries. While generally in Europe being a psychologist still means having graduated after five years of studies in this discipline, in Italy it additionally requires being enlisted in the national registry of the National Council of Psychologists. All other associations are on a voluntary basis and the fact that someone’s name cannot be found on the list of members does not mean that they cannot legally present themselves as psychologists.

Social representations of psychologists

Introduced by Moscovici (1976), social representations were a construct that encompassed commonsense knowledge and lay theories about a new phenomenon in France in the fifties – psychoanalysis. Shared by certain groups of society, these opinions, judgments, images and metaphors served the function of familiarization and enabled communication. Moscovici realized that social representations could be extended to other phenomena, since they reflect how people think and interpret surrounding reality using a number of processes. Since then, Moscovici has considerably elaborated his theory (1988, 1998, 2011) and many social scientists have used social representations in their research.

Recently, de Rosa, Fino and Bocci (2013) have taken the original object of the seminal study – psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts to examine their social representations in France and Italy, also taking into account the information from various sources in the Internet. Without doubt, among the general public in Europe the distinction between a psychologist and psychotherapist is not very clear, let alone familiarity with different types of therapies. Movies, in particular by Woody Allen (Gordon, 1994), constitute a source of images that nurture laymen thinking about psychotherapy.

How about European psychologists themselves? Professionals are not free from commonsense thinking about their occupation. Romaioli and Contarello (2012) have conducted interviews with cognitive-behavioral, constructivist, psychodynamic and systemic-relational therapists in order to identify the representational processes that they employed to organize knowledge about change in their clients' lives. Social representations of therapists would often reify the metaphors used, showing their ideological attachment to the system of thought of a specific school. As shown by Romaioli and Contarello (2012), reified metaphors are the phenomenological description of different kinds of psychological problems, enabling the identification of linguistic repertoires more practicable for the therapist, aimed at constructing effective communication during therapy sessions. For example, cognitive-behavioral therapists represented change in terms of a slow and cumulative acquisition of instruments with which to cope with everyday difficulties (a metaphor of an encyclopedia); while psychodynamic therapists represented change as a regeneration of one's own roots that enables new growth (a metaphor of a tree). Such research (Romaioli & Contarello, 2012) is an example of the application of a narrative or conversational approaches to the study of social representations of a specific object – in this case the process of change in the lives of clients of psychotherapists. It also has an added value of appealing to metaphors that are likely used in other cultures, such as the metaphor of a tree (Raval, & Kral, 2004), in order to understand the process of socially constructing reality.

Overall, the European general public as well as psychologists themselves faced with the complex world of psychology and psychotherapy have developed articulate ways of thinking and representing these phenomena, rich in images, metaphors and rhetoric devices. In Europe, there are multiple points of reference on various levels and the lack of a single firmly established authority concerning standards, accreditation, monitoring, definitions and ethics. In North America, the American Psychological Association constitutes such a point of reference to universities and practitioners. Unsurprisingly, many Europeans turn to its standards, especially when it comes to the publication manual.

Conclusions

While this review paper concentrates on educational input rather than performance output, the authors recognize the need for considering both aspects, following the definition

of the content of psychologist's profession and its various specializations across Europe (Roe, 2002). Considerable differences persist between North American and European models of clinical psychology training (Donn, Routh, & Lunt, 2000), although efforts are being made towards the standardization of the profession of a psychologist and continued professional development (Poortinga, 2015), yet for some common standards (especially publication manual), the American Psychological Association is a firm point of reference.

What are some practical recommendations to a North American psychologist when interacting with her European colleagues? First, instead of referring to a "PsyD" it is much better to ask about a "specialization" of a psychotherapist, enquiring about her particular school of thought or approach, years of study and supervised practice. Concerning a "PhD", misunderstandings are not very likely. However, while throughout the entire Europe someone is a doctor in psychology only after obtaining a doctorate degree, Italy constitutes an exception: even a BA in psychology legally entitles a person to the title of a doctor in psychology ("dottore" in Italian, abbreviated "Dott." or "Dr").

Asking about a license in Europe can also be tricky. Each country has different regulations and it is safest to first enquire about what are some national regulations concerning private practice and if there is an obligatory, public national registry of psychologists and psychotherapists. A conversation about different associations and societies could also open up a whole new world, quite distinct from the American Psychological Association and its divisions. Moreover, there seems to be a tendency among European psychologists not to go into as many personal details as their colleagues from the United States, emphasizing the results of their research, publications and professional status.

In sum, when interacting with European psychologists it is wise to first define and explain both contexts. The efforts to overcome the human tendency to ethnocentrism in psychology should be mutual and conscious (Takooshian, 2003). Such exchange among researchers probably brings fewer surprises than among psychotherapists, but will surely be fruitful, eye opening and stimulating in both cases.

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