Psychology and Poverty Reduction: A Global Special Issue

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Abstract

A "global special issue" on poverty brought together 9 international psychology journals during 2010 through 2013. The purpose was to highlight psychology's contribution toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals are rooted in the "capabilities approach" and highlight the importance of fostering environments that support 3 core domains: health, basic education, and income. Here, we analyze what the global special issue contributed. As a whole the global special issue provided an account of "how" psychology engages with poverty and poverty reduction. First, the global special issue, more than other research on poverty, was focused on lower- and middle-income settings. Second, while the content of the articles could be coded into 3 specific domains (health/well-being, education/development, and society/work), the vast majority of the articles straddled more than 1 category. Third, the contents of the global special issue could be organized in terms of the type of contribution: that is, practicality, theory, description, and advocacy. We highlight the importance of addressing wider situational and sociopolitical structures that constrain capability and potential, without losing sight of the person. Psychology might (a) concentrate resources on finding out what actually works to enable poverty reduction; and (b) apply what we know to ensure that research on poverty reduction is more informative and compelling to community stakeholders, organizations, and policymakers. Such an "implementation science" could advance poverty reduction and human development.

Keywords: psychology, poverty reduction, capabilities approach, UN Millennium Development Goals

Despite humankind's many achievements, discoveries and milestones, we have yet to find a way to eliminate relative (Iceland, 2003) and absolute poverty (Carr, 2013) around the globe. A major global anti-poverty plan is the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, or "MDGs" (Annan, 2000; United Nations, 2006; 2011). The primary goal is poverty reduction, which is undergirded by a series of other human development targets in health, education, work, gender-equity, the environment, and global partnership. These goals as a set are comparatively more multi-faceted than human development predecessors. In theory the MDGs incorporate ideas about enabling individual potential (a focus of psychology in the 1960s), empowerment through community and group dynamics (1970s), market structures (1980s), and good governance (1990s). The MDGs are built around a person-centered definition of poverty as a restricted opportunity, or capability, to live a life worth valuing. In this sense, poverty reduction therefore equals enabling both absolute and equitable inclusion and access to the necessary prerequisites for basic human capabilities: health, education and income, with one building on, and reinforcing, the other (Sen, 1999).

Compared to its predecessors in the last millennium, the MDGs have arguably been relatively successful (Clark, 2013). For example, a key 2015 target of halving the proportion of people living on less than $1.25 a day was met before the latest economic crisis in 2008 (United Nations, 2012). It is worth noting that both this target and whether it was fairly met is debated (see Reddy & Pooge, 2009). Equally, the global economic crisis regrettably halted and slowed progress on other goals. As a result, for example, international aid has been cut for the first time in more than a decade, whilst the impact of job losses has been felt globally (World Bank, 2012). These and related barriers to opportunity, e.g., job losses, unemployment, and cuts in health services have, however, boosted demand for fresh perspectives on how poverty can be reduced (Carr, 2013). This paper reports on one initiative within psychology to respond to the above demand, namely a "Global Special Issue" of international journals. In 2009 a group of editors in psychology simultaneously agreed to call for, and as simultaneously as possible release, a special issue of their journal on the same theme – poverty reduction.   The project was launched in 2009 when one of the authors of this paper wrote directly and personally using a standard email letter to the editors of twelve journals, asking if their publications would be interested in participating in the project (Carr et al., 2010). Thereafter, each journal was free to launch its own call, using its

own standard processes and procedures, although they did consistently refer to an overall project website, including its applied title (http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/departments/school-of-psychology/research/poverty/other-projects.cfm). Although the calls-for-papers did not emphasize implementation or direct interventions per se, official communications across the global special issue did consistently mention not just "poverty" per se but importantly its "*Reduction.*"

Understandably, three of the journals that were originally approached did not participate (and are kept anonymous for ethical reasons). Their own reasons for non-participation included journal editors stating that they felt that the content of the global special issue fell within the normal remit of their publication and did not require a special issue. Other journals initially agreed to participate but later withdrew from the process having encountered difficulties during the publication process. Some also failed to reply to repeated invitations. In the end, nine journals published material that contributed to this global special issue (Table 1, below). Journal outputs were to be coordinated temporally with contributions being published during 2010, when the special issue was formally launched at the Congress of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), in Melbourne, Australia (Marai, Burt, & Waldegrave, 2010). While most of the global special issue was published in 2010, some content was delayed with the last articles published in 2013. Hence, 2013 is the first point in time when we have been able to conduct a full review of the complete project.

A Psychology-MDG Nexus

Psychology is a discipline and profession that has arguably remained relatively silent and absent from the MDGs and the MDG policy discussions to-date (Berry et al, 2011). The discipline's apparent absence is despite a history of studying poverty reduction that dates back at least to the 1950s with work on the 'culture of poverty' (Lewis, 1959). Some theorists have suggested that Lewis' influential construct tended - and still tends - to unhelpfully highlight psychological deficits such as listlessness and depression in explaining poverty (Evans, 2004; Lever, 2007; Mohanty & Misra, 2000; Moreira, 2007). In such research we potentially risk overlooking the role of situations, leaving the wider system blameless and with no apparent responsibility for enabling change (Carr, 2013).

In the 1960s, research into 'personal attributes' such as emotional stability 'in' aid workers, and instilling need for achievement (*n*Ach) 'in' entrepreneurs, began (Harris, 1973; McClelland, 1961). In the 1970s, following the work of Feagin (1972), research on how the donor public makes attributions about poverty, including "Third World" poverty was conducted by different psychologists; however, there was never any real clarity around what the findings really meant for helping to reduce poverty itself (Harper, 2003). The 1980s was generally a time of 'crisis' of confidence in psychology's own capacity to transcend 'psychologizing' poverty (Sinha & Holtzman, 1984). By the late 1990s however, the focus began to shift, from the person to the situation. These context domains, derived inductively from the psychological literature at the time were healthcare and wellbeing, education/developmental and social and organizational settings (Carr & MacLachlan, 1998).

Today, the overlapping context domains implied by efforts such as the set of MDGs, suggest some foundations for a fresh reprise of psychology's fit with the overall "grand plan" for human development (Easterly, 2006). If, for example, we take the context domains suggested by Carr and MacLachlan (1998), does the content of the global special issue still categorize readily into one of three main context domains above? Or, is the material less readily classified into any single context domain? Taxonomies may be useful in social science, but not if they oversimplify reality (Gould, 1994). For this current review, an additional form of differentiation was devised based on the type of contribution made by the article. This second system comprised the following categories: practicality, theory, description and advocacy. These four categories will be used to try and illustrate in what way psychology is actually contributing to this area. As development economists of note have argued, "Grand plans" are one thing but concrete operational details are another, and it is these details that are often required for translating plans into practice (Easterly, 2006). Below we expand on the scope of these four categories.

1. *Practicality*. According to the capabilities approach, poverty reduction is about enabling context so that people can reach their inherent potential, e.g., by having a platform of sound health, education, and income (Sen, 1999). People are inherently proactive. It is enablement of opportunity that is of paramount practical concern. Some core practical issues include for example, evaluating whether providing rural healthcare facilities reduces infant mortality rates, assessing the utility of cash incentives in persuading parents to send their kids to

school, and finding a way for micro-credit to become transformational rather than merely palliative against on-going hardship (Banerjee & Duflo, 2008). Examples like those (for many others, see Banerjee & Duflo, 2011; Carr, 2013) are some of the issues that operationally define the MDGs. What seems to be missing from Capability theory itself is an understanding of 'how' capability can be enabled by context, at a behavioral level. Contributions from psychology can thus be evaluated against that broad yardstick.

2. *Theory*. Practicality is sometimes dependent on good theory (Lewin, 1951). Consistent with self-determination theory for instance, incentives in and out of education sometimes become "perverse," by "crowding out" intrinsic motivation. An extrinsic reward for achievement can inadvertently undermine the very motivation it is seeking to reinforce (Gneezy, Meier, & Rey-Biel, 2011). The capabilities approach links to psychology via theories of motivation, in this case in a context(s) of educational development. Motivation, of course, is also central to other contexts, and types of context – like health and workplace settings. Other theories may also make important contributions, for example theories of identity, learning, social justice, etc. Hence it becomes important to evaluate the contribution that psychology may make to poverty reduction through its behavioral-level theories. Human motives, for example, may sometimes act as mediators between macro-level policies and everyday behavior.

3. *Description* . The testing and development of theory-in-context depends on foundations in detailed description, including, for example, measurement. Forgetting this point can sometimes lead to glaring omissions in development policy. For example, in development policy discourse, the concept of a "migration-development nexus" is widely touted – mobility can help people to prosper their way out of poverty. Development in this case might be mediated by behavioral factors, such as successful adjustment and acculturation (Berry et al., 2011). Nonetheless, according to the United Nations Human Development Report for 2009 – a major global policy document - it was stated that "Moving abroad not only involves substantial monetary costs for fees and travel… but may also mean living in a very different culture and leaving behind your network of friends and relations, which can impose a heavy *if unquantifiable psychological burden*" (United Nations' Development Program, 2009, p. 10, emphasis added). The qualifier "can" notwithstanding, this kind of comment, in a major influential publication, arguably omits to mention decades of research, in

psychology, on measuring cultural adjustment reliably and validly and incorporating those measures into cross-cultural mediational models of opportunities for immigrants, students and migrant workers (Furnham, 2011). Description in general and measurement in particular is thus an important contribution that psychology may make to poverty reduction.

4. *Advocacy*. Finally, and most importantly perhaps, poverty reduction is a moral and ethical standard to which a profession can and should hold itself accountable (Lefkowitz, 2012). The MDGs are a global initiative to lift our performance as an applied profession and discipline in poverty reduction (Marsella, 1998). This paper therefore asks to what extent psychology as a discipline and profession has managed to respond to its ethical imperative to be a good global community citizen (Lefkowitz, 2010; Marsella, 1998).

The aim in this paper is to describe how psychology addresses poverty, as demonstrated in the global special issue. The paper also aims to articulate the value of the global special issue, that it has the potential to create a space for psychology to make a 'step change' making human behavior in impoverished contexts a respectable possibility for scholars and practitioners of psychology. Thus our major purpose is to describe the special issue and its contribution. Other articles published during the same time frame are also briefly described in order to provide context and background.

Method

Participants

The participating journals ($n = 9$) are listed in Table 1 (below). The focal participating societies, globally, regionally and nationally, are also listed in Table 1. Overall, the output of the global special issue contained $N = 61$ individual pieces from the nine journals listed above (including $n = 3$ book reviews). Editorials and commentaries/replies to commentaries were included provided they were substantive and focused on poverty reduction, rather than merely outlining the specifications for the global special issue itself, and the process by which the collaboration had transpired. Most of the contributions ($n = 33/62$) were research studies, rather than research reviews ($n = 23$) or narrative reviews ($n = 6$).

Across the global special issue, articles included a range of different populations who varied with regard to gender, age, employment status and relationship to country of origin (Table 1). A variety of articles concentrated on either migrant or expatriate groups (e.g., Marai, Kewibu, Kinkin, Peniop, & Salini, 2010). There was also a strong focus on other marginalized populations including children living on the street (e.g., Chireshe, Jadezweni, Cekiso, & Maphosa, 2010), people living with disabilities (e.g., Dalal, 2010), and refugees (e.g., Milner & Khawaja, 2010).

Articles in the global special issue frequently categorized participants according to their profession or job. Often these articles were in some way connected to aid work (e.g., McWha & MacLachlan, 2011). However a range of other professional categories was also considered, including anti-poverty community advocates (Kagee & Delport, 2010), farmers (Mathew, 2010), and bonded laborers in stone quarries (Singh & Tripathi, 2010).

Measures

Firstly, in keeping with Carr and MacLachlan's pre-Millennium review (1998), articles were coded for their context domain: health and wellbeing; educational and developmental; and social/community and organizational (including work and employment). In addition, the material was coded for approach according to: practicality; explanatory theory; measurement, and advocacy.

Procedure

Coding procedure. Stage 1: in keeping with Carr and MacLachlan's pre-Millennium review (1998), articles were coded for their context domain: health and wellbeing (H/W); educational and developmental (E/D); and social and organizational (S/O; including work and employment). Stage 2: in addition, the material was coded according to the four categories discussed earlier related to their type of contribution: practicality (PRAC), theory (THEO), description (DESC), advocacy (ADVO).

The first author read and then categorized the content of the global special issue using the two stages of coding specified above. During this process it was noted that there were numerous occasions where it was felt that a second or sometimes even third categorization was equally valid. Then, two graduates assistants of the second author also coded the article abstracts. They were unaware of the codes assigned by the first author. In

their coding, they attempted to focus on a single code. Attempts to resolve inconsistencies between the graduates assistants took place through a second round of coding where both had awareness of each other's original coding decisions. Despite this second round of coding, the coders reported difficulties restricting themselves to a single code. And, in multiple instances, they did not reach an agreement on the same single code. This seemed to reinforce the importance of using a multiple coding system to describe the content of the global special issue. As a result of the above, we used the results of the single coding carried out by the graduates assistants as check on the coding carried out by the first author. In a small number of cases this resulted in small changes to the original coding. The final classifications in Table 1 were then reviewed and approved by the remaining authors on the paper. For the stage 1 coding, Table 1 includes both primary code and secondary codes. Primary codes use capital letters (e.g. H/W) and lower-case letters are used for secondary codes (e.g. h/w). It was harder to attribute primary and secondary priorities to the stage 2 coding, concerned with type of contribution. So while multiple codes are attributed to the same paper to signify the different types of contributions within the global special issue, we have not attempted to distinguish between primary and secondary codes.

Comparison point. In order to provide a comparison point between the global special issue and the wider psychological literature, a search of the PsycINFO database for 2010, using the search term "poverty" under title (TI) was conducted. This revealed a total of N = 241 publications. Subtracting from these any which were also in the global special issue (n = 29), left a total of N = 212. The content of this literature was compared to the content of the global special issue.

Results

The results section will first detail the comparison between the global special issue and the contemporaneous psychological literature introduced above. Then it will apply the two categorization systems described earlier to the articles to the articles from the global special issue. First the articles will be described according to their context domain, then their type of contribution.

Comparison point

Of the N = 212 comparison articles described earlier, a majority (n = 147) were based in high-income or upper-middle income economies, principally USA and Western Europe. Only N = 65 (31%) included a

significant or major focus on low-income countries. From Table 1, equivalent figures from the global special issue (for 2010) would be $n = 8/49$ (16%) and 39/47 (83%). Such figures suggest that a focus on the poorest in the world, in both absolute and relative terms, was stronger in the global special issue than across a wider sample of the psychological literature from the same period. However we do acknowledge, and caution, that the search term itself was restrictive, and only crudely indicative as a comparison point at best (for examples of the wider literature, see for example, Anand & Lea, 2011; Bullock, Lott & Truong, 2011; Rutherford, Cheery & Under, 2011). Not all of the manuscripts in the special issue itself would have been identified by the search. In fact, only 29 of the 61 special issue articles from that sample, suggesting that our search missed a high percentage of the global special issue articles themselves, although we did only check 2010 and thus could not have caught any of those papers in the global special issue that were published after this date. To sum up, whilst the wider psychological literature retains a significant focus on poverty and poverty reduction ($N = 241$ papers in one database in 2010 alone), the bulk of this literature was not especially directed at populations and settings in the world where poverty is most acute and targeted by the MDGs themselves.

[Table 1 about here]

Categorization level 1 – Context domain

From Table 1, the content was in general only somewhat readily categorized into domains H/W, E/D, and S/O (Carr & MacLachlan, 1998). Based on the logic that basic capabilities are sometimes necessary for valued ones, basic health is a foundation for basic and then higher education, which in turn can help to support decent employment opportunities (Annan, 2000; Carr & MacLachlan, 1998; Sen, 1999, above). Accordingly, the focus shifts in Table 1 progressively from health and wellbeing, the largest category (as it was in Carr & MacLachlan's review of the wider literature 1998), to education and development (the smallest, again) to work and society (medium-sized category). However, a striking feature of these categorizations is that they are mostly multiple. In fact there is no sharply differentiated pattern in terms of our level 1 coding, either within or across "specialist" journals. Thus, like the interlocking nature of the MDGs themselves, and the overall ethos of the global special issue, the overall character of Table 1, compared to Carr & MacLachlan's review of the wider literature in 1998, was more multi-faceted in terms of context domain.

Categorization level 2 – Type of contribution

Practical. This category was reserved for articles that clearly had practical implications, with respect to poverty reduction. From Table 1, there are practical implications in each of the three main context domains. In terms of the global special issue's title, this "practical" category would be the type of contribution that most directly addresses poverty *reduction*, perhaps.

In health and wellbeing, for instance, Kagee and Delport (2010) found that frontline staff rudeness was a deterrent for patients attending HIV retroviral treatment programs – that the experience was demeaning and humiliating for the patients. Practically, this clearly implies that staff can be trained in customer service and sensitivity (using training needs analysis and evaluation taken from stock in trade techniques in industrial and organizational psychology). Similarly, Lee et al (2010) provide details on how workplace internships in the hospitality sector in Cambodia can assist young Cambodian women to find some protection from exposure to HIV infection risks (H/W), through a combination of training (E/D) and the enablement of opportunities for (S/O) decent work. This story of how psychology was applied through various partnerships is in itself highly practical. Lee et al (2010) further state that even though solutions are apparent, so too are practical precautions and caveats. Lee et al (2010) point out that women may escape prostitution only to find that the newfound trust in their steady male partners, who are outside the program, is sometimes misplaced. Wider, less micro and more systemic changes, such as providing health awareness training for male partners, may be required. Tuason (2010) was able to show that personality traits alone were not sufficient to escape poverty; rather wider situational opportunities were key – a point that has been made in the development literature with respect to entrepreneurial traits requiring at least some opportunities for a business environment (Easterly, 2006).

A similar point is made with respect to education and development opportunities. In his paper on transforming exclusion into inclusion for people who live with both poverty and disability, Dalal (2010) shows that organization is a key to poverty reduction, for example through organizing people into self-help groups. This is a key point, about social dynamics, that resonates with the wider literature in poverty reduction, for example with respect to women in development (Schein et al, 2011) and with the empowerment of groups in general (Carr, 2013).

Within the global special issue itself (from Table 1), MacLachlan et al (2010) have argued that empowerment is the antithesis of dominance, and a key human factor, with extensive practical applications, to poverty reduction (Taylor, 2010). Much of their argument was based on workplace research in the global special issue (Table 1), a key form of dominance has been the outcome of "dual salaries" (Marai et al, 2010; Munthali et al, 2010; Zhou et al, 2010). Duality of salary means that international workers ("expatriates") are frequently paid a lot more than their local counterparts, who are frequently just as qualified and experienced. This is a legacy of colonial and neo-colonial times when the argument is advanced that local workforces simply do not have the capacity for highly skilled work, and that expatriate labor is consequently at a premium.

Many of the former 'colonies' have invested substantially in education and training of their human resources. Each of the authors by the study by Marai et al, Munthali et al and Zhou et al (2010) ran and reported in-country workshops in their studies, to derive practical ways of reducing the "economic apartheid" of dual salary systems and aligning more with local aspirations. The resulting practical interventions themselves are relatively familiar in evidence-based management and workplace psychology (ESRC, 2010). They include, for example, designing culturally competent structured and transparent job analysis, specification, evaluation, description, selection, evaluation and career planning (Carr, 2013). The research has enabled collaborations between researchers and NGOs, in order to research which policy combinations are felt to be fair and sustainable by NGO workers themselves (http://www.peopleinaid.org/interactive/Forums/FairPay). Other forms of partnership include researchers working with NGOs and the judiciary to run practical workshops that give judges an insight into life and living conditions on the 'under' side of a local or national "poverty line" (Hodgetts, Chamberlain, Tankel, & Groot, 2013).

Within the global special issue, in their paper on aligning job analysis and selection with local aspirations, Manson and Carr (2010) showed how to improve fit between development workers and workplace wellbeing, by using multiple (global and local) indices of "fit" (e.g., with local aspirations for job specification and goals). Similarly, Kemp et al (2010), focusing on the other, supply end of aid resources and donations, showed how third-party donations were more aligned with private donors' aspirations and thus confidence in

how aid is effectively disbursed, compared to more traditional, conventional donations of money (which many thought would not get through, or would be misspent in other ways such as on overheads like dual salaries).

Theoretical. Contributions to the development of theory in poverty reduction can be found throughout Table 1. One unifying idea is of uncovering coping mechanisms, which we argued earlier can function as motivational mediators. The mechanisms in Table 1 can mediate for instance between facing poverty with HIV infection and wellbeing (Kasayira & Chireshe, 2010), between social drift and schizophrenia (Read, 2010), and between facing farming financial crises and self-destructive behavior (Mathew, 2010).

In Mathew's (2010) article, immersion in community life is identified as a third coping style (in addition to problem and emotion-focused coping styles). In a relatively less poor setting, a similar concept emerges: "Ageing positively" is a health-related mediator, often used in discourse to make sense of material hardship by being a good community citizen - but ironically in the process of letting government services (partly) off-the-hook (Breheny & Stephens, 2010).

In the domain of social and community life, theoretical contributions can be found in Table 1 concerning how people's implicit processes and biases mediate coping with changes through immigration into 'their' communities (Pedersen & Fozdar, 2010); for making supportive attributions about appropriate forms of anti-poverty interventions (Hastie, 2010); about new settlers' adaptation patterns and styles (King, Welch & Owens, 2010; Udahemuka & Pernice, 2010); and about the motivating qualities of social identity as a mediator for poverty reduction initiatives (Thomas, McGarty & Mayor, 2010). These mediators are not part of the "culture of poverty," but perhaps more constructively can be seen as part of the "culture[s] of daily life" (Kumar, 2010). Other authors in Table 1 might include culture of daily work life, which is required to deal with everyday workplace strains even in humanitarian crisis work (Vergara & Gardner, 2011), and with the workplace inequities and challenges to identity from dual salaries (Lefkowitz, 2010; Saner, 2011).

Description . This is perhaps the widest sub-category, because most research contains at least some elements of description, including measurement. For example, Table 1 describes, the risks from unemployment (Plattner & Gonzo, 2010); inter-sexual violence (Moagi-Gulubane, 2010; Modie-Moroka, 2010); migration

(Chirshe, 2010; Davidson, Murray & Schweitzer, 2010) and the risks that street-children face to their health and wellbeing (Chireshe, Jadezweni, Cekiso & Maphosa, 2010).

In terms of education and development, lack of education blocks human potential (Davies, Crothers & Hanna, 2010; Shumba, 2010), whilst poverty and hardship demonstrably continue to impact on development into older age (Waldegrave & Cameron, 2010). Outside of the global special issue however, the limited resources for research in low-income countries often preclude measuring the processes and outcomes (Chireshe & Plattner, 2010).

In social and organizational terms, Hayati, Yazdanpanah and Karbalaee (2010) show how it is possible to measure the imbalance and partiality in 'support' of drought-affected dirt farmers, with the less needy often qualifying for more support than their more needy counterparts. Aid organizations themselves should be more accountable for such slips, and transparent about efficiency in meeting the goal of reaching the most needy (Burt & Carr, 2011). Within these organizations, and projects, it is possible to measure the quality of work life, for example the quality of cross-cultural relationships between local workers and their international colleagues (McWha & MacLachlan, 2011).

Advocacy. This is a relatively large category in Table 1. Examples of advocacy range for example from calls for a more structural than person-focused, "psychologized" approach to health and wellbeing (Fryer & McCormack, 2013; McCormack, 2013; Murray & Marks, 2010; Stephens, 2010). Potential solutions include self-organization (Campbell, Cornish, Gibbs & Scott, 2010; Cramm, Møller & Nieboer, 2010; Ng, 2010), for instance into business-related groups such as micro-credit networks (Tomlinson, Rohleder, Swartz, Drimie & Kagee, 2010). Micro-credit groups of course are a major element in many anti-poverty initiatives outside of psychology (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). A wider goal that they arguably have is social as well as economic inclusion (Sampson, Gridley, & Turner, 2013), for example through social identity, interaction and solidarity (Schein et al, 2011).

In education and development, gender equity in educational opportunities, particularly for girls, is a topic for advocacy within the global special issue (Machingambi & Wadesango, 2010), as it is in the MDGs themselves (Table 1). Educational projects against illiteracy are another, more general vehicle for community

empowerment (Boaduo, 2010). The global special issue itself is an educational vehicle for outside disciplines and professions, with respect to new perspectives on poverty reduction (Mwamwenda, 2010; Waldegrave, 2010) and more inclusive social policy (Stephens, Alpass, & Towers, 2010).

Finally with respect to social and organizational dynamics, Table 1 contains advocacy for greater awareness in aid advertising against ironic effects from asking people 'not' to stereotype 'the poor' (ironic because they can easily and unexpectedly rebound, actually producing more stereotyping than would otherwise be the case; Kennedy & Hill, 2010). A critical question is, how might psychology approach poverty from relatively structural perspectives? For example, banks and credit groups, as well as legislators in government and civil society, as institutions, arguably need to stop irresponsibly selling and marketing debt (Walker, 2013). Social services towards new settlers, as institutions of social inclusion, from low-income settings should be more respectful and aligned (Copping, Shakespeare-Finch & Paton, 2010; Murray, 2010). Indeed psychologists can proactively lobby government institutions and structures about how to improve their "migrant"/new settler services to be more culturally competent (Davidson & Carr, 2010; Milner & Khawaja, 2010). Research itself, as an institution in society, might become more culturally competent, learning to walk more in the shoes of those people who it aims to "study," and hence otherwise risks objectifying and losing community confidence (Bastos, Rabinovich & Almeida, 2010; Carr, 2013).

Discussion

Over and above the fact that contributions themselves came from and focused on low-, middle- and higher-income settings, several striking features emerge from the global special issue as a whole.

(1) The research itself may have become more multi-faceted, by straddling different contexts at the same time. We can see this from the cross coding in Table 1. A total of 43 studies were coded in more than one area and only 16 addressed a single area. The literature was less readily parsed into discrete compartments than the last major review (Carr & MacLachlan, 1998). Today, for example, we see examples of studies that promote health through decent work, which includes both vocational training and health education.

(2) A number of the papers in the global special issue explicitly focus on poverty reduction rather than on poverty alone. Historically many critics both inside and outside of psychology argued that a focus on poverty alone could potentially risk backfiring by taking pressure away from systems to reform (Carr, 2013). For instance, a study focused on poverty and depression might suggest palliative measures against depression but not against the grinding work conditions, continual health worries or food shortages that contribute towards it in the first place. A focus on only alleviating the symptoms of poverty within the individual risks, paradoxically, diverting efforts away from making systemic or structural changes causes of poverty. Today, multiple examples in Table 1 appear to begin to take a different, more situational approach, while at the same time not losing sight of the person.

As is true of the debates emerging throughout the world, a number of the papers in the global special issue also rightly focused on inequality and inequities rather than poverty per se. This turns attention from development within a country and region to topics such as the global control of capital. Perhaps the future contribution of psychology will continue to examine human behavior not just in low-income countries in isolation but also through a greater understanding of the effects of wider socio-political structures that support and protect inequality.

The above review and the global special issue itself are of course limited. For example, we have not captured any literature that is not written in English. It seems possible that contributions from different languages might provide a somewhat different picture of how psychology has been and is approaching both poverty and poverty reduction elsewhere. That notwithstanding it is possible that the global special issue, has created a space for psychology to make a 'step change' in terms of its contribution to this area. If that is the case, now may be a good time for psychology to consider what else it might address as it moves forward.

Despite the many positives that can be taken from the global special issue, it seems that psychology continues to have little or no presence in development debates and policy forums. Instead it seems to be stereotyped as a "helping" profession rather than one that is capable of contributing to poverty reduction itself (Berry et al, 2011). If we believe that many of the contributions within the global special issues are useful to poverty reduction, then perhaps we need to consider whether psychology lacks a model for implementation.

Implementation

What would an emphasis on implementation look like? First of all, it has to bring new information to any specific development issue (Carr, 2013). Research has to add value, in an already crowded place. This might entail showing 'how' NGOs can work with the private sector and social groups to help protect the health and career opportunities for Cambodian women beer sellers (Lee et al, 2010), or finding a way for judges to appreciate and even partly share the perspective of potential 'offenders' (Hodgetts et al, 2013). Whatever its context domains and type of approach, Psychology as a profession has to be both socially responsive and innovative, in order to "stand out" as having something different, additional, new, to offer. Thus we are not specifically advocating greater implementation of knowledge, but rather that specific kinds of research be actively and persuasively promoted to those who are implementing programs to reduce poverty. Based on the examples just given, these kinds of research must be multifaceted, multidisciplinary, longitudinal, contextual, and above all perhaps informative (in the Information theory sense of the word, novel and empowering in some way) to those whose lives are directly affected by political decisions, and to all those who make them, self and others.

Secondly, we have to become more persuasive, or more specifically learn what works in terms of persuading communities and policy-makers to have confidence in what psychological research has to offer. To do that, we could perhaps develop more confidence in ourselves, as a discipline and a profession, in the face of poverty itself. The past decades have witnessed much critical self-reflection, which is good, but also much handwringing and resorting to what we arguably know best – individual factors such as personality – arguably at the expense of focusing outwards on situations, and how they enable or disable capability. Like the work with Cambodian beer sellers and with judges reviewed above, another prime example of capacitating research programs is contained in Serpell et al's work in Zambia, on educational goal setting around indigenous constructs of intelligence (Serpell, 2011; Serpell & Jere-Folotiya, 2011; Serpell, Mumba & Chansa-Kabali, 2011). At its core this work is aligned with local aspirations and values, builds on traditional wisdom and knowledge, is programmatic, politically aware, evidence-based, and critically self-reflective including critical and realist perspectives.

Given the practical and theoretical developments reported in the global special issue (Table 1), we can research what enables research to be persuasive and to have real impact. A change in thinking toward implementation science is necessary. To give an example, in one study conducted in the context of a low-income community, it was observed that the greatest single increase in primary school enrolment, over and above more concrete and material incentives, resulted from simply explaining to parents in a respectful manner the long term benefits of their children's education (Banerjee & Duflo, 2008). This research finding was novel in the information theory sense of the word (Carr, 2013), and empowering in that it persuaded many parents to enroll their children into schools. The point is that this was an empirical finding on what aspects of research, and what information was most persuasive in the eyes of the local community (Banerjee & Duflo, 2008). Context was key. Although we must be careful not to extrapolate to other contexts (the global poor are not all the same) similar points may be applied to policy-makers in government and multi-government decision-making settings, for example, in persuading them to sign up for evidence-based, critical and realist, context-based, locally-situated, good-practice protocols for special populations in health care (MacLachlan et al, 2012), and in winning widespread and enduring political support for youth and gender empowerment programs (Pick & Sirkin 2010).

Consideration of the global special issue as a whole shows not only 'that' psychology is contributing towards poverty reduction but also 'how' it is becoming more multifaceted, for example through the multiple codes that were necessary to capture its context domain, the type of approach that was adopted, and the actual contribution itself (Table 1). In many ways this more multifaceted approach mirrors both poverty more generally and the MDGs specifically (Iceland, 2005). Challenges, of course, remain, including becoming more interdisciplinary beyond the boundaries of economics (a very predominant and significant perspective in human development practice, theory and policy) not to mention psychology itself (MacLachlan, Carr, & McWha, 2008), and gauging the extent to which research in one particular setting generalizes to the next. After all, the capabilities approach itself suggests that one size will never fit all (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011).

Nevertheless, prominent economists and some politicians have cogently argued that we are already aware of many of the generalizable, generically anti-poverty kinds of opportunities that help significantly to reduce poverty, from adequate nutrition and basic education to decent work and life opportunities (Clark, 2013;

Sachs, 2005; Sen, 1999;Table 1).   The challenge *after* that, with which Table 1 suggests that this special issue has engaged, is operational and empirical knowledge, context-specific in many cases, about 'how' to improve health, education and working conditions (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011; Easterly, 2006). The subsequent challenge however may be more overtly psycho-political. It entails earning the trust and confidence of policy makers and the local communities that they should be serving, both locally and internationally (Burt, 2014; Carr, 2013). With the formation of the next set of "post-Millennium" goals in 2015 getting ever closer, it seems psychology has much to offer and also still much work to do in developing anti-poverty psychology (Carr, 2013). This includes developing an implementation science of policy persuasion, including new diplomacies (Carr & Bandawe, 2011; Saner & Yiu, 2012).

Conclusion

What does psychology have to offer to the reduction of poverty? Of course as noted we are limited by not capturing any literature not written in English, and that literature might provide a somewhat different picture of how psychology tackles poverty, and poverty reduction, including social equity. Nonetheless given the breadth of the special issue we should acknowledge that it has created a space for psychology to make a 'step change'; making the study of human behavior in materially impoverished and privileged contexts alike a respectable imperative for scholars and practitioners of anti-poverty psychology.

In that vein, people in economically poorer countries may not like to be called 'developing' and, in a way, the very terminology raises the issue of whether it is poverty we should be concerned with, or inequality. The term is not used in the body of this article. Many of the papers in the special issue, as is true of the debates emerging throughout the world, rightly focused on inequality and inequities rather than poverty. This turns attention from development and poverty per se to the global control of capital and influence and the disincentives for that to change. Perhaps a significant part of examining human behavior in impoverished contexts includes understanding the effects of these socio-political structures that support inequality not only on people who experience poverty but also on those who are situated at the other end of the spectrum.

We thank all the contributors to the Global Special Issue: editors, authors, reviewers and of course the research participants. We hope that this review does justice to your work. We also wish to thank our reviewers and editors for their very detailed, considered and constructive comments on earlier versions of this paper. In many places their comments have been included almost verbatim. We appreciate the value that has been added to the review as a result of their input and advice.

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Table 1– A Brief Content Analysis of the Global Special Issue
(Running order as much as possible follows the aforementioned conceptual sequence: H/W – E/D – S/O, using Context and Journal title)

Context & Type of Contribution	Content Summary	Focal Societies	Author(s)	Journal abbreviation
h/w, S&O DESC, ADVO	In a world that is characterized by increasing inequality, the promotion of equal health must include the socio-political context, and in particular the study of privilege and power.	Australia, Haiti, Republic of South Africa, India, Cambodia	Stephens	JHP
h/w, S&O ADVO	Cross-level ground-up community building, e.g., through organization, is required for health-related empowerment amongst disadvantaged groups in rural and remote Australia.	Australia	Ng	
H/W PRAC	Patients' reported barriers to accessing antiretroviral treatments include health issues (e.g., food insecurity), educational need (health literacy), and organizational issues (staff rudeness).	Republic of South Africa	Kagee and Delport	
H/W ADVO	Malnutrition motivates geographical mobility that in turn often creates vulnerabilities in families and fuels risky HIV behavior, e.g., sex work. Potential solutions include micro-credit and education.	Global	Tomlinson, Rohleder, Swartz, Drimie and Kagee	
H/W, S/O DESC ADVO	Well-being amongst "the poor" is predicted, statistically, not only by income but also by social capital, marital status and health status. For the least poor, education also mattered.	Republic of South Africa	Cramm, Møller and Nieboer	
h/w, S/O ADVO	Case analyses of landless workers' and people's health movements and a treatment action campaign show that health psychology needs to expand its focus on these movements.	Brazil, India, Republic of South Africa	Campbell, Cornish, Gibbs and Scott	
H/W, B, S/O PRAC	Women beer sellers at risk of prostitution and HIV/AIDS are included in a hotel internship program that is offering career routes out of poverty through decent work and education.	Cambodia	Lee et al.	
E/D DESC	Evidence from diverse sources and locations indicates that poverty impedes educational potential, that some children overcome setbacks, but we do not yet know how or why.	Global	Shumba	JPA
E/D DESC ADVO	Structural factors, e.g., poor housing and cultural norms denying girls equal opportunity for education, impact their development yet are often ignored in health and wellbeing.	Sub-Saharan Africa and globally	Machingambi and Wadesango	

e/d, S/O DESC ADVO	Community psychology and education against illiteracy can be applied to help boost the collective self-esteem of local community groups and releasing more agentic potential.	Rural sub-Saharan Africa	Adu-Pipim Boaduo	
H/W THEO DESC ADVO	Mediating between (i) the double negative of HIV/AIDS and poverty and (b) subjective wellbeing are various coping strategies, which psychology can help to bolster.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Kasayira and Chireshe	
H/W, S/O DESC	Street children face a range of risks to their health and wellbeing, e.g., exposure to HIV/AIDS via child prostitution, drug addiction, marginalization and being beaten by police.	South Africa	Chireshe, Jadezweni, Cekiso and Maphosa	
H/W, S/O DESC	Unemployment directly impacts wellbeing, by interlinked states/processes of hunger, helplessness, social exclusion, low self-confidence, but not on the motivation 'to' work.	Namibia	Plattner and Gonzo	
H/W, S/O DESC	Dating violence between heterosexual student partners was "fairly common," its frequency was independent of gender of perpetrator and of family socio-economic status.	Botswana	Moagi-Gulubane	
H/W, S/O DESC	Poverty and hardship in Zimbabwe has forced migrants to South Africa, where women migrants face risks of marginal employment, sexual harassment, and HIV/AIDS exposure.	Zimbabwe/South Africa	Chireshe	
H/W, S/O DESCADVO	Rates of intimate partner violence among women are linked to lack of financial resources or a stable income. Women's economic opportunities need expanding.	Botswana	Modie-Moroka	
H/W, E/D, S/O ADVO	"What needs to be done is sharing the contents of this issue with those in a position to formulate policies...so that millions of Africans afflicted by the scourge of poverty can be set free..."	Sub-Saharan Africa	Mwamwenda	
H/W, E/D, S/O THEO DESC	Mid-life, people with higher and lower incomes create positive discourses of "ageing positively," e.g., being virtuous active citizens. This lets Government services potentially continue with underserving people in the community.	New Zealand	Breheny and Stephens	NZJP
H/W, E/D, S/O DESC ADVO	Post retirement, having few resources can mean losing social support, which, more than either gender or ethnicity, is linked to mental health outcomes. Policy-makers need to know.	New Zealand	Stephens, Alpass and Towers	
E/D, S/O DESC ADVO	Midlife hardship means that wellbeing can be compromised, for example, via lack of affordable housing, not only in the present but also in the future, when middle- becomes old age.	New Zealand	Waldegrave and Cameron	
S/O PRAC THEO ADVO	Aid advertising that urges viewers not to stereotype "the poor" may ironically backfire. Hence aid agencies need to know the stereotype content and valence before they consider this option.	New Zealand/Sub-Saharan Africa	Kennedy and Hill	

H/W, E/D DESC ADVO	Childhood poverty is linked to a range of health and social dis-benefits. Social policy helps to redress these. Research should focus on how to persuade the public to support such policies.	New Zealand	Davies, Crothers and Hanna	
H/W, s/o THEO ADVO	Social Causation theory of schizophrenia (poverty is a cause) and Social Drift theory (schizophrenia leads to poverty) are both correct. Poverty is a cause; although Social Drift is also implicated in its maintenance.	Global	Read	
S/O THEO DESC	Bloggers' responses to immigrant stories reveal diverse reactions, with implicit biases and blends of emotions among both pro and anti immigration segments of the community.	Australia	Pedersen and Fozdar	JPRP
h/w, S/O THEO DESC	Refugees' experiences from Serbia to Australia follow a recognizable set of stages, each with their own challenges, and adaptation patterns (active/passive integration, segregation).	Serbia, Australia	King, Welch and Owens	
h/w, S/O THEO DESC	African migration to NZ is for voluntary and involuntary reasons, the former predicting a more integrative acculturation style; the latter more emphasis on maintaining cultural heritage.	Africa, New Zealand	Udahemuka and Pernice	
H/W, s/o DESC ADVO	Mental health assessment instruments available for resettlement services have not demonstrated cultural competence, reliability or validity, and may be underreporting real refugee needs.	Global review	Davidson, Murray and Schweitzer	
H/W, S/O DESC ADVO	Sudanese refugees to Australia cope with transition in a variety of cultural ways, e.g., reliance on religious values, social support. Services should align with and respect these social resources.	Sudan, Australia	Copping, Shakespeare-Finch and Paton	
h/w, S/O ADVO	The preferred acculturation style of many Sudanese new settlers in Australia is integration, but the host community does not always see it that way. Psychology can focus on closing the gap.	Australia	Murray	
h/w, S/O ADVO	Forced migration can fuel social exclusion, restricting refugees and asylum seekers' opportunities rather than expanding them. Psychology needs to lobby government about real service needs.	Sudan, Kashmir, Australia	Davidson and Carr	
H/W, E/D, S/O ADVO	The Sudanese community in Australia is significant, creating a need to inform and train the health services' workforce in cultural competence to help reduce acculturative stress.	Sudan, Australia	Milner and Khawaja	
S/O PRAC THEO	The more students view poverty's causes as structural, the more they favored structural alleviation, e.g., minimum income. Policy has to align with community perception and values in order to be more effective.	Australia	Hastie	AP
S/O THEO ADVO	Social identity is a key theoretical concept for motivating anti-poverty action inside and outside of groups directly affected by poverty, e.g., via emotion-based & problem-focused coping styles.	Australia (and low-income countries)	Thomas, McGarty and Mavor	
S/O	The timeworn concept "Culture of poverty" should be replaced by "culture of daily life," e.g., "traits" like "idling" become support	India	Kumar	PDS

THEO ADVO	networking. Breaking out of routines may aid prosperity.		
S/O PRAC ADVO	Psychology of bonded labor includes a fear of freedom. Communities are not always free to choose their own freedoms. Normative systems, e.g., accept usury, must change, too.	India	Singh and Tripathi
H/W, S/O THEO DESC	When farms hit financial crisis farmers and family suffer, e.g., shame, suicide. Coping styles include emotion & problem-focused, plus a new idea of immersing more in community life.	India	Mathew
H/W, e/d, S/O PRAC DESC	People who made it out of destitution (vs. others who did not) did not differ on values or resilience. What differed instead was situational opportunity - for advancement in life, or career.	The Philippines	Tuason
h/w, e/d, S/O DESC ADVO	Drought hurts health, education. Management packages favored the least-needy, non-dirt farmers with paperwork skills to apply for soft loans. Management training must empower the poorer farmers, too.	Iran	Hayati, Yazdanpanah and Karbalaee
h/w, e/d, S/O ADVO	Researchers can walk in shoes of "the poor," by immersing selves in community experiences of poverty and processes of empowerment for better health, education and work	Brazil	Bastos, Rabinovich and Almeida
H/W, E/D, S/O PRAC DESC ADVO	People living with disability and poverty combined are doubly excluded (from health, education, employment). Alignment via mutual self-help groups is a way forwards.	India	Dalal
H/W, E/D, S/O ADVO	Unless micro and macro can meet in the meso-level, poverty reduction efforts are tilting at windmills. Psychology should show how people react to policy, e.g., education for girls.	Low-income communities and contexts generally	Tripathi
S/O PRAC DESC	Finds that third-party giving is an effective means of fund-raising, compared to conventional monetary donations, by building market trust and confidence that the aid will make a difference.	New Zealand/Global	Kemp, Richardson and Burt	JMP
S/O DESC	Argues that aid organizations like any other need to be efficient and that work psychology has a bigger role to play in promoting evidence-based workforce management, and funding practices.	Global	Burt and Carr
S/O THEO ADVO	Gender empowerment is enabled by informal and formal women's organization within workplaces. This places an onus on work psychology to contribute more towards enabling such processes as part of decent work conditions.	Nicaragua	Schein, Marsella, Wiesenfeld, Sànchez, Berry & Reichman.
H/W, S/O THEO	Advances theory of workplace stress by showing that positive appraisal, problem-focused coping and hardiness were statistical predictors of psychological wellbeing.	Colombia	Vergara and Gardner
h/w, S/O PRAC THEO	Aid workers who fitted both international and local subject matter experts' job specifications were happier in the job. Operationalizes	Global except Europe	Manson and Carr

DESC	macro-level Alignment policy in UN macro policy with organizational theories of "fit."			
S/O DESC	Construct validation of a measure of Quality of Work Life for aid workers, focused on the quality of interpersonal relationships between expatriates and local workers, and mutual learning.	Malaŵi, Uganda, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, China, India	McWha and MacLachlan	
S/O PRAC THEO DESC ADVO	Dual salaries are de-motivating and perceived as unjust, especially by host national employees, who widely recommended the introduction of performance management.	Malaŵi and Uganda	Munthali, Matagi and Tumwebaze	IJP
S/O PRAC THEO DESC ADVO	With international: local salary gaps approaching a ratio of 10:PRAC dual salaries contribute to Island poverty/economic fragility. Local groups recommended localization, single pay system.	Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands	Marai, Kewibu, Kinkin, Peniop, Salini & Kofana	
S/O PRAC THEO DESC ADVO	Dual salary ratios and differential perceived injustices between expatriate and local homologues remain higher in India than in China. Residual injustice in China linked to relative deprivation.	India and China	Zhou, Lu, Li, Li, Papola, Pai & Sahu.	
S/O PRAC THEO DESC ADVO	Dual salaries create perceptions of work injustice, contributing to poverty and brain drain and detracting from productivity, linkages moderated by organization but not sector or country	Malaŵi, Uganda, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, China, India	Carr, McWha, MacLachlan & Furnham	
h/w, e/d, S/O THEO ADVO	Dual salaries research raises the possibility of a humanistic work psychology, addressing structural inequalities more than it serves interests of power. Needed are better measures of performance.	Malaŵi, Uganda, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, China, India	Lefkowitz	
h/w, e/d, S/O THEO ADVO	Offers a range of new theoretical propositions about dual salaries, e.g., actual expatriate performance will feed back into initial reactions to dual salaries as well as result from them.	Malaŵi, Uganda, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, China, India	Saner	
H/W, S/O PRAC ADVO	From "the perspectives of 'people with first-hand experience of poverty,'… it will be hard to resist the conclusion that an urgent priority for us to better understand the socio-structural violence which is poverty"	Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom	Fryer & McCormack	TACP
H/W, e/d, S/O ADVO	Advocacy is needed stressing inclusion as a means and a goal of and in poverty reduction. This includes single parent families, under/unemployed people, people living with disabilities, Indigenous Australians, refugees, migrants.	Australia	Sampson, Gridley, & Turner	
H/W, e/d, S/O PRAC ADVO	Conditionality policy is demeaning, and counter-productive. Researchers can become partners in advocating for systemic change, e.g., Family 100 Project to give the judiciary an insight into everyday living context for some 'offenders.'	New Zealand	Hodgetts, Chamberlain, Tankel, & Groot	
H/W, S/O ADVO	Debt is too easily socially constructed as a dispositional issue rather than a failing of social and socio-economic structures. Manufacturing personal debt by corrupt selfish institutions, who make money from	United Kingdom	Walker	

	poverty, should be exposed.			
H/W, e/d, S/O ADVO	Explores poverty as warfare and economic apartheid, conducted by those with power and privilege. Suggests that reversing this trend requires the recognition of our common sense of humanity.	Scotland, Australia, Nicaragua.	McCormack	
H/W, e/d, S/O ADVO	Book review of K. Thomas' (2010) Human life matters, which critiques the barbarism of neo-liberalism and the global economy that marginalizes 'the poor' in favor of an oligarchy of oppression by the minority rich.	Global	Thomas	
H/W, e/d, C ADVO	Book review of N. Dogra's (2012) Representation of global poverty: Aid, development and international NGOs. Focuses on how Dogra deconstructs representations of "developing" vs. "developed" worlds, & stereotypes therein.	United Kingdom	Hodgetts	
H/W, E/D, S/O PRAC THEO ADVO	Book review of MacLachlan et al's (2010) The Aid Triangle, which stressed the need to recognize human factors of dominance, justice and social identity in order to make aid more effective in the reduction of poverty.	Global	Taylor	NZJP

Note.   JHP = *Journal of Health Psychology*
JPA = *Journal of Psychology in Africa*
NZJP = *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*
JPRP = *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology*
AP = *Australian Psychologist*
PDS = *Psychology & Developing Societies*
JMP = *Journal of Managerial Psychology*
 IJP = *International Journal of Psychology*
TACP = *The Australian Community Psychologist.*
Context domain key
H/W = Health, E/D = Education & developmental, S/O = Social and Organizational; capital letters indicate primary domain: lower-case letters
        indicate secondary domain(s)"..
Type of Contribution category
PRAC = Practical, THEO = Theory, DESC = Description, ADVO = Advocacy.