



RCGD Research Highlights: Sean Joe

Arriving to build a deck, the contractor might expect to find a house on which to build. Imagine his surprise to find the house needing to be built before work could start on the deck. Roughly speaking, this was the situation Sean Joe, RCGD Faculty Associate and Assistant Professor of Social Work and of Psychiatry at the Medical School, found himself in when, as a social-worker specializing in developing family based interventions for adolescent risk behaviors, he found little groundwork in the field on which to develop suicide intervention practices. The literature search for relevant work on suicide from as early as 1938 produced

only a smattering of articles. Despite the importance of this public health concern, only one evidence based, randomized control trial study has been completed that offers evidence of its effectiveness in preventing suicide.

So in 1994, he decided to “build the house” in order to do the work he set out to accomplish, i.e., help sociologists develop suicide intervention practices based on solid research. His first scientific



presentation on the topic appeared in 1996.

Joe’s strategy for laying the foundation for the suicide intervention research included two phases. Phase 1 focused on patterns across life spans. One significant finding from this phase is that young blacks under 35, especially males, are particularly vulnerable to suicide. Phase 2 is concerned with risk and protective factors for both adolescents and adults beginning with psychiatric non-fatal suicide behaviors.

As the foundation nears completion and his work nears phase 3, which is Intervention Research, studies focus on identifying the risk/protective factors in suicide prevention. The Program for Research on Black Americans study on the “Role of Religion in Black Suicidal Behavior” uses data from the National Survey of American Life. Its goal is to use this data to help understand how religion & spirituality might reduce suicide attempts and ideation in blacks.

Along the way Joe has been involved with a research study group, a core group of five collaborators, that helps generate interest in this work by reinforcing the need for sociologists to do this research in their particular areas of culture, ethnicity, and gender.

Professor Joe’s dedication to providing sociologists with intervention programs based on solid research inspired a whole new body of research. There has been a significant increase in suicide related research since his work has brought the need for suicide research into focus.

RCGD Hosts ISR MLK Day Celebration

A short walk on a Monday afternoon in January brought ISR faculty and staff to the Michigan Theatre where they celebrated Martin Luther King Day with a movie, *The Jackie Robinson Story*, and related lecture. The movie told the story of baseball Hall of Famer, Jackie Robinson and Dodger General Manager, Branch Rickey, two pioneers in the struggle to break racial prejudice. The film’s release in 1950 followed quickly after the historical 1947 season when Jackie Robinson became the first African-American to play major league baseball.

The relevance today of this deft handling of the volatile climate created when Robinson entered major league ball was illustrated by University of California, Santa Cruz, psychology professor Anthony Pratkanis. Pratkanis, a U of M alumni whose interests include how the social world influences our attitudes, beliefs and behavior, described both the strategies used by Rickey to negotiate through racial intolerance and achieve a positive outcome and the wisdom and grace demonstrated by Jackie Robinson, saying they offer a viable model for working with current cultural prejudice.

Robinson’s and Rickey’s courage provided not only an appropriate way to celebrate the work of Martin Luther King, but also proved to be a provocative backdrop for the historical inauguration of the nation’s first African-American president.



July 1962– Jackie Robinson & Branch Rickey reunited as Robinson is inducted into baseball’s Hall of Fame.

Publications & Awards

Jennifer Crocker has been elected president of the Society for the Personality and Social Psychology. Jenny will serve as President-elect in 2009, President in 2010, and Past-President in 2011.

Jacque Eccles was awarded the Distinguished University Professorship by the University of Michigan

Jacque Eccles is one of the featured speakers—along with the Dalai Lama, Marian Wright Edelman, Martin Brokenleg, Dan Goelman, Less Shulman, and others—at the “Educating World Citizens for the 21st Century” conference to be held in October 2009 in Washington, D. C.

Jacque Eccles received the Distinguished Lifetime Career Award from the Society for the Study of Human Development. She also delivered an invited address at the biennial meeting of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development.

Jacque Eccles served on a panel at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs presenting “Learning to be a Girl: Care Giving in the Context of HIV/AIDS.” The event was organized and sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations and co-sponsored by Working Group on Girls of the NGO Committee on UNICEF, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues and Baha’i International Community. Panel presenters offered recommendations derived from case studies and diverse practices from all around the world.

Sean Joe (RCGD Faculty Associate) is the 2009 recipient of the Edwin Shneidman Award from the American Association of Suicidology for outstanding contributions in research to the field of suicide studies. Sean gave an address after he was presented with the award at the April 2009 42nd American Association of Suicidology Conference in San Francisco.

Richard Nisbett’s, *Intelligence and How to Get it: Why Schools and Cultures Count*, was published in 2009 by W. W. Norton & Company.

Richard Nisbett was named the 2010 Henry Russel Lectureship winner.

Daphna Oyserman is the recipient of the 2009 Society for Social Work Research Excellence in Research Award for her article entitled “Identity-based Motivation and Health” in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93 (6) 1011-27. Daphna received the award at the Presidential Awards Ceremony on Friday, January 16, at the 2009 SSWR Conference in New Orleans.

Norbert Schwarz will receive the Distinguished Scientific Achievement Award of the Society for Consumer Psychology (APA Division 23) in San Diego.

Norbert Schwarz recently received the Wilhelm Wundt–William James Award for exceptional contributions to trans-Atlantic psychology for 2009. The award will be presented at the biennial meeting the congress of the European Federation of Psychology Associations (EFPA) in Oslo Norway.

The “2008 Best Article Award” from the Association for Consumer Research is “How Warnings about False Claims Become Recommendations” by **Ian Skurnik, Carolyn Yoon, Denise C. Park, and Norbert Schwarz**.

NEW BOOK

Intelligence and How to Get It: Why Schools and Cultures Count

Published early in 2009, Theodore M. Newcomb Distinguished University Professor Richard Nisbett’s new book, *Intelligence and How to Get It*, has been greeted with critical acclaim.

Dr. Nisbett explains in Chapter 1, “The basic message of this book is a simple one about the power of the environment to

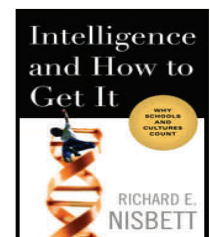
influence intelligence potential, and more specifically about the role that schools and cultures play in affecting the environment.” Jim Holt, in his review of the book for the New York Times (March 29, 2009) comments that he “...doesn’t shirk the hard work. In (this book), he offers a meticulous and eye-opening critique of hereditarianism.” The evi-

dence for this critique utilizes research, much of it recent, in neuroscience and genetics along with studies of educational interventions and parenting styles which Prof. Nisbett skillfully debunks the view that heredity largely determines IQ.

The book goes on to offer suggestions both for individuals

and cultural institutions to improve intelligence.

The appendix offers those unfamiliar with statistics a user-friendly primer valuable in following some of the more technical aspects in the book.



From the Director's Desk

It is hard to divorce the events that happened in RCGD this past year from the most notable event of the year—the election of America's first African-American President. Of course, research on the nature of prejudice and the value of diversity has been a common theme in research by RCGD faculty from the early work of Dan Katz and Ted Newcomb on the nature of prejudice through the seminal research of Claude Steele on stereotype threat to the recent research of Pat Gurin and James Jackson on diversity. In many respects this year marks the culmination of the social impact of such research in accord with ISR's goal of "social science in the public interest."

However, this year also brought moments of deep reflection and sadness. Two long time colleagues and prominent RCGD researchers, Dorwin 'Doc' Cartwright and Robert B. Zajonc, passed away. A memorial service and Festschrift is being planned for 'Doc' Cartwright. Bob Zajonc's legacy lives on in many ways and was recognized with a "celebration of his life" in April at the Michigan League. This event brought together many of his former collaborators, students, friends, and extended family members to reminisce and recognize Bob's contributions to the world. In his honor, RCGD has established the Robert B. Zajonc Scholars Fund that will support the studies of first and second year graduate students in social psychology. More information about the fund and how to contribute can be found on the RCGD website at (<http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu>).

One of Bob's proud accomplishments was the establishment of our sister Institute for Social Studies (ISS) at the University of Warsaw. I am pleased to report that the ISS board of directors has now decided to honor Bob by renaming the ISS to the Robert B. Zajonc Institute for Social Studies. A dedication will occur next May 13–15 with a conference in Bob's honor featuring presentations by colleagues and students who have been influenced by his work. We expect attendance by a large number of former colleagues and friends (see <http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu> for more information).

RCGD hosted two other very special events this past year. Professor Timothy Wilson from the University of Virginia delivered the 2008 Katz-Newcomb lecture at the end of October. The other notable event hosted by RCGD for ISR was the Martin Luther King Day "Celebration of the Life of Jackie Robinson." During the year, while these events were happening, RCGD faculty continued their usual extraordinary output of scholarly research and publications (see <http://www.rcgd.isr.umich.edu> for more information). We presented two outstanding Group Dynamics seminar series on "Social Dynamics" in the Fall and on "Self Control" in the Winter. Our faculty continued to bring in notable grants to support our research, and we expanded our ranks of younger faculty. I end this academic year with the expectation that the coming year should be just as notable as the past one.

Rowell Huesmann—Director, RCGD



Remembering RCGD Researchers Dorwin 'Doc' Cartwright and Robert Zajonc

Dorwin 'Doc' Cartwright and Robert B. Zajonc, two giants in the field of social psychology with close ties to each other and to the Research Center for Group Dynamics, passed away.

Dorwin 'Doc' Cartwright, one of the founders of the field of group dynamics, died July 18, 2008 in Santa Barbara, CA. He was 93 years old.

Cartwright, founding director of the Research Center for Group Dynamics, was "one of the true early giants in the study of group interactions on individual and group performance," said Stanford Univ. psychologist

Robert Zajonc, one of Cartwright's earliest doctoral students and a long-time colleague at ISR. "He demonstrated that there were systematic patterns in the behavior of groups and that these patterns could be studied experimentally. This work is the foundation for the contemporary behavior studies that are now revolutionizing all fields of social science and economics."

"Cartwright was a major figure in the study of group dynamics," said RCGD researcher Richard Nisbett. "His book with Alvin Zander on the topic was the primary resource for the field for more than 20 years."



Robert B. Zajonc, former director of RCGD and ISR died on Dec. 3, 2008 after a long battle with pancreatic cancer. He was remembered by Univ. faculty, staff and family at a memorial service held at the Michigan League. A comprehensive tribute to Bob along with information about the Zajonc Fund can be found on the web at (rcgd/isr.umich.edu/zajonc). Should you have photographs to contribute to the "web scrapbook", please contact us at 734-764-8360.



The following is a sampling of thoughts about Bob taken from a few of the publications that remembered him. "He witnessed and survived some of the worst of human behavior to become one of the world's leading experts on how people behave." Stanford News Service, 12/11/08. "Those fortunate to work with Bob found the experience to be among the most exhilarating, gratifying, and merry in their careers as psychologists." (in press) American Psychologist. "What united his diverse output was an abiding concern with the relationship between feeling and thought. Cont. on page 4

Research Center for Group Dynamics Programs

- Achievement Research
- Aggression Research
- Center for the Analysis of Pathways from Childhood to Adulthood
- Culture, Cognition & the Brain
- Identity Based Motivation & Social Contexts
- Evolution and Human Adaptation Research
- Program for Research on Black Americans
- Program on Teaching, Learning, and Technology
- Self and Social Motivation Research
- The Psychology of Self-Report

International Collaboratives for Research & Training

- USA/Germany Lifespan Development
- USA/Poland Cooperative Program on Social Dynamics

Emerging Programs

- Biosocial Foundations of Caregiving, Altruism & Cooperation
- Economics and Decision Sciences (EDS)
- Health and the Mass Media Research
- Life-Course Social-Cognitive Development
- Roots of Terrorism

Remembering RCGD Researchers

(Cont. from page 3)

Professor Zajonc repeatedly explored the place in the human mental makeup where emotion butts up against cognition, partly in an effort to determine which influences which more strongly. (On balance, he came down on the side of emotion.)” New York Times 12/8/2008. “Robert Zajonc was a consummate scientist, scholar and social science researcher. His was a remarkable life, a life led during a renaissance period of social psychology and he had much to do with its development and flourishing...” Association for Psychological Science, 4/09.

RCGD Researchers in the News

Throughout the year research at RCGD gains local and national attention. Articles highlighted below may be accessed from the RCGD website’s “In the News” page:

rcgd.isr.umich.edu/news/

Scott Atran—*Huffington Post*: The moral failure of our national intelligence, 7/11/09

Paul Boxer—*Science News*: Media violence cited as ‘critical risk factor’ for aggression, 11/20/08

Stephanie Brown—*Psychological Science*: Caregiving behavior is associated with decreased mortality risk, 4/2009

Brad Bushman—*Detroit Free Press*: Grand theft summer, 7/1, 2008

Jennifer Crocker—*KiVi-TV*: U.S. teens brimming with self-esteem, 11/12/08

Jennifer Crocker and Amy Canevello—*University News Service* (article & podcast): How to get a college roommate you can live with, 08/25/08

Pamela Davis-Kean—*Michigan Today*: At the magical age of eight, belief synchs with behavior, 11/18/2008 & *Star Ledger*, 11/7/08

Stephen Garcia—*Ann Arbor News*: Larger field dulls the drive to compete, 3/10/09

Stephen Garcia—*The Economist*: Psyched out, 7/9/09

Rowell Huesmann—*CNN*: Violent video games linked to child aggression, 11/3/08

Sean Joe—*Newsweek*: Black men and suicide, 11/25/08

Jere Johnston—*Univ. of Mich. News Service*: U.S.A. learns helps immigrants learn english, 2/26/2009

Randy Nesse—*Science Magazine*: Darwin applies to medical school, 4/10/2009

Dick Nisbett—*New York Times* op-ed: Education is all in your mind, 2/7/09

Daphna Oyserman—*Miller-McCune Report*: Not just another word: definitions of ‘freedom’ vary, 7/02/2009

Daphna Oyserman and Richard Nisbett—*New Scientist*: Beyond east and west: how the brain unites us all, 3/10/09

Mary Rigdon and Shinobu Kitayama—*Scientific Blogging*: Brother can you spare a dime?, 4/16/2009

Norbert Schwarz—*New York Times*: Reinvent wheel? Blue room. Defusing a bomb? Red room, 2/6/09

Norbert Schwarz and Hyunjin Song—*TIME Magazine*: Would You buy Xylitol? Why some names scare us, 2/24/09

Norbert Schwarz and Hyunjin Song —*Scientific American*: A recipe for motivation: easy to read, easy to do, 02/2009

Norbert Schwarz and Peter Ubel—*Parenting Magazine*: 8 ways to be a happier mom, 03/2009

Jacqui Smith—*Univ. of Mich. News Service*: Old as you want to be: study finds most seniors feel younger, 12/2/08

Univ. of Warsaw renames Institute to honor Robert Zajonc

Institute for Social Studies (ISS) Conference Announcement

On May 13-15, 2010 the University of Warsaw celebrates the scientific achievements of Professor Robert B. Zajonc, one of the most creative and influential social psychologists of the past half-century. In 1991 Robert Zajonc was instrumental in establishing the Institute for Social Studies (ISS) at the University of Warsaw as a sister institution of the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at the University of Michigan. To commemorate Professor Zajonc’s role in its founding, ISS will be proudly renamed the Robert B. Zajonc Institute of Social Studies. As part of the commemoration there will be a conference during which several colleagues and friends will discuss Professor Zajonc’s life and work. ISS extends a warm invitation to all of Bob’s colleagues, students and friends to participate in this celebration of the life and scholarship of this most distinguished Polish-American psychologist.

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