**My short bio and research interests**

After I completed my bachelor's degree in Psychology in 2012 in my home country, Turkey, I earned my master’s degree in the area of Applied Social Psychology in 2014 in England. I am currently a Ph.D. student in the Historical, Theoretical, and Critical Studies of Psychology Program at York University, Canada.

I am generally interested in our specific disciplinary ways of dealing with the cultural diversity of humankind. Within this very broad scope of interest, the important question for me is how do we psychologists conceptualize the notion of *culture* and utilize it to make sense of similarities and differences between societies? My focus of reading, with principally a critical/theoretical and secondarily a historical stance, is broad in a way that it includes central culture-inclusive areas of psychology (e.g. cross-cultural, cultural, and indigenous psychologies).

More specifically, my current research focuses on the ideological value of the concept of culture in the context of indigenization. Even though “culture” as a reality has a significant empirical/experiential reference, I think, its primary importance derives from its having an ideological value. Culture is an elusive concept. It is a *catch-all* term or more correctly it is an *empty signifier* which can be filled with whatever you want depending on your aim and political ideology. For instance, it could be easily “abused” to cover political conflicts (as in the thesis of clash of civilizations) and structural accounts of economic problems (e.g., the superficial relation between Third World fatalism and their underdevelopment). In this sense, culture may be a convenient concept for psychologists who want to test the validity and reliability of their theories and stay away from other larger issues.

Taking this ideologically elastic value of the concept into consideration, I am currently asking: how can we, not just scientifically, but also ethically and politically, substantiate the indigenization movement of psychology? One of the most mentioned goals of this movement is that of “describing a cultural reality and constructing a discipline of psychology accordingly”. Given that my description is in fact not purely descriptive but (at least implicitly) value-laden or ideological and my “cultural” vision may not be appreciated by other “insiders” of my culture, another important question emerges: how can I justify my specific take on a cultural reality? I think this is the point where we should go beyond mere intradisciplinary indigenization by making our implicit ideologies/prescriptive visions explicit. In doing so, indigenous psychologies may conceptually deepen and more convincingly respond to challenges by other psychologists. For example, indigenous psychologies are criticized for remaining within the “emotional” and rhetorical phase (e.g., by Gustav Jahoda). This criticism may be valid as long as you adhere to a relatively older (positivistic) and value-neutral mission/vision for the discipline of psychology. Against this criticism, indigenously-minded psychologists share their empirical work by emphasizing the fact that there is a complex cultural reality waiting to be discovered (e.g., Kwang-Kuo Hwang). Even though this “scientific response” is not in vain, I think indigenization in psychology finds its “truer” legitimacy by “going beyond” the aim of indigenizing the discipline. My observation is that indigenization is currently in a burgeoning stage aptly captured in the rhetoric of “a complex empirical reality waiting to be discovered”. But this movement is only “potentially” meaningful as long as it serves higher “societal” values beyond “intradisciplinary” indigenization. In this sense, for instance, I am trying to draw a “theoretical and practical” parallel between democratic pluralization of Turkey and the indigenization of the discipline of psychology in Turkey. A more general question lies behind
this specific endeavour: can indigenous psychologies find (or strengthen) their scientific legitimacy through a democratic political vision?