EUROPEAN SUMMER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

20th August - 26th August, 2018
Benedictine abbey of Frauenwörth
Fraueninsel, Chiemsee - Germany

KINSHIP, CONFLICT AND COMPASSION

MIND & LIFE
EUROPE

Impressum

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Welcome!

Dear Friends,

On behalf of Mind & Life Europe, we are delighted to welcome all our participants and guests to the fifth Mind & Life Europe Summer Research Institute

Since 2004, the Mind & Life Institute has been hosting a highly regarded yearly Summer Research Institute in Garrison, New York. In 2014, Mind & Life Europe launched the European edition of this program and the response has been vigorous and gratifying. This year we are convening a distinguished international faculty of scientists, artists, scholars, professionals from the social domain, contemplatives and over 85 highly qualified students from across 6 continents and 23 countries.

This year's theme is ‚Kinship, Conflict and Compassion'. The narrative arc for this topic begins with the evolutionary story about the development of a capacity for a kind of high-level cooperation that is probably unique to humans. This capacity for an emergent, distributed cognitive cooperation also requires that the ability to connect with others is favored in human evolution. That ability to connect, however, comes with a tendency to create an "other"; thus, in-group/out-group distinctions are also a product of this evolutionary process. These distinctions, as we experience them now, can create biases and conflict, and raise the crucial question of how we might overcome the negative aspects of the in-group/out-group distinction while enhancing our cooperative connectivity. The arc of our topics during the week thus includes cooperative/distributed cognition and social connectivity as evolutionary developments; the role of in-group/out-group distinctions, in terms of both facilitating cooperation and creating conflict; and the ways that we can transcend conflict and enhance healthy connections through various approaches, including contemplative training.

The faculty is composed of accomplished scholars and scientists in the field of contemplative studies. As is the tradition at the ESRI, it is an interdisciplinary group composed of representatives from the fields of philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, the cognitive and social sciences and Buddhist scholarship and practice.

The ESRI is part of a larger Mind & Life Europe initiative to convene and catalyze research and activities in the European setting, fostering the creation of a community for scholars, clinicians and practitioners from the sciences and the humanities. Its goal is to promote the creation of a contemplative, compassionate and comprehensive science of the mind that informs medicine, neuroscience, psychology, education, social sciences, and the humanities.

We would like to thank the Mind & Life ESRI planning committee members and Sister Scholastica McQueen and her team at Kloster Frauenwörth, for setting the stage and ensuring the smooth unfolding of our time together. We heartily thank our faculty for dedicating time from their summer schedules to share their work and to engage with us. The generosity of our donors has metamorphosed an idea into an event. In particular, we would like to thank the Hershey Family Foundation for its

extraordinary support, which has allowed us to bring this project to fruition and facilitated the participation of all of us.

Our time on the island is an opportunity to leave the all too hectic flow of daily life and concerns, and to live and think together – doing a slower kind of science. We hope that this will be an experience that sparks new intuitions and activates the possibilities that each of us harbors and that multiply when plunged into the medium of a true conversation. The framework of the program is designed to realize this for you, and we hope that the experiences of our days together will bring you not only increased knowledge but also touched hearts, deeper insights and new relationships to accompany your thought and research in the future.

Warmest Wishes,

Amy Cohen Varela
Chairperson
Mind & Life Europe

Sander Tideman
Co-Director
Mind & Life Europe

The guiding principles of the Mind & Life European Summer Research Institute

The Mind & Life Summer Research Institute is a weeklong study and practice program dedicated to cultivating interdisciplinary exchanges between scholars and practitioners of contemplative disciplines, and scholars of the various fields of the behavioral and social sciences, neuroscience, clinical research and the humanities. The longterm objective is to advance the training of a new generation of scholars engaged in exploring the ways in which these different practices and perspectives can complement one another in a comprehensive investigation of mind, human experience, brain/body function and health.

Specific goals:

To facilitate innovative and critical dialogue between experimental scientists, clinical researchers, humanities scholars, and contemplative scholars and practitioners and to encourage integrative research collaborations that explore the mind, including first-, second- and third-person approaches, and the effects of contemplative practices on mind and behavior.

To create a space for this dialogue that supports a contemplative orientation, via meditation and yoga instruction, daily contemplative practice periods and a one full-day silent retreat. To stimulate and encourage the next generation of young scientists (post-doctoral and graduate students) and contemplative scholars and practitioners who are interested in innovation and new forms of collaboration in contemplative studies.

To invite and encourage senior investigators to consider how established research approaches may be complemented, expanded and improved by other modes of investigation, particularly by including the first-person perspective, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the mind and human experience.

To foster examination of how culture, history and other contextual dimensions influence implementation of contemplative practices in behavioral sciences and societal applications.

To critically evaluate emerging best practices, future opportunities, and challenges that arise as contemplative disciplines become adopted and adapted to the needs of science and society.

Biographies & Abstracts Lectures

Hanneli Ågotsdatter

Hanneli Ågotsdatter is a psychotherapist and a teacher of yoga and meditation. She is the founder of kontemplation.dk that offers mindfulness training for groups and individuals. Yoga, mindfulness meditation, empathy and creativity are interwoven into an integrated practice aimed at discovering and enlivening the body, heart and mind.

In recent years, Hanneli has placed special emphasis on relational competence, teaching the practice of empathy and presence to professionals working with children and young people.

At the 2018 MLESRI, Hanneli will teach the morning yoga sessions. In her classes, she draws from her practice of yin yoga and hatha yoga, mediation training, as well as from her in-depth training in the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program at the Center for Mindfulness, UMass Medical School.

Hanneli lives at Vaekstcenteret, a contemplative community in Denmark under the guidance of founder Jes Bertelsen. She divides her time between counseling, teaching, and long-term personal meditation retreats. www.kontemplation.dk

Presence Yoga

Every morning during the ESRI, Hanneli Ågotsdatter will guide a session of Presence Yoga.

Hanneli's teaching style blends the slow flow of mindfulness practice with yin-based sequences to create suppleness at the core and enhance internal awareness.

The morning sessions will focus on gentle movements, slow yoga stretches and breath awareness. This practice is an opportunity to wake up and connect to your body and mind. All ages and levels of ability are welcome. No previous experience of mindfulness or yoga is necessary. The classes may also serve as a refresher for participants with an already established practice – whether of yoga, meditation or both.

Presence Yoga is not about doing advanced poses or about physical performance, but rather an invitation to be present with your body and breath, accepting where you're at, and to experience, and maybe even enjoy, the benefits of mindful and gentle movement.

Sabina Čehajić-Clancy

Sabina Čehajić-Clancy received her PhD in social psychology from Sussex University (2008). She is currently an Associate Professor and Dean of the Political Science and International Relations Department at the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology.

She is also affiliated with Stanford University as a former Fulbright scholar. Sabina's work is in the area of intergroup reconciliation for which she has received many dissertation and career awards.

Her research fits into four main categories: intergroup contact/dialogue, intergroup emotions, social identity and education. She has 15+ years of experience in working as a consultant for international organizations designing and evaluating peace-building and reconciliation interventions. Her research has also received wide national and international coverage. Sabina also serves on the editorial boards for Political Psychology and the European Journal of Social Psychology.

The Psychology of Intergroup Reconciliation

In this talk, I will address and discuss three questions related to processes of intergroup reconciliation in post-conflict societies. First, I will talk about the processes and implications of social identity in coming to terms with ingroup moral violations. Specifically, I will focus on processes of denial as a commonly used moral disengagement strategy. Second, I will discuss some socio-psychological mechanisms (self-affirmation and intergroup contact) that can be utilized to facilitate more constructive social processes such as acknowledgment but also moral (group-based) emotions of guilt and shame. Related to this, I will present data demonstrating some contradictory implications of group-based guilt and shame. And finally I will address some challenges of intergroup contact field interventions and ways of overcoming those. The above questions will be discussed in the light of empirical evidence from several (post) conflict contexts.

Heather Grabbe

Dr Heather Grabbe is Director of the Open Society European Policy Institute, Brussels. She is a political scientist who advocates for democratic pluralism and open societies to the EU institutions and governments, with a particular interest in the interaction between politics and society.

She was ranked 5th in Politico's 2017 list of "women who shape Brussels" and appears regularly in the media on open society issues – from populism to EU foreign policy. She spoke recently at TEDx Brussels and in the Belgian Senate on the importance of critical thinking and mindful engagement with post-truth politics, and how technology is affecting the openness of societies and quality of democracy.

From 2004-2009 she was Senior Advisor to then European Commissioner for Enlargement Olli Rehn, responsible for EU policy on the Balkans and Turkey. Before joining the Commission, she was Deputy Director of the Centre for European Reform, the London-based think-tank. She did academic research on European politics at the European University Institute (Florence), Chatham House (London), Oxford and Birmingham Universities, and teaching at the London School of Economics.

Her publications include The Closing of the European Mind – and How to Re-Open It; Can the EU Survive Populism? (with Stefan Lehne, Carnegie Europe 2017) and The EU's Transformative Power: Europeanisation through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe (2006, Palgrave).

Othering in the digital age:
how to keep your head clear while online

"Othering" and the creation of divisions between in-groups and out-groups is familiar human behaviour documented by social psychologists and anthropologists. In politics there are often deliberate attempts to create othering and increase conflict in order to gain or maintain power. The quickest and easiest way to unite a group is to point to an external enemy. But 21st century life brings new challenges: digital life and technological change enhance separation and conflicts because they change how we engage in politics. Digital communication affects the brain and social relations, creating filter bubbles and nurturing distrust of people with different views and life experiences from our own. How can we as individuals protect ourselves from manipulation and the biases that result from online communication and 21st century life? Mindfulness is a vital part of the defence: maintaining our mental health, connection to spirit, and also helping to sustain our communities and bridge conflict.

Leor Hackel

Dr. Leor Hackel is a postdoctoral scholar in the Stanford Social Neuroscience Lab at Stanford University; beginning in January 2019, he will be an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Rutgers University. He received his B.S. in Neuroscience & Behavior from Columbia University in 2011, and his Ph.D. in Social Psychology from NYU in 2016. In 2016, he began his postdoctoral fellowship, funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation.

Dr. Hackel's work asks how people form impressions of others through interactions; how people make social decisions, like choosing whom to help or whom to befriend; and how social groups shape these decisions. To address these questions, his work integrates approaches from social psychology, affective science, computational modeling, and cognitive neuroscience. He further studies implications of these topics for prosocial behavior, intergroup relations, and economic inequality. In particular, his recent work has asked how social behavior can unwittingly propagate inequality and how group boundaries alter the ways in which people learn about and choose to help others.

Social groups shape cooperation:
Evidence from behavior and the brain

Humans readily categorize the world into "us" and "them." These group boundaries offer a way to make sense of the social world and fulfill key motivational needs for group members. For instance, identification with social groups promotes a sense of belonging and provides people with material and social resources. As a result, social groups powerfully structure the way in which humans perceive and interact with one another. Drawing on behavioral and neuroimaging experiments, I will discuss how social groups influence two key components of cooperative behavior: (1) deciding whether to help others and (2) learning whether others tend to help us. In particular, I will present research suggesting that social identification shapes the intrinsic value people place on the welfare of others, and that group categorization leads people to generalize learning about individuals to other group members. In this manner, social groups shape basic psychological and neural processes underlying cooperation.

Daniel Haun

Prof. Dr. Daniel Haun is the Director of the Leipzig Research Center for Early Child Development (since 2016) and Full Professor for Early Child Development and Culture at Leipzig University, Germany since 2015.

He studies the inter-cultural diversity of behaviour in humans and investigates the phylogeny and ontogeny of the psychological mechanisms that produce and stabilize population-level behavioral diversity. He holds a PhD from the Max-Planck-Institute of Psycholinguistics and the Donders Centre for Cognitive Neuroimaging and was research group leader at the Max-Planck-Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and Max-Planck-Institute for Psycholinguistics.
www.lfe.uni-leipzig.de

The potential of others - Observations of human social behavior

Humans rely on others all the time. Humans learn from others, cooperate with others, enjoy each other's company. At the same time, humans bind themselves to others. We are for example willing to conform to others - sometimes even while demoting our own opinions and preferences. This orientation towards others is championed as a necessary condition for human sociality. Variation across species in preferences to cooperate with others or in tendencies to empathize with others identified several unique features of human sociality. Several of these species-specific social features, such as, for example, overimitation and normative conformity, share roots in the same underlying species-specific mechanism: self-similarity preference, i.e. Liking others who are like me.

This homophily-based account includes two closely related claims. First, children preferentially affiliate with, cooperate with and learn from similar others. Second, since members of the child's social group tend to prefer individuals that are similar to themselves, children can mediate their social relationships by attempting to manage their own similarity to others. It is looking towards others, other species, other cultures, that reveals the species unique ways in which we enjoy, select and consider others. It is part of what makes us us, part of what makes us others.

Bryce Huebner

Bryce Huebner is a Provost's Distinguished Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Georgetown University. He is primarily interested in questions about the structure of human cognition and agency, the different kinds of minds we find in our world, and the implications of cognitive scientific research for ethical theorizing.

By drawing upon tools from the cognitive and biological sciences, and by taking inspiration from the work of a wide range of philosophers (from Benedict de Spinoza, to Śāntideva, to Emma Goldman and Paulo Friere), he aims to develop a theory of distributed and situated cognition, which can provide a better account of the shared world in which we live. More details about his research can be found at https://brycehuebner.weebly.com/

Cultural learning and our tribalist psychology

For most of human history, people lived in small bands, which were part of larger ethnic groups. They learned to identify stable markers of group membership (including language and dress), as well as reliable markers of social status; and this provided them with a foundation for trust and cooperation, as well as a tendency to adopt tribalist ideologies and exclusionary practices. Modern humans retain these tendencies, and this has terrible implications for interactions in multicultural societies. In this talk, I will examine the role of cultural learning in fostering three factors that play a critical role in shaping our tribalist psychology: a habit of focusing attention on the differences between ingroups and outgroups; a habit of ignoring the similarities between members of ingroups and outgroups; and a habit of ignoring differences between individuals, once they have been categorized as outgroup members. By clarifying these habits of attention, I hope to shed light on the kinds of practices that can mitigate the harmful effects of tribalist ideologies and exclusionary practices.

Cendri Hutcherson

Cendri Hutcherson is the director of the Toronto Decision Neuroscience Laboratory and an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Toronto with a cross-appointment to the Rotman School of Management.

She received degrees in psychology from Harvard (B.A.) and Stanford (Ph.D.), and worked as a post-doctoral scholar studying neuroeconomics at the California Institute of Technology. Her research program applies computational modeling to behavior, eye tracking, EEG, and fMRI data, with the goal of understanding how we make decisions and why we sometimes make decisions we later regret. Ultimately, she hopes to use this research to develop training programs that help people make better decisions for both themselves and others.

No time to be nice? Motivational and computational dynamics of altruistic choice

Altruistic behavior is a ubiquitous feature of human behavior, and one that is distinctly sensitive to group membership. Yet the mechanisms underlying altruistic choice are still incompletely understood. Does altruism require the controlled suppression of rapid and automatic selfish instincts, or do people intuitively default to prosociality? What implications might this have for understanding the dynamics of intergroup interactions? Dual process models of choice have used a variety of approaches to answer this question, with conflicting results. To shed new light on these questions, we have begun to develop a neurocomputational model of altruistic choice capable of simulating and predicting the temporal dynamics of neural and behavioral responses.

Here, I will show how a combination of data from fMRI, eye tracking, mouse-tracking, and time pressure studies can be used to inform and constrain the parameters of the computational model, generating unique insights into the processes driving prosocial behavior. Our results suggest that altruism is neither wholly automatic nor wholly controlled. Instead, selfish and altruistic motives evolve and shift dynamically over the course of just a few seconds depending on a host of inter- and intra-personal factors that change the motivational and attentional priorities of the decision maker. Our results have important implications both for understanding how to improve interactions between groups and for predicting when, why and for whom altruism might feel like a battle between inner demons and better angels, or like an intuitively obvious choice.

Anca Minescu

Dr. Anca Minescu is a lecturer in psychology, and vice-dean for internationalization, at the University of Limerick, Ireland. Over the last 15 years, her research in ethnic relations looked into processes of identity, discrimination and political activism in different national contexts, from the Russian Federation, to Western and Eastern European countries.

She investigates how the larger political, historical and social context impacts on individuals attitudes and behaviours, how ideological beliefs determine exclusionary attitudes, and how the crucial processes of identification with particular groups (ethnic, national, opinion based political groups) mediate intergroup behaviours and affect social change. Anca's involvement in international research networks and professional associations of political and social psychology sustains cross-national analyses of tolerance, marginalization and integration of national minorities, immigrants and refugees.

More recently, she gained increased expertise in intercultural competence training, by running workshops and extending her research with funding from the Irish National Forum for Teaching and Learning, and support from local non-governmental and governmental bodies in the Mid-West of Ireland. This work underlies several intervention, support and consultancy programs developed under the Health Hub Sanctuary Project in Limerick. This project addresses both minority and majority groups, aiming to support migrants to develop their networks and strengthen their well-being, as well as support front-line people working with migrant communities by equipping them with

intercultural competence and other necessary skills that will decrease discrimination and prejudice against the "different" others.

In her role as Vice-Dean International of the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, she works on developing sustainable international partnerships as well as fostering students' and staff ability to become global citizens, able to negotiate culturally diverse workplaces and communities. Thus looking at "how cultural diversity works" in community and educational settings, for both the "newcomers" and the "host" groups, and combining research with practical interventions have become the cornerstone of Anca's portfolio.
Homepage of the Department of Psychology: www.ul.ie/psychology/

Dealing with Cultural Diversity: From Inclusion ("us versus them") to Integration (a new "us")

How can social and cultural psychology contribute to the social inclusion of migrants and marginalized minority groups? How can we reformulate the question of "including the Other" into questions of societal integration and diversity benefits? Too often, the burden is placed on the "Other" to adapt, change and belong, without questioning the larger climate of accepting social change within the host society.

In this context, intercultural competence training is a very useful intervention, bridging socio-cultural differences by empowering people to feel more confident and secure in their own identities. It works, but it differs for people belonging to minorities and majority groups. By deepening our roots, we can become curious and comfortable with "difference". I will give examples and engage you in experiential learning games on how we came to promote compassion rather than conflict and prejudice, in working with volunteers, front-line workers, refugees and migrant communities in Ireland.

Masi Noor

Dr Masi Noor - Since 2003, I have studied the psychology of forgiveness, victimhood, and related concepts both in the psychology lab but importantly also in real-life contexts such as Northern Ireland, Chile, former Yugoslavia and in Palestine & Israel. A great deal of my research is informed by real-life stories that can powerfully identify the key ingredients for personal and collective transformation and growth.

I was privileged to co-found the Forgiveness Toolbox (www.theforgivenesstoolbox.com) which, through the analyses of victims and perpetrators' real-life stories, identifies key tangible skills enabling individuals and communities to understand and explore the practice of forgiveness. I am also keen to make scientific knowledge accessible to wider audiences. Recently, a collaboration between an artist, a journalist/story-teller and myself has given birth to a graphic book 'Forgiveness Is Really Strange'. This book has received encouraging reviews, e.g., "This book will become a moral guide to readers, including young people, on how to make the world a better place." (Professor Simon Baron-Cohen, University of Cambridge)."

I was trained as a scientist through a BSc degree in Applied Psychology at the University of Ulster and a PhD degree in Social Psychology at the University of Sussex. I have held several academic positions at various UK-based institutions, but for now I am happily a staff member of the School of Psychology at Keele University, where among other duties, I am the Programme Lead for the MSc in Applied Social and Political Psychology. I speak Farsi, German, and English, but do not have a mother tongue.

The Psychology of Forgiveness: Evidence from Psychological Research and Real-life Stories

In this talk I summarize what I have learned about forgiveness through conducting psychological research and studying real-life stories over the last 15 years. I will first offer a definition of forgiveness, clarifying what forgiveness is and what it is not. Here, I will also explore what attracts us to acts of revenge and how forgiveness may offer a more viable strategy to manage the pain of loss and achieve a bigger sense of justice.

After exploring numerous and unexpected strange aspects of forgiveness, I will focus on what psychological research has identified as factors that enable people to consider forgiveness or prevent them from doing so. Importantly, I will then discuss the benefits (e.g., health) associated with forgiveness as well as shed light on the dark side of forgiveness (i.e., pseudo forgiveness).

Finally, I will introduce the online forgiveness toolbox (www.theforgivenesstoolbox.com) that I have developed together with the Forgiveness Project (www.theforgivenessproject.com) and that contains skills based on insights from research and real-life stories.

Andreas Olsson

Dr. Andreas Olsson received his PhD in experimental psychology from New York University (2006). Until 2008 he was a post-doctoral research fellow at Columbia University. He then moved to Karolinska Institutet, where he was appointed an Associate professor and a research group leader in 2011. He is the founder and director of the Emotion Lab (www.emotionlab.se).

The broad aim of Dr. Olsson's research is to describe and model the psychological and neural foundations of emotional learning and regulation in social situations. Dr. Olsson has >50 publications, including papers in Science, Nature Neuroscience, Nature Communication, Psychological Science, and Trends in Cognitive Science. Dr. Olsson has obtained several national and international scientific awards and grants, such as an individual Starting Grant from the European Research Council (ERC). In 2015, he was named a Wallenberg Academy Fellow.
Website: www.emotionlab.se

Learning to value others and their actions – implications for social group dynamics

We belong to a uniquely social species. Unlike other animals, humans connect and collaborate extensively with unrelated others, and our brains are distinguished by their ability to "read" the minds of those we interact with. Yet, we also share many social characteristics with other social animals. For example, as is commonly observed across species, humans typically display a social preference for related, familiar, and similar individuals. Because much of what we do is motivated by social goals,

these preferences deeply affect many facets of our behavior and its underlying emotional and cognitive processes. Here, I will discuss the close relationship between social preferences and emotional learning, which is at the heart of human social and cultural life – from the individual's development of social skills to the emergence and maintenance of cultural habits and traditions. I will present experimental research showing how social cognition, such as perceived similarity, shapes learning **(1) from others** when we learn the value of stimuli and situations vicariously by observing the emotional responses of others, and **(2) about others** when we learn to value people through directly interacting with them. I will show that the application of basic learning mechanisms, such as Pavlovian and instrumental conditioning – as long as they model the influence of social cognition – can help us to understand the forces behind why and how humans connect, form groups, as well as disconnect and develop antipathy against each other.

Nichola Raihani

Nichola Raihani is a Professor of Evolution and Behaviour and a Royal Society University Research Fellow, based in the Department of Experimental Psychology at University College London. Nichola works at the interface between evolutionary biology, psychology and economics.

Her research addresses a question of fundamental importance: how does cooperation thrive when individuals are tempted to cheat? Initially, trained as a field biologist at the University of Cambridge, she has studied cooperation in several non-human species, including pied babblers (in the Kalahari Desert), Damaraland mole-rats (South Africa) and the mutualism between cleaner fish and their reef-fish clients (Great Barrier Reef). This perspective has provided a deep understanding of how social behaviour evolves, which has since been used to inform and refine her more current work on humans. Here, her work has explored when people cooperate and why, how mechanisms like punishment and reputation concern can promote cooperation and, more recently, how cooperation and other social behaviours are affected by variation in sub-clinical paranoia. Outside academia, Nichola works with several public and private sector companies, by providing behavioural insights to motivate effective behaviour change.

How paranoia affects social cognition and behaviour

Humans are arguably unique in the animal kingdom in being able to understand that other individuals have intentions and also to some extent, to predict what these might be. Nevertheless, because inferences about the beliefs and goals of others are often made in highly ambiguous scenarios, there is much scope for variation and error in intention attribution. One way in which variation in intention attribution might manifest is as paranoid thinking. Paranoia is the most common presenting symptom of psychosis but is also distributed throughout the general population to varying degrees of intensity, including among people without any clear psychiatric or neurological difficulties.

Paranoia can be defined as an exaggerated tendency to believe that others intend to cause the person harm. I will suggest that paranoid thinking might be understood as the adaptive output of a psychological system geared towards detecting coalitional threat. I outline our conceptual framework for thinking about paranoia in evolutionary terms, as well as selected experiments that show that paranoid attributions about the intentions of others are labile and increase in response to experimentally-induced social threat. As well as affecting how we perceive others, I will show that paranoia also affects social behaviour, biasing people towards reduced cooperation and increased punishment in social interactions.

Velma Šarić

Velma Šarić is a researcher, journalist, peacebuilding expert and human rights defender from Sarajevo, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. Ms. Šarić is the Founder and President of the Post-Conflict Research Center, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Balkan Diskurs, and Project Manager of WARM Foundation, Bosnia Branch.

As a researcher and producer she has worked on numerous publications and films about the 1992-1995 Bosnian war, including *Uspomene 677, In the Land of Blood and Honey* by Angelina Jolie, and *I Came to Testify and War Redefined* from the PBS series *Women, War & Peace*. Ms. Šarić has held fellowships at both Columbia University in New York and the Robert Bosch Foundation. As part of her fellowship with the Robert Bosch Foundation, she attended the 2016 Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability Fellowship Program.

In 2014, Ms. Šarić and the Post-Conflict Research Center were awarded the Intercultural Innovation Award by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the BMW Group. In 2016, Ms. Šarić attended the Vital Voices' Global Ambassadors Program in London and is currently the only Bosnian to be a part of the VV100 – a Vital Voices group of 100 most engaged and visionary women of the Vital Voices Global Leadership Network.

Ordinary Heros peacebuilding program

By displaying portraits and testimonies of rescuers

from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Ruanda, Cambodia, and the Holocaust, who risked their lives to save the lives of others, *Ordinary Heroes peacebuilding program* aims to promote moral exemplars, courage and inspire inter-ethnic and intercultural cooperation. The program comprises a series of reconciliation-focused educational and creative multimedia activities in towns and cities throughout BiH and the greater Balkans region.

We've directly engaged more than 5,000 Bosnian and regional youth in this program, over 250,000 Balkan citizens through arts-based exhibitions, and more than 370 million viewers through documentaries. In addition to this, our organization received a 1st place for the 2014-15 Intercultural Innovation Award given by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the BMW Group. We were also a top-5 finalist in the Council of Europe's 2015 Diversity Advantage Challenge Award and our program is currently featured as a best practice in a toolkit developed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to help elected officials from 47 countries organize intercultural and inter-religious activities.

Tania Singer

Prof. Dr Tania Singer is the Director of the Department of Social Neuroscience at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig, Germany, since 2010. After receiving her Ph.D. in Psychology in 2000 at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, she became a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the same institution and later at the Wellcome Department of Imaging Neuroscience as well as at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience in London.

In 2006, she accepted a position as Assistant Professor at the University of Zurich and later as Inaugural Chair of Social Neuroscience and Neuroeconomics and Co-Director of the Laboratory for Social and Neural Systems Research. Her research focus is on the foundations of human social behavior and the neuronal, developmental, and hormonal mechanisms underlying social cognition and emotions (e. g, empathy, compassion, and fairness) as well as prosocial behaviors and cooperation. Moreover, she investigates the psychological and neuroscientific effects of contemplative mental training on wellbeing, stress reduction, brain plasticity and cooperation.

Prof. Singer has published her research work in many renowned journals (e.g., Science, Nature) and is the Principal Investigator of the ReSource project, a one-year longitudinal mental training study on compassion. She does cooperative work with Dennis Snower from the Kiel Institute for the World Economy on the topic of Caring Economics and how psychology and neuroscience can inform new models of human decision making. She is Board Member of the Mind & Life Institute in Charlottesville, VA and of Mind & Life Europe.

Foundations and plasticity of empathy, compassion and prosocial motivation: How to overcome outgroup hate and ingroup favoritism

In the present talk, I will present neuroscientific and psychological findings on the functioning of social emotions and motivations such as empathy and compassion and will give evidence for their fragility and modulation by beliefs and context as well as their trainability and plasticity through mental training interventions.

The social neurosciences have focused on the question of how people relate to and understand each other. Hereby, researchers have distinguished between at least two different routes on the understanding of others: one affective-motivational route referring to our ability to feel with (empathy) and for (compassion) another person, and a cognitive route allowing to infer other people's intentions, beliefs, and thoughts - a capacity also referred to as Theory of Mind, mentalizing or cognitive perspective taking. After a definition of concepts, I will briefly review the main results of neuroscientific studies investigating empathic brain responses elicited by the suffering of another being and show how these empathic brain responses can easily be modulated by several contextual and stimulus intrinsic factors such as perceived fairness of others or whether one thinks that another person is belonging to your ingroup or your outgroup. I will show how easily empathic brain responses can be turned into opposite feelings of Schadenfreude and revenge and an associated lack of helping and prosocial behaviors in a healthy adult population merely based on certain beliefs they have. I will also show evidence for a dissociation of the two routes of social cognition in psychopathology such as preserved Theory of Mind but lack of empathy in aggressive male offenders.

After showing conditions for the lack of empathy, I will turn to the question of the improvement and malleability of these social capacities and show data giving evidence for brain and behavioral plasticity in the domain of empathy, compassion and Theory of Mind as well as different forms of cooperation and prosocial behaviors after short- and long-term mental training intervention programs. I will show first results of the ReSource Project, a large-scale multi-methodological one-year secular mental training program in which participants were trained in different 3-month mental training modules focusing on a) attention-based mindfulness, b) prosocial motivation and compassion, and c) perspective taking on self and others. I will present training-related changes assessed on measures of structural brain plasticity, social cognition and prosocial behavior as well as stress and health markers. Finally, I will discuss the potential use of these scientific findings in addressing conflict resolution, overcoming ingroup-outgroup biases and moving towards more caring society and global cooperation.

Contemplative Faculty

John D. Dunne

John D. Dunne (PhD 1999, Harvard University) serves on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he holds the Distinguished Chair in Contemplative Humanities, a newly endowed position created through the Center for Healthy Minds. He also holds a co-appointment in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literature and is participating in the creation of a new program in Asian Languages & Cultures. Previously he was an Associate Professor in the Department of Religion at Emory University, where he co-founded the Collaborative for Contemplative Studies.

John Dunne's work focuses on Buddhist philosophy and contemplative practice, especially in dialog with Cognitive Science and Psychology. His work appears in publications ranging across both the Humanities and the Sciences, including works on Buddhist philosophy, contemplative practices and their interpretation within scientific contexts.

John Dunne speaks in both academic and public contexts, and occasionally teaches for Buddhist communities, most notably the Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe. In addition to serving as a faculty member at the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds, he is a Fellow of the Mind and Life Institute, where he has previously served on the Board of Directors. Dr. Dunne also serves as academic advisor for the Ranjung Yeshe Institute in Kathmandu, Nepal.

John is an Association Member of Mind and Life Europe.

Charles Hastings

Charles Hastings provides meditation guidance for the online application Imagine Clarity, in collaboration with Matthieu Ricard. He is a translator and editor for the 84,000 project, translating the entire Tibetan Kangyur, or 'words of the Buddha,' into English.

Charles studied Sanskrit and Pali at Cambridge University. He has studied with a number of wonderful Tibetan masters, in particular Kangyur Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and spent 8 years in meditation retreat in Dordogne, France. He has also taught school, worked in business and raised a family.

Elizabeth Mattis-Namgyel

Elizabeth has studied and practiced the ancient wisdom of Mahayana Buddhism, as well as the Vajrayana tradition of the Longchen Nyingthik, for over 30 years under the guidance of her teacher and husband, Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche. After meeting Rinpoche in Nepal in 1985 she became his first Western student. She has been intimately involved with Rinpoche's work in bringing Buddhist wisdom to the West, in particular the development of Mangala Shri Bhuti, an organization dedicated to the study and practice of the Longchen Nyingthik lineage. She is also a founding member and teacher of Wilderness Dharma Movement and on the advisory boards of Prison Mindfulness Network and the Buddhist Arts and Film Festival.

Elizabeth has an academic background in both Anthropology and Buddhist Studies, but her learning is also grounded in practice. After many years of solitary retreat, Rinpoche appointed Elizabeth as Retreat Master at Longchen Jigme Samten Ling, Mangala Shri Bhuti's retreat center in southern Colorado. Elizabeth is the author of *The Power of an Open Question: The Buddha's Path to Freedom* and has written a new book: *The Logic of Faith: the Buddhist Path to Finding Certainty Beyond Belief and Doubt*. She has edited Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche's two books, *It's Up to You* and *Light Comes Through*, and teaches the Buddhadharma throughout the United States and Europe.

Elizabeth helps demystify some of the most common misconceptions about Buddhist teachings and practice, while maintaining a deep respect for the tradition she comes from. She is known for her willingness to question the entire path in order to reach a place of genuine understanding, and asks audiences to engage in the practice of open questioning with her while she takes a fresh look at the assumptions and beliefs we have about spirituality. She is known for her interest in the wisdom aspect of the teachings – the insight into dependent origination and emptiness – and her ability to clearly elucidate these teachings and their application using contemporary and fresh language, without watering down their meaning. When she is not traveling, she enjoys riding her horse through the vast plains of the San Luis Valley in Crestone, CO.

ESRI Contemplative Day: Awareness of Connection

In keeping with this year's theme, our collective practice on the contemplative day will emphasize meditative styles that enable us to explore the nature of our connection with others. During this "mini-retreat," the ESRI Contemplative Faculty will invite participants to engage in exercises that enable us to examine that quality of those connections, the assumptions that may hinder our capacity to reach beyond our own "in-group," and the methods for expanding our social field of connectivity. Participants who seek more guidance will have an opportunity for more extensive instruction, while more experienced practitioners will enjoy long periods of quiet contemplation. The overall approach is secular, but inspired by various contemplative lineages that have conveyed their wisdom to the present day.

Planning Committee

Sabina Čehajić-Clancy

For the bio of Sabina Čehajić-Clancy please see page 6 in the brochure.

Andreas Olsson

For the bio of Andreas Olsson please see page 13 in the brochure.

John D. Dunne

For the bio of John D. Dunne please see page 18 in the brochure.

Sander Tideman

Sander Tideman, LL.M., is specialized in developing societal- and sustainability oriented leadership in organizations. He has been studying contemplative traditions and practices for 30 years, integrating the insights gained from this into his work as a management professional, consultant and researcher.

He is currently Co-Director of Mind & Life Europe and serves on the faculty of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) in the Netherlands. He authored several books and articles, including *'Mind over Matter; Towards a New Paradigm for Leadership in Business and Economics'* (2007) and *'Business as Instrument for Societal Change: In Conversation with H.H. the Dalai Lama'* (Greenleaf 2016).

Sander received education in International Law (Utrecht University), Asian Affairs (London School of Oriental and African Studies), International Economic Law (London School of Economics) and Chinese language and culture (Taiwan National Normal University). He later studied various approaches to psychology, organizational dynamics and leadership. Since encountering Buddhism while travelling in the Himalayas in 1982, he has studied under Buddhist teachers in Nepal, Tibet and India.

Amy Cohen Varela

Amy Cohen Varela is Chairperson of the Mind & Life Europe Board, clinical psychologist specialized in psychodynamic therapy and philosophy, France.

I was born in Boston and studied comparative literature at Brown and Columbia Universities before moving to Paris in the early '80's. There I decided to work with other kinds of stories, and received my degree in clinical psychology at the University of Paris 3, with a specialty in psychodynamic theory and practice, and in parallel, completed psychoanalytic training. Since then, I have worked as a clinical psychologist/psychoanalyst in private practice and at Sainte-Anne's, a public psychiatric hospital, where I helped develop a research department in madness and esthetics. I met Francisco Varela in the mid '80's and we enjoyed life and dialogue together until his death in 2001.

Schedule

Schedule	Monday, 20 August 2018	Tuesday, 21 August 2018	Wednesday, 22 August 2018
Time	**Arrival & Welcome**	**Connectivity / Enaction**	**In group - Out group**
6:15-7:00		Yoga with Hanneli Ågotsdatter	Yoga with Hanneli Ågotsdatter
7:00-7:45		Meditation	Meditation
8:00-9:00		*Breakfast*	*Breakfast*
9:15-11:45		Daniel Haun, Leor Hackel, Andreas Olsson	Cendri Hutcherson, Nichola Raihani, Tania Singer
11:45-12:15		Reflection time	Reflection time
12:15-12:30		Meditation	Meditation
12:30-13:30		*Lunch*	*Lunch*
14:00-15:30	Arrival + Registration 14:00-18:00	Convergence: panel discussion and group dialogues	Convergence: panel discussion and group dialogues
16:00-17:30		Tracks	Tracks
18:00-19:00	*Dinner*	*Dinner*	*Dinner*
19:00:00		Poster Session	
19:30-21:15	Welcome and Orientation Sister Scholastica, Sander Tideman, Amy Cohen Varela		Mind & Life Awards/Programs and documentary
21:15-21:30	Meditation	Meditation	Meditation
from 22:00 to 8:15	*Silence*	*Silence*	*Silence*

Program subject to change!

Thursday, 23 August 2018	Friday, 24 August 2018	Saturday, 25 August 2018	Sunday, 26 August 2018
Contemplative Day Silent Retreat	**Compassion - overcoming conflicts**	**Integration**	**Goodbye and Departures**
Yoga with Hanneli Ågotsdatter	Yoga with Hanneli Ågotsdatter	Yoga with Hanneli Ågotsdatter	Yoga with Hanneli Ågotsdatter
Meditation	Meditation	Meditation	Meditation
Breakfast (in silence)	*Breakfast*	*Breakfast*	*Breakfast*
Contemplative Practices with John D. Dunne, Charles Hastings, Elizabeth Mattis-Namgyel	Bryce Huebner, Sabina Čehajić-Clancy, Masi Noor	Heather Grabbe, Anca Minescu, Velma Šarić	Departure 9:00-12:00
	Reflection time	Reflection time	
	Meditation	Meditation	
Lunch (in silence)	*Lunch*	*Lunch*	
Contemplative Practices with John D. Dunne, Charles Hastings, Elizabeth Mattis-Namgyel	Convergence: panel discussion and group dialogues	Convergence: panel discussion and group dialogues	
	Tracks	Tracks	
Dinner (in silence)	*Dinner*	*Dinner*	
	Poster Session		
Contemplative Practices with John D. Dunne, Charles Hastings, Elizabeth Mattis-Namgyel		Closing MLE	
	Meditation	Meditation	
Silence	*Silence*	*Silence*	

Poster

Tuesday, 21 August 2018		
Presented by		**Title**
1	**Leslie Agger**	Traditional Compassion Building Exercises Among First Nations People of Norh America
2	**Catherine Andreu Cafati and Carlos García Rubio**	Bringing mindfulness where it is really needed: A Randomized Controlled Trial assessing the effects of a mindfulness-based intervention on executive functions in children of a high-risk school in Latin-America
3	**Julia Ayache**	Work: The effect of a brief mindfulness induction on false memories production
4	**Joanna Buryn-Weitzel**	Helping, Sharing, and Comforting Behaviours in Ugandan and British Infants
5	**Cristián Coo Calcagni**	Exploring the relationship between Mindfulness and Social Resources at Work
6	**Jessie Dezutter**	Meaning in life: An experience on the nexus of mind, body, and brain?
7	**Lucy Draper-Clarke**	Bringing the Contemplative into a Critical Reflexive Pedagogy: a Case Study
8	**Filip Van Droogenbroeck**	Social differences in compassionate attitudes among secondary education students in Flanders - A sociography
9	**Pascal Frank**	Integrating personal approaches toward sustainable development into sustainability science Curricula - An example from Leuphana University Lüneburg/Germany
10	**Liudmila Gamaiunova**	Recovery from stress in long-term meditation practitioners and matched controls: mediative role of cognitive emotion regulation strategies
11	**Nanja Holland Hansen**	Effectiveness of Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) for caregivers
12	**Barbara Jachs**	Extracting Subjective Experience States from Retrospective Temporal Tracing in Meditation
13	**Catherine Juneau**	Defining and measuring Equanimity
14	**Moé Kishida**	The associations between self-efficacy for yoga practice to health and wellbeing: Does confidence in yoga practice matter?
15	**Sari Laine**	Developing Leaders‘ Body-awareness

Overview subject to change!

Friday, 24 August 2018		
Presented by		**Title**
16	**Wolfgang Lukas**	Contemplative Collaboration - a CERN-inspired Vision for a Collaborative Contemplative Science-and-Practice Community
17	**Karin Matko**	What is Meditation? Revealing Structure in the Vast Meditation Landscape
18	**Heather McDonald**	Creativity, Mindfulness and Personality – Is there a link?
19	**Catriona O‘Toole**	Mindfulness, Contemplative Pedagogy and Trauma-Informed Praxis in Education
20	**Murillo Pagnotta**	Rethinking ’social learning‘ from the perspective of developmental systems theory and radical embodied cognitive science
21	**Søren Buskov Poulsen**	Buddhism and science, living with an ethical project
22	**Marcel Prestel**	Synergies between Meditation and Neurofeedback
23	**Betül Tatar**	Mindfulness and food cravings: Preliminary findings on the role of domain specificity in decentering training
24	**Christopher Timmermann**	Neurophenomenology of the DMT state
25	**Ciaran Tobin**	Tibetan Mind Science and Western Mental Health: A Cultural Congruence Framework
26	**Elliott Trives**	The Role of Intention in a Breath Focused Attention Practice - An Experimental Design
27	**Dominik Weghaupt**	Mindfulness and Compassion in pre-service teacher education
28	**Maximilian Wilhelm**	Mindfulness Meditation: Evidence of web-based training intervention on cognition and emotion – A Pilot Study
29	**Elena Zubeldia**	Contemplative Dance: a micro-phenomenological study of preacceleration

Poster Abstracts

1. LESLIE AGGER

Traditional Compassion Building Exercises Among First Nations People of Norh America

Anishinaabe people have their own traditional understanding of compassion yet it is all but absent from contemporary indigenous healing discourse, which is heavily weighted towards suffering and the traumatic aspects of the colonial experience. My research explores Anishinaabe constructs of compassion, using the indigenous language as primary means for analyzing and understanding compassion. Ogoopaadenimaan is the Anishinaabe word that most accurately parallels a western understanding of compassion. It reflects both an observation of suffering and an obligation to assist those who are suffering. Traditional Anishinaabe compassion cultivation techniques included mindful art forms including birch bark biting and beading as well as the dream fast and the sacred hunt.

Author: Agger, Leslie (Winnipeg, CA)

2. CATHERINE ANDREU CAFATI AND CARLOS GARCÍA RUBIO

Bringing mindfulness where it is really needed: A Randomized Controlled Trial assessing the effects of a mindfulness-based intervention on executive functions in children of a high-risk school in Latin-America

Introduction: Interest in the applications of mindfulness practice in education is growing in the scientific and contemplative community. Recent research has shown that mindfulness practice in schools may be beneficial for executive functions (EFs), which are abilities crucial for social-emotional development, mental health and quality of life in children, teens and adults. EFs are impaired in high-risk vulnerable contexts and there are few studies using mindfulness-based interventions to improve EFs in these backgrounds.

Aim: The aim of the present study was to investigate the effects of a mindfulness-based intervention in high-risk elementary school children on executive functions in a randomized controlled trial.

Materials and methods: Children from four 4th and 5th grade classrooms drawn from a socioeconomically deprived school in Santiago de Chile were randomly assigned to either receive a mindfulness-based intervention (N = 70) or serve as active controls receiving a social skills program (N = 70). Pre, post and 6 months follow-up assessments include behavioural measures of self-regulation and questionnaires evaluating EFs. Electroencephalography was used to record the neural activity during two EF tasks (Go/Nogo and Flanker task). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to deepen the experience of the participants in the mindfulness-based intervention adapted for this high-risk context.

Results: The intervention was feasible and could be done in this new setting. During the poster presentation this innovative project will be presented along with its results. At this moment data analysis is being carried out.

Conclusions: Results could contribute to understanding how mindfulness practice can promote cognitive and social-emotional development and positive mental health, particularly important in socioeconomic vulnerable contexts. This project has been awarded the European Mind and Life Francisco Varela Award 2016.

Authors: Andreu Cafati, Catherine (Millennium Institute for Research in Depression and Personality (MIDAP), Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, CL); García Rubio, Carlos (Autonoma University of Madrid, ES); Araya, Claudio (Universidad Adolfo Ibañez, CL); Albert-Bitaube, Jacobo (Autonoma University of Madrid, ES); Schonert-Reichl, Kimberly (University of British Columbia, CA); Dorjee, Dusana (Bangor University, GB)

3. JULIA AYACHE

Work: The effect of a brief mindfulness induction on false memories production

Although most studies highlight the positive impacts of mindfulness on several cognitive processes (attention, executive functions), the impact of this practice on memory remains controversial. While some studies have shown a beneficial effect on encoding process, others suggest that a short induction of meditation may increase false memories. The explanation of such results remains unclear. Some authors point out the role of the amplification of semantic propagation mechanisms during the encoding, while others suggest the adoption of a less conservative response criterion in meditators. To bring a new light on this phenomenon we implemented a virtual reality protocol in order to induce false memories. Before encoding, participants were randomly assigned to a mindfulness meditation condition (16 subjects, age: 21.06 ± 2.58), or they listen to a story (18 subjects, age: 22.03 ± 3.50). They were then confronted with a recognition test where the studied items were presented, mixed with different types of lures (critical, semantically or perceptively linked, or unlinked). Our main results show that a short practice of meditation does not generate more good or false recognitions but induces a better discrimination of the items and promotes recollection rather than familiarity for correctly recognized items. These results do not support the hypotheses suggesting a semantic amplification during encoding or the adoption of a liberal response bias. On the contrary, they are consistent with better encoding, probably caused by the improvement of attentional processes. The shift to a more ecological paradigm confirms the benefits of the meditation on memory. These results support the inclusion of this practice in remediation therapies or in school environments to improve learning and memory abilities.

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4. JOANNA BURYN-WEITZEL

Helping, Sharing, and Comforting Behaviours in Ugandan and British Infants

Studies in recent years have shown that children engage in prosocial behaviours (e.g., helping others achieve their goals, sharing valuable resources with others, and comforting individuals in distress) from very early on in their development. It still remains an open question though to what extent prosociality is an innate behaviour and how much of it is established through socialisation processes. Therefore, I am planning to conduct a study on the development of prosocial behaviour with children of two different cultural backgrounds. In order to understand more about the importance of socialisation processes in the emergence of helping, sharing, and comforting behaviours, I will work with parents who have very different socialisation goals and show different parenting practices. I will be following mother-infant-dyads in Uganda and England for the first two years of the infants' lives and examining mothers' expectations and behaviours concerning prosocial behaviour in their children. I will ask mothers about their socialisation goals and interview them regularly about prosocial behaviours their children might be showing in their everyday lives. Additionally, I intend to observe and test the infants' actual prosocial behaviours towards both their mother and an experimenter in a set of experiments. I will also film everyday interactions between mother and child every three months and identify opportunities as well as actual instances of prosociality between the two. This longitudinal, cross-cultural study, which encompasses observational, interview, and experimental data, should allow for new inferences about the way helping, sharing, and comforting emerge and develop throughout infancy and give us new insights into the ontogenesis of prosociality.

Author: Buryn-Weitzel, Joanna (University of York, 145 Lawrence Street, YO10 3EF York, GB)

5. CRISTIÁN COO CALCAGNI

Exploring the relationship between Mindfulness and Social Resources at Work

There is a growing consensus about mindfulness meditation as an effective treatment for a wide range of somatic illnesses and psychological disorders (Arias, Steinberg, Banga, & Trestman, 2006; Chiesa & Serretti, 2011; Hofmann, Sawyer, Witt, & Oh, 2010; Shonin, Van Gordon, & Griffiths, 2013). However, little attention has been paid to Mindfulness-Based Interventions' (MBIs) possibilities as tools to promote healthy and positive outcomes, rather than just to reduce negative outcomes, even though the research indicates that mindfulness is positively related to constructs such as vitality, life satisfaction, and interpersonal relationship quality (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007; Glomb, Duffy, Bono, & Yang, 2011). Indeed, most scientific models of mindfulness offer a primarily extinguishing account of the way mindfulness functions, focusing on the extinction of maladaptive habits and disengagement from negative states of mind, rather than on the cultivation of adaptive behavior and positive states of mind (Garland, Farb, Goldin, & Fredrickson, 2015). Thus, there is a significant gap in the scientific literature about the potential positive effects of Mindfulness. My research project focuses on the exploration of

positive psychological and salutogenic effects of MBIs at work, specifically, on the effects of MBIs on workers subjective well-being, engagement, and performance. To achieve this we have designed and conducted controlled trials and diary studies, both with positive results. In an effort to move forward, we are interested in expanding the perspective of positive and salutogenic effects of mindfulness at work to the collective and organizational level of analysis. Exploring the effects of individual mindfulness and other contemplative tradition-based practices (such as compassion and loving-kindness meditation) on social/relational processes and outcomes such as empathy, mobbing, teamwork ability, and the effect of contextual factors such as social support climate, leader/worker perceptual distance and organizational culture on inhibition/promotion of individual and collective mindfulness.

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6. JESSIE DEZUTTER

Meaning in life: An experience on the nexus of mind, body, and brain?

The search for experiencing meaning in life is described as a 'central human motive' and a fundamental drive of the human nature. Some argue even that the human brain cannot sustain purposeless or meaningless living because the brain is wired to facilitate meaningful thought and action. Although there seems to be a consensus that experiencing meaning in life is important, it remains unclear what 'meaning in life' as a concept exactly is. This lack of conceptual insight becomes even more problematic because mounting evidence shows that experiencing meaning in life is of crucial importance for the well-being and health of many individuals across different situations and in a broad range of contexts. Recent scholars described meaning in life as a tripartite construct consisting of the dimensions 'coherence' (understanding your life), 'purpose' (trying to achieve important life goals), and 'significance' (feeling that your life matters). This theoretical approach seems, however, not able to describe fully the bodily felt sense of meaning in life that individuals experience and describe in our studies. In our research, we aim to search for a full understanding of the experience of meaning in life based on different perspectives namely meaning in life as construction in the mind, as a disposition with bodily correlates, and as a connection in the brain. Until now, our studies focused on a dispositional perspective which is valuable but limited. We aim to broaden our scope to neuro-phenomenological approaches clarifying the 'mind'-aspect as well as neuro-imaging clarifying the brain aspect. In a second step, we aim to study how positive psychological strengths or virtues like forgiveness and compassion might stimulate the experience of meaningfulness in life. We hypothesize therefore that forgiveness and compassion might act as meaning-making strategies.

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7. LUCY DRAPER-CLARKE

Bringing the Contemplative into a Critical Reflexive Pedagogy: a Case Study

The debates on the decolonisation of education in South Africa have focused predominantly on what is taught in a decolonised curriculum. Yet, there is equal need to address the question of how the new curriculum is presented. This poster presentation explores the work of Drama for Life (DFL), at the University of the Witwatersrand, which is addressing these issues through student-centred, humanist, constructivist learning. DFL's mission is to enhance dialogue for purposes of social transformation and healing through arts-based research, teaching and learning, and community engagement. The department aims to achieve this through critical reflexive and therapeutic arts approaches that relate to current social realities and the rich indigenous knowledge of Africa. I propose that a contemplative approach could add value to the critical reflexive pedagogy. Zajonc (2013) refers to a contemplative pedagogy as the "educational methods that support the development of student attention, emotional balance, empathetic connection, compassion, and altruistic behavior, while also providing new pedagogical techniques that support creativity and the learning of course content". Contemplative pedagogues have not always embraced the move into the social justice arena, but social transformation and healing lie at the heart of DFL's work. Interviews with staff members revealed a range of issues in the facilitation of student learning: internalised oppression; student self-absorption; the prevalence of trauma; the challenge of holding paradox and complexity; and the need for personal sustainability in the activism space. These issues are problematized, investigated and interpreted through Kaufman's frame of Contemplative Critical Pedagogy (CCP): Establishing a foundation of non-duality; Promoting an awareness of interdependence; Encouraging us to embrace impermanence; Fostering intentionality; Grounding the political with the personal. "A critical contemplative pedagogy is a conscious attempt to not just be the change … but to bring about that change as well." (Kaufmann, 2017:1)

Author: Draper-Clarke, Lucy (University of the Witwatersrand, 42 Kingston Avenue, 2092 Auckland Park, ZA)

8. FILIP VAN DROOGENBROECK

Social differences in compassionate attitudes among secondary education students in Flanders - A sociography

In this article, social differences in compassion are explored based on newly gathered data in 2018 on a representative sample of 6000 secondary education students in Flanders. Most compassion research makes use of convenience samples in an experimental design. Little is known about social variation in compassionate attitudes. In our exploratory analysis, we investigate how gender, social economical background, atheism, religious identity and degree of religiosity are relate to compassionate attitudes. Second, we investigate how compassionate attitudes relate to outcomes concerning prejudice (e.g., homophobia). If we wish to foster compassionate attitudes among young people it is fundamental that we gain insight in the social determinants of compassion.

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9. PASCAL FRANK

Integrating personal approaches toward sustainable development into sustainability science Curricula - An example from Leuphana University Lüneburg/Germany

At Leuphana University in Lüneburg / Germany, I am currently developing a module for the "Sustainability Science" Master degree focusing on "personal approaches toward sustainable development". The overall aim of the module is to stimulate the acquisition of personal, social and professional competencies based on a systematic reflection of subjective experience (somatic, sensory, emotional, cognitive) as well as personal world views, belief systems and values. The module consists of the following five courses that have been elaborated and so far isolatedly thought during the last years:

1. Contemplative practices: Students gain theoretical and practical insights into different contemplative practices, such as Yoga, MBSR, Vipassana meditation etc.

2. Introspective methodology: This course conveys the methodological background of first-person methodology and allows students to work with introspective methods for data collection (e.g. microphenomenology) and analysis (e.g. interpretative-phenomenological analysis).

3. Transforming personal consumption: Students define a precise transformation project of their personal consumption behavior, reflect upon their individual hindrances and resources and finally analyze intersubjective patterns among course participants.

4. Dealing with arguments: In this course, students systematically observe and analyze the relevance of affective-motivational factors when dealing with arguments.

5. Potentials and limits of personal approaches toward sustainable development: Based on a portfolio developed during the module and additional theoretical inputs on the topic, students reflect upon potentials and limits of personal approaches toward sustainable development.

The module's intention is to enable students to i) cultivate a better awareness of inner states and processes and their relevance for the agenda of sustainable development, ii) acquire coping mechanisms to face (particularly affective-motivational) challenges related to sustainable ways of living and to mobilize related personal resources facilitating the latter, iii) obtain theoretical and practical knowledge on working with first-person methodology and develop skills in using introspective data collection and analysis.

Author: Frank, Pascal (Leuphana University Lüneburg, Scharnhorststraße 1, 21335 Lüneburg, DE)

10. LIUDMILA GAMAIUNOVA

Recovery from stress in long-term meditation practitioners and matched controls: mediative role of cognitive emotion regulation strategies

Psychosocial stressors activate a distinct response through the limbic-sensitive "processive" stress pathway, leading to the physiological changes orchestrated primarily by the Hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis (HPA) and the Sympathomedullary Pathway (SAM). Contemplative practices, defined as a form of training enacting a process of self transformation through self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-inquiry have been linked to stress reduction by substantial research evidence. However, the investigations that employed physiological markers of stress are less numerous and provide contradicting results. In addition, mechanisms of this relationship have not been systematically addressed. This study investigates the relationship between one form of contemplative practice - meditation - and the stress response to social evaluative threat in long-term meditation practitioners, and age and gender matched meditation-naive controls. Participants underwent the stress-inducing Trier Social Stress Test and its control version, and the magnitude of stress response (reactivity and recovery) was measured by changes in salivary cortisol, heart rate, and heart rate variability. Psychological variables associated with the stress response included primary cognitive appraisals, state shame and self-esteem, cognitive emotion regulation strategies.There was a significant difference in cortisol recovery from stress between groups. Meditation analyses demonstrated significant indirect effect of group on recovery through acceptance, one of the cognitive emotion regulation strategies.

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11. NANJA HOLLAND HANSEN

Effectiveness of Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) for caregivers

The Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT) course is a promising intervention for cultivating compassion and reducing suffering. Approximately 25-50 % of caregivers are at risk of developing stress, depression, and anxiety due to their caregiving role. Thus we are in the early stage of investigating the effectiveness of CCT on decreasing self-reported psychological distress in caregivers of patients suffering for psychiatric disorders. Method: Prior to a randomized control trial including 154 caregivers, who will be randomized to CCT or a waitlist control, we translated and pilot tested the CCT program in Denmark and we are still testing the following self-reported questionnaires: Symptom CheckList-5 (SCL 5), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), Self Compassion Scale-12 (SCS-12), and the newly developed Multidimensional Compassion Scale (MCS) which we have translated into Danish following WHO guidelines, within a self-selected and self-paying community setting. Results 5 CCT courses including 49 participants were currently pilot tested. The majority of the participants were professional caregivers (i.e. psychologists, teachers, social workers, doctors, nurses, and business leaders). Only five participants were not able to complete the course (due to others factors than the content and structure of the course) yielding an attrition rate of 10%. We will be presenting results of the pilot-study regarding the suitability of the self-report questionnaires. Conclusion The CCT course is feasible and acceptable to participants within a self-selected and self-paying community setting.

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12. BARBARA JACHS

Extracting Subjective Experience States from Retrospective Temporal Tracing in Meditation

Meditation can be practised as a phenomenological inquiry, allowing meditators to pay attention to different aspects of their conscious experience. In this research project, we are making use of a meditator's skill in reporting their contents of consciousness in an extended version of a retrospective temporal tracing paradigm to track their experiences, retrospectively, over time, and along nine different dimensions of experience: awareness, boredom, conflict, affect, effort, focus, lens, source and wakefulness. In a small cohort study of ten weeks, eleven participants recorded their daily meditations at home using this retrospective temporal tracing method, portable EEG devices, meditation diaries and three behavioural tasks. This means we can study the relationship between the different subjectively described states of consciousness achieved during meditation, their electrophysiology and their behavioural outcomes in a naturalistic setting. Once the retrospective experience tracings are digitised and vectorised, this approach allows us to create a nine-dimensional experience vector for each moment in time. We then proceed to extract the most common subjective experience states (ie configurations of experiential intensity) within and between participants. Additionally, hierarchical cluster analysis is used to assess the distance between possible experience states. This research aims at finding attractor states of experience towards which participants gravitate, depending on their level of experience and the state from which the meditation was initiated. These states are then used to label the neurophysiological data obtained for the respective meditation session, with the aim of finding a relationship between the subjective and the electrophysiological attractor states. We show that the method of retrospective experience tracing can be a useful tool for the research into subjective experiences and their dynamics, as well as for the relationship between the subjective experience, electrophysiology, behaviour and performance and for neurophenomenology in general.

Author: Jachs, Barbara (University of Cambridg, Selwyn College, Grange Road, CB3 9DQ Cambridge, GB)

13. CATHERINE JUNEAU

Defining and measuring Equanimity

Many studies reveal the positive impact of mindfulness training on well-being and mental health. Several mechanisms have also been identified (Gu, Strauss, Bond, & Cavanagh, 2015). Equanimity, a balanced state of mind, is originally rooted in Buddhist theories as one of the Four Immeasurables. Recent development in Western psychology recognizes it as a promising central process involved in mindfulness-based meditation (e.g., Desbordes et al., 2015; see also Hadash, Segev, Tanay, Goldstein, & Bernstein, 2016). Despite these recent advances, relatively few studies have examined it empirically and it lacks measurement instruments. It thus remains crucial to develop such tools to better understand its functioning, its relationships with mindfulness and related constructs, but also to facilitate the treatment and prevention of health issues such as addictive behaviours. Indeed, the detrimental approach/avoidance reaction toward addictive stimuli or their absence (Grabovac, Lau, & Willett, 2011) could be diminished by more equanimity. Under this perspective, two studies have been conducted. The first study was a validation of an equanimity questionnaire, with a sample of 265 adults. Results of a factor analysis show two main factors: the first one could be described as an even-minded state of mind no matter the object or situation, which substantially overlaps with emotional stability; the second one is hedonic independence, which corresponds to the absence of being mainly driven by desire toward pleasant objects/situations or to reject unpleasant ones. These two definitions of equanimity are both correlated to non-reactivity but lead to distinct psychological outcomes and differences in subjective evaluation of arousal caused by visual stimuli. Furthermore, only the second factor is significantly linked in the predicted direction to addictive behaviours. Implications of these results for current definition of equanimity and for both affective and cognitive processes will be discussed.

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14. MOÉ KISHIDA

The associations between self-efficacy for yoga practice to health and wellbeing: Does confidence in yoga practice matter?

The contemplative practice of yoga integrates elements of breath, physical movement, and meditation in the promotion of health and well-being. According to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, self-efficacy in one's yoga practice will impact the degree to which an individual may derive physical and mental health benefits from practice. Prior research on self-efficacy for yoga to impact health outcomes is sparse, especially in daily contexts. A 21-day prospective daily diary study was conducted in community-dwelling yoga practitioners (N=103; age range; 18-76 years, practicing at least once a week) to examine the impact of yoga and self-efficacy for yoga practice (assessed by the Yoga Self-Efficacy Scale; Birdee et al., 2015) on health and well-being (i.e., daily ratings of physical health, emotional health, and life satisfaction). Multilevel models were estimated to examine the associations between yoga, self-efficacy for yoga, and health and well-being. On average, practitioners engaged in 2.23 times of yoga practice per week. Across all 21-days, yoga practice predicted enhanced health and well-being such that on days when practitioners reported practicing more yoga than their usual, greater health and well-being was reported. Overall yoga practice (i.e., a practitioner's average time in yoga practice across 21 days; $b=0.16$, $p < .05$) and baseline self-efficacy for yoga practice ($b=0.27$, $p < .05$) also predicted daily physical health. In multilevel models looking at yoga practice days, there was an association between overall self-efficacy for yoga and daily physical and emotional health, and life satisfaction. Daily fluctuations in self-efficacy for daily practice predicted daily fluctuations in life satisfaction (the only within-person effect, $b=0.13$, $p < .05$). This study provides preliminary evidence that perceived ability in yoga practice is related to perceptions of health and well-being in the context of daily practice. Strategies to enhance self-efficacy for yoga practice may assist in maximizing benefits.

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15. SARI LAINE

Developing Leaders' Body-awareness

This research aims to study leaders' self-awareness and explore the meanings that leaders give to their self-awareness. The purpose of the research is to increase understanding of the effects of self-awareness in an organizational context and explore the possibilities of amplifying this trait in leaders. The possibility of developing leaders' self-awareness is explored using intervention, an implementation of ten weeks work life-oriented meditation -based training program. Previous research implies that wide self-awareness affects individuals' behavior in an affirmative way, but its developing possibilities have not been widely studied. It would be beneficial to understand the effects of self-awareness better to increase the effectiveness of organizations in an ethical manner. The leadership development field lacks knowledge of how to develop leaders' personal traits, virtues, and self-regulation. This research combines cognitive and bodily methods to make an effort to increase knowledge of how leaders have become themselves, and how their awareness can be developed. The research will be conducted during years 2017-2021. The research target group is composed of leaders and managers, their line of business is not limited. About 30-40 individuals will participate the training groups. Training groups will be implemented in 2019 and 2020. Selected participants take part to ten weeks meditation/mindfulness -based training program that meets once a week for one hour. The effective elements of the training are introductions, discussions and practices, including body scan meditation, conscious breathing, conscious movement, and simple yoga practices, which have in previous research been shown to reduce stress and improve the life quality. Research material will be compiled qualitatively applying interviews, diaries, observation, and also inquiries. Material will be analyzed using e.g. content analysis, discursion analysis, and procedural inductive deduction. The results can be utilized in organizational development programs, human resource development, and recruiting.

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16. WOLFGANG LUKAS

Contemplative Collaboration - a CERN-inspired Vision for a Collaborative Contemplative Science-and-Practice Community

Collaboration is found to be abundant in nature and indispensable in human culture. However, in contemporary research ecosystems including Contemplative Science (CS), researchers face overly competitive environments, lack of collaboration, and apparent scarcity of resources, visibility, manpower and expertise. To overcome such challenges, a transition to a more collaborative culture is proposed, in which the tension between competition and cooperation is harnessed such that both can serve a common purpose. Starting from a set of shared common values, we propose to employ a set of collaborative, contemplative, scientific, and community-building „best practices", on all levels from the individual to the larger community. Drawing inspiration from physics research communities at CERN, who have demonstrated the effectiveness of their collaboration models over recent decades at the frontier of science and technology, our proposal includes that: (1) studies be planned, performed and funded by

larger collaborations, (2) data, technologies, and best practices be shared in a spirit of generosity, (3) rigorous internal peer-review processes be followed prior to coordinated publication. Such practices can significantly reduce overheads while leveraging available resources and expertise, facilitate rigorous „slow science“, and safeguard high-quality publications with high replicability. This benefits the CS community from the perspectives of scientists, practitioners, stakeholders and the public. In the domain of CS, specific challenges must be addressed above and beyond those found in physics (including trans-disciplinarity, conflicting traditions / methods, and lack of common languages) while leveraging unique resources that CS and contemplative practices provide on individual, interpersonal, and systemic levels. We present findings from our ongoing feasibility study that investigates how the successful CERN model of collaboration might be complemented further with contemplative-collaborative practices to benefit CS over coming decades. We invite researchers, practitioners and other interested parties to share experiences and to establish an ongoing dialogue for deeper collaborative exploration.

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17. KARIN MATKO

What is Meditation? Revealing Structure in the Vast Meditation Landscape

Meditation is an umbrella term for many different meditative practices in different traditions and schools. The huge number of existing practices makes it difficult to investigate “global” effects of meditation. Recently, some studies began to compare selected meditation practices or proposed theoretical models and classification systems. However, the present studies constitute the first attempt to capture a comprehensive sample of all existing meditative practices and examine the structure underlying these diverse techniques in a bottom-up way. The present poster summarizes the results of three studies, but lays its focus on reporting the structure derived in Study 3. In the first study, we collected all meditative techniques we could find, altogether 309, which, using several selection criteria, we reduced to 50 fundamental techniques. In the second study, an internet survey, 637 experienced meditators provided data on how much experience they had with each of these 50 practices. The 20 most practiced of the 50 meditation techniques were chosen for the third study. 100 experienced meditators responded to a second survey and judged the similarity of each of the 20 techniques with other techniques. Employing principal component analysis in Study 2, the majority of practices could be allocated plausibly to seven main groups of meditation techniques. Study 3 used multidimensional scaling and found two orthogonal dimensions along which meditation techniques could be classified. Within these two dimensions, seven main clusters of techniques emerged that differ only slightly from the factors found in Study 2. Consistent with recent theorizing, we conclude that there is no “meditation” in general, but that there are rather different groups of techniques that might exert diverse effects. These groups shed new light on previous categorizations and question the common division into FA and OM practices. We propose a new classification system based on our empirical results.

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18. HEATHER MCDONALD

Creativity, Mindfulness and Personality – Is there a link?

BACKGROUND: People with schizotypal traits show heightened creativity, with positive dimension driving this relationship. However, suspiciousness, an aspect of positive schizotypy, is a high-risk factor for conversion to schizophrenia. We found that mindfulness practitioners have higher magical thinking, another aspect of positive schizotypy, but lower suspiciousness than the general population, suggesting that mindfulness could mitigate the risks of suspiciousness whilst preserving aspects of positive schizotypy linked with creativity. The main aims of the present study were to i) investigate the relationship between the individual aspects of positive schizotypy and creativity; and ii) explore the role of dispositional mindfulness in this relationship.

METHODS: One hundred and seventeen healthy participants (M = 27 years; SD = 9.5; Male = 30, Female = 87) completed the Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire, the Experience of Creativity Questionnaire, and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire. A sub-sample of 40 participants completed two lab-based creativity tasks.

RESULTS: Positive Schizotypy had significant positive relationship with the self-assessment measure of creative experience, but not the objective creativity tasks. Unusual perceptions, ideas of reference, and suspiciousness, but not magical thinking, significantly correlated with subjective creativity. Dispositional mindfulness showed a trend for a positive relationship with magical thinking, and had a significant negative association with suspiciousness and ideas of reference. There were no significant relationships between dispositional mindfulness and any measures of creativity.

CONCLUSION: Positive schizotypy was positively associated with subjective experience of creativity, but not the objective measures of creative output; however, magical thinking was not the driver of this relationship. As anticipated, suspiciousness was negatively associated with dispositional mindfulness, warranting the application of mindfulness-based interventions for mitigating the risk of positive schizotypy.

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19. CATRIONA O'TOOLE

Mindfulness, Contemplative Pedagogy and Trauma-Informed Praxis in Education

Mindfulness, Contemplative Pedagogies and Trauma-Informed Practice in Education Research shows that childhood trauma/adversities (e.g., abuse, neglect, witnessing violence, bereavement) are vastly more common than recognized and have a powerful effect on children's present-day lives as well as their mental and physical health in adult life (Felliti, 2002). Mindfulness has been identified as a way to support students' socio-emotional and academic development (e.g., Britton, 2014). Nevertheless, while the benefits of mindfulness are increasingly clear, leading experts on trauma urge that care needs to be taken when teaching mindfulness to someone who has experience of trauma (Van der Kolk, 2014). This suggests that we need to proceed with caution in any universal roll-out of mindfulness programmes in schools. As part of an ongoing systematic review and meta-analysis of the impact of school-based mindfulness, we aim to explore if mindfulness is working equally well for all young people, and/or if there are adverse consequences for certain groups (O'Toole, et al., 2017). In parallel, however, there is a growing interest in trauma-informed practice (the core principles of which include safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration and empowerment (Fallot & Harris, 2009). Trauma-informed practice emphasizes the need for settings to be attuned and responsive to the impact of trauma. This poster presentation explores how incorporating mindfulness and other contemplative practices into teacher education can support the journey toward compassionate, trauma-informed practice in education. Contemplative pedagogies offer opportunities for teachers to intimately connect with their own experience, and to engage with the struggles, perspectives and experiences of others (CMind, 2018). They can set the ground work for personal flourishing of the teachers themselves, as well as supporting a deep sensibility and commitment toward the collective work of nurturing a personally enriching, responsive and compassionate educational experience for all children, but particularly those who have experienced trauma.

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20. MURILLO PAGNOTTA

Rethinking 'social learning' from the perspective of developmental systems theory and radical embodied cognitive science

Humans and non-human animals may learn new skills throughout their lifespan. In many cases, what and how individuals learn depends on their historical relations with others around them. Within the behavioural sciences, the term 'social learning' is currently used to refer to this class of phenomena. Behavioural scientists commonly argue that processes of social learning provide the link between 'biological' phenomena and 'cultural' phenomena because of its role in the 'passing on' of knowledge among individuals within and across generations. The number of studies focusing on social learning and the number of species examined have increased dramatically in the past few decades. This has improved our understanding of the similarities and differences among animal species, including humans. This is indeed a fascinating topic. However, my project is motivated by a dissatisfaction with the prominent epistemic roles played in this literature by a set of oppositions, including nature-nurture, biology-culture, body-mind, and individual-society. In my work, I attempt to develop an alternative way of thinking about social learning that is not founded on these oppositions. To this end, I explore ideas from developmental systems theory, radical embodied cognitive science (i.e., ecological psychology and the enactive approach to cognition), and relational thinking. I also conduct empirical studies in ways consistent with this alternative, relational-processual framework, focusing on attentional and behavioural coordination and its relation to learning.

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21. SØREN BUSKOV POULSEN

Buddhism and science, living with an ethical project

Based on ethnographic fieldwork since 2014 for my PhD-project on the science education of Tibetan Buddhist monastic scholars underway in communities in exile, my poster explores the social and ethical conditions for the engagement between Buddhism and science. My work relates particularly to the experienced challenges and opportunities that life in a so-called modern world bring – "a world of science" as my monastic interlocutors often describe it – and the social and ethical navigation required therein. Monastic institutions are developing strategies for survival in the ever-changing social and demographic landscape. Change can appear as inevitable and, following the Dalai Lama, the alliance with science is set to play an important role in the hopes for a strong future for Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhist monastic institutions. Although this alliance may in part arise out of necessity, it also brings with it opportunities. In particular, projects such as the Dalai Lama's "secular ethics" creates hope for a more compassionate world. In part through the study of science, younger monastic scholars are preparing themselves to take up such projects and to be of benefit in the world. However, these monk-scholars come out of a tradition and a community with particular ethical sensibilities and judging what counts as positive in an ever-changing environment requires and is under intense negotiation. My poster and my research in general attempts to understanding this complex socio-ethical space.

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22. MARCEL PRESTEL

Synergies between Meditation and Neurofeedback

Synergies between Meditation and Neurofeedback common to most forms of meditation practice is the goal to not get lost in task-unrelated spontaneous mental activity. This process of mind-wandering has

been linked to increased activity in the default mode network (DMN) and indeed, meditators show less activity in DMN regions. In order to find EEG markers of DMN activity, we analyzed simultaneously acquired EEG/fMRI data and among others found that frontal mid-line theta (FMT) EEG activity was negatively correlated with BOLD activity in the DMN. In addition, a recent study with expert meditators reported that FMT power was increased during deep meditation and reduced during mind-wandering. Consequently, we chose FMT power for feedback in a neurofeedback feasibility study and employed independent component analysis to determine individual FMT EEG components. Six subjects with prior meditation experience were first instructed in two forms of meditation and practiced these on the first day. Over the course of the next two weeks, subjects received FMT-neurofeedback in 8 sessions and were instructed to use meditation as a strategy to increase FMT power, as well as find their own strategies. Individual FMT power was visually fed back on a screen via a light cone that increased in size and brightness when FMT power rose. Each session was followed by an interview for subsequent qualitative analysis. All subjects were able to raise average FMT power over the course of the neurofeedback training, as shown by the correlation between FMT power and training session number (range: $0.26 < r < 0.82$, mean: $r = 0.64$). Also, session number was a highly significant ($p < 0.0001$) predictor of FMT power in a mixed effects analysis. Subjective reports indicate that focussed attention meditation was the dominant strategy and facilitated an increase in perceived ability to influence the feedback.

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23. BETÜL TATAR

Mindfulness and food cravings: Preliminary findings on the role of domain specificity in decentering training

This study examined the effects of general and domain-specific decentering experiences on reactivity to food cues in a mixed sample of meditators and non-meditators. Decentering can be defined as the metacognitive awareness of one's thoughts, feelings and reactions being transient mental events, thus experiencing them as less subjectively real. It has been suggested that domain-specific approaches where decentering training focuses on improvement or relief in a particular domain (e.g. food, relationships, compassion, etc.) may have different effects than approaches where a general decentering training is implemented. Here, we report preliminary findings from an ongoing study testing whether participants benefit more from learning decentering through a domain-specific or a general approach when dealing with potential food cravings. Participants (currently N = 35, female = 28) received brief instructions of general decentering, food-specific decentering, or relaxation (control). Participants then viewed a bowl of potato chips (attractive food) and rice cakes (neutral food), in counterbalanced order. We assessed salivation, self-reported desire, thoughts about eating the food, and thought reflecting decentering from the food. Our results suggested that across conditions, participants experienced more reactivity toward the attractive food compared to the neutral food. Food-specific decentering was equally effective in reducing these responses as the other conditions. Exploratory analyses, however, revealed an association between increased self-reported decentering and decreased desire for both foods, and an overall trend suggesting that food-specific decentering approaches might be more effective than general approaches in reducing cravings for both food items. These effects will be re-examined with further data collection. Overall, understanding the ideal level of specificity for mindfulness trainings has theoretical significance that might also inform the development of effective training programs and interventions in the context of dealing with both reward-related and negative affective processes.

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24. CHRISTOPHER TIMMERMANN

Neurophenomenology of the DMT state

Introduction: DMT is a psychedelic compund which has been used for centuries in ritual contexts. It induces a rich phenomenology characterized by intense visual and somatic effects usually described as enabling a deep immersion into a "world-analogue" similar to dreams. Because of the short-lived nature of the DMT experience (peak effects at 2 minutes following injection followed by a gradual offset), it is an ideal candidate for the study of neuronal processes that underlie radical shifts in conscious experience assessed using a neurophenomenological framework.

Methods: In this placebo-controlled study we investigated the effects of DMT in the brain and experience by using EEG, online measures of subjective effects and microphenomenological interviews to assess the progression of different phenomenological features of the experience. We investigated the effects of the compound in the brain by using EEG measures of oscillatory power and metrics which have been used to assess global states of consciousness (Lempel-Ziv complexity).

Results: Analyses of EEG activity on every minute after administration and online intensity ratings reveal an intimate relationship between reductions in oscillatory power, increases in complexity measures and dynamic shifts in conscious experience. Furthermore, reductions in oscillatory power showed a high relationship with the temporal progression of sensory effects, while increased measures in complexity-based measures related to the temporal progression of emotional effects.

Discussion: Our findings indicate the relevance of using DMT and other short-acting psychedelics for the study of dynamic aspects of conscious experience, by inducing radical shifts in experience in controlled research environments as well as enabling a bridge allowing the study between changes in subjective experience and brain activity using an approach rooted in neurophenomenology.

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25. CIARAN TOBIN

Tibetan Mind Science and Western Mental Health: A Cultural Congruence Framework

Context: Globally, the focus on mental health (MH) issues has become increasingly important in recent years. However, current Western approaches based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM V), have fuelled a contentious debate concerning how modern society should treat mental disturbance. The British Psychological Society (BPS) suggests a 'paradigm shift' within the field of MH, and call for alternative conceptual approaches away from the current 'disease model'. Furthermore, academic literature reveals an imbalance within Western psychology concerning traditional and indigenous approaches to MH. Buddhist ideas have recently become more popular in Western societies, and we might see the popularity of mindfulness techniques as an invitation to explore a much wider range of practices available from their original traditional context.

Aim: To develop a culturally congruent model of MH between Tibetan and Western psychologies. Cultural congruence is grounded in understanding (a) the worldview of the indigenous community, (b) the influence of one's own worldview, and (c) the skillful integration of knowledge into psychotherapy services. This model will be ultimately edited for and disseminated as a medical anthropology/MH academic textbook.

Method: The application of anthropological research methods in MH such as: narrative interviews, participant observation, textual analysis, and a working collaboration with senior Western and Tibetan scholars.

Expected Contributions: Complement existing knowledge and help narrow the gap between two divided paradigms. In light of the problematic issues identified within the current global MH milieu; the development of a culturally congruent medical anthropology/MH academic textbook would offer (a) students and health practitioners alternative perspectives and options when diagnosing and treating the individual, (b) a logical framework for exploring the Western view of the brain and the Tibetan view of the mind, (c) a scientifically holistic cross-cultural model of MH and alternative conceptual model as called for by the BPS.

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26. ELLIOTT TRIVES

The Role of Intention in a Breath Focused Attention Practice - An Experimental Design

Since the decontextualisation of mindfulness from its buddhist roots, Focused Attention (FA) and Open Monitoring (OM) practices have been studied as core mechanisms increasing welbeing and mental health. However, in comparison with occidental Mindfulness Based Interventions, in the tibetan buddhist context for example, those practices are systematically preceeded and followed by the development of a loving kindness intention for all sentient beings. We wanted to know if this contextualisation have some psychological effects. As a consequence, we conducted an online experimental study in which participants had to develop a breath focused attention practice. We randomly assigned participants in two groups: self-centered intention (n = 24) and loving kindness intention (n = 19). In the first condition, we asked participants to let go from any expectations and develop an open and non judgemental attitude. In the second condition, we encouraged them to develop a loving kindness intention toward all sentient beings. Then, we guided both groups to effectively develop the intention. We measured subjective authentic durable happiness, loving kindness, compassion, goals in relationships and generosity. Preliminary results show that participants in both conditions have higher scores of happiness after than before the practice ($F(1, 42) = 83.24$, $p < .001$, η^2 .66) and that they do not differ significantly from each other ($F(1, 41) = 0.22$, $p > .05$). Nevertheless, participants in the loving kindness condition have higher scores of compassion ($t(32) = -2.49$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.86$) and compassionate goals in relationships ($t(41) = -2.07$, $p < .05$, $d = -0.63$) than participants in the self centered condition. Thus, without losing any beneficial effects in terms of happiness, when participants practice with an intention of loving kindness, their compassion and their willingness to help others increase.

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27. DOMINIK WEGHAUPT

Mindfulness and Compassion in pre-service teacher education

A mixed-method study about one-semester university courses with mindfulness and compassion-based approache. Subject of this dissertation project is the implementation and investigation of mindfulness and compassion based approaches in pre-service teacher education. The concept of mindfulness has found its way into teacher education in recent years. In particular, in-service teacher education was addressed by institutions such as Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE), Stress Management and Resilience Training (SMART). The research interest in this area has so far been very strong on health psychological parameters. Although individual schools and colleges offer mindfulness programs, mindfulness has hardly been a term of pedagogical discussion in recent years. With a developing educational theory of mindfulness and the growth of contemplative pedagogy the focus is now also on educational issues. This study considers the relevance of mindfulness and compassion for the personal development of pre-service teacher students in their pedagogical

professionalization process. Several university courses with mindfulness and compassion-based approaches in German-speaking countries are going to be investigated, taking into account the following question: What effects does a one-semester course with mindfulness and compassion based approaches has on the teacher students? The further theoretical discussion about the relevance of these effects for the pedagogical professionalization process is essential for this study. In a second strand, phenomenological research is conducted on the basis of journal entries written by the teacher students to investigate the question: What is it like for teacher students to participate in a university seminar that focuses on mindfulness and compassion through contemplative practice? A third strand of research examines the need and possibility that university teachers attribute to mindfulness and compassion in teacher education. By comparing and integrating these three perspectives, the significance of mindfulness and compassion for pedagogical professionalization will be examined.

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28. MAXIMILIAN WILHELM

Mindulness Meditation: Evidence of web-based training intervention on cognition and emotion – A Pilot Study

A Pilot Study: Maximilian L. Wilhelm, Britta K. Hölzel, Maria Mora, Benno Bremer, Kathrin Koch.
Objective: The positive influence of mindfulness meditation training (MMT) on stress reduction, cognitive performance, creativity, and emotion regulation has been found in previous studies (Tang, Hölzel, & Posner, 2015). However, due to time consuming and cost intensive procedures, many of mindfulness meditation studies suffer from low methodological quality and do not allow for causal inferences (Tang et al., 2015). As a high training quality is crucial for the overall outcome (Crane et al., 2012), one approach to address these issues might be the delivery of a well-designed web-based program (Fish, Brimson, & Lynch, 2016).

Methods: Healthy adults (N = 21) with no prior meditation experience were quasi-randomized to an MMT (N = 11) or health training (HT, N = 10) group and underwent a 31-day training consisting of 15 minute/day practice. Participants completed self-report inventories that measured mindfulness (MAAS) and perceived stress (PSS) as well as behavioural measures of attentional control (ANT), cognitive flexibility (STROOP), emotion regulation (affect labeling), reaction to positive and negative affective stimuli (affective priming), and creativity (RAT, AUT) before and after MMT or HT.

Hypothesis: The present study was designed to investigate the impact of a 31-day web-based mindfulness meditation program on cognition and emotion. Compared to the HT, we expected that participation in the MMT would lead to increased self-report levels of mindfulness and decreased levels of perceived stress. Furthermore, when compared to HT, participation in the MMT would lead to enhanced performances of attention regulation, emotion regulation and creativity.

Results: Ongoing study. First results are expected for July, 2018. Discussion Results will be discussed in light of recent findings of MMT on cognition and emotion.

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29. ELENA ZUBELDIA

Contemplative Dance: a micro-phenomenological study of preacceleration

In the recent years there has been an increasing interest in the scientific study of dance as a relational contemplative practice. However, little attention has been paid to the experiential and neurological micro-dynamics of dance. This study aims to research the interval between movements, or preacceleration, from a neurophenomenological approach. We combine first, second, and third person perspectives. In order to evaluate this phenomena, the subjective experience from the dancers were collected through micro-phenomenological interviews and real time nonverbal reports; dance observers provide subjective annotations on touch screens devices in real time, periods of movement and stillness were defined using inertial sensors placed on the dancers, and various physiological measures (such as EEG, ECG or breathing) were recorded for both dancers and observers. In this contribution we combine data from the inertial sensors, the online subjective reports and the elicitations. The results show that preacceleration is accompanied by a visceral experience of security. While inertial measures and subjective measures did not perfectly overlap, they were systematically aligned, with first and second perspective reports closely matching each other. We propose that contemplative dance can be effective for restoring the attachment system and strengthening the capacity of self-regulation, both of the dancer and the observer. We discuss the possible neurophysiological mechanisms implicated in preacceleration through an integration between the polyvagal theory and classical Hindu philosophy. To conclude, we offer insights into the therapeutic potential of dance which can serve to optimize the efficacy of dance therapy and pedagogy, and guide future research. This research project will be presented at 2018 Mind and Life European Summer Research Institute in the form of a brief live experiment and depicted as a piece of installation art.

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Varela Awards

The Mind & Life Francisco J. Varela Awards (Varela Awards) – an important and integral component of Mind & Life Europe's support of contemplative scientists and scholars – are based on neuroscientist and philosopher Francisco J. Varela's belief that contemplative training offers modern science novel methods for investigating human experience. In his vision, contemplative training not only provides a new domain for scientific study, but more importantly offers resources for advancing scientific theories and models of consciousness, emotion, and cognition.

Mind and Life views the Varela Awards as an essential feature of its overall strategy of building an interdisciplinary understanding of the mind and human behavior. These awards are a key vehicle for increasing the number of exemplary scientists, scholars and clinicians involved in contemplative studies. Strong proposals will meet the highest standards of rigor in the applicant's field of expertise. Furthermore, preference will be given to interdisciplinary studies that incorporate first-person contemplative methods (e.g., introspective investigation and reports on subjective experience) into traditional cognitive, behavioral, physiological, clinical, or sociocultural research. This awards program also encourages the active collaboration of researchers with contemplative scholars/practitioners in all phases of investigation.

The Varela Awards were established in 2004 as a companion program to MLSRI and have been a critical element in supporting the development of Contemplative Science and Contemplative Studies. The Varela Awards support new research proposals, most developed through collaboration at the MLSRI and/or the ESRI, which often do not qualify for traditional streams of funding.

Since 2004, Mind & Life has distributed more than $ 2 million in funding to support junior scientists in these emerging fields. As a result of the Varela Awards, a significant increase in cognitive, behavioral, neurobiological, and clinical findings are being published in top-tier, peer-reviewed, scientific journals. To date, more than 195 scholarly articles have been published resulting from Varela Award projects, and hundreds of scientific presentations have been given at conferences and special lectures. Further, the relatively modest awards have been leveraged into more than $ 62 million in follow-on funding for awardees. Research that is now being conducted with the support of Varela Awards will be the future basis of the emerging fields of Contemplative Science and Contemplative Studies. Today's researchers will be tomorrow's leaders in the exploration of the mind.

To be eligible for a Varela Award, researchers and scholars must have attended the Mind & Life SRI or the European SRI within five years of their application. This grant is intended as a career development award, and is open to graduate students and post-doctoral fellows currently affiliated with a research institution, and junior faculty up to their third year of university appointment.

For those applying based on attendance of a US Summer Research Institute (in Garrison, NY), the application period for the 2018 Varela Awards will be open from August 31-September 28, 2018. The funding decisions will be announced in December 2018.

For those applying based on attendance of a European Summer Research Institute (Chiemsee, Germany), the application period for the 2018 European Varela Awards will be open from September 24-October 29, 2018. The Awardees will be announced on January 25, 2019.

To find out more about the Varela Awards, please visit our website **mindandlife-europe.org**.

Previous European Varela Award Winners - from 2014 onwards

2017

Oussama Abdoun
Michelle Carr
Liudmila Gamaiunova
Annika Lübbert
Patricia Milz
Willeke Rietdijk
Frank Schumann

2016

Gabriel Axel Montes
Carlos Garcia Rubio and Catherine Andreu
Britta Hölzel
Barbara Jachs
Gesa Kappen
Anna Reebs
Michael Tremmel and Freya von Hohnhorst

2015

Katarzyna Bylow-Antkowiak
Anira Escrichs
Enrico Fucci
Emily Hammond
Josipa Mihic
Anne Maj van der Velden
Nina Vollbehr

2014

Corina Aguilar-Raab
Tim Gard
Bergljot Gjelsvik
Terje Sparby

A warm and heartfelt 'Thank you' to express our sincere gratitude to:

The Mind & Life Europe Board: Amy Cohen Varela (Chairperson), Charles-Antoine Janssen, Astrid Lunkes, Cornelius Pietzner, Andreas Roepstorff, Tania Singer and Wolf Singer.

The Mind & Life ESRI Planning Committee: John D. Dunne (Chairperson), Sabina Čehajić-Clancy and Andreas Olsson.

The members of the ESRI Community Building Committee: Nathalie Legros, Britta Hölzel and Wolfgang Lukas.

The Mind & Life Europe Co-Director, Sander Tideman, and Ute Brandes, ESRI Coordinator.

Sister Scholastica McQueen and her team for providing the infrastructure of the abbey and for their work, and Ayurveda chef Nicky Sitaram Sabnis and his team for serving delicious food and the service, Karl-Heinz Kroeger & Simon Brucker of eventTec Equipment and Consulting for the technical support, the entire Converia team for the website and registrations support, Daria Startseva for graphics and the design of the brochure and Kuhn & Partner for the accounting.

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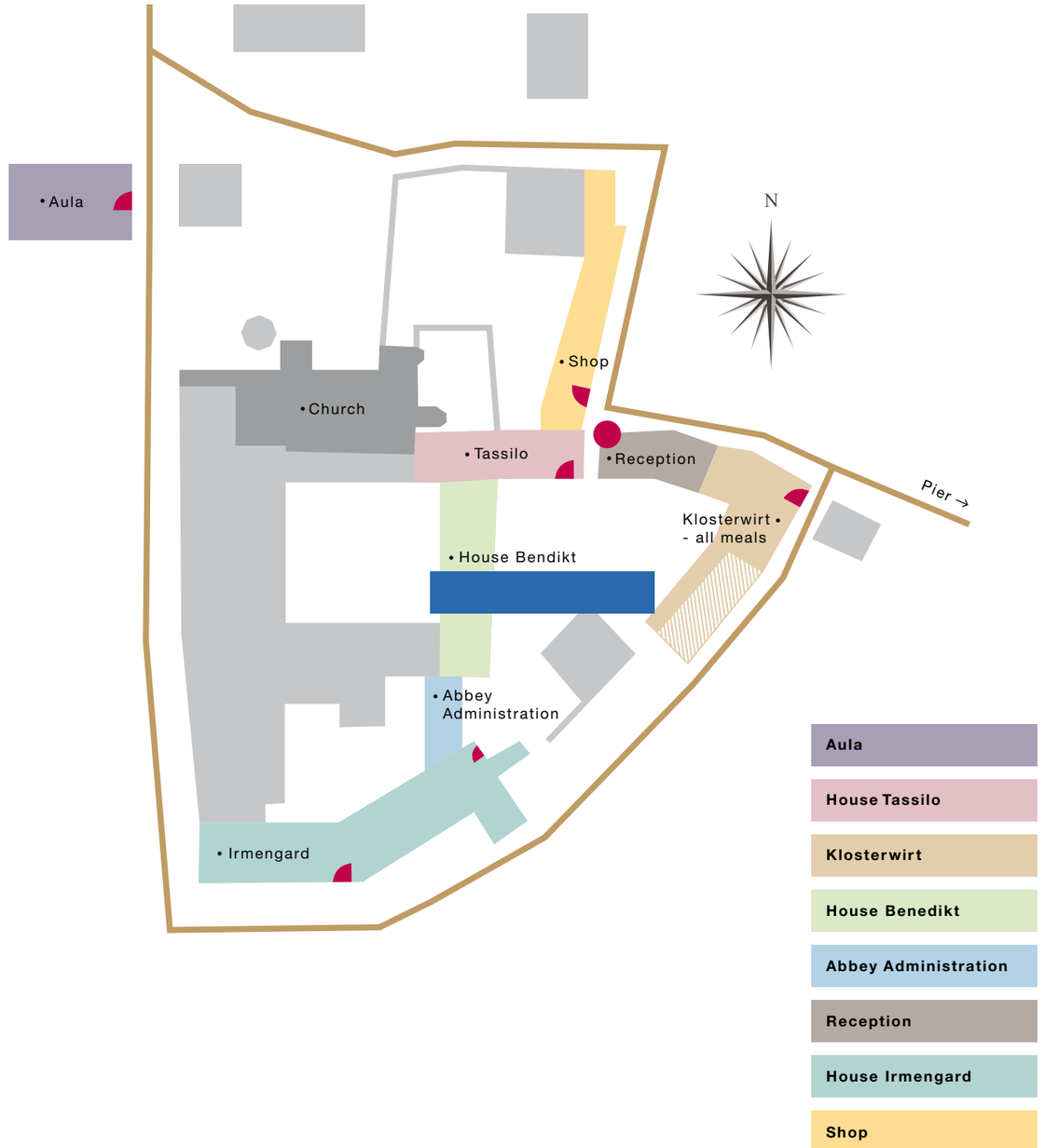
We hope the benefits of this gathering will have innumerable positive implications for years to come.

Map



Mind & Life Europe is registered in Switzerland as a society with a not-for-profit status and a support office in the Netherlands.

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