

# FULBRIGHT CHRONICLES



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3 (OCTOBER 2023)



## IN THIS ISSUE:

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION • COLLEGE ADMISSIONS • SCOTLAND • WIDENING PARTICIPATION • HIGHER EDUCATION • LEADERSHIP • ENTREPRENEURSHIP • ADULT LEARNING • PEER SUPPORT • FRANCE • BEHAVIORAL NEUROENDOCRINOLOGY • SEXUAL PARTNER PREFERENCE • PIGS • GLASS RECYCLING • MENTORSHIP • UNIVERSITY • COMMUNITY • YEAR OF TURKEY • INTERNATIONALIZATION • TOLERANCE • CAMBODIA • ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION • INTRAPRENEURSHIP • ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT • ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE • BIOTECHNOLOGY • CELLS • CULTURAL EXCHANGE • HEALTHCARE • METAVERSE • 3D VIRTUAL WORLD • INTERCULTURAL INTERACTION • INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE • MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

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The journal provides a welcoming space for Fulbrighters to share their work and reflections on global issues with a broad audience. It features thoughtful, accessible articles that reflect on how Fulbright experiences have contributed to knowledge and cross-cultural understanding, or that comment on contemporary issues that affect the Fulbright program or cultural and educational exchange more broadly.

The *Fulbright Chronicles* can only succeed with the engagement of the Fulbright community. The editors strongly encourage Fulbrighters to contribute articles or commentaries on topics related to your research and practice and the critical issues of our times. Author Guidelines are available on our website ([www.fulbright-chronicles.com](http://www.fulbright-chronicles.com)).

The journal is an independent publication, overseen by the Editorial Board members under the guidance of the Co-Editors. Rob Ellis serves as Publishing Editor. For further information, visit the *Fulbright Chronicles* site ([www.fulbright-chronicles.com](http://www.fulbright-chronicles.com)).

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# BUILDING A STRONGER GLOBAL FULBRIGHT COMMUNITY

KEVIN F. F. QUIGLEY AND BRUCE B. SVARE

We founded this journal believing that Fulbright experiences have a profound effect on the participants and those experiences have an enduring but often unexamined impact. We also believe that the Global Fulbright Community has untapped potential to make more progress in achieving its lofty goals of promoting mutual understanding, advancing knowledge, and improving lives worldwide.

Here at the *Chronicles*, we are interested in finding ways to strengthen the Fulbright community to better achieve the Fulbright goals. Now, 75 years after its establishment and with more than 400,000 participants from some 160 countries, we think that there should be a more concerted effort to understand the Fulbright Program's impact and to encourage more efforts to strengthen the global Fulbright Community, especially by enhancing the communications, and connections among us. We believe that this will lead to a more engaged and impactful community.

As far as we understand, our collective knowledge of and links to the global alumni are modest. Estimates suggest that there are well-established links to just 15 percent of our alumni and consequently limited engagement from Fulbright alumni. There are some parallels with another iconic US government program, the Peace Corps. They, too, have limited connections to and engagement from the approximately 250,000 alumni of that program. This low level of connection results from the Fulbright Programs focus on selecting and supporting the program participants to a far greater extent than assessing its enduring impact and keeping alumni engaged in advancing the Fulbright Programs goals.

A comparison with college and universities connections with their alumni suggests that the Fulbright Program could be much more connected to their alumni. Generally, US universities are better connected to their alumni than global universities. For elite US universities, these closer connections can generate ongoing alumni engagement at the level of 50 percent or higher. While these percentages of alumni engagement are much lower for universities in other regions, global universities are increasingly realizing that ongoing connections with and engagement from their alumni is essential to their sustainability.

*We think that there should be a more concerted effort to understand the Fulbright Program's impact and to encourage more efforts to strengthen the global Fulbright Community, especially by enhancing the communications and connections among us.*

Because the Fulbright Program does not have strong links to our global alumni, our community's potential is weakened and our ability to assess its enduring impact is limited. In London this past July, Rob Ellis (of the *Fulbrighter* and the *Chronicles* publication editor), helped organize a workshop for five national alumni associations (including Aiden Warren, an associate editor and representing the Australian Alumni Association), a few national Fulbright commissions, as well as representatives from the US State Department and the International Institute of Education, which administers many of the Fulbright Programs. This workshop sought to develop ideas and strategies for strengthening our global Fulbright community and deepening connections among us. In particular, the workshop agreed to develop a better database of Fulbright alumni, as well as sharing contact information with alumni associations for new Fulbrighters so that national alumni associations can connect with and be a resource before and after the newest Fulbrighters participate in the program. We are hopeful that this London meeting will be an important step in strengthening the connections among our alumni, and we believe that it will lead to discernible improvements in the Fulbright Programs overall impact.

In this issue, an interdisciplinary trio of Australian Fulbrighters (Iain Butterworth, Angela Heise, and Jon Adams) discuss Australia's Fulbright Leadership Development program that aims to help alumni become "... reflective, technical, and tenacious lifelong learners and change agents," and "... to act as purposeful catalysts for change." This exemplary program offers a model with practical, implementable, and assessable means for developing a program building on our Fulbright experiences in ways that advance the overall goals of the Fulbright program, thereby enhancing their impact.

As always, this issue provides a set of commentaries and articles from our global alumni on the benefits of cultural exchange programs across multiple fields including higher education, entrepreneurship, health care, and artificial intelligence. All of these articles cast clear light on the Fulbright Programs' enduring impact and how these programs provide invaluable experiences that promote mutual understanding.

Thank you for reading the *Fulbright Chronicles*. We hope that it inspires you to become more connected to other Fulbrighters in ways that advance the timeless and much-needed efforts to promote mutual understanding and create the knowledge necessary to build a more peaceful and prosperous world for all.

# COMMENTARIES

# THE UNITED STATES AND SCOTLAND HAVE A LOT TO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER ABOUT ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

CATHERINE DEVLIN

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## ABSTRACT

My experience teaching Scottish high school students during my Fulbright year guides my disappointment regarding the recent United States Supreme Court ruling against affirmative action. Working as a tutor for Widening Participation – a program which provides adjusted entrance requirements for underserved students – showed me the value of diverse opinions in the academy. Upon returning to the United States, I will use my Fulbright experience to continue to work towards educational equity.

**Keywords:** affirmative action • college admissions • Scotland  
• widening participation • higher education

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## TEACHING AND LEARNING FROM UNDERSERVED SCOTTISH STUDENTS

I learned a lot about America from teaching teenagers about Scotland.

I moved to Glasgow to study Gender History as a Fulbright Postgraduate Grantee. My research focused on understanding and correcting historiographic oversights that obscure women's stories. This research bridged my transition from mass media storytelling, having previously served as the lead researcher for NBC's 2020 documentary *Sky Blossom*, to a career in education as a sixth-grade history teacher. Whether in film or in the classroom, I hope to decrease inequities in how we remember and who has access to history.

As a beneficiary of the Fulbright Program - a fellowship program created by Senator William Fulbright to promote bilateral intellectual exchange - I was eager to learn about Scottish culture and to share my experience of being American. In line with this goal, I took a job as a Widening Participation tutor in the Top Up Programme. Top Up is a six-week study skill course which provides adjusted university entry requirements to students who live in Scotland's lowest income zip codes, serve as caregivers, are estranged from their families, or have refugee status. Admissions requirements into higher institutions vary by undergraduate program and personal circumstances. For instance, a student hoping to study history would typically require five A's on their Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) exams to be guaranteed a university spot, but a student who had completed Top-Up and served as a caregiver would be guaranteed an offer with an A and four B's.



The Top-Up program seeks to correct inequities stemming from the structure and history of the Scottish education system. Like the United States, Glasgow students are assigned to secondary schools based on their home zip code. While families are able to request that their local council change their students' school placement, in 2016 just 32% of these requests were accepted. Scottish university admissions criteria center around test results, meaning that a student's academic career is almost entirely shaped by the quality of their secondary education. In some parts of Glasgow, more students get sent to prison each year than are admitted to the University.

Top-Up sections are divided into topics that guide a final essay question. My group studied the impact of Scottish stereotypes. I was intrigued by the challenge of this allocation. Having lived in Scotland for only a month, I was tasked with teaching Scottish students about their own national identity. I soon realized that the apparent irony of this assignment inspired incredible conversation and cultural exchange. The students eagerly sought my opinion of Scottish culture as a foreigner, and they responded with their beliefs about the United States. On both sides, we had a lot to learn and celebrate. When a session fell on Thanksgiving, the students listed things they were grateful for (but refused to believe that pumpkin pie is delicious). When the Scottish holiday Burns Night approached, we read the poems from the celebration's namesake (and I strongly objected to the pumpkin pie debate when I learned what was in haggis).

The students faced stereotypes beyond kilts and bagpipes, however. As Widening Participation students, many of their university peers considered them to have reached university through a "back door." The students confided in me their worries about not fitting in or belonging in higher education. When I asked them to write down the first word that they associated with the University of Glasgow, the most frequent answer was "posh," followed by "accent" (referring to the fancy accent associated with the university as opposed to the rest of Glasgow). "Snobby" was also on the leaderboard, and one student expanded beyond a single word to write "it only has students from private schools." My students viewed the university as a far off, inaccessible place, not meant for them.

*Having lived in Scotland for only a month, I was tasked with teaching Scottish students about their own national identity. I soon realized that the apparent irony of this assignment inspired incredible conversation and cultural exchange.*



## CONNECTING WIDENING PARTICIPATION TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

My students concern about the “fairness” of their admission mirrored conversations in the United States regarding affirmative action. On June 29, 2023, the United States Supreme Court ruled that colleges cannot consider race as part of the admissions process. This ruling ended affirmative action, a decades-long initiative to combat race-based discrimination in employment and education. Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy (R) commended the decision, saying it allows students to “compete based on equal standards and individual merit.”

But this outlook assumes that college admissions practices are based on equal standards and individual merit. Race affects experience, and college applications are incomplete without this part of identity. The United Nations declared intersectionality – the recognition that different social identities create unique forms of discrimination – as necessary in combatting inequality. To remove considerations of race from college admissions forces admissions committees to make judgements without seeing the full picture. Contrary to Representative McCarthy’s remarks, these committees are *less* able to ascertain a student’s individual merit.

Furthermore, the Supreme Court decision falsely implies that students admitted under affirmative action do not belong at universities. In the case of my Scottish students, who faced similar criticism, their nontraditional path to university in no way affected their success. A sixteen-year survey of 30,000 Top-Up students showed that students who participated in the program had the same likelihood of graduating with first class honors as any other student.

In admitting these students, the university not only chose applicants who were likely to be successful, it also increased the diversity of its student body which improves research quality and promotes innovation. Policies promoting diversity benefit institutions. A 2022 study of 13,000 legal articles found that law reviews which actively sought diverse writers saw their volume citations increase by 23% over a five-year period. We learn more outside of echo chambers.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

As an American in Scotland, I saw how quickly we form and strengthen stereotypes. While my Glaswegian students worried that their accents would make them appear less educated to their university peers, one student argued that it was better than having an American accent. Her classmate quickly disagreed: “Americans don’t sound smart, but they sound rich. Catherine sounds like a movie star.”

The United States is certainly a popular culture giant, but it is also a global leader in higher education. Yet with falling enrollments and skyrocketing prices, a 2023 *Wall Street Journal* poll found that most Americans are no longer convinced of the value of a college degree. The recent Supreme Court ruling against affirmative action will continue the downwards trajectory of American universities. Removing affirmative action will not increase the caliber of students, it will only decrease diversity, thus harming university outcomes.

In August, I returned to a less equitable America than the one I left last year. I now teach at a charter school in Boston. My students are primarily low-income students of color. In the words of former first lady Michelle Obama, these students will have to “sweat a little more to climb the same ladders” as their more privileged peers. Their sweat will push our nation forward.

It is a tragedy that we ask this of them.

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Exploring Glencoe, Scotland

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**BIOGRAPHY**

Catherine Devlin was the 2022-2023 Fulbright Postgraduate Grantee at the University of Glasgow. Before completing her Fulbright, she worked as the lead researcher and associate producer of the 2020 NBC documentary *Sky Blossom*. She teaches sixth grade history at a Boston charter school. She can be reached at [catherine.devlin@fulbrightmail.org](mailto:catherine.devlin@fulbrightmail.org)

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# ARTICLES

# AUSTRALIA'S FULBRIGHT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: SUPPORTING ALUMNI TO GENERATE SYSTEMS CHANGE

IAIN BUTTERWORTH, ANGELA HEISE, AND JON ADAMS

## ABSTRACT

Fulbright alumni often return home with visions of leading personal, institutional, and societal change. However, they often face challenges in implementing social entrepreneurship. This paper introduces the Australian Fulbright Leadership Development Program, emphasizing the transformative learning styles that are needed to empower scholars as reflective, tactical, and tenacious lifelong learners and change agents. The program's foundation in peer learning, goal-setting, and social support is outlined, along with participant outcomes and evaluation findings.

**Keywords:** leadership • entrepreneurship • adult learning • peer support



## INTRODUCTION: FULBRIGHT IS ABOUT LEADERSHIP

The Fulbright Program is dedicated to fostering “mutual understanding between nations, advancing knowledge across communities, and improving lives worldwide”. The Fulbright Program provides scholars with a unique opportunity to enact Brookfield’s definition of adult learning, namely “to make sense of and act upon the personal, social, occupational and political environments in which they live”. The Australian Fulbright Alumni Association (AFAA) envisions building “a vibrant and diverse, connected community” in which alumni “interact with one another to share ideas and knowledge; inspire others and promote free thinking, debate and ideas; and challenge the status quo for a better Australia/world.” Fulbright alumni frequently describe their Fulbright experience as transformative. The program offers scholars a rare chance to gain cross-cultural, political, and historical insights relevant to their field, providing a deeper context for their personal and professional vision.

Like Joseph Campbell's heroes, who return to the 'ordinary world' with a vision for catalyzing systemic change, many alumni often find themselves in disempowering environments back home. These settings lack the cultural readiness, organizational capacity, or necessary resources to embrace new ways of thinking and working, affecting their sense of empowerment and efforts as change agents.

To realize our vision at AFAA, we recognized the need to support alumni to act as purposeful catalysts for change. This involves building conceptual, organizational, and leadership skills that go beyond traditional line management to include securing political support, brokering intersectoral action, and mobilizing community participation. As noted by Prof John Catford, People need to "analyze, envision, communicate, empathize, enthuse, advocate, mediate, enable, and empower a wide range of disparate individuals and organizations." To sustain their tactical momentum as change agents, Fulbright alumni also require supportive environments to nurture and use their leadership potential. Alumni associations can play a crucial role in providing not only social support but also opportunities for peer learning, collaboration, mentoring, networking, and leadership development.

*To realize our vision at AFAA, we recognized the need to support alumni to act as purposeful catalysts for change. This involves building conceptual, organizational, and leadership skills that go beyond traditional line management to include securing political support, brokering intersectoral action, and mobilizing community participation.*

### AUSTRALIA'S INAUGURAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In June 2022, the inaugural Leadership Development Program brought together 33 Fulbright alumni in Australia's capital, Canberra. The program was organized by the Australian Fulbright Alumni Association (AFAA) in collaboration with Fulbright Australia (FA) and the School of Public Health, University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). This alumni enrichment program was designed to (i) enhance the impact of the Fulbright experience and strengthen alumni connections and collaborations; (ii) foster the exchange of ideas and challenge and inspire participants to perform at their highest level professionally; (iii) foster the growth of participants' social entrepreneurship efforts and leadership skills; and (iv) further develop the collaboration, partnership, and joint initiatives of AFAA and FA in the interests of Fulbright Alumni post-award experiences.

The program's design and delivery were overseen by AFAA Committee members Angela Heise (AH), professional leadership, emotional and cultural intelligence trainer and coach; Dr. Iain Butterworth (IB), Healthy Liveable Cities Consultant and AFAA President from 2015 to 2022; and Professor Jon Adams (JA), Distinguished Professor of Public Health at the School of Public Health, UTS. Each convenor has a rich history of facilitating adult learning across various settings and formats. AH and JA managed the participant

application process with FA. AH led adult learning methods and leadership tools, group goal setting, and workshop facilitation, while JA handled pre- and post-workshop production, participant engagement, and served as the MC. IB ensured effective communication, goal clarification, action planning, evaluation, and workshop facilitation by leading the production of the ‘group agreement’.

This event was funded by a Fulbright Enrichment Grant of USD\$34,500 (AUD \$50,500) from the US Embassy, with FA contributing AUD\$5,000. The School of Public Health at UTS also invested considerable cash and in-kind resources in providing administrative, logistical, and on-site support, valued at some AUD\$30,000. Event management was enhanced through the launch of AFAA’s Internship partnership with RMIT University. Brokered by Committee member Prof Aiden Warren, AFAA’s inaugural Intern managed social media and participant feedback for monitoring and evaluation purposes. This in-kind contribution was worth some AUD\$11,000. AFAA’s Committee members supported as presenters, table facilitators, logistics coordinators. Using typical consultants’ rates, our in-kind investment value was more than AUD\$100,000.

To align with Grant Proposal objectives, we targeted Fulbright alumni who had completed their awards within the past five years. To maximize participant diversity, we targeted all Fulbright award recipients, including postgraduate, postdoctoral, professional, industry, Indigenous, and Senior Scholars. We also included international alumni who had received their awards overseas and now lived in Australia. We appointed 36 applicants, ensuring equal representation of men and women (three successful applicants were unable to join due to COVID and other unforeseen circumstances). Applicants were asked to submit a covering letter and a two-page *résumé*. The letter addressed their leadership experience and skills, strengths, and challenges (personally, professionally, and/or academically), and their reasons for applying to the Program. Four members from FA and AFAA assessed and cross-checked the applications, using the themes that emerged to inform the program design.

The event spanned from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. The program adopted a multifaceted approach to leadership. It covered various crucial contexts, such as the post-pandemic age; encouraging individual and collective resilience; identifying and addressing technological challenges and opportunities; interpersonal engagement; and diversity and inclusivity. Crucially, the program addressed the leadership challenges that participants identified in their applications. These challenges encompassed personal life events, core skills and values, social and political events, and specific behavioral skills and issues.



The program included a special symposium with Indigenous alumni. A formal Saturday dinner featured a keynote speech by a FA Board member. Other speakers included FA's Program Manager, and AFAA's President. Three AFAA Committee members showcased AFAA's new Mentoring Program and encouraged registrations.

The program employed a wide variety of adult learning methods, including pre-course reflection, plenary presentations, brainstorming, personal reflections, and planning activities. It also involved working in pairs and small groups, values clarification, creative visualization, movement-based and metaphorical exercises, and world café sessions. Guest speakers and strategic planning were integrated into the learning modules, balancing enjoyment with purposeful contemplation. A core aspect of the program was adult peer education, through which participants used techniques shared by facilitators to make sense of their lifelong experiences. Through challenging and creative interactions, participants taught and learned from each other. At the start of the program, participants established a group charter to foster respectful group dynamics.

### **FOSTERING LEADERSHIP ACTION THROUGH PERSONAL PLANS**

The Leadership Development Program aimed to support participants to create individual goals for action, achievable through 'small wins.' It encouraged learners to commit to feasible goals aligned with their reasons for joining the program, with AFAA providing follow-up support. Throughout the program, participants explored how their personal goals related to emerging themes from the application process. They discussed leadership challenges based on their professional interests and geographical location.

Towards the program's end, participants created Personal Implementation Plans through personal reflection, discussions, and facilitator support. The plans included specific goals, reasons for pursuing them, enablers, potential barriers, implementable activities, stakeholders to engage, support mechanisms (like peer support and mentoring), and how to measure success. Participants completed their plans online during or shortly after the Leadership Program. This information was used to support participants and evaluate the program's impact.

Analysis revealed that around half of participants' goals focused on 'psychological empowerment', which is defined as "the connection between a sense of personal competence, a desire for, and a willingness to take action in the public domain." Approximately a quarter of the goals aimed to create organizational-level change, while the rest focused on leveraging changes in the wider social system.

Enablers for achieving these goals were identified across organizational support (40%), personal networks (30%), and the wider social system (30%). AFAA was recognized as a significant source of support through peer networks and the mentoring program. Identified barriers included personal challenges like self-criticism, imposter syndrome, and burnout, as well as lack of resources and organizational and systemic barriers like university policies and racism.

*“I believe there can be some explicit/implicit racism that can serve as barrier to me getting a mid-career level job. Most people would want me to start at an entry-level which I do not feel comfortable with.”*

Planned activities for achieving these goals covered personal, organizational, and broader systemic levels. Personal actions included writing strong job applications, refreshing essential evaluation frameworks, and meeting with networks. AFAA was seen as a vital organization for leveraging change, forming working groups and planning events.

Participants intended to rely on their own professional networks (around 60%) as primary support mechanisms. Approximately one fifth identified AFAA’s programs and networks as enabling. Other support mechanisms included formal training and collaboration. Measures for identifying success varied, including increased confidence in leadership; securing full-time positions; establishing research centers; and generating community engagement and discussions through events.

## **PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS**

Evaluation responses captured at the conclusion of the weekend were overwhelmingly positive, as illustrated by quotes from two participants:

*“It was a most enjoyable weekend that was ambitious in its scope and delivered on all of its promises. It was remarkable to see just how well diverse interests and goals were catered for.”*

*“I liked having a range of presenters, I love that they had all been a part of the Fulbright experience. I thought the size of the group really worked. To be honest, it’s one of the best and most enjoyable workshops I’ve ever participated in!”*

## **IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**

To support implementation, AFAA’s Intern personally contacted all participants two weeks after the event to discuss progress, address unforeseen challenges, and refine goals and strategies if necessary. These interviews revealed that most participants had taken goal-directed actions, such as applying for leadership roles, engaging in leadership activities with peers, applying training in their supervisory roles, and strengthening their personal leadership plans. When contacted four months later, participants identified that their actions had gained considerable traction. Two participants shared the following reflections:

*“The training and process of brainstorming and coming up with a workable process proved very helpful when I launched ‘Universities Enable’, a [national] disability steering group for higher education.”*

*“I’ve used [what] we learned to improve how I lead teams and people, but also as a training tool for those people I lead, who lead others. I’ve also built new networks across the Fulbright community.”*

## **EVIDENCE OF LASTING VALUE**

Participant reflections, shared after four months, demonstrated how the program had created lasting value. As noted by two participants,

*“[The leadership weekend] was a reminder that I’ve got a job to do, in helping to lead the organisations, I am part of to ... create the positive impact this world needs.”*

*“I am also delighted to find some like-minded Fulbrighters who have since joined efforts to promote a collaborative project that we are all passionate about. This gives me hope for the future, and the opportunity to develop a place-based network.”*

## **THE PROGRAM HAS STRENGTHENED THE AUSTRALIAN ALUMNI COMMUNITY**

The Leadership Program has brought immediate benefits to AFAA, aligning with our vision for refreshed governance. Several participants enrolled as mentors or mentees in AFAA’s mentoring program, leading to 12 confirmed mentorship relationships for 2023-24.

The program’s success attracted four alumni to join AFAA’s national committee, enabling long-standing committee members to step down. To enhance our online presence, a social media sub-committee was established. Notably, AFAA’s stronger profile led to two long-term members bequeathing funds to the association upon their passing in 2022. The Dudley Bequest will support future iterations of the leadership program. It also has allowed us to hire our first two Interns to coordinate AFAA’s Mentorship Program and social media.

AFAA is planning the second iteration of the leadership program for 2025, with an opportunity to engage previous participants as presenters. Our evaluation feedback will be used to strengthen the program.

## **FULBRIGHT ALUMNI DO WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD, SO, LET’S SUPPORT THEM.**

We are highly confident that alumni everywhere seek to leverage their Fulbright experience to influence changes in public policy, community norms and values, and the physical environment. In this section, we recommend some critical success factors that can enable you to resource, staff, execute, support, and assess an alumni leadership program.

We were extremely fortunate to secure funds through the US Embassy and Fulbright Australia. However, integral to this success was the strong partnership that we had built with FA, through which AFAA's unique vision and strengths became clear to both FA and the US Embassy. Over several years, we purposefully grew AFAA's partnership with FA to extend beyond superficial information exchange to embrace shared goal setting; aligning our activities; and sharing resources. AFAA/FA's joint funding submission demonstrated the value proposition of both our partnership and the proposed leadership program.

AFAA committee members' combined interdisciplinary expertise and experience offered further evidence of our capability to deliver intended outcomes. We are certain that alumni elsewhere possess similar expertise in adult learning and professional development.

Through the professional linkages provided by two of AFAA's national Committee members, AFAA secured critical backbone support through the UTS team and our inaugural RMIT University Intern. This backbone support ensured coherent project momentum by managing day-to-day functions, such as stakeholder engagement, communications, participant recruitment, on-the-ground logistics, and data collection and analysis. This support enabled AH, IB, JA and other Committee members to focus on delivering an effective, enjoyable learning experience and tangible participant outcomes.

We encourage you to engage your members to identify leaders in academic institutions, NFPs or commercial enterprises that have a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility and the resources to provide backbone support. These organizations might be able to provide a venue and have access to delegate accommodation. As in our Australian example, other National Fulbright administrations may be willing to engage, share in-kind resources, and/or link your Alumni association to agencies that can offer financial, social, or human resources.

The training itself, and our evaluation methodology, drew on the Community Capacity framework and contemporary approaches to documenting Collective Impact. Towards the conclusion of the program, participants considered the extent to which the program had enabled them to achieve the goals identified in their applications and during the program. Next, participants shared their stories of change: both shortly after the program, and several months later. We then could show the diversity of actions taken and outcomes at the personal, organizational and community levels of analysis. These compelling narratives not only validated our approach, but also demonstrated to our members that AFAA is delivering towards our Vision.

Having an AFAA Mentoring program in place offered participants an immediate opportunity to engage in a structured, formal professional development program to support them to implement their leadership goals. Consequently, the intake for the second year of the mentoring program was double that of the first.

Finally, it was very helpful, both to participants and AFAA itself, for us to offer participants a range of immediate leadership activities within AFAA. These included joining working groups, portfolio implementation, initiating or supporting state-level events, holding AFAA events and joining the national Committee itself.

We are confident that your Alumni association will have most if not all of these building blocks in place. We look forward to supporting your efforts.

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Identifying the course goal

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#### **BIOGRAPHY**

Iain Butterworth was trained in community psychology and has extensive experience working within and across government, higher education, and the community sectors. His interests include place, health, and liveability; adult learning; university-community engagement; and community capacity building and evaluation. As a Fulbright Scholar to the University of California in 2003-4 and again in 2017, Iain built his expertise in the WHO Healthy Cities program, and the UN Global Compact – Cities Programme. In 2011 Iain helped to establish the Victorian Liveability policy research program, now led by RMIT University's Healthy Liveable Cities Group, where he is an honorary Associate Professor. He can be reached at [iain@iainbutterworth.com](mailto:iain@iainbutterworth.com)

Angela Heisse was a Fulbright Scholar to UC Berkeley in 1986-7. She has worked to strengthen leaders in the areas of emotional, social, and cultural intelligence competencies and teaches people in organizations of all sizes how to balance task effectiveness with building trust and rapport, combine results-orientation with empathy, and distinguish between management and leadership. Drawing on her broad work experience, which she gathered on five continents, Angela combines her vast practical coaching and training knowledge with her skill of living in many different countries and her extensive studies of human consciousness and behaviour. She can be reached at [angela@angelaheisse.com](mailto:angela@angelaheisse.com)

Jon Adams is a Distinguished Professor and has over 25 years' of experience researching, teaching, mentoring and providing academic leadership in universities in public health, health services research and health social science with a focus upon self-care, primary health care, prevention, wellbeing and health maintenance. In 2019, Jon was the first ever Fulbright Australia Senior Scholarship awarded exclusively on Integrative health care (exploring care for vulnerable/priority populations). He attended Boston University, in the Department of Family Medicine. He can be reached at [Jon.Adams@uts.edu.au](mailto:Jon.Adams@uts.edu.au)

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# PIGGING OUT IN FRANCE

ELIZABETH ADKINS-REGAN

## ABSTRACT

I spent a year in France with the help of a Fulbright Award. As a life scientist and animal researcher, my primary aim was to carry out a collaborative experiment with my host on a topic of mutual interest, sexual development in animals, specifically pigs. That aim was fulfilled, leading to a long-term shift in my research. The value of the experience went well beyond that, with an enduring impact both professionally and personally.

**Keywords:** France • behavioral neuroendocrinology • sexual partner preference • pigs



When I applied for a Fulbright Award in 1986, I was an associate professor at Cornell University, where I had been on the faculty since 1975. My field was behavioral and evolutionary neuroscience, also known as behavioral neurobiology. This branch of science seeks to discover and understand the neural and hormonal systems and processes responsible for naturally-occurring adaptive behavior that has been shaped by selection in the course of evolution. My own research investigated hormonal effects on the brain responsible for reproductive behavior in animals, the subfield known as behavioral neuroendocrinology. I was particularly interested in the role of hormones like estrogens and androgens in the development of sex differences in behavior. Most of my work had focused on birds and on behavior like singing, courtship displays, and mating.

What drew me to France scientifically was the possibility of extending my research to sexual partner preference and to mammals. In this context “sexual partner preference” refers to the pronounced and widespread sex difference across animals in preferred sex of mating partners, with females usually but not always preferring male partners and males tending to prefer female partners. (The analog in humans is often referred to as sexual or gender orientation.) Here the interesting sex difference is defined not by the behavior itself (the motor acts), but by the social preference for the sex of partner for engaging in the behavior, a potentially more complex phenomenon. Remarkably little was known about how this sex difference comes about during development, and it was not at all obvious that hormones would necessarily be involved.

As I combed through the literature on the subject, I discovered some exciting recent work with pigs as the subjects that strongly pointed to a major role for hormones produced by the testes of males during the first months after birth in the development of their adult attraction to females and interest



in mating with females. The work was coming from both France and the US. An opportunity to collaborate with a French researcher better matched my strong wish to spend some time living in another country, to learn how that country worked, and to see the US from another perspective.

With the French researcher on board to be my host and collaborator, I was thrilled when my Fulbright application succeeded. Like many scientists of my generation, I did not already know a spoken non-English language. I had taken Latin in high school and German (reading and translation only) as a college freshman. To prepare for my Fulbright year, I took a year of French at my university along with the freshmen. The summer before going, I hired a tutor to further work on conversation. I did not want to be a visiting scientist who made no effort to communicate in anything other than English. I also suspected, correctly as it turned out, that to do the research, I would need to be understanding the French of the non-professional staff who raised and cared for the animals. Furthermore, I was determined to get to know France and French life through the French language. Scientific culture is international and rather similar everywhere, and so is academic culture to some extent. I wanted to be able to interact with non-academic and non-professional people as well as scientists.

### OFF TO FRANCE

I arrived in France just as summer was transitioning to fall. Right away I was invited to a gathering for Fulbright scholars at the American Embassy in Paris. It was quite eye opening to see the show of force surrounding the embassy building, with dozens of heavily armed police due to recent terrorist activity in the city. Also eye opening was that I could write checks on my Fulbright stipend local checking account from anywhere in France without showing any identification. I later learned from French friends that what kept the system honest was that penalties for bouncing a check were much more severe than in the US.

My research took place at the branch of the Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA, National Institute of Agricultural Research) in Nouzilly, just outside of Tours. France has long been a European agricultural powerhouse, and the Nouzilly INRA was an impressive facility. There were multiple research groups studying behavior and endocrinology in a variety of domestic farm animals, including most of the French researchers whose work had long been familiar to me from reading the literature. My scientific host and collaborator, Prof. Jean-Pierre Signoret, was one of the founders of the study of hormones and behavior in farm animals and a renowned expert on the behavior and endocrinology of the domestic pig. I was free to originate and plan an experiment to achieve my goal of better understanding the development of sexual partner preference in pigs. Signoret provided all the necessary advice and resources and assisted with surgery and behavioral testing. He

was also unfailingly gracious and had a wonderful sense of humor of the kind that is essential when working with animals as lively, intelligent and large as pigs. I learned a great deal from him about the domestic pig, the different breeds, and the wild boar, the ancestral form that is also farmed in France.

The behavioral testing took place in a giant T-shaped maze that allowed each subject to choose to spend time with either an adult male or an adult female. Together we found that males develop to be attracted to females because they are exposed to high levels of estrogens produced by their testes during the first months after birth. Males in the group where testes were removed shortly after birth (that were castrated, a standard practice in pig farming), grew up to be attracted to males instead of females. On the other hand, if males were in a group given implants of estradiol, an estrogen, as replacement for the missing testes, they showed the normal (for pigs) preference for females. At this point perhaps you are scratching your head and thinking, wait a minute—aren't estrogens female hormones? In the world of popular science, they are, but nature has little regard for such categories. In every vertebrate animal that has been studied, both sexes produce both estrogens and androgens, any sex differences lie in relative amounts, and in some species, like pigs and horses, males' testes produce as much of the estrogens as female ovaries do. In the pigs, the testes are major estrogen producers during the period after birth.

Pigs develop more slowly than lab animals like rats or mice, so it was a challenge to fit the experiment into the allotted 10 months. It was completed just in time and fortunately it was a success. To a scientist, that means there was a clear answer to the question and clear support for the hypothesis. In this case, the hypothesis was that in pigs, testicular estrogens in early life are responsible for the sexual partner preference of adult males.

My time at INRA and in France was not without its challenges. As a somewhat shy science geek who began learning French at the age of 40, there were some stressful moments, especially at the beginning. In addition, it was one of the coldest French winters for some years, and the pig barns were unheated. My first purchase was a warm sweater to wear under my work uniform. Even then, I was cold much of the time.

### IMPACT ON MY SCIENTIFIC CAREER

My Fulbright-supported research experience had a lasting influence on my subsequent scientific career and research directions along with those of a number of my graduate students and post-doctoral collaborators. After I returned, I had the knowledge to co-supervise a dissertation that determined which sense of smell was responsible for female pigs' attraction to the odor of male pigs, a phenomenon I had witnessed first-hand while at INRA. With my interest in sexual partner preference reinforced by the experiment with the pigs, I initiated a program of research on the sexual partner preference of

*My Fulbright-supported research experience had a lasting influence on my subsequent scientific career and research directions along with those of a number of my graduate students and post-doctoral collaborators.*

a bird, the zebra finch, that forms long-term pair bonds, an arrangement typical of a large percentage of bird species. Animals that form pair bonds have a close and continuous social relationship with another individual that goes beyond simply mating, and often raise the young together (co-parent). Nothing was known about whether hormones have anything to do with this kind of sexual partner preference—with why male birds (usually) pair with females and females pair with males. I was determined to find out. Later on, the research evolved to focus on the pair relationship itself (the bonding process), and whether hormones were involved in the strong motivation to form a pair relationship. Because of these new research directions, I eagerly agreed to participate in a multi-college, multi-disciplinary three-year project (2004-2007) involving both social scientists (human researchers) and biologists (animal researchers) titled “The Biology of Families: From Ecology to Endocrinology” (Evolving Family Project, Institute for the Social Sciences, Cornell University).

### **IMPACT ON MY ACADEMIC CAREER MORE BROADLY**

The Fulbright year also influenced my academic life beyond my own research interests and connections. I came back to my university with new understanding of the experiences of foreign visitors and students. I came back with a new openness to moving beyond my comfort zone and giving back to institutions and structures from which I had benefitted. When, a few years later, I was asked to become an associate dean for my college, I accepted readily. (It didn’t hurt that I was in France on a vacation when the request came.) I ended up serving in that administrative capacity twice, in 1991-1996 and 2009-2012. Both times my role included working on behalf of the foreign language teaching programs, for which I had even greater respect than before because of my own experience learning French and then using it in the workplace.

### **IMPACT ON MY LIFE**

During the Fulbright year my French language preparation paid off richly in ways beyond the research setting. My husband and I (he had come with me) quickly became close and lasting friends with the couple who spoke no English from whom we rented a weekly-rate vacation home while searching for more long-term accommodation. They introduced us to all their friends and family and, together with social time with my colleagues at INRA, we came to have a very active social life. Through these friendships and social activities, I learned an enormous amount about the region of France where we were, its history, government, politics, and school system. I learned how the French version of a government-funded health care system worked. We were in one of the most famous regions of France for food, and there were many opportunities, both in restaurants and in people’s homes, to learn a

great deal about what makes the cuisine and the restaurants so special and so treasured. I “pigged out” many times and came back a few pounds heavier but very happy to have gained so much insight. There were also opportunities to talk to local farmer-vintners producing artisanal wine and learn about its production. Throughout the year I met and interacted with a broad range of people ranging across the political and social spectrum. Little of this could have happened if I had not had the good sense to learn French before my Fulbright year.

I came back to the US with a more advanced knowledge of the French language than when I set out, and that too has had a lasting impact. Since then I have been able to read books in French, which opened up a whole new world of literature, not only literature from France but also Francophone literature from Canada and the Caribbean.

## CONCLUSION

My Fulbright year allowed me to achieve my goal of collaborative science that had a long-term influence on my research career. It was also an exceptional opportunity to experience another country first-hand for an extended period, to come away with a greater understanding and appreciation of its place in the world and world affairs, and to acquire lasting language skills.

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The author (in the required work uniform) recording behavior in the pig barn at INRA in Nouzilly, France.

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#### **BIOGRAPHY**

Elizabeth Adkins-Regan is professor emeritus of psychology and of neurobiology and behavior, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. She received an American Fulbright Research Scholar Award (1986-1987) to France. She is the recipient of a Daniel Lehrman Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for Behavioral Neuroendocrinology (SBN), the Donald S. Farner Medal from the International Symposium on Avian Endocrinology, an Exemplar Award from the Indiana University Center for the Integrative Study of Animal Behavior, and a Howard Bern Award from the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology. Adkins-Regan is a Fellow of AAAS, the Association for Psychological Science, and the Animal Behavior Society, and has served as President of SBN. She can be contacted at [er12@cornell.edu](mailto:er12@cornell.edu)

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# A FULBRIGHT STAY AT MICHIGAN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY: A LIFE-CHANGING AND CAREER-ALTERING EXPERIENCE

ADELE DZIKWI GARKIDA

## ABSTRACT

My first trip to the United States was the result of a Fulbright Scholarship Award to Michigan Technological University in 2005-06. It was a life-transforming experience that boosted my teaching, research, leadership capacities, and social skills. The award gave me the opportunity to meet and work with professionals in my field and enabled me to complete my PhD studies. As a result, my Fulbright experience positioned me for career growth, mentorship, and leadership.

**Keywords:** glass recycling • mentorship • university • community



## INTRODUCTION

In 2005 I received a Fulbright scholarship which at the time was called a Junior Staff Development Program Award (JSD) and is now called a Fulbright Foreign Student Fellowship (FFSP). My Fulbright award gave me the opportunity to go to America for the very first time and I excitedly looked forward to the day of my arrival. I remember sitting on the plane and chatting with the man next to me. When he asked why I was going to the United States, I told him that I had received a Fulbright Award to continue my studies. He physically turned in his chair and replied “*won, what a prestigious scholarship! You must be very good at what you do!*” This further confirmed to me how very prestigious the program is and how very privileged I was for the opportunity.

Upon arrival at Houghton Airport in Michigan, a middle-aged man walked up to me, greeted me, and asked, “*Are you a Fulbrighter?*” I responded “yes” and then wondered how he guessed right. I soon realised that I was wearing my Fulbright shirt which was given to us at the gateway orientation in New York. Then he introduced himself as a Fulbright alumnus and by coincidence he was a faculty member at Michigan Technological University (MTU), my host university. From then on, he and his wife, who was Dean of Students at the same institution, became my guardians. They are Dr. Willie Melton and Dr. Gloria Melton.

At MTU, I studied at the Institute of Materials Processing (IMP) with Professor Jiang Yang Hwang who was the Director of the Institute. I also worked with other Professionals that included Xioadi Huang, Alisson Hein, Shi S as well as some PhD students including Bowen Li and Jia Jia. My research area, which is glass recycling technology drew a lot of attention even in the US at that time.

My trip to the US and the research undertaken formed the fundamental part of my PhD research thesis. The research facilities, books, and journals assisted me in undertaking quality laboratory experiments and quality thesis write-ups. I was awarded a PhD in Glass Technology in March 2007 and became the first to acquire a doctoral degree in glass technology at a Nigerian university.

### **HOST COMMUNITY**

In 2005 when I set out for the Fulbright program, I was not really sure of what to expect from the people I was going to meet and where I was going to live for the nine months. I stayed at the Memorial Union Building (MUB) guest room for a week while I looked for accommodation. Eventually, I found a house off campus in Dodgeville and I shared a room with an American Student at Michigan Tech named Rachel Sommer. Rachel and my neighbours (Tammy, Bonnie, Dell, Mom Helen) were amazing and welcomed me to the neighbourhood on my first day of arrival with gifts. I learnt a lot about the American culture and food and I also shared my Nigerian culture and food with them. For instance, I told Helen Tomasic, the oldest of my neighbours at 83 years of age, that I would not be able to call her by her name as it is in American culture but instead, I could call her 'mom Helen'. I was happy that she accepted and she, in turn always called me 'my daughter Adele' until she passed away over a year ago at 99 years of age.

I also made a lot of friends on campus among faculty members and students. After about 2 weeks I was able to meet other Fulbright fellows from other countries. One event that is still fresh in my memory was the Parade of Nations, where MTU showcased students representing their various countries. We all marched through the town and so many people from the entire city came out and watched us. It was so thrilling to experience this.

### **RESEARCH IN THE US**

My research was laboratory-based at IMP and I began by collecting waste glass from glass stores in the Houghton area and on campus. The faculty members and staff I met were very helpful. I also had access to an excellent library as well as high-technology tools and equipment that facilitated my



research. Being at MTU was also very timely as we had been working on upgrading our program of Glass Technology to Glass and Silicate Technology at my home institution. Working in the IMP laboratories enabled me to acquire skills that were later going to be very useful on my return to Nigeria.

The problem that my research tried to solve was that of recycling glass (light bulbs, bottles, flasks) that are routinely discarded and lies in our streets and in refuse dumps. Most people in my home country of Nigeria were not aware that glass is a recyclable material. My research was designed to find ways of converting glass waste to usable forms and therefore remove it from the environment. My research focussed on the most commonly found glass waste. They are drinking glass (lead crystal glass), fluorescent light tubes (soda-lime-silica glass), laboratory glassware (borosilicate glass), and window glass (soda-lime-silica glass). The outcome of my research has been presented at national and international conferences and published in some academic journals. The implications of the results obtained from this research have also formed the basis for my subsequent research endeavours.

### **RETURN TO NIGERIA AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Upon my return to Nigeria, I felt like I could take on the whole world. I had so many new things I had learned and so many ideas for the application of my skills. But first, I was faced with completing my seminar presentations and taking my oral examination to defend my thesis. I was able to successfully get through this and therefore move up the ladder to becoming a senior lecturer in 2007. Because I was the first to receive a PhD in Glass Technology, my responsibilities of mentoring and guiding younger academics and other full-time postgraduate students on research methodologies were greatly increased. It was also necessary for me to publish my research in reputable journals and to increase my presence at local and international conferences in order to share the outcome of my research with colleagues from around the world.

I also dedicated myself to improving the quality of teaching, research, and overall upgrading of our university program of studies. This led to a rigorous program review and ultimately grew into a full department now called the Department of Glass and Silicate Technology. From the demonstration of all the lessons I had learned during my Fulbright stay at MTU, I was appointed the founding Head of the Department. This appointment gave me the opportunity to influence decisions on what is best for the development of the Department. In its early days, the Department was supported financially by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TET Fund). This allowed the university to build a new structure for us. My experiences at IMP at MTU were instrumental in the design of the new building.

My continuous hard work and dedication enabled me to rise to the rank of full professor in 2014. Thus, I became the first individual in the department to rise to this rank. I am currently working with some younger academics in collaboration with some Fulbrighters in building more robust Eco-friendly Glass Recycling Technologies with the ultimate vision of establishing a center of excellence.

### IMPACT ON FACULTY AND MENTORSHIP

Becoming a senior academic comes with a lot of responsibilities. I was appointed postgraduate coordinator and faculty seminar coordinator. Here I employed the skills and style of discharging these duties from my Fulbright experience. This helped to improve learning and research conducted by postgraduate students. It also increased their participation at seminars with faculty, improved their engagement in collaborative learning, and allowed them to finish their studies in record time.

I also took on the responsibility of becoming an advisor to several postgraduate students at the MSc and PhD levels, particularly for those who were interested in working on recycling glass. I have worked with my students on many new projects including research on glass paints, glass tiles, glass-concrete, glass-reinforced rub-concrete, and glass-reinforced particle board. I have graduated 11 PhD's and 20 MSc/MA's.

I have also provided mentorship for younger academics on how to employ best practices in handling their lectures and how to write good academic papers for presentation at international conferences and eventual publication in reputable journals.

Over the years I have mentored numerous potential applicants for the Fulbright Scholarship for Undergraduate Students, Foreign Language Teaching Assistantships (FLTA), Fulbright Foreign Student Program, Fulbright Visiting Scholar Program scholarships as well as awards for the Study of the U.S. Institutes for Scholars (SUSIs) program. Eighteen of my mentees have been successful in their applications.

### ENGAGING WITH FULBRIGHT ALUMNI IN NIGERIA

The alumni of the Fulbright program in Nigeria in the year 2000 organized themselves as the Fulbright Alumni Association of Nigeria (FAAN). I joined FAAN in 2006 on my return to Nigeria and since then I have actively participated in its activities. FAAN has accomplished many impactful projects over the years with support from the U.S. Fulbright Mission. FAAN has carried out life-changing community service activities and has inspired, trained, and mentored over 2000 youths through its community outreach efforts.

*I am currently working with some younger academics in collaboration with some Fulbrighters in building more robust Eco-friendly Glass Recycling Technologies with the ultimate vision of establishing a center of excellence.*

Over the years I have been engaged in building the Nigerian Fulbright community. I have been engaged with FAAN activities first as a very active member who rose to coordinating status at the National level. For the past ten years, I have played the role of Assistant Secretary, Secretary, and the 6th President (the first female President). These positions have given me the privilege to lead the community of Fulbrighters of 300 very active members. We organize and carry out some impactful projects on the Nigerian community, contribute to the development of Nigeria and its people as well promote cultural values between the peoples of Nigeria and the United States.

I took over the leadership of FAAN in May 2019 as the President and it spanned over 4 years of 2 terms. During this time, there were many problems in the university system regarding substance abuse and sexual harassment. We embarked on research to establish the extent of the situation and then scheduled a conference where we could further discuss the issues. This was to be held in April 2020 and it was to be hosted by Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State. Just as we reached advanced level preparation for the conference, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and we had to put the conference on hold. We resorted to virtual activities during the lockdown. This process enabled us to continue our conversations on substance abuse and sexual harassment and solicit experts in the field to speak with us on the major issues. We also held other webinars to create awareness about Covid 19 and provide insight on the coronavirus. Right after the lockdown restrictions were reduced, we held sensitization talks in high schools in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria and donated face masks and hand sanitizers to them.

In March 2021, we celebrated the Fulbright program's 75th anniversary at Bowen University. This program was held in hybrid mode; both physical and virtual. It was attended by the ambassador to Nigeria Mary Berth Leonard, Cultural Affairs Officer Public Affairs Section, US Embassy Abuja, and several other US mission staff. In attendance was also Prof. Juliu Okojie former Executive Secretary to National Universities Commission and Fulbright alumnus. It was a grand celebration with a great deal of support from the US mission in Nigeria as well as our host and former Fulbrighter Joshua Ogunwole, the Vice Chancellor of Bowen University. We planted trees at the Bowen University premises and gave awards to 75 deserving members of FAAN in recognition of their impact on FAAN and society. One of the main highlights of the conference was the statement of FAAN on substance abuse and sexual harassment in Nigerian tertiary institutions. The United States Consulate in Lagos also commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Fulbright program at the Consul General's residence, I assisted in coordinating the attendance of Fulbrighters from Northern Nigeria.

Because of Nigeria's rising level of national insecurity in 2021, we saw the need to organize a conference in April 2022. We brainstormed to provide some solutions under the theme "Interrogating Equity, Inclusion, and Justice as Panacea to Nigeria's National Security". The conference was hosted by the

University of Uyo. Another important issue that arose was the 8-month strike of university academic staff in pursuance of improved working conditions in public universities. While this was not immediately successful, it did provoke FAAN (95% of its membership are university lecturers) to come together to try to find another way around solving this problem. This culminated in our 2023 conference with the theme ‘Improving the Quality of Higher Education: Stakeholders Engagement’. At this conference, all stakeholders joined in the discussion. FAAN would follow up on the position of this conference to relevant policymakers to ensure its adoption and implementation.

### NETWORKING

The links and networks created during my Fulbright year have not only been maintained but they have also expanded to other professionals that I have met through attending conferences. I have also made and maintained links with US Fulbright Scholars to Nigeria. These networks help us to continue to connect and inspire one another as we pull our energies together to face new challenges which I see as new opportunities.

### NOTES

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Host university international students at Parade of Nations

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**BIOGRAPHY**

Adele Dzikwi Garkida holds a PhD in Industrial Design (Glass Technology) from Ahmadu Bello University in 2007. Adele is the first to acquire a PhD in Glass Technology from a Nigerian University. She was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship to attend the Michigan Technological University from 2005 – 2006. She is a winner of the US Embassy Small Grant Award for youth empowerment. She is a member of several professional organizations. She is involved in teaching at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels and has graduated several undergraduate, MSc, and PhD students. She is the Pioneer Head of the Department of Glass and Silicate Technology, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Adele Garkida is a Professor of Glass Recycling and Sintering Technology and the 6th President of the Fulbright Alumni Association of Nigeria. She can be reached at [adelezik@yahoo.com](mailto:adelezik@yahoo.com)

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# THE INTERSECTION OF DIFFERENT WORLDS: A TURKISH FULBRIGHTER'S EXPERIENCES IN THE UNITED STATES

ERCAN KARAKOÇ

## ABSTRACT

I was a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2010-11. During my visiting period, I taught modern Turkish history while introducing Turkish culture and controversial issues in my country to the Chatham community. These experiences allowed me to grow as an academic and give back to the students and faculty of my host institution.

**Keywords:** year of Turkey • Chatham University • internationalization • tolerance



## BACKGROUND

Fulbright grants represent some of the most prestigious scholarship and academic support programs in the world. Those who earn the Fulbright awards undoubtedly improve themselves academically and enjoy tremendous benefits. I worked as a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2010-11. In this essay, I discuss the invaluable contributions of the Fulbright program to my personal development.

I earned my BA degree from the History Department of Boğaziçi University (Istanbul) in 1998. Subsequently, I completed my MA studies in the Department of National Security at Gebze Institute of Technology (Kocaeli) in 2001. During my internship in 2002 at the Assembly of Turkish-American Associations, a prominent Turkish lobby in the US, I met assembly members in Washington DC who had come to America through Fulbright programs. Additionally, I came across advertisements promoting Fulbright grants on our university's bulletin boards. After I obtained my PhD degree in history from Marmara University (Istanbul) in 2008 while I was concurrently working as a research assistant at Gebze Institute of Technology, I expressed my intention to apply for a Fulbright Postdoctoral Fellowship to our dean. Fortunately, he encouraged me to pursue it, citing the example of another Fulbright grantee at our university. However, I learned that applying for the postdoctoral grant would take more time. Ms. Ülkü, a staff member at the Istanbul Fulbright office, recommended that I apply for the Scholar-in-Residence Program. Accordingly, I prepared the necessary documents, including a prospective syllabus, and was informed that I had received the fellowship. While I had prior experience traveling abroad, including visits to

the Balkan countries and two trips to the United States, this time, I would be staying in a foreign country for an extended period with teaching and academic and social responsibilities. I anticipated numerous challenges but recognized that I needed to push beyond my boundaries to explore a new world and engage with new people and cultures.

### **FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE 2010-2011**

I worked at Chatham University in Pittsburgh as part of the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence program in the 2010-2011 academic year. The University was formerly a women's college. Later, it was turned into a small institution where both undergraduate and graduate education programs were offered. Pittsburgh, one of the oldest cities in the US, used to be a center of the steel industry. Now it has become a cathedral of learning with higher education institutions, such as Carnegie Mellon, Pittsburgh, and Duquesne.

“Global Focus,” a program within the History and International Relations departments at Chatham centers on a country every year. This program declared the 2010-11 academic year as the “Year of Turkey.” I participated in numerous Global Focus events and took every opportunity to provide information about Turkish culture. The “Year of Turkey” events included seminars on Turkish history, a symposium on Turkish-Armenian relations, Turkish music performances and film screenings, a Republic Day celebration, and giving an honorary degree to the Turkish Ambassador to Washington, Namik Tan. There were also demonstrations of marbling art, ney (an end-blown flute made of reed) improvisation, calligraphy practices, and a whirling dervish ceremony. Turkish dishes, coffee, and baklava were served, giving the Chatham community opportunities to taste these delicacies. In addition, I was supposed to assist in the educational and social activities as a Turkish visiting scholar. Accordingly, I attended several undergraduate and graduate courses as a guest professor. The topics I touched upon included marriage in Turkish culture, the role of women in Turkey, Turkish food culture, and Turkish foreign policy.

Leading up to the opening convocation of the university, I realized that both faculty members and university staff did not know much about Turkey. Therefore, in my speech on the opening day, I underlined some basic information that Turkey has been a NATO ally of the US for more than half a century, is a parliamentary democracy and a secular republic. I also emphasized that Turkey's European Union accession negotiations were underway and that the country serves as a bridge between Eastern and Western civilizations. Significantly, the early 2000s marked Turkey's rise to prominence both globally and regionally. During this period, Turkey was elected as a temporary member of the UN Security Council. One of the deputy secretary generals



of NATO had become the Turkish ambassador. The general secretary of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was also a Turkish scholar. At a time when the “clash of civilizations” was a hot topic, Turkey demonstrated the best example of how Islam and democracy can work together.

### **THE IMPACT OF MY FULBRIGHT EXPERIENCE**

The Fulbright experience significantly advanced my academic development. Upon my return to Turkey, I attained the title of associate professor and received early tenure. Shortly thereafter, I was appointed as the head of my department. I also had the opportunity to lecture Turkish officers undergoing staff officer training at the War Academy Colleges. Additionally, I maintained contact with another Chatham University faculty member, Tompson Makahamadze, who was also a Fulbrighter. He had completed his PhD at the George Mason University Center for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. With Tompson’s assistance, Dr. Sandole, a professor at GMU, invited me to his institution as a visiting professor. My connection with Chatham continued. I arranged Dr. Jean Jacques Sene (director of the Global Focus Program), and his students’ meeting with the Turkish Ambassador, Ali Rıza Özcoşkun, during their trip to Gambia.

As a sociocultural impact, the Fulbright program has internationalized me. Being a Turkish Muslim, I worked in a distant place with a different dominant civilization, engaging in sincere communication with individuals from various backgrounds. We fostered a positive rapport with students and scholars from the Far East, the Indian subcontinent, and the African continent. An illustrative instance occurred in 2011 when Japan experienced an earthquake. In response, a charity campaign was initiated to aid the Japanese people, and I lent my support to this initiative. Similarly, upon my return to Istanbul, I hosted the president and accompanying delegation of the Assembly of Turkish-American Associations. We collectively visited the Yıldız Palace Museum, a residence of the sultans during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, on a separate occasion, a group of Chatham students came to Turkey, and we convened in Istanbul’s historical peninsula. In the subsequent years, we organized a seminar about Turkey for visiting Fulbright scholars to Turkey.

Secondly, during my Fulbright period, I came to appreciate the significance of tolerance and dialogue in fostering communication and interaction between societies. I encountered fellow Fulbrighters from diverse backgrounds, including Bulgaria, Norway, and Italy, and our engaging conversations and shared moments were truly enriching. In a particularly memorable instance, an American-Jewish Fulbrighter warmly hosted me, treating me to dishes specific to Mediterranean cuisine. In gratitude, I reciprocated with a music CD featuring compositions by Ottoman Jewish composers. Similarly, the head of my department and several other academics extended invitations for

special occasions. In return, I invited faculty members, university staff, and students to a Turkish restaurant in Pittsburgh, where we collectively savored the diverse flavors of Turkish cuisine. These experiences left a profound and positive impact on me.

Thirdly, I saw that our prejudices can be eliminated. Turks and Armenians were strongly prejudiced against each other, due to the controversial events experienced in the last years of the Ottoman Empire, especially in the First World War. I realized how sensitive it was to talk about tragic inter-communal events, and learned the importance of empathy. I developed a very cordial dialogue with Armenian-Americans I met at Chatham University. Indeed, I heard a Chatham student of Armenian descent wanted to protest against me on the opening day of the university. Yet, after having a sincere conversation in my office, she reported her contentment to the Global Focus Program director. I extended an invitation to the Calians, an Armenian-American couple, to a “Year of Turkey” event, which they graciously attended. Later, they hosted a birthday celebration for me at their residence, where I presented them with a music CD featuring the Ottoman Armenian composers. In fact, Armenians and Turks, share a common history and geography over millennia. Rather than focusing on the sad events of the last century, one should concentrate on the shared values of our past and hopes for the future. Peace and tranquility are in the common interests of both the peoples and neighboring states of Turkey and Armenia.

*Thanks to Fulbright, I saw that our prejudices can be eliminated.*

Finally, I would like to emphasize the role of representing both your country and the Fulbright program as a Fulbrighter. These hold significant importance because these occasions provide an opportunity to underscore the prestige of being a Fulbright scholar. For instance, I attended a dinner at the residence of Dr. Esther Barazzone, the university’s president, where I engaged in a fascinating historical conversation with one of the US ambassadors who had served in Bulgaria. Similarly, I had the chance to meet Namık Tan, the Turkish Ambassador to Washington at the time. He was conferred an honorary degree by Chatham University. It was a moment where I felt I represented my country. Indeed, as a Fulbrighter, I also represent the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES), my host university, my country, and my home institution. Through these, Fulbright programs not only contribute to the academic development of individuals but also contribute to a more peaceful world.

## NOTES

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Dr. Karakoç and Turkish Ambassador Namık Tan with a group of Chatham students during the honorary degree program

### BIOGRAPHY

Ercan Karakoç is a professor of modern history at Yildiz Technical University in Istanbul. He received the Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence Fellowship for Chatham University in Pittsburgh. He can be contacted at [ekarakoc@yildiz.edu.tr](mailto:ekarakoc@yildiz.edu.tr)

# DEVELOPING ENTREPRENEURIAL AND INTRAPRENEURIAL EDUCATION IN CAMBODIA

FRANK THEODORE KOE

## ABSTRACT

As a Senior Fulbright Specialist in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, my goal was to assist the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC) in developing an entrepreneurial program that would invigorate their existing STEM curriculum and programs while building an entrepreneurial ecosystem to support interest in entrepreneurial growth. The relevance of intrapreneurship is also highlighted to demonstrate how students interested in entrepreneurship can utilize entrepreneurial principles and practices within innovative businesses that will employ them.

**Keywords:** Cambodia • entrepreneurship education • intrapreneurship • economic development



## HISTORY AND THE GROWING SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Cambodia has had a difficult recent history particularly from 1975 to 1979 when Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge sought to impose a utopian form of rural Communism to create a classless social system. His brutal regime forcefully evacuated everybody from the cities and pursued a policy of genocide whereby more than two million Cambodians were killed.

Despite this tragedy and related trauma, there is evidence that the human spirit is a mighty force and Cambodia is very much on the rise. Currently, Cambodia is experiencing tremendous growth. One of reasons for this is entrepreneurship.

Cambodia, a country growing from the remnants of the Khmer empire that controlled much of Southeast Asia from the beginning of the eight century CE has developed quickly in the past 40 years. Much of this economic development has occurred in Phnom Penh, the economic, industrial, and cultural center of the country. Notwithstanding recent developments, Cambodia is largely rural (approximately 75%) and conservative in nature (about 95% of the population practice Buddhism). Even though Cambodia is often perceived to be a poor nation, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2022 was \$29.96 billion, which is about 0.01 percent of the world economy, and the GDP is expected to continue to rise. The Entrepreneurship Development Fund (EDF), The World Bank and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale

Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), among others, have played a significant role in spurring growth by helping Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMS) and start-ups that have and will continue to positively affect the future economic landscape of Cambodia.

When we think of entrepreneurship in the US, we often think of emboldened and resilient people who possess an active entrepreneurial mindset, and who are willing to take risks. Capital is available for entrepreneurs to try out their ideas, and if they fail to create a sustainable business, they have the opportunity to try again. Many US entrepreneurs believe that “Fail” stands for First Attempt in Learning. And what is learned from a business that did not work can transfer to another attempt or another opportunity. From the US television series Shark Tank to friends, family and online Crowdfunding sites, there appears to be an endless array of opportunities to obtain some amount of money to determine if one’s idea has potential. While this is not the case in Cambodia, where funding is not easily accessible, there is more in the equation to attaining financial support. Regardless of where people reside, potential entrepreneurs with the mindset focused on finding opportunity and creating value, can start new businesses. In Ethiopia, for example, tires are recycled that wash up on its shores into sandals and in Africa, mountains of urban waste are converted into Africa’s first waste to-energy-plant. Regardless of where people reside, potential entrepreneurs can greatly benefit from various forms of learning and assistance.

The entrepreneurial ecosystem includes identifying people with particular skills including making sure that existing markets are vibrant and functioning, surveying needs, understanding customers and culture, and connecting with supportive organizations and networks that provide personal encouragement to those who wish to pursue a new business idea. The challenge in helping a country, or city within a country, to entrepreneurially grow and flourish entails understanding the culture, history, and where they are in the present moment with respect to what it is they are looking to improve or change. It is unreasonable to impose one’s views onto another country or institution. Indeed, what works in one country may fail in another. Listening to understand, not just to respond is essential despite language barriers. And having a capacity to be patient is also critical. I vividly remember one instance where it took a few minutes to understand that a question I was asked was about ‘courses’ not ‘costs.’ We were mutually frustrated, but when we finally figured out what the right word was we had a ‘break through’ and a good laugh!

### **THE ASSIGNMENT AND LEARNING LANDSCAPE**

After determining a compatible Cambodian school match, I was fortunate to initially work with a few individuals at the Institute of Technology of Cambodia (ITC) in Phnom Penh. Those faculty and administrators were instrumental in helping me gain clarity with regard to the needs of the school in terms of entrepreneurship classes. Thanks to Zoom, we had many meetings

prior to leaving for Cambodia. Those Zoom sessions helped me develop an understanding of what ITC's needs were and what I could offer. Since I teach in an 18-credit intra-university minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation (ENTI) that I helped establish in the College of Engineering at Penn State, there were indications early on that I could help.

In Cambodia, the system of higher education consists of separate institutions. For example, in the US, several colleges can be part of one university situated oftentimes in one location. In Cambodia, colleges are geographically separate entities. ITC is the institution where a student goes to study engineering sciences and technology in a five-year undergraduate program. ITC also offers master and doctoral programs. In Cambodia if you choose to study something besides engineering and technology, you have to travel to another educational institution that specializes in that discipline.

As a Fulbrighter at ITC in May and June, 2023, I was able to join faculty, students, and the administration in evaluating their entrepreneurial program. The aim was to make entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship an integral part of their STEM education comprising 15 rigorous engineering degree programs and 7 technical degree programs. The hope too was to engage students in the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

### **NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PREPARATION**

To understand and evaluate the current entrepreneurial situation within ITC and its surrounding community, we conducted a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats or barriers that need to be overcome) to check the pulse of entrepreneurial education at the school and general interest in entrepreneurship. The results indicated that there was work to be done. In fact, the only entrepreneurship course offered was in students' final year, a time when they are anxiously looking for employment. However, there was one faculty member who sponsored a start-up contest where students could make business pitches and have feedback from judges. The overall assessment indicated a general interest in entrepreneurship, but one question remained: how can an entrepreneurship program fit into an already crowded curriculum?

Developing and institutionalizing new programs cannot happen without the full commitment and buy-in of senior administrators, department heads, and faculty. It is important to 'sell' the benefits of a vibrant entrepreneurship program that includes fostering innovation and discovery among students, bolstering the local economy and, in the case of intrapreneurship, helping existing companies understand how innovation happens within firms to keep them ahead of the competition.

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING**

It became evident early in my visit that linear thinking was the dominant way faculty thought and taught and was the method by which students progressed in their studies. This is fairly typical and understandable. In order for STEM students to succeed in their studies, a clear progression of thought must be followed. One must learn addition and subtraction before moving on to more complex equations. Linear thinking follows a systematic, step-by-step progression that leads to conclusions. A bridge will fail if the calculations are wrong.

However, entrepreneurial thinking has non-linear characteristics, which means making connections between unrelated concepts and ideas. Both ways of thinking are needed in order to advance an idea, especially a technical one. While these differences were underscored when I interviewed many faculty and department heads, attempting to modify the way one thinks is complicated and time-consuming. However, I was excited to see that some faculty were already experimenting with both linear and non-linear thinking by way of student projects to broaden the student's perspectives and increase possibilities. Why can't a structurally sound and functional bridge be also beautiful?

## **INTEGRATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INTRAPRENEURSHIP**

My work at ITC included teaching a short course on entrepreneurship to students and faculty, as well as working with administrators and a few faculty members who were already fully vested in establishing an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Additionally, I had the opportunity to meet with several company representatives who were part of ITC's University Industry Linkage Office (UIL) who shared their views about ITC graduates they have hired and ideas on establishing a more formal entrepreneurship program that could contribute to advancing their company's mission and goals.

During my Fulbright experience, we gained wide-spread support for a visible and integrated program in entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship. Several inroads were made that included bringing senior administrators on board to understand the value of a program in entrepreneurship. Additionally, the benefits of corporate outreach were explored. Several companies that we worked with during my Fulbright indicated a strong interest in supporting entrepreneurship and were willing, through the existing UIL organization, to understand how ITC students can innovate within their companies. While many companies in Cambodia remain quite pyramidal or hierarchical, there were enough UIL companies on board to explore how the concept of intrapreneurship can help them innovate. These interested companies plan to join a small faculty group to discuss the mechanics of how entrepreneurship can be incorporated not only into the curriculum, but carry over into the day-to-day life of their companies.

One thing I emphasized during my assignment is the importance of establishing a support system for students interested in exploring their entrepreneurial ideas beyond campus. This support system could include joining the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) that currently connects 180 countries, bringing in outside speakers as part of an Entrepreneur in Residence program, as well as creating an entrepreneurship club initiated and run by students. Engaging with local startups, entrepreneurs, and business leaders to foster connections between the university and the wider entrepreneurial community is essential. This engagement can deliver real-world insights and opportunities for students such as internships and help define how the entrepreneurial mindset works. It can also humanize entrepreneurship and allow students to understand that although entrepreneurship can be satisfying, it can also be equally frustrating. Lastly, a system for monitoring the progress and impact of the entrepreneurial program was also discussed.

### IMPACT AND REWARDS

Entrepreneurship is not an easy subject to teach or motivate students to embrace. Many people today feel that entrepreneurship cannot be taught and that a person is either born an entrepreneur or at some point in their life has an epiphany that fires up their emotions and carries them onto developing a new product, service, or system. Besides, considering that entrepreneurs in the US, on average, range from 41 and 43, it is not typical for young people to pursue entrepreneurship, especially with student debt that must be paid off.

*One of the greatest rewards was to learn how I could bring entrepreneurship education to ITC and help them see that learning about entrepreneurship can indeed help save a great deal of time and maximize the chances of converting an idea into an opportunity.*

From a personal perspective, one of the greatest rewards of my Fulbright was to learn how I could bring entrepreneurship education to ITC and help the faculty, students, and administrators see that learning about entrepreneurship can indeed help save time and maximize the chances of converting an idea into an opportunity. Learning about the people and culture before and during my ITC experience helped me a great deal. I was often modifying my thoughts and lectures as I acquired more knowledge about the realities of how entrepreneurship is viewed in Cambodia.

Despite having extensive experience in entrepreneurship teaching and years developing my own business, it was still a challenge to present my thoughts in an unfamiliar environment. Southeast Asia is like no other place I have visited. However, I greatly appreciated the level of acceptance I received from people—an acceptance that made me feel as though I had been in Cambodia for a long time. As time went on, our exchanges became more fluid and easier.



While ITC is making great strides in developing an engaging program in entrepreneurship, it will take persistence and time to build a program that starts on campus and supports entrepreneurs throughout their careers. Devising a solid program in entrepreneurship and its off-shoot, intrapreneurship, is an entrepreneurial project unto itself. Fortunately, before I departed, the administration designated a director for entrepreneurship to oversee much of what was identified during my assignment; I intend to continue to offer assistance when needed in the future.

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ITC students learning about entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship

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**BIOGRAPHY**

Frank Theodore Koe is professor of engineering entrepreneurship at The Pennsylvania State University where he teaches graduate and undergraduate courses on corporate innovation and entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial leadership, and intrapreneurship. His patented products have occupied shelves in Walmart, Dicks Sporting Goods and appeared on Amazon. His award winning text, *Fabric for the Designed Interior* published by Bloomsbury, is forthcoming as a third edition. Frank can be contacted at [ftk2@psu.edu](mailto:ftk2@psu.edu)

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# BRIDGING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND HEALTHCARE: A FULBRIGHT JOURNEY IN THREE CONTINENTS

POLAT GOKTAS

## ABSTRACT

From the vibrant cityscape of Ankara to the corridors of Harvard Medical School, and then to Dublin's historical allure, my Fulbright journey mapped Artificial Intelligence (AI)'s impact in healthcare across diverse landscapes. This worldwide exploration illuminated both the promise and the complex challenges that AI brings to the medical field. The Fulbright experience broadened my understanding of the possibilities and pitfalls at the intersection of AI and healthcare, strengthening my commitment to navigate these advancements responsibly.

**Keywords:** Harvard • artificial intelligence • biotechnology • cells • cultural exchange • healthcare



## A FULBRIGHT JOURNEY COMMENCES: UNRAVELING THE LAYERS OF CURIOSITY

My initial fascination with technology, driven by a deep curiosity about the world, became the foundation for my studies. Fostering my enthusiasm further, I extended my academic journey at Bilkent University, Ankara. There, I engaged in my MSc and PhD in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, expanding my comprehension into multidisciplinary studies. My participation in the international scientific community took a significant leap when I was nominated as a Young Scientist at the 66th Lindau Nobel Laureates Meeting in Lindau, Germany in 2016. This annual event brings together Nobel Laureates and promising young scientists from various disciplines to foster intellectual exchange. The 2016 meeting specifically focused on the fields of physics. Nobel Laureates presented lectures, and interdisciplinary panel discussions were held to engage in deep scientific dialogue. This invaluable experience served as a catalyst for my subsequent Fulbright chapter of my journey, providing me with unparalleled insights and networking opportunities that shaped my research endeavours.

## **MOVING FORWARD WITH THE FULBRIGHT EXPERIENCE: EXPLORING NEW IDEAS IN BOSTON**

The Fulbright Doctoral Research Fellowship, awarded in 2017-18, presented a unique chance to further my research at Harvard Medical School, one of the world's leading medical institutions. As a Fulbright fellow at the Wellman Center for Photomedicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, I engaged in a pioneering project that blended image acquisition, image processing, data analysis, and life sciences, under the supervision of Prof. Seok Hyun (Andy) Yun. In this context, our goal was to identify cellular information at the single-cell level for high-throughput, label-free classification and detection. The potential advantages of this research were profound: it could disrupt the diagnostic research of anemia and cancer cells, specifically for in-vitro studies (see notes).

In the laboratory, I collaborated with one postdoctoral fellow from the clinical side and another from the field of applied physics, to develop ideas for my PhD project. During my Fulbright program, our research findings have been showcased at several notable conferences. These included the National Radio Science Meeting in Boulder, hosted by the U.S. National Committee (USNC) for the International Union of Radio Science (URSI); the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) International Symposium on Antennas and the USNC-URSI Radio Science Meeting in Boston; the Sigma Xi Student Research Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina; and the Gordon Research Conference on Lasers in Micro, Nano, and Bio-systems in Waterville Valley, New Hampshire. My contributions included both oral and poster presentations, as well as participation in student paper competitions. The scholarly outputs from these events have been published in IEEE Xplore. This period of rigorous research culminated in receiving the 2017/18 IEEE Antennas and Propagation Society (IEEE AP-S) Doctoral Research Grant – related to my PhD project about how single biological cells scatter electromagnetic waves in realistic scenarios. This award, given to only a few individuals each year, showed the importance of our research contributions to the IEEE community.

During my Fulbright tenure in the US, I had the privilege of meeting leading researchers at conferences and workshops, fostering valuable collaborations. For instance, I participated in the 2018 Fulbright Global Health Innovation Seminar in Atlanta, Georgia, US. A visual representation of my attendance and engagement at this seminar can be seen in an accompanying figure captioned: “Polat, along with fellow Fulbright scholars, at the 2018 Fulbright Global Health Innovation Seminar held in Atlanta, Georgia.” The seminar focused on strategies to reduce inequality and enhance public health. These themes overlap with my research, which aims to identify cellular information at a single-cell level for high-throughput, label-free classification and detection. Notable figures at the seminar included Dr. Michael Eriksen, a renowned

expert in global health and tobacco control, and Dr. Richard Rothenberg, a prominent figure in infectious disease epidemiology. Interacting with leading scientists and fellow Fulbright researchers during this event greatly enriched my career development plan.

In addition to the professional aspects, the emphasis on international exchange by the Fulbright program has been pivotal in providing a global perspective. This experience has allowed me to identify both differences and similarities in research methodologies across various regions. For instance, researchers in Europe are making significant strides in the fields of cell biology and biophysics, employing state-of-the-art techniques similar to those used in the US (see notes). However, the rate of progress and the application of these advanced methodologies are often influenced by economic circumstances. The disparities underline the importance of a global effort to foster and support scientific research, regardless of the economic status of the country. Advancements in one part of the world can, and should, stimulate progress in others. This belief underscores the value of the Fulbright program that facilitates the exchange of ideas and encourages collaboration between researchers from diverse backgrounds and regions.

*Engaging with researchers from diverse backgrounds and cultures broadened my horizons and exposed me to a wide range of innovative ideas and approaches.*

Engaging with researchers from diverse backgrounds and cultures broadened my horizons and exposed me to a wide range of innovative ideas and approaches. These interactions stimulated my intellectual curiosity and pushed me to think beyond conventional boundaries. My networking journey began at workshops, seminars, and conferences where I interacted with researchers in fields related to my own. I reached out to these researchers to share my perspectives and potential ideas related to their areas of study, serving as an initial step toward possible collaboration. Upon identifying mutual interests, we initiated further dialogues to refine our collaborative objectives. Through continued discussions, we fine-tuned workflows and project scopes, thereby transforming casual academic encounters into productive partnerships. By engaging in dialogues and forming collaborations with leading scientists in healthcare, I acquired critical insights into state-of-the-art research methods and furthered my own research endeavors. During my Fulbright program, I developed a strong professional network through ongoing discussions with leading healthcare researchers. This network has been instrumental in offering consistent support, mentorship, and collaborative opportunities, enriching both my Fulbright experience and my career thereafter.

Indeed, the Fulbright experience has provided me with a deep appreciation of the importance of establishing a symbiotic relationship between research and real-life challenges. I have learned to see the immense value in bridging the gap between academic research and practical applications. To provide concrete examples, during my Fulbright tenure, I developed collaborative

pathways with Harvard and MIT. This led to the opportunity to receive funding from Enterprise Ireland and the European Union (EU) through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Co-Fund Scheme. This EU project has enabled me to broaden my research scope into developing AI algorithms that are specifically designed to solve real-world problems, particularly focusing on generative AI.

### **ENCOUNTERING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: DISCOVERING POTENTIAL AND PITFALLS IN HEALTHCARE**

During my Fulbright at Harvard, I developed a profound interest in the field of AI, particularly its potential impact on healthcare. The transformative potential of AI algorithms in healthcare is particularly compelling. These algorithms function by analyzing large datasets, such as medical records or imaging scans, to identify patterns and make predictions. For example, AI can assist in diagnosing illnesses earlier by scanning medical images for minute abnormalities that may be missed by the human eye. Similarly, they can aid in the development of personalized treatment plans by analyzing a patient's genetic dataset. As the technology matures, it holds promise to revolutionize patient care, making diagnostics and treatments more accurate, accessible and patient-centered healthcare system for the general population in the coming years. This intriguing capacity of AI has spurred my continued exploration in the field. To provide a concrete example of the transformative power of AI algorithms, please look at my research in developing advanced AI algorithms to enhance the stem cell manufacturing process (see notes).

The AI algorithms were designed to optimize the growth conditions in cell density and media environments, enhancing the yield and quality of the stem cells produced. This innovative approach could have a profound impact on regenerative medicine. For instance, improving the stem cell manufacturing process can lead to more effective treatments for a wide range of conditions such as Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injuries, and heart diseases (where stem cell therapies are showing promising results). In contrast to traditional methods, which often rely on fluorescent channel bio-markers and involve time-consuming image analysis, AI algorithms offer a more efficient approach. AI algorithms can analyze complex biological data from label-free images, streamlining the process and significantly reducing cellular analytics time. This has the potential to expedite diagnostics and other medical procedures by a substantial margin, including more precise diagnoses, personalized treatment plans, and improved patient outcomes. By eliminating the need for time-intensive steps in traditional bio-marker procedures, AI not only speeds up the process but also enhances its accuracy, making it highly impactful for current healthcare methodologies.

While the potential benefits of AI in healthcare are immense, it is essential to acknowledge the challenges associated with its integration into clinical practices. Questions regarding data security, algorithmic bias, preservation of human judgment, and accountability have emerged as significant areas of concern that require careful consideration. To ensure that AI in healthcare benefits all, addressing its constraints is crucial. One of the central points of my current research focuses on navigating the ethical dimensions of AI, particularly within the healthcare settings (see notes).

As natural language processing tech gets better, generative AI models like the generative pretrained transformer (GPT) series are emerging as powerful tools. However, a myriad of ethical considerations has emerged. How can we ensure that sensitive patient data used in AI healthcare systems is adequately protected? How do we eliminate biases in AI systems to prevent discrepancies in patient care and treatment? As AI becomes more prevalent, how do we maintain human involvement and judgment in patient care? Who bears the responsibility when AI-induced errors occur in medical settings? And most importantly, how do we construct an ethical and regulatory framework to manage AI in healthcare? These considerations must be addressed to ensure the responsible and ethical applications of AI in healthcare.

### **IMPLEMENTING AI FOR REAL-WORLD PROBLEM SOLVING: A GATEWAY TO INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION**

Taking these inquiries into consideration, I continued my research activities in Dublin, Ireland, where I received the funding through my collaboration with Harvard and MIT colleagues during the Fulbright journey. In Dublin, my research was backed by Enterprise Ireland and the EU through the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Career-FIT PLUS program, a European Commission initiative designed to promote transnational, intersectoral, and interdisciplinary mobility among experienced researchers. My project entitled “*DeepStain: Deep Learning for Cell Image Analysis*,” is the result of a strategic partnership between ValitaCell & Beckman Coulter, an Irish biotech firm, and School of Computer Science & CeADAR, Ireland’s Centre for Applied Artificial Intelligence at University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland.

This project allowed me to extend my research into developing AI algorithms tailored to solve real-world issues. I have been actively integrating these advanced AI algorithms to improve stem cell manufacturing processes. The potential implications of this research for the health sector are substantial and could potentially revolutionize the treatment of various conditions, including cancer, arthritis, and Crohn’s disease. The long-term impact of these advancements has the potential to transform how these conditions are managed, providing new and more effective approaches to improve patient outcomes and quality of life.

Throughout my academic journey, I have actively engaged in discussions surrounding the ethical considerations of AI in healthcare. One notable international collaboration arose during my Fulbright program, where I had the privilege of working alongside Prof. Ali Fuat Kalyoncu in the field of Allergy and Immunology at Hacettepe University in Ankara, Turkey. This participation stems from my strong commitment to ensuring that technology remains aligned with human values and principles, without ignoring them in clinical settings. (see notes). The outcomes of this collaboration resulted in another significant publication and paved the way for a collaborative project with Dr. Begum Kalyoncu, a Fulbright Alumni, focusing on an AI project in the nutrition field.

By actively engaging in these discussions and collaborative projects, I aim to contribute to the development of ethical frameworks and responsible practices that guide the integration of AI into healthcare. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and a steady commitment to human-centered approaches, we can integrate the potential of AI while ensuring that it remains aligned with our values and serves the best interests of patients and society as a whole into our life.

### **LOOKING AHEAD: A GLOBAL VISION FOR ETHICAL AI IN HEALTHCARE**

Even though I have gained invaluable insights into the practical applications of AI within this dynamic field, the ethical dilemmas persist. I believe that engaging in open discussions, implementing AI responsibly, and a commitment to human values are essential in successfully navigating these challenges. I am excited to continue on this path, with the knowledge and experiences I acquired during my Fulbright, and with a firm determination to strike a balance between technological progress and ethical considerations. Addressing these dilemmas is no easy task, and it would require a collective effort from researchers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and society as a whole. However, I believe that through the cultivation of open and constructive discourse, a responsible approach, and a commitment to maintaining our shared human values, we possess the capacity to successfully navigate these challenges.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS: BALANCING DREAMS AND DILEMMAS**

Through my academic journey, starting from Ankara and spanning continents, the Fulbright program's influence on my personal and professional growth is undeniable. Without the Fulbright experience that brought me from Ankara to Boston, I would never have been able to step inside a new point in my life. As I progress, I remain committed to making AI in healthcare not just a dream, but a reality that is beneficial for all regardless of social



boundaries – as one of the pillars of the Fulbright program. While challenges may lie ahead and the path may not always be easy, I am hopeful that each step forward brings us closer to a world where AI in healthcare becomes a reality that benefits all while upholding ethical standards and security.

This is a journey worth pursuing. As I reflect on my Fulbright experience and look towards the future, I am grateful for the opportunities it has provided and the long-lasting effect it has had on my career. These experiences have provided me with invaluable connections that continue to shape my current research studies and contribute significantly to my professional growth. Additionally, I am currently honored to be a member of the Advisory Board for the Turkish Nobel Community, where I provide mentorship to Junior researchers in high schools. I also actively engaged in mentoring undergraduate international students through the IEEE Engineering in Medicine & Biology Society – Student Mentoring program. These roles allow me to advance the vision and mission of the Fulbright Association as an alumni member, giving back to the community and supporting the next generation of researchers. I am dedicated to persisting on this path, striving towards a future where AI in healthcare becomes a crucial instrument for enhancing lives globally.

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Polat, along with fellow Fulbright scholars, at the 2018 Fulbright Global Health Innovation Seminar held in Atlanta, Georgia.

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#### **BIOGRAPHY**

Dr. Polat Goktas was awarded a Fulbright Doctoral Research Fellowship in 2017-18 at the Wellman Center for Photomedicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Boston, US. At present, he is a Marie-Curie Research Fellow at the UCD School of Computer Science, and Ireland's Centre for Applied Artificial Intelligence, focusing on practical artificial intelligence solutions. His accolades include the 2016 Young Scientist Award at the Lindau Nobel Laureates Meeting, the 2017 IEEE AP-S Doctoral Research Grant as the top global PhD student, the 2020 Marie-Curie Individual Fellowship, the 2021 METU Serhat Ozyar Young Scientist of the Year Award, among others. He can be reached at [polat.goktas@ucd.ie](mailto:polat.goktas@ucd.ie). His social media handles include Twitter: [@PolatGoktas](https://twitter.com/PolatGoktas) and LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/polat-goktas-ph-d-29b24b58/>

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# BEYOND BRICK-AND-MORTAR EDUCATION: USING METAVERSE FOR INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS TO PROMOTE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

UMI H. SAIDAH

## ABSTRACT

Fostering mutual understanding across cultures is always Fulbright's primary mission. This article describes how metaverse can contribute to this goal through intercultural interactions between avatar-context-avatar representing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Indonesia, a native instructor in the United States, and digital objects in the virtual world. In this article, a general notion of metaverse is first explored, followed by how it is used for interactions to promote intercultural competence. Finally, challenges and impacts are presented.

**Keywords:** Metaverse • 3D virtual world • intercultural interaction • intercultural competence • mutual understanding



## INTRODUCTION

I am a 2018 Fulbright scholar from Indonesia, studying in a PhD program in educational technology and second language acquisition at the University of South Florida. Here are my reflections on using metaverse for intercultural interactions between avatar-context-avatar. Avatars are representations of users in metaverse, while context includes any objects in the virtual world. The avatar-avatar interaction takes place between university-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Indonesia and a native English instructor in the United States via verbal, written, and motion contacts. The avatar-context interaction relates to how the avatars engage with the objects and the virtual world.

## WHAT IS METAVERSE?

The term metaverse is not new, as it was coined by Neal Stephenson in his science-fiction novel *Snow Crash* published in 1992. My introduction to metaverse happened in November 2021 when Facebook changed its name to Meta. I decided to join an international symposium held virtually on metaverse by a public research university in South Korea. As the notion of participating in a symposium on metaverse was new to me, I was hesitant at the beginning. Questions of what and how kept going around in my head. Fortunately, my professor, who shared the event with me and became one of the opening panelists at the symposium, offered an orientation session. Prior to the session, he asked me to download the metaverse app, create an

account, and customize my avatar—a virtual figure representing myself in the 3D virtual world. He then told me how to navigate metaverse for the purpose of the symposium, including how to move around (e.g., walk, run, sit, stand up, shake hands, waive etc.), how to interact with other avatars (via voice chat, text chat, or motion) and context (by zooming in/out, scrolling up/down, or playing/pausing the objects in the virtual world), and how to present (e.g., upload slides, use a pointer, run slides etc.). I found the orientation meaningful as it helped me familiarize myself with the metaverse and build my confidence to do tasks in it. For the first time, I did my symposium presentation and attended other presenters' presentations on the metaverse. It was a fascinating experience.

Metaverse as an advancement of virtual reality (VR) technology holds promise as an effective educational technology. My professor and I decided to engage further with the technology by conducting a systematic literature review on the use of VR for language learning (under revision). From reviewing 32 articles published between 2012 and 2021, we found that VR promotes linguistic gain (i.e., vocabulary acquisition) and nonlinguistic gain (i.e., motivation). It also has the potential to reduce foreign language anxiety. VR facilitates vocabulary acquisition in a way that provides a high-fidelity environment that engages students to learn the target vocabulary in context. Additionally, its game-like characteristics promote motivation. Regarding anxiety, VR technology supports anonymity, in which some degree of users' actual identities are concealed through avatar representations, which can reduce users' anxiety. Upon conclusion of the review, we agreed to do my dissertation research using metaverse and examine the effects of metaverse on intercultural communicative competence, foreign language anxiety, and motivation.

### **METaverse FOR INTERCULTURAL INTERACTIONS TO PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE**

In the EFL context, learning the target language culture is traditionally done through learner-instructor interaction or learner-content interaction in an in-person format. With the advancement of technology, such learning may alternatively be bridged by metaverse. Metaverse platforms can help users from different geographical locations interact and learn cultural knowledge together. The interaction happens between users (avatar-avatar interaction) and users and digital content displayed in the virtual world (avatar-context interaction). The digital content includes images, videos, illustrations, slideshows, online articles, and interactive stickers. The digital displays are purposefully designed and developed for intercultural interactions to facilitate intercultural learning. The avatar-avatar interactions may take place via voice

or text chat. The avatar-context interactions may occur via running slideshows forward/backward or browsing further cultural information via browsers available in the virtual world. Such user-user and user-context in the virtual world are cross-cultural in the sense that they can cross cultural boundaries.

In my research, I study Indonesian EFL learners in their learning of target language culture via avatar-context-avatar interactions on metaverse. I began the study consulting three English as a Second Language (ESL) experts at the University of South Florida to identify cultural topics that are appropriate for university-level EFL learners. Based on their recommendations, I decided to use the Pathways book series from National Geographic Learning as a reference and picked five cultural topics: the Ukulele; Hmong Americans; urban challenges and innovation; Amish in America; and cowboy life and culture. From the topics, I developed learning objectives, learning content, intervention procedures using metaverse as a learning environment and evaluation. Next, I collaborated with a university in Indonesia as a research site and recruited two research site coordinators to help me with permits, recruitment of participants, and informed consent forms. I recruited a native ESL/EFL instructor to facilitate the intercultural interactions. I requested an onboarding session from Virbela, the metaverse platform which I purchased my metaverse suite from. The onboarding was offered to the instructor and research site coordinators as well because it was their first experience using metaverse. We launched the intervention sessions beginning with five intercultural interaction tasks.

## THE INTERACTIONS

Two main interactional strategies were applied in the interventions. These were activating learners' background knowledge to connect to the topics through questioning and answering and comparing Indonesian and American cultures to identify subtle and significant similarities and/or differences. It is worth highlighting that in accordance with standards for foreign language learning by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), learning the target language culture in a foreign language learning context should be concurrent with reflecting on learners' own culture. Learners' own culture provides entry points that allows them to connect what they already know with what they will learn in order to develop their intercultural knowledge and skills. In addition, the ACTFL highlights that cultural competence in language learning includes understanding cultural products and practices in order to construct their cultural perspectives.

For example, to communicate about the Amish the instructor provides an entry point of interaction by talking about a similar group of people in Indonesia, the Baduy. The cultural aspects discussed about the Baduy included schooling practices, use of technology, transportation choice, fashion style, and residential locations. After such interactions, the instructor invited learners to explore digital content about the two cultures displayed in

the rooms in the virtual world. Learners were given a chance to interact with the cultural displays consisting of images, illustrations, videos, articles, and slideshows. After engaging in the immersive learning experience, learners assembled outside the display rooms to interact with the instructor about the target language culture they just learned. The way the intercultural interactions were facilitated was by comparing and contrasting through analyzing the similarities and/or differences between the target language culture learned with their own culture communicated at the entry point. All the intercultural interactions were between avatar-context-avatar.

Another example is learning about urban challenges and innovations. To connect the EFL learners with the urban challenges and innovations in the United States, the instructor first engaged them in a discussion about air pollution and the dense population in Indonesia's capital city, Jakarta. The instructor explored their perspectives about causes and solutions regarding air pollution and the dense population in the city. Gaining learners' perspectives that relate to their life experiences, the instructor invited them to immerse themselves in cultural displays. The displays showed air pollution in Los Angeles and an innovative solution of smog-eating roof tiles to reduce pollution. The displays showed the High Line, a public space in New York City that was repurposed from an unused railroad. After the immersion experience, learners interacted with the native instructor about the two issues. Even though my research only focused on voice chat interactions, the nature of metaverse allowed written and motion interactions: for example, via virtual sticky notes and emotes available in the virtual world.

Another avatar-context-avatar intercultural interaction was about cowboy life and culture. The entry point of the interaction was about animal herders in Indonesia. We built learners' personal relevance through interaction about the job description, fashion style, and job transformation of animal herders in Indonesia from the past to the present. Subsequently, we invited learners to immerse themselves by interacting with cultural displays in the suite in the 3D virtual world. After the immersion, the instructor interacted with learners about both animal herders in Indonesia and cowboys in the U.S. by comparing and contrasting the two. For example, both look after cattle; however, this has declined due to animal domestication. A difference was their clothing. Cowboys wear typically wear boots and chaps, whereas Indonesian cattle herders do not wear this equipment.

From intercultural interactions, learners are expected to value the similarities and respect the differences. Such awareness is necessary in foreign language learning for effective communication across cultures. The findings of my research suggest that learner experience of participating in intercultural interactions may contribute to constructing their perspectives of the target language culture that is similar and/or different from their own. The intercultural interactions between EFL learners in Indonesia and a native speaker in the US may facilitate a joint effort to collaboratively construct

new cultural perspectives. By being reflective of their own culture and open to another culture, both parties mutually cultivate active construction of respect and understanding that identifies and sympathizes with each other. Therefore, through the study of cultures, we promote mutual understanding that appreciates similarities, values differences, strengthening relationships between people.

## CHALLENGES

There are a few challenges to consider. First, the United States and Indonesia are in different hemispheres with different time zones. Time commitment toward the intervention should be communicated as clearly as possible to all parties associated with it, including the EFL learners, native instructors, research site coordinators, supervisors, and researchers. Agreement on the time commitment entails the smoothness of the intervention; otherwise, the 12-hour time difference could be a challenge. Second, there are specific hardware and software requirements for metaverse to run smoothly. Third, it is important to organize a trial session prior to the intervention that includes technical checking and first-person navigation of the metaverse. The technical check is to ensure the compatibility between the device and application to support avatar-context-avatar intercultural interactions that allow verbal, written, and motion interactions between avatars without interruption.

## IMPACT OF MY RESEARCH

This project provided me a rich research experience. I never thought that taking a new challenge of attending and presenting on metaverse would open up a way for my research interests.

I hope the experience of learning target language culture on metaverse serves as an alternative to traditional classroom learning. As the world becomes increasingly digital, adopting and implementing technology in order to achieve effectiveness through innovation is inevitable. Using metaverse increases opportunities for learning the target language culture directly with a native speaker, too often rare in the EFL context due to geographical distance. From a post-treatment interview, I found that having intercultural interactions on metaverse gave Indonesian EFL learners a new learning environment that is different from the usual.

*Learning cultures in the metaverse was more engaging because we all ran an application, walked around, and were still focused. It felt real.*

To quote one participant from the post-treatment interview: “There are many differences between intercultural learning in the classroom and in the metaverse. In the classroom, students usually present, or a lecturer explains, and then students take notes. It is boring. Learning cultures in the metaverse was more engaging because we walked around and were still focused. It felt real.”



Additionally, learning about the Amish and the Baduy, the Hmong Americans and the Chinese Indonesians, helped EFL learners expand their perspectives on cultural diversity in the two countries.

To quote another interviewee: “It is good to know that American culture is unique. The uniqueness comes from cultural diversity. Just like Indonesia, which consists of diverse groups, I now know that the United States is a lot more than American Indians or Native Hawaiians. They have many diverse groups. We compared the diversity in Indonesia and the United States, to gain a new perspective on American culture.”

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Umi Saidah, observing intercultural interactions to promote intercultural competence on metaverse, Spring 2023.

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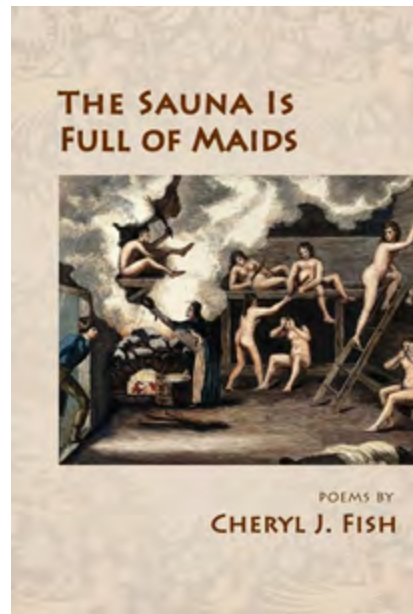
Umi H. Saidah received a DIKTI-funded Fulbright Grant for her PhD study at University of South Florida. For her intervention research in Indonesia, she received an Overseas Travel Grant from The American-Indonesian Cultural & Educational Foundation, Inc. (AICEF). She would like to thank Dr. Sanghoon Park for his supportive mentorship throughout her dissertation research. She can be reached at [umisaidah@usf.edu](mailto:umisaidah@usf.edu)

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# REVIEWS

# HEAT RISES LIKE TOLERANCE

KENDRA REYNOLDS



*The Sauna is Full of Maids* by Cheryl J. Fish who was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Tampere, Finland, in 2007.

Opening with an epilogue quoted from the Finnish National Epic, the *Kalevala*, Cheryl J. Fish’s collection invites us to venture over thresholds, both geographical and political, on its voyage through an enchanting maze of steamy saunas, and acquaint ourselves with humans at the heart of the culture, mythology, and gritty beauty of Finland that she herself first delved into during her time in Finland. The first poem, “Gulf of Finland” functions as a portal, where readers are invited to dive into Finnish life: “Go and hit the water. Swim naked, then sit / in the smoke sauna / hot on a wood bench, top row. Out into cold pool” (17). In this piece, Fish also immediately captures one of the main exponents of the Fulbright experience – namely, growth in travel – through the collection’s opening line: “Can I use my miles to get more miles? / They never expire” (17).

Complimenting her words with photographs of the people she grew to know so deeply, particularly the indigenous Sámi (descendants of early Nomadic people), whose treatment she equates with the indigenous Native Americans of her American homeland, we are given windows into real lives as she captures hidden stories and practices of a culture threatened by colonialism, climate change, and the influence of ever-encroaching modernity. Encompassing pictures of both the people and the still lakes, forests, mushrooms and sheer magnificence of the Finnish landscape, the reader is transported to a place of calm, of contemplation, a space outside of

time where life moves more slowly and deliberately, in sync with the pace of nature. We become voyagers learning with each new *yoi* (song). As the title of one of Fish's poems attests, these are certainly "Songs [that] Captivate the Traveler," allowing readers to "dwell in the Northland for inspired intervals" (18).

In one of my favorite poems from the collection, "Prior Previous-ness," Fish foregrounds a central motif: the sauna as a haven, a space outside of social expectation, symbolized by the cast-off clothing where "we relax our previous- / ness. Lost in sweat and shower, heated meditation, far from / New York City, and our jobs" (25). Fish captures how saunas are almost spiritual in their nature, encouraging users to live in the *now*, and connect intimately with others outside of the superficial corporate rush: "In our prior previous-ness we were not / close. Here, we glisten" (25). The saunas become a space for transformation and healing.

*Fish captures how saunas are almost spiritual in their nature, encouraging users to live in the now, and connect intimately with others.*

Saunas also cross divides—political, social, national—as "Heat rises like tolerance" and inhabitants "Leave / imperfection / and judgement" at the door to enjoy "Music / collective and separate" (63). The sauna provides a space where shared humanity is foregrounded, difference accepted and embraced, and people are inspired to take "non-traditional paths, content with in-betweens" (63). It is difficult to maintain distance, both physical and psychological, in these small, intimate spaces of bonding, warmth, and vulnerability. Challenging those in power who uphold divides, construct the barriers and boundaries that separate and divide, Fish writes "Liars cross the line so often they fell bridges" (60). This whole collection is an act of resistance that, like the saunas, is about cohesion, healing over these man-made cracks, embracing all kinds of seemingly contradictory concepts: hot and cold, vulnerability and strength, self and Other.

The collection is thus not an exercise in detached escapism; these poems are imbued with politics and a sense of urgency, the saunas providing only brief respite from the forces at work in the world outside. This is captured in Fish's poem, "Turbulent Cruise-Ship Sauna" where she questions: "What's / next in these troubling times? Away from the mainland / . . . queasy inside wet waves" (37). Fish is a scholar not only on theories of identity and resistance, but also on environmental justice. These influences merge together here as she writes "I apologize for my Americanness" (18), destructive Capitalism present throughout, in tandem with colonial brutality as "Nations circle the water, on alert / to take more" (35). The reader is left with the sense that the Sámi people, their culture, their ecosystem, their homes, their traditions, and their peace are all as fragile as the ice, melting into the rising sea: "The [Sámi] town is sinking. Citizens, monuments, homes must / be moved or demolished / From cracks and crevices, the sound of cash" (34).

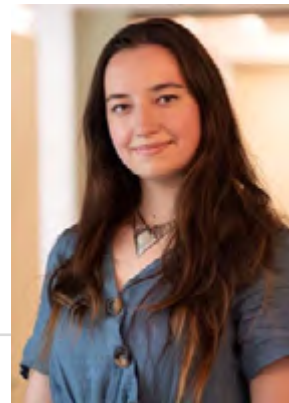
Overall, Fish aims to “make bridges with words” (42) to connect her poems to a number of political issues: namely the oppression of the Sámi people and their culture, women, and the environment. Fish refuses to despair, however, highlighting the innate strength of the oppressed who refuse to lie down as victims: “Survival is our name. Don’t fuck with us” (43). At the same time, the collection acts as a healing meditation, urging readers to embrace and accept who we are, no more and no less, as we recognize our shared humanity and connect once again with the rhythms of the natural world. My experience of reading this collection ultimately rings true in the book’s closing line: “How pleasant for me to flit here / . . . Longing for eternal things” (63).

Cheryl J. Fish, *The Sauna is Full of Maids*. Brunswick, Maine: Shanti Arts Publishing. 2021. 74 pages. \$15.95.

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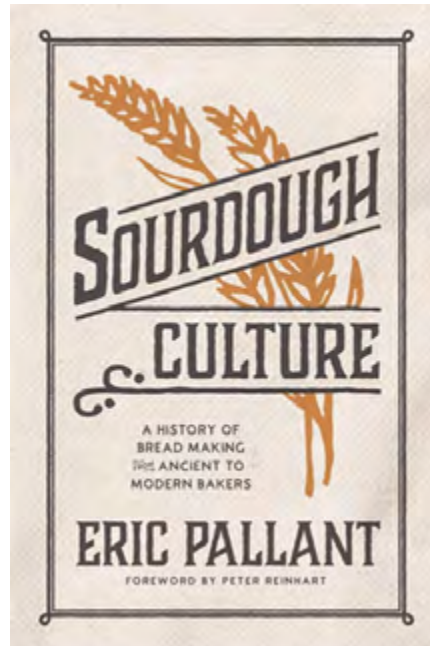
#### BIOGRAPHY

Kendra Reynolds lives in Northern Ireland and was the 2019-20 UK/US Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence for the University of Tulsa and Tulsa Community College in Oklahoma, where she taught contemporary literature and creative writing in poetry. She is both a literature scholar and poet, having published poems in a variety of anthologies and magazines, including *The Honest Ulsterman* and *North Star: Short Stories and Poems by Female Northern Irish Writers*, as well as a research monograph entitled *The Feminist Architecture of Postmodern Anti-Tales: Space, Time and Bodies* (Routledge, 2020). She can be reached at [reynolds-k6@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:reynolds-k6@ulster.ac.uk)



# THE CONNECTEDNESS OF SOURDOUGH CULTURE

ISAAC OLUSEUN ADEJUMO



*Sourdough Culture: A History of Bread Making from Ancient to Modern Bakers* by Eric Pallant, who was a Fulbright Scholar to the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies (Israel) in 2001 and to Lancaster University (UK) in 2016.

My wife, a microbiologist, a bread lover, and an amateur baker, was as interested as I was when I first received *Sourdough Culture* in the mail. Yet, later, after we had both read the book and shared our thoughts, we agreed we had not known as much on the subject as we thought we had.

This book is not just about the history of bread-making or the eternal characteristics of sourdough starters. (For non-cooks: sourdough bread requires a “starter,” often called a “culture”—hence the significance of the book’s title.) It offers much more than that. Whoever you are and no matter how much you think you know about bread-making and its history, no matter how many books you have read on the subject, *Sourdough Culture* offers you a unique, deep, and inter-continental experience.

*No matter how many books you have read on the subject, ‘Sourdough Culture’ offers you a unique, deep, and inter-continental experience.*

Pallant, the Christine Scott Nelson Endowed Professor of Environmental Science and Sustainability at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania, explains that bread symbolizes unity across races, regions, religious and cultural beliefs, and geographical boundaries. He acknowledges that a country's bread reflects its greatness, echoing Julia Child when she asked, "How can a nation be great if its bread tastes like Kleenex?"

Pallant examines the connection between bread and religion, noting that Jesus's life is intertwined with bread; he was born in the "house of bread," he fed his listeners with bread and called himself the "bread of life." You might say that his beliefs, like bread, are shared across races, regions, and cultural beliefs.

The author also shows the significance of bread throughout history, for example, during the French Revolution. Grain shortages were a direct impetus for violence—and inspired Marie Antoinette's famously callous statement, "Let them eat cake."

But this is also a personal story, and Pallant explains that he was inspired to trace the history of sourdough starters when confronted with a question about the starter he used to make his own bread. "If I had kept this starter alive for twenty years, and it was alive in the Mamula household [friends from Allegheny College] before coming to me, how old was it?" (3).

Douglas Steeples, also a friend of the Marmulas, had collected the starter years before from his grandmother, and he traced it back to an archaeological site, to a former Air Force pilot, who was thought to have brought the starter to Cripple Creek, Colorado. Guided by his friends, Pallant eventually traced his sourdough bread culture's history back 122 years, from the Fertile Crescent through ancient and primitive kitchens to ovens and kitchens of the twenty-first century. As he tells us, "Sourdough culture, like religious belief, can be expanded and shared indefinitely" (57).

Indeed, the main focus of *Sourdough Culture* is how bread connects us—a similar point made by Peter Reinhart, the American baker and author of many books on the subject. This is often lacking in other books on bread-making and its history. *Sourdough Culture* emphasizes the "connectedness" of bread, how it cuts across nutrition or food science, philosophy, food security, history, psychology, agriculture, technological advancement, transportation, archeology, human evolution, and politics. This book will have world-wide appeal to bread lovers, bakers, scientists, historians, students, archeologists, engineers, technologists, politicians, psychologists, and philosophers.

Eric Pallant, *Sourdough Culture: A History of Bread Making from Ancient to Modern Bakers*. Evanston, Illinois: Agate Surrey. 2021. 321 pages. \$29.

**BIOGRAPHY**

Isaac Oluseun Adejumo holds a doctorate in Animal Science (Feed Toxicology) and a Master's Degree in Agricultural Biochemistry and Nutrition from University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He was a Fulbright Scholar to the Department of Animal and Food Sciences, University of Kentucky, 2019-2020. Over the years, he has focused on health, climate change, and food security-related research activities, using nutritional biochemistry, molecular biology, food/feed toxicology, in-ovo and whole animal testing approaches. Most recently, he has focused on dietary manipulations to reduce the amount of nutrients excreted into the environment by farm animals, thereby reducing air pollution and its negative impact on public health and the environment. He can be reached at [smogisac@gmail.com](mailto:smogisac@gmail.com)

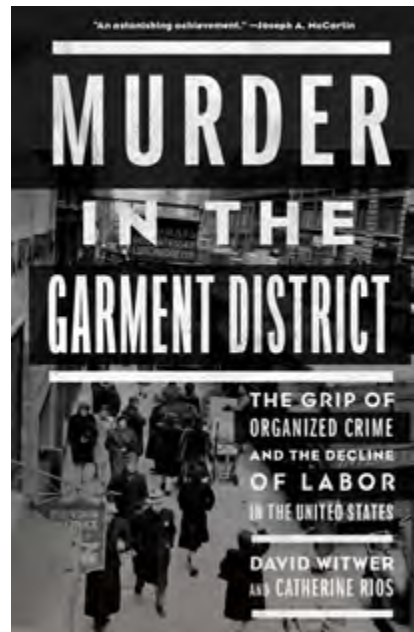
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# RACKETEERING, UNIONS AND THE LOSS OF PUBLIC TRUST

ROBERT JAQUAY



*Murder in the Garment District: The Grip of Organized Crime and the Decline of Organized Labor in the United States* by David Witwer and Catherine Rios. David Witwer was a Fulbright Bicentennial Chair in History at the University of Helsinki, Finland, in 2022.

*Murder in the Garment District: The Grip of Organized Crime and the Decline of Organized Labor in the United States* provides a challenging, yet rewarding read. The authors—David Witwer, a professor of history at Penn State Harrisburg, and Catherine Rios, a professor of communication there—offer shocking examples of mob violence upon unions occurring post-WW II along with vivid descriptions of urban, working-class neighborhoods from which both organized labor and organized crime arose, illustrating the infiltration of racketeers into originally high-minded labor unions, and explaining the moral compromises made by labor leaders in that era. All this became grist for courtroom trials, Congressional hearings, and damning media coverage from the late 1940s through the 1950s.

The genesis of the book's title is the brazen daylight stabbing that killed William Lurye, an organizer for the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union and married father of four, on the afternoon May 9, 1949. Lurye's assailants, connected to racketeers hired by garment shop owners to keep unions at bay, were not convicted due to witness intimidation and suspected

mob connections with local law enforcement. New York Mayor William O'Dwyer claimed he added police presence to make the Garment District safer, but garment worker leader Sasha Zimmerman retorted, "You sent the cops down and they arrested all our pickets" (26). Finding no recourse from law enforcement and the courts, exasperated labor leaders reluctantly concluded that continued existence of their unions required dealing with the same mobsters attacking them.

Witwer and Rios describe the spread of union racketeering in other New York industries beyond the garment district, such as "waterfront shipping, the produce and seafood markets, or waste hauling" (80) and in other cities, including Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, and Seattle. They then detail a series of newspaper and magazine exposés. Particular focus is given to the 1957 Congressional hearings conducted by the McClellan Committee, which created a widespread distrust of unions that, the authors assert, continues to this day.

***Exasperated labor leaders reluctantly concluded that continued existence of their unions required dealing with the same mobsters attacking them.***

Yet the authors seem to suggest that William Lurye's brutal murder was the major catalyst for all subsequent events related in the following chapters and that union corruption is the primary cause for the sixty-year decline in membership and political power from its post-war peak. However, Lurye's death is but one compelling example of the violent means mobsters used to force their corrupt bargains with labor leaders. Scant mention is made of multiple factors that account for the decline of labor, such as globalization, technological change, passage of the Taft-Hartley Act, failure to organize workers in southern states. While organized crime infiltration is a lingering factor in decline of union strength since World War II, full explanation for the downward trend line is much more complex than the title conveys.

Nonetheless, *Murder in the Garment District: The Grip of Organized Crime and the Decline of Labor in the United States* is highly engaging and thought provoking. The fascinating depictions of its main personae and events ring true. This reviewer was reminded of Cleveland, Ohio, which, although not mentioned in the book, has neighborhoods populated by a similar cast of factory workers and truck haulers, shop owners, union leaders, mobsters, policemen, prosecutors, elected officials and news reporters with likewise complicated relationships their shared affinities engendered. The book also called to mind *The Plain Dealer* and *Cleveland Press* accounts of local car bombings, shootings, and fights to control labor as well as Cleveland-oriented works, such as James Neff's *Mobbed Up: Jackie Presser's High-Wire Life in the Teamsters, the Mafia and the FBI*; and Rick Porello's *To Kill the Irishman*, along with a slew of concrete measures to support working people proposed by the think tank Policy Matters Ohio.

*Murder in the Garment District* concludes with these lines: “The politically fatal link between the union movement and labor racketeering was cemented in the Cold War era of the McClellan Committee hearings. As long as this false notion remains uncorrected, the possibility of labor’s revival remains dim, and without that revival America’s continued slide down toward worsening inequality and working-class alienation seems destined to continue” (236). The authors explain how we entered this dark thicket, yet their historical perspective does not offer guidance for finding a forward path.

David Witwer and Catherine Rios, *Murder in the Garment District: The Grip of Organized Crime and the Decline of Organized Labor in the United States*. New York: The New Press, 2022. 289 pages. \$26.99.

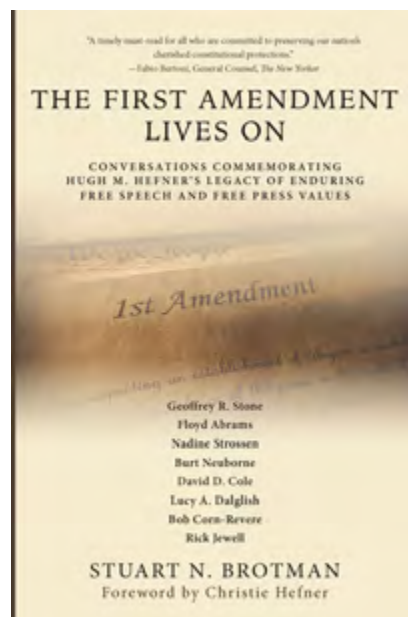
#### **BIOGRAPHY**

Robert Jaquay was a 2016 Fulbright Specialist at the Coady International Institute of St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, Canada. He retired in 2021 after twenty-five years as Associate Director of the George Gund Foundation, a grant-making organization, in Cleveland, Ohio. Currently, he is senior fellow at the Levin College of Public Affairs and Education at Cleveland State University. He can be reached at [books@fulbright-chronicles.com](mailto:books@fulbright-chronicles.com)



# THE SURPRISING LEGACY OF PLAYBOY'S HUGH HEFNER: EIGHT CONVERSATIONS ON THE FIRST AMENDMENT

BRIAN SEMUJJU



*The First Amendment Lives On: Conversations Commemorating Hugh M. Hefner's Legacy of Enduring Free Speech and Free Press Values* by Stuart N. Brotman, the Fulbright-Nokia Distinguished Chair in Information and Communications Technologies at the University of Helsinki, 2012-13.

Stuart N. Brotman is the Alvin and Sally Beaman Professor of Journalism and Media Law, Enterprise, and Leadership at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, with decades of experience teaching and handling first amendment cases. In addition, he has worked at the policy level with four US administrations on media/communication/telecommunication affairs. This vast experience positions him as an informed and eager interviewer.

Brotman delivers eight conversations with free speech/free press enthusiasts all woven together by their rich experience and knowledge of landmark events in the history of the First Amendment to the US Constitution. All have had decades of experience directly working on freedom of expression and freedom of the press projects either as lawyers, journalists, or both. In addition, each of them has had an illustrious teaching career closely connected to First Amendment elements within university curricula.

The first conversation, with Geoffrey R. Stone, the Edward H. Levi Distinguished Service Professor of Law at the University of Chicago Law School, begins with a general assessment of key First Amendment milestones and principles, including how government benevolence to fund any media presents a double-edged sword when government demands the same media to work as a mouthpiece; the chilling effect when people decide not to speak out against government excesses and violation of individual freedoms because they think their individual voice is powerless; and the advantages of having a free and functioning system that respects freedoms, which includes recognizing that the majority shouldn't necessarily suppress the minority, especially when the majority is "acting in ways that are seen as inconsistent with the aspirations of the Constitution" (26). In a way, this part is very enjoyable with its historical approach to First Amendment challenges and its portraits of the champions of freedoms, like justices Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis Brandeis who wrote landmark dissenting opinions against the Espionage Act of 1917. These opinions eventually became mainstream for the Supreme Court in a 1969 case called *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (27).

Other experts offer equally fascinating accounts and predictions for freedom of speech and press, especially as related to social media today. For those readers new to the First Amendment, Burt Neuborne, the Norman Dorsen Professor of Civil Liberties at New York University School of Law and the founding legal director of the Brennan Center for Justice, describes the law and breaks it down into six ideas: "1) no government establishment of religion, 2) free exercise of religion, 3) free speech, 4) free press, 5) free assembly, and 6) the right to petition the government for redress of grievances" (121).

What strikes me as unique is how each expert's First Amendment experience resonates with others' experiences, like the Vietnam War protests. Both Geoffrey R. Stone and Nadine Strossen, the first woman to head the American Civil Liberties Union, participated in student protests in various capacities while others, like Floyd Abrams, the William J. Brennan, Jr. Visiting Professor at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, helped in litigation that was directly connected to the war via The Pentagon Papers. Interestingly, the cases cited as accounts of First Amendment struggles, like *Texas v. Johnson* (132), in which it was decided that non-verbal protests like flag burning are protected by the First Amendment, have a bearing on modern protest movements like Black Lives Matter and others.

*The cases cited as accounts of First Amendment struggles ... have a bearing on modern protest movements like Black Lives Matter and others.*

On the other hand, the Wikileaks and Edward Snowden's publishing of classified documents are cases that are very similar to the Pentagon Papers that President Richard Nixon rushed to court to stop. While the Pentagon Papers were leaked by Daniel Ellsberg at a time when the Internet was not

yet in public domain, the First Amendment issues discussed by the experts in relation to them are almost relatable to Snowden, Chelsea Manning, and others in our generation, although the book also draws some lines between the two generations of leaks.

The final conversation, with Rick Jewell, the Hugh M. Hefner Professor of American Film (Emeritus) at the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts, describes how *Playboy* Magazine publisher Hugh M. Hefner directly promoted education against censorship by funding a program at USC and actively participating in students' seminars on censorship for almost twenty years.

This book is a useful resource for both journalism and law students (and instructors) interested in how the First Amendment relates to such themes as the right to protest, campaign financing, publishing of leaked classified documents, social media posts, and censorship of media content for decency. The periodized events from each conversation make the book a useful historical and compelling resource on key First Amendment cases, on the protagonists and antagonists of the freedoms, and on how their actions shape our understanding of the same freedoms today.

Stuart N. Brotman, *The First Amendment Lives On: Conversations Commemorating Hugh M. Hefner's Legacy of Enduring Free Speech and Free Press Values*. Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2022. 258 pages. \$25.

#### BIOGRAPHY

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