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Dominique A. Giampieri  
*Portland State University*

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Stigma vs Stigma: The Difference of Stigma on Mental Health Between Argentines and  
Americans

Dominique A. Giampieri

Portland State University

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### **Abstract**

Through the use of an extensive literature review the author compares research in regards to different populations contrasting individuals from America and Argentina and compares the difference of stigma on mental health that these individuals hold. Through this literature review, it was concluded that individuals in the United States stigmatize mental illness on a higher level than Argentinians do. This is in fact due to the culture in Argentina being more open about talking about their feelings and emotions.

### **Introduction**

Stigma, which is defined as prejudice and discrimination endorsed by the general population, associated with mental illness, is an ongoing battle (Corrigan 2012). Through extensive research and a literature review, the goal of this paper is to differentiate between stigma associated with mental illness that occurs between people from the United States and Argentinians. Taking into account the variety of ways in which people react to stigma will help psychologists to more deeply understand where the stigma is coming from, and as a result develop means to end it.

It is hypothesized that mental health is less stigmatized amongst Argentines as opposed to Americans, being that the culture in Argentina encourages people to talk more openly about their feelings and emotions. Adversely, in the States, it is much less common for individuals to discuss their mental illnesses. This in turn affects the inclination towards seeking help from mental health professionals. The following literature review will compare and contrast the view on stigma in each location. There will also be research that reviews stigma associated with mental illness in a general cross cultural sense.

## METHODS

The author has completed an extensive review of the available literature from peer reviewed journals as well as secondary sources. All literature included has relevance in conjunction with stigma found in Argentina, the United States, or cross-culturally. Two of the sources are unacademic, while the remaining eight are from peer reviewed journals.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Stigma in Argentina vs. US vs. Cross Culturally**

Stigma of mental illness is viewed differently between the Argentinian population and the population of the United States. In Argentina, mental illness at least seems to be more widely spoken about.

### **Stigma in Argentina**

**“LOONY RADIO” (Formulate a scented that creates what im conveying take away for example) clearer intro to each article, back into the notion of stigma. take away article headers)**

Gathering information from Caselli (Looney Radio) / Landau(CNN) /Agrest, M., Mascayano, F., Ardila-Gomez, S., Abeldaño, A., Fernandez, R., Geffner, N.,Lipovetzky, G/

For example, in the article written by Irene Caselli, (caselli YEAR) “How Argentina's 'Loony Radio' is Changing Attitudes About Mental Health,” we see that the “Loony Radio” in Buenos Aires is a safe space to make patients in a psychiatric hospital to feel less excluded from their community. This hits on the idea of feelings like outsiders vs insiders. Inpatients that attend this weekly show are less likely to be readmitted to the hospital than those who are not involved.

This leads to the idea that talking about mental illness more openly, or even just not by shunning

those who struggle with mental illness, is a step towards erasing the stigma. While prejudice and biases may always exist, this radio station served as a form of acceptance to those struggling.

Statistical data)

“In Therapy? In Argentina, It’s the Norm”

Argentina is home to more psychologists per capita than anywhere else in the world. Speaking of mental health is a norm. This may be because they view psychotherapy not only as a tool to cure emotional illnesses, but one that develops a greater quality of life. Another example of this cultural norm is Argentinian’s expression of their feelings. Compared to Americans, Argentinians are more open to speak about personal issues. This may be caused by the individualistic culture that is prominent in the United States in contrast with the collectivist culture in Argentina. (statistical data)

“Cross-Cultural Comparison of Stigma Towards Mental Illness and Help Seeking” \*\*

Argentinians use the fact of being in psychotherapy as something to be proud of, even sometimes viewed as a status symbol. In Buenos Aires, Argentina's capital, there is approximately 1 psychologist per 200 people. In fact, Buenos Aires is regarded as the mecca of Psychoanalysis (Hallander, 1990). “There is even a neighborhood in Buenos Aires known as “villa Freud” and a restaurant called “Cafe Siggy,” after Sigmund Freud (Mondello, 2002). Argentines view therapy as a means of improving their lives and better understanding themselves. Stigma is highly linked to social values.

\*Use Corrigan article to talk about normalization stemming from exposure

“Mental illness stigma research in Argentina”

Agrest et al. highlighted the National Mental Health Law that was passed in Argentina in 2010,

stating that people are not to be discriminated against, despite current or previous mental health conditions. While a resistance remains in fully accepting those with mental illnesses, people may benefit by exposure to those with mental illnesses in their communities (Corrigan et al 2007).

This study focused mainly on the attitudes towards people who are mentally ill, in which it is was difficult to get concrete evidence one way or the other. It was reported that those living in close proximity to former in-patients were more accepting, but also one in four persons surveyed proclaimed that they would be uncomfortable working with a person with schizophrenia.

### **Stigma in the US**

“Public stigma of mental illness in the US a systematic lit review”

Forming interventions that can reduce public stigma of mental illness help by giving definitions.

Authors are arguing that the stigma surrounding mental health effects a person to seek and receive help that would be beneficial to them, and the policies that revolve around that. Also explored are ways in which to reduce stigma. The evidence used to support this argument had a strict criteria to focus specifically on the US. This article will be helpful to give evidence not only on current stigma, but also offer intervention for future prevention of stigma.

“Emotional clarity as a buffer in the association between perceived mental illness stigma and suicide risk.”

This article states that mental illness stigma does not only contribute to low self esteem, but also interferes with treatment seeking, both of which can lead to a higher risk of suicide. The authors note that those with limited coping skills and lack of support are more easily affected by the impact of stigma. Stigma in this article can be identified by the fear of interpersonal

rejection, shame, and discrimination across many life domains, such as work and housing.

The authors also argue that the degree of intensified perceived stigma is linked with a higher risk of suicide. Participants completed a version of the Perceived Devaluation Discrimination Scale (Link, 1987; Link, Castille, & Stuber, 2008) which gave researchers a better understanding of perceived stigma by the participants.

This study found that perceived stigma and suicide risk were positively correlated. Emotional clarity is an important aspect introduced by the authors, which means that individuals are able to process their feelings. Creating an environment in which individuals are able to process their emotions more openly may lead to an increase in seeking treatment and a decrease in suicide risk.

### **Cross-Cultural Stigma.**

**ways in which stigma is different, note all the authors**

**ways in which its different (proper citations) for all authors**

“Stigma towards mental illness in latin America and the Caribbean: a systematic review”

Authors are focused on shifting the mental health policy in Latin American regions as well as lessening the burden of the stigma of mental health. The argument made is that public and family stigma differed from that which is experienced in Western European countries (this will strengthen the contrast between stigma between Argentina and the US.) A big question explored in this article is whether or not culture plays a large part in shaping stigma, something that spans largely across Latino countries. Articles used in this review included peer reviewed scientific

journals, that included qualitative and quantitative measures of public stigma. This review encapsulated many different angles, and will therefore be useful to give concrete evidence of numbers associated with studies done on how the public views mental health and it gives background on where the stigma stems from.

“Cross-Cultural Comparison of Stigma Towards Mental Illness and Help Seeking.” - VERY HELPFUL

The authors in this case claim that stigma is rooted in culture, and in return the level of stigma of mental illness varies between cultures. Stereotypes towards a diagnosed person can result in the loss of status and are viewed in a negative light, ie: sometimes fear, disgust, and avoidance. This deprives those who are stigmatized of their dignity and their right to participate fully in society, or furthermore seek treatment. According to Goffman, those who are labeled as mentally ill may not be regarded as quite human (Goffman, 1963). Stigma does not only impact those with mental illness, but also the actions of the public. Many cultures, such as the ancient Greeks and Romans considered mental illness to be caused by evil spirits and demons. Other cultures, such as the ancient Chinese and Egyptians viewed mental illness as possessions and even used inhumane exorcisms. On the other hand, religion in Islamic Spain and the Middle East taught that their God loved all people, even those with mental illness, and in turn people were treated more humanely. These examples demonstrate the extreme different ways in which mental illness is perceived cross culturally. This intensified stigma can lead to hopelessness and isolation. Authors also found that there was a lack of information when American's were seeking a therapist. It is important to remember that stigma is not the only factor when researching why people are not seeking mental health. The authors also note that age, gender, and socioeconomic status play



roles in seeking treatment.

### **HYPOTHESIS/INTENDED FINDINGS**

It is hypothesized that the stigma of mental health in the US is greater than the stigma in Argentina. This may be due to cultural influences, and the people of Argentina inherently talk about their feelings and emotions more openly in general as opposed to Americans.

### **METHODS**

The author has completed an extensive review of the available literature from peer reviewed journals as well as secondary sources. All literature included has relevance in conjunction with stigma found in Argentina, the United States, or cross-culturally. Two of the sources are unacademic, while the remaining eight are from peer reviewed journals.

### **SHORTCOMINGS**

The shortcomings of this research included the inability to do personal field work. Personal interviews with both Americans and Argentines would have strengthened the data set. Also, the research of stigma in regards to mental health in Argentina is seldom, this may be in part because mental health in general is more generally accepted due to cultural values. (why) Finding scholarly articles comparing the countries of interest specifically were limited.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

After an extensive review of the literature, the author found that the stigma in Argentina associated with mental illness is of lesser intensity than the stigma in the United States. This is

due to the cultural acceptance of feelings and emotions. [expand](#)

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