

Award winners of the 2016 Patrice L. Engle Dissertation Grant in Early Child Development: Buket Kara, Marina A. Zhukova, Elsa Escalante Barrios, and Michelle Fong



Buket Kara is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Psychology at Koç University Graduate School of Social Sciences and Humanities in Turkey. Her supervisor is Associate Professor Bilge Selçuk. Her research interest lies in the combination of social and developmental psychology in exploring the development of prejudice and discrimination among children, and psychological development of war-torn children. Her thesis project investigates cognitive, emotional and social development, and psychological functioning of preschool Kurdish children, who have been exposed to war trauma in three Southeastern cities of Turkey that mostly suffered from (and partly destroyed by) the combats. Since her undergraduate years, Buket have joined several NGOs and contributed to several projects, which targeted various disadvantaged groups such as street children, children in prison, and Somalian refugees. Currently, she is in the executive board of the *Association of Psychologists for Social Solidarity* in Turkey, acting in solidarity with the oppressed people in the society, organizing workshops about social equity and campaigns against hate speech and discrimination towards minorities and refugees. She is also a member of *Peace for Children- Right Now* initiation. Buket hopes that her dissertation work will help to provide valuable insights about the effects of war-related experiences on Kurdish children's psychological functioning and development; and to serve for binding up the wounds as contributing to the formulation of appropriate intervention programs and policies for these children.

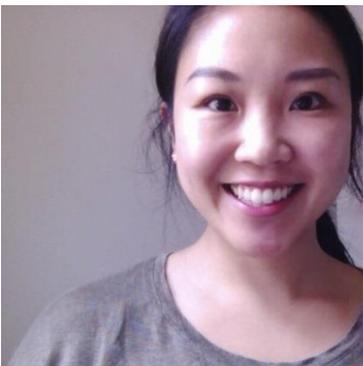


Marina Zhukova is pursuing her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and Psychophysiology at the Department of Psychology, Saint-Petersburg State University. Her advisors are Drs. Elena Grigorenko and Sergey Kornilov. Marina's research is focused on long-term effects of early institutionalization in children and young adults in the Russian Federation. In particular, she is focused on behavioral and neurophysiological aspects of language development. Her project entitled "Language development in children born to mothers raised in institutional settings" will focus on a unique and understudied sample of mothers with a history of early institutionalization and their children. The study aims at assessing the extent to which early institutional experience of mothers can modulate the quality and quantity of linguistic input received by their children and, potentially, their further language development. Marina hopes that her research will help to develop evidence-based interventions for dyads of children and their mothers with a history of institutionalization.



Elsa Lucia Escalante Barrios is pursuing a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Human Sciences with specialization in Child Development and Early Childhood Education at University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). Her advisor is Professor Helen Raikes. Escalante has a Doctoral Fellowship of COLCIENCIAS, the governmental agency that promotes science and technology in Colombia. Her dissertation is *“Feeding Practices of Families with Latino Preschoolers in Colombia and the U.S.: A Cross-cultural Multiple Case Study”*. The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to identify the differences and similarities among Colombian and American child’s eating behaviors, child’s temperament, feeding practices, and relationship inputs of parents and teachers. During her doctoral training, she also worked for the national evaluation team of programs for

childcare and education in the U.S. such as Educare, funded by the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, and Early Steps to School Success, funded by Save the Children. In addition, she has experience conducting cross-cultural research in this field in Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey and University of Nebraska, U.S. study of self-regulation. Elsa is currently representing her country in the European Early Childhood Education Research Association. Escalante holds an MSc in Child, Youth and Family Studies (UNL) and an MSc in Education (Universidad del Norte). Before pursuing the doctorate, she was member of Reporter Committee of the Decennial Plan of Education 2006-2016 for the chapter about “Child Development and Initial Education” created by the Ministry of Education in Bogota, Colombia. Miss Escalante has been responsible for the design and implementation of early childhood educator training programs in her country and Latin America; she was instructor for the Organization of American States (OAS) and director of the bachelor program of the Early Childhood Pedagogy at the Universidad del Norte. Escalante’s desire is to contribute with the design of culturally responsive intervention programs that promote healthy feeding practices and child development with children at risk, especially focused on Latino population living in diverse cultural contexts. Escalante expects to have practical implications for the families, child centers, governments, and worldwide child welfare organizations.



Michelle Fong is a doctoral candidate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Oregon. Her advisor for this project is Dr. Jeffrey Measelle. Broadly, Michelle is interested in promoting optimal child development in the context of early adversity. Her dissertation focuses on adapting, implementing, and evaluating an early caregiving intervention for use in Lao PDR - a Southeast Asian country in which almost half of all children fail to reach their full developmental potential. The caregiving intervention, Care for Child Development, aims to promote child development through age-appropriate play and communication activities that also encourage caregiving sensitivity and responsiveness. Michelle has previously worked in Lao PDR with families and health workers on

research examining caregiving practices, and its relation to a variety of health markers. Michelle’s clinical experiences in the US include involvement in parenting programs and early interventions for low-income families and families involved in Child Protective Services. Michelle hopes that her dissertation will be a step towards increasing accessibility of early psychosocial interventions in Lao PDR. Long term, she hopes to draw attention to early child development in low- and middle-income countries, the places most neglected by social science research.