



6th International Attachment Conference

August 30th-September 1st 2013
Pavia, Italy

Editor

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University of Pavia



International Attachment Conference

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Preface

The present proceedings book offers a selected review of the 6th International Attachment Conference (IAC) that took place in Pavia, Italy, from 30th August till 1st September 2013. The goal of the 6th IAC was to bring together the worldwide community of distinguished and emerging attachment researchers highlighting the scientific and clinical relevance of the work in this field with a specific focus on distinctive themes: attachment and neurobiology, trauma and developmental and clinical correlates, attachment related to parents and teachers. Presentations by invited keynote speakers around these themes were interspersed with parallel symposia sessions and poster sessions. More than 500 participants, coming from about 35 countries around the world, took part at the Conference and some of them accepted to give a further contribution elaborating their work in a proceeding text.

The Conference program – 12 keynote lectures, about 30 symposia and 100 poster presentations – reflected current trends in attachment research including convergent evidence from studies of emotion, brain, body, mind and behavior as related to reliable and valid measures of attachment, with a particular focus on bridging clinical and developmental sciences.

The formula already used for the previous editions – Regensburg, Paris, Braga, Barcelona, Oslo, – to combine some training methods with the conference presentations was also adopted in the Italian edition. We therefore offered to a limited number of participants the opportunity to attend and to be certified on the main evidence methods based on attachment.

The first area of interest of the Conference program, coordinated by Prof. Marinus H. van IJzendoorn of Leiden University, the Netherlands, focused on the relationship between attachment and neurobiology. An innovative theme for the different editions of the Conference which reflected a trend of increasing success in studies where body, brain and mind are inextricably linked to understanding the psychological individual functioning; Massimo Ammaniti (University of Rome La Sapienza, Italy) addressed the issue of mirror neurons focusing on different areas of the brain activation related to emotion, empathy and attachment. On the basis of existing studies that have investigated the role of oxytocin in the mechanisms related to interpersonal trust and attachment relationships Prof. Marian J. Bakermans - Kranenburg (University of Leiden, NL) presented the results of a series of meta-analyzes which showed that intranasal administration of oxytocin leads to a greater ability to recognize facial emotions and interpersonal trust. Brand new and interesting data and ideas presented in the report of Pasco Fearon (UCL, London), where the role of genetics in the bond of attachment in adolescence was explored. If studies on genetics and attachment in infancy showed a weak influence of genetic determinants with respect to attachment, the same can not be said with regard to adolescence where, on the contrary, it is evident that 38% of the variance with respect to secure attachment is explained by genetic factors. A clear indication of

the importance of also deal with the contribution of genetic and so-called “non- shared factors” in the study of the processes that underlie potential changes or continuity of the attachment in this period of development. Finally, a contribution to the understanding of the interaction between neurobiological and environmental factors in the construction of intersubjectivity was presented by Ruth Feldman of the Department of Psychology of the University in Ramat Bar.Ilan (Israel), which offered a framework for stimulating new results in the field of various affiliative relationships ; parent – child relations, romantic ones between friends.

The second thematic area was dedicated to some emerging areas of scientific debate in the clinical and developmnetal domains , that is the theme of trauma and its relational aspects related to attachment. Discussant Prof. Howard Steele, the New School of Social Research in New York, (USA) Editor of Attachment & Human Development and president of the newly-formed Society for Emotion and Attachment Studies (<http://www.seasinternational.org/>). Lavinia Barone presented the empirical findings of the group at the University of Pavia (IT) , emphasizing the centrality of the concept of attachment disorganization to understand the risk factors on both development and psychopathology, considering different fields – such as that of adoption, institutionalization and some dysfunctional caregiver systems such as filicide and borderline personality disorder. Abraham Sagi – Schwartz of the Center for the study of child development at the University of Haifa (Israel) presented the results of the work done by his group of longitudinal research on holocaust survivors, showing the trauma long-term effects, involving three generations. The relationship between trauma , dissociation and disorganized attachment was addressed by one of the leading experts on the subject in the clinical setting, Giovanni Liotti ARPAS (Rome, IT). Finally David Wallin (USA) focused on the role of the therapist and how his state of mind with respect to attachment can influence the process therapeutic .

The third thematic area addressed the theme of parenting and educational interventions. Coordinated by the spouses Grossmann , four invited speakers, Robert S. Marvin (Ainsworth Child-Parent Attachment Clinic of the University of Virginia Medical Center, USA) showed the use of the intervention “Circle of Security” in the prevention of externalizing behavioral problems and the promotion of skills parenting. Still on the subject of interventions to support parents , Miriam Steele , (Centre for Attachment Research at the New School for Social Research in New York, USA), showed the effectiveness of the intervention group GABI (Attachment Based Intervention Group) with the families in socio-economic deprivation and frequent occurrence of domestic violence . The intervention of Isabel Soares of the University of Minho (Portugal) focused on the development trajectories in two groups of children: those from a deprived socio-economic environment and those in institutions. Finally, Karin Verschueren (Catholic University, Leuven Belgium) addressed a relatively underexplored topic in the theoretical framework of attachment, that is the importance of attachment relationships at school.

The proceedings the reader will find in the book reflect the maturity reached by the attachment theory in the field both of research and of intervention.

I hope that this last effort would contribute to the improvement of a field rich and promising for our scientific and clinical community.

Prof. Lavinia Barone

Conference Chairperson

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