

TITLE PAGE OF PROPOSAL

University Proposal # \_\_\_\_\_ FOR PASSHE OFFICE USE ONLY: FPDC proposal # \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: The impact of perceived stressfulness of commonly experienced political events on psychological well-being of Americans

RFP Category: 1-B Faculty Research Total Grant Amount Requested from FPDC: \$600.00

Discipline: Psychology Sub-Discipline: Stress & Coping

Project Director (name, position, department, university, telephone number and e-mail address):

Krys Kaniasty, Ph.D., Professor, Psychology,  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania, (724) 357 2426, [kaniasty@iup.edu](mailto:kaniasty@iup.edu)

Faculty Status (see definitions below): XX Tenured

Other Participants (names, departments, e-mail addresses): N/A

IRB/IACUC Status:  Approved (IRB # \_\_\_\_\_)  Pending  N/A

(will be submitted for review in February, 2014)

ABSTRACT (one paragraph of approximately 150 words in non-technical language):

Can stress appraisals of “garden variety” of political events impact psychological well-being? Do events such as battles over affordable health care, budget sequestration, or government shutdown affect psychological health and happiness of Americans? The study will focus on psychological impact of the run-of-the mill political events perceived as stressful by citizens, regardless of whether or not these events were simply witnessed or experienced directly. Undergraduate student collaborators will conduct face-to-face in-home interviews with 300 volunteers from different communities across Pennsylvania. Three outcome variables will be assessed: satisfaction with sense of alienation, and positive mood. It is predicted that negative appraisals of political events will be associated with lower levels of psychological well-being. The overarching goal of the study is to significantly contribute to international psychological literature and augment scholarly and pedagogical expertise of the PI who actively researches and teaches in the fields of stress and coping and cross-cultural psychology.

Endorsement: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, University Faculty Professional Development Committee Date

Endorsement: \_\_\_\_\_  
University President Date



that bring gains and losses, rewards and costs, regardless of whether or not these events are directly or indirectly experienced. The proposed research will examine whether or not the appraisals of commonly occurring political events would be associated with concomitant variations in subjective well-being of Americans living in Pennsylvania.

### Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of this research is embedded within my continuous drive for scholarly growth and augmenting my research expertise. The proposed research project will contribute to the general theory of stress and coping. Nearly 30 years ago stress and coping researchers advocated moving away from aggregated life-event measures and promoted examination of specific and unambiguous life events (e.g., Hobfoll, 1988; Kessler, 1983). The theoretical and clinical importance of studying discrete dramatic events, or a constellation of related events within a specific political upheaval or crisis, is still the golden standard for the field. To complete understanding of the dynamics of everyday stress processes, studying the impact of perceived stressors of everyday political events on subjective well-being has its merits too. The secondary goal of this research is embedded within my professional development as a teacher and mentor. Conducting empirical research on social-psychological concomitants of politics across different cultures will serve as tangible resources in my pedagogy and interactions with students.

The first objective of the proposed research is to replicate and extend the Kaniasty & Jakubowska (2013; in press) study in United States. Does stress appraisals of "garden variety" of political life events impact the subjective well-being of Americans? Do events such as battles over affordable health care, budget sequestration, or government shutdowns cumulatively affect psychological health and happiness of Americans? Based on media accounts of these events, personal reactions and observations of reactions of others, the answer to this question seem obvious. Yet this study is very much needed because the empirical knowledge on this issue is at best minimal, and possibly, only now emerging. The second objective of the proposed research springs from a genuine sense of urgency for conducting studies on these questions given the palpable misanthropy and moral degradation that have accumulated in the lives of many Americans in the last few years of dispiriting and costly national and local politicking. In other words, one proximal objective is to seize the current political milieu because this may be the best time for such investigations. The study will catalog a list of contemporary stressful political events in lives of the Pennsylvanians. The third objective of the proposed research is closely aligned with the trajectory of my own professional development within the research areas of stress and coping. I am a social and community psychologist who has been studying interpersonal dynamics (e.g., helping behavior, companionship, sense of community, interpersonal conflict) in the context of stressful life events at both individual (e.g., criminal victimization, lay-off) and community level (e.g., floods, hurricanes). My theoretical analyses and empirical studies conducted in the US, Mexico, and Europe, strongly demonstrated that the capacity of a collective to triumph over adversities is based on maintaining and augmenting social cohesion, mutual social support, cooperation and a sense of belonging to a valued social group and community. Politics and the political context are a most influential background for these processes. Expanding my research enterprise into psychological impact of-of-the-mill political events on psychological well-being is a part of my professional development which will enhance my theoretical and empirical expertise for future scholarship on coping with a variety of life stressors. The opportunity to augment my knowledge and credibility as an instructor in cross-cultural psychology is the fourth objective of the proposed research project. In the Spring 2014, I will be teaching a new course in cultural psychology, currently listed as PSYC 485 Special Topics: Cultural Psychology. This class will explore how culture influences human thought and action, and to what extent are identities and behaviors common or unique to people and to their cultural environments.

### Description of the Project

In preparation for the proposed project, I will begin this research (irrespective of the outcome of this grant submission) with two studies involving undergraduate IUP students as participants. The



Psychosocial resources will expand on past research that investigated stress protective functions of personal and communal resources following war, or clusters of related political events. The present study will ask if certain characteristics of persons and their social environments would also serve as moderators of influence of commonly occurring political circumstances on subjective well-being. The choice of psychosocial resources for the present study is guided by an overarching premise that for any resource to be relevant for coping it must be closely matched with the ecological demands of the stress context (see Cutrona & Russell, 1990). Resources to be examined here will make direct references to respondents' political activities and will reflect both their respective individual as well as collective dimensions. (1) Political self-efficacy (individuals' beliefs about their capabilities in influencing policy-related actions) will be measured by a 9-item revised Sociopolitical Control Scale (SPCS-R, Peterson et al., 2006). (2) Interest in politics will be assessed with 3 items asking respondents for the frequency with which they follow political

BUDGET SUMMARY

<u>Project Budget</u>	Proposed <u>Grant</u>	University <u>Contribution</u>	Other Revenue <u>Sources</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Salaries/Stipends				
Benefits				
Honoraria	9,000.00			9,000.00
				(ab)
(a. Compensation to respondents for their time, 300 participants * \$20 = 6,000.00)				
(b. Stipends for 15 students collaborators * 20 surveys each * \$10 per survey = 3,000.00)				
Supplies				
Equipment				
Operating Expenses	600.00			600.00
(photocopying, 300 questionnaires * \$2.00)				
Travel				
Other (specify)				
TOTALS	9,600.00			9,600.00

Krzysztof (Krys) Kaniasty

<http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=44401U>

#### EDUCATION

Ph.D., 1991, Social/Community Psychology. University of Louisville

#### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

1997 to present, Professor, Department of Psychology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania

#### SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

International Functions within the Discipline:

President (2012-2014), Stress and Anxiety Research Society ([STARstar-society.org](http://STARstar-society.org))

2011 to present, Research Fellow, Institute of Psychology, Polish Academy of Sciences

Editor Emeritus, *Anxiety, Stress and Coping: An international Journal* 2001-2007 Taylor & Francis.

Books:

Moore, K., Kaniasty, K., Buchwald, P., & Sese, A. (Eds.) (2013). *Stress and anxiety: Application to health, occupational and job stress, and challenges in assessment of stress and anxiety*. Berlin, Germany: Logos Verlag.

Moore, K., Kaniasty, K., & Buchwald, P. (Eds.) (2012). *Stress and anxiety: Application to economic hardship, occupational demands and developmental challenges*. Berlin, Germany: Logos Verlag.

Roussi, P., Vassilaki, E., & Kaniasty, K. (Eds.) (2008). *Stress and psychological resources: Coping with life changes, occupational demands, educational challenges, and threats to physical and emotional well-being*. Berlin, Germany: Logos Verlag.

Kaniasty, K. (2003). *Klaska żywiołowa czy katastrofa społeczna? Psychosocjalne konsekwencje polskiej powodzi 1997 roku. (Natural disaster or social catastrophe? Psychosocial consequences of the 1997 Polish Flood)*. Gdańsk, Poland: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.

Selected peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters (since 2002):

Kaniasty, K. & Jakubowska, U. (in press). Can appraisals of common political life events impact subjective well-being? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*.

Kaniasty, K., & Jakubowska, U. (2013). Assessing common political life stressors: Warsaw Appraisal of Political Stress Inventory. In K. Moore, Kaniasty, K., Buchwald, P. & Sese, A. (Eds.) *Stress and anxiety: Application to health, occupational and job stress, and challenges in assessment of stress and anxiety* (pp. 83-94). Berlin, Germany: Logos Verlag.

Kaniasty, K. (2012). Predicting social psychological well-being following trauma: The role of postdisaster social support. *Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, Policy*, 14, 22-33.

Bonanno, G., Brewin, C., Kaniasty, K., & La Greca, A. (2010). Weighing the costs of disaster:

Kaniasty, K. (2005). Social support and traumatic stress. *PTSD Research Quarterly*, *16*. The National Center for PTSD.

Norris, F. H., Baker, C., Murphy, A. D., & Kaniasty, K. (2005). Social support mobilization and deterioration after Mexico's 1999 Floods. *Effects of context, gender, and time*. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *36*, 5-28.

Kaniasty, K., & Norris, F. H. (2004). Social support in the aftermath of disasters, catastrophes, and acts of terrorism: Altruistic, overwhelmed, uncertain, antagonistic, and patriotic communities. In R. Ursano, A. Norwood, & C. Fullerton (Eds.), *Bioterrorism: Psychological and public health interventions* (pp. 200-229). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, F. H., Friedman, M., Watson, P., Byrne, D., Diaz, E., & Kaniasty, K. (2002). 60,000 disaster victims speak: Part I. An empirical review of the empirical literature, 1981 – 2001. *Psychiatry*, *65*, 207-239.

Norris, F. H., Kaniasty, K., Conrad, M. L., Inama, G. L., & Murphy, A. D. (2002). Placing age differences in cultural context: A comparison of effects of age on PTSD after disasters in the U.S., Mexico, and Poland. *Journal of Clinical Geropsychiatry*, *8*, 153-173.

Keynote addresses:

Disasters or social catastrophes? On social psychological reactions of communities coping with natural and human-induced disasters. Keynote presented at the 46th Annual Australian Psychological Society (APS) Conference, Australia Canberra, October 4 – 8, 2011.

Disasters or social catastrophes? On social psychological reactions of communities coping with natural and human-induced disasters. Keynote presented at the 32nd Annual Conference of the Stress and Anxiety Research Society (STAR) in Munster, Germany, July 18 – 20, 2011.

United or Divided? Social-psychological reactions to natural disasters, technological catastrophes, acts of violence and terror. Paper presented at the 1st Annual PASSHE Psychology Potluck Conference, Indiana, PA, October 23, 2010.

Relevant conference presentations:

Kaniasty K. & Jakubowska, U. (2013, July). Personal and communal resources as moderators of the relationship between common political life events and subjective well-being. Paper presented at the 34th Annual Conference of the Stress and Anxiety Research Society (STAR), Faro, Portugal. (Symposium: "Social support and its relevance at work, at school, and in the community" P. Buchwald, Chair),

Kaniasty K. & Jakubowska, U. (2013, March). Associations between appraisals of commonly experienced political events and psychological well-being. Poster presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, New York, NY.

Jakubowska, U., & Kaniasty, K. (2012, July). Attitudes toward democracy in post-communist states and their psychosocial determinants: The example of Poland. Paper presented at the 30th International Congress of Psychology, Cape Town, South Africa.

Kaniasty, K., & Jakubowska, U. (2012, July). Political stress and sociopolitical, interpersonal, and community functioning. Paper presented at the 33rd Annual Conference of the Stress and Anxiety Research Society (STAR), Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

Jakubowska, U., & Kaniasty, K. (2011, July). Development of the Warsaw Appraisal of Political Stress Inventory. Paper presented at the 32nd Annual Conference of the Stress and Anxiety Research Society (STAR), Munster, Germany.

Major Professional Awards:

The 2011 Stress and Anxiety Research Society Lifetime Career Award, Stress and Anxiety Research Society (STAR) [http://www.star-society.org/html/star\\_awards.html](http://www.star-society.org/html/star_awards.html)

The 1997 Distinguished Faculty Award for Research-- Indiana University of Pennsylvania Senate Award.

The total amount of various grants that I obtained and maintained at IUP exceeded \$500,000 (NIMH, IREX, PASSHE, IUP, Georgia State University, Dartmouth College/National Center for PTSD)





## Previous FPDC grants and outcomes

1994-1995, "Dynamic Role of Social Support in the Process of Coping with Job Loss" PA State System of Higher Education, Category 1-B (Faculty research), \$5,600 (spent \$1,198). Final report submitted.

This study examined various manifestations of social support in a group of laid-off workers (n = 21) as compared to a group of workers (n = 25) continuously employed by the same plant. It was predicted that the loss of employment would result in perceived loss of social support from various sources. Recognizing methodological shortcomings in this study, the data indicated that deterioration of social support from friends mediated the adverse impact of job loss on depressive symptomatology.

### Major outcomes:

Kaniasty, K. (1997). Influence of stressors on perceptions of social support. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, Ill. (Division 8, Symposium: Explaining Perceptions of Social Support: Developmental, Cognitive, and Environmental Factors, K. Kaniasty, Chair).

Kaniasty, K., & Kim-Phillips\*, S. (1998). Social support deterioration in the context of coping with job loss. Paper presented at the 69th Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Boston, February, 1998. (PsyD graduate student)

1998-1999, "Disaster Recovery in Poland: The July 1997 Flood" PA State System of Higher Education, Category 1-B (Faculty research), \$7,000. Final report submitted.

This project investigated a cross-cultural applicability of research on social support dynamics in adjustment to community stress of natural disasters. The PASSHE sponsored phase (July-September, 1998, Wave 1) of this longitudinal study was conducted 12 months after severe flooding affected southwest Poland and neighboring countries in the summer of 1997. A theoretical model labeled social support deterioration deterrence (SSDD, Kaniasty & Norris, 1997) guided face-to-face interviews with 303 residents of Opole region who experienced varied