



Contributions of Community Psychology to the strengthening of social justice, democracy, welfare and sustainable development

Aportes de la Psicología Comunitaria al fortalecimiento de la justicia social, democracia, bienestar y desarrollo sustentable

Editorial

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A transformation scenario is currently taking place in Latin America. In the neo-liberalism crisis context, numerous organized minorities have made clear the questioning of the democratic constructions in our continent based on the articulation from the territories and in a communitarian key. These transformations challenge the components of individualism and social fragmentation reported as characteristic of our societies (Rodríguez & Montenegro, 2016). Solidarity and communion seem to be the axes from which the groups claiming the overcoming of inequity and social exclusion of significant groups have articulated, as well as the social

exclusion of important groups, as well as environmental depredation.

The recent panorama shows us the transversal presence of citizens protesting in the streets for their rights despite the pandemic. We also observe the reinvention of collectives and organizations that have seen in technological tools a possibility to continue their actions during the confinement. We see that communities are no longer only demanding changes; out of their exclusion, based on their own autonomy, they also have learned and implemented autonomous strategies.

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In Chile, the recently created Constituent Convention, chaired by Lamgen¹ Elisa Loncon, renews our hopes for a process that promises to integrate minorities not previously considered in the perspective of the development of a more equitable and just country. Its structure, besides being parity and made up of regular citizens outside political coalitions, has allowed an opening to the heterogeneous knowledge that we find in the community field. The consideration of a diversity of knowledge in the constituent dialogue, considering popular and ancestral knowledge, places us in a scenario of a true paradigmatic transformation, thus allowing an ecology of knowledge that we hope will not fall into co-optation (De Sousa Santos, 2013).

The constituent moment has allowed the 'Buen Vivir' (Good Living) to permeate as a horizon in the political discourse, in the pretension of the construction of a developed and just society (Polo & Piñeiro, 2020; Torres & Ramírez, 2019). From this perspective, we rescue the radical transformation proposed by the 'Buen Vivir' to the prevailing development model, noting also that these proposals deserve to be considered from the field of Community Psychology in the areas of psychosocial intervention as well as in training and research (Reyes et al., in press).

We should remember that from its purpose of responding through research and action to these and other challenges in our societies, Community Psychology has sought to develop effective strategies to successfully support actions for social improvement, emphasizing the strengths of individuals and collaborating in the constitution of competent communities. As such, it proposes a work that guarantees dialogue between the community and social agents, thus ensuring a praxis committed to the transformation of existing relations of power and exclusion (Montero, 2006).

In this socioeconomic and social crisis context, traditional forms of neighborhood organization have been recovered and others have been built, linked to the use of virtual media. Both have proven to be fertile in terms of strategies, novel and convening. The creativity and the organizational response of the neighborhoods to the crisis are challenging and encouraging us to go beyond, since the theoretical and analytical frameworks are surpassed by the wealth of initiatives and perspectives of this community protagonism. This is a challenge for Psychology and the Social Sciences in general, and specifically, for Community Psychology.

The ongoing transformations today invite us to review the relationship established by the community actions

developed by Psychology and other related disciplines and how we are defining change. Reviewing for example, social policies and understanding them as a condition for change, recovering the notions of Good Living, allows us to recognize that they are a space for disputes of knowledge and ethical and political meanings (Reyes et al., in press). Moreover, by approaching the field of research, we can sustain a transformative and non-extractivist praxis involving people, organizations and communities, enabling us to contribute with tools for change (Grosfoguel, 2016).

The current issue of *Psicoperspectivas*, evidences these, as it allows us to examine contemporary Latin American research (mainly from Brazil and Chile) that emerged from current challenges. Covering phenomena such as community dynamics in neighborhoods, social support and collective health of homeless people, the construction of health from community dynamics, the sense of community in adolescents, resistance to women's violence, the politicization of community spaces such as soccer fans and organization in the face of environmental problems, researchers develop novel and rigorous methodological procedures and share results that imply to question what is known and go beyond.

The possibility of connecting us with virtuous and collaborative work experiences between the professional world, the community and university academic spaces is always necessary in this historical moment, and every time this happens it deserves all our attention and appreciation. The works in this Thematic Section are a proof of this.

Opening the thematic section, Alba Zambrano Constanzo, Daniel Henríquez Fernández and Antonio Saldías Alarcón, in their article '*Participatory evaluation of community psychosocial dynamics from the perspective of community strengthening*', present a participatory action research that aimed to collaborate in improving the capacity for organization and collective action in a neighborhood of Temuco, Chile. Within this framework, they describe an evaluation strategy of the community psychosocial dynamics, a contribution for the communities which allow them to focus their attention, analysis and intervention on these dynamics, providing evidence and guidelines for this purpose. It also contributes to public policy programs that often omit the psychosocial components of community dynamics as a key aspect to mobilize processes and resources to improve living conditions.

From Brazil, Verônica Morais Ximenes, Carlos Eduardo Esmeraldo Filho, Sâmia de Carliris Barbosa Malhado,

¹ Sister. It is used as a greeting or preceding a person's proper name with a reference to a person. Source: <https://mapuche.nl/>

Renata Silvestre Moreno and Maria Natalia Bizerra Pimentel Monteiro, introduce the study *'Social support for homeless people: Interface with health, human rights and subjective dimension'* which emphasizes the notions of social support and its relationship with health. This research analyzes the social support of homeless people in Fortaleza (Ceará, Brazil) from health, human rights and subjective dimensions. Through the application of questionnaires to people living on Fortaleza's streets in 2019, they analyzed the sources of social support mostly sought by homeless people. The results pointed to God, the POP Center, and Friends in street situation. The least sought as sources of support were the CAPS, the National Movement of Homeless Population (MNPR) and the Therapeutic Communities, all of which open discussions about the situation of homeless people as subjects of rights.

Eugênia Bridget Gadelha Figueiredo, Elaine Soares de Freitas Leitão, Marcos Antonio de Sousa Rodrigues Moura, Rafaela Pinheiro Pereira, Sara Leite Fernandes and Wanessa Raquel de Farias da Silva in the article *'Promotion of community mental health in a vulnerable territory: Challenges and possibilities'*, report Experiences collected in supervised practices in Psychology and Community Health. Using participatory methodologies in conducting the processes of surveying the health needs of the territory, action planning, implementation and evaluation, based on onto epistemological assumptions and analytical categories of Community Psychology, the authors report how, in the territory, community relations are crossed by the psychosocial effects of inequality and fear weakening the structure of life in common. In this context, they point out the importance of facilitating the improvement of community relations aimed at overcoming social inequities in health, as well as the valorization of history, memory and local language.

In the research *'Relationship between sense of community, well-being, mental health and gender in schooled adolescents'*, authors Loreto Leiva, Anubis Mendoza, Betzabé Torres-Cortés and Andrés Antivilo-Bruna inquired about the level of Sense of Community perceived in Chilean school contexts and its relationship with the Well-being and Mental Health of school adolescents; also considering gender as a relevant category. With almost three thousand participants from 11 municipal educational establishments, they assessed the Sense of Community, the level of Well-being and the difficulties in Mental Health. Results showed that Sense of Community, Well-being and Mental Health are better in students in elementary school and in males, also finding that Sense of Community predicts Well-being as well as Mental Health in adolescents.

From Brazil again, Renata Guerda de Araújo Santos shares an ethnographic research developed in the city of Juazeiro, State of Bahia, in her article *'The production of mental health care: A quilombist community perspective'*. Through the ethnographic narrative - recomposed from a field diary and an interview with a patient of the Psychosocial Care Center, it describes her vindication in the face of obstetric violence and madness. The author highlights how racism generates and defines the suffering and death of black women, being fundamental -in a context where race, gender and class coordinate the lines between life and death-, that care and the articulation of networks may incorporate "quilombismo" as an ethical, political and community referent capable of becoming a strategy in psychosocial care.

In their article *'Community politicization of female soccer fans: The case of Nuestra Cruzada'*, Oriana García and Roberto Fernández examine the spaces of community politicization of women soccer fans to address violence and exclusion towards women, both in soccer and in society in general. Specifically, they report the results of a research developed with members of Nuestra Cruzada group, with the aim of understanding the community politicization that takes place in this space. Through participant observation and the group's document review, the main results showed that the group allows its members to be together both in soccer and in various socio-political struggles, transforming the stadium and the gallery into spaces of resistance against machismo and patriarchy, but also acting in the streets in various feminist and social demonstrations in general. The authors highlight the importance of the community politicization of women in soccer for the ongoing processes of resistance and social transformation.

Concluding this thematic section, author René Squella Soto in his article *'Socio-environmental conflict, citizen participation and territorial dispute: Contributions from Community Environmental Psychology'*, refers to the multiple conflicts in which the territory is disputed and the valuations made of it and the common goods existing therein, within the framework of the socio-environmental problems occurring in the current Chilean neo-liberal capitalist development model. With the perspective of community environmental psychology and collective mapping as a methodological tool, together with the socio-environmental movement "No to the Quebradilla Thermoelectric Plant", Squella describes and analyzes the socio-environmental conflicts taking place in the Province of Petorca, Chile. His work reports the emergence, coming from the community and from the conflict, of an organized collective action that stimulates the sustainable construction of the territory that inhabitants have generated for decades, and questions authorities and institutions, stopping a project

catalogued as harmful for the ecosystem and local productive initiatives.

One of the Free Thematic Articles, Rosa Vázquez-Recio shares her work '*The narrated memory in experiences of school disengagement: For a situated knowledge to improve education*', a research focused on the role of memory in the processes of narrating school disengagement experiences. Author addresses memory in qualitative research and narrative approaches, the methodology used in the study, and from which she conducted ethnographic interviews with adolescents and young people who have experienced school disengagement. Results allow the identification of relevant memory enclaves in school disengagement experiences: disciplinary reports and expulsions, teachers, classmates, subjects, exams, transition from primary to secondary school and self-image. This research leads to conclude that situated knowledge, sustained in the narrated memory, can help educational

improvement to ensure equity and inclusion.

In '*Mid-level leadership practices in third shift coordinators of youth and adult education in Chile*', researchers Andrea Carrasco Sáez, Pablo González Martínez and Diego Barraza Rubio, examine the role played by journey educational coordinators (CTJ) in establishments for this category of education (EPJA-TJ). Authors state that, while the role is valued and highlighted by the teachers interviewed, from the formal perspective, it is necessary a definition of the position attributions, since in practice, those who act as TJs go beyond what is established in literature as "middle leaders". On the other hand, and considering the importance of the TJs, they propose that this figure should be recognized as a managerial-level teacher, associating their functions with a commensurate remuneration and continuous training programs, while promoting the strengthening of this educational modality and a solid leadership structure.

We invite the interested community to review this sample of community actions developed from psychology and other related disciplines.

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