



Psychology, psychosocial processes and rural scenarios*

Editorial

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*Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version).

Recommended citation: Reyes Espejo, M. I., Pavez, J., Urbina, C., Monreal-Alvarez, Ma. V., Landini, F., & Ribeiro, L. P. (2022). Psychology, psychosocial processes and rural scenarios: Editorial. *Psicoperspectivas*, 21(2).
<https://dx.doi.org/10.5027/psicoperspectivas-vol21-issue2-fulltext-2806>

A significant part of the world's poorest population lives in territories defined as rural. Thus, the lack of access to health, education, recreation, and problems of habitability and connectivity are relevant challenges to be addressed for the development of rural scenarios. Added to this, aspects such as low technification and low training are part of the difficulties of dynamic development of rural territories on a global scale (ECLAC, 2018).

In Latin America, analyses of the recent (pre-pandemic) period show that territorial inequalities, from the polarizations between the rural and urban world, continue to be explained from the processes of emigration of young people to the cities, idealized as the best development alternative. As a consequence, the decrease in rural population density, as well as its lesser relevance in the context of its visibility for public and social policies, particularizes the effects of social inequality and poverty for those who remain in rural areas. However, we know that the problems of rurality have structural roots that are anchored in the local dynamics and life experiences of the entire community (ECLAC, 2018).



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In Chile, as in all Latin America, this migratory process has been described as a factor that leads to the transgenerational reproduction of rural poverty based on the accumulated disadvantages accounting for the erosion of individual, family and social resources (Morales et al., 2022). Emigration of rural Chilean youth to the cities has not provided an answer or a way out of poverty; on the contrary, this territorial uprooting is considered one of the main problems of increasingly depopulated and aging rural areas. Therefore, an alternative to address poverty in rural Chile has been to encourage the return of young people, understanding their leadership and work as a practice that stimulates local economies at the rural level (FUNASUPO, 2021).

Since health and social crisis resulting from COVID 19 pandemic, it has been detected the beginning of a trend to return to rural areas by young people, sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters of rural-urban migrants. According to Fundación Superación de la Pobreza (2021), these returning decisions respond to individual choices of their protagonists and, in practice, they have little support from the governmental-social context, having to face a myriad of odds and obstacles. But we have also seen the important impact of their arrival in the territories:

They bring energy, new ideas and the desire to develop the territory and reverse the poverty that affects their communities. They arrive hand in hand with tourism, agricultural, livestock or handicraft enterprises that revitalize trades, ways of life and reactivate the local economy and culture. They are true territorial dynamizers (p. 41).

From this perspective, we can see how community dynamics constitute a relevant space for intervention providing alternatives to overcome new and old problems facing the rural world today.

All the above highlights the most recent processes of social transformation in the national and international context and contextualizes a practice of "Buen Vivir" aligned as a post-developmental trend that, as a critical perspective to the capitalist-neoliberal development models imported from the West, promotes the direct participation of citizens in community (Reyes, et al., 2021). In this sense, Good Living also implies the consideration of other rights such as those of the environment and the relevance of life in harmony of the subjects with their environment. Its attention in the field of rural studies points out an important challenge for Psychology as a discipline, and also in the field of interventions, situating psychosocial processes from their particularities, needs and particular meanings.

Latin American Psychology has rarely stopped to think about the specificities of rural areas, both in relation to the knowledge it generates and its professional practices. Thus, findings of research and psychological work, in general, tend to be transferred uncritically from urban to rural contexts without a proper discussion of their scope and contextual relevance, which implies a naive assumption that human beings are identified with urban. Simultaneously, specific psychosocial processes and dynamics associated with rurality remain invisible to our profession. Given this context, it is necessary to make a greater effort to think about the interface between psychology and rurality. We assume that 'the rural' requires a specific view of psychology, since it is a field of problems that challenges its theories and tasks, usually thought and developed from urban sociocultural practices.

In Latin America, this non-essentialist scenario of rural Psychology has also pointed out its fragmentary nature at the level of its developments, identities and perspectives. Thus, advancing in the development of reflections on the nature of the disciplinary space is a relevant challenge, favoring the consolidation of discussions that can take up the multiple voices of its protagonists (Conti et al., 2020).

Rural Psychology, as a field of problems that articulates psychology and rurality, appears as a heterogeneous space, where coexist a diversity of approaches and perspectives. While this constitutes a potentiality by allowing to approach its object from different perspectives, also leads to the great challenge to integrate different contributions from the recognition of diversity values -which is not always easy- especially when it involves different ethical-political perspectives.

This acknowledges the tensions arising between rural and urban world views, evidenced in the ways people relate to each other, to land and nature, as well as in the variety of production, reproduction and life transformations. Practices based on life experiences, social, historical and current struggles for alternative models of development, recognition of rights and political autonomy as an affirmation of one's own identity.

As a plural field, the idea of rural psychology also invites attention to a set of issues of great importance in the Latin American context, often little attended to by psychology. This opens up a potentially unlimited list of phenomena that stand out either because of their importance or because they require greater attention. Among them are: migratory processes or displacement of rural populations, political violence, rural development and international cooperation initiatives and projects, aging of rural populations, sexual and reproductive health, and cultural and ethical diversity, among many others.

In this edition of *Psicoperspectivas* we confirm the importance and impact that rural psychology can have, understanding it as an analytical field where proposals and approaches to the psychosocial processes of different Latin American territories emerge, which, while keeping many similarities, also makes their heterogeneity visible.

This issue contains six papers selected from our call for papers **Psychology, Psychosocial Processes and Rural Scenarios**. They outline experiences from Cuba, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile, located in rural contexts, gathering the experiences of rural workers. We hope that the dialogue of these works will serve as a stimulus to continue contributing, from Latin America, to promote the work and development of rural psychology at a global level. From this perspective, we invite readers to encourage and share these research experiences.

First, we present the article '*Exchange of experiences and horizontal learning among extension agents: Neglected source of knowledge for practice*', by researcher Fernando Landini (CONICET, Argentina), who collects and analyzes, from the approach of communities of practice, the horizontal learning derived from interaction among peers in the framework of rural extension, based on interviews with extensionists from Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala and Uruguay (68 individual and 18 group interviews). This study identifies four specific interaction dynamics: questions to colleagues, exchanges in planning meetings, dialogue in non-formalized spaces, analysis of practice in the framework of postgraduate programs; it highlights the existence of specific and other more profound learnings that question the way of approaching practice, and the existence of exchanges among peers based on a logic of diversity of opinions and preferences, in contrast to a criterion of truth. The results suggest the need to understand the impact of different work dynamics on the interaction between peers working in private enterprise, to analyze peer exchange processes from an ethnographic perspective, to study the link between conceptual knowledge, personal experience and dialogue with peers in the framework of extension and rural development postgraduate programs, and finally, to identify and analyze the tools used by different Latin American institutions to facilitate these peer interaction processes.

In second place, the work by the authors Pamela Castillo Mardones and Marta Gràcia, entitled '*Use and development of oral language in the rural classroom: change of educational paradigms*', seeks to make visible the challenges and opportunities faced by schools located in rural Chile through the analysis of the perceptions and strategies of use and development of oral language in the classroom, according to teachers who work in rural schools, considering their school and family history. Given the importance of the development of communicative competence, we consider it necessary to know, from the teachers' point of view, their communicative histories in relation to the way in which they accompany the use and development of oral language in their students from rural areas. To this end, the authors interviewed eight teachers from two regions of the country, identifying factors that influence communicative competence in the rural context and a profile of teachers who promote instances that favor its acquisition.

In '*Minority social influence against socio-environmental crisis: Intentional ecological communities in rural places*', author Rodolfo E. Mardones identifies, through ethnographically oriented qualitative research, the emergence of intentional communities that act at the interface of personal and collective change, gather under ecological principles and experience ways of life. Mardones identifies, through ethnographically oriented qualitative research, the emergence of intentional communities that act at the interface of personal and collective change, gather under ecological principles and experience ways of living together in the face of the socio-environmental crisis, with the purpose of influencing society and its relationship with nature, seeking to understand the practices of minority influence directed at their surrounding community in the environmental, economic and social dimensions. The author emphasizes that the socio-environmental crisis and its immediate expression in climate change take center stage as a catastrophe that must be urgently faced, however, its daily life must confront socio-political contradictions.

Researchers Ma. Verónica Monreal-Alvarez Felipe Valenzuela-Levi, Catalina Muñoz Hernández and Camila Cordeu-Lobos are the authors of '*Views, conflicts, and confluence on rural well-being: A qualitative study on a community in Valparaíso*'. This article seeks to contribute elements for reflection on public policies for rural development, to understand the relationship between the visions of people belonging to a community in a rural locality and the decision-makers and executors of territorial and sectoral policies for that locality, given that globalization, migratory flows and the redirection of economic production in rural territories to areas other than agriculture have brought into debate the criteria and indicators that guide the definition of rurality, making it clear that the urban-rural dichotomy is insufficient. The authors identify the analytical axes that guide the identification of discrepancies between social actors with respect to needs related to community and environmental well-being: experience with rurality, relationship with nature, social support and the view of community organizations in the territory. It also establishes that community psychological processes characterize the social dynamics of communities in rural contexts, occupying a preponderant place in the dialogue between territories and public policies.

Authors Carmen Gloria Núñez Muñoz, Mónica Peña Ochoa, Mauricio Díaz Araya and Bryan González Niculcar examine, in their article '*From urban to rural schools: A case study of school path with children in Chile*', the results of a qualitative research aimed at understanding and analyzing the subjective experience of children regarding their own school path, in a context where Chilean rural schools have been receiving students who come from urban schools and who have experienced dynamics of exclusion. Through semi-structured interviews, supported by the collage technique with images provided by the researchers and content analysis, the results reveal a school experience marked by the absence of adults and violent relationships with peers in the urban school, as opposed to the school experience in the rural school of meaningful and close ties. We conclude the importance of the role of rural schools in the continuity of school trajectories, where inclusive cultures positively valued by families are developed.

In '*"It was there near the yaca tree": Appropriation of social memory by rural black children*', by authors Beatriz Corsino Perez and Amanda Thuns Biazzi, addresses the narratives of elderly residents in the community of Cafuringa, in Campos dos Goytacazes village, Brazil, as well as intergenerational dialogues and the role of children in the preservation of social memory. From semi-structured interviews with nine community residents and workshops with more than 30 years old and young people, the appropriation and updating of the narratives told by the elders -mostly legends related to Afro-Brazilian traditions- emerges using strategies such as dialogue, games and drawing. Authors highlight the specific relationship that the community establishes with its territory, the conflicts between the values of the present and the memories of the past, and the active role that children play in the maintenance of social memory.

In addition, in this issue we include three free articles that report on novel studies that highlight the effects of the COVID context on the work of public policies and on the urban environment from the

experience of older adults. Finally, we present an article situated in a school context, which addresses the effects of assimilation -from Bourdieu's perspective- in a school with high socioeconomic diversity.

In '*Gender and teleworking: The case of the female workers of the Uruguay Grows with You Program*', researchers Karina Batthyány, Sol Scavino Solari and Sharon Katzkowicz study, through the analysis of 26 in-depth interviews with female workers of the Program, how they were affected by the change in the working modality after the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of daily, work and childcare dynamics and how they faced the challenge of reconciling work and caregiving spaces. Authors establish that the change had significant emotional costs for the workers, as a result of the stress arising from the feeling of non-compliance in both areas, the difficulty of delimiting the work and care space and the feeling of maternal guilt, placing care as a basic problem that places on them the responsibility of dealing with work and care in the pandemic.

Authors Bárbara Olivares, Antonella Rossi and Marie Geraldine Herrmann-Lunecke revise, in '*Walks of the elderly through their neighborhoods of residence in Santiago, Chile*' the results of a research that sought to know the effects that the urban environment has on the walking of the elderly. They interviewed 40 elderly walkers belonging to four neighborhoods of the commune of Santiago, applying two techniques: an in-depth interview to know the psychosocial profile of the walkers and a "walking interview" to accompany daily routes in the environments where these people walk. The information was analyzed qualitatively and three categorical axes were constructed where the main results were organized. It is concluded that the pandemic has a negative impact on the lives of the elderly, preventing them from walking and intensifying the experiences of loneliness and isolation. Living in neighborhoods of long permanence produces beneficial effects for the elderly, allowing them to be linked to the spaces from memory and collective trajectories.

The final paper, '*Inclusion, equality and assimilationism in schools with socioeconomic diversity*' researcher Manuela Mendoza-Horvitz analyzes the findings of a case study in two Chilean schools with exceptional levels of socioeconomic heterogeneity among their students. Guided by a discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's concepts, an analysis of interviews with teachers and principals reveals an ambivalent attitude towards socioeconomic differences and mixtures in schools. On the one hand, these differences are celebrated and associated with benefits for all students, mainly the development of egalitarian dispositions, such as attitudes to relate respectfully and empathetically with others. On the other hand, the aim is to make socioeconomic differences invisible in everyday life in order to promote social equality in the school environment. The article argues that such invisibilization is articulated at the cost of assimilation of the poorest students, which poses limitations for social inclusion in these schools despite their exceptional openness to mixing. It concludes by discussing some key elements to consider for the promotion of non-assimilationist school inclusion and democratic coexistence.

It is our hope that this new issue will renew and stimulate interest in the hard work of Social Science professionals in rural areas. We invite everyone to review its contents.

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