

International Community Psychology: Community Approaches to Contemporary Social Problems. Volume I.

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Psicología Comunitaria Internacional Aproximaciones Comunitarias a los Problemas Sociales Contemporáneos. Volumen I.

UNIVERSIDAD IBEROAMERICANA PUEBLA

Puebla, México. 2011

Almeida, Eduardo. Editor

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ISBN:

Published by:

Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla. First Edition 2011.

Printed in Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla

Blvd. del Niño Poblano 2901, Unidad Territorial Atlixcáyotl, Puebla, México 72197

Telephone: +52 222 372 3000

You can order additional copies of this publication via the following email address: libros@iberopuebla.edu.mx

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Typographical ordering

En portada: Obra del Mtro. José Valderrama Izquierdo

Datos de la obra: - Título: "En todos uno". – Técnica: óleo sobre madera. – Medidas: (0.21 x 0.40 mts). – Número de Obra: 512. – Año: 2008.

Mail del Artista: vi.art12@gmail.com

Colección: Familia Almeida Sánchez

Diseño primera y cuarta de forros:

José Valderrama Izquierdo

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ISBN:

Publicado por

Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla. Primera edición 2011.

Impreso en Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla

Blvd. del Niño Poblano 2901, Unidad Territorial Atlixcáyotl, Puebla, México, 72197

Teléfono: + 52 222 372 3000

Puede ordenar ejemplares de esta publicación a través de la siguiente dirección electrónica:

libros@iberopuebla.edu.mx

Printed and bounded in Mexico

Impreso y encuadernado en México

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Dedication

To all communities throughout the world.

Dedicatoria

A todas las comunidades esparcidas por el mundo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is the first volume of two that will communicate the Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Community Psychology celebrated in Puebla, Mexico, in June 2010. As such it partially represents the third international academic achievement of community psychologists from all over world. Human beings from all the continents gave time and support to make the international gathering a success. We decided to offer in Vol. I the presentations of the invited participants that were selected by the Scientific International Committee. But there were other important studies presented at the Conference. A competent editorial team from Puerto Rico is now preparing Vol. II. Here we want to thank the two local editorial teams, the one from Puebla (Mexico) and the one from San Juan (Puerto Rico). We also have to mention and thank the members of our International Editorial Committee. They were important collaborators in the preparation of the Conference, decisive in selecting the invited participants, and assuring the quality of their presentations.

A special recognition is deserved by the 16 contributors of this volume. They volunteered their time and expertise preparing their keynote addresses and papers, delivering them, and going through the demanding experience of revising their texts and contributing to the editing of the book. Their presentations were the backbone of the Conference.

To David Fernández Dávalos, President of Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla who has been a permanent supporter of the academic celebration, motivating faculty members, students and administrators to be active in the organization of the Conference, we give him a heartfelt thanks.

Three instances of the university were instrumental in the recognized quality achieved in the June 2010 International gathering and in the final preparation of this Vol. I.: The Department of Human Development, the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, and the Alain Touraine Chair. The members of the Executive Committee and of the Puebla Editorial Committee belong to those instances.

Special thanks are deserved by Mary Paz Cuahutle, María Guadalupe Chávez, Isabel Vázquez, Cristina Fonseca, Adelina Quiroz, María Eugenia Romero and Guadalupe Barradas for their support in organizing and following up many tasks before, during and in the preparation of

this first volume. We want to acknowledge the skilled translation work, written and oral, carried out by Rossana Dos Santos, Linda Christianson, Jean Hennequin, Cathleen Pomaski, Guillermo Duque, Mónica Ayala and Eduardo José Almeida Sánchez. And finally we must recognize the artistic contributions of José Valderrama and Carmen Tiburcio.

AGRADECIMIENTOS

Este libro es el primer volumen de dos que comunicarán las Memorias de la Tercera Conferencia Internacional de Psicología Comunitaria celebrada en Puebla, México, en junio de 2010. Como tal representa el tercer logro académico internacional de psicólogos comunitarios de todo el mundo. Seres humanos de todos los continentes brindaron tiempo y apoyo para hacer de este encuentro internacional un éxito. Decidimos ofrecer en este Volumen I las presentaciones de los participantes invitados que fueron escogidos por el Comité Científico Internacional. Como también hubo otros estudios importantes presentados durante la Conferencia un competente equipo editorial de Puerto Rico está preparando el Volumen 2. Queremos reconocer y agradecer a ambos equipos editoriales locales, al de Puebla (México) y al de San Juan (Puerto Rico). También debemos mencionar y agradecer a los miembros de nuestro Comité Editorial Internacional. Ellos fueron colaboradores importantes en la preparación de la Conferencia, decisivos en la selección de los participantes invitados y aseguraron la calidad de sus trabajos.

Un reconocimiento especial merecen los 16 autores de este volumen. Aportaron voluntariamente su tiempo y su expertez preparando sus intervenciones, presentándolas y emprendiendo la exigente experiencia de afinar sus textos y contribuyendo a la edición del libro. Sus presentaciones fueron la columna vertebral de la Conferencia.

Damos un agradecimiento cordial a David Fernández Dávalos, Rector de la Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla, quien ha sido un sostén permanente de esta celebración académica, motivando a profesores, estudiantes y administrativos para participar activamente en la organización de la Conferencia.

Tres instancias de la universidad fueron clave para lograr la alta calidad organizativa y académica lograda en el encuentro internacional de junio de 2010 y en la preparación de este Volumen I: El Departamento de Ciencias para el Desarrollo Humano, el Departamento de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades, y la Cátedra Alain Touraine. Los miembros del Comité Ejecutivo y del Comité Editorial Local de Puebla son parte de estas instancias.

Agradecimiento especial merecen Mary Paz Cuahutle, María Guadalupe Chávez, Isabel Vázquez, Cristina Fonseca, Adelina Quiroz, María Eugenia Romero y Guadalupe Barradas por su apoyo organizando y realizando muchas tareas, antes, durante y en la preparación de este Volumen I. Queremos reconocer el competente trabajo de traducción, escrito y oral, realizado por

Rossana Dos Santos, Linda Christianson, Jean Hennequin, Cathleen Pomaski, Guillermo Duque, Mónica Ayala y Eduardo José Almeida Sánchez. Finalmente debemos agradecer las contribuciones artísticas de José Valderrama y Carmen Tiburcio.

FOREWORD

The First International Conference on Community Psychology, held at the University of Puerto Rico, campus Río Piedras, in June 2006, was a bold initiative designed to convene for the first time community psychologists from all over the world. The general topic was “Shared Agendas in Diversity”. The Conference was successful in deploying the diversity of community psychology agendas and in giving the opportunity to exchange the variety of experiences in which community psychologists were involved.

The Second Conference took place in June 2008 in Lisbon, Portugal. The Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada was this time the convener. The leitmotif chosen was “Building Participative, Empowering and Diverse Communities; Visioning Community Psychology in worldwide perspective”. This time the purpose of the international gathering was to encourage community psychologists to build communities characterized by participation and empowerment, learning from the diversity of participants’ research and interventions. This Conference was a second landmark in conforming and confirming the international status of Community Psychology.

The Third Conference celebrated in June 2010 at Universidad Iberoamericana in Puebla, Mexico, focused on “Community Approaches to Contemporary Social Problems”. It addressed the scientific and professional status of Community Psychology as an international endeavor from the perspective of the historical and sociocultural context of present day social concerns and as a multidisciplinary “linking science” able to afford an original and needed contribution to deal with them.

Community psychology worldwide has been relevant in relation to key sociopsychological issues in rich and disadvantaged nations confronted by psychologists since the mid-fifties of the last century.

Three important recent sources of International Community Psychology give the information to support this general overview: *International Community Psychology: History and Theories* (Reich et al., 2007); *International Community Psychology: Shared Agendas in Diversity* (Vázquez Rivera, et al., 2009); and *Historias de la Psicología Comunitaria en América Latina. Participación y Transformación* (Montero y Serrano-García, 2011).

In the 1950s and 1960s the key social psychological issues were how to attend the health and mental health needs of the world population (Bennett, Sarason, Pichón Rivière, Moffat, Cueli); and how to make relevant psychological contributions to solve development problems (Fals Borda, Seaman, Escovar).

In the 1970s the concerns of community psychologists were how to attend to the needs of the poor, the minorities and the elderly. (Bronfenbrenner, Almeida, Rappaport, Kelly); and how to develop alternative sociopolitical strategies in the disadvantaged nations to end colonization and to improve the material and psychological human condition (Freire, Fanon, Maurer Lane, Duncan).

In the 1980s the issues raised were how to respond to the demands of gender equality and of the needs of the disabled (C. Kagan, Burton, Francescato, Bristo, Ornelas); and how to confront the psychological hurdles to the democratization process of the world (Martín-Baró, Montero Rivas, Seidman, Maori psychologists, Theology of Liberation).

In the 1990s the world was confronted with how to deal with the new epidemics (HIV-AIDS and others) and with the spread of drug addictions (Serrano-García, Pérez Jiménez, Medina Mora, Natera, Orford); and also for ways to confront the psychological impacts of the economic impositions of the world financial institutions (Zapatistas, Dobles, Bader Sawaiia, Freitas, Fryer).

In the 2000s new threats had to be envisioned: how to face the world's natural systems degradation and the new technologies psychosocial consequences (Mercado, Montero y L. L., Legewie, Wiesenfeld, Malvezzi, Stark, V. Francisco, Voorhees, Blanchard, Obst); and how to fight for public policies beneficial to the well being of everyone, not only of the elites (L. T. Smith, E. Sánchez, Sánchez Vidal, Sixsmith, Sasao, Miranda, Aubry, Zambrano).

In the 2010s the world looks for ways to deal with migration and economic recession problems everywhere (Papineau, Nafstad, Botchway, García Ramírez, Lundburg, Wolff); and to confront the related psychosocial realities of domination, discrimination, exclusion and violence generated by the powerful capitalistic trend to give absolute priority to financial profits at the expense of the well being of humanity (Trigo, Moreno, Sonn, Vargas Moniz, Bauman, Sacipa).

The aforementioned issues are undoubtedly the main psychosocial concerns of the recent historical decades. This picture give the rationale behind the main theme for the Third Conference: Community Approaches to Contemporary Social Problems. The focus was on Economic polarization, Interculturality, New Technologies, and Violence. The Conference was

designed for contributing to the study of such topics. In this first volume of the Proceedings the reader will find the texts of the 16 invited collaborators. The same topics certainly will be studied in the articles chosen for the second volume.

Given the importance of community realities, i.e. of interacting cognitive and emotional collective life situations, as a timely issue, these proceedings become all the more significant by providing additional background for this emerging International Community Psychology as a “linking science”. It has to be acknowledged that Community Psychology has been so far powerful in experiences, diverse in agendas, limited in theorizing and academic institutionalization, and scarce in communicating its findings. There has been an honest effort of deflating some of the current myths and misconceptions of community and about Community Psychology.

The main issue for the social sciences from Community Psychology it is not the relation between the individual and society, but the relation between the individual, community and society. Community Psychology as a linking science, recognizing the diversity of its local or regional agendas, can help in studying and understanding social problems from their subsumed human relational realities. It can contribute also to the knowledge and comprehension of individual subjective and objective situations related to healthy and unhealthy behaviors and mental conditions.

This is to say that the concept and reality of community imply not only a mediating role in the exchanges between the individual and society, but that it becomes, in some sense, a third important element in order to explain and understand the status and dynamics of the human condition: relationality, communication, conversation.

When we speak of community in this Foreword we refer to a form of group relationship based on a dynamic interaction relatively stable that includes strategies of conflict management and diverse levels of shared utopias. In other words we have in mind a collective process of an evolving system of stabilized relationships, of a dynamic network of communication, of a web of ongoing conversations among individuals in which they can find mutuality, affection and identity. Community as relationality adopts different community structures according to historical and cultural circumstances and places. The Third International Conference on Community Psychology was designed to build knowledge on the way diverse community structures and experiences approach and confront the four main concerns of our times.

Four sets of main issues.

The contents of this book are presented in four sets of texts organized according to the subject matters developed by the collaborators: Critical vision of Community Psychology; Health as a Community Challenge; Violence, attempts upon community life; Cultures and Communities.

a) Critical Vision of Community Psychology

Four texts intend to raise questions from the previous development of the Community Psychology field:

- In “From Complexity and Social Justice to Consciousness: Ideas that Have Constructed Community Psychology” Maritza Montero attempts to build a theoretical system through the analysis of ideas that have contributed to conform community psychology as a way to study and offer solutions to social problems affecting communities, to achieve a better world. This text of the Inaugural Conference is an invitation to join the author in the unending and neglected effort to give better and richer theoretical foundations to our emergent science.
- María de Fátima Quintal de Freitas develops a model of analysis in “Community Psychology as Political Education and Awareness-raising: Resistances and possibilities in Everyday Life”. The purpose is to offer an approach that makes possible its liberation paradigm. Engaged participation in social transformation and raised awareness sometimes are taken for granted in community programs without taking into account the challenges and dilemmas encountered in the present contexts of globalization and exclusion. How to guarantee a way of social change strengthening the small networks of solidarity? How to involve? How to keep involved?
- “Thinking Critically the Theory and Practice of Community Psychology”, this article by Esther Wiesenfeld presents a demanding agenda for the years ahead. Community Social Psychology in Latin America can be viewed as a psychological discipline with an autonomous development in the region. It includes academic and field programs, multiple areas of application, processes, scopes of action, populations, activities. The

discipline has been growing steadily. However, many questions have to be raised, in terms of initial values and expectations, its adaptation to society's rapid changes, theoretical and methodological usefulness, new dilemmas and challenges, community myths, university training, relevance in the struggle to confront poverty.

- A proposal to enlarge the field is offered by Wolfgang Stark in "Community Psychology as a Linking Science: Potentials and Challenges for Transdisciplinary Competencies". Community Psychology must go beyond its traditional concerns and its focus on local communities. The idea includes collaborating more with other disciplines, societal institutions, business companies; learning from different cultural values approaches; focusing on macro and micro issues of community analysis and community building; developing its identity as a linking science.

The message for Community Psychology coming out from these four presentations relates to the need to increase the theoretical activity in the field, to develop analytical skills and practices, to keep alive and alert the critical eye of the discipline, and to broaden the scope of its concerns as a scientific crossroads.

In the Inaugural Address Maritza Montero develops the key idea of Relatedness from which derives the notions of sense of community and of community identity. Fatima Quintal de Freitas contributes to this position when she relates social change with individual involvement by creating small networks of solidarity. Esther Wiesenfeld manifests in her paper her concern about the inadequacy of community psychology as it is understood and practiced in relation to our societies rapid changes in a *weltanschauung* dominated by individualistic trends. Wolfgang Stark suggests the need of Community Psychology to develop its identity as a linking science by focusing on community as a catalyst of macro and micro social issues.

b) Health as a community challenge

Recurrent themes, important for community psychology, are the difficulties endured by persons attempting to provide appropriate community health services and the ones suffered by people who receive such services. Such difficulties are presented in the next papers: A first theme is the well-being of people living with long-term neurological conditions; of families and communities affected by addictions; of indigenous women linked to an alcoholic partner; of homeless people from a first world country. Another theme is the importance of listening to the cultural and circumstantial aspects of the affected. The third is the need for collaborative working between disciplines.

- In “Well-Being Services for People with Long Term Neurological Conditions: Co-Researchers Involvement in Research, Service Design and Development” Judith Sixsmith affirms that community health services can enhance the well-being of people rather than simply reveal or address their health and social care needs. This chapter outlines the involvement strategies in services provided for people with Long Term Neurological Conditions refocusing service provider perceptions away from seeing this people as needy, or as problems to be solved and more towards people whose well-being can be improved with the support of professionals. The study includes co-researchers training. It presents reflections on the process of involvement in service design and delivery.
- An enormous challenge for families and communities health and well being come from the millions of people whose lives are adversely affected by alcohol or drug addiction. Having to cope with it can make it a highly stressful experience. In “Re-Empowering Family Members Disempowered by Addictions: Support for Individuals or Collective Action?” Jim Orford presents a program of research that has explored in detail the nature of affected family members experiences and develops a method for helping affected family members in their own right. The research carried out in four countries has suggested the existence of a common core of disempowered experience with some cross-cultural variations. The supporting method emphasizes listening

carefully to families' stories, providing relevant information, discussing coping dilemmas and building social support.

- Guillermina Natera has experienced that it is extremely difficult to modify patterns of consumption of alcohol in indigenous families and communities. However, these families suffer from poverty and from the consequences of the alcohol abuse of a relative, and usually they do not receive assistance. "The Mental Itineraries of the Everyday Lives of Indigenous woman Linked to their Partners Excessive Alcohol Consumption" describes a research project that studied women's forms of suffering from this problem in a patriarchal world. It is difficult for them to tell others about their partner's problem. A brief intervention model was adapted to help families. Listening respectfully to the emotional malaise of the women enabled the researchers to discover their mental itineraries and to devise new coping strategies which led to a significant reduction of depressive, health and psychological symptoms.
- Homelessness is a major social public health problem affecting people all over the world. It affects also developed countries. It is defined as a living situation in which individuals and families are lacking permanent housing as a result of poverty and inadequate supports. In "Conducting Research on Homelessness in Canada from a Community Psychology Perspective: Reflections on Lessons Learned" Tim Aubry refers to two projects of research on homelessness within a community psychology perspective that were conducted in Ottawa: A longitudinal study that followed a group of people who started out homeless for a period of two years; and a project for the development and dissemination of report cards on homelessness. Some lessons learned were the need to expand research and advocacy efforts on homelessness, the need to develop them in collaboration with the community, the need to make a significant investment in dissemination of research findings.

These four presentations offer new insights in dealing with community health problems. One important aim of community health psychology is to look for the well-being of people, beyond their problems. Health hurdles affect not only individuals but also and significantly the

lives of the collectives in which they live. Patriarchal obstacles and other cultural limitations can be overcome developing community innovative strategies. Social public health problems are global in nature, research efforts about them must become important objects of public policies.

Judith Sixsmith stresses the importance of addressing the problems of long term neurological disabilities not only as a social problem or as an individual impairment, but as a collective need for well being. Jim Orford and Guillermina Natera focus their papers in the same way pointing out to the addiction problems not as a general social plague or as an individual limitation, but as a source of distress for the family and the community. Tim Aubry's work on homelessness has been concerned with it not as an abstract social problem, or as an individual situation, but as a community challenge to be addressed locally through adequate social policies.

c) Violence, attempts upon community life.

This section includes papers from a Symposium and a Keynote Invited Address intended to catalyze critical Conference debate in relation to violence. The question was how should violence be understood from a Community Psychology standpoint and how can that understanding be progressively deployed. The next four articles will talk, from the differing standpoints of the authors, about their violence-related work: Socio-structural, political, xenophobic and racial violence.

- In "The War Without Bullets: Socio-structural Violence from a Critical Standpoint" David Fryer, a community psychologist, and Cathy McCormack, a community activist, have worked in mutually supportive and stimulating ways to collaboratively understand and contest socio-structural violence. They focused critically on interconnections between poverty, inequality, unemployment and psycho-social destruction. The community activist characterized these interconnections as manifestations of "War Without Bullets" waged against oppressed people. She has promoted awareness. The community psychologist has tried to develop the notion of a "War Without Bullets" to give it theoretical discursive legitimacy. This chapter

presents the discursive frame of reference. Long term collaboration between community activism and community psychology for effective thinking and action are discussed.

- Stella Sacipa Rodríguez is the author of “Building Cultures of Peace in the Community Life in the Face of Intensifying Political Violence in Colombia”. The purpose of the chapter is to think and build peace cultures by referring to the different challenges confronted by a country immersed in political violence, studying them through Community Psychology and Political Psychology. The author studies experiences from three sources: reports from religious organizations, research communications from the Colombian “Social Links and Peace Cultures Research Group”, and reports from researchers working in non-psychological disciplines studying violence problems. The author points out the fascination for violence in Colombia, the repressive actions conducted daily by the government, and the political system, as hurdles to achieve a culture of peace.
- Norman Duncan’s paper “Reaping the Whirlwind: Xenophobic Violence in South Africa” reports that this kind of violence did not disappear once the Apartheid was over. The country was hit by waves of violent attacks against foreigners, mostly people of color and most of them poor. More than 70 people died and 120,000 were displaced. The intensity of, as well as the apparent motivation for this new violence came as a surprise to most. This chapter examines the causes of this violence. The paper explores potential contributions of community psychology in addressing xenophobic violence.
- Christopher Sonn explores the challenges, tensions and possibilities for pedagogy and community research in contexts where relations are characterized by dynamics of dominance and subjugation in Australia. In “Research and Practice in the Contact Zone: Crafting Resources for Challenging Racialized Exclusion” the author draws on three areas of research and practice where he has been involved in examining responses to intergroup relations with a focus on identity construction. The author has

ventured far beyond the borders of Community Psychology to identify ways that maintain racialized oppression. Some conceptual and methodological resources are discussed that have been helpful in making visible symbolic ways that keep intergroup relations characterized by race related privilege and power.

Regarding the many faces of violence manifested in recent decades, the four papers of the third section make it clear that they are usefully envisioned and confronted by focusing them from a community perspective. The “War Without Bullets” i.e. the socio-structural violence endured by the majority of people in the world can be fought according to David Fryer and Cathy McCormack through popular education and academic support at the local community level. The political violence experimented in Colombia since the mid-fifties of the last century, and aggravated recently, has been studied and counteracted by local experiences originated in religious organizations and by interdisciplinary teams. Stella Sacipa reports her work as a community psychologist member of a research team targeting objectives of peace development at the community level. Political violence is structural and rests on individual leaders actions, but a community intervention approach has been shown as an effective strategy. Sometimes xenophobic violence seems to be averted when a whole country has defeated a generalized discrimination reality such as the Apartheid. However, Norman Duncan’s paper reveals that the problem cannot be solved, until the seeds of xenophobia are uprooted culturally at the local communities level. Christopher Sonn’s Keynote Address make it explicit that racialized oppression and violence cannot be really confronted and overcome until symbolic collective ways of racialized intergroup relations are made visible.

There are many faces of violence. In this book four of them are explored: Violence related to poverty created by social structures, violence generated by protracted wars, a culture of violence perpetuated once colonialism is supposed to be over, subtle ways to maintain racialized oppression. Community psychology contributes to uncover the psychosocial causes of violence, to build cultures of peace, to realize the profound seeds of violence created by long term colonialism, and to be alert not to reproduce, with maybe good intentions, racialized oppression.

d) Cultures and Communities

Community Psychology takes into account the cultural diversity of the scenarios in which research, intervention, reflection and action occur. Four papers refer to this heterogeneity dealing with community approaches related to different experiences: A new national program of primary health care, the Family Nurse and Physician Model, that takes seriously as basic the culture-health relationships; the development of Community Psychology in a country characterized by strong indigenous cultures; the possibilities of community life in a contemporary culture gadget oriented; the needed change in the cultural paradigm of our times from an individualist one into a solidarity one as the only possibility for subject (social actor) development and the creation of community.

- Alicia Martínez Tena presents a multidisciplinary approach to understand the social and cultural factors linked to healthy and unhealthy situations and to describe the characteristics of the culture-health model of Primary Health Care developed in Cuba. Regional cultural differences are considered in trying to visualize the way of life of the patient, his cultural practices and his links with the members of his family and with other social actors of his community. The article “Cultural Factors and Primary Health Care in Cuba. A vision from Community Practice” stresses the need to develop a cultural communication process including the practice of attentive listening, the recognition of particular cultural patterns of behavior, the negotiation of therapeutic recommendations.
- In “Community Psychology and Social Problems in Mexico” Eduardo Almeida affirms that indigenous cultures are the backbone of community life in Mexico. Years and centuries of intents to disappear the Mesoamerican ways of life from the Mexican population have failed. Community Psychology, as an emergent social science in Mexico, cannot be understood without this background. Psychoanalytic, Behavioral, Clinical, Social and Labor Psychology approaches have been implemented to study and intervene with Mexican populations as community experiences. The field in Mexico has been informally evolving through the practices and thinking of Mexican psychologists confronted by pressing social problems.

- The individualist culture that pervades the industrialized countries and that gradually becomes the pattern of life everywhere does not favor communitarian life. Sigmar Malvezzi stresses this point in “The Syntax of Present Day Society and the Building of Community Life”. People are learning to depend on gadgets rather than on other people. That culture gives value and makes people dependent on sensations. Another trait is the cult of the urgency, time and space are shrinking and people depend on the flow of conjunctures. These conditions nourish social sedentarization and individualization. However, communitarian life is the human condition. In it human beings find mutuality, affection and identity. In the war people face with their own conscience the most powerful weapon are reflexivity and affection, resources found in community life, not in gadgets.

- “Countercurrent Subject and Community”, the Keynote Address of Pedro Trigo, offered a radical program for community psychology. Human subjects and humanitarian communities cannot flourish in a culture of individualism and corporativism which is the dominant trend in our times. To overcome this powerful culture it is required a critical mass of authentic human subjects immersed in non fundamentalist communities and in free associations promoting life and the recognition of others, particularly the poor. An experience of more than three decades living in poor neighborhoods of Latin American Cities made Pedro Trigo aware of the suburban culture of these populations that is characterized by the agonic conatus (struggle) for a dignified life, totally different from the individualistic conatus (struggle) to maintain oneself in the existence. Poor people from the decaying urban suburbs are able to surmount a neglecting government, the lack of productive employment, and negative life conditions. In doing so they become extraordinary human subjects. The Ecclesiastic Communities of the Poor favor this culture of conviviality where a communitarian tissue can be nurtured.

The previous papers contribute to make explicit the cultural face of the community concept. Alicia Martínez Tena describes the Cuban health program as a new way to approach the

well being of the population by looking at health social problems not as national ones or as individual malaise. Eduardo Almeida stresses the importance of community psychology as a neglected scientific perspective to deal with the psychosocial problems of Mexico. Community life was, has been, and will be, a cultural trait of its identity. The roots of this affirmation can be found in the empirical fact of the indigenous cultures' influence in all national ways of life. Sigmar Malvezzi's paper uncover the reasons of much of the social problems of our times, pointing out that people from the rich nations and increasingly people from poor countries are disaffected with their societies and place their existential confidence more on gadgets than on persons. Pedro Trigo offers the most radical proposition in terms of achieving a human society integrated by fraternal human beings as subjects.

The last four chapters of this book offer the possibility to see with different perspectives the cultural diversity of the studies and interventions carried out by Community Psychology: The beneficial effect of considering cultural factors in national health programs; the richness and fecundity of recurring to old and vulnerable cultural traditions to better understand present community situations and difficulties; the awareness of the prevailing culture of gadgets promoted by the uncritical use of the new technologies, and the promise of a more human life by promoting a community culture of mutuality, affection and identity; and finally the proposition of making a radical change of the predominant individualistic culture into a convivial culture able to create communities of dignified life for everyone.

The Pre-Conference Workshops

A word of recognition is due, after this review of the 16 invited presentations, about the 10 Pre-Conference Workshops conducted by 14 invited experts.

Dolores Miranda and María Montero described the main theoretical and methodological characteristics of Community Psychology to the people in the workshop “Training of community psychologists”. Dolores and María tried to develop the participants competencies in critical analysis, proposals of solution to specific community problems and evaluation of possible interventions.

Irma Serrano-Garcia and David Pérez Jiménez provided knowledge and evaluation skills for people involved in community organizations. The workshop “Community Projects Evaluation” included lectures and interactive activities for the participants.

The workshop “Ethical questions on community action”, conducted by Alipio Sánchez Vidal, was designed to develop skills in dealing with ethical implications while working on difficult social problems during community interventions.

The participants manifested great interest in the workshop “Violence in couples’ affective relationships” given by Leonor Cantera. Most of them were already immersed in programs of prevention and problem resolution regarding those violent situations.

Serdar Degirmencioglu from Turkey and Jorge Basaldúa from Mexico discussed with the participants how to create favorable conditions for groups of young subjects’ participation in community decisions. The workshop was titled “Community Action and Youth”.

Jorge González and José Amozurrutia studied with the participants “Emergent communities of Local Knowledge” using Cyberculture to achieve groups of distributed cognition.

People worked on “Community Coalitions” with Tom Wolff to create healthy communities, developing the power of collaborative solutions in favoring social justice.

“Community Profiling, Networks and Organizational Analysis: Tools to Empower Women and Minority Groups”, a workshop conducted by Donata Francescato criticized political ideologies of social dominance and focused empowerment processes for women and minority groups. The participants experienced creative tools such as novels, movies, jokes and narratives to explore affective dimensions.

Jaime Alfaro Insunza and Alba Zambrano discussed with the participants community intervention practices in programs of social policies. The workshop “Public policies and Community Psychology” studied three Spanish Autonomic communities and three Chilean localities in the Araucania region.

Social Movements of civil resistance, a key strategy for our contemporary problems was the object of the workshop “Culture and Active Non-violence”. Pietro Ameglio discussed the Gandhian program of “Swaraj” (self-government) and of “Satyagraha” (the power of truth) as a timely approach for a movement of peace, with justice and dignity.

Homages

The Third International Conference on Community Psychology honored with a Memorial Session two remarkable psychologists and a committed community activist.

Isaac Prilleltensky presented the life and achievements of Seymour B. Sarason, an American psychologist whose groundbreaking work on social settings and their influence on individual problems helped establish the field of community psychology.

Sigmar Malvezzi talked about Silvia Tatiana Maurer Lane, a Brazilian psychologist who looked for a transforming social psychology able to confront the colonization and violent exploitation situations in Latin America. To meet that challenge she proposed community psychology.

Eva Gálvez member of a Mexican NGO working with oppressed populations, recalled the committed life of Alberta Cariño, her companion in the struggle for emancipating people in an indigenous region, who was murdered while carrying vital supplies to a village controlled by brigands serving the political interests of a corrupt governor of the State of Oaxaca.

Final Reflections

The Third International Conference on Community Psychology has afforded its modest but relevant contribution to the development of our field. Although one is tempted sometimes to agree with the popular saying that there is nothing totally new under the sun regarding the human condition, particularly when one looks at the recurrent historical traits of irrationality, sickness, violence and discrimination, there are at least four problems in the contemporary world situation that have an impact on it, that differ in magnitude and complexity and that were addressed by the Conference: The negative effects of globalization as economic polarization between the rich and the poor; the unequal distribution of the new technologies and their detrimental consequences of sedentarization and solipsism; the asymmetries in the intercultural relations incremented and intensified by the process of migration; and the almost unbelievable deployment of violence the world over.

The realization of the Third International Conference in Puebla was a redoubtable challenge. But it has been a community achievement adventure. We hope that this First Volume

of the Proceedings together with the Second, now in preparation in Puerto Rico, could give witness to the progressive advancement of the International Community Psychology as a worldwide service contributing to enhance and dignify the life of every human being.

Let me recall at the end of this Introduction the words of Fernando Pessoa that expressed the lively atmosphere of the Third Conference:

Of everything three things remained:

The certainty that *we were* always starting again.

The certainty that *we had* to go on.

The certainty that *we will* be interrupted
before *we had* finished.

Build a new path out of the interruption,
build a dancing step, out of the fall,
a ladder, out of fear,
a bridge, out of dreams,
an encounter, out of the quest.

October 2011

Eduardo Almeida Acosta

Editor

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INTRODUCCION

La Primera Conferencia Internacional de Psicología Comunitaria realizada en la Universidad de Puerto Rico, campus Río Piedras, en junio de 2006, fue una iniciativa audaz diseñada para congregarse por primera vez a los psicólogos comunitarios de todo el mundo. El tema general fue “Agendas Compartidas en la Diversidad”. La Conferencia fue exitosa al desplegar la diversidad de agendas de la Psicología Comunitaria y al ofrecer la oportunidad de intercambiar la gran variedad de experiencias en las que se encontraban involucrados los psicólogos comunitarios.

La Segunda Conferencia tuvo lugar en junio de 2008 en Lisboa, Portugal. Esta vez fue el Instituto Superior de Psicología Aplicada el encargado de convocar. El tema escogido fue “Construir Comunidades Participativas, Potenciadoras y Diversas: Visualizar la Psicología Comunitaria desde una perspectiva mundial.” Esta vez el propósito de la reunión internacional fue alentar a los psicólogos comunitarios para construir comunidades caracterizadas por la participación y el empoderamiento, aprendiendo de la diversidad de investigaciones e intervenciones de los participantes. Esta Conferencia fue un segundo acontecimiento destacado, conformando y confirmando el estatus internacional de la Psicología Comunitaria.

La Tercera Conferencia, celebrada en junio de 2010 en la Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla, en México, tuvo como tema general “Aproximaciones Comunitarias a los Problemas Sociales Contemporáneos”. Buscó contribuir al estatus científico y profesional de la Psicología Comunitaria como un aporte internacional desde la perspectiva del contexto histórico y sociocultural de los problemas sociales actuales, y como una “Ciencia Enlace” multidisciplinaria capaz de ofrecer una contribución necesaria y original para enfrentarlos. La Psicología Comunitaria ha sido relevante en relación a los asuntos psicosociales clave confrontados por psicólogos comunitarios en países ricos y países en desventaja, desde la mitad de los años cincuenta del siglo pasado.

Tres fuentes importantes recientes de la Psicología Comunitaria Internacional proporcionan la información para conformar esta revisión general: *International Community Psychology: History and Theories* (Reich et al., 2007); *International Community Psychology: Shared Agendas in Diversity* (Vázquez Rivera et al., 2009); e *Historias de la Psicología*

Comunitaria en América Latina. Participación y Transformación (Montero y Serrano-García, 2011).

En los cincuentas y sesentas los problemas psicosociales importantes fueron: cómo atender a las necesidades de salud y de salud mental de la población mundial (Bennett, Sarason, Pichón Riviére, Moffat, Cueli); y cómo aportar contribuciones psicológicas relevantes para resolver problemas del desarrollo (Fals Borda, Seaman, Escovar).

En los años setenta las preocupaciones de psicólogos comprometidos se orientaron a responder a las necesidades de los pobres, de las minorías y de los ancianos. (Bronfrenbrener, Almeida, Rappaport, Kelly); y a cómo desarrollar estrategias sociopolíticas alternativas en las naciones en desventaja para terminar con la colonización y para mejorar la condición humana psicológica y material (Freire, Fanon, Maurer Lane, Duncan).

En los ochentas las exigencias fueron cómo responder a las demandas de igualdad de género y a las necesidades de los discapacitados (C. Kagan, Burton, Francescato, Bristo, Ornelas); y cómo enfrentar las dificultades psicológicas para el proceso mundial de democratización (Martín-Baró, Montero Rivas, Seidman, psicólogos Maoris, Teología de la Liberación).

En los noventas el mundo tuvo que preguntarse cómo tratar las nuevas epidemias (VIH-SIDA y otras) y la expansión de la adicción a las drogas (Serrano-García, Pérez Jiménez, Medina Mora, Natera, Orford); y también acerca de cómo enfrentar los impactos psicológicos de las imposiciones del mundo de las finanzas (Zapatistas, Dobles, Bader Sawaiia, Freitas, Fryer).

En los años 2000 nuevas amenazas tuvieron que ser consideradas: cómo combatir la degradación de los sistemas naturales del mundo y cómo tratar las consecuencias psicosociales de la nuevas tecnologías (Mercado, Montero y L. L., Legewie, Wiesenfeld, Malvezzi, Stark, V. Francisco, Voorhees, Blanchard, Obst); y cómo luchar por políticas públicas benéficas para el bienestar de cada ser humano y no sólo para las élites (L. T. Smith, E. Sánchez, Sánchez Vidal, Sixsmith, Sasao, Zambrano, Miranda, Aubry).

En los años que van de esta década (los 2010) el mundo busca estrategias para dar respuestas a los problemas que generan las migraciones y la recesión económica en todas partes (Papineau, Nafstad, Botchway, García Ramírez, Lundburg, Wolff); y para enfrentar las realidades psicosociales de dominación, discriminación, exclusión y violencia generadas por la poderosa

tendencia capitalista de dar prioridad absoluta al lucro financiero a costa del bienestar de la humanidad (Trigo, Moreno, Sonn, Vargas Moniz, Bauman, Sacipa).

Los temas mencionados con anterioridad son sin duda algunas de las principales inquietudes psicosociales de las décadas históricas recientes. Esta visión de conjunto da razón de lo que motivó la adopción del tema principal para la Tercera Conferencia: Aproximaciones Comunitarias a los Problemas Sociales Contemporáneos. Este tema se enfocó a partir de cuatro ejes temáticos: Polarización económica, Interculturalidad, Nuevas Tecnologías, y Violencia. La Conferencia se diseñó para contribuir al estudio de esos grandes asuntos. En este primer volumen de las Memorias el lector encontrará los textos de los 16 conferencistas invitados, y en un segundo volumen aparecerán artículos escogidos de participantes.

Dada la importancia de las relaciones comunitarias, de interacciones cognitivas y emocionales en situaciones colectivas vitales, como un asunto vigente, estas Memorias se vuelven tanto más significativas por ofrecer fundamento adicional para esta emergente Psicología Comunitaria Internacional en tanto “ciencia enlace”.

Hay que reconocer que la Psicología Comunitaria ha sido hasta ahora poderosa en experiencias, diversa en agendas, limitada en teorización y en institucionalización académica, y escasa en la comunicación de sus logros. También ha sido relevante el esfuerzo honesto por desenmascarar algunos de los mitos en voga y de las deformaciones acerca de lo que es la comunidad y la psicología comunitaria.

El asunto principal de las ciencias sociales desde la perspectiva de la psicología comunitaria no es solamente la relación entre el individuo y la sociedad, sino la relación entre individuo, comunidad y sociedad. La psicología comunitaria, en tanto “ciencia enlace”, reconociendo la diversidad de sus agendas locales y regionales, puede ayudar a estudiar y a entender problemas sociales desde las realidades humanas relacionales subyacentes. Puede también contribuir al conocimiento y a la comprensión de situaciones individuales objetivas y subjetivas ligadas a comportamientos sanos y patológicos y a condiciones mentales.

Esto quiere decir que el concepto y realidad de comunidad implica no sólo un papel mediador en los intercambios entre individuo y sociedad, sino que se vuelve en cierto sentido un tercer elemento importante en la explicación y el entendimiento del estatus y de la dinámica de la condición humana: relacionalidad, comunicación, conversación.

Cuando hablamos de comunidad en esta Introducción nos referimos a una forma de relación grupal sustentada en una interacción dinámica pero relativamente estable, que contiene estrategias de gestión de conflicto, y niveles variables de compartición de utopías. En otras palabras, tenemos en mente un proceso colectivo de un sistema en evolución de relaciones estabilizadas, de una red dinámica de comunicación, de un tejido de conversaciones concurrentes entre individuos, en los que se pueden encontrar mutualidad, afecto e identidad. La comunidad como relacionalidad adopta diferentes estructuras comunitarias según sus lugares y circunstancias, históricas y culturales. La Tercera Conferencia Internacional de Psicología Comunitaria se diseñó para construir conocimiento sobre la forma como diversas estructuras y experiencias comunitarias abordan y enfrentan las cuatro preocupaciones sociales principales de nuestro tiempo.

Cuatro conjuntos de artículos

Los contenidos de este libro aparecen ubicados en cuatro conjuntos de textos organizados según los temas abordados por los autores: Visión Crítica de la Psicología Comunitaria; Salud como Desafío Comunitario; Violencia como Atentado a la Vida Comunitaria; Culturas y Comunidades.

a) Visión Crítica de la Psicología Comunitaria

Cuatro textos plantean cuestionamientos al desarrollo logrado por la Psicología Comunitaria.

- En “Desde la Complejidad y la Justicia Social hasta la Conciencia: Ideas que han construido la Psicología Comunitaria” Maritza Montero intenta construir un sistema teórico para la Psicología Comunitaria por medio del análisis de las ideas que han contribuido a conformarla, como una forma de estudiar y aportar soluciones a los problemas sociales que afectan a las comunidades con el fin de colaborar en la construcción de un mundo mejor. Este texto, que fue la Conferencia Inaugural, es una

invitación a acompañar a la autora en el inacabado y descuidado esfuerzo de aportar mejores y más sólidos fundamentos teóricos a nuestra ciencia emergente.

- María de Fátima Quintal de Freitas desarrolla un modelo de análisis en su artículo “Psicología Comunitaria como educación política y concientización: Resistencias y posibilidades en la vida cotidiana” cuyo propósito es ofrecer un abordaje para hacer posible el paradigma de liberación. Se dan por existentes en programas comunitarios la participación comprometida en la transformación social y la concientización incrementada, sin tomar en cuenta los desafíos y dilemas planteados por los contextos actuales de globalización y exclusión. ¿Cómo asegurar caminos de cambio social fortaleciendo pequeñas redes de solidaridad? ¿Cómo involucrar? ¿Cómo mantener la involucración?
- “Pensamiento Crítico acerca de la Teoría y la práctica de la Psicología Comunitaria” es el artículo de Esther Wiesenfeld en el que presenta una agenda exigente para los años venideros. Según Wiesenfeld puede considerarse a la Psicología Social Comunitaria Latinoamericana como una disciplina psicológica que ha tenido un desarrollo autónomo en la región. Comprende programas académicos y de aplicaciones en campo, múltiples áreas de intervención, procesos, campos de acción, poblaciones, actividades. La disciplina ha crecido incesantemente. Sin embargo, muchos cuestionamientos deben plantearse, en términos de valores y expectativas formulados inicialmente al poner en marcha la disciplina. Es necesario revisar su adaptación a los rápidos cambios sociales que están sucediendo, su utilidad teórica y metodológica, nuevos dilemas y desafíos, mitos comunitarios, formación universitaria, relevancia en el combate a la pobreza.
- Wolfgang Stark ofrece una propuesta para ampliar esta ciencia en su artículo “Psicología Comunitaria como una Ciencia Enlace. Potenciales y Desafíos para Competencias Transdisciplinarias”. La Psicología Comunitaria debe ir más allá de sus inquietudes tradicionales y de su enfoque en comunidades locales. La idea comprende lograr una mayor colaboración con otras disciplinas, otras instituciones sociales,

empresas de negocios; aprender de valores culturales diferentes a los propios; enfocar asuntos macro y micro en el análisis de la comunidad y en la construcción comunitaria; desarrollar la identidad de la Psicología Comunitaria como ciencia enlace.

El mensaje para la Psicología Comunitaria de estas cuatro contribuciones es sobre la necesidad de incrementar la actividad teórica de la disciplina, de desarrollar habilidades analíticas y prácticas, de mantener vivo y alerta el ojo crítico, y de ampliar el alcance de sus inquietudes en tanto punto de convergencia científico.

En la Conferencia Inaugural Maritza Montero desarrolla la idea clave de Relacionalidad, de la que se derivan las nociones de sentido de comunidad y de identidad comunitaria. Fatima Quintal de Freitas contribuye a esta posición cuando relaciona el cambio social con la involucración individual creando pequeñas redes de solidaridad. Esther Wiesenfeld expone en su artículo la inquietud acerca de la inadecuación de la psicología comunitaria, tal como es entendida y practicada, en relación a los rápidos cambios de nuestras sociedades inmersas en una cosmovisión dominada por tendencias individualistas. Wolfgang Stark propone la necesidad de que la psicología comunitaria desarrolle su identidad como Ciencia Enlace, enfocando a la comunidad como un catalizador de asuntos sociales de nivel macro y micro.

b) La salud como desafío comunitario

Temas recurrentes, importantes para la Psicología Comunitaria, son las dificultades experimentadas por las personas que tratan de proveer servicios apropiados de salud comunitaria y por la gente sufriendo que recibe esos servicios. Estas dificultades se presentan en los siguientes trabajos que insisten en tres temas: El primero es el bienestar de gente en situación de vulnerabilidad: personas que viven con padecimientos neurológicos de larga duración; familias y comunidades afectadas por adicciones; mujeres indígenas con una pareja alcohólica; gente sin casa y sin hogar en un país del primer mundo. Otro tema es la importancia de tomar en cuenta los

aspectos culturales y circunstanciales de los afectados. El tercero es la necesidad del trabajo colaborativo entre disciplinas.

- En “Servicios de Bienestar para Personas que sufren Condiciones Neurológicas de Larga Duración: Involucración de Co-Investigadores en Investigación y en Diseño y Desarrollo del Servicio” Judith Sixsmith afirma que los servicios comunitarios de salud pueden favorecer el bienestar de la gente y no sólo atender a sus necesidades de salud y cuidado. Este capítulo subraya las estrategias de involucración en los servicios otorgados a gente con Padecimientos Neurológicos de Larga Duración, reenfocando las perspectivas de los proveedores de servicios que sólo ven a estas personas como necesitadas, o como problemas por ser resueltos, en vez de distinguirlos como seres humanos cuyo bienestar puede mejorarse con la ayuda de profesionales. El estudio incluye capacitación de co-investigadores. Presenta reflexiones sobre el proceso de involucración en diseño y práctica durante el servicio.
- Un desafío enorme para la salud y el bienestar de familias y comunidades es el que se origina en millones de gente cuyas vidas son negativamente afectadas por ingesta de alcohol y por adicción a drogas. Tener que enfrentar esto constituye una fuerte experiencia estresante. En “Reempoderando Miembros de Familias Desempoderadas por las Adicciones: ¿Apoyo para individuos o acción colectiva?” Jim Orford presenta un programa de investigación que ha explorado en detalle la naturaleza de las experiencias de miembros familiares afectados y que ofrece un método para ayudar a estas personas. La investigación realizada en cuatro países sugiere la existencia de un conjunto común de experiencias de desempoderamiento, junto con algunas variaciones transculturales. El método de apoyo hace hincapié en las historias familiares, provee información relevante, elabora sobre dilemas de enfrentamiento y sobre construcción de apoyo social.
- Guillermina Natera tiene la experiencia de que es sumamente difícil modificar esquemas de consumo de alcohol en familias y comunidades indígenas. Sin embargo,

estas familias viven en pobreza y sufren de las consecuencias del abuso de alcohol por parte de uno de sus miembros. Habitualmente no cuentan con ningún apoyo. “Los Itinerarios Mentales de la Vidas Cotidianas de Mujeres Ligadas a sus Parejas de Consumidores de Alcohol en Exceso” describe un proyecto de investigación que estudió cómo sufren las mujeres con este problema en una cultura patriarcal: se les dificulta hablar con otros acerca del problema de su pareja. Se adoptó un modelo breve de intervención para ayudar a estas familias: escuchar respetuosamente acerca del malestar emocional de estas mujeres permitió a los investigadores descubrir los itinerarios mentales de estas personas y diseñar novedosas estrategias de enfrentamiento que lograron una reducción substancial de síntomas psicológicos, depresivos y de salud.

- La carencia de casa y hogar es un gran problema de salud pública social que afecta a gente en todo el mundo. Afecta también a países desarrollados. Se define como una situación vital en la que individuos y familias carecen de vivienda permanente como consecuencia de la pobreza y de la falta de apoyos adecuados. En el artículo “Investigación Realizada sobre los Sin Casa y Sin Hogar en Canadá desde una Perspectiva de Psicología Comunitaria” Tim Aubry se refiere a proyectos de investigación que se realizaron en Ottawa sobre carencia de casa y hogar: un estudio longitudinal que acompañó a un grupo de gente sin techo durante dos años; y un proyecto para la elaboración y divulgación de tarjetas de informe sobre carencia de casa y hogar. Algunos aprendizajes logrados fueron la necesidad de expandir esfuerzos de investigación y respaldo sobre el tema, la necesidad de hacerlo en colaboración con la comunidad, y la necesidad de hacer inversiones significativas para la divulgación de hallazgos de la investigación.

Estas cuatro presentaciones ofrecen nuevas luces (insights) al tratar problemas de salud comunitaria. Una finalidad importante de la Psicología Comunitaria de la Salud es procurar el bienestar de la gente, más allá de sus padecimientos. Perturbaciones de salud afectan no sólo a los individuos sino también y significativamente a las vidas de los colectivos en los que viven. Obstáculos patriarcales y otras limitaciones culturales pueden superarse diseñando estrategias

comunitarias innovadoras. Problemas sociales de salud pública son globales, los esfuerzos de investigación para atenderlos deben ser objeto de políticas públicas locales.

Judith Sixsmith insiste en la importancia de tratar los asuntos de discapacidades neurológicas de largo alcance no sólo como un problema social o como un deterioro individual, sino como una necesidad colectiva de bienestar. Jim Orford y Guillermina Natera enfocan sus trabajos de la misma manera señalando los problemas de adicción no como una plaga social general o como una limitación individual, sino como una fuente de apuro y miseria para la familia y la comunidad. El trabajo de Tim Aubry acerca de los Sin Casa y Sin Hogar se ha orientado a tratar, no un problema social abstracto o a una situación individual, sino a un desafío comunitario para ser abordado localmente a través de adecuadas políticas públicas sociales.

c) Violencia, atentados a la vida comunitaria.

Esta sección incluye participaciones en un Simposio y en una Conferencia Magistral que buscaron suscitar debate crítico en relación a la violencia. La cuestión fue cómo entender la violencia desde el punto de vista de la Psicología Comunitaria y cómo puede incrementarse su entendimiento y las formas de enfrentarla. Los siguientes cuatro artículos hablan, desde las diferentes posiciones de los autores, acerca de su trabajo sobre la violencia: Violencia socio-estructural, política, xenofóbica y racial.

- En “La Guerra sin Balas: Violencia Socioestructural desde un Punto de Vista Crítico” un psicólogo comunitario, David Fryer, y una activista comunitaria, Cathy McCormack, hablan de su trabajo conjunto. Esa sinergia ha sido estimulante para entender y confrontar colaborativamente la violencia socio-estructural. Ellos apuntaron críticamente a las interconexiones entre pobreza, desigualdad, desempleo y destrucción psicosocial. La activista comunitaria caracterizó a estas interconexiones como manifestaciones de una “Guerra Sin Balas” establecida contra gente oprimida. Ella ha promovido la concientización de la población. El psicólogo comunitario por su parte ha tratado de desarrollar la noción de “Guerra Sin Balas” para dotarla de

legitimidad teórica. El capítulo ofrece el marco de referencia discursivo. Colaboración de largo tiempo entre activismo comunitario y psicología comunitaria se proponen como forma de lograr pensamiento y acción efectivos.

- Stella Sacipa Rodríguez es la autora de “Construyendo Culturas de Paz en la Vida Comunitaria, frente a una Violencia Política que se Intensifica en Colombia”. El propósito del capítulo es reflexionar y crear culturas de paz en relación a los desafíos planteados en un país como Colombia inmerso en violencia política, desde la Psicología Comunitaria y desde la Psicología Política. La autora estudia experiencias provenientes de tres fuentes: informes de organizaciones religiosas; comunicaciones del “Grupo de Investigación sobre Lazos Sociales y Culturas de Paz”; e informes de investigadores de disciplinas no psicológicas estudiando problemas de violencia. La autora señala la fascinación que hay por la violencia en Colombia, las acciones represivas que ejerce diariamente el gobierno, y el sistema político, como obstáculos para lograr una cultura de paz.
- El artículo de Norman Duncan “Cosechando el Torbellino: Violencia Xenofóbica en Sudáfrica” informa que este tipo de violencia no desapareció cuando se superó el Apartheid. El país fue azotado por olas de ataques violentos contra extranjeros, muchos de ellos personas de color y la mayoría pobres. Más de 70 murieron y 120,000 fueron desplazados. La intensidad y la motivación aparente para esta violencia constituyó una sorpresa para muchos. Este capítulo examina las causas de esta violencia. El texto explora posibles contribuciones de la Psicología Comunitaria para enfrentar la violencia xenofóbica.
- En su Conferencia Magistral Christopher Sonn explora los desafíos, tensiones y posibilidades para la pedagogía y la investigación comunitaria en contextos en los que las relaciones se caracterizan por dinámicas de dominación y subyugación en Australia. En “Investigación y Práctica en la Zona de Contacto: Elaborando Recursos para Desafiar a la Exclusión por Raza”, el autor se basa en tres áreas de investigación y práctica en las que ha participado, examinando reacciones en relaciones

intergrupales enfocadas a construcción de identidad. El autor se ha aventurado más allá de las fronteras de la Psicología Comunitaria para identificar las formas como se mantiene la opresión racializada. Se discuten algunos recursos conceptuales y metodológicos que han ayudado a visibilizar formas simbólicas que mantienen relaciones intergrupales caracterizadas por poder y privilegios relacionados con la raza.

Considerando los múltiples rostros de la violencia manifestados en las décadas recientes, los cuatro capítulos de la tercera sección exponen con claridad la utilidad de visualizar y confrontar estas facetas de agresividad inhumana enfocándolas desde una aproximación comunitaria. La “Guerra sin Balas”, es decir, la violencia socio-estructural sufrida por la mayoría de la población en el mundo puede ser combatida, según David Fryer y Cathy McCormack, por medio de educación popular y de apoyo académico a programas de nivel local comunitario. La violencia política experimentada en Colombia desde la mitad de los años cincuenta del siglo pasado y agravada en años recientes, ha sido estudiada y enfrentada por experiencias locales creadas por organizaciones religiosas y por equipos interdisciplinarios. Stella Sacipa Rodríguez informa acerca de su trabajo como psicóloga comunitaria miembro de un equipo que diseña objetivos de pacificación a nivel comunitario. La violencia política es estructural y se sustenta en acciones de líderes individuales, pero una aproximación de intervención comunitaria ha demostrado ser una estrategia efectiva. A veces se piensa que la violencia xenofóbica parece haber sido descartada cuando todo un país ha derrotado una realidad de discriminación generalizada como la del Apartheid. Sin embargo, Norman Duncan hace notar en su artículo que el problema no puede solucionarse si no se desenraizan culturalmente las semillas de xenofobia en las comunidades locales. La Conferencia Magistral de Christopher Sonn hace explícito que la opresión y la violencia de tipo racial no pueden ser realmente enfrentadas y superadas hasta que se evidencien formas colectivas simbólicas de relaciones racializadas intergrupales.

Hay muchas caras de la violencia. En este libro se exploran cuatro de ellas: Violencia relacionada con la pobreza generada por las estructuras sociales; con la violencia desencadenada por guerras interminables; con una cultura de violencia que se perpetúa una vez que parece haber

desaparecido el colonialismo; y con formas sutiles de mantener opresión racializada. La Psicología Comunitaria puede contribuir a hacer patentes las causas psicológicas de la violencia, a construir culturas de paz, a reconocer las profundas semillas de violencia depositadas por un colonialismo de muchos años, y a estar alerta para no reproducir, hasta con buenas intenciones, opresión racializada.

d) Culturas y Comunidades

La Psicología Comunitaria toma en cuenta la diversidad cultural de los escenarios en los que se realizan investigaciones, intervenciones, reflexión y acción. Cuatro artículos se refieren a esta heterogeneidad de aproximaciones comunitarias en experiencias diferentes: Un nuevo programa nacional de atención primaria de salud, el Modelo de Enfermera y Médico Familiar, que toma en serio las relaciones cultura-salud; el desarrollo de la Psicología Comunitaria en un país caracterizado por fuertes raíces culturales indígenas; las posibilidades de vida comunitaria en una cultura contemporánea dependiente de los aparatos (gadgets); el necesario cambio del paradigma cultural de nuestros tiempos, de uno individualístico a uno de solidaridad, como la única posibilidad para el desarrollo de sujetos y la creación de comunidad.

- Alicia Martínez Tena presenta una aproximación multidisciplinaria para comprender los factores sociales y culturales ligados a situaciones saludables y no saludables y para describir las características del modelo de Cultura-Salud de Atención Primaria desarrollado en Cuba. Diferencias culturales regionales se toman en cuenta para entender la forma de vida del paciente, sus prácticas culturales y sus lazos con miembros de la familia y con otros actores sociales de su comunidad. El artículo “Factores Culturales y Atención Primaria de Salud en Cuba. Una visión desde la Práctica Comunitaria” insiste en la necesidad de desarrollar un proceso de comunicación cultural que incluya la práctica de escuchar atentamente al paciente, de reconocer sus patrones culturales de comportamiento, y la negociación con él de las recomendaciones terapéuticas.

- En “Psicología Comunitaria y Problemas Sociales en México” Eduardo Almeida afirma que las culturas indígenas son la columna vertebral de la vida comunitaria en México. Años y siglos de tratar de hacer desaparecer las formas de vida Mesoamericanas de la población mexicana han fracasado. La Psicología Comunitaria como una ciencia social emergente en México no se puede entender sin estos antecedentes. Psicología psicoanalítica, conductista, clínica, social y laboral han sido utilizadas como Psicología Comunitaria para estudiar e intervenir en poblaciones mexicanas diversas. La disciplina en México ha evolucionado informalmente a través de prácticas y reflexiones de psicólogos mexicanos confrontados por problemas sociales acuciantes.

- La cultura individualística que campea en los países industrializados, y que gradualmente se vuelve el modelo de vida en todas partes, no favorece la vida comunitaria. Sigmar Malvezzi insiste en este punto en “La Sintaxis de la Sociedad Actual y la Construcción de Vida Comunitaria”. La gente está aprendiendo a depender de los aparatos (gadgets) más que de los demás. Esta cultura valora y hace dependiente a la gente de sus sensaciones. Otro rasgo actual es el culto de la urgencia, tiempo y espacio se están achicando y las personas dependen de flujos y de coyunturas. Estas condiciones favorecen la sedentarización social y la individualización. Sin embargo, la vida comunitaria es la condición humana. En ella los seres humanos encuentran mutualidad, afecto e identidad. En la guerra que los seres humanos llevamos con la propia conciencia, las armas más poderosas son la reflexión y el afecto, recursos que se encuentran, no en los aparatos (gadgets), sino en la vida comunitaria.

- “Sujeto y Comunidad a Contracorriente”, la Conferencia Magistral de Pedro Trigo, ofreció un programa radical para la Psicología Comunitaria. Sujetos humanos y comunidades humanizadoras no pueden florecer, afirma Trigo, en una cultura de individualismo y corporativismo, la tendencia que predomina en nuestro tiempo. Para superar esta poderosa cultura se requiere una masa crítica de auténticos sujetos humanos inmersos en comunidades no fundamentalistas y en asociaciones libres que

promuevan la vida y el reconocimiento de los otros, particularmente de los pobres. Una experiencia de más de tres décadas viviendo en barrios pobres de ciudades latinoamericanas hizo consciente al autor de este capítulo, de que la cultura suburbana de estas poblaciones se caracteriza por el conato agónico (la lucha) por una vida digna, totalmente diferente del conato (la lucha) individualístico de mantenerse uno mismo en la vida. Gente pobre que vive en suburbios urbanos decadentes son capaces de superar gobiernos negligentes, falta de empleos productivos, y condiciones negativas de vida. Haciendo esto se constituyen en sujetos humanos extraordinarios. Las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base favorecen esta cultura de convivialidad desde la que puede crearse un tejido comunitario.

Los capítulos anteriores contribuyen a explicitar la cara cultural del concepto de comunidad. Alicia Martínez Tena describe el Programa Cubano de Salud como una forma nueva de buscar el bienestar de la población, mirando a los problemas sociales de salud no como asuntos nacionales o como malestares individuales. Eduardo Almeida insiste en la importancia de la Psicología Comunitaria, como una perspectiva científica no aprovechada para atender los problemas psicosociales de México. La vida comunitaria fue, ha sido y seguirá siendo un rasgo cultural de identidad. Las raíces de esta afirmación pueden encontrarse en el hecho empírico de la influencia de las culturas indígenas en todas las facetas de la vida nacional. El artículo de Sigmar Malvezzi hace patentes las causas de gran parte de los problemas sociales de nuestro tiempo señalando que la gente de las naciones ricas, y cada vez más la de los países pobres está insatisfecha con sus sociedades. Y otorgan su confianza existencial más a “gadgets” (aparatos) que a personas. Pedro Trigo ofrece la propuesta más radical en términos de lograr una sociedad humana integrada por seres humanos fraternales en tanto sujetos.

Los cuatro últimos capítulos de este libro ofrecen la posibilidad de ver, desde perspectivas diferentes, las diversidades culturales de estudios e intervenciones realizadas por la Psicología Comunitaria: Los efectos benéficos de considerar factores culturales en un programa nacional de salud; la riqueza y fecundidad de recurrir a viejas y vulnerables tradiciones culturales para entender mejor situaciones y dificultades comunitarias actuales; la conciencia de que la cultura prevaleciente de aparatos (gadgets) promovida por el uso acrítico de nuevas tecnologías está

dañando a la gente, y que existe la promesa de una vida más humana promoviendo una cultura comunitaria de mutualidad, afecto e identidad; y, finalmente, la propuesta de realizar un cambio radical de una cultura individualista a una cultura convivial capaz de crear comunidades de vida digna para todos y cada uno.

Los Talleres Pre-Conferencia

Tras esta presentación de las 16 ponencias invitadas, queremos reconocer el trabajo desarrollado por los 10 Talleres Pre-Conferencia que fueron dirigidos por 14 expertos invitados.

Dolores Miranda y María Montero expusieron las principales características teóricas y metodológicas de la Psicología Comunitaria a los participantes que tomaron el Taller “Formación de Psicólogos Comunitarios”. Dolores y María intentaron desarrollar en los talleristas competencias en análisis crítico, en propuestas de solución a problemas comunitarios específicos y en evaluación de posibles intervenciones.

Irma Serrano-García y David Pérez Jiménez ofrecieron conocimiento y habilidades de evaluación a gente involucrada en organizaciones comunitarias. El Taller “Evaluación de Proyectos Comunitarios” incluyó conferencias y actividades interactivas con los participantes.

El Taller “Abordaje de las Cuestiones Éticas en la Acción Comunitaria”, impartido por Alipio Sánchez Vidal, se diseñó para crear habilidades para enfrentar implicaciones éticas al trabajar con problemas sociales difíciles durante intervenciones comunitarias.

Los participantes manifestaron un gran interés en el Taller “La Violencia en las Relaciones Afectivas de Pareja” dirigido por Leonor Cantera. Muchas de ellas y ellos ya estaban comprometidos en programas de prevención y solución de problemas en relación a estas situaciones de violencia.

Serdar Degirmencioglu de Turquía, y Jorge Basaldúa de México discutieron con los participantes cómo crear condiciones favorables para lograr la participación de jóvenes en decisiones comunitarias. El título del Taller fue “Acción Comunitaria y Juventud”.

Jorge González y José Amozurrutia estudiaron con los participantes Nuevas Tecnologías en el taller “Comunidades Emergentes de Conocimiento Local” empleando Cibercultura para crear grupos de cognición distribuida.

En el taller de Tom Wolff sobre “Coaliciones Comunitarias” se trabajó sobre la manera de lograr comunidades saludables, desarrollando el poder de soluciones colaborativas a favor de la justicia social.

“Perfiles comunitarios, Redes y Análisis Organizacional: Instrumentos para empoderar mujeres y grupos minoritarios”, un Taller dirigido por Donata Francescato, criticó ideologías políticas de dominación social y enfocó procesos de empoderamiento para mujeres y minorías. Los participantes experimentaron instrumentos creativos tales como novelas, películas, chistes y narrativas para explorar dimensiones afectivas.

Jaime Alfaro Insunza y Alba Zambrano enfocaron su trabajo a prácticas comunitarias de intervención en programas de políticas sociales. El Taller “Políticas Públicas y Psicología Comunitaria” estudió tres Comunidades Españolas Autonómicas y tres localidades Chilenas en la región de Araucanía.

Los movimientos Sociales de Resistencia Civil, una estrategia clave para enfrentar nuestros problemas contemporáneos fue el tema del Taller “Cultura y No-Violencia Activa”. Pietro Ameglio presentó el programa Gandhiano del “Swaraj” (auto-gobierno) y de la “Satyagraha” (el poder de la verdad) como una aproximación oportuna para un movimiento de paz con justicia y dignidad.

Homenajes

La Tercera Conferencia Internacional de Psicología Comunitaria organizó una sesión de Homenaje para honrar a dos psicólogos extraordinarios y a una comprometida activista comunitaria.

Isaac Prilleltensky presentó la vida y logros de Seymour B. Sarason, un psicólogo norteamericano cuyo trabajo fundacional sobre escenarios sociales y su influencia en problemas individuales ayudó a establecer la Psicología Comunitaria en los Estados Unidos.

Sigmar Malvezzi hizo un recordatorio de Silvia Tatiana Maurer Lane, una psicóloga brasileña que propició una psicología social transformadora capaz de enfrentar las situaciones de colonización y explotación violenta en América Latina. Para abordar este desafío Silvia propuso a la Psicología Comunitaria.

Eva Gálvez, miembro de una ONG que trabaja con poblaciones oprimidas, recordó la vida comprometida de Alberta Cariño, su compañera en la lucha por la emancipación de la gente en

una región indígena, y que fue asesinada cuando llevaba víveres a un poblado controlado por sicarios al servicio de los intereses políticos de un corrupto gobernador del Estado de Oaxaca.

Reflexiones Finales

La Tercera Conferencia Internacional de Psicología Comunitaria ha aportado su modesta pero relevante contribución al desarrollo de nuestra disciplina. Aunque tal vez es cierto que “no hay nada nuevo bajo el sol” en relación a la condición humana, particularmente ante la irracionalidad, las patologías, la violencia y la discriminación, hay por lo menos cuatro problemas en la situación del mundo contemporáneo que lo impactan y que difieren en magnitud y complejidad a los de antaño. Estos problemas fueron abordados por la 3ª Conferencia: Los efectos negativos de la “globalización” como polarización económica entre ricos y pobres; la desigual distribución de las nuevas tecnologías y sus graves consecuencias de sedentarización y solipsismo; las asimetrías en las relaciones interculturales incrementadas e intensificadas por los procesos migratorios; y el casi increíble despliegue de violencia en todo el mundo.

La realización de la 3ª Conferencia en Puebla fue un desafío temible. Pero ha sido la aventura de un logro comunitario. Esperamos que este primer volumen de las Memorias, junto al segundo, ahora en preparación en Puerto Rico, pueda dar testimonio del avance de la Psicología Comunitaria Internacional como un servicio que contribuye a enaltecer y a dignificar la vida de cada ser humano.

Permítanme recordar al final de esta Introducción palabras de Fernando Pessoa que expresaron la animada atmósfera vital de esta 3ª Conferencia:

“De todo quedaron tres cosas:

La certeza de que *estamos* siempre comenzando.

La certeza de que había que seguir.

La certeza de que *seríamos* interrumpidos
antes de terminar.

Hacer de la interrupción un camino nuevo,

hacer de la caída un paso de danza,
del miedo, una escalera,
del sueño, un puente,
de la búsqueda... un encuentro.

Eduardo Almeida Acosta

Editor

Octubre de 2011

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CRITICAL VISION OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

**From Complexity and Social Justice to Consciousness:
Ideas that Have Constructed Community Psychology**

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Inaugural Conference at the III International Congress of Community Psychology
Puebla, Mexico, June 3, 2010

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From complexity and social justice to consciousness: Ideas that have built a Community Psychology

Abstract

This address focuses on the analysis of ideas that have contributed to build a psychology oriented towards a way to answer social problems affecting a kind of group present in every society: the community. Because of their human condition communities have a history, are **relational** and should be understood in their **complexity**. Community Psychology (CP), in its critical orientation, has looked for **social transformation** as a way to seek that constant goal of humanity: a better world. To do so, CP has assumed the idea of **praxis** and, consequently, the ideas of **engagement** and **participation**, whose links will be presented in their theoretical, methodological and practical aspects. That transformational praxis is also related with the ideas of **power** and **empowerment** (*fortalecimiento*) understood as the joint construction carried out by psychologists (external agents) and community stakeholders (internal agents), that may lead to **conscientization** and **liberation**, two ideas introduced by Freire. These ideas are presented as a theoretical system in which the **ethic** and **political** dimensions, together with complexity, constitute the basis for transformation, balance or, fleeting amelioration.

Key words: Complexity. Ethics. Politics. Praxis. Engaged participation. Participatory Engagement. Symmetrical Power. Conscientización.

De la complejidad y la justicia social a la conciencia: Ideas que han construido la psicología comunitaria

Resumen

Esta conferencia se centra en el análisis de ideas que han contribuido a generar una psicología orientada hacia la construcción de respuestas a problemas sociales que afectan a una forma de grupo presente en todas las sociedades: la comunidad. Como todo hecho humano las comunidades tienen una historia, son **relacionales** y deben ser entendidas en su **complejidad**. La Psicología Comunitaria (PC) en su **carácter crítico** se ha orientado por la idea de la **transformación social** que la impulsa a contribuir a la más constante búsqueda de la humanidad: un mundo mejor. Para ello asumió en su línea crítica la idea de **praxis** y por consiguiente, las ideas de **compromiso** y de **participación**, cuya fusión será presentada en sus aspectos teóricos, metodológicos y prácticos. Esa praxis transformadora a su vez se relaciona con las ideas de **poder** y de **fortalecimiento** (*empowerment, strengthening*), entendidas como construcción realizada en la participación conjunta de psicólogos/as (agentes externos) y personas comprometidas en la comunidad (agentes internos), que puede conducir a la **concientización** y a la **liberación**, dos ideas de origen freiriano. Estas ideas son consideradas desde la perspectiva de un sistema teórico en el cual las dimensiones **ética** y **política** constituyen junto con la complejidad la base que puede producir transformación, equilibrio o mejoría pasajera.

Palabras clave: Complejidad. Ética. Política. Praxis. Participación comprometida. Compromiso participativo. Poder simétrico. Conscientización.

Introduction

Community psychology (CP), in its community social psychology version or just as community psychology, has been concerned with social problems, either from an institutional perspective or from an engaged participatory perspective. Nowadays, as it was also in the past, it claims to be a psychology aimed at solving social problems for and with, the communities, contributing to their conscious strengthening (this includes empowerment and *fortalecimiento* (concept used in Latin America), with the purpose of obtaining desired transformations in their life conditions.

Social transformation, as well as the importance given to prevention, specially manifested in its United States origins, constitutes the foundation for the transforming condition that has characterized community psychology, to the point that the former has been included in one of its definitions². Both in its community social version and in its denomination as CP, this branch of psychology, which has gathered us in the Third International Congress, has been related to the social problems in the situations within which it is applied, be it from an institutional perspective or from a participatory perspective, prevention always being predominant in it. That is what a quick review of papers published in community psychology journals³ reveal. They also show the need to carry out social changes at the same time that actions are taken to fight and prevent etiological factors and behaviors that need to be eliminated.

Almost forty years of construction of CP provide enough history as to allow to make a deconstruction of its object, its method, its language, and its objectives. In such a way that I may present, in this address, a paradigmatic vision of this sub-discipline, through the ideas that, from my point of view, have been and still are fundamental for the construction of CP. These are not frozen ideas, converted into petrified statues. They are alive and continue being constructed, sometimes modulated, others transformed, depending on their response to the problems or challenges we have when confronting community praxis.

² A branch of psychology whose object is the study of psychosocial factors allowing the development, promotion and placement of control and power exerted by the people on their individual and social environment, in order to solve the problems affecting them and achieve changes within their environment and in the social structure (Montero, 2004/1984).

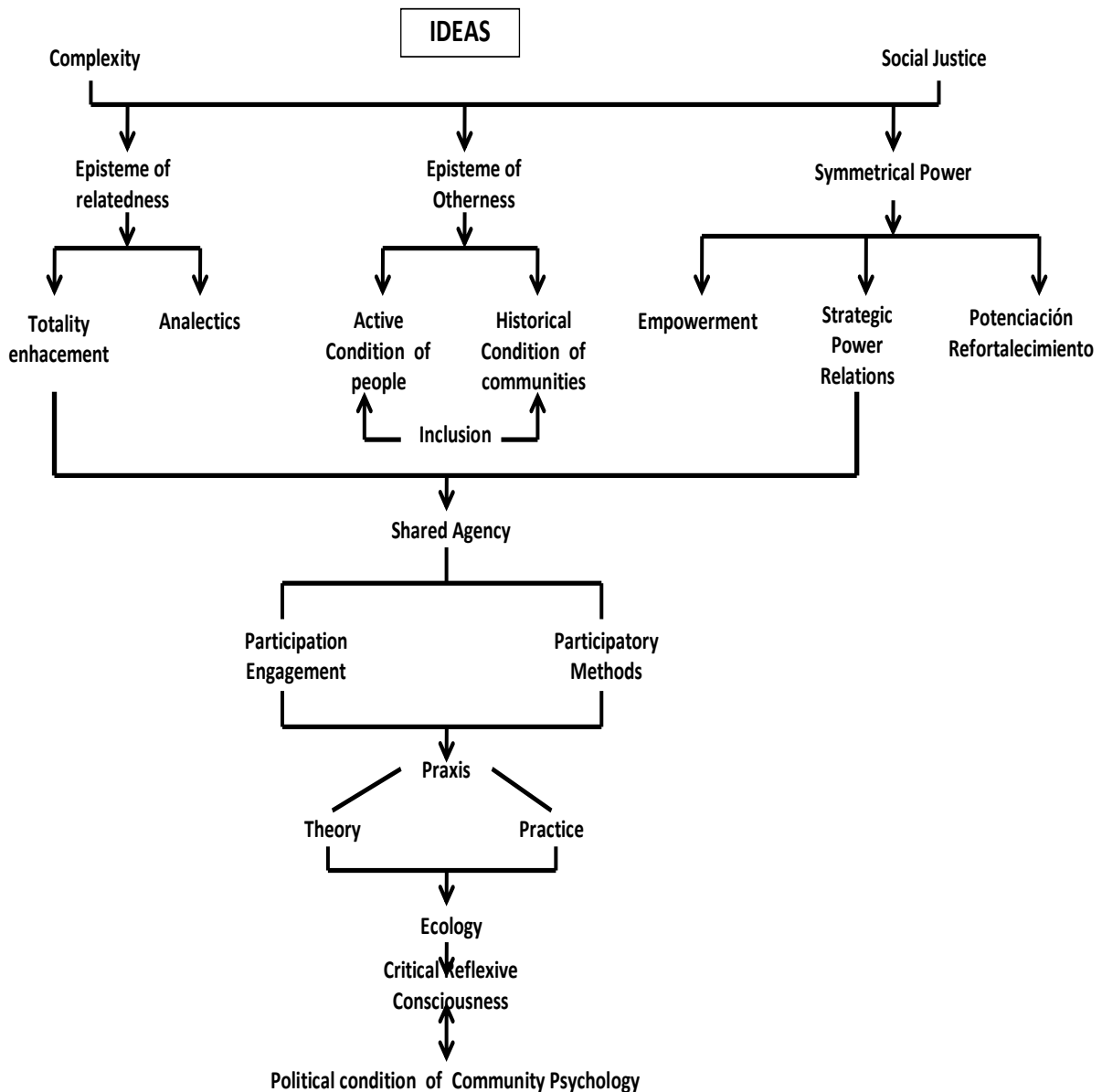
³ AJCP, JCP, CWF, RIP' JCSP, JPIC. Psykhe, AVEPSO.

To this effect I will start from the conception of CP as a social sub-discipline, inserted into each society according to the problems, needs and expectations generated in them; from its engaged participatory condition, and from its practice, produced both from within and without the community. A CP which is political because it affects the public space and concerns power and control of the circumstances upon which it intervenes to achieve transformations. A psychology in which the subject of the psychological action is an active being, participating in an activity that concerns him/her, not a mere passive receptor of services generated, decided and administered from a scientific, professional, institutional, and in any case external pole, presented as organizer and rector of therapeutic or psychosocial relations, decided exclusively by psychologists.

These characteristics respond to the initial commitment formally assumed in some countries (i.e. USA during the Swampscott Conference, 1965), or just implicitly introducing them in practice, as was the case of Latin America, where CP did not immediately used the denomination because what the pioneers intended to do was to renovate a social psychology criticized because of its lack of social sensibility, unable to attend to the real needs of the population.

In Graphic # 1 is presented a synthesis of the ideas that have marked CP as a psychology sub-discipline with a participating, committed, integrating, liberating, critical and conscious character. This graphic serves as a script for this address.

Graphic N° 1. Main Ideas in Community Psychology



The platform for these ideas resides in the complexity of the knowledge produced by CP. This is a work with neither beginning nor end or time limit. Firstly, because there may be multiple responses to the problems or to the satisfaction of a need; furthermore, the subjects with which we work change, go in and out, and at the same time the community remains with its

relationships and does not stop being. The objectives raised, which also may change along the way, are sometimes achieved in excess, sometimes in deficit. We cannot establish rhythms, although we may set goals and ends with participants of the communities. The cognitive subjects are all those that in somehow participate; there are no passive subjects waiting for or following the instructions generated from outside the community. The decisions are taken by collective consensus, and therefore, there are multiple voices.

Along with the complexity of the object of study and participants, there is an ethical conception equally fundamental: the orientation towards social justice, based on the respect of the Other. About this concept the work of Fondacaro & Weinberg (2002) shows how it has been an implicit participant in CP work over the years, but with little explicit discussion. These authors illustrate their point with the work of Prilleltensky & Nelson (1997) where “social justice figures as a naturally self-evident premise or *guiding principle*, for research in community psychology, not as a potentially problematic *topic* of research in its own right” (2002:486). They propose a program of research that incorporates the ecological principle and opens the possibility to “recast epistemological questions in terms that are amenable to empirical inquiry” (2002:487). They present it as a social ecological epistemology, open to the discussion of ethic, values, principles that are, or should be, the foundation for CP.

As those ideas that I consider the pillars for the construction of CP are developed, a connection between them, oriented towards inclusion and equality; as well as to the defense and exercise of social rights and to the compliance with duties towards society and humanity, can be seen. This aspect gives to CP not only an ethic character, but also political, expressed as an exercise of citizenship and as occupation of public space. I will then proceed to briefly discuss these ideas and how they are reflected on the community psychological praxis.

The idea of Contextual Ecology

I will start with an idea already prefigured in the previous paragraph, which is related to others that I will be drawing along this conference, and whose parallel emergence indicates that there is a paradigm supporting them which responds to the construction of CP. In its formal statement it corresponds to the line of thought which modeled the construction of CP in the United States and which corresponds to the ecologic-contextual and cultural consideration,

typical of the quantum-relativist paradigm which was being developed in the natural sciences during the seventies and the eighties.

Diverse American authors have constructed the ecological approach. I will mainly mention James G. Kelly (1966), a pioneer who, starting from the idea of complexity, understands that to be able to work with communities it must be understood that each one of them is unique; that the epistemological relation between researchers and the researched subjects, in community research and action, is complex, as it generates relationships of mutual influence and a double construction of meanings; besides understanding that the knowledge produced needs continuous revision, reconstruction, and re-elaboration. In this approach, we also find Rappaport (1977), whose work complements the ecologic aspect with the recognition of the unavoidable existence of values that need to be explicitly stated, in every relationship.

Returning to Kelly and his proposal, he too refers to epistemological premises, and to the analysis of the “converging and discriminative validity of concepts” (Westergaard and Kelly, 1992:38), since in doing that one avoids that “the scientific disciplines function with only an implicit knowledge” (Kelly, 1992:37), producing the impoverishment of knowledge. That rich, complex, dynamic, systemic, multi-variable, and with multi-leveled character, unpredictable but describable, relation, is a demonstration of the community world complexity constituting our field of study.

I cannot close this section without mentioning a notion derived from the idea of contextual ecology, which has influenced CP in such a manner that I dare say that probably the better part of the works published in the English language and also in Spanish, in the field of CP, constitute forms of preventive intervention. Prevention and intervention are guide words for action. Regarding this point, also there is the work of Seidman regarding the construction of a theory of intervention (1987/2003).

The Idea of Relatedness

Latin-American work way of community work is not **in** or **for** the community, but **with** the community (an aspect which is part of the complexity of communities). The way to define what is a community and who are the people constructing it, derives from this aspect. Usually, when speaking of community the reference is made to a group with a history, a culture and/or

sub-culture; a group whose relationships are characterized by shared social and psychological factors, and occupying a certain space. Very frequently, the territory is seen as the main aspect defining the community. That is the reason why territoriality is considered as what shapes the community, or as defining its characteristics. However, it is the relations generated by the people, what determine the community configuration and the limits, if any, of the territory. There may be communities that do not cohabit in the same place and at the same time. Territorial communities are such, due to the relationships established within them.

In fact, community psychosocial work starts with the relationships established between external and internal agents⁴, as that work is a form of shared agency. Therefore, CP has incorporated a conception of relatedness which started to be developed 40 years ago in Freire's Adult Literacy; whose systematic construction has been the labor of philosophers of liberation (Scannone, 1976, 1990; Dussel, 1987, 1998), who have defined an episteme of relatedness in which ontology rejects the dominant idea in Western thinking, of individuality as the essence of Being. That episteme considers that the Being resides in the relatedness in which all of us exist. Not because we cease to exist as individuals, but because we can only be individuals within the relations that we construct and that construct us. Let us remind the words of Freire: "We are beings of relations in a world of relationships" (1976). It is possible in this manner to overcome the autarchic conceptions of the Self constructed as opposed to the Other, and seeking to possess or suppress that Other (Levinas, 1977), thus generating forms of exclusion.

The basis of this episteme is the enlargement of Hegel's concept of dialectic totality, with the object of including a fourth element (besides thesis, antithesis and synthesis), proceeding from an Other that responds neither to thesis nor to antithesis, but that has opinions, knowledge, interests, that will have an influence on the antithesis, and in the elements originally considered as its only sources. Often in CP communities are those Others, whose otherness has also frequently been negatively defined, relegating them to exclusion.

Due to its primary mandate of social justice, CP seeks to eliminate all forms of exclusion. For this reason, the episteme of relatedness, indicating that we know by and, within relations, permits to explain the type of participative, inclusive approach of CP regarding the task to be

⁴ External agents are those who come to work, from outside, with the communities. Internal agents are the stakeholders and persons interested in achieving changes or solutions to problems inside the community.

carried out and the manner of deal with it. That episteme leads, as we will later see, to forms of symmetric power, thus avoiding three forms of exclusion (Montero, 2002):

1. The exclusion of the Other from the universe contained in the totality.
2. The exclusion of the Other from the lifeworld controlled by the Other.
3. The exclusion of the Other denied, dominated, disqualified and constructed as negative, whose independence is refused or suppressed.

These forms of exclusion constitute what Levinas defines as an “ontology of selfishness” [...] “a form par excellence through which the Other becomes him/her own self when becoming mine” (1977:70).

From the idea of relatedness derive the notions of sense of community and of community identity, which as has been discussed, seem to overlap in CP, as they look as the same subject, which at its core is the network of relations constituting a community and giving sense and ownership to those belonging to it..

The Idea of Otherness

From the episteme of relatedness derives then the need not only of accepting the existence in equality of those who used to be socially constructed as different, as external Others, because they are not like us. In this sense much of the work done by CP is directed to fulfill needs or, to obtain equality in reception of public services required by those others, who nevertheless belong to the same society. And as it has been understood that knowledge is not produced through acts in which a type of agent introduces ideas or actions that another passively receives, it is necessary to understand that this other one whom we approach must be part of a relation characterized by equality and respect; by shared responsibility and belonging of the same totality (Dussel, 1998; Montero, 2002).

The notion of Other, and what Levinas (1977/1995) and Moreno (in press), to quote a philosopher whose work has been enlightening and a psychologist, call Episteme of Otherness, defines this Other who is recognized as the subject by definition of the working relation in CP, as:

- A social actor with opinions, desires, expectations and a voice, who can make, execute and correct decisions, and over all, has the right and the duty to participate in the activities carried out within the community.
- Someone pertaining to a culture and having a history.
- A producer of knowledge. His/her existence and participation require that plurality in the modes of knowing be considered and that be a part of the action and the reflection on community psychosocial work.
- An internal agent participating in the actions, discussions and transformations which take place in her/his community or his/her society.

Accepting the Other in his/her Otherness means that the criticism aimed at breaking ideologised and ideologising canons should be applied equally to both the internal and external agents (professionals, technicians, NGOs, civil servants). All of them are part of a relation in which all must work and produce and be responsible for the actions and their consequences. Transformation of the Hegelian dialectic does not preclude the dialectic character in a relationship in which the participants mutually influence each other, when constructing a new knowledge starting from their respective wisdoms. This idea directly leads to other, fundamental for CP: the idea of participation.

The Idea of Engagement-Participation

It can be said that there is a consensus with regard to participation being a central, if not the most important aspect of CP, whose practice is marked by the active presence of those for whom we work. To participate is a verb which forms part of common and current language, since it describes a form of action characteristic of daily life. But, when we say participation in connection with CP, the term is full of meanings. The first of them is that it does not refer to something that may be performed individually, as this would mean destroying the sense and notion of community itself.

From the start CP, both in its form of community social psychology (CSP) and as CP, incorporates participation, because it permits to achieve the transformations responding to community expectations and needs. And it is participation that warrants the success when we work with normative needs.

However, it is not a simple participation. The participation developed in CP requires something else which cannot be dealt with separately. Since the eighties it was acknowledged that the commitment factor plays a fundamental role, as without it participation could be transitory, itinerant, superficial and capricious, which would preclude its capacity of constructing other means of doing and thinking in relation with the community to which one belongs.

Engagement and commitment are necessary in order to have the kind of participation that may comply with the goal of contributing to social transformation, and to maintain the actions and changes, to generate others that would continue, sustain, modify, or even totally modify those actions and changes, according to the situations,. Although neither participation nor engagement, remain forever, their joint presence may furnish the responses to the changes within the community. Community praxis has permitted to identify the aspects that provide a base for a theory of binomial participation-engagement in CP. These aspects are:

- The direct relation observed in groups and persons (IAs and EAs) that achieve transformations in their communities. That relation points out that the greater the participation, the greater the commitment, and vice versa: the greater the commitment, the greater the participation.
- The dynamic character of the binomial participation-engagement. In practice we have encountered various degrees or levels of engaged-participation, permitting to say that as the engagement is increased there is more participation in the community, thus ratifying the previous point.
- There is a tendency which fluctuates in centripetal and centrifuge sense with regard to the nucleus of greater engaged-participation in a community. The ideal would be to obtain more people joining the centre than those leaving it, because community work can be a tiring task, taken time from people's leisure. Knowing that there always are fluctuations in participation, there is not an evaluation of the amount of engaged-participation. All modes of participation are necessary.
- When there is committed participation the links of circumstantial support and sporadic actions are maintained.
- Engagement is needed both in the internal and in the external agents. In this sense we go further than what was understood by social sciences during the 70's and 80's, when it was considered that only the EAs should be committed. In our praxis we have found

that if the IAs are not committed, the results are less effective or the desired knowledge is not obtained.

- Therefore, the interchange of scientific or specialized knowledge, and popular knowledge, proposed by Freire (1970, 1977) and by Fals Borda (1977, 1985) is obtained through engaged-participation. As proposed by Gonçalves de Freitas (1977) and Gonçalves de Freitas & Montero (2006) it is necessary to have an interchange of knowledge and modes of knowing including acknowledgment and analysis of what has been done, during community psychology work.

From engaged-participation, which we could also mention as participatory-engagement, derive other ideas. The first one, connected at the same time with the ideas of relatedness and of the Other and his/her inclusion, is *the active character of every human being*. No one is so poor, so weak, so ignorant as not being able to participate. Adverse conditions, as well as favourable ones, may be modified, and in the community psychosocial perspective, they can be used to produce changes in the people and their environment.

Another idea derives from the previously mentioned *political condition* of community action, being generated by engaged-participation, as in doing so it creates a way of action in public space, and simultaneously, a mode of appropriation of that space, as it is a form of civic activity.

A third idea is that of *the shared agency*. Community psychological work has a change generating function performed by two types of agents: those of an origin external to the community, already mentioned, and the stakeholders interested people and organized groups inside the community, who are internal agents of such transformations. Both agents should work together.

Participatory Methods

Not exactly an idea, but a very important action derived from the idea of participation, has been the adoption of participatory methods generated and successfully employed by other social sciences (i.e.: sociology, anthropology, ethnomethodology), such as participatory action-research; participatory interviews, and participant observation. When adopted by community psychology these methods have been adapted to community work, enhancing their applications.

These methods not only provide ways to do, but also promote and strengthen engaged-participation; simultaneously uniting the activity of EAs and IAs, strengthening their relation and producing new knowledge. To this should be added that those methods facilitate the engaged-participatory permanence of a greater number of IAs.

The Idea of Symmetrical Power

This idea is generated in CP. It was first developed in practice and then theorized, and has been slow in its dissemination. I must say that its scarce popularity is due in part to the fact that it is an idea that goes against another one that has absolutely reigned since the beginning of the 20th century. One that is so deeply ingrained and naturalized that, for many people, and I do not refer to the common people but to academics and college students, it is the only way possible to refer to power. I refer to the notion of power coined by Max Weber in 1922.

In fact, it is so naturalized that to speak of symmetry in relation to power seems like an oxymoron. Weber defined power as “the probability of imposing one’s own will in a social relationship even against every resistance and whatever the basis of that probability is” (Weber, 1922/1964: 228). A definition that since then has been paraphrased by innumerable social scientists (Dahl, 1969), including a few psychologists (i.e.: Fischer, 1992; Martín-Baró, 1984; Jiménez Burillo, 2006, amongst others). In that theory the power is always asymmetric; that is, power would always be concentrated in one pole of the relation. Such definition condemns to a perpetual situation of unbalance, in which any change would refer only to the holders of the power, not to its distribution in society. When it is accepted that there may be different forms of exercising the power which could break the asymmetry, fair and durable changes will be achieved.

Serrano-García and López Sánchez have been developing, in the field of PSC since the late eighties, a theory which deviates from the Weberian line. Their work, of which I heard for the first time in Costa Rica in 1991, was published in a book edited by me in Mexico in 1994 (reedited in 2001). These authors introduced the idea that resources, the basis of power, are unequally distributed, but at the same time, as they argue, every person has the capacity to exercise the power. They define power as “a personal, or indirect, daily action, in which people

express their social consensus and the ruptures between their experience and their conscience” (Serrano-García & López Sánchez, 1994:178).

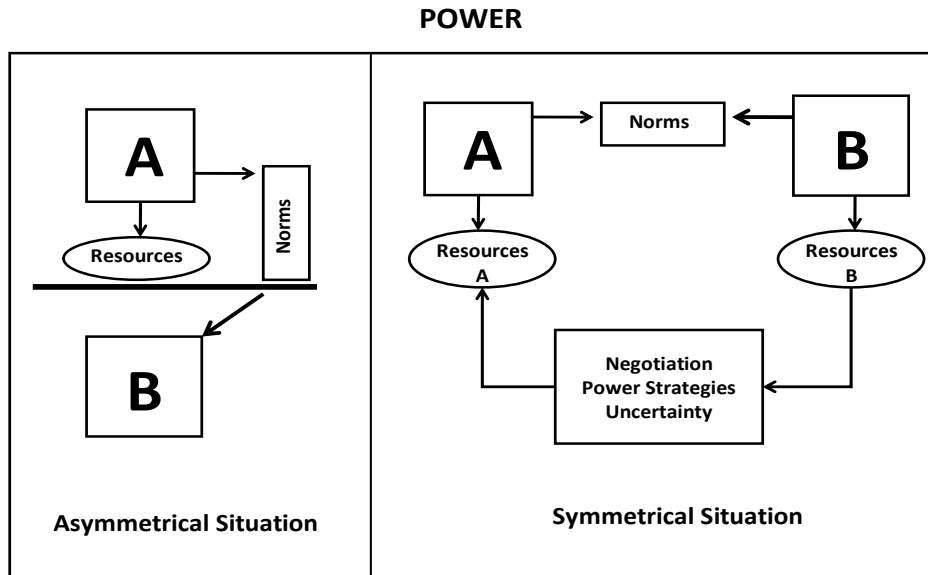
And as other authors had already anticipated (Foucault, Martín-Baró, Fischer), they consider that power is a relation. Power relations have a historical character and precede interaction, leading to the emergence of conflicts between individuals or groups of interest, as both parts in those conflicts are interested in the resources unequally handled benefitting one part and depriving the other.

This relational conception is important because it constructs the relation as being plural. Uniqueness does not make a relation, therefore when speaking of relation, the possibility of knowledge, feelings and various actions is being introduced. Thus, although a person or a group control all the possible resources in a situation, establishing the norms and the organization of the relation, as well as the behaviour to be observed by those lacking the resources, and wishing to obtain them, they are related with those people in need. The power relation needs them.

It is then possible to introduce in the relation other cultural and historical resources generated by desire and necessity, that might affect the certitude that those controlling the resources may have, in relation with their position and role in the relation. At the same time, the controlling ones may be interested in those other unexpected resources. A negotiation could be thus produced, and even more important, a change in the norms and organization of the relation, regarding the use of the desired resources.

Crozier (1970), introduced the concept of *power strategies* that can be used to define that intra-relation movement by making possible the contrast between resources, both asymmetrical, in order to balance the relation and gain access to what is desired. These could also generate “zones of incertitude with reference to the constrictive relation that may be exercised” (Crozier and Friedberg, 1977:86), from a pole of relation to the other. Graphic # 2 presents situations of asymmetrical and symmetrical power. Graphic 3 shows the dynamic of asymmetrical power.

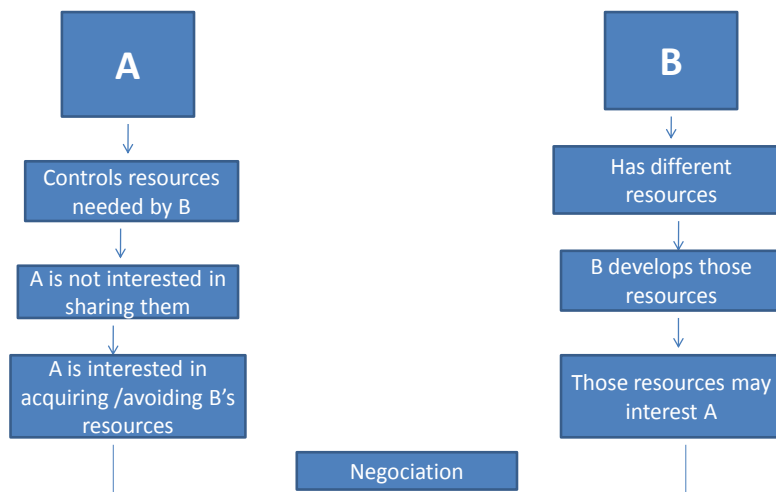
Graphic N° 2. Conceptions of Power



M.Montero 2010

Graphic N° 3. Dynamics of Symmetrical power

Symmetrical Power



An Idea and Two Answers: Empowerment and *Fortalecimiento*

“Power is a problem {...} not only when exercised abusively, within a dominant and oppressive frame, but also when its possession is ignored” (Montero, 2003:33). This ignorance of the power that may be possessed and exerted in order to transform things or to obtain a better quality of life, is a problem present in the community psychology field.

In 1981 Julian Rappaport introduced the concept of empowerment as a means of tending to the lack of power through the development in individuals and communities, consciousness of their power, or of their capacities. This concept was rapidly converted into an instrument for community work, as it implies processes in which community stakeholders jointly develop capacities and resources to control their living situation, committing themselves to achieve transformations in their environment, and at the same time transforming themselves.

In 1984 Rappaport defined empowerment as a set of possibilities that go from being a powerful model for social policies directed to community intervention, to being a process whose aims, ways and outcomes are variable and even inconsistent; to be considered both as an internalized attitude and as an observable behaviour that may produce a sense of control and authority over the life of a person. Rappaport’s idea has developed a life of its own and is a very successful one considering its high rate of utilization in CP research, intervention and prevention. Its heuristic usefulness is very high, as well as its productivity in terms of methodological forms of obtaining that individuals and communities develop control of their potentials and their capacities (see compilation Rappaport and Hess, 1984; Rappaport, 1990). Likewise, there has been considerable discussion over the theoretical (see Rappaport, 1987, for theoretical aspects), as well as critical aspects (Serrano-García, 1984; Fuks, 2006; Swift & Levin, 1987; Vázquez, 2004; Orford, 2008).

The idea of ignorance of power has provoked another, more recent reaction, to the concept of empowerment: I refer to the critical work of Carlos Vázquez (2004) in Puerto Rico, and his concept of *refortalecimiento* (re-strengthening). This is a concept that may be considered as ecologic in the before mentioned sense given by Kelly’s, because Vázquez highlights the need for contextualization and, as said, is essentially critical. In *Refortalecimiento* (re-strengthening) weaknesses are considered as strengths; it does not place itself where what is social digs into what is personal making itself part of it, but where “what is

social is what is personal” (p. 45); because what is personal is political and the subject is its context. Thus, re-strengthening is a paradox that implies rethinking what has been automatically assumed. To me this conception fits in with the idea of conscience, discussed later; with the processes of denaturalization and problematisation moving it, and incorporating the deconstruction about which Vazquez refers (2004), and with the symmetric conception of power.

The Idea of Praxis

This idea has a long history. In the first place and as its name indicates, it was originated in Greece and was created by Aristotle (*Nichomachean Ethics*), who will never cease to impress us with his enormous capacity of producing knowledge. In that first definition, which he defined as practice, praxis formed part of a triad together with *poiesis* (creation) and *episteme* (knowledge). A second Aristotelian version of these gnoseologic fields substituted episteme by *theory*, as the highest limit of what is human, bordering divinity. Then, praxis had a long historical period being considered as the lowest expression of knowledge. In the CPS developed in Latin America the concept of praxis is taken from the version developed in the nineteenth century by Karl Marx, in which that distance between praxis and theory generated through history is overcome.

The Marxian version gives praxis a critical practice character considering that practical and theoretical reasons are linked, and that union is such that from practice emerges theory and from theory derives practice. It is in this sense, developed from the Marxian criticism of Feuerbach theses, and from the experiences in research and action, that the idea of praxis is assumed by CP. The concept has a philosophical origin, but its development is based on action and reflection, as is so well illustrated by researches made according to Freirian ideas, and a host of followers all over the world, as well as from post-Marxist, neo-Marxist, and also non-Marxist perspectives incorporating the concept of praxis.

The Idea of Consciousness

This idea was also originated in Latin America and proceeds from the Freirean popular education (Adult Literacy) (1970, 1988 /1971, 1977), from Vieira Pinto (1960), from the critical sociology developed by Orlando Fals Borda (1959, 1978, 1985) from their followers, and also from the theology of liberation and the philosophers of liberation (Dussel, 1987; 1998). CP developed in LA adopted certain basic concepts and the emphasis in the mobilization of consciousness in order to be able to produce radical transformations in groups and individuals, so engaged-participation and/or participatory-engagement can be up to merit such denomination. That is what has been named conscientization, which is understood as a change in consciousness that enlarges cognition and affectivity, thus obtaining transforming actions. Through conscientization, consciousness critically examines situations and facts not previously considered and redefine situations or facts previously considered as natural and unavoidable. Conscientization supposes linking the knowledge of the present reality, with all its deficiencies, biases and limitations and the positive or negative conditions it may have, to the knowledge of their causes and effects (acknowledging and recovering their historical character). Analyzing one's individual and collective capacities to carry out transforming actions in the world of personal and community life, and generating new forms of understanding reality and its possibilities of change, are some other possibilities deriving from conscientization. Furthermore, conscientization is a way to generate a critical problematizing capacity.

This idea has impelled in CP, the construction of methods to foster conscientization (Montero, 2009), taking on account the specific situations characteristic of each community. This does not mean establishing a fixed line of action, but trying to respond in a critical manner to negative situations, stimulating analytical reflection. In this sense CP joins to its efforts the idea of liberation, of which it is one of its more assiduous exponents.

The Relation Between Ideas and Theoretical Concepts and Social Problems.

To close an analysis that insists on the situated condition (contextual) and the response to the specific needs, expectations and problems of communities as belonging to CP's praxis orientation, it is necessary to go further than a declaration of principles. I will not present a listing of the topics and problems with which deals PC's practice. That would just be a boring

gesture, and an insufficient task. Social problems are multiple, varied, changing and, few at the same time.

I'll develop the point a little more. A distinction should be made when speaking about social problems, classifying them in two lines that in fact are interwoven. These lines are:

- Problems of survival and autonomy/liberation.
- Problems of excellence and autonomy/liberation.

This means that unfortunately there are societies within which staying alive is the first daily task of a person. That is why liberation is primordial. Autonomy in them may be called liberation. That is, liberation from slavery, oppression, illness, hunger and thirst, and from the inequality and necessity producing those circumstances.

And there are societies in which the main task is to achieve the greatest possible well-being, by improving the services and opportunities within equal circumstances and with the autonomy derived from the liberation of disqualifying ideologies, alienation and anomy.

In the first case, the task of living includes being liberated from situations which make precarious that uncertain life. In the second case, the target is to reach the highest possible degree in quality of life, obtaining at the same time the necessary autonomy to make of that life a sum of satisfactions. In both cases human creativity is present.

The fundamental causes of social problems are always the same and I summarize them in Graphic N° 4.

Graphic N° 4: Causes of Social Problems



Challenges and Conclusions

What I have briefly described is a construction elaborated from a long experience characterized more by multiple everyday queries and questioning I pose myself than by orderly and clear definition. The reason is apparently simple: CP is in constant movement, every day we learn new things, others are more deeply studied, something is understood, which tomorrow might be problematised anew, because it is a knowledge being constructed at various fronts. I

started speaking of the complexity it presents from its birth, as a form of doing science, while being involved in common daily life. Now, at the moment of closing this address, I can only do it by enumerating the challenges that as a community psychologist and researcher I see in front of me, but knowing that other people, in other places, are equally perceiving, and probably much more, what I will state as follows:

- In the first place the necessity, more urgent time and time again, of conscientizing the external agents, in all their manifestations: psychology and other branches of science practitioners; technicians; representatives of NGOs and also of governmental institutions. The idea of consciousness as the moment of understanding necessary to transform a situation is not something to be reached only by IAs, all of us need to be conscientized regarding what we do and how and for whom we do it. Because nobody can conscientize if before she/he has not developed the necessary consciousness to do it (Montero, 2009).
- This supposes that EAs have to be problematized in order to be able to problematize other persons. And, likewise, they must be sensitized towards the people, locations, situations and relations with which they must work. It is not an easy task, but it is necessary to undertake it, as the current situation frequently is unbalanced with regard to these aspects. The question is not that in the communities they do not understand us, it is a question that many EA do not understand the communities.
- Other challenge is the necessity of handling with a plurality of methods, developed ad hoc, situations of a very high complexity. We need to avoid the methods in vogue, generating responses that really respond to the situations confronted.
- And to finish, even when there must be many other challenges, let us avoid the rigidity of procedures and let us hear, observe, respond and act according to each situation and its peculiarities, remaining faithful in this manner to the paradigm of which CP is part and to whose development CP has contributed.

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Community Social Psychology as Political Education and Awareness-Raising: Resistances and Possibilities in Everyday Life - Suggestion for a Model of Analysis

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Invited Keynote Address at the III International Congress of Community Psychology.
Puebla, Mexico, June 3, 2010.

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Abstract

In developing community work we have faced challenges and dilemmas relating to the involvement and commitment of different actors in the networks of community and everyday co-existence. Although there has been an increase in sensitivity and motivation within civil society towards psychosocial practices in various community projects, this has not meant that participation – committed to social transformation – or awareness-raising – seen as a critical and political process – have been implemented and are guaranteed to be present in the above mentioned work. In the practice of community work, it can be seen that participation and awareness-raising constitute necessary psychosocial processes for the possibility of social transformation, starting from the networks of everyday life. It is the aim of this paper to deepen the analysis of the contents and meanings in the concepts of Participation, Awareness-Raising and Strategies for psychosocial survival, in order to support the realization of intervention-work that is committed to the concrete reality of the population and with political projects of transformation. There will be a search for the similarities, differences and intersections between these concepts according to the views of Paulo Freire on Awareness-Raising education, and Ignacio Martin-Baró, as well as pointing to suggestions in the area of Latin-American practices of Community Social Psychology. With a view to a socially committed practice, we shall analyse the following conceptual axes: a) connections between knowledge-ignorance, love-unlove, hope-hopelessness present in the process of participation; b) society-culture-everyday life; c) education and community practices as forms of liberation (emancipation); d) possibilities for the praxis of maintenance and transformation. Finally, a proposal is made for a model of analysis for everyday-life according to Community Social Psychology, bringing together ideas from both authors and analysing the strategies for survival and resistance in everyday life that cut across our community practices. It is also the aim here to reflect on community practices as educational projects of social transformation, as well as on projects of popular education as possibilities for awareness-raising and participation in concrete life.

Keywords: Strategies of Survival/Resistance in Everyday Life; Participation and Processes of Awareness-Raising; Exclusion, Liberation (Emancipation) and Social Transformation.

Psicología Social Comunitaria como Educación Política y Concientizadora: Resistencias y Proactividades en lo Cotidiano. Propuesta de un Modelo de Análisis.

Resumen

En el desarrollo de los trabajos comunitarios en las últimas décadas, seguimos encontrando desafíos y dilemas, en particular con respecto al involucramiento y compromiso de los distintos actores en las redes de convivencia comunitaria y cotidiana. Hoy en distintos lugares se observan programas comunitarios que expresan de alguna manera una sensibilidad y motivación de la sociedad civil para realizar trabajos dirigidos a la mejoría de la calidad de vida de la población. Pero esto no significa que la participación comprometida con la transformación social y/o que la concientización, mirada como un proceso crítico y político en la vida cotidiana, se haya alcanzado en tales trabajos. Se puede decir que los contextos actuales de globalización y las relaciones generadoras de exclusión han representado desafíos para el desarrollo de las prácticas comunitarias, que se expresan en términos de garantizar un camino para la transformación social juntamente con el fortalecimiento de las redes mínimas de solidaridad. ¿Cómo implementar un proceso de formación epistemológica y política de los trabajadores comunitarios que esté, de hecho, dentro del paradigma de liberación de la psicología social comunitaria? ¿Cómo desarrollar formas de resistencia a la opresión y a la explotación humana, junto con formas de afirmación de una vida más digna y justa? Se pretende hacer una reflexión respecto a las certezas e incertidumbres que existen hoy con respecto a los avances y retrocesos de los trabajos comunitarios. Así como también en relación a la formación exigida y necesaria para una “sensibilidad histórico-social” y una generosidad cotidiana. Se analizarán los nuevos retos ontológicos planteados en términos de los contenidos políticos de solidaridad, lealtad, participación y concientización en la vida cotidiana de los agentes comunitarios externos e internos dentro de un proyecto de acción colectiva. Se completará la reflexión con una propuesta de análisis en la que la psicología social comunitaria tenga también un carácter de educación política y concientizadora, según los principios de la Educación Popular y Concientizadora de Paulo Freire.

Palabras clave: Practicas comunitarias transformadoras vs conservadoras; politización de lo cotidiano y educación concientizadora; formación político-metodológica en Psicología Social Comunitaria.

Community Social Psychology as Political Education and Awareness-Raising: Resistances and Possibilities in Everyday Life - Suggestion for a Model of Analysis

When developing practices of community intervention that have a clear commitment to the emancipation and liberation of sectors of the population and peoples that are oppressed and exploited, certain psychosocial dimensions have proven themselves to be of crucial importance (Escorel, 1999; Freitas, 2003; Lozada, 1999; Montero, 2000; Serrano-Garcia, 1992). This has been seen to be the case throughout the projects developed in the area of Community Social Psychology both in Brazil and Latin America in the last few decades. These dimensions relate to the dynamics inherent in community practices themselves, and appear in the interactions between the various participants in the projects, be they external (professionals) or internal agents (residents or participants in community groups) (Montero, 2000; Freitas, 1998, 2003).

If the work of Community Social Psychology has a clear commitment to the fact that populations, sectors and community groups ought to mobilise and organize themselves around their basic rights in order to build a fairer and more dignified life, it is important to analyse the meaning of some aspects present in people's lives, and which can differentially affect their possibilities for action and community intervention (Barreiro, 1985; Martin-Baró, 1989; Freitas, 2000). Through such analysis, the understanding of what happens with people in their day-to-day lives, of the meaning they give to their own lives and the kind of relation they establish with their fellowmen, can become a genuine 'turning point' for understanding why community practices succeed, or not, in the proposed direction (Freitas, 1998, 2003, 2005; Montero, 2000; Martin-Baró, 1987). It is this that allows us to understand to what measure the processes of awareness-raising and participation become susceptible to the events of everyday life, differently impacting on the people involved and pointing to possibilities, also differential, of success and failure in community projects (Barreiro, 1985; Flores, 1999; Freitas, 2003; Martin-Baró, 1987; Serrano-García, 1991).

Hence, speaking of processes of awareness-raising and participation in the area of community work, leads us to think about the everyday strategies people use to affirm and confirm their selves, be it in actions and relationships, or in their beliefs regarding those relations and

inbuilt practices. In other words, it leads us to try and answer the big challenge, always present for each of us in our various practices in the community, and which is expressed for the moment by two important questions:

- 1) How to involve and commit people – professionals, residents, or participants in various community groups – in the community projects to be developed?

However, even if it is possible to obtain this involvement, we come face to face with the other half of this challenge which is expressed in the second question:

- 2) How, then, do we maintain people doing what they are doing and, what is more, keep them in the belief that it is worth continuing to do what they are doing? That it is fair and correct (level of ethics and justice) and that it ought to be done (level of responsibility)?

In reality it is these two key questions that directly lead us to think about what goes on at the level of practice and at the level of awareness. The first refers to ‘doing’ as such and to interventions in the community; the second is related to the psychosocial processes involved and the politicisation of awareness, as well as to the successes and failures of that same awareness, when the practice is implemented in community relations.

Although different sectors of civil society are effectively more sensitive to social problems, doing numerous voluntary work, and there is a certain, almost collective, ‘predisposition’ to help the poor and destitute, one cannot unfortunately also say that two relevant facts obtain:

- 1) One cannot say that there is an increase in the participation of people committed to social transformation and facing up to the exploitative conditions in which they live; and
- 2) Neither can one say that those community projects have created processes of awareness-raising that imply a break with the forms of naturalizing everyday life and submitting to that exploitation.

For this reason, the above questions become important since they allow us to analyse possible articulations that may occur between awareness and participation, so that we can understand the strategies used against (or, unfortunately, for) the means of alienation and domination of awareness.

With these worries in mind, a proposal for reflexion and analysis will now be advanced that covers three stages. In the first stage, some concepts will be recovered, assumptions and categories that are part of the proposals made by Popular and Emancipating Education, in the philosophy of Paulo Freire, as well as in the perspective of the Social Psychology of Liberation (Emancipation), through the assumptions of Ignacio Martin-Baró. In a second stage, an analytical proposal will be put forward regarding the connections and influences of these dimensions – of participation and awareness-raising – in the carrying out of work in the community. And, in a third stage, the aim is to thereby identify aspects and dynamics of everyday life that strengthen community practices within a transforming and liberating view of Latin-American community social psychology.

I. First Stage: Some Concepts of Popular Education in Paulo Freire and the Social Psychology of Liberation (Emancipation) in Ignacio Martin-Baró

It is necessary here to quickly situate these two important researchers and social workers in the fields of Popular Education and Psychology. Maybe the best well known amongst them is Paulo Freire, the popular Brazilian educator who argued for the ‘re-discovery’ and ‘re-possessing’ of the world via the process of reading that world. He claimed that by reading the world one could recover it in its historical, political and socially transforming aspects (Freire, 1974, 1976, 1979). For Paulo Freire (1970, 1974, 1976), the processes of raising-awareness take place in the intercession of the process of ‘reading the world and making culture’, within which Men takes possession of his individual and social history.

Within the same perspective of socio-political commitment and existential involvement with the more disadvantaged and oppressed sectors of the population, we find the Jesuit Ignacio Martin-Baró, a social and communitarian psychologist. Sadly and stupidly, he was brutally murdered on November 16, 1989. The work of Ignacio Martin-Baró was always one of intervention from the concrete reality of the ‘simple’ people of his country, and registered a deep knowledge and empathy with the suffering of these people, hence positioning itself as a strong condemnation of human rights’ violations in El Salvador. His proposals for intervention were guided by basic principles related to an understanding of the events in people’s everyday life,

through different group relations, forms of social inclusion and belonging in already existing groups and identities.

In Martin-Baró, as well as in Silvia Lane (2000), we find the proposal to understand how macro-social dimensions affect what he calls the 'human psyche' (Martin-Baró, 1987, 1989), and how the different forms of power manifest themselves in human relations.

How did Paulo Freire and Ignacio Martin-Baró understand certain fundamental concepts for the reflections here suggested? Let us look at some of them.

1.1 On the Concepts of Society and Culture, Circles of Culture and Group Processes.

Regarding the concept and meaning attributed to the term 'Society', Paulo Freire explains the different types of society and analyses them in terms of closed-society, transition-society, alienated-society, and open-society. These types of society refer to power structures more or less authoritarian and imposing that permit different degrees of civil action and participation. From there, he reflects on the types of awareness and education that would be found in each type of society, going from a more authoritarian education that generates submission, to a more critical education that values participation and different types of knowledge (Freire, 1976).

The analysis formulated by Ignacio Martin-Baró, on the other hand, focuses on the capitalist modes of production and reproduction of social life, emphasizing the effects this has on people's psychic structure and their everyday relationships (Martín-Baró, 1985, 1997). He also emphasizes the different tensions and conflicts that exist in society and which translate themselves in various forms of power and submission, thus generating different degrees of conformism and fatalism about social and political events. Both, Freire and Martín-Baró, understand society in its historical, dialectical aspects as well as in its ideological and economical conflict, thus revealing their roots in Marxist thought.

Following from this we find in Paulo Freire a particularly important concept, one which is even included in his proposal for Popular Education. It is the concept of Culture. When we compare its importance with Martin-Baró's proposal, we can say that an equivalent concept here would be the understanding and analysis the author gives about Society, regarding the later from a perspective of conflict and historical determination, and revealing the contradictions and repercussions in people's psychosocial environment. For Paulo Freire culture is all that results

from human activity, from the “creative and re-creating [effort] of man, from his work aimed at transformation and the establishment of dialectical relationships with other men.” (Freire, 1976: 41). In Martín-Baró we find the notion of understanding Men in relation and as an actor and author of his own history, which is in turn manifested in real life relationships and not just in the relations between teacher-student.

One can thus understand the emphasis given to the so-called Circles of Culture in the proposal of Paulo Freire, and which refers to the discussion and analysis of occurring situations, events and themes that are part of the student’s culture. These themes make up the contents of the process of literacy to be carried out, thus allowing the student to regain his self-confidence as author of his own history. Already in Martín-Baró we can find the important role of Group processes exhibiting a dialectical connection between Power, Doing (Activity), and Group Identity (relative to the feeling of belonging to the group). This analysis allows us to understand the different ways of relating in concrete everyday life, rendering explicit various modes of conformism/non-conformism, submission/domination, naturalization/de-naturalization in everyday life.

1.2 On the Concept of Education

In both authors we find that it is through Education that it becomes possible to understand the repercussions of different conceptions of Men and Society that are promoted by the dominant ideology. In Paulo Freire, Education can be seen as a process of social change, in the full sense of the term. In Martín-Baró the emphasis falls on the identification of psychosocial phenomena that take place in daily relationships and which would, in turn, provide the basis for educational processes. And this would constitute the educational dimension of the Community Social Psychology (Martín-Baró, 1987; Freitas, 2005, 2007, 2008a, 2008b).

1.3 On the Concepts of Awareness, Alienation and (De)-Naturalization of Life.

Paulo Freire links the contents of awareness with types of education: banking (and alienating) education together with intransitive awareness *versus* awareness-raising (and liberating) education together with a critical awareness. He speaks of the transition from naïve

awareness to critical awareness as a form of emancipation or liberation for Men, and that this would happen through literacy (Freire, 1974, 1976).

In Martín-Baró, on the other hand, the emphasis is on the Processes of Naturalization and Des-Indoctrination of life. (Martín-Baró, 1987, 1989). He argues that it is in people's concrete everyday life that De-Indoctrination or breaking-away from the processes of naturalization and the form of power and oppression can take place. In doing this, new relationships of liberty and dignity can be strengthened through processes of participation and awareness-raising in everyday life. (Freitas, 2005, 2007)

A brief comparative synthesis of these concepts can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Comparison between Popular Education (Paulo Freire) and Social Psychology of Liberation (Ignacio Martín-Baró)

<i>Axes - Concepts</i>	<i>Popular Education (Paulo Freire)</i>	<i>Social Psychology of Liberation (Ignacio Martín-Baró)</i>
Society	Types of Society: Closed – In Transition – Alienated – Open. Critical, Historical and Dialectic Perspective.	Capitalist Society and Modes of (Re)Production of Human Existence. Critical, Historical and Dialectic Perspective.
Men and Society	Men creates Culture	Men builds his own History.
Culture and Groups	Circles of Culture: Dynamics of Educational Action + Contents of Reality	Group process: Power, Human Action (Activity), Psychosocial belonging
Education	Dialectic Relation: Student-Teacher.	Dialectic relation immanent to Relationships
Awareness-Alienation	Relation: Awareness and Types of Education Levels of Transition : Critical Awareness <i>versus</i> Naive awareness. Content of human relation in 3 axes: a) Knowledge – Ignorance. b) Love – Unlove c) Hope - Hopelessness	Human Relations: Processes of (Des)Naturalization and Indoctrination. Analysis of Human Relations regarding: a] Fatalism and Conformism b] Power Relations and Oppression
Practice and Commitment	Overcoming Oppression, Exclusion and dependence through Literacy Creation of Educational and Transforming Actions	Community Organization and Mobilization. Breaking-Away from Forms of Oppression and Exploitation.

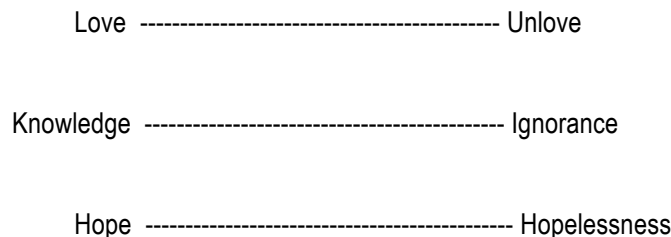
II. Second Stage: Participation and Awareness-Raising in Everyday Life Starting From Community Social Psychology

This seems to be the moment at which we can reflect on what makes people get involved and committed to community practices and pro-citizenship actions, independently of whether conditions permit this or not. The aim is to offer a plan of analysis that shows that there isn't a direct relation between degrees of awareness and the kind of action to be carried out (independently of whether such action is more progressive or transforming). The proposal put forward here brings with it another topic of discussion that reveals the complexity of the process of awareness-raising, in particular when this is related to the processes of participation that can show paradoxes and contradictions in everyday actions.

II.1 Main Axes in the Proposals Made by Paulo Freire and Ignacio Martín-Baró.

What are the axes or fundamental pillars in the proposals made by Paulo Freire to the Community Social Psychology perspective? Paulo Freire's proposal involves three important axes within the requirement of considering Men as a being in-relation and places himself at a certain point in each of three continuums: knowledge-ignorance; love-unlove; hope-hopelessness (Freire, 1976, 1979).

Figure 2: Principal Axes according to Paulo Freire



In the 'knowledge-ignorance' axis the emphasis is on the possibilities of knowing oneself, the world and life. In Freire's view, "there is no absolute ignorance or knowledge; there is only relative knowledge and ignorance" (Freire, 1976:23). For us, in the practice of Community Social

Psychology this means making explicit the type of authority and knowledge relation that obtains between the external agent and the community leaders or representatives when discussing and planning which actions are to be implemented.

In the ‘love-unlove’ axis, the focus is on the meaning and bonds in the relationships that are established during the educational process. Paulo Freire refers to love whilst emphasizing the fact that human beings are essentially unfinished, and also to the nature of the exchange between one and another in the process of discovery:

“It is false that love does not expect something in return... One loves insofar as one seeks communication, integration starting from communication with others. [...] Love implies fighting against selfishness. Those who cannot love ‘unfinished’ beings cannot educate. There is no compulsory education, just as there is no compulsory love. He who does not love does not understand others; does not respect them. There is no education through fear. One cannot fear education if one loves” (Freire 1976: 23-24).

According to Community Social Psychology this relation of ‘love-unlove’ would be translated into the emotional aspect of relationships, the meaning attributed to life and the beliefs that legitimize (or not) its doing (to love/not to love), its daily practice.

In the ‘hope-hopelessness’ axis, one can find the dimension of possibilities for the future, be those about individual or collective projects. For Community Social Psychology what is privileged here is also the future but with a focus on group and collective aspects; that is, one speaks here of political projects and their element of utopia.

II.2 A Model of Analysis in Community Social Psychology.

Could we find a proposed synthesis that integrates – at the level of community work directed at social transformation - the central axes of Paulo Freire’s Awareness-raising Education with the Processes of Awareness-raising in Martín-Baró’s Social Psychology of Liberation (Emancipation)?

A proposal is here put forward for analysing the possibilities of action that can be said to exist at the intersection between these three dichotomies in Paulo Freire. There is a discussion of the possibilities for intersection between the processes of awareness-raising and the actions in the

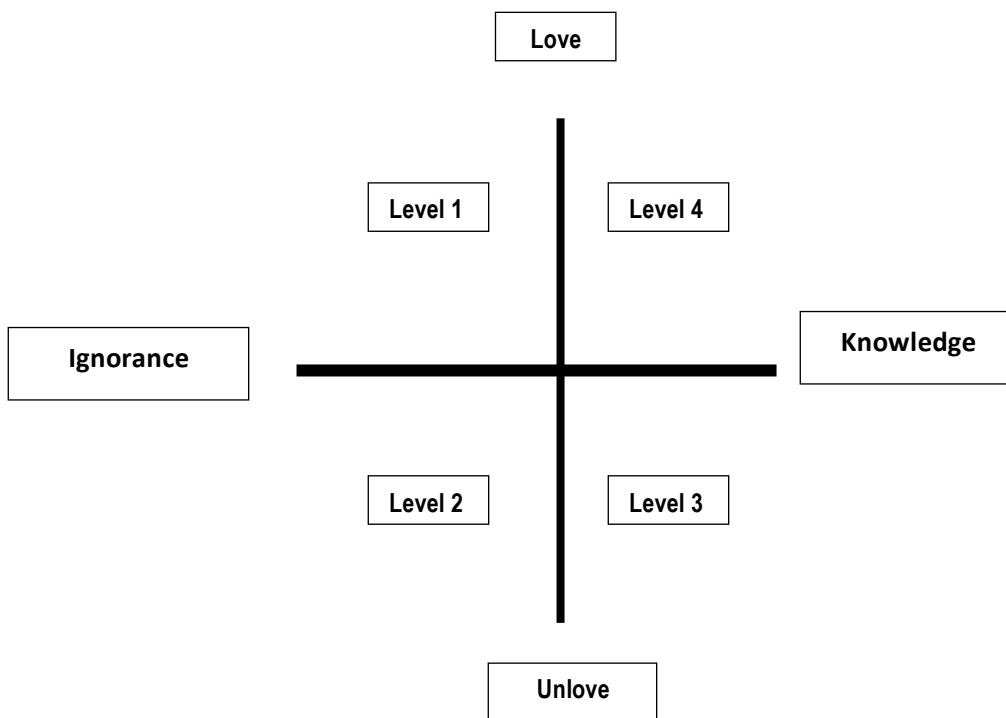
everyday life. The aim is to understand the movements or possibilities that we can create for a practice of transformation in everyday life and work in the community, depending on which processes of awareness-raising and participation (specific to each sector or plane/level) the internal or external agents find themselves in when involved in community work or educational processes of emancipation.

II.2.1 Community Practices and Everyday actions guided by the Three Axes.

Possibilities for Action in Community 1: Axis Love/Unlove versus Knowledge/Ignorance.

What balance and opposition could there be between emotion and knowledge in the development of community practices aimed at transformation? It is against the backdrop of mutual influencing between these two dimensions – the emotional aspects (represented here by the love-unlove axis) and knowledge (represented by the knowledge-ignorance axis) – that there will then be a discussion of the possibilities of attitude and action. The graphic illustration appears in Figure 3. Each one of the Levels refer to a type of participation and psychosocial practice in everyday life.

***Figure 3: Panel of Possible Participations 1:
Axes Love/Unlove versus Knowledge/Ignorance:***



In Level One (Love-Ignorance) we find an attitude of sympathy and closeness towards difficult and problematic situations, often guided by a certain affection that turns the situation or person into a target of sympathy or compassion. However, the little knowledge or disposition to face difficulties, or the lack of access to resources that allow one to understand the reasons for the problems that are experienced, doesn't make it such that the sympathy or sensitivity towards those problems is sufficient for a meeting of alternatives and overcoming the precariousness of the situation. It is the case when people have the inclination and the motivation to do and help, however do not know 'what to do' or 'how to do it' since they lack the resources, tools and knowledge.

In Level Two (Unlove-Ignorance) we come across a paradoxical possibility. On the one side there is the 'disaffected', who shows either little sympathy or little sensitivity towards the situation, neither getting involved or offering to do something to improve conditions. Parallel to this, we see the same lack of knowledge regarding available resources and/or the situation, as also seen in Level One. If on the one hand this may seem terrible, in the sense that it exposes certain attitudes of indifference towards social realities; paradoxically, on the other hand it can also indicate a certain degree of self-protection that the individual adopts when he feels impotent from lack of knowing what to do and how to do it. Thence, we can understand why people often appear to 'do nothing about it'.

In Level Three (Unlove-Knowledge) we find a different possibility of acting and position oneself towards the world and life, and which also raises certain worries. We can find here authoritarian attitudes and relationships in which the decision regarding what to do and how to do it belongs to those in a position of superiority or power. Emotional involvement, if there is any, may happen at the limit of fulfilling goals established by the knowledge dimension. In Paulo Freire's proposal we find here, for example, the cases of Banking Education, or those cases in which professionals decide which projects and actions ought to be executed in the community, based on the knowledge they have and which justifies them in acting in this manner.

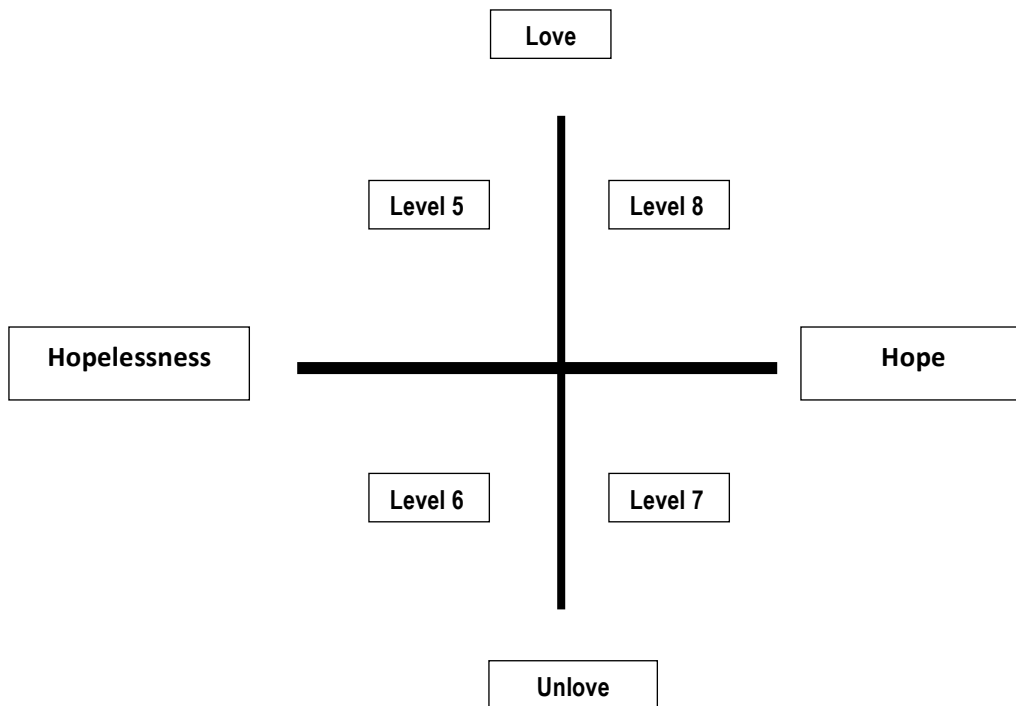
In Level Four (Love-Knowledge) we find the attitude we expect when one aims to carry out actions that lead to overcoming conditions of oppression and exploitation, and also contribute for people once again believing that it is possible to change and improve their lives, and that it is possible to have rights and dignity. We find present here practices that are guided by knowledge, which is itself renewed and recreated at each stage of the work by the resources available to face

up to the problems, together with bonds of unity and partnership that permits all those involved to create a frame of reference and solidarity that helps them create strategies for collective survival in everyday life.

II.2.2 Possibilities for Action in Community 2: Axis Love/Unlove versus Hope/Hopelessness.

One speaks here of the bonds of unity and affection, and the possibilities of a future or of projects that can be carried out and shared. One speaks of sensitivity towards another in direct relation with the utopia for the future. This is shown in Figure followed.

Figure 4: Panel of Possible Participations 2: Axes Love/Unlove versus Hope/Hopelessness:



In Level Five (Love-Hopelessness) actions are guided by the bonds and connections that may already exist or which are currently being built in community projects and people's everyday life. Meanwhile, the belief in the possibility that such actions will also lead to change is almost inexistent, as if there were no plans for the future. At the same time, to place oneself in this level indicates the existence of prime ground for the establishment of conformism and dogmas that replace belief in being able to change and alter one's life conditions.

In Level Six (Unlove-Hopelessness) we are faced with a delicate situation regarding the possibility of actions that are conducive to change. In other words, people don't believe that there is the possibility of a better future, and at the same time do not get involved nor do they worry about this or the existing situation. We thus have the right terrain for selfishness and isolated, short-term actions. This may then create another sort of insensitivity towards events and suffering in others' lives, given that there isn't a collective project or unity.

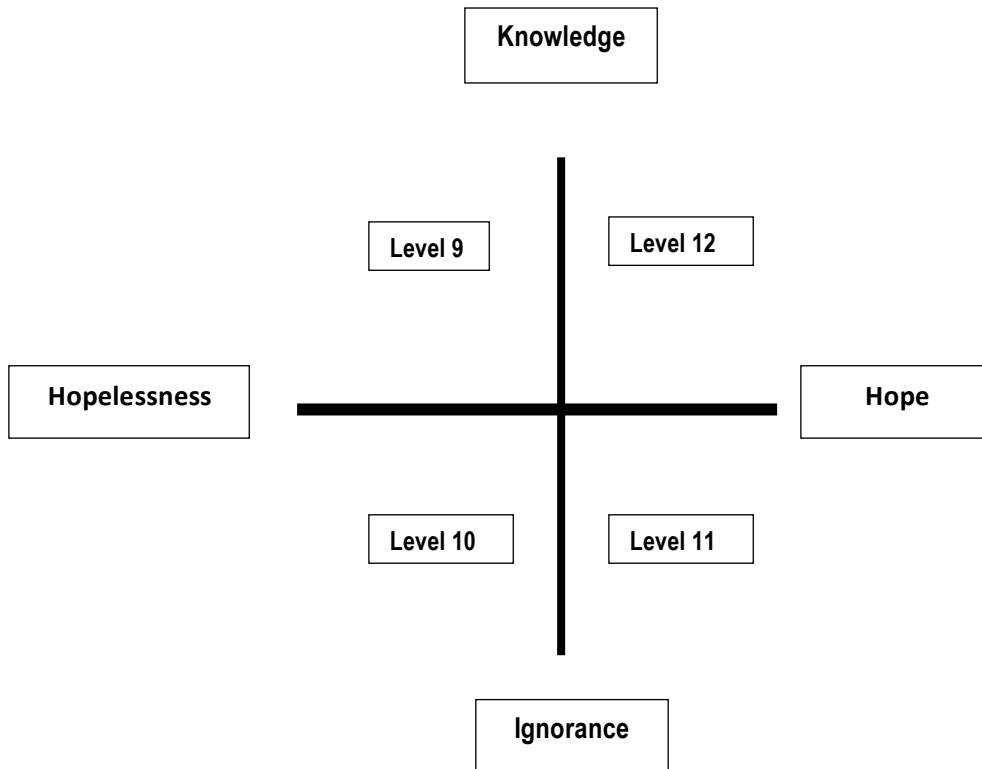
In Level Seven (Unlove-Hope) we can find some perspectives on change, since there is some belief in the future. Meanwhile, because there is no commitment or involvement in the situation or with people, this belief in the future seems closer to certain motivations present in a more immediate and individualistic perspective. The place of the Other and his life are not included within the range of worries preoccupying those placed at this level.

In Level Eight (Love-Hope) contrary to previous positions, we have the sector in which participation is implemented through commitment and involvement with the other, in such a way that bonds and feelings of belonging develop. We find here another section aiming towards practice in the community from a perspective of emancipation and social transformation. One could speak then about an element of utopia in community work and in human relationships in which feelings of belonging are encouraged.

II.2.3 Possibilities for Action in Community 3: Axes Knowledge/Ignorance versus Hope/Hopelessness.

To conclude this reflection on the possibilities of action and the results they produce in terms of impact on awareness, we now have the sectors relative to practices placed at some point along the axis of knowledge-ignorance and the axis of hope-hopelessness. This can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Panel of Possible Participations 3: Axes Knowledge/Ignorance versus Hope/Hopelessness:



In Level Nine (Knowledge-Hopelessness) we find action that, albeit guided by some knowledge regarding reality or its determinants, comes impregnated with a certain hopelessness and disbelief. One may see a certain weariness when confronted with situations and the problems experienced, together with a vision or attitude that denote fatalism, in the sense that one no longer believes that there is another possibility or alternative; that there is a different future. This also points to the fact that information and knowledge, even if correct and precise, are not always by themselves capable of leading people to do things and to change their lives. There is also the need for some kind of project, as a source of motivation and organization pro-change.

In Level Ten (Ignorance-Hopelessness) actions appear mediated by conformism in the face of the precariousness and adversity of the situation, together with a certain adaptation that permits one to face up to this state of affairs. On the one hand there is no collective project, and on the other there is no knowledge of what to do, which in turn results from either ignorance of

lack of access to information. We also find here a strong process of naturalization of everyday life: conformism and adaptation to existing conditions, as if they were immutable.

In Level Eleven (Ignorance-Hope) on the contrary, there is motivation or possibility of change and future projects. However, ignorance or the lack of information and resources prevents this from happening: magical alternatives or one's dependent on people that have such knowledge or resources are created; or still, projects may be so copious and generic – as the result of lack of knowledge about the real conditions - that they become unattainable. In this way, a new circle of inevitability regarding concrete problems is generated, together with a certain dose of conformism necessary to make this way of life acceptable.

In Level Twelve (Knowledge-Hope) we find the sector in which, through different forms of acting and participating, the dimensions that are complementary and which provide one of the pillars necessary for the possibility of change in everyday life come together. There is an alliance between the knowledge of all those who participate and are involved in a dialectic relationship of exchange and respect, and the projects for a better and fairer society in private and public life. We find here pro-change participation and the overcoming of forms of oppression and exclusion.

III. Some Reflections on the Proposal Put Forward

How are awareness-raising and participation articulated in ways of facing-up to and strategies for survival and resistance in everyday life? That is, how do we sever the relation between oppression and injustice that create forms of impotence and fatalism regarding life? It was in this perspective that a proposal was here put forward for an intersection between those bipolar axes, which also points to some psychosocial effects on actions.

Men, as a being-in-relation and acting in his daily life, is placed at some point along three continuums: knowledge-ignorance; love-unlove; hope-hopelessness. One can say that Paulo Freire presents us these continuums as having a certain parallelism between them. In doing this, the idea arises, for example, that if someone places themselves on the 'Love' side, they will also end up placing themselves on the side of hope and knowledge; or, the other way around, siding with 'unlove' they would also side with hopelessness and ignorance, and this seems to indicate that there are no other possibilities and that human action does not involve dilemmas or paradoxes.

However, it is precisely with this dialectic of everyday attitudes – expressing dilemmas and daily standoffs - that Community Social Psychology has been confronted. It was in this sense, and with a view to understanding these challenges, that a ***Model of Analysis*** was suggested that brings together some links between Paulo Freire and Ignacio Martin-Baró and adds, along the psychosocial dimension, the dilemmas, paradoxes and contradictions experienced daily in community work in the field of Community Social Psychology.

Hence, in this context, the proposal put forward suggests that we think about the three continuums in terms of axes that intersect each other, rather than running in parallel. Accordingly, in the perspective of the analysis here presented, each panel shows us how different types of participation and awareness-raising take place in everyday life, depending on which basic values are being considered. In each of these panels, one can find different types of strategy for survival, be they ones of resistance and negotiation, of facing-up to and overcoming, or submission and conformism to the ruling ideology and power.

The intersecting axes, as shown in several Figures, indicate different stages in the ***Process of Awareness-raising***, which could be paired with the levels or degrees of awareness suggested by Paulo Freire. They also reveal possibilities for action, showing more or less accentuated degrees of conformism-resistance and transformation-maintenance.

In proposing this way of understanding the ***Possibilities for Action in Community and Processes of Awareness-Raising*** involved, the aim was to make an analysis that allows us to capture the movements and variations in Human Action, as well as the motives responsible for such action. The contribution made by this analysis follows, in part, from the fact that during community practice various dilemmas and stalemates regarding “*what to do*” and “*how to participate*” present themselves in a particularly vivid way. And considering a more complex and challenging network of actions, there is the fact that community work involves at least a social ‘other’ and he, in turn, involves ‘various others’ that make up and integrate his community network with different forms of power and tensions.

The ***Network of Tensions and Action*** lived in the day-to-day has, therefore, a clear collective dimension, and for this very reason reveals the enormous challenges and dilemmas we face in order to help our community projects succeed, independently of whether people are aware of or defend their importance (Freitas, 2005, 2008b).

In this discussion we have attempted to show that this relation does not always happen, in so far as there are contradictory attitudes, like those noted in the various panels analyzed, and yet even so people participate. For this reason, there are various situations in which sharing dilemmas and uncertainties does not always give us strength to participate and change, sometimes even producing the opposite effect. It was in search of a dialectic understanding of these paradoxes and dilemmas that a discussion was here made of actions in the various panels. The aim was primarily to bring about a debate that could guide the ‘what to do’ in the everyday practice of community work committed to social transformation.

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Community Social Psychology in Latin America: myths, dilemmas and challenges

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III International Conference of Community Psychology

Puebla, Mexico, June 3, 2010

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Community Social Psychology in Latin America: myths, dilemmas and challenges

Abstract

Latin American Community Social Psychology (CSP) is one of the few psychological disciplines that has had an autonomous development in our region. This development has been characterized by a theoretical, methodological and applied production derived from the diverse and complex problems in our context. The development includes academic and non-academic practices and products, as evidenced by numerous undergraduate and graduate university courses and programs in the field, as well as its multiple areas of application (health, environment, education, slums, disasters, public policies), processes (organization, participation, critical reflection, consciousness raising, leadership, empowerment, feeling of belonging, identity), scopes of action (governmental and nongovernmental organizations, health centers, educational institutions, community organizations, residential communities), populations (particularly socially vulnerable and economically disadvantaged groups), activities (research, intervention, evaluation, training, negotiation, prevention, conferences, publications). The increasing number and variety of activities undertaken by CSP professionals provide support for a sustained growth of the discipline. However, has CSP's trajectory been in accordance with the needs, principles, values and goals that guided the field's birth half a century ago? Have CSP's accomplishments satisfied its founders' expectations? What is the current pertinence of such accomplishments and of the elements which oriented their fulfillment, in view of rapid and continuous changes in virtually all society's domains? Have CSP's theoretical developments contributed to solve psychosocial problems it initially aimed to address? Have methodological strategies employed, developed or adapted by CSP been useful for understanding, managing and producing knowledge about the issues addressed? In addition, considering CSP trajectory, can we refer at the end of the first decade of the millenium, to the same but grown up and established discipline, or are different CSP's emerging?, Which are some dilemmas and challenges currently confronted by researchers, academicians, practitioners, advocates, whose timings, tasks and demands vary? Are universities providing adequate training in terms of skills and tools for working with communities? Which are some of the myths on CSP that have emerged? Finally, has CSP contributed, both from inside and outside academy to ameliorate poverty in our continent? These,

as well as many other questions and answers coming from participants in the Third Conference will undoubtedly help to collectively strengthen old but still relevant directions for the discipline and to outline new ones, that will make us and the people we work with better human beings.

Keywords: Community social psychology, Latin America, myths, dilemmas, challenges.

Psicología Social Comunitaria en América Latina: Mitos, dilemas y desafíos.

Resumen

La Psicología Social Comunitaria Latinoamericana es una de las pocas disciplinas psicológicas que ha tenido un desarrollo autónomo en nuestra región. Este desarrollo se ha caracterizado por una producción teórica, metodológica y aplicada que ha sido el resultado de problemas diversos y complejos de nuestro contexto. El desarrollo incluye prácticas y productos académicos y no académicos, como queda evidenciado por numerosos cursos y programas universitarios de Psicología Comunitaria a nivel de pregrado y de posgrado, así como por sus numerosas áreas de aplicación (salud, medio ambiente, educación, barriadas, desastres, políticas públicas), procesos (organización, participación, reflexión crítica, concientización, liderazgo, empoderamiento, sentimiento de pertenencia, identidad), ámbitos de acción (organizaciones gubernamentales y no gubernamentales, centros de salud, instituciones educativas, organizaciones comunitarias, comunidades residenciales), poblaciones (en particular grupos desfavorecidos, social y económicamente vulnerables), actividades (investigación, intervención, evaluación, capacitación, negociación, prevención, conferencias, publicaciones). El incrementado número y variedad de actividades emprendidas por psicólogos sociales comunitarios profesionales provee el respaldo para el crecimiento sostenido de la disciplina. Sin embargo puede cuestionarse: ¿Ha sido congruente la trayectoria de la Psicología Social Comunitaria con las necesidades, principios, valores y metas que guiaron su nacimiento hace medio siglo? ¿Han satisfecho los logros de la Psicología Social Comunitaria las expectativas de sus fundadores? ¿Cuál es la pertinencia actual de esos logros y de los lineamientos que orientaron su realización, tomando en cuenta los cambios rápidos y continuos que experimenta la sociedad en todos sus dominios? ¿Han contribuido los desarrollos teóricos de la Psicología Social Comunitaria a resolver los problemas psicosociales que se propuso enfrentar inicialmente? ¿Han sido útiles las estrategias metodológicas empleadas, desarrolladas o adaptadas para entender, gestionar y producir conocimiento acerca de las problemáticas atendidas? Además, considerando la trayectoria de la Psicología Social Comunitaria ¿podemos referirnos al fin de la primera década de este milenio, a la misma pero crecida y establecida disciplina, o están surgiendo diferentes psicologías sociales comunitarias? ¿Cuáles son los dilemas y desafíos que enfrentan actualmente los investigadores,

académicos, practicantes y gestores que tienen tiempos, tareas y exigencias variadas? ¿Están las universidades proveyendo formación adecuada en cuanto a habilidades e instrumentos para trabajar con comunidades? ¿Cuáles son algunos de los mitos que han surgido a propósito de la Psicología Social Comunitaria? Finalmente, ¿ha contribuido la Psicología Social Comunitaria desde dentro o desde fuera de la academia a disminuir la pobreza en nuestro continente? Éstas, y muchas otras preguntas y respuestas que aportaron los participantes en esta 3ª Conferencia ayudarán sin duda a fortalecer colectivamente las viejas pero todavía relevantes direcciones de nuestra disciplina y para formular nuevas que nos harán a nosotros y a la gente con la que trabajamos mejores seres humanos.

Palabras clave: Psicología Social Comunitaria, América Latina, mitos, dilemas, desafíos.

Introduction

Community Social Psychology (CSP) is one of the few areas of psychology that has had an indigenous development in Latin America that is, generated from the diverse and complex peculiarities and problems of our reality. Almost four decades after its inception and having as guidance the commitment to contribute to reducing poverty, inequality and exclusion; academic and extra academic contributions in the field are numerous and represent a sustained growth of the discipline.

But what have been the trends and scope of such contributions to the development of the CSP? Do they converge with each other? What have been the implications for the goals of the CSP? Are these goals still valid or should they be reformulated and why? In the first case, what changes would we have to enter into the discipline to deepen or broaden its impact? In the second case, how would they have to be restated?

The answers to these questions are not simple or unique, nor do they obey the criteria of absolute or generalizable truths. They are like the discipline itself: complex, diverse, dynamic, and defiant. Therefore we do not claim to answer them, but to share our outlook with the readers on these issues, whose systematization is regularly updated, product of a long practice that integrates teaching, research, action and reflection with students and colleagues. Also, thanks to the invitation to participate in this symposium organized for the Third International Conference on Community Psychology. Events like these deserve that we put our daily activities on hold in order to meditate and write about community experiences lived with its players and others associated with them, from different places (school, residential communities, government agencies), and whose speed, intensity, requirements and urgency leave little time for this vital work. I thank the organizers of this conference for inviting me and for the opportunity to update and write about what I will now proceed to present.

The text is organized into two parts. The first part refers to some features of the Latin American context, as a field of production of CSP and the definition, purpose and development trends of the discipline. The second part focuses on a set of questions, ideas and proposals generated from the analysis of these trends and in general of contributions and Latin American experiences with CSP, which reinforce or rethink old ways and open new ones for our community psychosocial work and for the discipline itself.

First Part

1. Development context of CSP: poverty in Latin America.

The purposes of PSC are directly linked to the characteristics of the Latin American context, particularly its conditions of poverty that direct psychosocial community work to economically vulnerable sectors of society. Let us illustrate this situation with some recent data. On November 30, 2010, the Report on the Social Panorama of Latin America (CEPAL, 2010), based on the economic analysis of 19 Latin American countries (Argentina, the Multicultural State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Dominican Republic and Uruguay), estimated that by late 2010 the number of poor in the region would be of 180 million, and of these, 72 million would be in a position of destitution. These figures represent 32.1% and 12.9%, respectively, of the Latin American population and suggest a decline in poverty of 1.0% and of indigence of 0.4% compared to 2009, when the international economic crisis reversed poverty reduction levels for the 2003-2008 period. Notwithstanding the estimate for 2010, in which inequality, in terms of the income of different socioeconomic strata, increased in the last decade (Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2009; ECLAC, 2008, 2009) and levels of poverty continue to be critical particularly in precarious urban settlements (ECLAC, 2009; UNPD, 2009).

The high growth rate and population density, with inadequate living conditions in these settlements, are a threat to the survival of its people and an obstacle for the development of countries (Urban 21, 2000). The magnitude of this problem prompted the Organization of the United Nations to consider poverty reduction as a priority issue for policy in developing countries (The World Bank Group, 2004; UNDP, 2008) and promoted the development of the "Millennium Declaration". This is an agreement in which the 189 countries that make up the United Nations committed to joint efforts to build a safer, more prosperous and more equitable world and formulated an action plan to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty (income less than one dollar a day) by 2015 to half of what it was in 1990, representing Latin America and the Caribbean's 10.5 million people (UNFPA, 2008; Trigo, 2004). However, it is expected that only 7 Latin American countries can achieve this (Demian, 2008).

The complexity of this issue calls for a change in the conditions that sustain this state of affairs, from which the dominant model of science does not escape. In this regard, Calhoun (2007) calls for more public social science in the sense of social relevance and interference in public affairs, in order to increase their social relevance at the same time as strengthening the discipline. CSP is precisely an example of this alternative model of science due to the issues that concern it, the objectives and approaches, principles and values that guide it in order to achieve them. In line with this idea, several areas of knowledge and Latin American and international organizations have recognized the contribution of community organization and participation, and of the empowerment and strengthening of the members of poor communities as key processes for overcoming poverty, which is fully in accord with the principles of the CSP.

2. Community Social Psychology: definition

CSP, in my view, is a discipline that seeks to understand and influence, from and with communities in areas, situations, conditions and psychosocial processes related to the quality of life of groups in situations of inequality and insecurity, in order for them to acquire or strengthen capacities and skills that will allow them to co-manage resources along with other actors in order to ensure decent living conditions, which coincide with the values of democracy.

3. CSP: purposes.

As suggested by the above definition, a central purpose in CSP is to contribute to the fairness of oppressed and excluded sectors in society, promoting psychosocial changes of various types (affective, discursive, ideological, cognitive, relational, behavioral) on different scales (from micro to macro), environments (residential, institutional, academic, community), actors (government, civil society, community, professional). At the same time an attempt is made to consolidate the development of this discipline, which we have broken down into the following categories and purposes:

3.1 Level or scale of change

3.1.1 Macrosocial or level of social structure: Facilitates the transformation from a state of dependency, inequality, exclusion, injustice, oppression, mainly related to the problem of poverty.

3.1.2 Microsocial, or individual and human group scale: Promotes psychosocial processes (collectively building awareness, sense of community, identity, shared emotional bonds, democratic leadership, organization, participation, increase in power) that promote the transformation of conditions that threaten social, community and individual welfare.

3.2 Environment

3.2.1 Residential: To achieve the transformation from socio-environmental and adverse residential conditions, primarily in precarious settlements (provision of habitable housing, services and infrastructure, food, education).

3.2.2 Institutional: To influence government bodies, decision-makers and implementers of public policy, as well as others who perform community service or support communities to (re) conduct or enhance their resources and contributions to the satisfaction of the community.

3.2.3 Academic

3.2.3.1 Discipline: To build a discipline with relevance to the context, that is socially relevant.

3.2.3.2: Paradigmatic: To take on alternative paradigmatic perspectives, consistent with the problems of the context and the goals of the discipline.

3.2.3.3 Theoretical-substantive: To extend the conceptual framework toward approaches that address the processes, areas and actors required for the established target and generate knowledge that integrates different types of wisdom.

3.2.3.4 Methodological-instrumental: To develop appropriate strategies and tools to approach issues and contexts.

3.2.3.5 Information-divulging: To democratize knowledge in order to promote equity, justice and to strengthen disadvantaged sectors.

3.2.3.6 Interdisciplinary: To expand comprehensive frames with interdisciplinary outlooks.

3.2.3.7 Teaching: To take on community psychosocial work as an experience of lifelong learning, through training, reflection and exchange of knowledge and experiences.

3.2.3.8. Ethical-political: To vindicate participation as a mechanism to influence decision-making, for the exercise of citizenship and the enjoyment of rights, beyond the satisfaction of needs.

4. Trends in CSP: What did we find?

To refer to the trends of CSP and to the correspondence between trends and the relevance of community psychosocial production in order to meet the demands faced by its practitioners, requires a rigorous and comprehensive review and analysis of the state of the art in this field as well as contextualizing this production. To fulfill part of this task, the review focused on CSP works published in the proceedings of the Inter-American Congress of Psychology in 2005, 2007 and 2009 (Wiesenfeld and Astorga, 2009), supplemented with information from text collections and Latin American contributions to the area (Alfaro, 2000; Arango, 2007; De Freitas, 1996; Montero, 1984, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006; Sánchez 2001; Wiesenfeld and Sánchez, 1995; Serrano-García and López M., et al. 1987; Serrano-García and Rosario, 1992; Serrano-García, 2009).

51 articles were reviewed, 16 from 2005 (Varas and Serrano-García, editors), 17 from 2007 (Saforcada, E., Cervone, N, Castella, J; Lapalma, A. and De Lellis, M. , compilers) and 18 from 2009 (Cintrón, Acosta, and Díaz, editors). The review of these articles was undertaken considering: the type of work (theoretical or empirical), its theoretical foundations, methodology, participants and beneficiaries of the work areas or areas of performance and impact on community views and the community at large, and the type of relationship that this work maintains with the goals of CSP.

Of the work reported on, 45% is theoretical and 55% empirical. At the theoretical level, it is evident a diversity of conceptual frameworks (social representations, psychoanalysis, theory of semantic networks and other cognitive models, gender studies, concepts of philosophy and sociology, including interdisciplinary approaches, among others), only a quarter of the articles (25%) is based on approaches such as social constructionism, traditionally regarded as characteristic of CSP.

For the analysis of the type of methodology used, out of 28 empirical studies presented, only 6 (21%) used Participatory Action Research (PAR) or Participatory Research (PR), considered the most suited to the characteristics, principles and values of CSP (Suárez, 2005; Sierra and Reidl, 2007; Zaldúa, Sopransi, Veloso and Longo, 2009; Estrada, 2009; Echeverría,

Castillo and Cortés, 2009) and 22 (79%) used methodologies different from this methodological strategy.

The works include among participants: individuals and / collectives (groups, organizations, geographic and functional communities), age groups ranging from infancy to older adults, healthy and diseased participants with various educational, social and cultural levels, caregivers and people needing care from others, among many others. The fields of inquiry and action with these participants included educational, labor, cultural, health, residential settings.(Echeverría, Castillo and Cortés, 2009; De Assis, Biasoli and Nunes, 2009; Arnoso Martínez, Elgorriaga and Otero, 2009; Samaniego, Antivero, Bártolo, Bonzo, Stesh, Domínguez, García, Iurcovich and Villegas, 2005; Suárez 2005).

The inclusion of this variety of participants and environments is suggestive of the usefulness of work incorporating the community dimension in order to understand, speak, and change the conditions, problems, needs and potential of a wide range of people and contexts.

Reflection on community issues, as part of the framework of analysis undertaken, emerged in response to some papers published in the reports/recollections, whose focuses seemed to deviate from the budgets and methodology of CSP (for example, work was done with individuals rather than communities, methods used were quasi-experimental or statistical or manipulative rather than participatory, assessments or interventions consisted of individual interventions and not on the collective and active transformation of the participants) (Samaniego et al., 2005; Smith, 2005; Auyón, Estrada, Grazioso, García, Samayoa and Peláez, 2009; Domínguez, Chambers and Procidano, 2009). This overview led us to ask ourselves why they were included in these books and in response we identified the existence of different senses of community as well as possible connections between the work carried out with experimental and other approaches, and CSP. Thus, and without implying solidarity with the inclusion criteria of the work, in memories/recollections of 2005, 2007 and 2009, community is associated with:

- Concepts and processes of community psychology (empowerment, participation, communication, dialogue, etc.)(Miranda, 2005; Fuks, 2007; Miranda, 2009).
- Diverse populations that benefit from community psychosocial work or on which the research was conducted, which are considered communities (schools, work groups, cultural groups, health organizations, geographical communities, etc.)

(Ortíz, Nieves, Gómez and Malave, 2005; Peláez, 2007; De Assis, Biasoli and Nunes, 2009).

- Subjects studied (youth, unmarried mothers, social participation, poverty, environmental impact, etc.) related to both the communal, as well as many other aspects of a social character, such as public policy, culture and development, among others (Legaspi and Aisenson, 2005; Sierra and Reidl, 2007; Estrada, 2009).
- Instruments, diagnostic evaluations, concepts, and empirical knowledge related to the communities and stakeholders who care for them (Samaniego et al., 2005; Domínguez et al., 2009).
- Issues addressed by CSP and other fields of psychology (political, clinical, counseling, environmental) or other disciplines (sociology, anthropology) (Star and Walters, 2005; Maldonado, Cayupil and Maldonado, 2007; Domínguez, Torres, Akemi, Ciancia, Hernández and Pantoja, 2009).

In summary, the review of the literature showed diverse contributions to the discipline and its development: concepts, relationships, methods, attention and problem solving, and other types of application of CSP.

Thus, theoretical studies contributed to the discipline by emphasizing the importance of some concepts for CSP (social memory), explored the tensions that exist between that which is social and which is community in what refers to CSP (Miranda, 2005), critical reviews conducted of IAP ; showed tension between CSP and clinical psychology and how psychosocial interventions can be made from psychoanalysis; explored areas that are currently of great interest to CSP, such as public policy; and showed how the discipline is relevant to the development of these; emphasized the community and / or social dimension of some human actors (homosexuality, youth social networks); allowed for the update and reflection on the discipline or the making of further theoretical contributions (concerning values, participation, etc.).

On its part, empirical research contributed to the discipline and its processes by strengthening or providing concrete tools to participants to solve problems (smokers, communities with health problems, unmarried mothers); to observe how NGOs can aid in combating discrimination and stigma, and be a stage for emancipation and citizenship; to provide tools (inventories) that facilitate the identification of community needs and the implementation of

programs; to enable participatory processes, encouraging the exercise of power on the populations concerned in the studies, to produce empirical and / or theoretical information useful for the implementation of community strategies; to achieve changes in the quality of life of people (children with AIDS); contributing to the realization of interdisciplinary approaches; to provide concrete recommendations for poverty reduction.

Despite these contributions, the contents of most of these works did not pinpoint the theoretical contributions to the body of knowledge of CSP and, as demanded by CSP, their application, nor the advantages of using similar different or even incompatible research methods other than participatory action research which is the methodological strategy favored by CSP.

With regard to processes central to the discipline, such as community participation, their impact was not reported in terms of knowledge production and the changes that it hopes its implementation will provoke. For example, did the peoples' power increase? Was the experience transferred to other situations, contexts or populations? Was public policy impacted through participation?

The same thing happened with the interventions reported. It was not easy to identify the level and type of change achieved for communities, for the discipline, or for other areas and actors. Being that it is precisely change that is an essential purpose of CSP.

If we compare these results with those expected to meet the aims formulated for CSP, we note that work was done mostly at the micro level, covering a range of participants and locations. The correspondence of these with the notion of community is compromised, as they do not provide rationale to justify such a choice.

With regard to academic goals, one way or another the work as a whole did meet the expectations referred to in almost all sub categories of this target, (disciplinary, paradigmatic, conceptual, methodological, interdisciplinary, educational, ethical, political) This does not mean that every work included at least one or more of these categories or those who did had the scope and projection expected.

We do not know if the type of information we'd like to see is missing due, among several options, to the lack of clear criteria for selection of the works or to the traditional manner of reporting scientific research and experiences, whose format requirements, guidelines, content, extension, undermine the rendering of the information that we demand. These uncertainties pose challenges such as that of promoting different, creative, accessible and understandable reports

that ensure greater and better disclosure of the efforts in their respective areas of activity and their diversification in terms of various audiences interested in the subject.

Now, on to the second part of this paper.

Part Two: Reflections, Questions and Proposals.

In this section I discuss some essential components for the development of CSP, and for the fulfillment of its goals including: community, actors, relationships and processes. I must warn, however, that supplemented with the reviews above, questions, reflections and proposals, are based primarily on our long coexistence with the discipline in combination with environmental psychology, academia, communities and various institutions and government teams.

1. The Community.

1.1 The community and its forms of (non) existence: heterogeneous, diverse, invisible, homogeneous

The references to community in literature, a sample of which is the review carried out, account for multiple uses of the term, as well as a variety of community types and differences among its members, with regard to their community life. This heterogeneity, however, does not include all those who are a part of the community.

On the one hand, invisible sectors of the community (who do not lead or star in community processes, silent, dissident voices from leadership, those who do not participate in community activities), while on the other hand people with whom CSP professionals typically work are designated in the community context as "the community", suggesting that this variable number of committed people who are always involved, represents the other members.

This trend toward generalization not only distorts community reality by annulling the diversity of activities that constitute everyday community life, but also renders anonymous the protagonists that streamline processes and mobilize people; these are the people who show their faces in difficult situations. We believe that, on the one hand, this imbalance relieves community members of responsibilities when, either due to apathy, indifference, work overload, health reasons or whatever, benefit from the efforts of others. On the other hand, the imbalance at hand relieves leaders and external agents of responsibilities, who overlook or ignore the particular problems of those who feel inhibited or are not able to participate.

To recognize the intermittencies and fluctuations of the community will recover, in a conscious and critical manner, the amplitude of this central concept for the discipline and its processes, and therefore the scope of community work, and propose criteria to delimit it. We ask, however, what munitions, as Thomas Ibáñez would say (2001), we need to manage ourselves in multiple diverse and changing communities?

1.2 Community limits: transcending the local.

Part of the community complexity has to do with its geographical boundaries. Although the trend of CSP has been to work with spatially bound communities, at a local and micro level, it is necessary to transcend to a higher level, without neglecting the micro. In this way, and to encourage the shift from the conception of the problems in the communities from individual to collective, we must also convene a reflection on the limits of these problems beyond the community level, promoting rapprochement between communities and community institutions with similar problems, transferring successful experiences and learning from them. Doing so would facilitate meeting the goals of CSP; however this requires that we ask: What have been the reasons that have hampered going beyond the performance scales of CSP?

2. The actors and their variations: auto and hetero-conceptions.

Community psychosocial work calls for the interference of different actors, and the differences within and between them, resemble, in their specificity those considered for the community.

Thus we often refer to other agents involved with the communities, whether they are government, university or professional, negating their diversity and ignoring the transformations that are generated in the discussions, conversations, confrontations and negotiations within and between actors.

In this way, each actor develops concepts about himself and others, influence the forms of relating and of interacting with each other and the rest of society. But how does the community actor build himself and other members of the community? How do the State, academia or others build him/them, assuming as we noted, their internal diversities? Moreover, how is the CSP professional given meaning in accordance with his/her workplace (government official or non-government agent, academic or activist or social advocate? What use does he give the tools

provided by the discipline to reconcile discrepancies in his environment and how does he move them to the relationship with others? And finally, how is the State conceived by different actors?

3. The actors and their (inter) relations.

The various facets of community stakeholders are evidence of the plurality of modes of interacting conditioned by, among others, the knowledge or the (pre) judgment and direct or vicarious experiences with them. This kaleidoscope deserves that space be devoted to some of these actors and their (inter) relationships.

3.1 The third agent: (un) necessary and / or (un) desirable.

The consideration of the government actor or third agent (Wiesenfeld, 2000) ignored in the literature and CSP projects is of great relevance for the discipline. First, the shortcomings faced by communities which are of particular interest to CSP, are directly related to public policies formulated and implemented by these agents. Secondly, self-management has been a process valued as a strategy for achieving the community's requirements and to strengthen its members, but it also means unloading its duties on those who have the responsibility of ensuring citizens' rights and in turn overloading those who already carry on the struggle for subsistence with responsibilities. Viewed in this way, the interaction between third agent/community is evident. However, this co-implication is not easy, which is also obvious when considering what has happened in general terms on the government side and in the community. Thus, social policies have failed to reduce poverty significantly, hence their effectiveness, and in general the State's role in its relationship with communities, leaves much to be desired and has encouraged the incredulity of this sector.

The discontent of communities due to their long-standing unmet expectations has been manifested, among other ways, in historical claims to successive governments for their unwillingness to solve social problems, in distrust and rejection of these agencies and in the discredit of populist and interventionist measures. From the community side, community participation (CP) promoted by CSP, has as one of its aims to influence those policies as a strategy for incorporating community perspectives on the public agenda and thus claim the satisfaction of their needs and other rights. However, CP has not made an impact at the public policy level, nor and has it made the other actors who share responsibility in solving social problems assume their functions in a co-managerial way. In fact, self-management remains the

predominant form in which the poor meet their needs, a sample of which is the large number of Latin American people who self-construct their homes and reside in the so-called poverty belts.

It is evident that, without diminishing the contributions made by CSP, the psychosocial and community workers have a long way to travel, especially when there are even disagreements amongst ourselves concerning our performance, such as the questioning or the acceptance of handouts controlled by organizations following the institutionalization of service programs (Krause Jacobs and Jaramillo, 1998; Krause Jacobs, 2002), or of forms of participation induced by the State, which distort the voluntary and emancipating character of the process (Wiesenfeld and Sánchez, 2009).

This scenario raises several questions we must ask ourselves: How to address the relationship between State and community? Does work with organizations that represent the status quo represent a betrayal of the principles, values and goals of CSP? Is the State or government entity always an opponent the community must resist or confront? In the case of Venezuela, how to handle oneself before a state with emancipatory discourse similar to that of CSP, but with actions judged to be contrary to these, from the perspective of government critics? How to position oneself with local government agencies, opponents to the central policy of the State, whose management is also presented as transformative, but is it interfered by the ruling party? Is it possible or even desirable in the interest of CSP goals, to avoid the link with this third agent?

Additionally, how can we make personal interests compatible with academic, professional, and community interests, that are not always in harmony? How to reconcile the ruling-opposition polarization within the same type of actor, such as CSP professionals, who above such differences defend the means and ends of CSP? How to exploit these differences in terms of training opportunities for our students? Obviously this is an issue that in contexts such as those of Venezuela, are part of everyday life. It is a challenge then, for our colleagues from other countries, as for those involved to make this situation visible so the solutions will benefit the education of critical and sensitive professionals, with broad perspectives and respect for differences and with tools to address them; and above all with the commitment to place ethics over ideology and personal positions in working with communities.

Moreover, if we return to the idea that diversity congregates in each sector, how to enhance the effectiveness of psychosocial processes that we promote in the communities

(addressing problems, creating awareness, participation, negotiation), with the third agent, to influence decision-making in that environment? If we intend to do it, it will not be the official discourse in favor of or against community participation which causes the desired changes, but the will and community mobilization in the conviction of the legitimacy of their demands and the strength of their actions.

Although the CSP has had little foray into this field, we are not proposing something unprecedented. On the contrary, we are appealing to proposals from models such as participatory governance, or recent approaches to sustainable development that have been made from other disciplines and latitudes. In conclusion, the challenge we face is threefold: with the third agent, with the communities, with ourselves.

And we ask ourselves why? Let's talk about those who exercise CSP.

3.2 The backward exclusion.

A value that is shared in CSP is inclusion. However, we have intentionally overlooked, reasoned and even reasonable, social sectors with features alien or contrary to the community focus of the discipline (e.g. dominant sectors considered the middle class, or which threaten community interests, such as government entities). In doing so however, are we not reproducing exclusion backwards? Aren't we condemning them as actors not susceptible to transformation? Aren't we underestimating our own potential influence to impact these sectors with influence on the circumstances of these communities?

The inclusion of all stakeholders provides, in our view, access and understanding of their views and thus the advantages and difficulties coming from outsiders to the communities to achieve their requirements. This understanding also contributes to the formulation of proposals drawn on various perspectives and approaches to the same situation, based on knowledge of that set (Brinton Lykes, 1997).

However, are all the relevant parties, or is even a single party, willing and interested in this listing? If not, how to neutralize the negative influences of these sectors in the promotion of community processes? And if so, what tools can CSP provide to facilitate the implementation of inclusion without undermining the purpose of CSP or affecting the interests of the community? If we believe in the possibilities of human change, why not extrapolate this belief to areas and sectors of society that like it or not impact the sectors we work with?

3.3 CSP professionals and self-exclusion.

Another value that is shared on the CSP side is positioning on the side of the need and who suffers it, although in a reasoned not unconditional manner. This bias involves committed subjectivities, as postulated by constructionist and critical approaches widely adopted by the discipline (Wiesenfeld, 2000). However, paradoxically, professionals of CSP have also been absent from our own reports (Goncalves, 2006). They do not reflect the experiences of professionals as actors in the process they report. We do not relay the impact of experiences, learning or derivatives thereof; in short anything that positions or makes us visible in the literature. What accounts for this absence? Why have we not problematized our silence? Have we even noticed it?

We believe this policy has to do partly with traditional forms of publishing, in which the author fades within his own narrative due to the requirements of the posting rules which respond to the criteria of traditional scientific paradigms. Another possible interpretation is the isolation of our professional practice, which is paradoxical in a discipline oriented to building community with action, reflection and affection. In this regard, we have not generated sufficient space for dialogue and reflection with our peers on our concerns, achievements, difficulties, feelings that emerge in our work with communities. As the Participatory Action Research strategy states, dialogue based on praxis and actions stimulated by group reflections are ways of enriching human beings, citizens, professionals and of contributing to the development of CSP. Why not then assume them for our own processes as a community?

3.4 The mutual idealization between professionals and communities.

The principle of engagement with communities is a key issue in the bond of professionals with them. But their ways of interpreting and acting, both on the professional and community side are not without difficulty. In this regard we ask: what does commitment with communities mean? How do we handle it when we differ with the community's attitudes or actions, particularly those of its leadership?

Often the implementation of these principles is understood, from the professional, particularly the academic side, as a valuation and idealization of everything that happens in communities without problematizing or questioning it. This trend has to do with the glare of

novel contexts and experiences that inspire admiration and solidarity, and indeed often the desire to become "the other."

This type of relationship leads to a kind of engagement in which there is a risk of ignoring, underestimating or dismissing scientific knowledge as trivial or disconnected from the realities of the community. In this regard, this way of bonding can lead to a kind of activist coexistence that can benefit the community as it has a trained resource unconditional to its requirements. However, the discipline loses valuable feedback and necessary reflection for its development and therefore optimization in the performance of its goals.

This enchantment also has another side that is what happens from community members towards professionals, prioritizing the knowledge of the "expert", over their own knowledge, often arising from experiences other than those of the professionals.

Hence the importance of sharing the concerns raised in community work, in order to contextualize and understand individual perspectives and maximize their gains for the parties involved.

3.5 The academia-community relationship.

Professionals of CSP assigned to academia face particular circumstances inherent in university regulations.

3.5.1 The time dimension or university-community time incompatibility.

One of these circumstances relates to the incompatibility between academic and community times, which is the basis of the programmatic structure of the university curriculum of study. Its organization in defined periods, is contrary to the dynamics of the everyday life of communities, where problems do not wait for the start of the semester to arise. In this sense, if community issues discussed with students and teachers respond to methods that allow us to identify, prioritize and address priority issues with a rationale in which academic time is not considered, then how to solve this time limitation, without affecting the community nor transgressing academic lapses?

3.5.2 Dual loyalty.

On the other hand the academics engaged in the field of CSP have a dual commitment: to the community and to teaching and knowledge production, which under the aforementioned demands put them in the face of the dilemma of how to facilitate community problem-solving or teaching and disciplinary development.

In fact, analysis of the publications presented in the first part of this paper, as well as the results of previous and recent reviews (Serrano-García, 2009) show the reports are mainly from teachers and university students who pursue studies linked to the community psychosocial area. These reports refer to the dissemination of successful experiences and to the positive side of experiences, leaving aside the difficulties and other collateral processes. Reports did not include the implication of the research and / or intervention as far as the principles, values and goals that guide the discipline or the theoretical and methodological development of CSP.

3.5.3 Practicing professionals.

On the other hand, productivity outside the academy is unknown, while the dynamics of this task leave little room for reflection, systematization and writing of articles or texts in the terms required by the literature to which we must add the possible absence of motivation of professionals in this activity. The implications of these works often remain in the memory of their actors, which creates a vacuum of information relevant to the development of the discipline. The above requires, firstly, the need to generate alternative formats for the development and dissemination of experiences in CSP outside academia, and secondly to encourage creative spaces for dialogue between professionals working in different organizations.

4. Notes and questions on other topics / goals.

4.1 On theoretical production and methodology: coherence between objectives and results

The report of experiences without the reflective and theoretical counterpart, or theorizing on such experiences is responsible for another lack of information in publications in the area. We refer to the lack of theoretical production derived from complying with the research-action-reflection-production of theory cycle, which characterizes the methodological strategy of Participatory Action Research (PAR), favored by the CSP. We ask ourselves, is it feasible to target the production of knowledge through the use of PAR, is this goal feasible for an academic

without sacrificing the products with which he/she is assessed in this environment? In this vein, what has been the effectiveness and contributions of methodological strategies employed in our discipline, such as PAR, in the light of the limitations exposed? How much of the theoretical production in CSP comes from community involvement experiences of PAR?

4.2 Participation in PAR.

PAR poses co-research between researchers and community to generate knowledge sets of everyday situations that reflect and redefine, and on which we act based on their new significance. This cycle legitimizes the knowledge produced and increases the welfare of the community. But to what extent is such participation met? How many people participate, and who are they? Are they representative of the plurality that characterizes an inclusive and democratic process? Are those who yield or who do not have the role of key informants or leaders encouraged?

4.3 Regarding the processes: involvement.

Participation (P) not only has been and remains a fundamental pillar of the community psychosocial task, but it has been assumed as the process for excellence in virtually all areas. P is the column that gathers, gives meaning and directs other processes that emerge and evolve concomitantly (sense of community, empowerment). Compliance with the principles and guidelines of participation is a necessary condition for achieving the goals set by CSP. However, like the notion of community, the use of the term participation has been distorted and extended to the point that it is considered a social value in itself, apart from a set of considerations that lead to increase the compliance of its postulates in our field (e.g. co-option).

4.4 Interdisciplinary aspects.

While there is a recurrent call for joint, inter, multi or trans-disciplinary projects, in practice this rarely materializes. At best, the limitations of the different fields of knowledge are recognized and professionals are called in which, according to the particular project promoters, may respond to particular requirements, by virtue of their expertise. In this regard, is there clarity about the reasons that demand cross-disciplinary endeavors, and on the constraints which remain an outstanding issue on our discipline's agenda? Perhaps the answer to these questions can help

us either to initiate this work with greater certainty and conviction that so far has converted the terms that designate the work of more than one discipline as socially desirable.

4.5 Uncertainty.

Uncertainty has become a serious problem that limits community work, particularly from academia, given that other institutions involved in community life usually do so with work commitments that involve some type of guarantees and compensation. This is not the case for teaching, research and / or community university practice in which the commitment is of another nature. Circumventing community practice for the sake of preserving personal integrity, especially of our students, is legitimate and unquestionable. In fact, several colleagues have chosen to undertake practices in "safer" communities, thereby excluding many others, where the majority of its residents could benefit from this type of work. However, our commitment as citizens and social scientists interested in contributing to alleviate the problems of communities, of which insecurity is an important part, forces us to take on the challenge of community work in environments where our education and training can be useful. If we add the educational role of community work, in terms of awareness of students and teachers themselves about the existence of that other reality with enormous potential and strengths, our commitment increases.

4.6 CSP and the model of Sustainable Development.

A model that we believe shares many of the aspirations of CSP is that of Sustainable Development, of which few professionals in our field have taken notice. In this regard, recently added dimensions of community sustainability highlight the subject area and focus for CSP as a prerequisite for sustainable development. This is, therefore, a model that, incorporating precisely a community perspective, can help achieve the objectives of CSP, many of them coincident with the Millennium Declaration, made by United Nations (2008). In this vein, we consider that the possibility of sharing a common model with other actors and disciplines could help to overcome limitations of isolation from the disciplines and actors, for whom the encounter with others is represented as a loss rather than saving time, resources and efforts. This model, due to its nature calls for precisely such an encounter, and its purpose, inspired by the preservation of the environment, placed in a more neutral level in sectors whose radical views inhibits them from such encounters.

4.7 A closure that opens: Crisis or legitimacy of CSP: one or more CSP?

Finally, where do trends identified with CSP point to? Can we consider the heterogeneity exposed, with its achievements and limitations as indicators of the richness of CSP, of different CSP's that we have to make explicit or of a crisis of CSP? Can we interpret the diversity and divergence in trends in CSP as a crisis of CSP, in its approaches, methods, paradigms and goals, which have to do with the crisis of development models in the region, and therefore deserve intense discussion by those who are assumed to be psychologists or community social psychologists?

We leave the questions open so that together we generate the responses and incorporate new questions. Only then can we collectively strengthen old but successful transition paths or outline some new ones, which in any case shall make us and of the people we work with better human beings.

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Community Psychology as a Linking Science
Potentials and Challenges for Transdisciplinary Competences

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III International Conference of Community Psychology
Puebla, Mexico, June 3, 2010

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Community Psychology as a Linking Science

Potentials and Challenges for Transdisciplinary Competences

Abstract

In a globalized world, traditional values of Community Psychology, like community building, social change and empowerment, require more than working in a local community and/or improving the social situation of specific groups. While this work will remain an important core part of Community Psychology, the field of Community Psychology also should empower itself: by using its competencies to develop social innovations, focusing at emerging futures by developing shared goals (and take shared risks), and by collaborating with other disciplines, societal institutions, business companies or other actors in society in order to make a difference in the world. Community Psychology as a global academic field and a practical challenges has a rich history based on different disciplines, on various political and value backgrounds coming from traditional and industrialized regions and countries from all parts of the world. To use this richness, we have to start to learn from each other and to value different approaches. Therefore, in the future, Community Psychology should focus both on macro- and micro-issues of community analysis and community building, and it should develop its identity as a “linking science” fertilizing different approaches into a both overall and culture-specific approach of community-based research and practice. To achieve these goals, it will be important to elaborate and re-identify the “DSA of community psychology”: *Design Skills* to develop both strategic-innovative and creative abilities in order to nurture mutual knowing, awareness and playfulness, *Social Skills* to enhance the art of community building as a collaborative and empowering process, leading to social responsiveness and inclusion. *Action Skills* to learn how to co-create, implement and evaluate new concepts and social innovations to build communities in different settings.

Keywords: Innovation, emerging futures, micro and macro-issues, linking science.

Psicología Comunitaria Internacional en el futuro: Potencialidades y desafíos desde una perspectiva europea.

Resumen

En un mundo globalizado, los valores tradicionales de la Psicología Comunitaria, como construcción de comunidad, cambio social y empoderamiento, requieren algo más que trabajar en una comunidad local y que mejorar la situación social de grupos específicos. Aunque este tipo de acciones permanecerán como un núcleo importante de la Psicología Comunitaria, esta disciplina tiene también que empoderarse: necesita usar sus competencias para desarrollar innovaciones sociales, enfocándose a futuros emergentes desarrollando metas compartidas (y tomando riesgos compartidos), y colaborando con otras disciplinas, instituciones sociales, compañías de negocios y otros actores de la sociedad para aportar algo diferente al mundo. La Psicología Comunitaria como un campo académico global y de desafíos prácticos tiene una rica historia basada en diferentes disciplinas, en varios antecedentes políticos y de valores que provienen de regiones y países tradicionales e industrializados de todas las partes del mundo. Para aprovechar esta riqueza tenemos que empezar a aprender unos de otros y a valorar diferentes aproximaciones. Por lo tanto, en el futuro, la Psicología Comunitaria deberá enfocar situaciones de análisis y de construcción comunitaria desde temáticas tanto de nivel macro como de nivel micro. Deberá desarrollar su identidad como una “ciencia enlace” fertilizando diferentes aproximaciones culturales, universales y específicas, de investigación y práctica basadas en comunidad. Para lograr estas metas será importante elaborar y reidentificar el “DAS (Diseño de Acción Social) de la Psicología Comunitaria”: Habilidades de Diseño para desarrollar capacidades creativas y de innovación estratégica para generar conocimiento, conciencia y actitud lúdica mutuos. Habilidades para lo Social, para impulsar el arte de creación comunitaria como un proceso colaborativo y empoderante que lleve a inclusión y capacidad de respuesta social. Habilidades de Acción, para aprender a co-crear, implantar y evaluar nuevos conceptos e innovaciones sociales para crear comunidades en diferentes escenarios.

Palabras clave: Innovación, futuros emergentes, temáticas micro y macro, ciencia enlace.

Introduction

Being a community psychologist always has been a quest for new ways to deal with psychosocial problems not only on the individual level, but also to look for potentials and challenges of people and social settings. Community Psychology also has been and will be in the future a quest for a political identity as a psychologist who wants to improve social justice and individual well-being in a complex world.

That is why Michael Frese's (2006)² challenging question: "What if Applied Psychology Mattered in the World?" fits perfectly if we ask for community psychology's identity in a complex and globalizing world. Frese stated that psychology today needs a currency that is as important and respected as money. Therefore, psychology should develop well-being and happiness as a psychological currency in contrast to money and economic goods only. In order to achieve this, psychology needs to have an impact on all spheres of social life – community and social systems, economy, politics, etc.

For the future of our world, well-being, individual and collective happiness and social justice will become important elements of a currency which should be more important than money. Many multidisciplinary studies have shown that the key to individual well-being is maintaining social networks, community building, and enhance empowerment processes. Therefore, asking "What if Community Psychology Mattered in the World?" can show substantial categories for a social currency developed by community psychology (CP). Based on this notion, this paper will try to make a point for a Community Psychology of the future, based on the idea of a linking science, using the knowledge and craftsmanship of different areas and disciplines, and the professional capabilities of specialist practitioners as well as the practical wisdom of neighborhood groups and of everyday life.

Community Psychology – Concepts of a "linking science".

Community Psychology has had many origins before it has been called Community Psychology (Bennett et al., 1966). To name a few: community organizing (Alinsky, 1989) and

² Michael Frese, the past president of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), delivered this paper as a keynote paper in Athens at the Congress of IAAP 2006.

the Community Mental Health Movement (Bloom, 1973) in the US; Conscientization (Freire, 1996) and Action Research (Fals Borda, 1991) in Latin America; Marie Jahoda's (1972) groundbreaking long-term study on the effects of unemployment on the community or the Italian Democratic Psychiatry Movement (Basaglia, 1968) in Europe have influenced many community psychologists. Equivalently, many political movements (Civil Rights, Student's Movements of the 60s, Women's Liberation, Gay's Movements, Equal Rights for Handicapped Persons, Survivors of Psychiatric Hospitals and many more) have had considerable impact on research and practice of community psychology. Although the term "Community Psychology" has been developed in the US and still is being dominated by the discourse of the scientific community, we have to realize that there are many other developments in many parts of the world with different background and important contributions.

If one compares Community Psychology to other psychological disciplines, the picture is quite a paradox: Community Psychology on the one hand looks like a small island of science and practice being not very influential within the large discipline of psychology; but at the same time discourses and research topics of Community Psychology seem to have a broad impact on many disciplines. One of the reasons for this paradoxical picture is the basic concept of Community Psychology: the field conceptually always has oriented itself towards a systemic view of social dynamics in the world by integrating individual and group levels, community, organizational and societal levels of analysis. Because the concept of community psychology is transdisciplinary by nature, its identity bears a wide variety of regional and individual scholarly stories, and is trying to integrate personal value systems and scientifically based interdisciplinary research and practice within its boundaries. Julian Rappaport already in 1977 summarized the idea of community psychology: "...the real key to social change is in the attitudes, values, goals and political-economic ideology and social policy of which institutions themselves are composed and on which organisations are based." (Rappaport 1977: 180). But, although this systemic view is in the core of Community Psychology's belief system and has been developed since 30-40 years, it never has grown to be dominant in teaching and research. Having to survive in an academic world of distinct disciplines, there are only few consequences based on the systemic view of Community Psychology; quite the contrary, more than 80% of research and practice in Community Psychology still is restricted to individual or group levels.

Especially today the transdisciplinary concept of Community Psychology has the potential to be one of the most powerful applied psychologies in civil society. By linking:

- ❖ The strengths of different traditional disciplines (psychology, sociology, organizational science, anthropology, art, educational science, social work and social medicine)
- ❖ The spheres of academic science and the practical areas, addressing real world challenges of our time.
- ❖ And the analytical view on the past, and creative ideas for the future.

Community Psychology is going beyond traditional applied sciences: It is not only applying scientific results for praxis, but adds new questions and ideas on individual, social and societal issues by using systematically a transdisciplinary approach.

In order to unfold its potentials, a Community Psychology “linking science” wants to unleash itself from the limits of traditional academic disciplines and taxonomies: The social network and social support research already brought close collaboration between psychology, sociology and anthropology, and is also providing links to virtual networks in the world wide web which are relevant for social network research today, such as the complexity and global nature of today’s and tomorrow’s challenges on the micro-, meso- and macro-level problems of migration or demographic change and challenges of sustainability; but also the systemic patterns of today’s organizations or of modern medicine. All call for a transdisciplinary approach which is generally built-in to Community Psychology - if we as community psychologists use its potential.

Community Building in a Civil Society.

In the process of globalization, one can find contradictory movements: The erosion of traditional community structures is alienating both individuals and social networks; at the same time, for many continuous change processes in social life, and meeting new people and cultures both in reality and the virtual world, is both a burden and a chance to discover new opportunities and to develop innovative ideas. By analyzing risks and opportunities of globalization, eminent scholars like Anthony Giddens (2001), Zygmunt Bauman (2000) or Ulrich Beck (2005) all agree, that active community building processes in order to develop a culture of “learning communities” will be indispensable to overcome the risks and dangers of globalization. Castells’

analysis (2000) of the “network society” already emphasized the need for a culture of community which both, on the local and the virtual level, will determine our future communication.

Here, a future Community Psychology has to readjust the traditional model of community as local neighborhoods towards a systemic view of the role of community building in organizations, (real and virtual) social networks on the local level and beyond, and on the level of civil society (citizen groups, local and global coalitions and alliances) (see Senge, 1990; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2004; Wildemeersch & Stroobants 2003). Social networks, families, local communities and organizations (both companies and NGOs) in Europe will be challenged by continuing global migration processes, the need to adjust to considerable demographic changes and the quest for a new social justice in the world. And, if traditional structures are eroding, there will be an urgent need to develop common values in society together with all actors.

For Community Psychology, therefore, it will be necessary to develop a new and enhanced identity based on the field’s core values which is able to meet the challenges of a complex and globalized world. The steps described below - based on the guiding principles developed by an international group of community psychologist (adapted from Wolff et al., 2006) - may serve as a guideline for future research and action:

- Community psychology will become increasingly global in nature. This is why local communities are increasingly important because they are affected by global forces. Community psychology must collaborate with communities so they effectively adapt to such changes.
- A community psychology approach, by definition, must be an approach informed by multiple perspectives. Thus, the future of community psychology will require partnerships with other disciplines and community stakeholders. Community Psychology will have to partner with others while maintaining its own unique identity.
- Community psychology will become more engaged in the formation and institutionalization of economic, and social policy. These policies will be based upon the values that are at the core of our discipline and will incorporate psychological principles. Involvement with policy is consistent with community psychology’s ecological perspective on community which recognizes the importance of macrosystem factors, such as business and policy, on communities.

- Community psychology will become a field of research and action that makes a significant difference on issues of social change by promoting social justice. Social justice is defined as conditions that promote equitable distribution of resources, equal opportunity for all, non-exploitation, prevention of violence, and active citizenry.

If the global, demographic and economic change we are witnessing is requiring a new perception of civil society, the role of Community Psychology is to initiate and maintain dialogue and mutual support with all actors interested in social change and social innovation. Therefore, Community Psychology should start to be a real “linking science” by

- ❖ Discovering empowerment patterns between individuals, groups and social structures, not only in the neighborhood, but in all kind of settings where people work and live together (companies, virtual communities, social policy).
- ❖ Learning not only from the past, but sense emerging futures by learning across generations, cultures and institutions.
- ❖ Establishing new intersectoral alliances and test new forms of collaboration between different actors in society.
- ❖ Enabling mutual risk taking through experimental settings and program evaluation.

This requires to add to “incremental”, step-by-step social innovations forms of profound, more “radical” social innovations for which collaboration with other disciplines and actors are needed. Therefore the following section will show some exploratory fields of action and research to develop a “linking science” based on community psychology. Concrete potentials of Community Psychology as a linking science can be shown in the following exemplars of transdisciplinary approaches toward community building.

Discovering Empowerment Patterns.

The discourse on empowerment processes (Rappaport, Swift & Hess, 1984) in Community Psychology has been influential for many practical areas in community mental health and social work, psychiatry, community development and organizational science. In social policy the concept of empowerment has been adopted in various legislations in Europe and developed as a synonym for innovative approaches to social challenges and the growth of a consumer- and prosumer-oriented civil society. To use the dynamics of empowerment processes in order to

enhance well-being and growth not only in individuals but also in social systems, it is important to link the different levels of empowerment (individuals – group – organization) (Stark, 1996). Empowerment as a concept has been adopted in various disciplines (sociology, management, software development, women's studies...) (see as an example for many: Dominelli, 1999). In order to understand the systemic potential of empowerment processes it may be helpful to analyze the patterns of empowerment developed in areas like the BoP (Base-of-the-Pyramid)-approach (Hart, 2007) to develop social business (not only) in emerging markets (Yunus, 2008). Although the empowerment discourse has been extremely powerful in recent decades and had an impact not only on Community Psychology, but also on other disciplines and areas of work, the concept, from its start, still remains more as a professional attitude than a professional methodology or technique. A value-based approach may serve as an important basis to form a community psychology identity; in order to establish a technology for empowerment it helps to cross disciplinary boundaries: Christopher Alexander's groundbreaking book "A Pattern Language" (1978) is one of the most influential books in architecture, but at the same time hides important basic ideas for community psychology on establishing and nurturing a community, and offers a technology based on the patterns approach which has the potential to serve as a general language for empowerment. The idea of a pattern language has been adopted in many disciplines (one of the most important being software development, which developed many ideas on participation processes both in technological and pedagogical settings). But it has a potential not yet discovered systematically: To link the wisdom of different disciplines in order to understand and practice the art of empowerment and community building from different perspectives and to develop its variety of potentials. Douglas Schuler (2008) and his PublicSphere-Project have started to develop a pattern language for organizing and community building which could ignite a move to develop a pattern language for empowerment and community building based on the scientific knowledge of community psychology together with other academic and practical fields.

Presencing – Learning from the Future as it Emerges.

The concept of "Presencing" (Senge et al., 2004) tries to expand our knowledge and praxis on community building by shifting our habit of learning from the past into an attitude of valuing the potentials within settings and to "create deep innovation through moving from

egosystem to ecosystem awareness” (Scharmer, 2010). Based on more than 250 interviews with global leaders the concept identifies what Scharmer calls the “blind spot of leadership”. He argues to slow down current processes of decision making which most often stick to disciplinary and situational knowledge and to avoid “quick fixes” both in economy and social policy in order to regenerate sources of common creativity and inspirational self, to reframe values and beliefs on how things have to be and can be fixed, and to redesign global and regional policies in economy, ecology and human equity.

To rediscover our personal and collective source of creativity and to avoid quick fixes by downloading old patterns, Scharmer (2007) proposes a seven-step-process starting from identifying past patterns of problem solving, shifting one’s sense to new perspectives and a broader picture, identifying new potentials of collective creativity, crystallizing new vision and prototyping new ideas. This process structure and the built-in transformation could be a model of a community psychology learning journey integrating the body of community psychology research and practice together with the wisdom of other disciplines. It also integrates the views of major actors (economy – civil society – public institutions) in society and community building needed to develop a systemic approach toward challenges in the community.

Design Thinking – Experiential Learning based on Transdisciplinarity.

One of the most radical transdisciplinary approaches on societal and community challenges originally has been developed as an integrative and systematic approach toward product and service design (Brown, 2009). The 30-year experience of IDEO (www.ideo.com) has led to a concept which not only has revolutionized innovation management in design, but also has considerable impact on a participative and transdisciplinary approach to address community challenges. Starting at Stanford University Schools for Design Thinking since few years ago it has been spreading throughout the world exemplifying how transdisciplinary approaches can help to address social problems. The HPI School for Design Thinking at the Potsdam University in Germany, for instance, in its 1-year-program is collaborating with students and faculty from 25 Universities, 40 disciplines and a growing number of companies and public institutions and community groups. Small interdisciplinary student and faculty groups are addressing a series of

temporary design challenges culminating in a 12-week design challenge developed together with companies and public institutions.

The concept of Design Thinking is a wonderful and impressive example of the potentials of a transdisciplinary approach toward social problems, developing a collaborative scheme for actors in society as well as linking different academic discipline and praxis. Therefore, together with the two exemplars described before, Design Thinking also is an exemplar for Bruno Latour's "Reassembling the Social" (2005), which expands John Dewey's idea of experiential learning (1938) into modern societies.

Perspectives for a Future Community Psychology.

Traditional values of Community Psychology like social change and transformation and current challenges today require more than working in a local community and/or improving the social situation of specific groups. While this work will remain an important core part of Community Psychology, the field should empower itself, use its competencies to develop social innovations and look at emerging futures by developing shared goals (and take shared risks) by collaborating with other disciplines, companies, or other actors in society.

Community Psychology as a field should focus on macro- and micro-issues of community building together with various partners: This is why it is important to develop close ties not only with national and international community psychology groups in different parts of the world in order to develop a sense of cultural diversity, but also with other psychological and social science/social action networks and associations. And, given the political character of community psychology, the political arena is an important area to be engaged in. In Europe, the European Union and the European Commission will be one of the most important partners to foster community building and a sense of community in our society.

To support this movement and to strengthen the capabilities of each community psychologist, we should form transdisciplinary Community Interest Groups (professional, student and practitioner groups) which will be able to maintain, and promote, the rich body of knowledge on community building and develop future questions which may be important for our society. We should invest in a joint education and practice in Transdisciplinary Community Psychology in order to develop the idea of community psychology for young professionals in all areas and of

all disciplines. For this we can use and institutionalize a rich body of experience of community psychology programs in universities and schools all over Europe. The time of an interdisciplinary community building and social innovation master program should come within the next years. These kind of programs could enhance the DSA-skills for a transdisciplinary future of Community Psychology:

Design Skills will develop both strategic-innovative and creative abilities in order to nurture mutual knowing, awareness and playfulness.

In *Social Skills* students and practitioners will experience the art of community building as a collaborative and empowering background, leading to social responsiveness and inclusion.

Action Skills will focus on how to co-create, implement and evaluate new concepts and social innovations to build communities in different settings.

Dan Stokols (2006) as one of very few community psychologists has promoted the idea of a science of transdisciplinary action research. Given the global and complex nature of problems and challenges, this approach can use original strengths of community psychology and offer new potentials for the enhancement of the field as part of a transdisciplinary, and, consequently, political movement of social responsibility. To teach and research the DSA of Community Psychology, there is a need for adequate institutional facilities through which a science-society dialogue can be established. In a transdisciplinarity laboratory, scientists from various disciplines and non-scientists will cooperate for a certain period of time, aspire to a mutual learning process and conduct transdisciplinary research.

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**HEALTH CALLENGES TO COMMUNITY
PSYCHOLOGY**

**Well-Being Services for People with Long Term Neurological Conditions: Co-researchers
Involvement in Research, Service Design and Development**

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III International Conference on Community Psychology
Puebla, Mexico, June 4, 2010.

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Well-Being Services for People with Long Term Neurological Conditions: Co-researchers Involvement in Research, Service Design and Development

Abstract

This chapter outlines the involvement strategies used in a participatory action project conducted in the UK, together with co-researcher evaluation of their experiences, presents reflections on the process of involvement in service design and delivery and its impact on community co-researchers. The study was jointly commissioned by a Primary Care Trust and a Local Authority Adult Social Care department in partnership with researchers in the Research Institute of Health and Social Care at Manchester Metropolitan University. The study, in line with the UK government well-being agenda (DoH, 2007b), was designed to reveal the ways in which services provided for people with Long Term Neurological Conditions (LTNC's) can enhance well-being rather than simply reveal or address their health and social care needs. In effect, this refocuses service provider perceptions away from seeing people with LTNCs as needy, or as problems to be solved (by addressing their needs) and more towards people whose well-being can be substantially improved with the support of professionals. People with LTNCs who were involved in this study included those with Parkinson's Disease, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, stroke, dementia, epilepsy, motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, acquired traumatic brain injury among others with rare conditions such as Lesch-Nyham Syndrome. The study took a participatory action research approach (Kagan, Burton and Siddiquee, 2008) in which a key element was the input from the LTNC's service user and service provider communities. The experiences of university and co-researchers have been traced in this paper, pointing to the importance of considering the short and long term implications of collaborative working and the impact this has on project outcomes and service design.

Keywords: Involvement, co-researchers, service users, service providers.

Servicios de Bienestar para personas con Condiciones Neurológicas de Largo Término: Involucración de Co-Investigadores en la Investigación, en Diseño y Desarrollo de los Servicios

Resumen

Este capítulo bosqueja las estrategias de involucración empleadas en un proyecto de acción participatoria realizado en el Reino Unido, evalúa experiencias de co-investigadores, presenta reflexiones acerca del proceso de involucración en diseño y realización de servicios y del impacto en los co-investigadores comunitarios. Este estudio, acorde con los lineamientos del gobierno del Reino Unido acerca de la agenda de bienestar, se diseñó para hacer patentes las formas en que servicios dados a personas con Condiciones Neurológicas de Largo Término (LTNC's) pueden realzar su bienestar y no sólo atender sus necesidades de salud y atención social. En efecto, esta estrategia re-enfoca las percepciones de los que dan los servicios para no sólo ver a las personas con NCLT como necesitadas, o como problemas a ser resueltos (atendiendo sus necesidades) sino más bien como gente cuyo bienestar puede ser sustancialmente mejorado con el respaldo de profesionales. Gente con NCLT que participó en este estudio incluyó personas con Enfermedad de Parkinson, esclerosis múltiple, parálisis cerebral, derrame, demencia, epilepsia, enfermedad neuronal motora, distrofia muscular, daño cerebral traumático adquirido, entre otras, con condiciones raras tal como el Síndrome de Lesch-Nyham. El estudio siguió una aproximación de investigación acción participativa en la que un elemento clave es la aportación del NCLT usuario del servicio y las comunidades que proveen servicios. Las experiencias de la universidad y de los co-investigadores se describen en este escrito, señalando la importancia de considerar las implicaciones de corto y largo tiempo del trabajo colaborativo y el impacto que éste tiene en los resultados del proyecto y en el diseño del servicio.

Palabras clave: Involucración, co-investigadores, usuarios de servicios, proveedores de servicios.

Introduction

Service user² involvement in health and social care service design and delivery is now heralded as an integral part of service development with positive outcomes for service users, health and social care research and service provision in the UK (DoH, 2006, DoH 2005a,b). Such involvement has underpinned attempts to develop ‘wrap around’ health and social care services which are responsive to the needs of the person and are delivered to improve their lives. The idea is based on a recognition that those people who are in need of health and social care support and who are often marginalized within official support systems have valuable knowledge and experience which can be used to create services which focus on improved well-being and quality of life (INVOLVE, 2007). This constitutes a move away from locating the basis of power over service provision with health and social care providers and into a more equitable relationship where both experiential and professional knowledge are both valued. However, this ‘personalisation’ agenda (DoH, 2007a) tends, as it is conceptualized and implemented, to prioritize individual needs while often neglecting the holistic family and community context. Moreover, as long as the focus of service provision remains on service user ‘needs’ elicitation, the difficulties of articulating those needs (for service users), and satisfying those needs (by service providers) alongside the general mismatch between perceived needs satisfaction, well-being and quality of life (Hobbs and Sixsmith, 2009) makes it a very difficult process to navigate. The involvement of service users in this process can shift the focus from ‘needs’ by unpacking the meaning of well-being in everyday life and coupling this more firmly with improving quality of life through service provision. However, the difficulties of service user involvement cannot be ignored.

Current, and predominant, rhetoric surrounding ‘involvement’ is unrelentingly positive, firstly centring on the notion that involvement is an empowering process for people whose voices are seldom heard within the service context and secondly producing more responsive, person-centred services. Three key problems hinder effective involvement: firstly, people who receive services may have typically had little experience of participation in service design and so feel relatively inexperienced and lacking the requisite knowledge; secondly when service user

² The term ‘service user’ is preferred here to more recent descriptors of ‘client’ or ‘customer’ in order to simply signal the relationship between people with dementia and service provision. It is not intended as an holistic concept which characterizes a person.

involvement has been undertaken it can take the form of ‘consultations’ which are little more than opportunities to be told about what will happen; or finally, the difficulties of living chaotic lives or with chronic ill health can preclude or dissuade people from engagement with often demanding participatory processes (see Hobbs and Sixsmith, 2009; Woolrych and Sixsmith, 2008). A further barrier to effective involvement lies in the relative lack of experience amongst health and social care professionals who have had little experience of involving service users integrally in their service design and development. This can result in feelings of disempowerment for both service users and providers and a breakdown in the involvement process (Sixsmith, 2009).

This chapter outlines the involvement strategies used in a participatory action project conducted in the UK³, together with co-researcher evaluation of their experiences, presents reflections on the process of involvement in service design and delivery and its impact on community co-researchers. The study, in line with the UK government well-being agenda (DoH, 2007b), was designed to reveal the ways in which services provided for people with Long Term Neurological Conditions (LTNC’s) can enhance well-being rather than simply reveal or address their health and social care needs. In effect, this refocuses service provider perceptions away from seeing people with LTNCs as needy, or as problems to be solved (by addressing their needs) and more towards people whose well-being can be substantially improved with the support of professionals. People with LTNCs who were involved in this study included those with Parkinson’s Disease, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, stroke, dementia, epilepsy, motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, acquired traumatic brain injury among others with rare conditions such as Lesch-Nyham Syndrome. The study took a participatory action research approach (Kagan, Burton and Siddiquee, 2008) in which a key element was the input from the LTNC’s service user and service provider communities.

Participatory Action Research (PAR).

The action oriented and participatory framework was adopted at the very outset whereby

³ The study was jointly commissioned by a Primary Care Trust and a Local Authority Adult Social Care department in partnership with researchers in the Research Institute of Health and Social Care at Manchester Metropolitan University.

people with a range of different LTNC's as well as health and social care providers were recruited to participate in the study design and implementation. Their participation continued into the realms of data collection, data interpretation, report writing and final presentation of results.

The guiding principles of this participatory action research project were:

- Development of a partnership with shared vision and expectations.
- Equality of all stakeholders within the process.
- Open communication on all aspects of the research.
- Commitment to social justice for all.
- Support and training for involvement.
- Willingness by all concerned to allow the PAR process to facilitate change both in themselves and in service delivery.

In particular, because of the intensive involvement both in the research process as well as input into service design and delivery, the support and training of co-researchers was of paramount importance. As such, the recruitment and empowerment of co-researchers was essential to successful completion of the project.

Involving Co-Researchers.

The involvement of co-researchers was not a smooth process. The first difficulty arose with recruitment. For recruitment purposes, the local health and social care authorities provided a list of their service users so that the research team could independently initiate contact. A range of telephone, e-mail and face-to-face contacts were arranged to ask if they would be interested in forming part of the research team. Unfortunately, these requests were met with suspicion and skepticism and no recruitments were made. They reported that while they felt involvement was a positive aim for service development, and that contributing to research was a necessary precursor to improving well-being through service provision, they ultimately were ill equipped to participate themselves because they felt:

- Inexperienced in service design and development, preferring to defer to the knowledge and expertise of service professionals.
- They did not really understand what research was about and so were reluctant to commit to activity they were unsure they could handle.

- They had little to contribute from their own experience as service users.
- They lacked the necessary skills, stating their embarrassment to speak in meetings, lack of confidence in discussing the issues they feel are important, frustration in not being listened to and inability to properly read and understand official document because of professional jargon.
- They were unable to keep as fully informed as service professionals, thereby not having all the relevant information to make appropriate decisions.
- They had no time, with most being devoted to getting on with the everyday tasks of living with a demanding and often variable LTNC.

They also said that:

- Their communication and mobility problems would disqualify them from participation.
- That no-one would listen to the result of the research or service design and development outcomes if they were involved. Here, they felt that the work would have more credibility if it were entirely conducted by university experts.
- Finally, that former efforts of the local authorities to involve them in service design had previously been one sided and fruitless, particularly citing that service change would not happen because of bureaucratic barriers and cost. Consequently, they argued that service user wishes realistically play no part in setting the agenda for change.

This high level of negativity towards participation was based on health, psychological and social grounds as well as past experiences. In order to progress beyond these barriers a joint ‘consultation’ event involving health and social care personnel, university researchers, service users, their carers and family members. The aim was to present information about:

- The National Health Framework for LTNCs (set out in March DoH, 2005, by the Dept of Health; DoH, 2007c, 2008) and progress towards achieving its 11 quality requirements.
- The research enterprise linked into the current research project aims and objectives.
- The value of service user experience input into design and development.
- The potential role of co-researchers.

After presentations covering this information and follow on discussions, a series of workshops were conducted to establish:

- The meaning of ‘well-being’ from participant perspectives.
- How the well-being of people with LTNCs can be measured.

This consultation event was effective in engaging service users in both the service development and research enterprise by ensuring they felt informed, understood how they could contribute and enabling them to experience participation in the research itself. Evaluation of the event was extremely positive as service users felt for the first time that they understood that their participation had real value, their experiential knowledge was essential to effective service design and development, that university training and support would enable them to master any skills they would need but did not feel they possessed. Most importantly, the workshop exercised convinced them that research was not only enjoyable, but equalized relationships between themselves as service user and service providers since both groups were new to research. In addition, service users felt they understood much more clearly that the NSF Framework for LTNCs could actually become a mechanism for improving their own lives, rather than simply more bureaucratic rhetoric with no tangible positive outcomes for everyday life. Consequently, they wanted to see it implemented in ways which would benefit all people with LTNCs. In effect, the consultation event motivated participation on grounds of:

- Knowledge gained
- Skills development
- And desire for effective personal and social change

The analysis of data collected in the well-being workshops was then produced in a short pamphlet (also made accessible to those with visual and auditory impairments). Once this was distributed, service users felt their views had been listened to. In this way, the integrity of the research was established as a potential way forward to improve service provision and a number of volunteers voluntarily contacted the research team to begin work as co-researchers. In total, 6 service user and 4 service professional co-researchers were recruited as a result of the consultation event. This included managers and staff from physiotherapy and adult social care alongside those with Parkinson's Disease, Stroke and Motor Neurone Disease and Muscular Dystrophy.

Empowerment within the Co-Researcher Role.

The initial welcome meeting with all co-researchers ended with service users requesting extra support be supplied to them independent from service provider co-researchers as they had

struggled to contribute to the meeting. In response, a series of service user workshop/training sessions were organized. The first workshop centred on the co-researcher role which resulted in the shaping of their own plan for this role. The second workshop focused on research as a process. Interview evaluation of these initial workshops indicated that co-researchers cohered together as a social group with a shared vision, a joint purpose and a feeling of moving forward and contributing to the great social good of people with LTNCs. Their excitement, enthusiasm and acceptance of the value of different forms of knowledge were tangible. Initial workshops with service users were followed by a further set of joint service users and service provider sessions concerning:

- 1) The study aims and objectives and how these might be achieved. Intensive discussion on the nature of well-being suggested the inadequacy of framing this entirely in terms of need satisfaction. Co-researchers felt that attainment of improved well-being depended on more than the satisfaction of felt needs (which they felt were difficult to conceptualize and articulate beyond the confinements of service oriented need assessments), and included the pursuit of personal goals and leisure opportunities. This session ended in the resetting the study objectives to more clearly fit the lives of people with LTNCs
- 2) Qualitative methodology, its aims and uses in researching well-being with people with LTNCs. This produced co-researcher input into the design of the methodology (semi-structured interviews) and the setting of interview schedules used to help people with LTNCs tell us about their experiences both of well-being and service provision. Three service user co-researchers then asked to extend their role to become interviewers and interview other people with LTNCs.
- 3) A further training session was then conducted on 'how to do interviews' and was supported in face-to-face individual meetings between co-researchers and university research staff. This enabled training to reflect individual skills development. Ten service user and 10 service provider interviews were subsequently conducted by trained co-researchers.
- 4) Finally, a session overviewed ways of doing data analysis followed by two data analysis workshops in which co-researchers engaged in thematic analysis of transcribed interview data (re Braun and Clarke, 2006). This resulted in co-researchers contributing to the defining the concept of well-being and the most relevant indicators of service impact on

well-being

In addition to direct involvement in the research work itself, two co-researchers elected to sit on the study advisory board, inputting to discussion about the project, problem spotting and solving, and guiding the research towards attainment of its aims and objectives. Furthermore, 2 co-researchers were involved in the recruitment of the university research assistant

In general, the involvement of co-researchers enriched the study by reinforcing the notion that:

- A more experiential approach to understanding how people live their lives would be better able to highlight where well-being could be improved rather than relying on a needs assessment based approach.
- Well-being is an experiential rather than an articulated cognitive phenomenon. Asking people directly about their well-being is likely to reveal only well known platitudes. In addition, well-being is framed as much more than satisfaction or pleasure (ie hedonic well-being), and encompasses personal development and the achievement of goals and engagement in life (ie eudaimonic well-being, see Shah and Peck, 2005; Ryan and Deci, 2001).
- Well-being is a highly complex concept (Haworth and Hart, 2007) It is not simply an individual issue but a family and community issue very much as Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky, 2007) point out in their well-being manifesto for a flourishing society.
- It is difficult for people with LTNC's to think beyond what services normally provide and to bring to the table those wider social, psychological and community based aspects of well-being

These issues were all used to influence the conceptualization of the study as well as methods used, data analysis and interpretations.

Co-Researcher Reflections.

Ongoing research into the experiences of co-researchers was conducted throughout the study in order to focus on issues of power, control and the production of knowledge within the co-researcher context (see Reason, 1994). This involved initiation of reflexive sessions with co-researchers, conducted on an individual face-to-face level. Changes made to the co-researcher

role based on these reflections were accomplished within a cycle of research, reflection, action and change (Kagan, Burton and Siddiquee, 2008).

The reflexive process revealed that service user co-researchers had gained a good understanding of the complexities of research practice and procedure, knowledge of the constraints and opportunities surrounding service provision and confidence in their own ability to speak up at meetings inside and outside the context of the research. As Stolle (2001) suggests, they had gained in negotiation skills (evident when one service user co-researcher re-engaged with local committee work), presentation skills (two co-researchers were involved in presenting the findings of this research at a local conference) and social skills (one co-researcher reported that she had been better able to deal with family issues as a consequence of learning about active listening and taking the other's perspective). In this sense, a degree of capacity building for future involvement in local service provision and university projects had been achieved. Moreover, co-researchers felt they could engage in critical thinking, by challenging their own beliefs, divorcing the discussion of contentious or sensitive issue from their own emotional responses and actively interrogating their own thoughts and those of others around them. They found benefit in the reflexive process itself, using this to understand more about their social positioning within service provision, family and community contexts. In terms of subjectivity, they felt more able to accept and make profitable use of their developing sense of self power in their everyday living environments. This was most evident when one co-researcher found employment having thought through the value of the skills she had mastered and her new found confidence in herself as a working class women with much experience to offer which she brought to bear in her job interview. Both service user and service provider co-researchers described how they had used reflexivity in other areas of their lives, especially concerning their work and family situations. The co-researchers confided that the experiences they had encountered in the research had brought new meaning into their lives, staved off boredom and given them a broad social platform of concern. For some, this was one of the few times when they felt they mattered and could make a difference to the social fabric of their communities.

Benefits articulated by service provider co-researchers were a little less forthcoming. Those articulated were:

- A better understanding of the experiences of people with LTNCs (this was the most widely cited benefit of involvement),

- Clearer envisioning of the value of service user involvement in the design and development of services and
- The necessity of thinking differently around service oriented promotion of well-being.

In general, they felt they would be less dismissive on service user concerns in the future stating that they would prefer to think around ways to improve services rather than simply following tried and trusted techniques which were not always effective. They would, they felt, seek out service user input in the future. For them, co-researching had opened up a new way of thinking about implementing change.

The Difficulties of Co-Researching.

Despite the positive outcomes of involvement, a number of difficult issues arose for co-researchers and university researchers alike as Sixsmith and Boneham (2003) and Kagan (2008) have found in previous work. For service user co-researchers these revolved around:

- Continuing to see university researchers as leaders of all aspects of research and as fountains of knowledge in the area and looked to them for validation. This happened despite repeated efforts at creating an environment of mutual sharing and learning.
- Dropping out. Intensive individual contact was maintained with co-researchers alongside group meetings in which hospitality featured strongly (lunches, refreshments, social chit chat etc) in order to engage co-researchers with a strong commitment to the project. Nevertheless, one co-researcher dropped out stating they did not have the time or energy required to participate and another dropped out on ill health grounds. In this project, the loss of two co-researchers depleted the human resources considerably, but was not critical to project continuance since both dropped out towards the end of the project.
- Disagreements between co-researchers created an antagonistic atmosphere and breakdown in communications halfway through the project. Mediation between them, delivered via the research team, achieved some reconciliation but personal grievances remained. The bringing together of diverse people in a common project is not always guaranteed to create strong friendship bonds and the likelihood of dealing with difficult relationships should be factored into the involvement process.

- Periods of ill health meant that promised work was not always completed (ie no planned co-researchers involvement took place regarding the carer interviewing). Project researchers maintain contact on a personal basis where possible with people throughout any bouts of illness. This meant they could re-engage with the project when they felt better, if that was what they wished.
- Some reported that, at times, the stress of expectation (their own as much as unintended researcher based pressure) weighed heavily on them. Some worried about influencing the design of services in ways which might result in poorer service provision for people with LTNCs. Others undertook research tasks with a work-like commitment, neglected other duties in their lives to fulfill their co-researching tasks. This created feelings of guilt because of relative neglect of family and friends. In these cases, researchers on the project acted as listening ‘buddies’ to help them see their work in a more positive light as well as to find a good balance between their commitments.
- At times, co-researchers reported they felt undervalued because their work was unpaid, yet preferred to remain as volunteers to maintain an independent stance within the research context. While this ambivalence caused some tension at an individual level, independence meant co-researchers were free to leave the project or avoid undesired tasks. This issue of payment was problematic for the university research team who felt co-researcher work was of very high quality and deserving of payment.
- Finally, there was a feeling of emptiness when the project ended. Here, the researchers were able to provide them with contacts to future project co-researching involvement in order that they continue their work within the health and social care and university settings.

The problems encountered for service provider co-researchers were very different, as follows:

- They felt all work on the project should be done within their office hours but struggled to create the time and space to conduct research tasks to the standard they felt was appropriate. Negotiation with line managers helped to free time for research tasks.
- There was some conflict between work roles and research learning. For example, involvement of service user voices in the project bore tangible benefits, yet this was not always undertaken in other domains of service provision in which they were working. This caused a degree of frustration and a feeling of inability to achieve the best outcomes

for service users. Where such concerns arose, the research team talked through options for limited service user involvement and pointed to the use of involvement in future work.

- Some lack of motivation was experienced due to the burdens of an inflexible bureaucratic system and heavy work load. In these instances, the research team re-negotiated any co-researcher tasks to minimize their impact on work time and thus reduce such burdens.
- Perhaps the most problematic issue arose when co-researchers were distressed when analyzing their own service role in what could be rather depressing service users experiences. Re-aligning their perceptions towards the aim of the project to improve well-being through service provision was critical to helping co-researchers to envision the benefits of such work.

A number of disadvantages associated with involvement were experienced by the university researchers. In particular:

- The intensive level of work needed to prepare training and support for co-researchers throughout was not fully anticipated at project outset. In addition, formal evaluation of co-researcher experiences constituted a small scale study in itself. Nevertheless, intensive input was required to ensure effective involvement and this was prioritized over more administrative tasks.
- Researchers were sometimes exposed to upsetting situations where co-researcher illness or stress stimulated re-thinking of ethical issues about the rigours of participation in research, especially with people who are vulnerable to stress and ill health. In effect, researchers reported that the perceived benefits of involvement outweighed the felt disbenefits, but that they felt bound to support co-researchers in any way they could – often putting in effort in their own leisure time to smooth the process for co-researchers.
- At times, researchers felt that the involvement process was beyond their current skill base. In response, reading around the process of service user and provider involvement was strongly encouraged so that learning from previous PAR projects could help guide decisions and actions.

In hindsight, the project and the co-researcher process would have benefited from:

- The creation of a forum or panel of co-researchers who could be consulted regarding their involvement in future university, Local Authority or National Health Service projects.
- A more accurate anticipation of the time required to support involvement would have

made the whole process more manageable.

- There is a need for timely up-skilling in training methods/ negotiation skills in order to ensure the smooth running of the co-research element of the study.
- A buddying system could be implemented between co-researchers and research staff to address unrealistic expectations and increasing stress levels before they become problematic. This was done informally but did add to the university researcher workload
- Training in time management and counseling skills.

In Conclusion

The co-research involvement of service users and providers were crucial to the success of the project in envisioning and recommending the design and development of well-being services for people with LTNCs. Many psychological, social and community benefits to such participation were realized and the increase in co-researcher skills and confidence were evident. However, problems of empowerment within the research and service context were encountered as the mapping of service change progressed. Discussion, training and skills acquisition sessions were negotiated and facilitated with co-researchers with consequent positive and negative implications for the research design, data collection and analysis, and interpretation of findings. What was of paramount importance was the institution of the vision that co-researching was not just about bringing service users to the table, but equipping both service users and health and social care providers to discuss and work together on an equal basis. In this way, service user voices have been acknowledged and capacity building has progressed both within the community and in the service sector. This allowed service users and providers to relate together in different, more harmonious ways, involving openness, listening and attitude change (Kagan, 2008) as well as learning from each other and influencing the research beneficially. The experiences of university and co-researchers have been traced in this paper, pointing to the importance of considering the short and long term implications of collaborative working and the impact this has on project outcomes and service design.

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Re-Empowering Family Members Disempowered by Addiction: Support for Individual or Collective Action?

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III International Conference of Community Psychology

Puebla, Mexico, June 4, 2010

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Re-Empowering Family Members Disempowered by Addiction: Support for Individual or Collective Action?

Abstract

Just under one hundred million is a conservative estimate of the number of adults whose lives are adversely affected by the alcohol or drug addiction of close relatives. Including children in the figures would add tens of millions more. The particular qualities of the experience of having to cope with excessive drinking or drug taking in the family, in combination, can make it a unique and highly stressful and disempowering experience. A programme of research over a number of years has 1) explored in detail the nature of affected family members' experiences, and 2) developed and evaluated a method for helping affected family members in their own right. Work in Mexico, England, among indigenous Australians, and in different regions in Italy has suggested the existence of a common core of disempowered experience for family members, with some cross-cultural variations. Predominant cultural norms – individual, familial collective, or community collective – are amongst the factors that modify the core experience. A method of supporting affected family members – the 5-step method – has shown promise in a number of countries. Its emphasis is upon listening carefully to a family member's story, providing relevant information, discussing coping dilemmas, and building social support. The method is flexible enough to be used in brief forms (including booklet and web forms), with anyone affected by or concerned about another person's addiction, and it can be used in a wide variety of settings including primary care and other community settings. Examples will be given of the ways in which it can re-empower family members by building their confidence to cope effectively.

Keywords: Empowerment, disempowerment, addictions, family members' experiences, 5 steps method.

¿Re-Empoderando Miembros de Familias Desempoderadas por Adicción: Apoyo para Individuos o Acción Colectiva?

Resumen

Un poco menos de 100 millones es un cálculo aproximado del número de adultos cuyas vidas son afectadas negativamente por el alcohol o por la adicción a las drogas de parientes cercanos. Si se incluye a los niños en ese número habría que añadir decenas de millones más. Las condiciones particulares de la situación de tener que enfrentar el beber en exceso o tomar drogas en la familia puede resultar en una experiencia de desempoderamiento muy singular y altamente estresante. Un programa de investigación realizado a lo largo de numerosos años ha logrado: 1) explorar en detalle la naturaleza de las experiencias de los miembros de la familia afectados, y 2) desarrollar y evaluar un método para ayudar a esos miembros afectados en su vida cotidiana. Trabajo desarrollado en México, Inglaterra, entre aborígenes australianos y en diferentes regiones de Italia ha sugerido la existencia de un cuerpo común de experiencias de desempoderamiento en miembros de las familias, con sólo algunas variantes transculturales. Normas culturales predominantes – individuales, colectivas familiares y colectivas comunitarias – se cuentan entre los factores que modifican la experiencia central. Un método de respaldo para miembros de la familia afectados – el método de los cinco pasos – se ha mostrado promisorio en varios países. Hace hincapié en escuchar cuidadosamente el relato de un miembro de la familia, proveyendo información relevante, discutiendo dilemas de enfrentamiento y construyendo respaldo social. El método es bastante flexible como para ser usado en formas breves (incluyendo formatos de libreta y de red) con cualquier persona afectada por o preocupada por la adicción de otra persona. Puede ser usado en una amplia variedad de escenarios incluyendo atención primaria de salud y otras situaciones comunitarias. Se ofrecen ejemplos de las formas en que se puede re-empoderar a miembros de las familias, construyendo su certeza de que pueden enfrentar efectivamente el problema.

Palabras clave: Empoderamiento, desempoderamiento, adicciones, experiencias de miembros familiares, método de los 5 pasos.

Families and addiction: disempowerment on a large scale globally.

It is well understood that the prevalence of substance use disorders is on a colossal scale – of the order of 15 million people with drug use disorders globally and 75 million with alcohol use disorders, according to the World Health Organisation (Obot, 2005). What is not so well appreciated is the toll that such a problem, on such a large-scale, takes in terms of family health. This paper is about an experience that is shared by tens of millions of people around the world. It is the experience of living in a family in which one of the members of the family is consuming alcohol or taking illicit drugs to an extent that is seriously harmful to the family. The chief protagonists are the wives, husbands or partners, mothers or fathers, sisters or brothers, adult daughters or sons, aunts or uncles, and other close kin who are affected by the excessive drinking or drug taking. This group is referred to throughout the paper simply as *family members*. The problem drinkers or drug takers about whom they are concerned are referred to as their *relatives*.

Whereas the direct contribution of alcohol and drug problems to global ill-health is recognised, the indirect contribution to the global burden of ill-health caused by the stress on affected family members remains largely hidden and unacknowledged. That burden falls particularly heavily on women and increasingly in low to middle income countries.

Our research group at the Universities of Birmingham and Bath in England, in collaboration with colleagues in Mexico, Australia and Italy, has carried out a series of studies involving, between them, interviews with around 800 family members affected by their relatives' alcohol or drug problems (Orford et al., 2005, 2010a). Although the experience of being such a family member varies in certain ways according to socio-cultural group and other factors, we have concluded that there is a common core to that experience which is recognisable everywhere. That common core of experience can be summarised as follows. Family members affected by addiction face a form of chronic stress that impacts upon them at a number of different levels. It includes daily hassles of an unpleasant kind as well as relationships that deteriorate over what may be a very lengthy time span. The situation contains a number of threats, to oneself, the home, and the family, particularly to children, and perhaps to the whole community. There is much uncertainty for family members. Part of that uncertainty is how to understand and account for the deterioration in family life which is happening, which appears to be caused by the excessive behaviour of a loved one who seems to be threatening his or her own health and well-

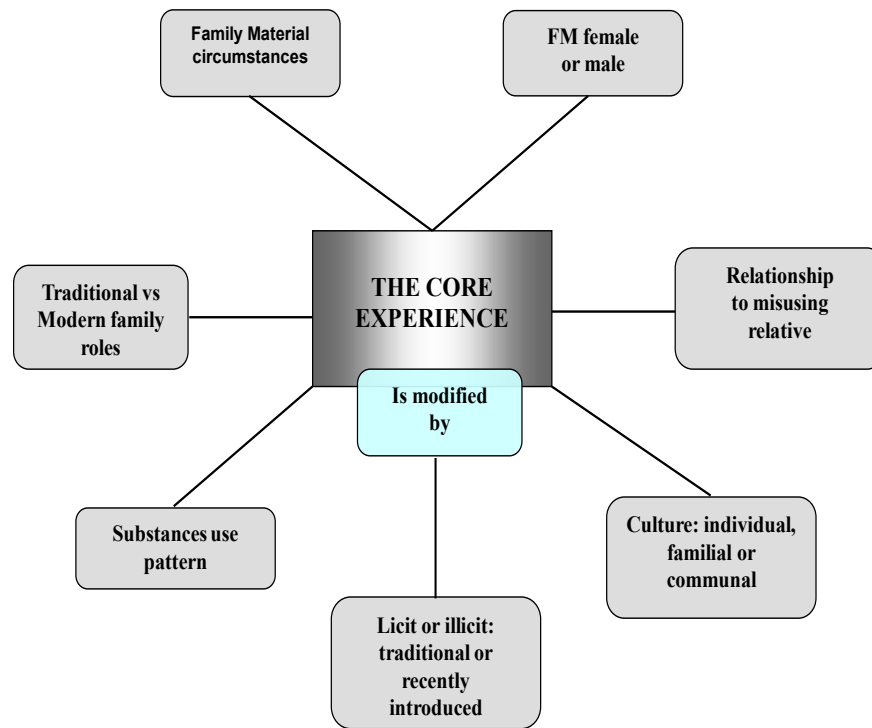
being as much as that of the family. How to respond to the relative and his or her drinking or drug taking, in ways that reconcile the needs of the family, the relative and the family member her/himself, poses a number of agonising dilemmas. Should a family member put up with it, stand up to it, or withdraw and seek a degree of independence? Those are perhaps the main options, but those apparently simple questions only begin to reflect the complexity of a family member's struggles for meaning and action.

That experience is very disempowering. Affected family members talk about being worried, preoccupied with thinking about the relative and the problem, feeling nervous and panicky, irritable and quick tempered, low and miserable, annoyed and resentful. It is common for them to feel failures themselves or to feel de-valued. Some say they feel alone facing the problem. Others feel frightened. It is not uncommon to hear thoughts of suicide expressed. There are few things more demoralising than witnessing at close hand a person you love, whose life is closely entwined with your own, and who you know is capable of many good things, apparently being taken over by a seemingly senseless attachment to such a harmful form of consumption. This sense of demoralisation is compounded if, at the same time, the addiction poses a threat to the family member's safety or is undermining of family functioning.

Culture modifies the core experience.

The experience of being a family member affected by a close relative's addiction might be called a 'variform universal', to use a term from cross-cultural psychology. Despite there being a common, relatively invariant core to the experience, individuals, families and communities are positioned differently in relation to substance use and misuse, and their varying positions significantly modify the core experience (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: MAIN MODIFIERS OF THE CORE FAMILY MEMBER EXPERIENCE



One of the factors that we believe acts as a modifier is the traditional versus modern arrangement of marital and family roles. An illustration comes from one of our studies in England which was with Sikh wives married to men with drinking problems. Most were first-generation immigrants to Britain, and all had had arranged marriages. On a cultural assimilation scale, wives reported eating mainly Asian food, wearing traditional clothes, and speaking Punjabi most of the time. Most regarded Britain as their home country, but many were still against intermarriage and felt different from indigenous English people. What they said about the ways they had coped suggested that most had moved from a position of inactive resignation to the problem, had often stood up to their husbands, for example by expressing anger towards them or by pouring their drink away, and had often achieved a measure of independence. The evidence showed, however, that despite these changes, they continued to show a relatively high level of

tolerance towards their husbands' drinking. All the Sikh wives continued to feel a sense of practical obligation toward their husbands that often involved behaviors that might be described as *tolerant-sacrificing*, such as cleaning up after them when they had been drinking or putting them to bed when they were drunk. Our earlier work with white English and Mexican family members had suggested at least five variations on the theme of independence. Some of these seemed more possible than others for the Sikh wives. For example, while 'not worrying' – one aspect of independence – was something that the Sikh women said they were achieving to a greater extent than previously, 'getting away' and 'doing what I want to do' were limited. Wives were not able to get out of the house for extended periods because of their duties as wives and mothers. Although some wives had learned to put themselves before their partners, they still mostly continued to put the needs of other family members before their own (Ahuja et al., 2003).

A way of correcting the neglect of affected family members.

Many family members affected by addiction have told us in the course of our research that they had never previously spoken about the problem in the detail which the research interview allowed. Most had received only minimal help from health or social services and it was not uncommon for the help or advice received to be described as having been unhelpful. On the basis of what we have learnt about the experiences of family members coping with addiction, we have developed an approach which we term The 5-Step Method (see Figure 2). We have now used this method in a number of studies. Three of our studies have taken place in the primary health care setting; the method is used by a variety of primary care health professionals, including doctors and nurses (Copello et al., 2000, 2009). Another of our recent studies focused on Black and Muslim families using ethnic minority community services (Orford et al., 2010b). The method has been used in primary care, and other community care settings in Mexico (Natera et al., 2010) and in Italy (Arcidiacono et al., 2009). We believe there are a number of attractions of the 5-Step Method: it is a low cost intervention which can be delivered in a number of different formats and is easily adaptable for different primary care and community settings.

**Figure 2: THE 5-STEP METHOD FOR
HELPING AFFECTED FAMILY MEMBERS**

1. Listen non-judgementally
2. Provide information
3. Discuss ways of coping
4. Explore sources of support
5. Arrange further help as needed (including the involvement of the addicted relative)

Using standard questionnaires, it has been a consistent finding that family members' symptoms of ill-health reduce following receipt of the 5-Step Method. More detailed analysis, based on interviews with participants in these studies, suggests that a number of transformations take place for family members, the principal ones being as follows:

1. *Focus on own life and needs.* The most frequently mentioned type of change referred to is an increase in independence or distance from the relative's problem drinking or drug taking. This is most commonly referred to in terms of an increased focus on oneself and one's own needs.
2. *Being assertive.* Family members speak of being more assertive with their relatives, by communicating more directly with the relative than previously, by being more directive in arranging alternative activities, or by being firmer in maintaining a course of action.
3. *Calming down.* Family members explain how sessions have helped them become less emotional in their interactions with their relatives; finding a different way of dealing with the anger and frustration caused by the drug misuse, acting more calmly, and seeing the positive effects of this change on the drug user's behaviour.
4. *Achieving a better understanding of the problem and seeing the links with one's own health.* Family members speak of gaining an understanding about their relatives' drinking or drug taking, or a realisation of the links between the drinking or drug problem and their own physical or mental health. An important element of this is experiencing a reduction

in self-blame: for having been a cause of the drug problem, for not having dealt with it, or for having taken action such as asking the drug-using relative to leave home.

An example from the Muslim arm of our ethnic minority study is that of a wife living with her husband and three children. Her husband's drug use, of over ten years' standing, meant that they were struggling financially much of the time. Her relationship with her husband, although basically satisfactory, at times left her feeling very low. She thought it had affected the children. She said she had no support from her in-laws. She was given a self-help manual in Urdu which accompanied the 5-Step sessions. As a result, she put in a lot of hard work in trying to help her husband reduce his drug use and successfully implemented some changes. She started to manage his heroin intake, helping him reduce his spending on drugs from around £100 a day to about £20. Her husband started to take methadone. She also rebuilt connections with her in-laws. The home environment gradually improved and this had a positive effect on the children, reflected in their improved school work.

From individual to collective action.

But I want to bring this presentation round to an issue which is crucial to community psychology: how to foster *collective* action on issues which are more usually treated as individual, personal and private ones. The origins of the 5-Step Method lie in clinical and counselling work with people with problems of substance misuse, and dissatisfaction with the failure of that work to acknowledge the impact of such problems on family health. The work has largely been with individual affected family members. It is clear, however, that this work touches on issues that are of central interest in community psychology. For one thing our work with minority indigenous and immigrant groups has shown us how coping with alcohol and drug problems is both a personal-private and public-community matter. This forced itself on our attention in a study with Aboriginal family members in Australia. Perhaps partly due to the more public nature of family life in remote indigenous communities in Australia, and perhaps partly due to the controversial nature of alcohol policy in the Northern Territory – for example rural communities could opt to be 'dry' – during interviews with indigenous family members it was not possible to draw a clear line between private and public, personal and community. Similarly, when interviewing affected family members in the Pakistani-Kashmiri Muslim community in

England, a dominant theme was the large, close-knit family and community networks which existed, offering great potential for positive social support but at the same time threatening greater exposure and dishonour to the family.

The majority of family members who have taken part in our studies have been women, most mothers and partners, but also including sisters, aunts and other female family members. The disempowerment experienced by women in our work – but also often experienced by affected male family members – and the re-empowering changes often associated with taking part in the 5-Step Method, appear very similar to those described by others who have contributed to work in community psychology, emancipatory public health, or women's health studies. For example, the Listening Partners programme described by Bond et al. (2000), for poor, rural mothers in the USA talks of, '... growth of self, voice, and mind among all participants...', as a result of a programme of meetings using 'reflective dialogue' which gave participants the experience of expressing themselves, knowing that they have been heard, and seeing or hearing their own words reproduced and acknowledged. Kar et al. (1999) reviewed reports of case studies from across the world in which women had been empowered in one of four areas: basic human rights, equal rights for women, economic enhancement, and health promotion. A conclusion was:

Several innovative and well-regarded community development models... hold that *community empowerment, especially empowerment of women*, is the key to successful programs for social change that affect the quality of life and health of poor and powerless families and communities.

A question that remains for me, therefore, is how our programme, which also embodies empowerment principles and has the potential to empower large numbers of women (and men) affected by alcohol and drug misuse, can move towards a more collective, community-oriented way of working. Interestingly, one of the 40 case studies of women's empowerment identified by Kar et al was Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Other examples of collective action started by family members and others affected by substance problems include neighbourhood action projects and local or regional policy campaigns. An example of the former was Voice of Southmead, an action project in a relatively poor area of Bristol, England. According to Brent (2009), in the course of this project, 'the concerns of the families of drug users moved into the public realm and were no longer treated as a private shame'. One of the interesting features of

that campaign was the involvement of men alongside women. An example of policy campaigning was provided by Marshall and Marshall (1990) in their book *Silent Voices Speak: Women and Prohibition in Truk*. During that campaign in the late 1970s to the mid 1980s women took the lead in maintaining a concerted and successful campaign, against considerable opposition, to have one jurisdiction in the Pacific Islands opt for 'dry' status.

The challenge, if this type of work is to move from individual to collective action, lies in the largely hidden nature of the problem. In all our studies it has been difficult and time consuming to recruit samples. Although the numbers of individuals and families affected are in the tens of millions world-wide, the problems remain largely private ones, unspoken about in public; the mothers, wives, fathers and other family members affected by addiction problems rarely have an effective collective voice. Helping them find that voice remains a task for the future.

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**The Mental Itineraries of the Everyday Lives of Indigenous Women Linked to their
Partners' Excessive Alcohol Consumption**

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The Mental Itineraries of the Everyday Lives of Indigenous Women Linked to their Partners' Excessive Alcohol Consumption

Abstract

Some time ago, a psychosocial research project was launched (1999) in an Otomí community in the state of Hidalgo to determine the dynamics of alcohol consumption. It was found, as in many places in Mexico, that alcohol consumption is deeply rooted in culture and that it is a tradition, but also the cause of many social problems, which involve various spheres of everyday life. One of these is women's everyday lives due to the violence and economic negligence inflicted on them, which produces emotional states of anguish, anxiety, physical and psychological malaise, which increases when they see how their partners' health is affected as a result of alcohol consumption. Can anything be done for them? Do they want help? Although women are not the only ones to suffer from this, since some children and parents are also affected, they are the main ones to feel the effects. As a means of supporting the family group, a brief intervention model was adapted as an alternative for providing support for the family. The results of the participation in the intervention program and the analysis of the narrations of this process expressed by women are presented in this paper. By mental itineraries, we understand the processes of psychological and cognitive changes undergone by these women in the search for an answer to a situation they could no longer tolerate, which plunged them into a state of crisis. This is analyzed from the theory of experience (Turner, 1994; Mier, 2001) and the Ritual Process (Turner, 1969) understood as, a process of awareness different from previous ones, which makes it different from other similar events. It also drives them to seek help, even though this may involve dealing with cultural norms and patriarchal dominance. What changes an everyday experience for a woman who has tolerated a situation for a long time, suddenly turning it into a social drama that drives her to seek help? The anthropology of experience is based on how individuals experience their culture, in other words, how events are perceived by awareness. To document this experience, we not only recorded data but also cognition, feelings and expectations. Studying this long-established, everyday situation that suddenly becomes a social drama requires examining all the stages in order to be able to reconstruct it. The social drama comprises four stages: rupture, crisis, readjustment and reintegration. Lastly, the study proved the usefulness of

the intervention for indigenous communities, despite the fact that the model is counter-cultural, since it runs counter to the cultural habits of alcohol consumption and obedience in a highly patriarchal society that looks for victims and culprits as a means of dealing with situations that cannot be solved or understood.

Keywords: Alcohol consumption, indigenous women, patriarchal culture, mental itineraries, symptoms reduction.

Los itinerarios mentales de las vidas cotidianas de mujeres indígenas ligadas al consumo excesivo de alcohol por sus parejas

Resumen

Hace tiempo se inició un trabajo de investigación en una comunidad otomí (1999), del estado de Hidalgo, con el objetivo de conocer la dinámica del consumo de alcohol. Se encontró como en muchos lugares de México, que el consumo está arraigado en la cultura, es una tradición, pero también es causa de muchos problemas sociales, que implican varias esferas de la vida cotidiana. Una de ellas es la vida de las mujeres por la violencia y la negligencia económica que se ejerce hacia ellas, que les produce estados emocionales de angustia, ansiedad, malestares físicos y psicológicos, que se incrementan de ver cómo se va deteriorando la salud de sus parejas por el exceso en la ingesta de alcohol ¿Se puede hacer algo por ellas? ¿Desean ayuda? Aunque no es privativo de las mujeres este padecer, pues hay hijos y padres que también lo sufren, lo más común es que sean las mujeres. Como una forma de apoyar al grupo familiar se adaptó un modelo de intervención breve, para ofrecerlo como alternativa para dar apoyo a la familia. Resultado de la participación en el programa de intervención y el análisis de las narraciones de este proceso que expresaron las mujeres, es lo que se presentará en este trabajo. Entendemos como itinerarios mentales, los procesos de cambios psicológicos y cognitivos, por los que transitaron estas mujeres en la búsqueda de una respuesta a una situación que ya no podían tolerar, que hizo crisis. Se analiza esta desde la teoría de la experiencia (Turner, 1994; Mier, 2001) y del Proceso del Ritual (Turner, 1969), entendida como un proceso de conciencia diferente a los anteriores, que la hace distinta a otros eventos semejantes, que les hace acudir a buscar ayuda aunque para ello tengan que enfrentarse a las normas culturales y la dominancia patriarcal. ¿Qué hace diferente una experiencia cotidiana para una mujer que ha tolerado por mucho tiempo una situación y, de repente se convierta en un *drama social* que acuda a solicitar ayuda? La antropología de la experiencia lidia en saber cómo los individuos experimentan su cultura, es decir cómo los eventos son recibidos por la conciencia. Por la experiencia nosotros no sólo registramos los datos, sino también la cognición, sentimientos y expectativas. Este proceso es cotidiano y ancestral, en un momento se vuelve un drama social que exige, a manera de un

proceso ritual, pasar a la persona por todas las fases para poder reconstruirse. Cuatro son las fases del drama social: la ruptura, la crisis, el reajuste y la reintegración. Finalmente, se demostró la utilidad de la intervención para comunidades indígenas, a pesar de ser un modelo que podría considerarse contracultural por el quebrantamiento de los hábitos culturales del consumo de alcohol, y de obediencia a una sociedad altamente patriarcal, que suele buscar víctimas y culpables ante situaciones que no se pueden resolver o comprender.

Palabras clave: Consumo de alcohol, mujeres indígenas, cultura patriarcal, itinerarios mentales, reducción de síntomas.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to show the impact of a program designed for the relatives of alcohol consumers implemented in Hñähñü indigenous communities in the Mezquital Valley in the state of Hidalgo. It examines the various phases of adaptation of the model: the feasibility study, the adaptation of the instruments, the application of the model and lastly a preliminary qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the process followed by these women to make decisions and find new ways of coping with a relative's problem of alcoholism.

The Valle del Mezquital zone in Hidalgo State (150 km from the capital of Mexico) was chosen because various researchers at the National Institute of Psychiatry have undertaken several studies on alcohol consumption for the past ten years (García-Andrade, et al., 2005), to understand and explain the high mortality rate from hepatic cirrhosis in the region—40 out of every 100,000 inhabitants, when the national rate is 21.7 (Narro, 1994).

Alcohol consumption in indigenous communities is linked to cultural norms that form part of a historically constructed pattern of behavior, in a symbolic space used to mediate conflicts, political relations and friendship and reaffirm gender roles (Corcuera, 1996; Oechemin, 2004). The purpose of this study is therefore to examine alcohol consumption and its consequences in communities. Inhabitants may feel that this practice is being threatened by a possible intervention that will lead them to reduce their consumption, as a result of which they may object to participating in the study.

One should also recall that any health intervention is usually an extrinsic event, outside the autonomous development of the collectivity, which in turn disturbs a stable system. The intervention demands “the implementation of a framework of unusual norms in a universe that is already governed by rules, which necessarily creates an atmosphere of confrontation” (Mier, 2002: 23-35).

Among the consequences due to alcohol abuse that have been reported, Orford (1998, 2005), Holmila (1994), Natera (2007) and Tiburcio (2007) have consistently documented those that affect family members, for whom no care is provided in Hñähñü indigenous communities. The suffering of families that coexist with a situation of alcohol consumption is not dealt with, even though it is extremely common.

The intervention model developed is a brief intervention model, designed to support the families who experience the consequences of alcohol consumption. It focuses on the coping styles used by relatives to deal with consumption and comprises the following five steps: 1) listening to and understanding the relative's particular problem, 2) providing relevant information, 3) identifying and analyzing coping styles, 4) analyzing support networks and 5) referring individuals to sources of specialized assistance, if required, Natera et al., (2009); Tiburcio et al. (2009). The purpose of this model is to help the relative cope with the situation in different ways in order to encourage his well-being (Orford, 2010).

In order to implement this intervention model in the community, first of all, a **feasibility study** was carried out in the communities. The principal results of this study made it possible to clearly identify the challenges to be dealt with in the implementation of the intervention. Among the difficulties identified were the predominantly patriarchal lifestyle into which power relations and the control of women are inserted through one of the main channels: gossip. Women from these communities are not easily allowed to seek access to psychological care in which they will discuss a primarily male problem such as alcohol consumption. Working in such small communities (with 300 to 900 inhabitants), the counselor must earn the trust of the persons he deals with and guarantee that he will not tell others about their problem. This is common among health workers who, with good intentions but fatal consequences, may utter phrases to the husband, such as “I’ve heard you’re not behaving well at home,” or “I’ve heard you’re drinking a lot,” triggering acts of violence in men. Another challenge, which is no small matter, is that alcohol consumption is perceived as a socially accepted and even desirable form of behavior among men that is inserted into everyday life as well as extraordinary events. At the same time, the culture of poverty and having a subsistence economy is a challenge to any intervention, since their scarce financial resources, time and physical energy are used primarily to satisfy their subsistence needs. These include food preparation, which often entails sowing, harvesting and preparing foods as in the case of making several kilos of tortillas a day, the main foodstuff, made from maize. Taking children to school and bringing them back, dealing with community tasks, fulfilling the social programs assigned to them, for which they are paid, are all priorities, as opposed to investing money to go to an appointment to deal with their mental health. This often involves walking long distances or paying a lot for transport to get there, as a result of which mental health becomes an extremely secondary matter. There are also aspects related to the

difficulties of expressing their needs for care, since if there is a lack of services oriented towards their physical health, the situation is even worse for mental health. However, there was a consensus regarding the need for psychological support that would help them learn how to deal with their partners' excess alcohol consumption.

Since the original model was developed for the urban population (Natera, Mora, Tiburcio, 2008), it was necessary to adapt both the language and the psychological instruments used to evaluate psychological malaise and the community's representation of how to deal with a relative's problem of alcoholism. The cognitive laboratories technique was used for this purpose (Tiburcio, Natera and García, 2009). The result was a manual designed for this population, which contains suggestions on how to cope with potential obstacles to its implementation that may arise (Tiburcio, Natera and Medina Mora, 2009).

Method

Participants

A total of 60 women between the ages of 18 and 60 participated, all of whom are residents of the municipalities of Cardonal and Ixmiquilpan, in Valle del Mezquital, Hidalgo. Participants were divided into two groups of 30 each. The first group received the sessions and the second did not. All the participants were invited to take part in the intervention. Those who agreed formed part of the intervention group while those who did not were assigned to the non-intervention group.

Materials and instruments

Three questionnaires previously adapted and validated for this zone by Tiburcio (2007) were used. The Scale of Symptoms (SRT), which reports the presence of physical and psychological symptoms associated with stress, the Coping Questionnaire (CG) to describe the coping styles used for dealing with consumption and the Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) to classify possible cases of depression.

Procedure

A quasi-experimental design was used, with an evaluation before the intervention and an evaluation 3 months later. The three instruments were used in both groups. Intervention sessions were held in the respective community health centers although some sessions were conducted in the family's home. The confidentiality and anonymity of all the participants was guaranteed through informed consent.

Each person attended between 4 and 6 sessions, with an approximate duration of ninety minutes. The intervention ended once the patient said she was confident enough to use new coping styles and her support networks.

Results

Below are some of the preliminary quantitative and qualitative results. The former correspond to the application of the instruments before and after and a preliminary anthropological analysis showing part of the processes experienced by the women.

The results of the group that did not receive the intervention were compared with those that did. A significant reduction in depressive features and in the number of physical and psychological symptoms was found in participants after the treatment. (Figures 1, 2 And 3).

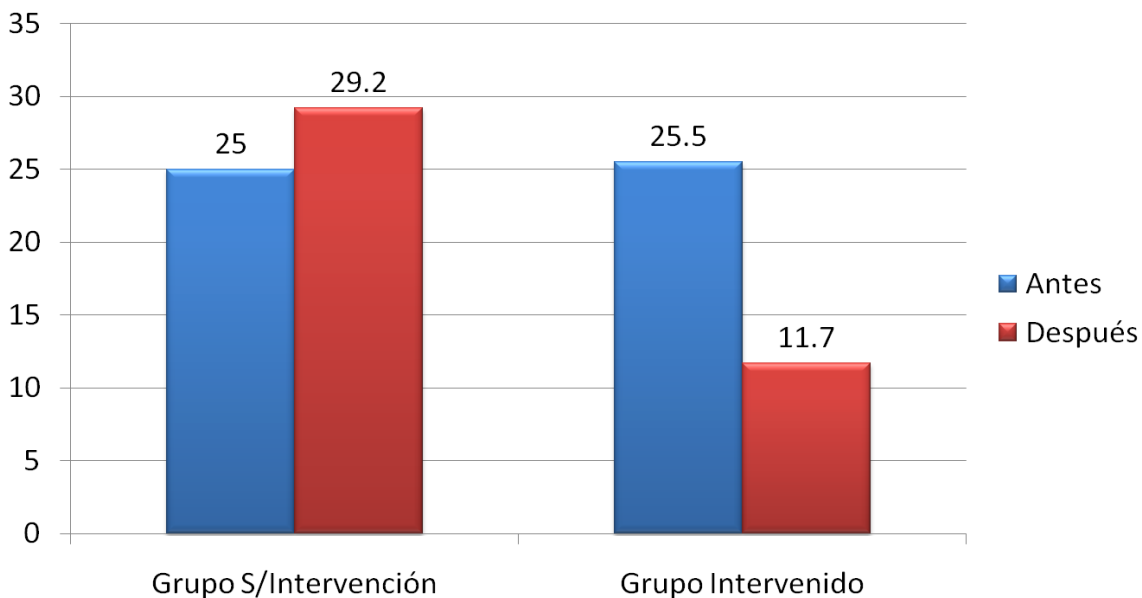


Figure 1. Percentage of depressive features experienced by group before and after the intervention.

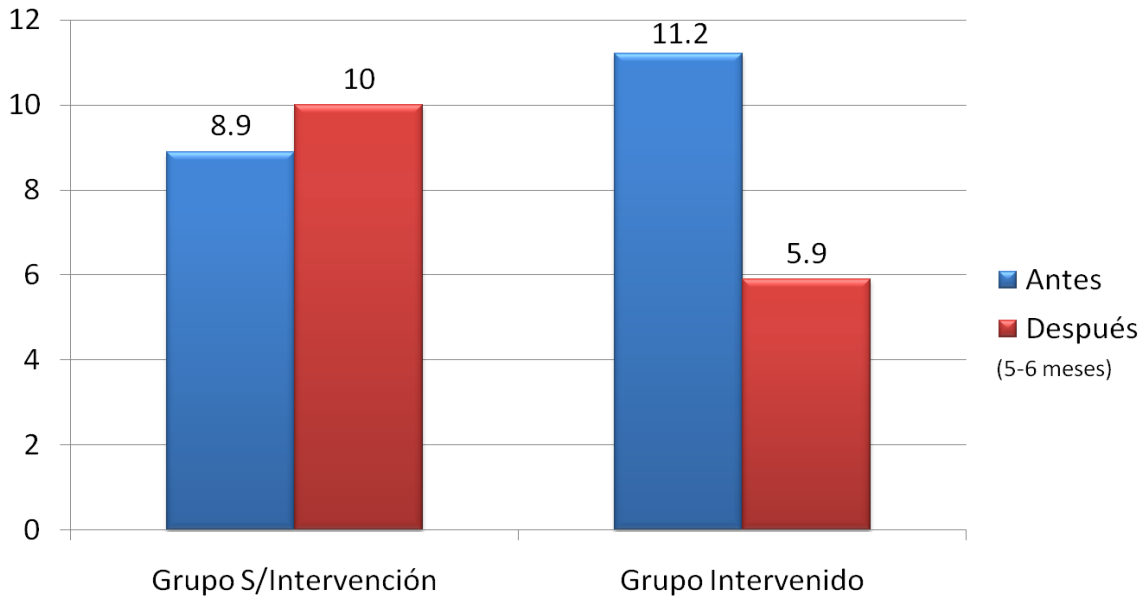


Figure 2. Percentage of depressive features by group before and after intervention.

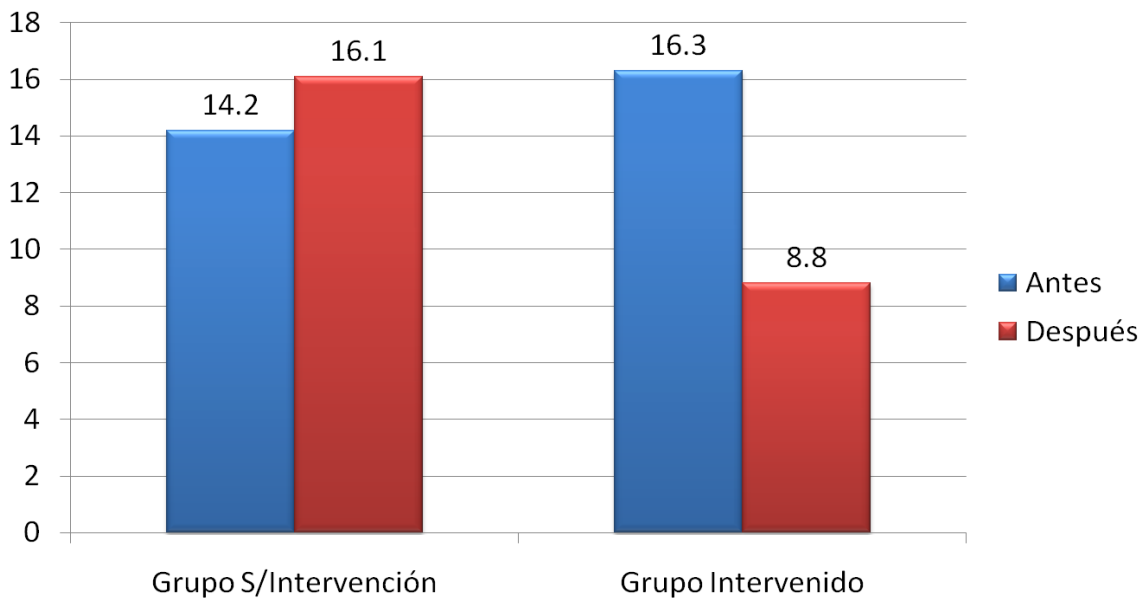


Figure 3. Psychological symptoms identified in groups of participants.

Ways of coping with the problem of alcoholism were found to be universal (Orford, 2005). In other words, although these forms are very similar in the urban and rural zone, there are cultural, material and affective elements that make them have different expressions and alter the way they are understood. Individuals nearly always request help to know “how to stop the other

person from drinking,” when the purpose of the intervention is to orient the intervention towards the relative’s concerns.

An increase in independent coping, related to lower stress, was found. Conversely, the group that did not receive the intervention not only remained the same but four months later, its situation had deteriorated, as regards both depressive features and physical and psychological symptoms (Natera et al., 2010).

What are the mental itineraries followed by those who suffer from having an alcoholic relative?

Initial stage: By mental itineraries, we understand the processes of psychological and cognitive changes undergone by these women in the search for a response to a situation they could no longer tolerate, which had plunged them into a state of crisis and expressed in phrases such as the following: *I am condemned to live like this! I won't be happy until he stops drinking! I am worried...I have a lot of problems with my husband because he is an alcoholic! He arrives drunk and hits me! If only he stopped drinking! I want to die! No-one needs me! “He insults me, shouts at me, swears at me and my mother, which really annoys me.”*

These were some of the most common phrases heard at the beginning of the interviews with relatives of alcohol consumers. They include stories with a great deal of violence and infidelity, as Estela said, “Now I know it’s the alcohol, he always used to come home drunk.”

Given that the perception of alcohol consumption is a behavior that is fully accepted by the community, relatives do not feel that they can complain, since consumers are the ones that must decide whether or not they stop drinking. Thus, what triggers the process of seeking help is an associated problem. The only thing that explains why women seek and accept help now is because they are going through an experience (Turner, 1994) understood as a process of awareness different from previous ones, which makes it different from other similar events. What makes this experience different is its scope and impact. The feeling of dizziness is what makes this event unique and different from others. This experience is shot through by the perception of pain, which has become the maximum offense, which is why they seek help.

Following the intervention model, the first interview is a continuous narration of the itineraries of a multitude of scenes of suffering they have experienced, which form part of their everyday lives, where men's alcohol consumption is a form of behavior that is totally accepted by the community. Relatives do not feel they can complain since consumers are the only ones that have the power to decide whether or not stop drinking alcohol, even though the rest of the family suffers the consequences, such as violence and financial negligence. The possibility of a solution is focused on the consumer. These feelings and emotions may last between 10 and 20 years. Women are not warned about the constant suffering they will experience from the time they marry. Other community members do not take into account the fact that they will have to deal with this problem. As Clementina says, "They knew he drank a lot but they did not tell me." Afterwards, she will have to bring up her children alone. "You know what you have to do with your daughters, I don't know anything about that." The husband is obviously not giving his wife power, but rather, avoiding responsibility. But she also suffers on his behalf, in the path of loyalties she has been taught to feel towards men. It hurts her to see her husband suffer and look down on himself, as when she says, "He only wants to drink, I don't care what they do to him, they can throw him down a ravine."

The lack of clear information about alcoholism still focuses on the fact that deciding to stop drinking is a sign of will. The drinker probably does not want to stop drinking, which he may use as an excuse for his behavior, but he may also be unable to stop drinking.

Second Stage. *As a result of the break, the crack and the crisis expand.* In this itinerary, there is increased awareness, although this does not happen in the same way among all the interviewees, since it varies in intensity, space and time. The respondent continues a process of intervention focusing on cognitive and affective aspects and begins to see things differently. Responsibilities are clarified and guilt is reduced. The respondent acknowledges the fact that the problem of alcohol consumption is the other person's and that she has a responsibility to herself. Asked whether she had refused to give her husband money, Josefina replies: "*To tell you the truth, I have refused to give him money because he'll spend it on drinking.*" This internal discourse, which women have never shared with other people and which confuses them about what they should do, combines with a series of feelings, such as anger, sadness and resignation, where guilt is present on an everyday basis. The woman feels guilty about having lied to a man,

her man! She begins a process of understanding and recognition of herself, and of realizing that refusing to give him money was not the wrong response.

It is worth analyzing what would have happened if she had given him the money. What would the advantages and disadvantages have been? Then, in the presence of the counselor who does not judge her but understands her, she realizes that this was the best decision. There is catharsis, relief and a self-evaluation that she did not make the wrong decision, that she was entitled to do so and that she made the right decision. She realizes that lying does not make her disloyal. Instead, it allows her to reaffirm herself and strengthens her way of coping. She knows that she is doing the right thing and feels less guilty.

Part of this process involves recognizing her Part of this process involves acknowledging her discomfort and relating it to alcohol consumption, having lived in suffering and isolation, in an attempt to conceal her problems. Physical pain, intense headaches, concern, anger and nerves in the face of the uncertainty of *what her relatives are going to say*, relatives who no longer visit her because her husband is always drunk. She does not sleep because she is worried about not knowing where he is, because he has not come home. She gets frightened and becomes paralyzed and feels she cannot do anything. He threatens to leave but she knows he won't. Once again, she takes stock of her health as a result of a problem for which she is not responsible.

Is violence a separate problem? As mentioned earlier, the women in the study now realize that, "Now I know it was because of the alcohol." A woman does not denounce her husband's violence, because that would mean talking about alcoholism. It would make the problem visible because the process means that the whole family and community would find out. Although paradoxically, she has threatened to denounce him because she knows that it is a crime to hit their daughters, "Without doing anything, or in revenge for anything, just because he is drunk." This is a problem that is associated more with justice than health.

They realize that they have experienced loyalty that should no longer continue and that they have suffered a great deal. For example, Clementina said: "There is a person who made me angry because he criticized him and I defended him," but she does not care any more.

Third Stage.- Reconstructive or delimiting action. There is no going back at this stage, because the woman is now aware of herself. This is when the intervention can achieve a transformation that runs counter to the prevailing culture. And so she restructures her thoughts by analyzing what she can choose. By reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages, she can

choose something new. “After the talks with the lady (the counselor) I calmed down and it was then that I thought about lots of options and decided to work to get on. I am still quite young...before I was destroyed, I wanted to die...eventually I plucked up the courage and said to my him (the husband) if you want to go, just leave and I stopped paying attention to him. *I don't want to sink now, I want to rise. He (the husband) also changed and learnt a lesson because of my attitudes and those of my children. If he became unpleasant he would have to go or I would...*” We see how enthusiasm arises as another form of experience (Turner, 1988) as she learns how to cope with the situation.

Lastly, the participant enters a **phase of readjustment and reconstruction**. Formal and informal actions are oriented towards dealing with a certain type of crisis or legitimizing other means of reaching agreements and processes of reflection take place. The women acknowledge the strength they have acquired and evaluate their possibilities of negotiation and capacity for action. They can look at themselves to transform themselves into an active subject, by looking at the future without ignoring the past. They modify their personal and collective identities and resignify traditions.

This last step is delimited by an action that shows the woman's reconciliation with herself and her social reintegration. Testimonials such as the one given below show that if women take the world into their hands, they become the subjects of their own lives. Juana begins to acknowledge the fact that her children need her, that he is no longer that important and that she is entitled to be happy and to seek things on her own. Several of them express themselves differently. “Thanks to you, (the counselor) I have recovered my balance. Things are different now because I feel happy and I thank you for your support. *I am grateful to my daughter for having supported me too.*” The process involves restoring the balance in herself and to a certain extent, the community. “*I don't want to die,*” says Juanita, as supportive links are formed. “*Now I know he won't change, he'll stop drinking when he wants to.*” (Rosa). Or Clementina who, during the process, decided to go to church to obtain support for her life and said, six months later: “*Now I realize he did not want me to go out, since I did not even go shopping...Now they say that I'm in control, that I go around on my own...I say I don't like to be insulted. If you carry on like that, I will continue fighting and you will find out that I won't answer you back, I don't want to fight. I don't want to leave what I have found, I am happy to have become a woman; I don't need to be a nun.*”

“He won’t do anything against me now, because if he does, I’ll sue him, if he dares.”

Months earlier, her husband had destroyed the kitchen when he was drunk, and “On that occasion (she said) I was frightened and cried but now I would defend myself.”

All these changes have an impact on the community sphere, even if it is only in her circle. Now her friends and neighbors say, “Go and get that help, it has done her a lot of good.” So the community finds out that it can be helped in similar circumstances. The notion of their bodies is also resignified. “I won’t let him touch me or sleep with me,” says Clara, which she confirms six months after the evaluation.

Discussion

We tried to carry out an analysis with an anthropological rather than a psychological approach, which we still do not know if we have achieved. We think that this is a means of understanding the effects of alcohol consumption from a cultural point of view. An intervention can resemble a ritual while the stages in Turner’s Social Drama provide the opportunity to explain women’s mental processes. Since the last intervention, they have not been the same. They have learnt to face the world differently, they have acquired power over their own lives and hope that this learning will be interiorized and last. It has also caused an effect on the community, particularly because the place where the research was carried out are villages with 400 to 500 persons, so news about what happens to one person spreads quickly. Nowadays, the intervention has been recommended to other people undergoing similar circumstances. Lastly, it could be the transmission of an individual process to a collectivity. In the long term, the community could alter its relationship with the world through a new look at women’s lives, in this case, as regards their partners’ alcohol consumption and they realize that they no longer have to put up with the effects of alcohol consumption.

At the same time, the study proved the usefulness of the intervention for indigenous communities, despite the fact that the model could be considered counter-cultural, since it goes against the cultural habits of alcohol consumption and obedience in a highly patriarchal society that tends to seek victims and culprits as a means of dealing with situations that cannot be solved or understood.

Despite the limitations these women experienced in attending their appointments, they group studied here managed to go to them. They all completed their program, because in the last analysis, they feel better and know that this is good for them and their children.

This is the only model that has been developed on the basis of direct experience of research with families. There is also scientific evidence of its effectiveness, which is one of its greatest strengths. The intervention achieved the desired results since it was able to give a person the tools for dealing with a relative's alcohol consumption and proved particularly effective in reducing depressive symptoms and psychological and physical disorders.



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**Conducting Research on Homelessness in Canada from a Community Psychology
Perspective: Reflections on Lessons Learned**

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Invited Keynote Address at the Third International Conference on Community Psychology.
Puebla, Mexico, June 4, 2010.

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Conducting Research on Homelessness in Canada from a Community Psychology Perspective: Reflections on Lessons Learned

Abstract

Homelessness has emerged as a significant and enduring social problem globally in developing and developed countries. With its aim of promoting social justice and influencing public policy, community psychology has much to offer in terms of addressing this problem. The presentation will focus on research and on research and knowledge mobilization efforts on homelessness in Canada of the keynote speaker that now spans over a decade. Specifically, findings from intervention and observational studies as well as knowledge dissemination products including a short video and report card on homelessness will be presented. Lessons learned from this work as a community psychologist will be discussed.

Keywords: Homelessness, social justice, public policy, research, mobilization, knowledge dissemination.

**Investigación realizada sobre los “Sin Techo” en Canadá desde una perspectiva de
Psicología Comunitaria: Reflexiones sobre los aprendizajes**

Resumen

La realidad de los “Sin Techo” ha emergido como un significativo y resistente problema social global tanto en los países desarrollados como en los en vías de desarrollo. Con el propósito de promover la justicia social y de influir en la creación de políticas públicas la psicología comunitaria tiene mucho que ofrecer en cuanto a enfrentar este problema. Esta presentación enfoca investigación y esfuerzos de movilización a partir del conocimiento sobre la realidad de los “Sin Techo” en Canadá realizados por el autor durante una década. Se ofrecen específicamente hallazgos de estudios de observación y de intervención, así como productos de divulgación de conocimientos incluyendo un corto video y tarjetas de informe sobre la realidad de los “Sin Techo”. Serán discutidos los aprendizajes producidos por el trabajo de este psicólogo comunitario.

Palabras clave: Realidad de los Sin Techo, justicia social, políticas públicas, investigación, movilización, divulgación del conocimiento.

Introduction.

Thank you to Dr. Almeida and the Organizing Committee for the invitation to be a keynote speaker at the Third International Conference on Community Psychology. It is my first opportunity to attend this conference and I am heartened and impressed to see the extent community psychology is present in different corners of the world.

Two weeks ago from May 20th to May 22nd, 2010, we held our first national conference on community psychology in Canada in my home city in Ottawa. I find meeting academics, practitioners, and students committed to community psychology values and practice to be energizing – there is no better group of people in psychology to spend time with. So I am happy to be here today.

Let me first tell you a little bit about myself. I am a professor in the School of Psychology at the University of Ottawa. I was trained as a clinical-community psychologist. My research interests are in the areas of community mental health and homelessness. I became involved in the issue of homelessness 15 years ago when I approached to assist as a researcher a new local coalition in Ottawa at the time, known as the Alliance to End Homelessness (ATEH) in Ottawa. The work I am going to present today is in the context of this collaboration and involves research and political advocacy.

To begin this presentation, I am going to provide you with a definition of homelessness and describe briefly the context of homelessness in the developed world and in particular in Canada. Subsequently, I will present the work and findings from two research efforts in which I have been involved. I will finish the talk by providing an assessment of the contribution of these research efforts and the lessons learned from the work.

Definition and Context of Homelessness in Developed Countries.

In a developed country like Canada, homelessness is defined as a living situation in which individuals and families are lacking permanent housing as a result of poverty and inadequate supports (Hulchanski, 2002). It is referred to in the literature as “literal homelessness” and includes people living on the street, people staying in shelters, and people living temporarily with friends or family (Toro, 2007). Homelessness has emerged as a major social problem in

developed countries across Europe and in other parts of the world starting in the 1980s (Shinn, 2007; Toro, 2007).

Homelessness has emerged as a important area of interest to community psychologists working in developed countries. The work of Paul Toro and Mary Beth Shinn, some of which has been published in community psychology journals, is particularly notable (Shinn, 2007, 2009a, 2009b; Shinn et al., 1998; Shinn & Weitzman, 1990; Toro, 2007; Toro et al. 1997; Toro, Trickett, Wall & Salem, 1991; Toro & Warren, 1999).

Why should community psychologists in developed countries like Canada be interested in the issue? Homelessness reflects a failure of social programs and policies that impacts the most marginalized groups in the population. As a result, new programs and policies are needed. Moreover, the solutions to homelessness are political in nature requiring the mobilization of the community to achieve necessary policy changes. Ultimately, homelessness is a social justice issue. Given this context, community psychologists are well-equipped to contribute in an informed and effective manner to this major social problem in developed countries.

Homelessness in Canada.

Canada is very large country geographically with a small number of people, namely 32 million people. It is considered a resource rich country. It is also a relatively young country of less than 150 years and has been populated by immigrants. It has a tradition of having progressive social policies such as universal health coverage, social welfare, and unemployment insurance; many of these policies were brought into being in the 1960s.

Despite its high standard of living and history of progressive social policies, there has been a dramatic increase in homelessness in Canadian cities over the past 15 years (Gaetz, 2010). Estimates put the number of people in a year experiencing homelessness at anywhere from 150K to 250K. The growing population has been characterized by an increasing diversification in the population with it now being made up of single men, single women, youth, and families (Gaetz, 2010). In 1998, the visibility of the problem and the overflowing situation in emergency shelters led the mayors of several large cities to declare homelessness a national disaster (Federal Canadian Municipalities, 2000). Twelve years later, the situation has only gotten worse (Gaetz, 2010).

In trying to identify the factors contributing to increasing homelessness in Canada, I find the analysis done by two Canadian researchers, Shirley Roy and Rock Hurtubise, as particularly helpful (Roy & Hurtubise, 2007). Specifically, they identify factors at three different levels as behind the growth in homelessness, namely structural, institutional, and individual. At the structural level, they identify the growing income inequality with an increasing number of people living in severe poverty, the decrease in affordable housing supply, and the decrease in income support. At the institutional level, they note deinstitutionalization in the mental health system that failed to support people with psychiatric disabilities now living in the community and child welfare policies that failed to assist youth transitioning from state care to living independently. Finally, in the context of these institutional and structural factors, the combination of poverty with individual vulnerabilities like health problems, social isolation, family difficulties produce homelessness.

Gaetz (2010) and Hulchanski (2002) in their analyses of the homeless problem in Canada, highlighted the termination of spending on housing by the federal government in the early 1990s combined with a reductions in income support for low income Canadians as the major factors fuelling the growth of homelessness in Canada over the past two decades. Together, these two factors have led to a growing number of individuals and families in the population who are unable to access adequate and affordable housing, placing them at risk of becoming homeless. The sub-populations most affected by this situation have been single parent families, visible minorities including aboriginal Canadians, youth, and new Canadians (Gaetz, 2010).

I live in Ottawa, which is the federal capital of Canada. It is a mid-size city with a population of about 1.1 million residents. Ottawa has both Anglophones and Francophones living there along with an increasing number of new Canadians. It has a stable local economy that has been largely recession-proof because of the presence of a large federal civil service. The Ottawa population is also highly educated and the cost of living is relatively high when compared to other Canadian cities. Despite the relative wealth in Ottawa, there has been a growing number of socio-economically disadvantaged individuals and families in Ottawa (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2010).

The current homeless situation in Ottawa finds shelter operating beyond capacity (ATEH, 2010). The climate in Ottawa which includes cold nights during three seasons of the year requires use of emergency shelters. The one-year prevalence rate for shelter use has been

approximately 7500 individuals per year in the last two years (ATEH, 2010). About 60% of shelter users are single men with the other part of the population including single women, youth, and families with young children. The average length of stay in our shelters in 2009 was 57 days (ATEH, 2010).

In 1995, a group of community agencies launched the ATEH, a coalition now of over 70 community organizations, government, university researchers, and concerned citizens including people with lived experiences of homelessness intended to contribute to public education, facilitate and disseminate research, and engage in political advocacy surrounding the issue of homelessness. I became involved as a researcher since the beginning of the ATEH in 1995. We have conducted a number of observational and intervention studies in collaboration with the ATEH. I am going to talk about two of the studies.

Principles of Conducting Research within a Community Psychology Perspective.

Before describing these studies, I want to briefly review the five guiding principles for conducting research within a community psychology perspective as elaborated by Dalton, Elias, and Wandersman (2001):

1. Community research is guided by community needs and interests. In other words, the research questions are formulated through a collaboration of community partners and researchers. In this way, the relevance and utility of the research is assured.
2. Research is an exchange of resources between researchers and the community in which they are working. Community partners bring to the research inside knowledge about the context in which they live. Researchers contribute their technical knowledge of research to the process.
3. Research is a tool for influencing political decision-making. This principle conceptualizes research as a tool that can and should be used for political advocacy purposes.
4. Research should be conducted to evaluate community decisions, programs, and policies. In this context, research contributes valuable knowledge about how social problems like homelessness can be addressed in an effective manner.
5. Research needs to produce products that meet the information needs of communities for decision-making and that communicate research findings beyond the academic world to

politicians, community leaders, community groups, and the general public. This principle expects community-based researchers to translate new knowledge gained through research for consumption and utility by non-researchers, especially for various stakeholders in the community responsible for solving social problems.

As much as possible, these principles for conducting community-based research have guided our research on homelessness. In line with definitions of different types of social interventions according to Dalton and his colleagues (2001), I would categorize our work as a form of policy research and advocacy in which we are trying to provide empirical information on the issue of homelessness that can be used for creating social change and contribute to the development of more effective social policies.

Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa.

One of the major studies we conducted in collaboration with the ATEH was known as the Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa, a longitudinal study that followed a group of people who started out homeless for a period of two years. The objectives of the study were twofold: (1) to identify the resources and risks factors facilitating or impeding a person's exit from homelessness, and (2) to examine the relationship between becoming re-housed and health.

Context and Previous Research.

Our rationale for conducting the longitudinal study on homelessness is that we believed along with our community collaborators that there were new insights to be gained by exploring the likelihood that homeless people with distinct characteristics will overcome their homelessness and achieve housing stability. Longitudinal studies have been widely touted as an effective means by which to increase understanding of the differential ability of individuals and groups to exit homelessness and achieve housing stability (Anderson & Tulloch, 2000).

To date, only a small number of longitudinal studies have tracked persons who are homeless over time to identify pathways out of homelessness (Caton et al., 2005; Cohen, Ramírez, Teresi, Gallagher & Sokolovsky, 1997; Sosin, Piliavin & Westerfelt, 1990; Piliavin, Wright, Mare & Westerfelt, 1996; Stojanovic, Weitzman, Shinn, Labay, & Williams, 1999;

Wong, Piliavin & Wright, 1998; Zlotnick, Robertson and Lahiff, 1999). These studies suggest that five sets of factors have been associated with the likelihood that a previously homeless individual will exit homelessness. These factors are: (1) demographic variables, (2) individual protective and risk factors, (3) economic resources, (4) social support, and (5) use of social services.

Female gender and a family status that includes children are demographic variables that have demonstrated a linkage with exits from homelessness (Wong et al., 1998; Zlotnick et al., 1999). Protective characteristics of note have included employment history and a history of housing stability, whereas identified risk factors have been a history of homelessness, substance abuse, and health problems (Piliavin et al., 1996; Zlotnick et al., 1999). Economic resources such as wages from work income, reliable social benefits, and subsidized housing emerged as being particularly important for homeless persons and families to become housed (Caton et al., 2005; Piliavin et al., 1996; Shinn et al., 1998; Wong et al., 1998; Zlotnick et al., 1999). Support from family and friends and use of social services has also been shown to be related to successful exits from homelessness (Caton et al., 2005; Cohen et al., 1997; Zlotnick, Tam & Robertson, 2002).

Objectives and Hypotheses.

Using a resilience perspective, the first objective of the study was to identify factors that affect homeless persons' ability to exit homelessness and achieve housing stability. Resilience is defined as the achievement of positive outcomes in the context of significant threat or severe adversity (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2000). Although resilience is a concept that has been investigated most frequently in children and youth, researchers are promoting its applicability to studying the adaptation of adults who are facing adversity. In using resilience to examine the housing trajectories of persons experiencing homelessness, we have identified predictors of exits from homelessness based on research on becoming homelessness, insights from the relatively small amount of research cited above that has examined exits from homelessness and a list of protective, resilience-promoting factors emerging from international research on resilience (Masten & Reed, 2002). Our choice of predictors also has been guided by examining variables that have potential practice and policy relevance to address homelessness.

Our predictors are clustered as representing resources or risk factors. Resources refer to a measurable characteristic in a group of individuals or their situation that predicts positive outcomes in the context of adversity (Masten & Reed, 2002). In contrast, risk factors are a measurable characteristic in a group of individuals or their situation that predicts negative outcomes (Masten & Reed, 2002). Through the lens of a resilience model, we hypothesize that resources and risk factors will be predictive of an individual's ability to exit homelessness successfully and attain housing stability. We are also interested in determining if specific demographic characteristics are predictive of success in leaving homelessness and thus will also examine the explanatory significance of sex, age, family status, and citizenship.

Based on resilience research which has characterized resources (Flynn, Ghazal, Legault, Vandermeulen & Petrick, 2004), we identified three levels of resources that can contribute to exiting homelessness and achieving stable housing. The first, - *individual resources*, - are defined as the capacity of individuals to take advantage of opportunities leading to positive adaptation: employment history, educational attainment, history of housing stability, sense of empowerment. The second – *interpersonal resources* – are defined as opportunities relating to interpersonal relationships and include: size of social network, perceived availability of social support, and satisfaction with social support. The third – *community resources* – refer to different kinds of formal assistance available to individuals: income support, use of health services, use of social services, and living in subsidized housing. We predicted that greater access to these resources will be positively related to leaving homelessness and achieving housing stability. We also identified *risk factors* in the areas of health and substance abuse as playing a role in an individual's capacity to overcoming homelessness. In particular, we predicted that physical and mental health difficulties and substance abuse problems will be negatively related to leaving homelessness. Figure 1 presents the resilience model that was tested in the study.

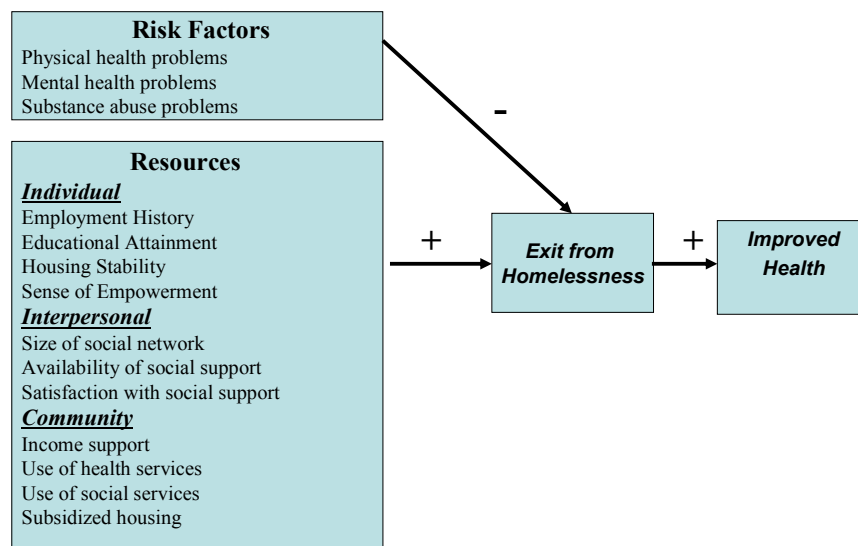


Figure 1. Resilience model tested in the Panel Study on Homelessness in Ottawa

In addition to hypotheses related to the relationship of resources and risk factors to exiting homelessness, we also predicted that exiting homelessness would be related to improvements in physical health and mental health. An implicit inference of studies on homelessness is that stable housing is likely to have positive impacts on formerly homeless persons' health. However, no studies have explicitly explored the relations between the attainment of housing stability for the homeless population and measurable health outcomes. Past research has shown that people who are homeless are in ill health compared to the general population. Homeless people have higher rates of illness, injury and hospitalization than the general population (Beijer & Andreasson, 2009; Hwang, 2001).

Frankish, Hwang and Quantz (2009) describe a complex interplay between homelessness and health issues, where health problems can be both a contributor to and consequence of homelessness. Living in crowded conditions in homeless shelters leads to the spread of infections such as tuberculosis, and homelessness presents barriers to treatment. Homeless people have higher mortality rates than the general population, and higher rates of substance abuse and mental illness. Substance abuse difficulties and poverty increase the risk of both

mental and physical health difficulties and homelessness. Injuries and assaults are prevalent among homeless people (Frankish et al., 2009).

People who are homeless may face challenges to managing chronic health conditions such as diabetes or hypertension, and they are at increased of developing a wide range of serious health conditions. Skin infections and dental problems are frequent, and homeless people may develop health conditions normally seen in much older people (Frankish et al., 2009). We found in the Panel Study that our sample of homeless people had significantly higher rates of numerous chronic health problems including asthma, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, arthritis, back problems, and migraine headaches in comparison to the general Canadian population (Aubry, Klodawsky, Hay & Birnie, 2003).

Methodology.

The methodology for the project was developed collaboratively based on input from university researchers, community agency personnel, emergency shelter staff, and the City of Ottawa's Housing Branch. The study design involved two interviews with participants, a first interview conducted when people were homeless and a second interview approximately two years after the first interview. We sampled using stratified sampling procedures for single adults (i.e., based on length stay in shelters of shelter population in 2001 for men and women and based on citizenship for women in women's shelter in 2001) and families (i.e., based on citizenship of shelter users in family shelters in 2001) staying in emergency shelters and population sampling for youth staying either in emergency shelters or using an inner city drop-in centre.

The interview protocols for both interviews included quantitative and qualitative measures asking respondents about their housing histories, income histories, employment histories, social networking, living conditions, social services utilization, health status, health care utilization, substance use, and demographic characteristics. Procedures for locating participants were developed and included obtaining permission from participants to contact family, friends, service providers, and the municipal office administering welfare benefits.

A sample of 412 individuals who were homeless was interviewed in the first phase of the study, including 87 single men, 85 single women, 79 male youth, 78 female youth, and 83 adults in families. A total of 255 participants (62%) were re-interviewed in the second phase of the

study. The follow-up sample comprised of 43 single men, 55 single women, 49 male youth, 50 female youth, and 58 adults in families.

Findings.

Three quarters (76%) of respondents had been housed for 90 days or more at the time of being re-interviewed. The most common type of housing in which they lived was apartments (52%), followed by townhouses (17%) and houses (14%). Seventy-nine percent of those who were housed rated the overall quality of their housing as being either “somewhat good”, “good”, or “very good”.

Virtually all of the families (97%) were housed. As well, among the subgroups, families had been housed on average for the longest duration ($M = 646$ days). In contrast, less than half of the single men (47%) had exited homelessness. Single men had also been housed on average for the shortest duration of all the subgroups ($M. = 265$ days). The majority of families (78%) and over half of housed single women (51%) reported living in subsidized housing. No single men reported living in subsidized housing.

Based on the resilience model of resources and risks described above, a sequential logistic regression on housing status at follow-up found the following predictors of being stably housed for a period of 90 consecutive days or more at follow-up:

1. Among *demographic variables*, younger age was associated with a greater likelihood of being stably housed at follow-up. Women were more likely to be housed at follow-up than men. Families showed a greater probability of being stably housed at follow-up than youth or single adults.
2. Among *individual resources*, a higher number of moves predicted a greater likelihood of being stably housed at follow-up. As well, a higher level of personal empowerment was related to a higher probability of being stably housed.
3. *Interpersonal* resources that included size of social network, perceived social support, and satisfaction with social support were not predictive of housing status at follow-up.
4. Among *community resources*, accessing subsidized housing and having a higher level of income predicted a higher probability of being stably housed at follow-up.

5. *Risk factors* that included the presence of physical health problems, mental health problems, or substance abuse problems (i.e., drug or alcohol abuse) were not predictive of being housed at follow-up.

Two hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to examine whether housing status at follow-up predicted improvements in physical health functioning or mental health functioning. Becoming re-housed was not associated with an improvement in physical health functioning or mental health functioning for respondents. However, housing quality as perceived by study participants was found to be a significant predictor of change in mental health functioning, with better housing quality at follow-up being associated with improvements in mental health functioning. In other words, participants who expressed higher levels of satisfaction with their housing at follow-up in terms of comfort, privacy, and overall quality were more likely to experience improvements in mental health functioning over the course of the study.

The above represents some select findings from this study. Two technical reports presenting all of the findings from this research (Aubry et al., 2003; Aubry, Klodawsky, Neimiroff, Birnie & Bonetta, 2007) can be accessed on the web at http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/crecs/eng/pub_proj_reports.asp.

Implications for Policy and Practice.

A number of program and policy implications are suggested by our findings:

1. It is clear in our findings that adults in families who experience homelessness in Ottawa are successful at re-establishing their housing. It is important to note that individual in families represented a distinct subgroup relative to other subgroups, with their homelessness tied closely to economic difficulties (Aubry et al., 2003). In this context, the fact that over three-quarters of families were living in subsidized housing should be regarded as a critical reason for the housing stability they were able to achieve at follow-up.
2. In contrast to adults in families, less than one-half of single men (49%) were housed at follow-up. Given that the majority of individuals in the homeless population are single men, these findings suggest that a more concerted focus on them, involving different strategies than are currently used, are needed. Affordability of housing appears to be a

particular issue faced by single men, as none of them reported living in subsidized housing at follow-up. As well, the importance of offering support in addition to housing, seems evident for many in this subgroup who experience significant health problems (Aubry et al., 2003).

3. Our findings also highlight the important role of subsidized housing in assisting formerly homeless people to successfully exit homelessness. In particular, participants in our study who accessed subsidized housing between interviews were more likely to be housed at follow-up. Our study joins previous research in showing the difference that subsidized housing can make in helping individuals and families who are homeless become re-housed on a long-term basis (Piliavin, Entner Wright, Mare & Westerfelt, 1996; Stojanovic et al., 1999; Wong, Piliavin & Wright, 1998; Zlotnick et al., 1999).
4. Our findings showed that, in addition to those who had access to subsidized housing, people with higher incomes were more likely to be housed at follow-up. The fact that economic factors and risk factors emerged as predictors of housing status highlights the importance of developing policies that will assist people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to afford housing. A straightforward strategy towards this end is to increase income support benefits. Almost 90% of participants in our study relied on social benefits as their sole source of revenue (Aubry et al., 2003).
5. The provision of rent supplements enabling people on low income to access private market housing is another strategy that is indicated by our findings. Economic resources, whether in the form of subsidized housing or higher income, is associated with exiting homelessness. Research has shown that rent supplements are effective in assisting individuals with a history of homelessness to achieve housing stability, including people with severe mental illness (e.g., Hulbert, Wood & Hough, 1996; Shinn et al., 1998; Sylvestre et al., 2004).
6. The perceived quality of housing at follow-up emerged as a predictor of improvements in mental health functioning over the course of the study. This finding indicate the need for policies which ensure that available affordable housing is of good quality in relation to safety, comfort, spaciousness, and privacy.

Dissemination Strategy.

Our partnership with the Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa in conducting the study sensitized us to the need to communicate its findings in ways that are comprehensible and accessible to several critical targets beyond an academic audience. Appropriate communication methods are essential to the effective translation of research knowledge into policy and practice. Effective communication of research findings entails integrating and simplifying information so that it is accessible to the target audience, and may include multiple modalities to target different stakeholders (Choi, 2005; Graham et al., 2006). In order for research to affect policy, the research issues must be brought to the policy agenda, and knowledge must be effectively and useably communicated to policymakers (Choi, 2003; Lavis, 2006). Similarly, effective communication can bridge the gap between research and practice (Choi, 2005; Graham et al., 2006).

Over the course of my academic career, I have become more aware of the difficulties in transferring knowledge produced by research as an effective “story” for use by all types of media – print, TV, radio and the internet – so that research results, and how they can influence policy action, can be “heard” and understood. As a result, the completed project led to the creation of a number of innovative tools communicating findings in a clear and compelling manner to non-academic stakeholders (i.e., citizens, policy-makers, politicians).

These tools were: (1) a 12-page booklet presenting research findings in a “popularized” text format, (2) 11 videotaped interviews with persons who have experienced homelessness and are now housed twinned with commentary by the researchers who tied the narratives to the findings of the Panel Study, (3) a 16 minute video documentary entitled “From Homeless to Home” in which three individuals tell their story about experiencing homelessness and becoming housed again and their stories are interpreted in the context of the panel study findings, (4) a two-part 30 minute radio documentary on the study that was broadcast on CHUO, the Carleton University radio station in Ottawa, and (5) an article on the research that appeared in the on-line magazine (Cult)ure.

The 16 minute video documentary was shown as part of this keynote address at the Third International Conference of Community Psychology in Puebla. All the dissemination products are available on the website of the ATEH in Ottawa at

<http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/homelessness/Homelessproject.cfm> .

Developing a Report Card on Homelessness for Ottawa.

The second piece of collaborative research I want to present to you involves the development and dissemination of a report card on homelessness in Ottawa. The first report card was developed in 2005, summarizing the situation in Ottawa in 2004. Since then, we have produced annually a total of six report cards. The report card is a product of researchers, community agency personnel working on homelessness, municipal employees, and concerned citizens who contribute as volunteers. Copies of these report cards are available on the web at <http://www.endhomelessnessottawa.ca/>.

Literature Review.

Prior to developing the first report card, we conducted a literature review on “report cards” (Beaulac, Goodine & Aubry, 2004). In this literature, a “report card” has been defined as a tool that communicates information about key social, health, economic, or environmental conditions in a community (United Way of America, 1999). Over the past twenty years, report cards have been developed to summarize the state of affairs in a wide range of public policy areas, including the environment, education, fire protection, health and social welfare, economic development, government management, and fiscal policy (Coe & Brunet, 2006).

Report card can have a number of purposes including defining a community problem, tracking change, mobilizing community problem-solving, educating the public and increasing awareness around a social issue, advocating for policy changes, ensuring accountability, and promoting specific actions (Beaulac et al., 2004). Gormley and Weimer (1999) identified three types of report cards: (1) *Scientific report cards* that are based on data collected in a methodologically rigorous manner, (2) *popular report cards* that communicates relevant information clearly and effectively, and (3) *hybrid report cards* that combine scientific rigour with effective communication.

The literature on report cards stresses the importance of the involvement of major stakeholders in developing a report card (Fielding, Sutherland & Halfon, 1999; Simmes, Blaszcak, Kurtin, Bowen & Ross, 2000). In the case of the report card on homelessness, these included researchers, personnel of community agencies serving people who are homeless, and

staff of the municipal government familiar working with relevant indicator data. Specifically, a working group made up of representatives from these different stakeholders was formed by the ATEH to develop the report card.

In order to solicit input on the format and content of the report card, a consultation of representatives of the organizations making up the Alliance was conducted (Browne, Beaulac, Fuller & Aubry, 2007). Based on this consultation, the following central messages for the report card were identified: (1) homeless people are a diverse group made up of single adults, youth, and families, (2) homelessness is not a conscious choice or a lifestyle decision but rather a life crisis over which individuals and families have no control, (3) the reasons behind homelessness are first and foremost economic in nature, especially involving poverty and the lack of affordable housing; and, (4) homeless people live in very difficult circumstances and frequently need both housing and supports to re-establish their lives in the community. These messages were intended to challenge some of the public stereotypes about homelessness and the homeless population.

A major goal of the report card was to describe homelessness in an accurate manner using credible data. Based on the types of report cards described earlier, a “hybrid report card” emerged as the chosen model for the Ottawa report card on homelessness. On the one hand, the report card was to serve as a formal means of monitoring and evaluating progress in ending homelessness in Ottawa using reliable indicators; while on the other hand, in order to mobilize the community in addressing homelessness in Ottawa, the document needed to be accessible to a wide audience, including the general public, politicians, decision-makers, and service providers.

Content of Report Card.

The make-up of the report card was divided into three main sections. The first section presented indicator data as it relates to housing, income, and homelessness. The second section described programs and services in Ottawa intended to assist people who were homeless or at risk of losing their housing. The final section presented recommendations for government and community members to effectively address homelessness.

The choice of indicators was based on availability and the need for data to be updated at minimum on an annual basis. Table 1 presents a list of indicators with the data sources that have been used in the report card.

Table 1. Indicators and data sources for Report Card on Homelessness in Ottawa

Indicator Area	Indicator	Data Source
Housing	Number of social housing units	City of Ottawa
	Number on social housing waiting list by client group	Ottawa Social Housing Registry
	Number of rent supplement units	City of Ottawa
	Number of supportive housing units	Supportive Housing Coalition
	Rental Vacancy Rate	Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation
	Average Rent for a 2 bedroom units	
Income	Social Assistance for a single person	Province of Ontario
	Average monthly # of Ontario Works Cases	City of Ottawa
	Minimum Wage	Province of Ontario
	Cost of Living increase	Statistics Canada Consumer Price Index
Homelessness	Number of different individuals using emergency shelters broken down by subgroups	City of Ottawa
	Total number of shelter bed usage	
	Average length of stay in emergency shelters by client group	

Grading Process.

The data in the first report card released in 2005 and based on indicator data for 2004 served as a baseline from which data in subsequent years could be evaluated. Using letter grades, progress was evaluated starting with the Second Report Card on Homelessness in Ottawa released in early 2006 and focusing on 2005 (Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa, 2006). Initially, an overall grade was assigned based on the following anchors for each of the letter grades: A = Significant progress with percentage change on indicators of 15% or more; B = Some progress with percentage change on indicators of 5% – 15%; C = No Progress with percentage change on indicators of less than 5%; D = Some Loss with percentage change on indicators of 5% – 15%; E = Significant loss with percentage change on indicators of 15% or more. Beginning in 2006, grades were assigned for indicator data on housing, income, number of people homeless, and length of shelter stay.

A two-step process for assigning grades was used in which initially indicator data for different years was sent electronically to members of the Steering Committee of the Alliance. In the first step, each member assigned grades independently. For the second step, these assignments were summarized and communicated at a meeting of the Steering Committee. At this meeting each member present provided a new grade publicly with justification. Final grades were then determined through a consensus process.

In 2009, it was decided the assignment of grades would be based beginning in 2010 on the extent progress was being made towards four key goals set by the Alliance for ending homelessness in Ottawa over a 10-year period. These goals were: (1) Reduction of the number of people using emergency shelters to 2000 people per years (from approximately 7500 in 2009), (2) reduction of emergency shelter stays to 30 days (from an average of 57 days in 2009), (3) reduction of the number of households on the social housing registry to 4000 (from over 10,000 in 2009), and (4) having individuals and families living on low and fixed incomes to spend a maximum of 30% of their income on housing costs (Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa, 2010).

Dissemination Strategy.

There are several steps that have been followed by the Alliance to maximize the impact of the release of its report cards. Specifically, a press conference is held the day of the release and the report card is made available on the web. The press coverage of the release has been excellent for each of the six years with news items appearing in local newspapers and on television and radio newscast. It has also resulted over the years in editorial pieces and columns. The Alliance has for the most part successfully shaped the information and messages appearing in the media. Generally, the media focus has been on the data rather than the grade assignment. The fact that the messaging based on the data communicated no progress in the first four years (2004 – 2007) and a worsening of homelessness in the past two years (2008-2009) has facilitated garnering media attention since they provided evidence of a “dramatic” nature that lends itself to criticizing government (Coe & Brunet, 2006).

Shortly after the release, there is a mail-out of hard copies of the report card to local politicians at the three different levels of government (i.e., municipal, provincial, and federal) as well as relevant Ministers in the provincial and federal governments. These mail-outs are followed with visits to these politicians to discuss the information in the report card and how governments can better respond to the issue. The report card always includes some very specific policy recommendations targeting especially housing and income support policies for consideration by politicians.

Conclusions.

A key question that every community psychologist needs to answer: “Is your research making any difference?” We have now completed the panel study that included the creation of the previously described knowledge transfer products. We have also put out six report cards reporting on six years of data from 2004 to 2009. The longitudinal picture available from the data published in these report cards enables us to track the progress that is being made in addressing homelessness in Ottawa. Figure 2 presents the number of different individuals who have used emergency shelters annually for each of those six years.

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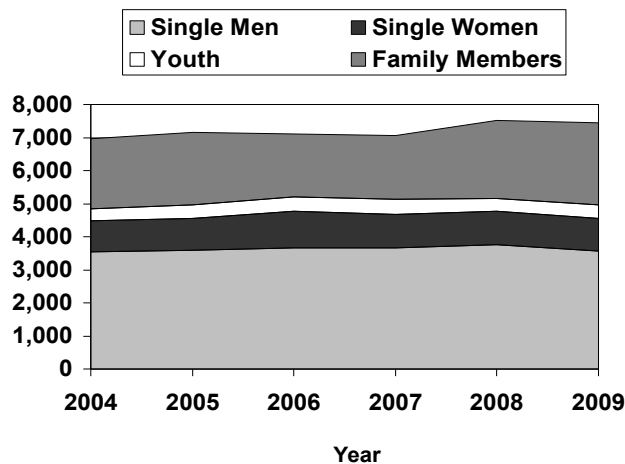
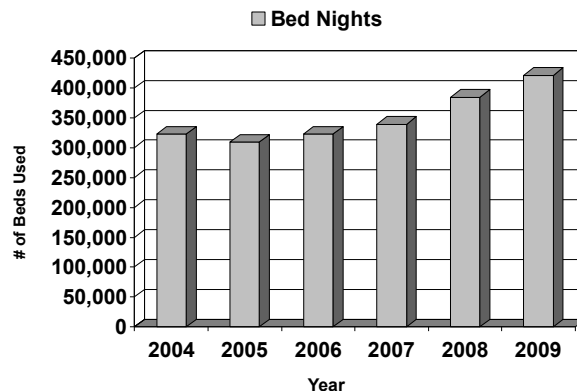


Figure 2. Number of different people using emergency shelters annually in Ottawa (2004-2009)

As presented in Figure 2, the total number of people homeless annually remained stable from 2004 to 2007, increased by about 500 people in 2008, and has remained at this level in 2009. Overall, this data shows no progress over the six year period with some deterioration being evident in the past two years.

As shown in Figure 3, further evidence of the deterioration is evident in the monitoring of shelter bed use over the six years.



Source: City of Ottawa. Note. 2004-2006 data standardized to 2007 & 2008 results.

Figure 3. Number of shelter beds used annually in Ottawa (2004-2009).

As presented in Figure 3, shelter bed use has shown increased in the past three years as a result of more people staying in emergency shelters and for longer periods of time. At this point, despite being involved in a coalition whose objective is to end homelessness, we seem to be going in the opposite direction. Despite this lack of progress so far in reducing homelessness in our city and our country, I continue to believe that community psychologists can and should play an important role in addressing homelessness.

First of all, community psychology values an ecological perspective where the interaction of the person with his or her environment is used to analyze and address social problems. Given the structural factors that are contributing to homelessness and requiring policy-level interventions, community psychologists are trained and well-placed to work at this level in addition to understanding the individual diversity that is characteristic of the homeless population.

As well, homelessness is a complicated issue that requires collaborative efforts in communities including the engagement of the public to solve it. Community psychologists have

the ability to do the kind of community organizing required to address homelessness, including contributing to political advocacy efforts through research.

In terms of research, there is a need for quantitative population-level research that shows the diversity in the population and evaluates the effectiveness of programs and policies as well as qualitative story-telling research that provides a much-needed human face to the problem challenging common negative “victim-blaming” stereotypes about people who experience homelessness. Ultimately, community psychologists can marry research, knowledge exchange, and political advocacy.

Lessons Learned.

In conclusion, what lessons can I draw from the research on homelessness in which I have been involved for over a decade?

First of all, our work locally has been overly narrow constraining our ability to influence provincial and national public policy-making. We need to expand research and advocacy efforts so that they are much broader in nature. Using Bronfenbrenner’s model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), we need to move the focus from the meso- and exo- levels to the macro-level particularly as it applies to the development of social policies that will address housing-related poverty.

Secondly, politicians, community groups, and the public are receptive and interested in research on solutions to social problems like homelessness. Our challenge in conducting research on homelessness is developing it in collaboration with the community so that it is maximally pertinent and useful. As well, as researchers we are faced with the challenge of ensuring that findings are communicated in an accessible manner.

Thirdly, we have been very fortunate to have a productive collaboration with a very active community coalition of committed organizations. The collaboration has reflected an exchange of resources with researchers providing research abilities in exchange for in-depth knowledge about the issue, relevant research questions, and assistance with knowledge mobilization provided by community groups.

Fourthly, a significant investment in dissemination is required for research findings to be accessible to and used by the community. The emerging area of knowledge mobilization is an

important one for community psychologists to master. Community psychologists are well-placed to be leaders in this area.

Finally, like many other social problems that are enduring, tackling homelessness requires persistence. My own reading of the situation in Canada is that we are close to what the Canadian-born author, Malcolm Gladwell, would call a “tipping point” in terms of finally addressing the problem of homelessness (Gladwell, 2000). For the last several years, the public discourse about homelessness in Canada has turned to solutions and specifically, the need to create affordable housing and to address growing poverty in the population.

In Canada, there is finally discussion on the part of our federal politicians of developing a national housing strategy. At the provincial level, there is also the development in of anti-poverty strategies. Time will tell if these will lead to the needed investments in the creation of affordable housing and the development of more effective income support programs for people living in poverty. As a community psychologist, I am cautiously optimistic and it motivates me to continue this work.

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VIOLENCE, ATTEMPTS UPON COMMUNITIES

The War Without Bullets: Socio-structural Violence from a Critical Standpoint

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The War Without Bullets: Socio-structural Violence from a Critical Standpoint.

Abstract

For over a quarter of a century David and Cathy have worked in separate, parallel but mutually supportive and stimulating ways, as community psychologist and community activist respectively, to collaboratively understand and contest socio-structural violence. Each has focused in different but critically complementary ways on interconnections between poverty, inequality, unemployment and psycho-social destruction. As a community activist, drawing on her experience of popular education and radical politics, Cathy characterised what was constituted by these interconnections as manifestations of “Wars Without Bullets” waged remorselessly against structurally oppressed people, and to promote conscientization through popular education, theatre of the oppressed, film making, radical politics and accessible writing. As a community psychologist, drawing upon critical scholarship and radical praxis, David tried to develop the notion of a “War Without Bullets” in ways which would give it legitimacy within the rhetorical discursive practices of the establishment yet critically refuse individualism, psychologism and essentialism. Both sought to deploy the notion of the “War Without Bullets” for progressive change. In this presentation, the discursive frame of reference of the “War Without Bullets” will be explicated, developed and critiqued. In doing so some advantages of long term collaboration between community activism and community psychology for effective thinking and action will be explored and debated.

Keyword: Community activism, community psychology, war without bullets, popular education, critical academics.

La guerra sin balas: Violencia socioestructural desde una perspectiva crítica

Resumen

Por más de un cuarto de siglo David y Cathy han trabajado en formas separadas, paralelas, pero mutuamente respaldantes y estimulantes, como psicólogo comunitario el uno y como activista comunitaria la otra, buscando entender y enfrentar colaborativamente violencia sociestructural. Cada uno ha enfocado en formas diferentes pero críticamente complementarias las interconexiones entre pobreza, desigualdad, desempleo y destrucción psicosocial. Como activista comunitaria, extrayendo de su experiencia en educación popular y política radical, Cathy ha caracterizado lo que constituyen estas interconexiones como manifestaciones de “Guerras Sin Balas” realizada sin remordimiento contra gente estructuralmente oprimida. Ella ha buscado promover concientización a través de educación popular, teatro del oprimido, creación de películas, política radical y facilitación de la capacidad de escribir. Como psicólogo comunitario, por medio de posturas académicas críticas y de praxis radical, David ha tratado de desarrollar la noción de “Guerra Sin Balas” en forma que le otorgue legitimidad dentro de las prácticas discursivas retóricas del mundo académico reconocido y a la vez rehusando críticamente el individualismo, el psicologismo y el esencialismo. Ambos han buscado expandir la noción de “Guerra Sin Balas” para lograr un cambio social progresivo. En este capítulo será explicado, desarrollado y criticado el marco discursivo de referencia del concepto “Guerra Sin Balas”. En este proceso se explorarán y debatirán algunas ventajas de largo alcance de la colaboración entre activismo comunitario y psicología comunitaria en cuanto a pensamiento y acción efectivos.

Palabras clave: Activismo comunitario, psicología comunitaria, guerra sin balas, educación popular, academia crítica.

The War Without Bullets: Socio-Structural Violence from a Critical Standpoint

“Have we ever seriously asked what psychosocial processes look like from the point of view of the dominated instead of from that of the dominator?” (Ignacio Martín-Baró in Aron and Corne, 1994: 28)

“The vagaries of modern life are undoing and remaking people’s lives in new and ominous ways. The subjects of our study struggle with the possibilities and dangers of economic globalisation, the threat of endless violence and insecurity, and the new infrastructures and forms of political domination and resistance that lie in the shadows of grand claims of democratization and reform.” (Biehl, Good and Kleinman, 2007: 1)

How should socio-structural violence be understood and how should that understanding be progressively deployed? For over a quarter of a century we, Cathy and David, have attempted to work in mutually supportive and mutually stimulating, if sometimes separate and parallel ways, as community activist and community psychologist respectively, in attempts to address this question. Each of us has focused critically, albeit in different ways, on interconnections between material poverty, societal inequality, socio-economic policy and psycho-social destruction in attempts to understand and contest socio-structural violence.

The standpoint from which this paper is written is fundamentally one of community praxis, a standpoint from which we seek to understand and contest both how societal constructions (such as unemployment, psychologically toxic labour market entrapment, poverty, inequality, disabling practices, psy-pharmacology, gendered, heterosexist and racist oppression, etc.) immiserate, destroy and obliterate, and to understand and challenge oppressive forms of psychology; to de-construct, de-legitimise and de-ideologise the socio-political processes through which oppressive ‘psy’ claims are given the status of ‘knowledge’ or ‘truth’; to render transparent and accountable the subjective, material, institutional, societal, political and ideological ‘psy’ interests served by what is, and what is not, thought, said and done by all relevant subjects; to

engage in progressive social action interconnected to and simultaneous with emancipatory power-to knowledge construction and legitimation and profound radical reflexivity; and to facilitate emancipatory process and outcome through progressive redistribution of social power, rather than collude with, or contribute to, reactionary notions of power as the property of an individual.

As a community activist, informed by her reading of popular education, community activism and radical politics, Cathy has - for over quarter of a century - witnessed each and every day a 'War Without Bullets' being waged remorselessly against herself and other structurally oppressed people: the poor, the ill, the unemployed, the disabled, the stigmatised, the marginalised and the simply different. Cathy lives in one of the most notorious public housing schemes in Europe (Easterhouse, Glasgow) which is characterised by what the establishment refers to as multiple deprivation in the form of unemployment, poverty, substandard housing, etc. and which has a fearsome reputation for gang violence. However, we both prefer to draw attention to socio-structural, political, ideological and psychological violence being directed towards the people of Easterhouse, by means of policies which manufacture unemployment, inequality, material poverty, socio-economic apartheid, ghetto township status, etc. and knowledges which position the consequences of socio-structural violence as the fault of those at whom the violence is being directed.

Cathy has facilitated tenants' group activism, promoted popular education, deployed the theatre of the oppressed, collaborated in award-winning documentary cinema, accepted international speaking engagements and written powerful accessible prose exposing and contesting socio-structural violence.

Cathy's struggle began in 1985 when she had felt so powerless to change the cruel reality facing her children and other people in her own community that she became more afraid of living than of dying. Although her children were bouncing with health when they were born, as soon as Cathy brought them home from hospital to her freezing-cold damp flat, her life became a constant battle for survival between her family and the fungus family. Then, when Britain was changed from an industrial to a money-market economy, Cathy's family were among the millions of working people deemed surplus to the requirements of capitalism who were thrown onto the unemployed-scrap-heap and forced to subsist on welfare. Whilst Mrs. Thatcher kept talking about individual choice, the real choice Cathy had to make was between feeding her hungry children or feeding her hungry fuel meter.

When Cathy joined her community's fight for justice she started to witness human suffering and hardship on a scale which she never thought she would see in her lifetime, except perhaps in time of war. Then she realised that there actually really was a war going on, only this war was not being fought with tanks, bombs or bullets: this War Without Bullets was a social, economic, psychological and propaganda war against the poor: a war without bullets.

As a research psychologist, informed by his reading of critical theory, community psychology and emancipatory pedagogy, David has - for over quarter of a century – documented the everyday socio-structural violence which is unemployment and its roles in socially constituting misery, injustice and the destruction of individuals, families and communities. David has drawn attention to the gigantic numbers of people, globally, destructively caught up in unemployment; to the continued deleterious impact of unemployment even after re-employment; to the psychologically corrosive impact of the anticipation of unemployment; to the toxicity of unemployment for family members of unemployed people including their babies and children; to the oppressive impact of unemployment even on the non-unemployed people in communities blighted by mass unemployment; and to how participation in the so-called flexible labour market, with its generation of temporary, part-time, insecure, non-unionised, psychologically destructive sub-employment, is for many as psychologically toxic as unemployment.

Moreover, David has argued that the tsunami of misery, maiming and mortality which is the War Without Bullets has continued throughout Labour as well as Conservative government administrations in England and has been used as an instrument of economic and social control to control inflation. Economists even have an acronym, NAIRU (Non Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment) referring to the level of unemployment necessary to control inflation - and to discipline the working poor; and that mass unemployment serves the interests of the status quo in a range of ways because unemployment is constructed to be a condition so undesirable that no-one wishes to become unemployed which all unemployed people wish to leave as soon as possible. Mass, involuntary, unemployment socially constituted to be personally and socially destructive, guarantees there are potential workers willing to do the most boring, dead end, underpaid, temporary, insecure, unpleasant jobs (i.e. the ones being created in the so-called flexible labour market), functioning effectively as an incomes policy, because it guarantees that there are unemployed people competing for the jobs of the employed, thus facilitating employers in reducing wages and working conditions. Unemployment serves the interests of the status quo

better to the extent that there are far fewer jobs than potential workers seeking them; that unemployed people are poverty stricken and have to go through intrusive and degrading rituals to get the pittance they get to keep them healthy enough to compete for work but not comfortable enough to have a viable alternative life style; that unemployment is a stigmatised condition with orchestrated campaigns by the media and politicians reinforcing the view that unemployed people are feckless, anti-social idlers living a life of luxury at taxpayers' expense, fraudulently claiming income and two-timing the system; that unemployed people are associated with criminality through media reports of mentioning whenever criminals were unemployed; and crucially in connection with the psychological War Without Bullets, that unemployment is demonstrated to 'cause' mental ill health whilst mental illness is simultaneously socially constructed as frightening, dangerous and deviant and whilst psychologists promote 'employability', active labour market policies and individualistic cognitive interventions to 'solve' unemployment.

Catastrophic as the pogrom on the poor achieved through neo-liberal labour markets is, David has argued that the pathogenic labour market characteristic of contemporary post-industrial societies is only one of many powerful mechanisms through which 'class-cleansing' socio-structural violence is accomplished under capitalism in the 21st century. Other mechanisms include: manufactured poverty and inequality; disabling practices; class, gender and white privilege.

Cathy's rhetoric and David's rhetoric are sometimes far apart in style but are essentially in agreement. For example, whilst Cathy observes that few of her class mates from primary school are still alive, David draws attention to the Final Report of the World Health Organisation Commission on Social Determinants of Health (Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health (WHO, 2008), which makes it clear (in table 2.1) that for men life expectancy in one of the poorer parts of Glasgow (the city where Cathy lives) is at 54 years, nearly 3 decades shorter than life expectancy in one of the richer areas of Glasgow, only a few short distance away.

Whilst Cathy writes that "the wealth in this country is not trickling down from the rich but gushing up from the poor sods like us" (McCormack, 2009: 52), David quotes Iris Marion Young (1988) that: "The injustice of class division does not consist only in the fact that some people have great wealth whilst most people have little and some are severely deprived. The theory of exploitation shows that this relation of power and inequality is produced and reproduced through

a systematic process in which the energies of the have-nots are continuously expended to maintain and augment the power, status and wealth of the haves”.

Whilst Cathy writes: “our children . . . see that the people with the knowledge are the cause of their frustrations” (McCormack, 2009: 132), David argues that psychology (and the associated wider and deeper set of knowledges, practices, technical processes and discourses which constitute the ‘psy-complex’) is increasingly clearly part of the problem and that, despite rhetorics of social justice, empowerment etc., community psychology is as ideologically problematic as any other manifestation of ‘psy’.

Whilst Cathy (along with allies) “began a popular education group in Easterhouse, the Popular Democracy Education Resource Centre”, and became involved in setting up the Scottish Popular Education Forum whose “aim was to bring about social change using popular education and try to build a social movement” (McCormack, 2009: 137), David has argued for the merits of ‘un-teaching’, critical pedagogy and praxis.

Positioning the carnage in our communities as a War Without Bullets may suggest the posing of new questions and answers:

Q: Who are the enemy?

A: The dead, wounded and traumatised are disproportionately amongst the most powerless who as non-producers and non-consumers are surplus to contemporary market requirements.

Mortality, morbidity and misery are greater the lower down the socio-occupational-class-poverty-power hierarchy one goes and however one constructs it: by employment status, wealth indicators, inequality, educational level etc. (which are all proxies for relative powerlessness).

Q: What are the means of waging war?

A: The ‘Weapons of Mass Demoralisation’ (WMD) deployed include processes which generate psychologically toxic: inequality; poverty; inequality; unemployment; flexible labour market (insecure, unsatisfying, poorly paid, poor quality, stressful jobs); substandard or insufficient housing; stigma; social apartheid and mis-education for critical illiteracy. If this was a ‘War With Bullets’, this weaponry would be banned under the Geneva Convention.

Q: What is the scale of the War Without Bullets?

A: All out - the chances of surviving the policy minefields in parts of the world are like the chances of walking blindfold through in a war zone

Q: What is the goal of the war without bullets?

A: Full spectrum dominance³ through full spectrum governmentality.

Q: What are weapons of resistance?

A: Critique; answering back; subversion; solidarity; conscientization; praxis.

Q: From whom can we learn - where has resistance been effective?

A: De-colonisers⁴, emancipatory disability activists, community activists; critical theorists; feminists; queer theorists; trades unionists; anti-capitalists; anti-globalisation activists; popular educators; progressive journalists; anti-imperial intellectuals . . . anyone who is not compliant in the face of the War Without Bullets.

Q: Who is waging the War Without Bullets?

A: The War Without Bullets is not just a civil war of the 'higher' classes against the 'lower', or a war of the 'State' against sub-groups of its citizens; and whilst a War Without Bullets, a briefcase war, involves people drafting and enacting policy, relaying problematic discourses, the relays of structural oppression, including: politicians, policy makers; bureaucrats; researchers; teachers; lecturers; psychiatrists; psychologists; therapists; counsellors; social workers; journalists; street level bureaucrats, etc., from a critical standpoint, it is essential not to default back to psychologism or individualism by positioning the War Without Bullets as being intentionally

³ "The overarching focus of this vision is full spectrum dominance—achieved through the interdependent application of dominant manoeuvre, precision engagement, focused logistics, and full dimensional protection. Attaining that goal requires the steady infusion of new technology and modernization and replacement of equipment. However, material superiority alone is not sufficient. Of greater importance is the development of doctrine, organizations, training and education, leaders, and people that effectively take advantage of the technology . . . the creation of a force that is dominant across the full spectrum of military operations—persuasive in peace, decisive in war, preeminent in any form of conflict" (http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/1225.pdf).

⁴ "Many indigenous communities continue to live within political and social conditions that perpetuate extreme levels of poverty, chronic ill health and poor educational opportunities. Their children may be removed forcibly from their care, 'adopted' or institutionalized. The adults may be as addicted to alcohol as their children are to glue, they may live in destructive relationships which are formed and shaped by their impoverished material conditions and structured by politically oppressive regimes. While they live like this they are constantly fed messages about their worthlessness, laziness, dependence and lack of higher order human qualities. This applies as much to indigenous communities in First World nations as it does to indigenous communities in developing countries. Within these sorts of social realities, questions of imperialism and the effects of colonization may seem to be merely academic; sheer physical survival is far more pressing. The problem is that constant efforts by governments, states, societies and institutions to deny the historical formations of such conditions have simultaneously denied our claims to humanity, to having a history, and to all sense of hope. To acquiesce is to lose ourselves entirely and implicitly agree with all that has been said about us. To resist is to retrench in the margins, retrieve what we were and remake ourselves. The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages and social practices – all may be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope" (Smith, 1999: 4).

waged by malevolent individual agents. As Iris Marion Young put it: ‘oppression’ designates the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power intends to keep them down, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society.” (Young, 1988: 272).

We are committed to working, collectively with others, to uncover the apparatuses, in the Foucauldian sense, composed of interconnections of discourses, institutions, scientific statements, regulations, practices etc., which constitute ‘chronic socio-structural violence’ and through which the ongoing transfer of powers from have-nots to haves, from poor to rich, from lower class to middle is accomplished in neo-liberal societies.

Some of the most sophisticated, contemporary, post-Foucauldian, work on subjectivity is currently being done by anthropologists and ethnographers like Joao Biehl (2005) who are extending and deepening our understanding of the process of subjectification, the genealogy of the subject, by painstaking investigation into “the ways in which inner processes are reshaped amid economic and political reforms, violence, and social suffering” (Biehl, Good and Kleinman, 2007). From this perspective, the ‘subjectivity of the unemployed’ is both the means and the outcome of the construction, regulation and destruction of the unemployed person, accomplished through apparatuses (in the Foucauldian sense) of interlocking discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements (including – of course - ones produced by community psychologists), philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions functioning to produce governmentality working in the interests of the neo-liberal social order. Rather than agency being positioned as restricted by depowering contextual structures, agency restriction is now positioned as a dynamic manifestation of violent auto-subjugation through the infolding of discursive exteriority.

The contemporary world is replete with problematic subjectification, the psychological War Without Bullets, and we believe that things are swiftly going from bad to worse. The question for us is not whether socio-structural violence characterises contemporary Western societies but through which apparatuses socio-structural violence is achieved in particular domains and its roles in those domains in rendering people governable through processes of violent subjectification.

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**Building cultures of peace in community life in the face of intensifying political violence in
Colombia**

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Building cultures of peace in community life in the face of intensifying political violence in Colombia

Abstract

The escalation of political violence, the extent of psychological trauma, the dehumanization, the naturalization of violence, institutional lying, and breach of trust are difficulties to building cultures of peace in Colombia. Their analysis and the experiences of communities of resistance and/or of peace, can lead to propose challenges that lead to manners of coexistence.

Keywords: Violence, cultures of peace, community experiences, peace.

La construcción de culturas de paz en la vida comunitaria frente a la intensificación de la violencia política en Colombia

Resumen

La intensificación de la violencia política, la amplitud del trauma psicosocial, la deshumanización, la naturalización de la violencia, la mentira institucional, la ruptura de la confianza son dificultades para la construcción de culturas de paz en Colombia. Su análisis y las experiencias de las comunidades de resistencia y/o de paz, permiten proponer retos que conduzcan a caminos de convivencia.

Palabras clave: Violencia, culturas de paz, experiencias comunitarias, paz.

Introduction

To ask oneself the question for the building of cultures of peace, in a country like Colombia, involves thinking about the difficulties and challenges that it involves, and the idea of peace that we start from. In our research group, we have done this and have opted for welcoming the call for the creation of a global movement for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence *of the UNESCO* (1999: 7-9), which states:

"The culture of peace is peace in action ... it is a culture of life which is to allow the coexistence of different beings and to instill a new ethic of solidarity, listening, caring for others and responsibility, in an invigorated democratic society that fights exclusion and guarantees political equality, social equity and cultural diversity " ... culture based on active non-violence, on pluralism, "This global movement must be based on a very broad definition of the culture of peace, that is based on respect for human rights, democracy and tolerance .."

We back the proposal of Galtung, Jacobsen & Brand-Jacobsen (2002) who consider the approach of opposition to peace must not be sought in war, but in violence, so that any definition of peace means the absence or reduction of all types of violence, either direct (physical or verbal), structural (avoidable deaths caused by social and economic structures), or cultural.

This is why I enounce first the **difficulties that hinder the creation of cultures of peace:**

Difficulties that hinder the creation of cultures of peace.

In Colombia, over the years, there have been accumulating feelings of grief, anger and fatigue, caused by the prolonged armed conflict. Those feelings combined with the lack of a healthy authority, able to settle conflicts by means of negotiation and routes of reconciliation have promoted confusion between healthy authority and authoritarianism, leading many Colombians to opt for the latter. In many sectors that make up the Colombian society, there are multiple pressures from various social sectors asking for options of force, pressing for the liquidation of the enemy in a vigorous and rapid way.

Much of the anguished Colombian opinion, desperate due to violence, and the numerous injuries that armed confrontation has brought to Colombian families, has become polarized, it is deeply split and dreams of a quick definition, by means of weapons with the immediate termination of the war through total annihilation of the other, the enemy.

Today the military dynamics overwhelm the armed actors and permeate the whole of society, the logic of war cuts across all dimensions of life in the country, we live the militarization of everyday life, where the only way to tackle the other is in denial, making him an enemy, annihilating him symbolically or physically: it is the polarization (Martín-Baró, 1990) of relationships, a dynamics visible in the form of settling disputes in day to day life.

The escalation of political violence in the past 22 years in the turf war for drug trafficking routes or land for national and multinational agribusiness has led to the forced displacement of 3,400,000 expressed by the current government Director of Social Action in an interview (Guardiola, 2010); or of 4,900,000 according to the Consultancy for Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES). Rojas, its director, noted (Guardiola b, 2010)

"10 percent of the total Colombian population has been moved because of violence and that exhibits deep structural flaws. ... Here is a true humanitarian tragedy... many people, long suffering the rigors of a dislocation that involves the violation of all their rights. "

In addition, UNHRC (2010) expressed

"grave concern for the widespread practice of enforced disappearances (28000, officially recognized in the National Register of Missing Persons) and the number of bodies that have been exhumed from mass graves ... The Committee notes that the discovery of the graves has been based mainly on statements of demobilized paramilitaries and the vast majority of victims were tortured before being executed."

Additionally, the inhuman practice of kidnapping and extortion carried out by the FARC is permanent and hurts many sectors of Colombian society, as well as attacks on people who do not give up the right to their domain, in clear violation of international humanitarian law. In this regard, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, (2010) in its annual report states:

"The report shows how the internal armed conflict continues to pose many challenges for the country, including the total disregard for international humanitarian law by guerrilla groups. This situation is exacerbated by the violence against civilians carried out by

illegal armed groups in the demobilization process of paramilitary organizations, the nexus of armed actors with drug trafficking and the particularly severe impact of armed conflict on indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities ." (UNHRC, 2010:1).

The problem of political violence is such that in discussing the infringed people, sociologist Pedro Cortés (2005: 3) says, "violence has been so widespread that what one might ask now is: how many families are there that have NOT been affected?"

People who have suffered forced displacement, the families of those who have disappeared, the abductees and their families, as well as victims of blackmail and extortion by armed groups suffer **psychological trauma**, a mental injury produced socially (Martín-Baró, 1990).

The damage to the processes of life caused by armed fighting, being forced to witness torture and murder, the impossibility of understanding, of making sense of the situations generated by the armed actors impact the victims psychically and psychosocially (Sacipa, 2001); where fear has become a psychological tool for social control, to generate submission and passivity (Lira, 1991). The emotional suffering caused by the losses, by family fragmentation, sadness, shame, mistrust, uncertainty, personal devaluation, are made patent in the stories of displaced persons (Sacipa 2003, 2007).

It is clear that both those who commit violent acts as well as those who promote their implementation have been dehumanized. Samayoa (1990) refers to **dehumanization** as the modification of cognitive schemes and patterns of conduct, which involves, among others, the loss or impoverishment of the capacity for lucid thinking, of the ability to communicate with accuracy, of sensitivity to suffering, of respect and of solidarity. This dehumanization is evident in a very unfortunate way in the confessions of demobilized paramilitaries², in which they chronicle the cruel training they received ³ in violent practices such as the dismemberment of living peasants, playing with the severed head of the "enemy", drinking blood from the victims, killing deserters' friends, or removing children from the wombs of their mothers. ⁴ Acts that horrify us and tell us about the "lack of reflection ... practices and exercises of the conditioning of the human conscience to kill ..." (Angulo, 2007: 556)

But in contrast to these facts, we find that in many places, especially in cities, that people have been **naturalized to violence**. And it has to do with such a prolonged exposure to it. In this sense, a colleague of ours, Mónica Novoa (2010: 2) states:

"There is no doubt, such a prolonged conflict resonates in various spheres of life, impacting how people perceive it in unusual ways, conceptualize it and act on the world we live in, to the point of "naturalizing" violence so much, that they may refer to themselves as happy. The Happy Planet Index, HPI, published in June 2009⁵, pointed to Colombia as the fifth among 143 countries, whose population more effectively aims for happiness, the people who at the same time live (or survive) in the midst of an armed conflict lasting more than 40 years".

The escalation of political violence is fed by **structural violence** and vice versa, the first driving peasants into the cities, which has increased the second, a situation that is even worse for those who have been uprooted, since according to the Civil Society Alternate Report to the Committee on Economic and Cultural Rights (2009: 3-4),

"Colombia is the second country in the region with the greatest inequality in income distribution, reaching a Gini coefficient of 0.576. The tax system design is clearly regressive, with emphasis on indirect taxation of the population with low pay and the extension of exemptions to the taxes of higher income sectors" Simultaneously with this, "The concentration of land ownership is very high and tends to increase: 0.43% of the owners own 62.91% of the rural land area, while 57.87% of the owners, have only a 1.66% of the land. Despite the recommendation made by the Treaty Committee regarding the implementation of agrarian reform in Colombia, a reverse land reform has been consolidated with a combination of legal and illegal means".

In this order of ideas, an editorial in the newspaper *El Tiempo* (April 13, 2010)⁶, referring to the capture of farmers in Antioquia and Chocó, for the promotion and financing of paramilitary groups, said:

"This is the 'paraconomy' a name that could describe the cash, logistical, political and legal nexus that sectors in various regions of the country offer the leaders of the paramilitaries to commit their most heinous crimes against humanity." According to the newspaper, "the authorities accuse the alliance of agribusinesses with the paramilitaries operating in the Urabá area of masterminding the murder and displacement of peasants

and Afrodescendants, and the illegal appropriation of their land. And it further states: "It is undeniable that regional power and the capture of public funds, such as those for health, were not the only area that served these illegal armed groups to consolidate their reign of terror. Employers, landlords and even multinationals paid for protection and ordered the paramilitaries to undertake the gruesome task of killing peasants and union leaders. Also, many deployed a systematic dispossession of hundreds of thousands of hectares and the usufruct of them in activities such as mining, ranching, agribusiness, illicit crops and logging. "

However, in the 90's, entrepreneurs, politicians and the military denied the joint activity with the paramilitaries. In fact, the common thing in many sectors of the Colombian population in the last 22 years was the denial of these facts, denial tied to a great **indifference** for the victims who are mostly peasants, poor, indigenous and of African descent.

"And that seemed not to affect other Colombians. This indifference, this denial is also part of the psychological damage to those who have experienced war. Not just the geographical distance of populations, it is the emotional distance; it is what the authors call a structure of feelings in societies, social practices that cause many Colombians to be closer to other countries and continents, rather than to their national reality "(Novoa, 2010: 21).

Martín-Baró (1990: 30) states that **lying** is characteristic of war, "ranging from the corruption of institutions to deliberate deceit in public discourse, through an environment of suspicious lies with which most people tend to conceal their views and even their choices ".

Institutional lying was inherent in the assassination of presidential candidate Carlos Pizarro, leader of the M-19, who in 1990 made peace with the government of Virgilio Barco. After 20 years, the investigation was revived and also recognized that along with paramilitary chief Castaño, retired generals and intelligence agents were involved⁷.

Another example of systematic concealment of reality (Martín-Baró, 1990) is constituted by extrajudicial killings of many young Colombians. Researchers Angulo, Zarama, and Burgos (2009) noted: "False positives are cases where security forces perpetrated gross violations of human rights and made them appear as victories in the battle against guerrillas. Victims are almost always dressed as guerrillas or buried in mass graves."

Another lack of truth, is related to the demobilization of the paramilitaries, according to Sanin Gutiérrez (2010):

"Although the demobilization of 2003 had undeniable successes, important deterrents remained, -when coupled with drug funding sources, commanders who did not accompany the process and repeat-fighters were revived in so-called Criminal Gangs (BACRIM in Spanish)... It is not true that they are simple agencies of common criminals; they have political objectives, they demand functions of coercion and social control, and given their history they privilege their customers and their integration in regional life with stability imposed through violence. The BACRIM retain multiple ties to state security agencies, as evidenced by the horror of so-called false positives. One might add that among their assets they have a series of links with the political system, offering them access to resources, security, well-located customers and a role in the establishment of regional order."

The presence of this armed actor is confirmed by the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó, which in a statement on April 23 complained that it had been victimized by new paramilitary attacks on the 12th and 13th of April, when they threatened to exterminate it; and Father Giraldo, its pastoral companion and human rights defender in the communities, was threatened in graffiti that appeared in Bogotá on April 23 as reported by the CINEP (2010).

The escalation of violence in Colombia, is closely related to what Jesuit Alejandro Angulo (2007) describes as "a **serious crisis of ethics**", which is very visible in the joint activity between politicians and paramilitaries, in what is called para-politics, with an absence of ethics, by which the ends of political control justifies the means.

Paramilitary leader Vicente Castaño, in an interview in 2005, stated:

"There is a friendship with politicians in areas where we operate. There are direct relationships between commanders and politicians and the forming of alliances that are undeniable. The self-defense groups give advice to many of them and there are commanders who have candidates friends in the municipalities and corporations⁸."

Another paramilitary leader, Mancuso has repeatedly made patent a (2004, 2007, 2008, 2010) ⁹, connection to congressmen, mayors, governors and other political leaders who took advantage of the influence exerted by paramilitaries in the region for electoral purposes. Similarly a former

senator under investigation stated in an interview in 2006 that almost all political leaders of the Atlantic Coast had accepted the paramilitary political project¹⁰.

In my opinion the cognitive changes related to dehumanization (Samayoa, 1990) appear to be functional in order to **legitimize violent practices**. A frightening example of this is the course called "Why is it lawful to kill communists in Colombia?"¹¹, which was taught to paramilitary groups by Mr. Noguera, deputy chair of the Administrative Security Department, between 1998 and 2002, according to declarations made to the Supreme Court by paramilitary Mancuso, which confirm the statements of another former paramilitary made in June 2008. Now, the serious thing about this is that for many years it was common to hear many Colombians legitimize political violence with claims such as: "If they have done something to the victims there must be a good reason for it".

The Ethical Crisis in justice is daunting, as expressed by Jesuit Javier Giraldo (2009) in the letter of Objection of Conscience, which he submitted to the Public Prosecutor's Office posing the moral impediment that prevented him from attending a judicial proceeding. Due to the fact that in the past, as a member of the pastoral group accompanying the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartadó, he collaborated with authorities striving to alleviate the suffering of victims and uncovering the truth. In his letter he tells how for 29 years, he saw how time passed without any progress, however the manipulation of the testimonies of victims, witness intimidation and even death of the complainants was visible. "It all reveals collusion between the military and judicial officials" (Giraldo, 2009: 34) in practices at odds with ethics.

The impunity alluded to by Giraldo is also visible in the recovery process for displaced people. In the UN in Geneva, an expert from the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, denounced that "only 20% of claims concerning dispossessed land are investigated. What about the other 80%? There appears to be impunity for violators"¹².

According to the Annual Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Colombia (March 2010), the ethical crisis also covers "the DAS intelligence agency dependent on the President of the Republic, which had been under development at least since 2003 and had comprehensively and systematically undertaken a series of illegal activities directed against, among others, human rights defenders, political opponents, journalists and senior government officials, such as the Vice President." Moreover, disturbing information published in the media indicated that even judges of the Supreme Court were under

surveillance. The Human Rights Commission, a Special Spokesperson for the United Nations and the UN Office in Colombia were also monitored. These actions, in many cases, were designed to neutralize the work done by the victims, who were considered "legitimate targets" for being potential opponents of government policies ". By placing the spotlight, on the activity of this body it made persecution to difference very visible by a totalitarian position, characterized by a kind of thought unable to conceive diversity, and as Suarez raised (2006: 86). "Through the aggregation of meaning one seeks to legitimize the political persecution of individuals and groups who advocate moral, ethical, and political values that differ from dominant views."

Sharing with Angulo (2007) the idea that "ethics is the weaver of the fabric of solidarity that re-links human beings to each other and their environment" we have been particularly concerned regarding the fact that the Government arguing the annihilation of the FARC in the past eight years has led to an open armed struggle and invited citizens to participate in networks of informants, thus promoting the **breakdown of trust** in psychosocial interactions (Sacipa, Vidales, Galindo and Tovar, 2007)

The democratic security policy reminds me of Martín-Baro's (1990) approach, of what war brings to social relations: violence, polarization and lies. The formation of networks of cooperation or of informants engaging people from within the civilian population promotes that militarist dynamics overflow the armed actors and permeate the social group (Sacipa, 2005). It is a war strategy that tears the social fabric, which destroys social bonds, in destroying the component of trust in the interactions that build civility.

By establishing distrust as the basic principle of relationships it makes it impossible for there to be unprepared meetings between citizens. The relations between neighbors are a blend of suspicion and the presence of differences is considered an object of accusation, reinforcing intolerance. As Martín-Baró, the Salvadoran Jesuit and psychologist stated this exacerbates social polarization, that is the movement of groups toward opposite ends. There is a critical crack in the framework of coexistence. Similarly, in various stages of daily life any difference is a threat, distrust is established as a basic principle of relationships precluding any encounter, leading people to forgo relationships that may be critical for them. Because as Castillo del Pino noted (2000) trust is the basic attitude that governs all interactions.

Building cultures of peace.

As stated in the beginning, we are interested in **building cultures of peace**, and as scholars we think that "the political dimension of *knowledge* can be strengthened to counter the functionality of violence" by its deconstruction, and by the recognition, construction and implementation of proposals that offer alternative conceptual relationships, 'relational proposals involving different looks to build more purposeful realities', to make social change possible including structural transformations.

We agree with Maritza Montero (1991: 38), that "the psychologist's role is essentially that of an agent of social change, committed to a project that seeks freedom, justice, equality, democracy and respect for human rights".

We welcome the approach of Galtung, Jacobsen & Brand-Jacobsen (1996) stating that peace, rather than a goal, is a process, a journey. It is the condition and the context of cooperation with which to transform conflict creatively and nonviolently .

In this sense, in Colombia there are **experiences of resistance** in the face of war. Hernández (2002) says that probably the first experiences of resistance were born with the CRIC, the Cauca's indigenous movement in the 70's, the organization that fought against the structural violence. It later became the origin of the experiences of civil resistance, such as the Proyecto Nasa, in 1980; the Jambaló experience in 1988; and the community of La María in 1989. Indigenous resistance that is based on a deep sense of self-government, autonomy, respect for territory and cultural identity (Cortés, 2005).

Rural communities have developed various peace initiatives such as The Association of Rural Workers of Carare (ATCC) in Santander in 1987; the Popular Consultation of Aguachica in Cesar in 1995; the experience of Riachuelo in the Municipality of Charalá, Department of Santander in 1997; the Municipal Constituent Assembly of Mogotes in 1998; the Communities in Self-Determination, Life and Dignity (CAVIDA) in the Cacarica in 1998; the experience of Samaniego in Nariño in 1998; and the experience of Pensilvania, Caldas in 1998.

Black communities resisting pressure and displacement caused by armed groups were organized in the Peace Community of the Antioquia Urabá and the Chocano Urabá in 1998, 1999. In them, as researchers, we found that "community establishes distance between all armed

actors, does not cooperate with them and does not allow them to stay inside" (Sacipa, 2001). In this process communities generate participatory processes in its citizens about peaceful coexistence, and changing political culture.

The Program for Peace, created by the Society of Jesus, in conjunction with the National Secretariat of Social Pastoral Activities of the Bishops Conference, developed the School of Peace and Harmony, and during eleven years of work was present in 49 church jurisdictions in an inclusive proposal and pluralistic education for peace. Thus according to the School, "the Church in Colombia has played a crucial role in accompanying people and communities at risk and in some regions has been the only entity to do so" (2009: 17).

The Church and NGOs, according to Hernández (2000) are key factors in processes of resistance to war, they make it possible for the population to create alternatives to conflict, and support their mobilization and unity. The peace communities, to whose training these two institutions have contributed, are experiences of nonviolent civil resistance, which works on social reconstruction, the revival of confidence and developing solutions for those affected by violence and war. These communities silently helped to build local peace, resisting violence of armed conflict, often at the expense of their own lives and they have taught us that building peace is possible without resorting to the use of violence even in the midst of crossfire. As further action in the peace communities, CINEP/ the Program for Peace, has had an important role. The Society of Jesus has accompanied several communities in the learning, organizational and educational process, as well as defended their rights when these are violated by those bearing arms.

In our own experience in university work at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, we accompanied a community organization (Cedepaz) for three years and assisted in their choice of nonviolence. "Supporting the process of their construction as an organization we feel they are citizens subject to law, in the building and autonomous self-management of their organization" (Sacipa and Tovar, 2004).

Now, faced with the escalation of violence, communities remain firm in their posture, and even though the Indian shelters of Tacueyo, Toribio and San Francisco, in northern Cauca have been heavily affected by armed conflict, they persist in their decision, and in a communication to the public. They call "to all social and popular base organization, to all peoples

and communities to continue fighting tirelessly to defend the territory, to strengthen unity and peaceful resistance in defense of life "(Indigenous Council of Tacueyo, 2010).

Working for the building of cultures of peace in Colombia is essential at a time like the present, when the social fabric is increasingly fractured. The experiences of the peace communities, of the initiatives and experiences of peace and civil resistance have shown us the paths followed by the communities themselves as educators and caretakers of these processes in the field of popular organization, civic participation, community empowerment, with accomplishments that speak of the amazing human capacity for the renewal of hope, of the immense possibilities for social reconstruction. The intention is to not be anchored in the violence that causes suffering. It is to accompany those who suffer from political violence, yes. But the decision is to go beyond, to get glimpses of hope, to co-construct a life and use it as a useful tool in the generation of cultures of peace, because as Montero noted (2007, 2009) liberation is necessarily a collective enterprise.

In national politics, there is today a **movement** of thoughtful people from various sectors of the population, a movement that goes from authoritarianism to the authority exercised in a democratic stance, guided by the motto "life is sacred". It is a movement towards the recovery of ethics, which has, as its most outstanding element, the awakening of youth, that for the first time engages in politics, and changes ways of doing politics from a critical point of view. This allows us to glimpse the recovery of hope. It is useful to remind the analysis conducted by Montiel and Rodriguez (2009) concerning the pro-democracy movement in the Philippines. Although we note that in Colombia in a strict sense there is no dictator because the president has been elected by a majority vote. But without doubt, it is a situation of authoritarianism that has promoted the death of thousands of people, and in a way similar to that of the Philippines, in a sociopolitical movement that aims to change the authoritarian regime and care for life.

Now, to strive for peace involves facing several **challenges**. One of them is to think how to contribute to changing the personal and collective disposition, in other words to produce a movement of the attitudes that throughout our historical construction as a nation have led to a standing armed conflict, looking for alternatives to the concern expressed by UNESCO as follows: "The question is to spotlight the great challenge before us, namely: to begin the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace" (UNESCO, 1999: 18).

A challenge for all social sciences, including psychology, it is undoubtedly to explore how to stimulate the transformation of thought in Colombians about ways of resolving conflicts. In this sense cultural psychologist Bruner (1990: 59) states: "The viability of a culture lies in its ability to resolve conflict, to explain the differences and renegotiate the community's meanings". Zulueta (1980) emphasizes the importance for Colombian society to learn to live peacefully, without waiting for the absence of conflict, without denying it, but on the contrary, recognizing it.

As several historians have noted, the relations between human beings throughout history have been marked by war. It has been imprinted on the psyche, in the form of relationships, of building ties, in social dynamics. However, this is not a peculiarity of the Colombian people; it is known worldwide that violence has marked history. However it is very noticeable that some people have managed democratic developments in social movements that have moved away from authoritarianism.

It is vital that people in all sectors understand the responsibility of different actors in the current situation. Here the question concerns how to promote transformations, changes in social groups, in people, so that responsibilities that historically have not been taken on shall go through a movement from denial to recognition.

This raises the question of the **ethical transformation** of those who have consistently generated economic, social and political exclusion in Colombia, those who have not led to favorable conditions for a just and dignified life for all Colombians. The question relates to changing the ethical position of those who claim to defend the Colombian People, submerging them in pain and reproducing the anti-values of those they seek to remove from power, such as exclusion, disrespect for life and the annihilation of the other.

There is talk of ethics training and guidance for Colombian leaders in conducting, not only the position in relation to armed conflict, but in leading the nation. In this sense Angulo (2007: 559) talks about ethics reform, saying that it "requires the beginning of a collective agreement, and this, in turn, implies a shared understanding of the terms at hand because the result of ethical agreement is a social contract, which is not limited to the formation of the state and the election of the government, but to be effective, it must cover all other human dimensions."

Notes

1. ssacipa@javeriana.edu.co
2. Confessions of a Paramilitary. Morris productions, YouTube, 2008.
3. Testimony of a Paramilitary. YouTube, Semana TV, January 2008.
4. Confessions of Paramilitaries (Genocide). YouTube, First Impact Program, December 2007.
5. Can be found in the online version <http://www.happyplanetindex.org/public-data/files/happy-planet-index-2-0.pdf>
6. <http://www.eltiempo.com/opinion> April 13, 2010
7. See the full story in *El Tiempo*, Sunday, April 25, Editorial Policy, pp. 1-2.
8. See full interview in the magazine *Semana*, edition No. 1205, Sunday June 5, 2005.
<http://www.semana.com/noticias-portada/habla-vicente-castano/87628.aspx>
9. The information can be found at: Salvatore Mancuso accused generals and congressmen via satellite declaration before the Supreme Court. *El Tiempo*, September 26, 2008.
http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/justicia/2008-09-26/salvatore-mancuso-acuso-a-generales-ycongresistas-en-declaracion-via-satelite-ante-la-1-cut-suprema_4566861
-Salvatore Mancuso. Knot agreement. Jaramillo to a jail in the District of Columbia. Luis Eduardo Celis. Monday, August 11, 2008.
http://www.razonpublica.com/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=174
- "I have for you the political tsunami" December 3, 2008.
http://www.cambio.com.co/paiscambio/805/ARTICULO-PRINTER_FRIENDLY-PRINTER_FRIENDLY_CAMBIO-4702581.html
- Paramilitaries in Congress. http://www.semana.com/wf_ImprimirArticulo.aspx?IdArt=80748
01/08/2004 - Edition 1161.
- Mancuso's testimony before the Supreme Court <http://www.semana.com/noticias-justicia/testimonio-mancuso-ante-corte-suprema/137877.aspx> Wednesday 21 April 2010.
10. In this connection see the article "40 Congressmen signed Autodefensas political commitment, Miguel de la Espriella recognized". Political Editorial, *El Tiempo*, November 27, 2006. <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-3342872>
11. <http://www.semana.com/noticias-enfoque/dicto-catedra-llamaba-licito-matar-comunistas-colombia/121251.aspx>

12. Colombia's displaced alarm the United Nations, AFP, 4 May 2010.
<http://www.univision.com/content/content.jhtml?cid=2387332>

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Reaping the whirlwind: Xenophobic violence in South Africa

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III International Conference of Community Psychology
Puebla, Mexico, June 5, 2010

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Abstract

In May 2008, South Africa was hit by waves of violent attacks against foreigners from the majority world. These xenophobic attacks resulted in the death of more than 70 persons, many injured and displacement of approximately 120, 000 people, all of them people of colour and most of them poor. While South Africa has long been considered one of the more violent countries in the world, the intensity of, as well as the apparent motivation for, this 'new' manifestation of violence came as a surprise to most. Based partly on the insights of Frantz Fanon and Hussein Bulhan, this paper examines the causes of this violence and argues that its emergence should not have come as a surprise. Furthermore, the paper explores the use of a memory project as a necessary starting point in South Africa for interventions aimed at addressing this violence.

Keywords: Apartheid, racism, scapegoating hypothesis, violence, xenophobia.

Cosechando el torbellino: Violencia Xenofóbica en Sudáfrica.

Resumen

En mayo de 2008, y en noviembre de 2009 Sudáfrica fue golpeada por olas de ataques violentos contra extranjeros. Estos ataques xenofóbicos produjeron la muerte de más de 70 personas, muchos heridos y desplazamientos de aproximadamente 120,000 personas, todas ellas gente de color y la mayoría de ellas pobres. Aun considerando que Sudáfrica ha sido catalogada como uno de los países más violentos del mundo, la intensidad y la motivación aparente para esta “nueva” manifestación de violencia causó un gran desconcierto. Basado parcialmente en las intuiciones de Frantz Fanon y de Hussein Bulhan, este capítulo examina las causas de esta violencia y argumenta que su emergencia no debería haber provocado sorpresa. Además este trabajo explora un proyecto de recuperación de la memoria como un punto de partida necesario en Sudáfrica para intervenciones orientadas a enfrentar esta violencia.

Palabras clave: Apartheid, racismo, hipótesis del chivo expiatorio, violencia, xenofobia.

Introduction

On the evening of 11 May 2008, in Diepsloot, a township in the north of Johannesburg, in the Gauteng province of South Africa, a Mozambican migrant, Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuavhe, was torched alive while a group of South Africans stood by laughing as he burnt to death (Worby, Hassim & Kupe, 2008). In the public memory, it was this cruel and gruesome event, more than any other, which marked the unfurling of a frightening wave of xenophobic violence that was to engulf the South African landscape for several weeks thereafter (Peberdy, 2009).

Not far from Diepsloot, in Alexandra, a township north-west of Johannesburg, other groups of black South Africans doggedly hunted down and indiscriminately attacked all people suspected of being foreigners. As the days passed, increasing numbers of people, including undocumented migrants, foreigners with legal residence status, and South Africans who ‘looked foreign’¹ fell prey to these groups. The most frequently proffered justification deployed by locals for these attacks was that foreigners were responsible for increases in crime and ‘stealing’ South Africans’ jobs, houses and women(!) (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

By 15 May 2008, the attacks had increased in momentum and had spread to several other areas in the Gauteng province, one of the northernmost and most populous provinces in South Africa. And by 22 May 2008, the violence had spread to several urban areas in the rest of South Africa (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

When, by June 2008, South Africans took stock of the horrendous excesses committed in their name during the preceding month, it was reported that 120, 000 people had been displaced, 670 had been injured, 70 had been murdered and countless women had been raped (Matsopoulos, Corrigan & Bowman, 2009; Peberdy, 2009). *En passant*, as with other forms of collective violence, this spate of xenophobic violence intersected in telling ways with the familiar enactments of dominant forms of violence, masculinity and masculine power in the South African context. Specifically, the perpetrators of these violent incidents were most frequently men and their victims often other men. Indeed, the characteristics of those involved in these incidents in large measure mimicked the demographic features of those involved in other incidents of violence and intended injury in South Africa (Matsopoulos, Myers, Bowman & Mathews, 2008). According to Matsopoulos et al. (2008), not only are adult men and more

specifically black men more likely than other groups to be the victims of violence, they are also more likely to be the perpetrators of violence (cf. Bulhan, 1985).

Initially, most South Africans and South African institutions, including the South African academy, appeared to be caught completely off-guard by this outbreak of violence aimed at particularly African and Asian foreigners. However, as various social scientists observed subsequently, this wave of xenophobic violence should perhaps not have been experienced as completely unexpected (Peberdy, 2009). Moreover, the surprise or disbelief expressed by many South Africans, as Gqola (2008) observes, may have been a function of a defensive ‘distancing’ manoeuvre on the part of political and social elites in post-colonial contexts aimed at showing that it is ‘them’ (i.e. the poor, blacks and other marginalised groups) who are responsible for this violence, not ‘us’ (cf. Fanon, 1990). Furthermore, as a reading of Gqola’s (2008) analysis of the violence indicates, the surprise expressed by many in the wake of the events of May 2008 could also have been indicative of the latter’s attempts to ‘disavow [their] agency and complicity’ in the profound and unacknowledged problems facing South Africa, due to current as well as past political practices (Gqola, 2008: 211).

Arguably, this orgy of violent excess could have been predicted long before May 2008, if one considers the litany of incidents of violence against foreigners, which were reported with ominous regularity in the local media during the preceding years (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Some incidents of xenophobic violence reported in between 1994 and 2007.

In 1994, groups of South Africans in Alexandra participated in a violent campaign aimed at forcefully driving Mozambican, Zimbabwean and Malawian migrants from the township, reportedly because the latter were reported to be responsible for the alleged increase in crime, unemployment and sexual attacks in the area.

In 1996, a crowd of approximately one thousand South African inhabitants of an informal housing settlement attempted to drive all foreign nationals out of the settlement. Two foreign nationals as well as two South Africans were killed in the ensuing violence.

In 1997, South African informal traders in Johannesburg launched a spate of violent attacks over a 48-hour period against foreign national informal traders. The attacks were accompanied by

widespread looting.

In 1998, six South African police officers were filmed setting attack dogs loose on three Mozambican migrants while hurling racist and xenophobic invectives at them.

In 1999, it was reported that six foreign nationals accused of alleged criminal activity were abducted by a group of South Africans in Ivory Park, a township on the outskirts of Johannesburg. One of the six managed to escape from the mob's clutches, three others were seriously injured and two were reportedly killed by means of the notorious 'necklacing' method².

In 2000, two Mozambican farm workers were assaulted by a vigilante group after they were accused of stealing. One of the workers subsequently died directly as a result of the attack.

In 2001, residents of Zandspruit, an informal settlement in Johannesburg, set fire to the houses of hundreds of Zimbabwean migrants forcing them to flee the settlement.

In 2006, several Somali shop owners were reported to have been forced to flee a township outside Knysna in the Western Cape Province, as a result of violent intimidation.

In 2007, more than 100 shops owned by Somali nationals in the Motherwell area in the Eastern Cape Province were looted during a series of attacks on African refugees over a 24-hour period.

Source: Hill and Lefko-Everett (2008: 1-9)

Why these xenophobic attacks?

During and in the aftermath of the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, South African social scientists appeared hard-pressed to explain why black South Africans were turning on foreigners from the rest of Africa and parts of Asia with such fatal vengeance. Some of the explanations proffered included the traditional (and somewhat less than useful) scapegoating and isolation

hypotheses, to which I will, in a moment, briefly turn my attention. Firstly, however, a brief definition of xenophobia would be apposite.

Xenophobia is typically defined as the ‘dislike’, ‘hatred or fear of foreigners’ (Harris, 2002: 169). Importantly, however, as Harris (2002: 170) correctly emphasises, xenophobia is ‘not just an attitude [as the standard definition of the phenomenon implies]: it is [also] an action’. As reflected by the incidents reflected in Table 1 above, xenophobia invariably entails acts and processes of violence, physical, as well as psychological and social. Furthermore, as also reflected by these incidents, in the South African context, xenophobia is not directed at just anyone. It is largely directed at people of colour. For this reason, Gqola (2008) in fact argues that the predominant nature of the violence directed against foreigners in South Africa in May 2008 was more than simply a case of xenophobia. It was also profoundly ‘*negrophobic* in character’ (Gqola, 2008: 213; cf. Fanon, 1990).

Scapegoating hypothesis.

Somewhat simplistically stated, the scapegoating hypothesis argues that xenophobia occurs when indigenous populations turn their anger resulting from whatever hardships they are experiencing against ‘foreigners’, primarily because foreigners are constructed as being the cause of all their difficulties. The traditional criticism directed at the scapegoating hypothesis of course is that it does not explain why foreigners are the group that is burdened with the hatred and abuse of autochthonous groups. More specifically, it does not explain why foreigners of colour in the context of contemporary South Africa invariably bear the brunt of the prejudicial and murderous hatred of the local population.

The following explanation also offered by various South African social scientists for the xenophobic violence of May 2008, perhaps partly addresses this lacuna.

Isolation hypothesis.

The isolation hypothesis holds that the xenophobia manifested in May 2008 was a consequence of apartheid South Africa’s isolation from the international community, and particularly the rest of Africa. During the apartheid era, South Africa’s borders with most of the

rest of the world were hermetically sealed, largely because apartheid South Africa was considered a pariah state; and partly because the apartheid state viewed most foreign countries as a threat to both its racist policies and the political stranglehold that it exerted on South African society. The antipathy expressed by South Africans towards other Africans in recent years, the isolation hypothesis holds, is a residual effect of the internalised antipathy or hostility engendered by the apartheid state towards the external world. Indeed, as Morris (in Harris, 2002: 172) argues,

There is little doubt that the brutal environment created by apartheid with its enormous emphasis on boundary maintenance has impacted on people's ability to be tolerant of difference.

While there may certainly be some measure of truth in this argument, the question that it obviously raises is why this intolerance towards difference is largely expressed in relation to other Africans and people of colour and not in relation to the Europeans who have also flooded South Africa buying up businesses and countless acres of property over the last two decades (cf. Gqola, 2008).

In addition to the above-mentioned hypotheses, the social sciences in South Africa proffered various other explanations for the xenophobic violence of May 2008 in the aftermath of this violence. Perhaps one of the more persuasive and increasingly cited of these relates to issues of poverty.

Endemic poverty.

Various researchers have commented on the fact that most of the xenophobic incidents that have plagued South Africa before, during and after May 2008 consistently occurred in economically and socially depressed townships, which the South African historian, Nieftagodien (2008) appositely refers to as the human 'dumping grounds' to which South Africa's 'marginalised and alienated' have consistently been consigned, both historically and in the present. Indeed, as Nieftagodien (2008) observes, Alexandra, which initially was the epicentre of the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, is a township characterised by desperate and brutalising poverty. Specifically, Alexandra is a township where the overwhelming majority of a population of 350, 000 people live in makeshift shacks that are crammed into a mere 2 km²; a township with an unemployment rate of approximately 30 per cent and where 20 per cent of households subsist

on a paltry monthly income of ZAR 1,000 (i.e. approximately \$128) or less. Within contexts such as Alexandra, Nieftagodien argues, xenophobia is bound to find fertile ground; particularly because it is within such areas that the majority of job-seeking migrants invariably land up (cf. Peberdy, 2009). Indeed, as reported by the South African Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2008), while quite high amongst the general population of South Africa, anti-foreigner (and more specifically anti-African) sentiment is particularly pronounced in poverty-stricken urban informal settlements such as Alexandra.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that there are places in the world where people are as poor as and indeed poorer than the inhabitants of Alexandra. Yet these places have not witnessed the extremely high levels of xenophobia seen in Alexandra and similar townships in May 2008. This, of course, alerts us to the probability that endemic poverty on its own cannot account for the xenophobic violence witnessed in South Africa in May 2008. This leads to another explanation for xenophobia, which is related to the 'endemic poverty' explanation, and which links xenophobia to perceptions of relative deprivation; an explanation to which I will now briefly turn my attention.

Relative deprivation.

Perceived relative deprivation can be defined as 'the subjective feeling of discontent based on the belief that one is getting less than one feels entitled to' (de la Rey, 1991: 40). Importantly, and as Pillay (2008) argues, it is not deprivation per se that evokes feelings of hostility towards foreigners, but perceptions of being deprived in relation to others.

With a Gini coefficient ranging between 0.68 and 0.70 over the last 20 years, approximately, inequality appears to have become increasingly entrenched in South Africa, both within the general population and within racialised groups (HSRC, 2004; Pressly, 2009). Indeed, research cited by May et al. (2000) and Pressley (2009) indicates that inequalities in income have become increasingly pronounced amongst blacks since 1994, and that they rank amongst the highest in the world.

Of course, while the poor are becoming increasingly poorer, the new political elites have no compunction about demanding and obtaining obscenely high salaries and all the trappings of conspicuous wealth, even if this is virtually inevitably at the expense of the poor.

In the face of the “naked display of self-enrichment” on the part of the new political and corporate elites, the response of “the marginalised, the unemployed ... and the working poor” to their apparently unchanging plight, or to being left behind in the new South Africa, is pervasive anger and resentment (Pillay, 2008: 100). In a context in which xenophobic discourses are encouraged and reproduced by the ruling elite (see Table 2 below for a range of statements attributed to various key role-players on the South African political landscape prior to May 2008), this anger and resentment are ineluctably directed at foreigners. Moreover, migrants are infinitely easier targets than the new political and corporate elites who typically construct themselves as the allies and champions of the poor in South Africa (see also Peberdy, 2009).

While certainly feasible, this explanation of course still does not account for why foreigners of colour and particularly African foreigners are the ones who bear the brunt of this anger and resentment.

Table 2. Political discourses and xenophobia

In 1994, the erstwhile South African Minister of Home Affairs, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, declared in parliament: “If we as South Africans are going to compete for *scarce resources* with *millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa*, then we can kiss goodbye to our Reconstruction and Development Programme” (Hill & Lefko-Everett, 2008: 1).

In 1997, the then Defence Minister, Joe Modise, in a newspaper interview, argued that there was a link between the presence of undocumented migrants in South Africa and crime in the country.

Also in 1997, Mangosuthu Buthelezi claimed that ‘illegal aliens’ annually ‘cost South African taxpayers billions of Rands (Hill & Lefko-Everett, 2008: 1).

In order to drive home the point that South Africa was ‘besieged’ by foreigners, the Department of Home Affairs, in 2001, disingenuously claimed that there were more than 7 million migrants in South Africa, despite having been alerted to the fact that the official 2001 census data

indicated that there were in fact fewer than 1 million documented foreign nationals in the country.

Source: Hill and Lefko-Everett (2008: 1-9)

To my mind, if one wishes to find a suitable explanation for the events of May 2008 one also has to examine the legacy of colonial and apartheid racism, because it is ultimately in this explanation that one will find the answer to the questions: Why have Africans and other people of colour been the inevitable targets of the xenophobic attacks of May 2008 and earlier, and why have these attacks been characterised by such brutal and inhuman violence?

Legacy of colonial and apartheid racism.

Various writers (e.g. Gqola, 2008; Harris, 2002; Mngxitama, 2008; Peberdy, 2009) argue that current manifestations of xenophobia should also be linked to the entrenched residual effects of colonialism and apartheid racism on the psyche of black South Africans. Specifically, it is argued that racism has been such a pervasive feature of South African society over more than three centuries and that it has had such a profoundly brutalising effect on South Africans that it is improbable that South Africans would not have internalised aspects of the insidious racist messages of the old colonial and apartheid orders of the abjectly ‘inferior’ black Other and the ‘superiority’ of whites. According to this explanatory framework, therefore, it is infinitely less threatening to direct the disappointments and frustrations resulting from the unfulfilled promises of a new South Africa at other blacks (and particularly blacks from the rest of Africa), rather than whites. After all, blacks according to the racist scripts of the old order are deserving of such treatment.

Moreover, as Peberdy (2009) observes, the old apartheid order, in keeping with its racist precepts consistently constructed foreigners of colour as unwelcome visitors (indeed, even Africans born in South Africa were constructed as unwelcome imposters) and white foreigners as (generally) welcome immigrants, and critically important for keeping the ‘black peril’ at bay. This legacy, she posits, lives on in current constructions of foreigners.

Of course, formal apartheid is no longer a reality in South Africa. However, as argued elsewhere (Duncan, Stevens & Bowman, 2008), its legacy lives on, both through its ongoing material effects and through the intergenerational transmission of its damaging psychic legacy.

Nationhood and immigrants.

Peberdy (2009) intimates that the often violent antipathy expressed towards foreigners can be read against changing constructions of South African nationhood. Indeed, she argues, that each re-definition of South African nationhood over the last century was accompanied by periods of pronounced processes of exclusion (and conversely, inclusion) in relation to foreigners – prescribing ‘who is allowed to enter and who is excluded from membership’ (p. 26).

Quoting Cohen (1994), Peberdy (2009: 26) argues that through these processes of exclusion, ‘a complex national and social identity is continuously constructed ... in its (often antipathetic) interaction with outsiders, strangers and foreigners’. Indeed, she argues that foreigners often served as the foil for the development of new constructions or narratives of South African nationhood. Of course, if we are to employ this explanation to account for the xenophobic violence of May 2008 and if we are to make sense of why this violence was directed primarily at people of colour, then we will have to employ it alongside the history of apartheid racism.

Why the extreme levels of violence witnessed?

It is widely acknowledged that the autochthonous populations of developing countries tend to perceive migrants from poor countries very negatively. Specifically, they most frequently perceive these migrants as taking away jobs from locals and being responsible for crime and violence. Yet these negative (or xenophobic) perceptions seldom result in such wide-scale acts of interpersonal or intergroup violence as witnessed in South Africa in May 2008 (Matsopoulos et al., 2009).

Why was this hatred of the Other (and, of course, the Self as reflected in the Other) expressed in this orgy of violence? In a recently completed paper titled, *Picking the Eyes out of the Country: Contentious Happenings, State Power and South Africa's Future*, the historian,

John Higginson (2010) provides us with a potential answer, or at least part of the answer to this question, when he observes,

The ‘master narrative’ of South African history is the violence of conquest, the violence of frontier wars, the violence of apartheid and of the struggle against apartheid, the criminal violence of gangs and the ritualized violence of ... faction fights (2010: 102).

South African history is indeed steeped and inscribed in violence. However, very important to note is that this violence was not simply physical. Accompanied by a relentless negativisation and abjection of the other, it also had profound psychological effects, which are rarely considered to be worthy of any serious consideration in contemporary South Africa. As we have argued elsewhere (Duncan et al., 2008), until this psychological violence is comprehensively and systematically confronted and engaged with, it will perpetually continue to re-inscribe itself in the interpersonal and intergroup relationships in South African communities. Indeed, as Frantz Fanon (1990), in *Wretched of the Earth* implies, if left unacknowledged, ongoing violence perpetrated by the former oppressed, will be inevitable, because the latter invariably realise that the violence of their past and the violence of their current circumstances ‘can only be called into question by absolute violence’ on their part. Unfortunately, as also implied by Fanon (1990), this violence is often directed at the Self or at the Self as reflected in the Other. This observation is further developed by Bulhan (1985: 143) in his *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression*, through the distinction drawn between violence directed at exploitative institutions and the state and intra-community violence or violence directed at a similar Other. Those on the margins of society, Bulhan (1985) argues, know that defending themselves against the quotidian assaults by broader society and callous governments invariably results merely in more intensified assaults. Indeed, as Bulhan (1985: 143) notes, “the high proportion of prisoners of [their] ... class and color, the all-pervasive media and institutions of social control engender in [the marginalised] ... a sense of vulnerability”. Thus, they avoid attacking the institutions and systems responsible for their hardship. However, while they believe that they are unable to defend themselves in the broader political, economic and social arena, they will defend themselves and exert whatever control they have over their own lives in the spaces that they construct as their own, namely their homes and neighbourhoods. “That is why”, as Bulhan (1985, p. 143) argues, “the slightest challenge ... or offense” by those like him who inhabit these spaces, “push [them] to a volcanic eruption of repressed aggression”.

Xenophobic violence and community psychology.

As should be clear from the presentation thus far, the explanations for the outbreak of the xenophobic attacks of May 2008, on the surface, are complex and fairly diverse, ranging from the effects of scapegoating, isolation, relative deprivation, the politics of nation-building and the processes of otherisation peculiar to the South African context, to the direct effects of institutional racism, which persist to this day.

Nonetheless, as complex and diverse as what the explanations outlined ostensibly are, they are connected to each other by one common element, and that element is apartheid oppression and its ongoing impact on South African society. Any intervention aimed at dealing with the xenophobia of the type that we continue to see in South Africa will have to start with an engagement with the toxic legacy of apartheid. There are of course various interventions that could potentially be effective in this regard. However, the intervention that I would briefly want to introduce here is one on which I have been collaborating over the last two years, namely the Apartheid Archives Project. This is an intervention that aims to understand the difficulties in living experienced by particularly the marginalised in South African society, not only through the present, but also through the past. Moreover, it is an intervention that aims to obtain an understanding of current South African social problems through listening to the explanations of those directly affected by these problems, rather than condemning them out-of-hand, as many South African social commentators have been prone to do since May 2008.

This intervention is of course strongly informed by the principles of community psychology, and particularly the notion that the most effective and most lasting solutions to communities' problems emerge from an engagement with the understandings which these communities have of the genesis of these problems (see, for example, Rappaport, 1981).

Of course, the opportunity to 'call into question' the violence of marginalised communities' past (and present) through listening to their accounts of this violence may just serve as mechanism that could obviate the need to calling past and present inequalities and hardship into question through acts of violence directed at the Self and the similar Other.

The Apartheid Archive Project.

Based in part on the assumption that experiences (and particularly traumatogenic experiences) from the past will constantly attempt to re-inscribe themselves in the present if they are not acknowledged and dealt with, this project aims to examine the nature of the violence of institutionalised racism of (particularly ‘ordinary’ black) South Africans under the old apartheid order and their continuing effects on individual and group functioning in contemporary South Africa. More specifically, the project aims to explore how earlier experiences under the old apartheid order currently mediate and continue to structure individual and group responses to the Other. To this end, the project is in the process of collecting narratives of experiences during the apartheid period of both black and white South Africans, of representatives from elites and marginalised social categories, of racist perpetration and victimisation, and of trauma and resilience. The aim is to collect as many narratives as possible over a three to five-year period from different sectors of South African society (but particularly from marginalised groups, such as the poor and the socially vulnerable, whose life stories are rarely incorporated into dominant historical accounts of the past).

It is hoped that the generation of these stories will allow for processes of reflection on the part of South Africans in ways that will allow us to engage with our past; and in the process to obtain some understanding of the ways in which this past continues to impact on the ways in which we relate to ourselves and others.

Of course, in relation to the problem of violence against foreigners it will be critical to pointedly explore South Africans’ perceptions of how their past and present influence their responses to foreigners and the rights of the latter in South Africa. I believe that this project will enable us to obtain a much more nuanced understanding of the types of violence that had been visited on South Africa in May 2008, thereby affording us the tools to much more effectively deal with this violence currently besetting South Africa and most frequently the poor and marginalised. Given the unacknowledged legacies of our past that continue to cast a shadow over intergroup relations, this or other similar projects would be an essential starting point for any interventions dealing with the problem of xenophobia and xenophobic violence in South Africa

Notes

- ¹ Perhaps indicative of the ongoing influence of the old apartheid racial ideology, many South Africans are persuaded that there are discernible differences between black South Africans and other Africans, with the latter perceived as having a darker skin tone!
- ² This form of violence entails placing a petrol-doused tyre around the victim's neck and setting the tyre alight.

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**Research and Practice in the Contact Zone: Crafting Resources for Challenging Racialised
Exclusion**

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Invited Keynote Address presented at the III International Community Psychology
Puebla, Mexico, June 5, 2010.

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Abstract

In this paper I explore the challenges, tensions and possibilities for pedagogy and community research in contexts where race relations have been, and continue to be, characterised by dynamics of dominance and subjugation. I draw on three areas of research and practice (i.e., developing pedagogy for anti-racism, partnering a community-based agency working to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and researching immigrant settlements) where I have been involved in examining responses to intergroup relations with a focus on identity construction. Based on this work, I have found myself venturing far beyond the borders of community psychology to identify multiple ways in which people negotiate racialised oppression. This writing has also helped in identifying the intricate ways in which research and practice can inadvertently contribute to oppression. As an example, I discuss whiteness studies and Indigenous studies as part of this venturing. This scholarship has opened up valuable opportunities for me to enhance critical pedagogy and research, and examine the diverse responses to this area of research and pedagogy. I discuss some of the conceptual and methodological resources that have been helpful in making visible symbolic ways in which race related privilege and power continue to shape intergroup relations. I also discuss the importance of investing in different ways of knowing and doing as an essential political imperative for a progressive community psychology.

Keywords: Colonialism, social identity, contact zone, history, racism.

Investigación y Praxis en la Zona de Contacto: Construyendo recursos para desafiar la exclusión racista

Resumen

En este artículo exploraré los desafíos, tensiones y posibilidades para una pedagogía e investigación comunitaria en contextos en los que las relaciones de raza han sido y siguen siendo caracterizadas por dinámicas de dominación y subjugación. Me baso en tres áreas de investigación y práctica (me refiero al desarrollo de una pedagogía antirracista; al acompañamiento de una agencia asentada en comunidad que trabaja para mejorar las vidas de Aborígenes y de Isleños en el Estrecho de Torres; y a la investigación en una colonia de inmigrantes) en las que he estado involucrado examinando respuestas de relaciones intergrupales con un enfoque de construcción de identidad. A partir de estos trabajos me he encontrado aventurándome bastante lejos de las fronteras de la psicología comunitaria para identificar las múltiples formas como la gente negocia la opresión racista. Este escrito me ha ayudado también a identificar las formas intrincadas como la investigación y la práctica contribuyen sin darse cuenta a la opresión. Como un ejemplo discuto estudios sobre blancura (whiteness) y estudios sobre indígenas como parte de esta aventura. Este trabajo académico me ha abierto oportunidades invaluable para realzar una pedagogía y una investigación críticas, y para examinar las diversas respuestas en esta área de investigación y pedagogía. Discuto algunos de los recursos conceptuales y metodológicos que han sido útiles para hacer visibles formas simbólicas como privilegios y poder relacionados con raza y que continúan configurando relaciones intergrupales. También me refiero a la importancia de invertir en diferentes formas de conocer y a hacer de ello un imperativo político para una psicología comunitaria progresiva.

Palabras clave: Colonialismo, identidad social, zona de contacto, historia, racismo.

Introduction

It goes without saying that the story I share here is not mine alone, but the product of ongoing collaboration. Some of the ideas will appear in a collaborative with Mariolga Reyes Cruz in which we articulate a decolonising standpoint in relation to studying culture in community psychology.

Over the last few years colleagues and I have been interested in explicating the tensions, challenges and possibilities for engaging in empowerment research and practices alongside different communities where the relationships between those communities are characterised by dominance and subjugation. Some of this work has focussed on understanding the immigration and settlement experiences of different immigrant communities, including our own communities of origin, in Australia (e.g., Sonn & Lewis, 2009). While in other projects we have concentrated on examining the ways in which Aboriginal people negotiate the discourses of the dominant group (Sonn, Bishop & Humphries, 2000) the dynamics of identity negotiation for white Australians engaged in reconciliation (Green & Sonn, 2005): and, more recently, we have begun to explore the identity making processes for second generation members of ethnic minoritized communities in Australia (Ali & Sonn, in press). At the heart of the different studies is a focus on understanding the complex dynamics of social identity construction within contexts that are characterised by social relations of domination and subjugation, especially where there is racialised oppression.

While we recognise the complex and multiple ways in which oppression takes place, much of our focus has been on explicating the nature and functioning of racialised oppression. Following Fanon (1967, see Bulhan, 1985) and Hall (2000) we view social identity, based on race and ethnicity, as constructed within social/cultural/historical contexts via social and symbolic means. Because of histories of oppression and colonisation these social and symbolic resources for social identity construction are unevenly distributed. Social identity construction is an important site through which we can examine symbolic power and privilege afforded because of group members and how these are negotiated in everyday relations. In our understanding engaging with symbolic power is vital to disrupting the dynamics of oppression in intergroup encounters and contributing to transformative research and practice.

An aim of this work is to develop praxis and to contribute to the construction of community psychological approaches that can help expose and transform racialised oppression that continue to shape the lives of different groups in Australia and elsewhere, and that can contribute to the capacity for self determination and voice. In pursuing this agenda we have found useful the critical and ongoing contributions of different authors in community psychology aimed at developing the transformative capacity of community research and action (e.g., Montero, 1990; Prilleltensky, 1994; Rappaport, 2000; Watts & Serrano-García, 2003). However, like others (e.g., Watts, 2009), I have found some of the taken for granted processes and assumptions of knowledge construction in community research and action limited. In this presentation, I overview some of our work including the challenges and tensions that have lead us to critical social science literature, in particular the writing on critical race theory, whiteness studies and indigenous studies that are helping us to articulate a decolonizing standpoint from where to engage with issues of identity within an awareness of a broader set of social, political, historical, economic arrangements. I start with some of the experiences and literature that have been helpful in theorising some of the challenges in negotiating dynamics of race in different contexts and settings. I then discuss some current work in partnership with a community development agency and use some of the issues that we have been exploring in efforts to engage in empowerment oriented work alongside Aboriginal Australians. I conclude the presentation by making connections with community psychology research and action.

Broader Context: History of race relations.

The history of relations between Aboriginal and settlers has been marked by colonialism and the ongoing effects of oppressive race relations (Glover, Dudgeon & Huygens, 2005). Since settler arrival in 1788 different practices and policies had been in place that oppressed the Aboriginal people. In the different States and Territories these were nuanced. But, key policies and discourses ranges from protectionism to assimilation and later self determination. It was not until the late 1960's and early 1970s that Aboriginal people were recognised as citizens, and prior to this time they were counted along with the Flora and Fauna of the country. Since that time there had been several significant Inquiries and Royal Commissions that have highlighted the devastating impacts of colonisation and the ongoing oppression of Aboriginal people. These

included an inquiry into the disproportionate number of Aboriginal people who were dying in police custody, the practice of removing Aboriginal children from families to be raised on missions and children's homes and the successful challenge to the myth of *Terra Nullius*, the claim that Australia was vacant when settlers arrived. Out of these developments came several initiatives aimed to heal relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people including the process of formal reconciliation. In more recent times we saw further oppressive responses reflected in governmental interventions, known as the Northern Territory Intervention, into issues of community dysfunction that arise out of colonialisation. Suffice it to say that extreme disadvantage continues and racism still characterise the lives of Aboriginal people in Australia.

The significance of race in Australian relations is also evident in the histories of immigration. In the late 1800's, Australia, along with other British colonies, like South Africa and New Zealand initiated legislation to protect the interests of the white people in those countries. In Australia, this was reflected in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, which came to be known as the White Australia policy (for an overview of race and racism in Australia see Hollinsworth, 2006). This policy favoured immigration from English speaking (that is white) countries. There were other means of control and exclusion in the different States. This policy was removed and replaced by multiculturalism in the 1970s. In more recent history we have also seen successive governments respond in extreme ways to refugees and asylum seekers as well as the construction and circulation of representations about Muslim's as barbaric, uncivilised and terrorists. These discourses are anchored in colonial histories (Said, 1979).

This is an abbreviated history of significant discourses and policy initiatives in Australia that should suffice to show that race had always been foundational in the formation of Australia as a nation state (see Tascón, 2004). The meanings of race has shifted over time, but as Quijano (2000: 95) has noted "the meanings have historical continuity that can only be understood in relation to colonial histories of empires". Even though race has been debunked as a social construction, it continues to be significant in structuring people's lives and undermining belonging (Noble, 2005). Cowlishaw (2000), for example, wrote that "race is more than a process of categorization". In her view "It is also a way of life, a major element of a cultural domain in which relative status suffuses subjectivities and colors all social interaction". While Fine and Weis (2002: 274) wrote that "Race is a place in which post-structuralism and lived realities need to talk. Race is a social construction indeed. But race in a racist society bears a profound

consequence for daily life, identity, social movements, and the ways in which most groups are seen as 'other'. Thus, in our work we have in part focussed on identifying and deconstructing racisms and colonialisms within research and practice and everyday lives. This continuity of racialised power relations in post colonial times, Quijano refers to as the colonality of power (see also Grosfoguel & Georas, 2000).

In the next section, I want to offer some reflections based on my personal and professional journey, by inserting myself into the story. This approach is informed by the proposals of those in critical race theory who have been advocating for writing about lived experiences as a means to disrupt processes of othering (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2003).

Moving racisms.

“Paying attention to the politics of location implies being aware not only of the anticolonial or antiracist position that one chooses in designating a mode of inquiry, but also of how those positions choose us as researchers” (McCleod & Bhatia, 2009: 597)

I emigrated from South Africa to Australia. As I got immersed in Australian society, it became apparent to me that racism here was of a different kind. It was not a legal system anymore as it was in South Africa during Apartheid. Racism was more subtle, emerging through discursive networks and the micro-politics of power. In South Africa, I was labeled 'coloured' and positioned in-between black and white. The membership afforded me privileges while being discriminated against by the same people imposing marginality on me. In Australia there was no such explicit hierarchy, yet, I was constructed as a racialized outsider in relation to an ostensibly

White majority as well as a different kind of black person in relation to Aboriginal Australians.

For the last 16 years, I've worked in predominantly White academic settings as a researcher and educator in community psychology teaching mostly non-Aboriginal students. I was already sensitive to how psychology and community psychology uses notions like race, ethnicity and culture to categorize groups often misrepresenting or not representing people like me. And for me, these omissions and misrepresentations became a key motivation for writing about the experiences about my community of origin and other communities marginalised by colonial practices in psychological knowledge production. The issues of intersections of colonialism and psychology became further complicated as I engaged with the writings of Indigenous scholars in Australia and Aotearoa (often known as New Zealand) (Martin, 2003; Oxenham, 2000; Smith, 1999). They were writing back, writing about decolonization and anti-colonialism, to assert Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being in the world. As I engaged in this work nagging questions emerged. What are the implications of these writings for my research and teaching? How would I engage in empowerment praxis when the dominant ways of being, knowing, and doing of the psychology and also community psychology is named as problematic? I began to explore possible answers through collaborating in projects led by Indigenous Australians, raising the stakes for our White colleagues and students in research and teaching settings.

Part of my work as an ally to Indigenous Australians has been to work with the Centre for Aboriginal Studies at Curtin University in Western Australia to incorporate issues of diversity into psychology courses and to research individual and community responses to oppression. I was learning about the history and continuing oppression of Indigenous people and wanted be involved in responding without imposing my agenda. The writing and activities of colleagues at the Centre and also the writing focused on Indigenous Australians rights to self-determination, made even more salient how some of the assumptions and theoretical tools that underpin psychology actually worked to silence and undermine Indigenous voices (e.g., being trained as “expert” and “objective knower” of others, developing models privileging Western ways of being and knowing, building theory based on core values such as individualism). The writing of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) from Aotearoa was particularly challenging and helpful. She wrote about decolonising methodologies highlighting the importance of engaging with imperialism from the vantage point of the dominated. She argued that colonialism is a form of imperialism achieved

through control of culture, economics and education. Knowledge and knowledge production is implicated in process of colonisation and as such decolonisation, in part, is about engaging with colonisation. One site for decolonisation is the very processes and practices of knowledge production and the creation of ways of doing and being that are empowering and ethical.

The exchanges with Indigenous Australian colleagues and our shared experiences of racialisation, and the shared stories of colonialism across Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, led me to turn the gaze away from a superficial understanding of the cultures of others onto examining one's own culture in relation to other cultural groups (Sonn, 2004). My discomfort recognizing the disempowering effects of the knowledge production practices of my discipline and from being othered in everyday settings moved me to problematize dominance and normativity. I began deconstructing dominance through research and teaching while affirming the cultural identities and aspirations of those silenced in Australia's Eurocentric psychology. Central to this shift was Freire's (1972, 1994; Huygen & Sonn, 2000) critical pedagogy, in particular the focus on deconstructing taken for granted social and political realities. For me, this meant a form of inversion, of shifting the gaze towards normativity because I was teaching ostensibly 'white' students.

Deconstructing Normativity.

The critical writings in whiteness studies and privilege are linked with the work on decolonisation. Critical whiteness writers argue that Whiteness signals "...the production and reproduction of dominance rather than subordination, normativity rather than marginality, and privilege rather than disadvantage" (Frankenberg, 1993: 236). Those who belong to this group are typically not asked to reflect on their cultural identities because their culture is the norm. Thus, Whiteness is often invisible; members are blind to the privileges that they have by virtue of their group membership. The invisibility of Whiteness is what makes it so powerful; people are rendered blind to the ways in which culturally sanctioned practices can work in an exclusionary and often colonising manner.

I am outside Whiteness because I am a black person, an immigrant in Australia, keenly aware of how racism is significant in the lives of people of colour. And yet, I belong to a White institution and have been trained in a historically Eurocentric academic discipline. I am inside

Whiteness too. My colleagues and the majority of the students in psychology programs in Australia are ostensibly “white.” I had seen White colleagues “being helpful” without necessarily considering or understanding the different discourses that position non-indigenous people as helpers and Indigenous people as requiring help and the implications of these for empowerment work. Everyday we see how mainstream institutionalized systems in Australia privilege the knowledge and tools of Eurocentric psychology while looking suspiciously at Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing (Dudgeon & Oxenham, 1990). Indigenous and non-white colleagues and I witness the ways in which some allies end up taking over spaces created for Indigenous people often becoming recognized as experts on Indigenous matters.

There are other ways in which normativity and privilege are reproduced other than becoming experts on Indigenous matters. Based on a review of literature Green, Sonn, and Matsebula (2007) identified three ways in which privilege is reproduced that are pertinent to understandings of cultural competence. These include: the construction of knowledge and history, determining national identity and belonging, and in anti-racism practice. In terms of the construction of knowledge and history there are core cultural anchored assumptions about self that all others are assessed against. For example, those in power also dominate discussions about who is civilised and who is uncivilised and what constitutes real and not real identity claims.

Race privilege is also reproduced in discussions about what it means to be Australian and who can or can’t belong to the nation. Ghassan Hage (1999) used the work of Pierre Bourdieu to discuss the way in which white people in Australia claim governmental belonging, which is acquired through the accumulation of cultural capital, the sum of cultural and symbolic resources including knowledge, and social and psychical characteristics. The sense of governmental belonging is reflected in white people feeling that they have the right to say who is welcome and who is not welcome in the country.

In terms of anti-racism practice, white people often decide what is racist and what is not racism and they can also choose not to worry about racism, while racialised subjects do not have this choice. White people also have a choice and can focus on promoting tolerance, rather than disrupting systems of privilege. For example, at a recent national roundtable on racism towards Indigenous Australians held in 2009, I presented a short paper on whiteness and cultural competence. After the presentation groups of 5-8 people discussed the issues raised and then reported back. The response of the first table was interesting. The first comment was that

although they recognised the experience of Indigenous people, they wanted to highlight that white people were also discriminated against in the 1930s and 1940s during the gold rush period. The Whiteness literature is careful to acknowledge the contingent nature of privilege and that it is unevenly distributed and intersects with class, gender and age. One of the Aboriginal participants responded to the comment made by the reporter stating that it was in itself a reflection of claiming a privileged position and it shifted the focus of oppression to the white experience, while also equating the colonisation of Aboriginal people with experiences of early white settlers.

A diverse group of colleagues – including Aboriginal scholars – and I began to integrate as a key part of our Race Relations and Psychology courses the history of race relations in Australia focusing on Indigenous writers. Students were challenged to explore key concepts (race, ethnicity and culture) used in psychological research to examine difference to then turn to the Whiteness literature shifting the focus from the “other” to their own group memberships. This turn, exposes taken for granted social positions and the privileges afforded because of those positionings. Problematizing how the cultures of “others” are typically treated as static and antiquated was central; this served to reveal how understandings of self and others are produced through historically situated discourses, taken for granted knowledge and everyday practices within social and political contexts. Ultimately, the challenge is to grasp the implications of those understandings for everyday interactions.

Teaching about Whiteness to ostensibly White students has proven to be quite challenging. The notion of Whiteness is contested by most students, and so it should be. Typically the students’ initial response is to resist or reject the notion. The initial rejection, more often than not, is about equating Whiteness with racism and they do not want to be seen as racist. The response is to disconnect from the history of race relations and engage in us/them constructions without considering the societal arrangements that Whiteness speaks to. Whiteness studies in essence provide a lens to turn the gaze. It requires that we have a clear understanding of power in the context of race relations and the various ways in which power is produced and reproduced through cultural resources and processes. In the next section I turn to some of the current work with a community cultural development agency with whom we are working to build community and to explore decolonising praxis.

Partnering CANWA.

For the last 10 or so years I have been working with an arts based agency in Western Australia. I have been performing different roles from board member, researcher, and critical friend. The Community Arts Network use arts and arts practice to promote community engagement and they also advocate for the development and inclusion of art and broader understandings of culture in community development and planning. Since 2002, CANWA has been consulting with communities and key stakeholders about to the viability of creating an Indigenous Arts and Culture position in one of the shires in Western Australia's Wheatbelt region (Waller & Hammond, 2006/2007). Suffice it to say that following consultative processes a unit was established with the aim to assist in Aboriginal self determined cultural and arts development in one of the regional communities in east of Perth in the central east or Wheatbelt region of Western Australia. It is a small town with about 1180 people, which includes people living in the town and in the greater shire (ABS, 2007). 118 people (about 10% percent) of the population are Indigenous. This compares with an average Aboriginal population of about three percent in Western Australia.

I think it's just a lack of understanding and ignorance from the Wadjela [non-Indigenous] community towards Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people are visual people. They like to be seen out in the streets. In terms of their drinking, there's a core group of people who drink a lot in Kellerberrin that may represent maybe 5, maybe 10% of people. That's their choice. What it comes down to is choice, but don't put all Aboriginal people in the same basket. Don't paint us with the same brush because we're all different; but that's been the perception of the Wadjela community. Also that comes back to historical factors, historical things that have happened in the region. There's been a lot of racial tension of course and with the previous government legislations and the Stolen Generation in the mission days for example. You know the power of men and particularly white men in communities quite often on councils, you'll see a whole heap of white men in their 40s, 50s and 60s who sit on the council and these people are firmly entrenched with their views about Aboriginal people and Aboriginal issues (Keith, Aboriginal)

Race and Whiteness in the Contact Zone.

As part of CANWA's ongoing engagement in CCD work in the Wheatbelt, we have been accompanying the agency to report and evaluate some of its community based projects and also to contribute as reflective partners. One of the projects that we reported on explored the role of the arts in empowerment, CANWA's role in community empowerment and ways in which non-indigenous people can best support indigenous empowerment (Green & Sonn, 2008). Here I want to illustrate some of the complexity of negotiating intercultural relations by reading into a social interaction within a workshop setting. In one project we explored the ways in which participation in the arts activities fostered empowerment, the role of CANWA in empowerment and the possibilities for working together. Here I use one extract from a conversation with a non-Aboriginal woman who works for CANWA and is an outsider to the community. She facilitated photography workshops as one of the activities community members identified as something they would like to do. The facilitator had been to the town several times as part of the broader project.

Conceptual framework.

We conceptualised the workshop as a contact zones, which for Pratt (1991: 33) is a "social space where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, a such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in parts of the world today." In this space different stories and representations shape and influence our understandings of self and other. These representations can be understood as discourses which are "historically constructed regimes of knowledge. These include common-sense assumptions and taken-for-granted ideas, belief systems and myths that groups of people share and through which they understand each other" (Mama, 1995: 98). Mama further states that Discourses position individuals in relation to one another socially, politically and culturally, as similar to or different from; as 'one of us' or as 'Other' (Mama, 1995: 98) and also inform how blame and merit is to be apportioned. People have different subject positions available within discourses and these can be contradictory depending on social and historical relations. Furthermore, power is transmitted through discourses and dominant discourses exercise their hegemony by "resonating with and echoing the institutionalised and formal knowledges, assumptions and ideologies of a given social and political order." (Mama, 1995: 8). We have drawn on this understanding to explore the dynamics of identity and politics in the contact zone.

The extract is of course open to other readings, but in view of CANWA' work and the broader social/historical/economic context there are also limited readings. The extract is as follows:

Louise: She came in the morning with a six-pack of grog and cheekily said "do you want a drink?" and I said "no and I'm just not gonna see that. We're just going to put that away and that won't exist just for today" or something like that.

Interviewer: You said that?

Louise: Yeah, and I carried on doing what I was doing and then she came back again and said "if you don't want me to do this, if you don't want me to drink or if I've upset you, I can go" and I found that sad and confronting and all those things because it wasn't as if she was asking "am I allowed to do this?" or "will CAN WA do this if I do this?" or "will I get in trouble?" It was more like, "nah, I want to know what you think about me doing this" and I found that really sad and I don't know why.... It was more like "do you care that I drink? Do you care that I'm drunk at 10 o'clock in the morning?" as in "nah, as a person, do you care that me, as this person is doing this?" Louise: I guess it was the disappointment, maybe fear, because there was an element of just a big reality so I guess the reality of it was just frightening for me.

Louise is challenged by the actions of one of the workshop participants, a young Aboriginal woman. She does not know how to respond, but responds by refusing the request and ignoring the behaviour. The person comes back and asks Louise to respond, to engage, to take a stance. Louise feels sad and confronted. She is challenged by the fact that the young woman has brought her reality into the workshop and wants to know what Louise, the outsider white woman thinks and knows. The young woman knows of the stereotypes, the hegemonic discourses about Aboriginal people and drinking on pay day.

Louise goes on to talk about her disappointment and fear, about having to see reality, the 'real' life for many Aboriginal people outside of the workshop. She had to come to terms with her own position as a white woman, an outsider, and as a professional in the context of Aboriginal marginality and white race privilege.

Following Feldman (1992, as cited by Watkins and Schulman, 2008), in systems characterised by relations of domination and subjugation there can be distortions to what we see and do not see. Not seeing beyond the workshop, the differential subject positions, histories and

lived realities that coalesce in the contact zone, can result in the reproduction of relations of domination and privilege. In this project, it had become essential to engage with CANWA staff in critical discussions about taken for granted understandings about race, culture and ethnicity and how these are utilised in everyday discussions in Australia and the effects on our relations. In this framework, race, culture and ethnicity are social constructions and ideological and generated within colonial histories, and, like others, we have argued that it is imperative to deconstruct racism, culture and ethnicity in everyday settings based on the understanding that these notions are central to ongoing coloniality. For Louise this meant understanding marginalisation and social exclusion.

The contact zone itself is the space within which identities and histories come into conflict. In Australia, talk about race and racism has been repressed by the discourse of multiculturalism (Riggs, 2007). In this country, we do not talk about racism and even deny prejudice and contest racism (Rapley, 2001). But, for Aboriginal people and people of colour racism is an everyday reality within the Australian racial formation (Paradies, Harris, & Anderson, 2008). The fact that we avoid talking about or naming 'race' as significant in the history and current social relations is problematic and does result in the reproduction of white race privilege in everyday settings, including in settings such as those constructed for positive community development projects.

This excerpt reflects some of the tensions that arise when working alongside Aboriginal Australians in order to disrupt racism and contribute to empowerment. How do you empower in a colonised or post-colonising (Moreton-Robinson, 2003) space, where there is pain, frustration, complacency, racism? One of the critical elements here is that this research work has provided the basis for CANWA to engage and reconstruct its own understandings of empowerment and intercultural engagement. This process of developing praxis is ongoing and has included restructuring the agency to now include at least 50% Aboriginal staff members and putting in place relevant support systems for the staff members. CANWA's work continues, and there are important lessons to unpack further as they develop their praxis, which is part of our ongoing work. Some of this includes the tensions between knowledge and history and the fear that stories will be appropriated. There are also understandings of Aboriginality based on Western discourses that continue to influence understandings and shape practices. But, what is clear so far is that lived experience in combination with critical theorising is an important epistemological position and central to a decolonising agenda.

Summary and conclusion.

As I reflect on the different paths of the journey, of weaving in and out of community psychology research and action literature, I often come back to one of the key aspirations: The inclusion of marginalised voices as central to deconstruction and reconstruction projects. For me this has meant grappling with notions like empowerment and social justice within a framework that recognises power, the sites and means for the reproduction of power and privilege in everyday settings, and the importance of understanding histories of colonialism in decolonisation efforts.

Community psychology is committed to social change. However, it has been necessary to venture beyond the boundaries of the discipline to develop resources for challenging racialisation. The writing from diverse areas that focus on decolonisation and that is written under critical race theory and whiteness studies have been extremely valuable in helping us articulate a standpoint from which we can engage in deconstruction, both as members of minoritised groups as well as in our roles as partners or allies to those who are excluded (Reyes-Cruz & Sonn, in press). This is and continues to be a challenging task, but through critical reflective practice, we are creating resources to explicate the micro politics of race within a broader social, cultural and historical context.

The writing in the areas I have identified above value lived experiences and critical analyses – the movement between being on the ground and theorising (Fine & Weis, 2007). It shares much in common with the critical writing in community psychology (Lykes & Moane, 2009; Watts & Serrano-García, 2003). Central to this critical analysis is an understanding of historical memory or history of colonial relations within which racialising practices develop and engagement in reflexive practice. There is a focus on promoting voice and developing ways of knowing that disrupts the power of the expert knower.

History and memory.

History and memory are central to social change and in particular liberation psychologies. Martín-Baró (1994) argued that the recovery of historical memory is central to liberation psychology, while Bulhan (1985: 277) argued that those who are oppressed have been denied

“individual biographies and collective history” and have been made appendages to the “biographies and histories of others”. We have drawn on the writing of liberation theorists as well as others (e.g., Bhatia, 2007; Quijano, 2000) to argue that it is essential to understand histories of colonialism and the continuity of colonial relations in our efforts to promote anti-racist and anti-oppressive projects in our personal and professional lives. In our efforts we have brought people with different histories together in the contact zone and utilised the writing by Indigenous and black scholars as well as writing that deals with deconstructing normativity. We use this to facilitate de-ideologization and to create new subjectivities within limit situations (Martín-Baró, 1994). The processes of deconstructing racialisation and othering is challenging, but we have found it vital for countering the historical amnesia that is part and parcel of a liberalist agenda – an agenda that seeks to equalise future possibilities while denying historical and ongoing inequities in resources required for living.

Reflexivity.

The very processes of knowledge construction is scrutinised for its disempowering effects, and there is recognition of the partiality of knowing. To this end, we also advocate an approach of situated knowing. Some of this is reflected in our effort to challenge both whiteness and race and to recognise the differential power afforded because of our social group memberships.

Instead of an exclusive focus on the other, one also needs to ask reflexive and introspective questions about oneself – about the position one occupies in matrices of power and privilege and the extent to which such positions inform one’s practices, actions and beliefs. As such, I cannot claim to be non-racist if I am white, or non sexist if I am a male, but rather make non-racism and non-sexism a project within which I constantly re/situate myself, and within which I continuously take up a performative position. (Laubscher, 2006: 211).

The work in the contact zones departs from a dialogical orientation and commitment to the other. It is a praxis that is in line with the ethical positions articulated by different authors (Bird Rose, 2004; Montero, 2007; 2009). In our context this means understanding and recognising that, as old settlers and immigrants, as people who share this land, with Aboriginal people, we are all

positioned differently in relation to the legacy of colonisation and racism. While we are all positioned differently, as privileged or marginalised, or somewhere along this continuum, and we are all implicated in responding to the issues facing our communities. As part of this process we have focussed on examining dynamics of oppression as they occur in research, teaching and more recently partnering community based agencies by drawing on the writing from Indigenous and other scholars who write from liminal spaces as well as the writing aimed at disrupting normativity. Through this we endeavour to create spaces for relational and respectful engagement that does not only focus on the diverse other, but brings us into a mutual relationship aimed at disrupting racism (see Laubscher, 2006).

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CULTURES AND COMMUNITIES

Cultural factors and primary health care in Cuba. A view from community praxis.

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III International Conference of Community Psychology
Puebla, Mexico, June 4, 2010.

Cultural factors and primary health care in Cuba. A view from community praxis.

Abstract

The changes and transformations in Primary Health Care (PHC) developed in recent years from the implementation of the model of Physician and Nurse of the Family in Cuba, must be supported by a shift in perspective and move from an eminently biologicist paradigm to a

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biosociocultural paradigm. This makes it possible to explicitly situate the relationship between culture and health and explain the social and cultural factors related to healthy behaviors, and also to support interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies. The results presented in this paper corroborate the theoretical postulates of cultural anthropology, cultural sociology and medicine that argue that the gap between multidisciplinary health teams and social actors occurs, among other reasons, because of existing traditional cultural etiological models of health and disease. Cultural differences could be addressed through knowledge of the patient's culture, his cultural practices and his links with family members and other stakeholders in the community. It allows the productions of a process that includes cultural communication, listening carefully the patient's point of view rather than just ordering treatments that reflect scientific practices. The strategies and backgrounds presented in this study demand the presence of multiple perspectives and are very important to designing policies and models of intercultural health care to achieve satisfaction of patients, families and communities.

Keywords: Primary health care, biosociocultural paradigm, culture, health, interdiscipline.

Factores culturales y atención primaria de salud en Cuba. Una mirada desde la praxis comunitaria.

Resumen

Los cambios y transformaciones en la Atención Primaria de Salud (APS) que han venido desarrollándose en estos últimos años a partir de la implementación del modelo del Médico y la Enfermera de la Familia en Cuba, tienen necesariamente que sustentarse en un cambio de perspectiva y transitar de un paradigma eminentemente biologicista a un paradigma biosociocultural. Ello posibilita ubicar de manera explícita la relación cultura-salud para explicar los factores sociales y culturales asociados a las conductas saludables, así como sustentar los estudios en enfoques interdisciplinarios y transdisciplinarios. Los resultados que se presentan en este artículo corroboran postulados teóricos de la antropología cultural, la sociología cultural y la medicina, que sostienen que la brecha entre equipos multidisciplinarios de salud y actores sociales ocurre, entre otras razones, por los modelos culturales etiológicos de salud y enfermedad existentes. Las diferencias culturales podrían abordarse mediante el conocimiento de la cultura del paciente, de sus prácticas culturales y de sus vínculos con los miembros de su familia y otros actores sociales de la comunidad. Esto permite generar un proceso de comunicación cultural que contemple: escuchar con atención y reconocer el modelo cultural del paciente más que indicar tratamientos terapéuticos que sólo reflejen conocimientos científicos. Estrategias de este tipo y antecedentes como los que se presentan en este artículo exigen perspectivas múltiples y son importantes para diseñar políticas y modelos de atención intercultural en salud que logren dar satisfacción a las necesidades y expectativas de pacientes, familias y comunidades.

Palabras clave: Atención primaria de salud, paradigma biosociocultural, cultura, salud, interdisciplina.

Introduction

During the early years of the revolutionary period in Cuba, the Integral Polyclinic was created. It was defined as the basic unit of the National Health System, which included all health activities within the assigned geographical area. At the same time the link between the Polyclinic and other levels of care in the National Health System was established and gave impetus to community participation through mass organizations.²

It was precisely in 1964 that the Integral Polyclinic emerged as the center of the activities in primary health care. Polyclinics were organized before this, in some cases, using the old health houses. The label “integral” was not used at first. The term “polyclinic” was taken from units of service in European socialist countries, but they did not have the same function. Several clinics in those countries were gathered in the same place (poly: pediatrics, internal medicine, clinical surgery, gynecology, dermatology ...), but the tasks of promotion and prevention were not performed, there as it was in our centers (Rojas, 2004).

The community polyclinics are the cornerstone of this system; there are 498 in the country, each of which gives service to 30 000 or 60 000 people. These polyclinics also operate as organizational nodes between 20 and 40 doctors and neighborhood family nurses' offices and as research and teaching centers for medical, nursing and other health sciences. (Luna, 2010).

Throughout the seventies, before the Declaration of Alma-Ata in 1978, polyclinics were established and incorporated the program of Family Doctors and Nurses in the mid-eighties. This made it possible to strengthen the capacity of the health system on prevention and analysis of community health and clinical services.

In 1982, the need was raised for a General Physician to provide services in different locations: a sugar mill, a boat, a school, an internationalist mission, or in a urban residential area. The new program was based on the designation of a physician and a nurse to take care of a number of families (approximately six hundred and seven hundred people) living in the same town or neighborhood. These professionals would combine the work in the community, in the hospital and in the office, and had to integrate into their practice the knowledge of the basic specialties (internal medicine, obstetrics, gynecology and pediatrics). The idea of the Family Physician had to do with a complete and thorough knowledge of the environment and conditions in which people lived.³

In the nineties the program placed family physicians and nurses all over the country and managed to serve well over 95% of the population. In 2008, further changes were introduced in the primary care in Cuba. Since 2002, 241 polyclinics have undergone extensive renovation, a process that continues today. The purpose is to add services previously available only in hospitals. Currently, the average polyclinic offers 22 services, including rehabilitation, radiology, ultrasound, optometry, endoscopy, thrombolysis, emergency services, orthopedics, clinical laboratories, family planning, dental, maternal and child health, immunization and care for the elderly and people with diabetes. (Luna, 2010). The roles of the polyclinic and the offices of family physicians and nurses are also evolving. In this regard, Dr. Luna says:

“Since 2007, the polyclinics are expected to play a leading role in capacity building and quality control among health-related institutions in their communities. We have incorporated into our teams directors of pharmacies, nursing homes, maternity homes and others and we have also begun to offer more training to health workers from the Federation of Cuban Women, professionalizing their work in the community”.

The interdisciplinary perspective in Primary Health Care.

Primary Care is the basic and initial level of attention. It which guarantees the globality and continuity of care throughout the patient's life, acting as manager, case coordinator and flow regulator. It includes research, health promotion, health education, disease prevention, health care, maintenance and restoration of health and physical rehabilitation. It requires a working concept that goes beyond the bounds of a profession, a field of knowledge and a scientific discipline. In Cuba's conditions, this concept acquires more dimensions if one takes into account the following elements:

1. The introduction of a new formula in the reorganization of the system as a result of the presence of more than 20,000 Cuban physicians living abroad, mostly in Africa and Latin America. Its characteristic feature is the rapid formation of new family physicians: "We are now training 42% more family physicians in order to meet all our commitments and to improve levels of patients' satisfaction" (Luna, 2010).

2. The changing nature of new health problems. Urbanization, globalization and other factors speed the worldwide spread of communicable diseases and increase the burden of chronic disorders.
3. Climate change and food insecurity shall have a major impact on health in the years ahead, so that the articulation of an effective and equitable response will involve huge challenges.
4. The development of interdisciplinary social sciences research within the framework of community development.
5. The presence of a variety of Centers of Studies and Research whose results point to improving the quality of life for Cubans.

Working for more than 25 years in Cuban communities, through research focused on studies of cultural processes, has made it possible to introduce, validate and support the importance of the cultural perspective in social analysis. In the case that concerns the author of this paper the socio-semiotic concept of culture is a valuable tool for understanding the problems of health and disease.

The socio-semiotic concept of culture for understanding the culture-health link in Primary Care.

The analysis of contemporary processes in healthcare needs an approach that goes beyond disciplinary boundaries. The transformation of communication processes, the eating habits induced by the media, and the constant renewal of the social scene, lead to rethinking the traditional paradigms that are still being used to address health problems within the framework of community development.

It is increasingly evident that contemporary cultural phenomena the emergence of the Internet, the issue of consumption and its significance, the intensification of multicultural relations, the emergence of new cultural practices – demand to go beyond the traditional divisions and scientific methodologies, introducing new concepts and approaches to promote greater cultural and health dialogue clamored for by more and more voices from the communities and public institutions.

All of these elements require complex readings, interpretations that go beyond the alleged theoretical support provided by traditional paradigms, and therefore, highlight the need for greater presence of cultural discourses on the development of a healthier attitude.

Thus, it is necessary to weigh the subjective dimension represented by the area of structured and socially established consciousness with its particular set of distinctive symbolic codes with the necessary constitution of society's critical sense (Alexander, 2000).

For the present case, the socio-semiotic concept of culture appears, then, as a useful theoretical approach for achieving a greater understanding of issues relating to healthy living in communal areas. This lies in an approach focused on a cultural analysis of health phenomena that are framed in the context of community development. An analytical perspective is here introduced which permits the affirmation that culture projects the area of priority of the symbolic dimensions, and therefore, this approach stands as a criterion for disease research and health prevention.

In his book *Different, Unequal and Offline. Maps of multiculturalism* – (2004) Néstor García Canclini takes up in detail the issue of multiple definitions of culture. This text assumes a more inclusive concept of culture. This is because in the late 90's, important valuations were introduced, founded on the new contexts, in which Latin American multiculturalism is produced and sustained by a significant scientific production, very diverse, beginning with its epistemic constructs. García Canclini has pointed out that:

As there are more sociological studies of culture and anthropological studies on cultural modernization, convergence is observed primarily with respect to the object of study. Coinciding with other disciplines and trends in the social sciences, linguistics, semiotics, communication studies, many anthropologists and sociologists now define culture as the **sphere of production, circulation and consumption of significant**s. (García Canclini, 2004: 233).

In the work mentioned above, Néstor García Canclini makes an important contribution to cultural studies when he incorporates new trends. Because of their importance, they are located in this section.⁴

The first trend is one that sees culture as the instance in which each group organizes its identity. Culture is presented in everyday use when it is identified with education, enlightenment,

sophistication, vast information. In this line, in the words of García Canclini, culture is the accumulation of knowledge and intellectual and aesthetic skills. (García Canclini, 2005: 30).

In contrast to uses of culture that were held to establish the distinction between culture and civilization, another theory exists that suggests a confrontation of the pairs nature-culture and society-culture. There is a complex and intense, overlapping between social and cultural processes and one of the main thesis emerges: All social practices contain a cultural dimension, but not everything in these social practices is culture. The book of Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical reasons on the theory of action*; the one of Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, and the one of Jean Baudrillard, *Critique of Political Economy of the Sign*, have shown from different scientific perspectives, the symbolic aspect of social life produced by culture. Thus the world of meaning is attributed to culture. Culture encompasses all the social processes of meaning, or stated in a more complex way, culture embraces all social processes of production, circulation and consumption of significance in social life (García Canclini, 2005: 34). Culture is the space of social reproduction and organization of differences.

What epistemological implications are encompassed by this definition? What is its scope for the development of health research? What methodological tools does it offer to scholars, researchers, and technicians involved in the studies of primary health care?

The sociosemiotic concept of culture is presented as social processes of what is produced, what is learned and what is consumed in social history. This procedural and changing conception of culture becomes evident when we study complex societies, not only from cultural production, but also from the established interconnections in the social fabric at the micro and macro levels. Culture, understood as the space of construction of meaning, prevents us from the uncritical use of words, especially those that have the ability to establish facts, as they are accompanied by coercive or persuasive actions.

In short, *culture* as a concept is useful to name the whole process of production, circulation and consumption of meanings, with the following specifications:

1. Culture and symbolic mediations play a role in structuring the functions of social and cultural practices. From this perspective, the instrumental resources offered by the concept are also presented as a dynamic knowledge area where codes, meanings and symbols underlie and structure society. This makes apparent changes, mobility and order,

that different individuals, groups and social classes incorporate in their worlds of feelings, perceptions, representations and imaginariums.

2. The symbolic dimension refers to field processes, as the processes involved in everyday life. Cultural analysis is applied to the organized production of knowledge, information, images and speeches; it is also applied to the continued production of meaning at the level of everyday relationships and interactions located where individuals are involved with others and themselves.

3. Symbolic production in private and public spaces is conditioned by the processes of the dominant social life, by a mode of production that organizes the development over time of a set of structured and contradictory social relations, or that organizes a social process in its development. The patterns of significance are elements of that process, and part of the dynamic and complex factors of social life, forming entities of meaning that participate in the general process of social production and reproduction.

4. In community frameworks where Primary Health Care is established, individuals, families and social groups project their cultures, i.e., the set of meanings that guide a way to produce a reality suited to their interests, traditions, practices and representations. This accounts for the different and various explanations on behaviors and their interpretation.

5. The growing autonomy of specialized fields of symbolic production confines the spaces in which the struggle for social construction of meaning takes place, because if it is true that in capitalist societies the ruling class owns the means of production in the economic sense, and also most of the means of symbolic production, it should not be thought of as an act of total and crushing domination. Subaltern classes and groups are not totally without resources; capitalism, the logic of value, does not cover all areas of social life.

6. The analysis of culture, understood as a set of processes of meaning, can choose as the focus of its study the identification of situations of symbolic violence, that is when it comes to imposing the existence of a meaning on others.

7. Cultural analysis can be translated into models of communication that would consider the meeting (horizontal, vertical or oblique) between subjects with different meanings on a single practice, object or cultural institution. The theoretical construction of horizons of interpretation would investigate the sociological origin of meaning, and question the

relationships established between individuals and social contexts in which they participate.

If the above specifications are agreed upon, the necessary elements for designing a model of cultural analysis to understand the determinants of health are present. These include:

a. **A relational approach**, because we are interested in studying situations where the processes of significance are transformed into symbolic violence: What happens between signs, meanings and interpretations?

b. **An inquiry into language**, because language is an institutionalized power.

c. **Contextualization**, because the processes of meaning are embedded in specific contexts. Temporal and spatial dimensions are not only criteria of delimitation but symbolic ordering constraints of the individual life, imposing timetables, rhythms and age groups, or establishing a distinction of places, regions and territories.

d. **Diverse formalization procedures** in order to study the internal structure of the processes of meaning, to know what is its capacity to symbolize.

e. Finally, **a hermeneutic practice** that allows rebuilding, creatively, the overall sense of purpose, practice or discourse analyzed.

Culture determines the socio-epidemiological distribution of disease in two ways, namely:

- From a local perspective, culture shapes the behavior of individuals that predispose people to certain diseases.
- From a global perspective, the political-economic forces and cultural practices make people act with the environment in ways that can affect health.

All activities of our everyday lives are conditioned culturally. Culture shapes our behavior homogenizing social behavior and, in turn, making us distinguish differences and inequalities. Therefore culture is a variable to explain these differences and inequalities at different levels of society.

Culture is a social construct, and therefore the habits that are constituted as cultural and socially acceptable norms also change. The more or less healthy behaviors acquire a different dimension in terms of social significance that they have at a given time.

Towards a proposal for a tool from cultural factors in Primary Health Care.

One of the changes in primary care in Cuba was the creation of multidisciplinary teams who used the philosophy of a comprehensive health care, understood as the effect of the interaction between biological, psychological, social and cultural factors. This implied the consideration, research, and intervention in all of these factors from the experience, knowledge and participation of different groups who influence the health-disease beyond the traditional health care concept.

During the late 1980's, the organization of interdisciplinary teams linked to social and cultural institutions began to be used on a more permanent basis. The more effective experiences have been in rural settlements, semi-urban and coastal areas of the municipality of Guamá in the province of Santiago de Cuba, which are the initial points of reference from the Universidad de Oriente.

The experiences and the subsequent development of social sciences at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Universidad de Oriente has enabled the introduction of a variety of alternative methodologies aimed at improving the quality of life of hundreds of families, groups and individuals of those areas of the eastern region of Cuba. One of them is precisely the work with cultural factors.

The incorporating of cultural factors in diagnostic health studies on primary care, report essentials of human behavior: they also endow greater integrality in their analysis, reflections, reviews and epistemological structures, complementing the studies of diseases that are the object of inquiry.

Cultural factors facilitate the perception of distinctive features that make up different human groups and settlements within the same geographic and social space. They also help to understand significant trends and explain possible links established between the actions of individuals and groups and social dynamics. Cultural factors are not dimensions, or elements. They are defining conditions reported as essentials of human behavior. Issues such as religion, customs and traditions provide a set of meanings that cannot be ignored in studies of health and disease (Martínez and Illescas, 2007).

A deeper study of these meanings, leads to discern which factors are dynamic and which are static, taking as basic criteria the stability, permanence in time and rupture. Thus, language and customs are part of the first group; communications and technology, of the second.

The use of these factors in health studies supports obtaining a summary of all the accumulated and socialized experience by different social groups, individuals and families in their daily lives. The new elements that are incorporated as a result of modernity, also express the levels of development of cultural values that are evolving. Professional, administrative, technological and productive levels are carriers of new forms of cultural creation and reveal other ways of establishing relationships, new roles, attitudes and procedures; and therefore the new diseases that are contracted as a result of multiple interactions of human groups with their environment.

The introduction of cultural factors also demands the incorporation of anthropological, sociological, psychological and semiotic perspectives in health studies.

Methodological approaches.

The experiences presented are the results of a research paper prepared by the Center for the Integral Development of Culture⁵, that has studied since 1996, issues of culture and community development from a variety of disciplines.

The methodological approaches. That are included, are results of interdisciplinary work that is being developed in several neighborhoods of the city of Santiago de Cuba, where the concepts of health and illness have had and still have significant presence.

The aim is to provide a conceptual and methodological framework for working with the community, from the binomial culture-health.

The tasks in the organization of work of the interdisciplinary team are:

- Recover the history of the group and make a diagnosis on the present situation, include new members and discover the degree of closeness and commitment to the community's health proposal.
- Promote interdisciplinary spaces where work will be focused on the difficulties and ways to resolve them.
- Analyze the daily difficulties, the obstacles to the realization of scheduled tasks, reviewing the slogans raised in team meetings.
- Record activities and projects and collaborate in setting priorities and planning activities.

- Incorporate the cultural and historical dimension within the team in order to broaden its conception of the processes of health-disease-care.
- Encourage processes of reflection on the institution: its history, organization, policy, power relations.
- Provide information on the program area's population in terms of demographic composition, history, organizations, groups and institutions.
- Reflect on strategies of community work to coordinate externally.

A model of analysis was drawn up which contains the theoretical dimensions and the analytical concepts for the explanation of health behavior and disease. The dimensions incorporate the socio-semiotic conception of culture; the cultural conception of health and the cultural conception of Primary Health Care. The analytical concepts are: a) Cultural practices, meanings and orality that correspond to the socio-semiotic conception. b) Family, group, individual and community, that in turn, correspond to the cultural conception of health. c) Concepts of cultural differences, inequalities and communication related to cultural competence.

In regards to the community, this meant increasing the knowledge its history, its forms of organization, institutions, leadership, networks, forms of communication, existing logic, symbolic violence, orality. Reflecting on the community and its relationships to the health center and taking into account the degree of approximation, images, expectations, experiences and applications in health care and programs, we sought to strengthen existing links and develop an appropriate methodology of work.

Categories to take into account

- Secondary orality.
- Rites.
- Legends.
- Magical-religious feast days.
- Food traditions.
- Feeding practices.
- Use of technological devices.
- Labor tradition.

- Forms and conditions under which commuters travel.
- Social spaces created.
- Consumption of green medicine.
- Cultural practices associated with hygiene.
- Sexual practices.
- Use of fashion.
- Community cultural dynamics.
- Symbolic violence.
- Patriarchal model.
- Matriarchal model.
- Socialized model of disease.
- Family space distribution.
- Social background and cultural consumption.
- Shared symbols.

Methods and tools.

On the theoretical level. The analysis-synthesis, for the purpose of the review of the literature and the development of synthetic ideas, as well as the historical-logical method.

Sociological and anthropological theories are used as methods.

On the empirical level. The use of statistical inferences from existing documentation, and the application of tools developed from interviews, ethnographic methods and questionnaires on the basis of methodological triangulation in terms of data and techniques. The use of questionnaires for patients and people in the community. The use of records of observation in public spaces, of social, food, and health facilities. And also the use of conceptual maps.

Bridges of communication should be built between the different disciplines that share the space of primary health care, facilitating the exchange of knowledge based on respect for the diversity of views that flow into one complex and evolving subject; the utopia to which we have referred as multidisciplinary teamwork could then be possible. This would result in an improved quality of services provided to citizens, making the philosophy of a comprehensive health care a reality. Disease and health are two internal concepts of each culture. To get a better

understanding of the prevalence and distribution of health and illness in a society, we need a comprehensive approach that combines sociological and anthropological issues in addition to biological and medical knowledge about health and disease. We also have to create networks and work with the concept of coordination at various levels of the local structure.

Notes

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2. A movement towards the development of primary health care was being implemented in close coordination with the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP) and driven by the activities of health education. It created the popular community actions. This was first expressed in the rural health posts of the volunteers of the National Malaria Eradication Service (SNEP), and a little later with the Health Officers of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and the Health Brigades of the Federation of Cuban Women. The "Schools of Health" were created for them. Community officials gave support for primary care services through the Ministry of Social Welfare.

3. In September 1983, a document entitled "Considerations about linking the health team to the block" stated the need to divide the population according to the political-administrative structures. Two main objectives were pursued: Focus on faster and more effective solutions to epidemiological problems and environmental health; and facilitate and promote the participation of mass organizations in healthcare in order to boost the role of local government bodies, strengthening the link between general practitioner and family groups organized in the community. Thus, on MINSAP 10 doctors were selected to implement the pilot program. The Polyclinic chosen was "Lawton" in the Township of Ciudad de La Habana because of the effective performance of doctors in that place and because of its geographical location and the characteristics of its population, mainly a working-class neighborhood. The three-month pilot study used a group of nurses who worked in the different sectors of the political-administrative division at the Defence Committees of the Revolution (CDR). In this way, the basic unit of community health was restructured.

4. In the book “*Different, disparate and disconnected. Map of multiculturalism*”; García Canclini proposes three key elements to address the issue of multiculturalism and globalization: difference, inequality and disconnection. He wondered not only how to recognize the differences and to correct inequalities, but also how to connect the majority of global networks.

5. Center for Integrated Development Studies of Cultural Development affiliated to the Faculty of Social Sciences at Universidad de Oriente. The following academic programs were developed: Master of Community Cultural Development; Ph.D. in Sociological Studies of Culture; Popular Education Diploma and Community Work. More than 500 professionals have graduated from these programs. Culture and mentality of society in Santiago was the topic of research. Dr. Martínez Tena has received several national scientific awards for her research and teaching.

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Community Psychology and Social Problems in Mexico.

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III International Congress of Community Psychology
Puebla, Mexico, June 3, 2010

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Community Psychology and Social Problems in Mexico.

Abstract

Community Psychology has basically been an informal academic field of studies and practices. Its roots can be traced to an implicit community psychology practiced by indigenous and rural populations since pre-hispanic times, through colonial rule, XIX century republican regimes, post Mexican Revolution rural education programs and governmental and non governmental community development initiatives. The actual academic field of Community Psychology in Mexico shows a scarcity of academic programs that have not had the opportunity to become firmly established in higher education institutions. The main sources of academic theory and practice in contemporary Community Psychology in the world have had limited influence in Mexico. American community psychology with its strong clinical trend has been present but has not been the most important source of impact on Mexican community psychologists. Latin American community psychology with its contributions to confront the irrelevance of social psychology has also contributed to the development of Mexican community psychology but its influence was not decisive and only recently fruitful exchanges have been established. The field in Mexico has been informally evolving through the practices and thinking of Mexican psychologists confronted by pressing social challenges they have been forced to face in their efforts to make psychology relevant and useful. Mexican psychoanalysts tried to apply their expertise with marginalized urban settings. Humanist psychologists looked for underserved populations to make explicit their professional commitment in serving humanity. Behavior psychologists tried to devise a training curriculum centered on community service. Clinical psychologists at UNAM were concerned about the problems of our people in the big metropolis and by the traumas caused by natural disasters. Psychologists from all over Mexico and from diverse academic subfields and traditions have been working hand in hand with anthropologists, sociologists, social workers, popular educators, rural experts, and all sort of fields of study, in confronting the problems generated by the unequal distribution of wealth, corruption, the literacy and digital gaps, the denial and discrimination of ethnic peoples, and the increasing violence endured by many people in different regions of the country. What will be the future of community psychology in Mexico? What have we learned? What are our weaknesses and what

are our strengths? Do we need a more formal training? Do we need a formal employment market? Do we have something specific to offer among the health, education and social sciences? What are our theoretical and practical inputs? We live in difficult times. Community Psychology will be more needed than ever. What should we do to make it relevant?

Keywords: Historical roots, informality, relevance, community approaches.

Contribuciones mexicanas de la Psicología Comunitaria a los problemas sociales contemporáneos.

Resumen

La Psicología Comunitaria en México ha sido básicamente un campo académico informal de estudios y prácticas. Sus raíces pueden encontrarse en una psicología comunitaria implícita practicada por poblaciones indígenas y rurales desde los tiempos prehispánicos, a través del periodo colonial, durante los regímenes republicanos del Siglo XIX, en programas de educación rural después de la Revolución Mexicana y posteriormente en iniciativas de desarrollo comunitario, gubernamentales y de la sociedad civil. El presente campo académico de la Psicología Comunitaria en México muestra una escasez de programas académicos que no han podido establecerse firmemente en las instituciones de educación superior. Las principales fuentes de teoría y práctica académicas de la Contemporánea Psicología Comunitaria mundial han ejercido poca influencia en México. La Psicología Comunitaria de los Estados Unidos, con su fuerte tendencia clínica, ha estado presente pero no ha sido la fuente de mayor impacto en los psicólogos comunitarios mexicanos. La Psicología Comunitaria de América Latina, con sus contribuciones para enfrentar la irrelevancia de la psicología social, ha también contribuido al desarrollo de la Psicología Comunitaria en México pero su influencia no ha sido decisiva y sólo recientemente se han establecido fructuosos intercambios. La disciplina en México ha ido evolucionando informalmente gracias a las prácticas y a las reflexiones de psicólogos mexicanos confrontados por desafíos sociales urgentes que han tenido que enfrentar en sus esfuerzos para realizar una psicología relevante y útil. Psicoanalistas mexicanos han intentado aplicar sus conocimientos y habilidades para atender escenarios urbanos marginalizados. Psicólogos humanistas han trabajado con poblaciones vulnerables para hacer explícito su compromiso profesional de servir a la humanidad. Psicólogos conductistas se han esforzado por organizar el currículum académico centrándolo en servicio comunitario. Psicólogos clínicos de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México se han preocupado por los problemas mentales de la población en la gran metrópolis de la Ciudad de México y por los traumas generados por desastres naturales. Psicólogos de todo México, de diversas subramas académicas y tradiciones, han trabajado de la mano con antropólogos, sociólogos, trabajadores sociales, educadores populares, expertos

rurales, y académicos de muchos campos de estudio tratando de colaborar en la solución de problemas producidos por la desigual distribución de la riqueza y la corrupción, el analfabetismo y las brechas digitales, la negación y la discriminación de los pueblos indígenas, y la violencia incrementada que sufre mucha gente en diferentes regiones del país. ¿Cuál será el futuro de la Psicología Comunitaria en México? ¿Qué hemos aprendido? ¿Cuáles son nuestras debilidades y nuestras fortalezas? ¿Necesitamos una formación más académica? ¿Necesitamos un espacio más formal de empleo? ¿Tenemos algo específico que ofrecer al concierto de las ciencias sociales, de la educación y de la salud? ¿Cuáles son nuestros aportes prácticos y teóricos? Vivimos en tiempos difíciles. La Psicología Comunitaria será más necesaria que nunca. ¿Qué debemos hacer para volverla más relevante?.

Palabras clave: Raíces históricas, informalidad, relevancia, aproximaciones comunitarias.

Introduction

Community Psychology, an innovative field of psychology worldwide, has special characteristics in Mexico. As an academic field it is made up of rather informal studies and practices in the sense that they are not primarily related to teaching tasks and obtaining degrees.

In Mexico, however, it has strong implicit roots that date back to pre-Hispanic times in which, for example, in the Aztec empire on the one hand there was the state with the emperor and his politically-motivated cultural practices that we have all heard about such as the ceremonies in large temples and the historical accounts that have reached us. Along with this there was the reality of the communities where the populations' daily life took place (Soustelle, 1983: 25), a reality that we have less knowledge of than of the political practices at a more general level.

During the colonial period and in the face of the control practices that were exerted on indigenous people by the conquerors, community life continued to be a fact of life that allowed these populations to survive in the midst of situations of exploitation, oppression, contempt and discrimination (Reyes Garza, 2000: 75).

Following the Independence and despite the attempt to create a republican nation imitating the French and American liberal proposal, the typical features of rural and indigenous life continued because important practices and experiences of community life remained (Escalante Gonzalbo, 1999: 59) .The attempt to make the indigenous people citizens, at the expense of ceasing to exist as such, failed.

In the struggle for Independence indigenous people and peasants did the job for the creoles, without really benefiting from the processes of independence. All the effort to create a country of Mexican citizens tended to end the ethnic reality of indigenous groups (Acuña, 1981).

In the battles of the Revolution, peasants and indians also developed the fundamental role. After a hundred years two realities remain: first, that they were the least benefited by the revolutionary movement, and second that they did not cease to exist as peasants and as indigenous peoples.

The current reality is that the community life of these people is what has allowed them to survive (Bennholdt-Thompsen, 1998: 50) and what that allows them to envision a day when they can have access to a dignified life (Jiménez, 2007: 77).

In short, what I will attempt to refer to is the existence, between peasants and indigenous people of Mexico and numerous semi-urban and even urban populations, of locations, love, values and their own powers for a genuine community life. Therefore we speak of an implicit community psychology (Almeida and Flores Osorio, 2011).

Currently, at an academic level, there are only two universities in which to study a master's or doctorate in community psychology (Flores Mercado, 2009; Illescas, 2003). These are two programs that have faced many problems in attempting to prevail for several reasons, including the myth of the lack of job opportunities for those who are dedicated to studying this field. At an undergraduate level, there are courses or subjects in which community psychology is taught, and even at the UNAM it exists as a terminal field (Montero and Varas Díaz, 2007: 72). Aside from these academic realities, community psychology survives thanks to psychologists of all specialties who undertake community work (Almeida, Martinez and Varela, 1995).

The contact of Mexican community psychology with community psychology worldwide has up to now been limited and marginal; this has been the result of how it has developed in response to needs in the face of social challenges. There was some influence of American community psychology in the seventies in the past century thanks to an academic program that was established at the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO) in Guadalajara. But very soon the program organizers realized that such orientation as presented was not relevant to the communities in the area. Then they supplemented it with an approach toward humanistic psychology (Gómez del Campo, 1994). On the other hand, Latin American community psychology (Marín, 1988), which developed in the seventies and eighties due to the attempt to make relevant a social psychology that was devoted to the study of abstract entities and to the influence of social scientists as important as Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda, was not a decisive influence on the beginnings of Mexican community psychology.

Where does Community Psychology emerge from in Mexico?

Mexican community psychology arises from the need to address social challenges by psychologists from different theoretical orientations. For example, orthodox psychoanalysts tried to apply their knowledge to meet urban marginality. Thus arose the program known as Psychocommunity (Cueli and Biro, 1975) which was developed by teachers and students from

the UNAM and the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. The program is true social psychotherapy and is still relevant, albeit small, in various community experiences. As stated earlier, psychologists with a humanistic orientation such as Juan Lafarga and José Gómez del Campo used the approach of Carl Rogers to address urban populations (Lafarga and Gómez del Campo, 1992). At the National School of Professional Studies Iztacala (ENEP-Iztacala), behavioral psychologists developed the study plan for the major in Psychology in terms of practices closely tied to community service in its area of influence (Lozano Treviño and Lezama, 2003). UNAM clinical psychologists decided to complete the training of their students by connecting them with the searing realities of the marginalized urban environment (Valenzuela Cota, 1995). They also addressed the psychological problems of the university community, and played an important role in the response to psychological problems caused by disasters such as the earthquake that struck Mexico City in September 1985. Several social psychologists linked to the UNAM, to the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Iztapalapa campus, to the Autonomous University of Puebla and several other universities also began to develop a community psychology based on the theoretical positions they preferred such as the operational groups of Pichón Riviére, the aforementioned Psychocommunity and the Ecology of Human Development of Urie Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In all these approaches to community there were interdisciplinary relations with social anthropologists, social workers, popular educators, rural experts, feminist sociologists, etc. In all, the target was oriented toward facing the social challenges of unequal distribution of wealth, corruption, illiteracy, discrimination and violence. This set of circumstances and needs is what the basis of Mexican community psychology is and perhaps that's where their most interesting contributions emerge.

What science are we talking about?

Ever since the seventies and perhaps the sixties there was plenty of talk about the intellectual and practical crisis of social psychology. This is mentioned now, not only in relation to this branch of psychology, but it can be said of all social sciences (Bartra, 2009). In those years, sociology was a field of study which was highly sought by students. Today, few choose it, due in part to the difficulty involved in a life devoted to researching social problems, instead of dealing professionally with the problems it studies.

The trends of capitalism after the fall of the Berlin Wall, neoliberalism and the scarcity of jobs in recent times have added to this intellectual crisis of Social Sciences. Moreover, according to several experts in these sciences, the crisis has also been caused by the isolation of its practitioners, the lack of a critical sense with regard to one's own work and approaches of these fields, to the lack of communication, the fragmentation of many schools of thought and the jumble of theoretical papers without empirical support (Bartra, 2009).

In the face of this intellectual crisis, what can we say of a psychology which has been socially accused of being useless? Just as for other social sciences, in psychology there is also a shortage of critical studies of the science itself as well as isolation and fragmentation. The excessively individualistic approach to psychology, that we have ironically sometimes called that of attention to the middle-class' neurosis, has prevented us from being aware of the country in which it develops, a country where mental health problems are of a more collective nature and are related to cultural and structural causes (Almeida, 2011). This explains the reluctance of directors of many psychology schools and departments, throughout the territory, to make social psychology the orientation that corresponds to the needs of the country. Psychology is currently the human and social sciences major with the highest demand by students because it allows them to orient themselves toward the performance of a professional practice (Bartra, 2009) with little relevance in the social area. This explains the scarcely academic reality, in the curricular sense, of Community Psychology.

What have the contributions of Community Psychology been?

The origin of community psychology in Mexico can be found in the response to social challenges. This has allowed it to have a path without as much fragmentation as other branches of psychology or that of other social sciences. Educational psychologists, organizational psychologists, health psychologists, clinical psychologists and social psychologists have found themselves working side by side and face to face in trying to solve social problems in communities in which they have worked. The awareness of this non-fragmentation has not been assessed at its full potential. This is so because as in other social sciences there is a lack of criticality and assessment in its practitioners.

If something is unusual in Community Psychology it is its proximity to society. Here one cannot apply the accusation of the remoteness of science toward the problem it intends to study. The proximity to society and the discretion of its actions however, have not allowed Community Psychology to become more visible in the perception that governments have had of its activity, even though many community psychologists work in government organizations or government programs. The designers of these programs and the bureaucrats, who control them, seldom realize the knowledge, skills and attitudes displayed by these community psychologists in undertaking their task in order to make the role they play be less of assistance. The work of community psychologists is seldom mentioned in the domesticated mass media which often takes on critical positions of resistance in the face of government aberrations. It is known that social sciences, particularly economics and political science, have focused on responding to issues of concern to the authoritarian governments that have characterized Mexico (Bartra, 2009). The work of Community Psychology on the other hand develops between alternative programs, with low visibility and low submission to the demands of the State.

In academia, community psychology is presented as a marginal trend. Community psychologists have had to achieve recognition by the usefulness of their work and products that have been achieved (Pick and Givaudan, 1999: 203). Currently, the business environment is discovering the importance of the concept and reality of community for the organizational effectiveness of their companies.

Community Psychology is characterized by its closeness to society, their experience of conflict, its low visibility, and scarce recognition.

A venture of Community Psychology has been the quality of communication that has been developed between its experiences and its practitioners. It has been a venture because you cannot do community work in isolation, detached from real social networks in the environment in which it develops. Very diverse meetings have been fostered to achieve the exchange of experiences (Flores Osorio, 2007; Almeida and Flores Osorio, 2011). Formal organizations have even been developed to make these efforts viable, such as PDP (Promotion of Popular Development); ANADEGES (Development and Management Analysis) or PRAXIS (Training Program and Response in Action). To encourage this communication there have been attempts to create some publications, such as the newspaper "The Other Stock Exchange", which reported many community experiences in the country.

At the Autonomous University of Puebla in 1992 the journal titled Community Social Psychology was created (Almeida, 1992), only four editions and one special edition were published up to 1995. It halted publication for lack of institutional support. On several occasions attempts have been made to try to revive it. Following the 3rd International Conference on Community Psychology, Manuel Martinez from the Universidad Autonoma de Puebla was able to achieve the formation of an Editorial Board to re-publish it.

Final Reflection

What has been achieved? What has been learned through Community Psychology in Mexico? What are its strengths and what were the difficulties in the community processes that it has promoted? How to encourage the development of the discipline in Mexico?

The main achievement of the path described is that community psychology has positioned itself as a theoretical and practical discipline that has its own significant contributions to understanding Mexican social reality, to help improve the living conditions of its population in terms of social justice, respect and appreciation for cultural diversity and the democratization of its political processes. It is also a perspective with strong roots in the collective unconsciousness of the Mexican people (Almeida and Flores Osorio, 2011).

Historical and critical recovery of this path has uncovered the extent to which the contributions of the resilience of indigenous peoples and peasants in Mexico offer novel approaches to a psychology that promotes a balance between body and spirit, the individual and the collective, dreams and reality (Le Clézio, 1988: 247).

On the other hand the effort to locate Community Psychology with close by disciplinary approaches such as Social Work and Clinic Sociology has allowed us to detect the contributions of these disciplines to community development, *the specificity of what is psychological in this task*, the awareness that social change cannot be the monopoly of any praxis approach.

Community psychologists in Mexico have to recognize the learning we have acquired from the contact and dialogue with the past and present of rural education (Loyo Bravo, 1985: 9), the people's educational training offered by the CREFAL (CREFAL and OCE, 2009), the daring critique of CIDOC (Gutiérrez Quintanilla, 2007), the knowledge and assessment of the Agricultural Graduate School (Sánchez Quintanar, 2006), the fertility of the Theology of

Liberation (Hernández Avendaño 2006: 224), the vigor of the peasant movements (Moguel, Botey and Hernandez, 1992) and the rebelliousness of women (Marcos, 2008).

The panorama of the many experiences of community psychology far and wide throughout the country is really impressive. Almeida and Flores Osorio (2011) have made a first attempt to survey the vast field of commitment, action and reflection of a large number of Mexican psychologists who have dared to work in a field that is distinguished by low pay, little recognition and involvement in the thick of life of communities. Universities across the country have contributed to the strength of this process, not so much from the institutions but from the creativity of teams of psychologists who have been able to search and find rural and urban academic spaces to link psychology and community. From the UNAM (Valenzuela Cota, 1995), the UAM Iztapalapa (Reid & Aguilar, 1995) and the National Institute of Psychiatry (Orford, 1992) there have been bodies established that have survived to address problems of community mental health, to deal with disasters and to address the terrible consequences of the unequal distribution of wealth. Jesuit universities have struggled amid contradictions to put into action the preferential option for the poor (Gomez del Campo, 1994). If it were possible to delve into the complexity of Mexican community psychology maybe one would be able to capture the fact that the greatest strength comes from the intricate network of colleagues and friends that has been woven over 50 years among its practitioners, based, like almost everything in Mexico in the central region and spreading across the country. They would detect the social ties that bind, from Community Psychology at the Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, the Universidad Autónoma de Sinaloa, the Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Morelos, the Universidad Veracruzana, the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, the Instituto Tecnológico de Sonora, the Center for Food Research and Development of Sonora, the Proyecto de Animación y Desarrollo in Puebla, the Psychosocial Space for Community Strengthening in Chiapas, the Universidad de la Tierra, the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Occidente, the Latin American Universities and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México... To this they have contributed their friendship, the exchanges of experiences, the meetings, and the conferences.

The greatest difficulty in the process of Community Psychology in Mexico has been the difficult of institutionalization of it for many reasons. The times have not been conducive to assess the professional dedication to the confrontation of social problems (Correa, González and Mora Lomelí, 1993). Social psychology has rarely been the main focus of interest of academic

psychology in Mexico, much less so has it been Community Psychology. The stronger orientations have been to the clinical, the educational and business. Currently the two formal programs on community psychology have been greatly weakened because there is little student demand for them, the faculty has aged or retired, and institutions continue to bet on decadent neoliberalism.

The field of community psychology in Mexico needs to make more visible the reality of its work, to strengthen the strong national informal links and try to make them more institutional. It also requires it to be more open and bring its wealth of experiences and learning to the wide world.

In the past nine years, the first decade of this Century, international contacts with community psychologists in Latin America have intensified thanks in particular to the Congresses of the Interamerican Society of Psychology, of Psychology of Liberation and of Community Intervention and Praxis. At a global scale the contact has been through the International Community Psychology Conferences, in San Juan, Puerto Rico and Lisbon, Portugal. The one in Puebla in 2010 has been a great boost in knowing what is being done in Mexico. The immediate outlook for the future seems to be that community psychology will continue in Mexico thanks to increasing non-institutional university experiences, or outside the universities, but also through theoretical and methodological contributions of scholars that from their scientific humanistic fields think and act in relation to community approaches to contemporary social problems.

Finally, I will refer to a text about history by historian Edmundo O 'Gorman, replacing community psychology where he speaks about history. The text is as follows:

"I want a community psychology unpredictable as is the course of our mortal lives; a community psychology capable of surprises and accidents, fortunes and misfortunes; a community psychology woven with events that may or may not have happened; a community psychology without the shroud of essentialism and freed from the straitjacket of a supposedly necessary causation; a community psychology only understood with the help of the light of imagination... a community psychology of daring flights and always on edge as our love; a community psychology as a mirror of the changes, in the way of man's being, reflection, therefore, of the changes, in choice so

that in the focus of understanding of the past the degrading metamorphosis of man into a mere toy of an inexorable fate does not operate" (O' Gorman, 1991).

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Critical thinking on theory and practice of Community Psychology

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III International Congress of Community Psychology

Puebla, Mexico, June 3, 2010

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The Syntax of Present Day Society and the Building of Community Life.

Abstract

Communitarian life is the human condition. In it human beings find mutuality, affection and identity – three of the fundamental resources they require to fulfill their existence. Because of the span of resources communitarian life brings about it has not only proved along human history to be a condition that grants better quality of life but has also rooted the strategy of manufacturing cells (the main tool enterprises manage to face the fierce economic competition in the beginning of the XXI century). The structure of manufacturing cells is a technique which replaces the logic of the assembly lines by the logic of the communitarian life. Notwithstanding this revival of community by the enterprises, the present day society has not spread the community model as its pattern of existence. Conversely, that kind of use of the community model was neutralized by several factors, being one of them the steady production and innovation of all sorts of gadgets, which can and have been used to solve people's problems and satisfy their needs, thus an stimulus for an individualistic culture. The dependence of those gadgets has created a culture in which communitarian life is not required because people learn to depend on gadgets rather than on other people. Apparently, people do not need the community any more because being able to live alone, the other turns to be less important than the gadgets. That culture has been characterized by traits which being the social pattern of human life imposes hurdles to the development of the communitarian life. The first of these traits is the value given to and the dependence of sensations. This cultural trait has been an obstacle to community which is strongly dependent of affection. It is hard to think of a community grounded on sensations because the latter has to do with individuality. The second cultural trait is the loss of sensitiveness for the causality of things. The gradual but steady loss of confidence in the economic and political systems fuels the disappointment with the real word, a condition which according to Desbarats (2009) fuels in its turn "the bulimia" of work and of causality. Surrounded by technologies people have the perception of power and therefore become result directed rather than building of textures of causalities directed. Community implies the sharing of work on the causes of both the events and targets. The third cultural trait is the cult of the urgency, a kind of recreation of the

non-temporal time. The conditions created by the economic competition within the context produced by technologies which shrink the time and the space impose the dependence of the flow of conjunctures. These conditions are easily seen in the “zappings”, “fast”, “spots”, “clips” and “just-in-time” patterns of social and individual behavior. The “24 hours” services confirm the non temporal time. Today to be busy all the time gives meaning to the existence. How is it possible to build communitarian life when the prevailing cultural logic is the one of the flow of the conjunctures? The individual profile fueled by that culture discloses a person flexible, always rushing, with short term focus, reactive, authoritative, intolerant to frustration and to failure, unable to delegate and unmotivated to communitarian life. As such, that individual may be master of his/her time but is turned into slave of his/her desires. These conditions nourish the social sedentarization and the individualization. Through the communitarian life people can learn that the mobile phone is a powerful weapon in the war to fight the economic competition as they can also learn that it is fragile as an instrument of emancipation. In the war people face with their own conscience the most powerful weapon is reflexivity and affection, two resources they can find easily in the communitarian life, not in the gadgets.

Keywords: Communitarian life, individualistic culture, sensations, no causality, urgency, reflexivity, affection.

La Sintaxis de la sociedad actual y la construcción de vida comunitaria.

Resumen

La vida comunitaria es la condición humana. En ella los seres humanos encuentran mutualidad, afecto e identidad – tres de los recursos fundamentales que requieren para realizar su existencia. A causa del rango de recursos que aporta la vida comunitaria ésta no sólo ha probado, a lo largo de la historia humana que es una condición que ofrece mejor calidad de vida, sino también ha inspirado la estrategia de células de producción (la principal arma que las empresas gestionan para enfrentar la feroz competencia económica a principios del siglo XXI). La estructura de las células de producción es la técnica que remplaza la lógica de las líneas de ensamblaje por la lógica de la vida comunitaria. No obstante la revitalización de la comunidad por las empresas, la actual sociedad no ha difundido el modelo de comunidad como su patrón de existencia. Conversamente, ese tipo de uso del modelo de comunidad ha sido neutralizado por varios factores, uno de los cuales ha sido la producción e innovación constante de todo tipo de aparatos (gadgets) que pueden y han sido usados para resolver los problemas de las gentes y satisfacer sus necesidades, volviéndose por lo mismo en el estímulo para una cultura individualística. La dependencia de estos aparatos ha creado una cultura en la cual la vida comunitaria no se requiere porque la gente ha aprendido a depender de los aparatos más que de la gente. Aparentemente, la gente ya no necesita de la comunidad porque es capaz de vivir sola. El otro resulta ser menos importante que los aparatos. Esta cultura se ha caracterizado por rasgos que siendo el modelo social de la vida humana impone obstáculos al desarrollo de la vida comunitaria. El primero de estos rasgos es la dependencia y el valor otorgado a las sensaciones. Este rasgo cultural ha sido un obstáculo a la comunidad que depende fuertemente del afecto. Es difícil pensar en una comunidad basada en las sensaciones porque éstas tienen que ver con la individualidad. El segundo rasgo cultural es la pérdida de sensibilidad en relación a la casualidad de las cosas. La gradual pero constante pérdida de confianza en los sistemas económicos y políticos impulsa el desencanto con el mundo real, una situación que según Desbarats (2009) impulsa a su vez “la bulimia” por el trabajo y por la causalidad. Rodeada por tecnologías la gente tiene una percepción de poder y por lo mismo llega a ser “orientada a resultados” más que a construir tejidos “orientados a causalidades”. Comunidad implica el compartir trabajo en las causas de ambos, de

los acontecimientos y de los objetivos. El tercer rasgo cultural es el culto de la urgencia, una especie de recreación del tiempo no temporal. Las condiciones creadas por la competencia económica dentro del contexto producido por las tecnologías, que encojen el tiempo y el espacio, imponen la dependencia del flujo de coyunturas. Estas condiciones pueden verse fácilmente en el “zapping”, “fast”, “spots”, “clips” y “just-in-time”, patrones o esquemas de comportamiento individual y social. Los servicios de “24 horas” confirman el tiempo no temporal. Estar hoy ocupado todo el tiempo da sentido a la existencia. ¿Cómo es posible construir vida comunitaria cuando la lógica cultural prevalente es la del flujo de coyunturas? El perfil individual impulsado por esa cultura es el de una persona flexible, siempre apresurada, incapaz de delegar y sin motivación para la vida comunitaria. Como tal, este individuo puede ser dueño de su tiempo pero se vuelve un esclavo de sus deseos. Estas condiciones alimentan la sedentarización social y la individualización. A través de la vida comunitaria la gente puede aprender que el teléfono móvil es un arma poderosa en la guerra o en la lucha por la competencia económica, pero también puede aprender que es frágil como un instrumento de emancipación. En la guerra que la gente enfrenta con su propia conciencia las armas más poderosas son la reflexividad y el afecto, dos recursos que pueden encontrar fácilmente en la vida comunitaria, más no en los aparatos (gadgets).

Palabras clave: Vida comunitaria, cultura individualística, sensaciones, no causalidad, urgencia, reflexividad, afecto.

Introduction

Community is a way of being-together related to both the sustainability and the quality of human life. This belief is supported by the traditional organization of most societies in small groups, such as the family, and in the centennial history of empirical data produced within both human and biological sciences. These two supports give consistency to the conception of communitarian life as a necessity and as a rich source of resources. Innumerable studies on poverty, social peace, demographic reproduction, child socialization, mental health, well-being and the quality of life comprise data and discussions on the communitarian organization of the being-together, as another evidence of the presence of community as a fundamental human issue.

Unfortunately, it is not the need human beings have of communitarian life that defines the ways it evolves and the support it gets to be accomplished. The globalized society is a historical moment which has added new and harder challenges to communitarian life by removing from the context many of the fundamental elements the achievement of communities relies on (Lash, 2007). The weakening of those elements has turned the development of communities within the globalized and competitive society dependent of the understanding of the syntax within which society is organized and managed (Urry, 2005). The present chapter is an analysis of that syntax. It aims at exposing some of the boundaries and contingencies imposed by the globalization process to the accomplishment of communitarian life. The main question at stake in it is “what conditions globalization has created that affect the accomplishment of communitarian life?” Through the answer of this question the identification of the grammar created by the globalized society is analyzed as part of the resources through which communities are built at the dawn of the XXI century.

Why is communitarian life a popular and traditional form of being-together?

Communitarian life consists of a particular way of being-together, or being-with. Collective shared life has been present in societies since the most primitive days of men and women in this world. Community is a transcendent form of social life for it puts the individual in a creative interdependence with the group. In it, individuals are “I” and “we” at the same time. In communities, people are not gathered as a sum but as a new collective being. The community has

been a human solution for the process of adaptation found in both, humans and many animal species such as fishes, insects and mammals. Breeding and survival are related to the way the self-other relationship is molded. Even a broad oversight of that phenomenon discloses two reasons rooting the choice of communities as a way of being-together. The first is the limited capacity of animals and humans to produce all the resources required for their survival, reproduction and development: Thus they require cooperation. Being-together is a condition which amplifies those required resources as strengthens the individual's existence.

According to Cooper (interviewed by Chia and Kollinikos, 1998) the being-together in communities is so powerful that turns the action of "understanding" into the action of "interstanding". The second reason is the persistence of the communitarian way of life (*actually, its resistance*) along the evolution undergone by both animals and humans, showing that community is an effective solution for the accomplishment of adaptation of individuals and of groups. Both animals and humans manage their interaction with the world always looking for the best way to be-with and to explore each other's resources. Communitarian life has been the model chosen for millennia and is far from being overcome or set aside, even within the hard conditions imposed by the globalized world.

In investigations of "why communitarian life has succeeded?" it will not be difficult to realize that such a form of being-together has to do with fundamental resources of life such as support, trust, preservation, sharing and well-being. In few words, communitarian life is an adequate setting for the accomplishment of the human condition for its capacity to optimize those resources, and thus fosters long term hope. Within communities, individuals are preserved in their individualities, they find support in sharing activities with others and may get confidence and wings for the development of their potentialities. These conditions make communitarian life an object resistant to fragmentation and to disappearance. It accomplishes the well-known belief of Gestaltism that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. If this belief is true, the study of communities has challenged researchers because it requires steps beyond the functional question in such a way that the very understanding of the human condition is grasped as an object of study.

That challenge stems from the several faces communitarian life has; it is like a polyhedron - an object of several sides in which every side may provide information about itself and the others, to which it borders, but not really information about the whole. Besides that, just as

Gilles Deleuze (1980) understood, communitarian life is a mesh of intertwined connections like a rhizome in which the starting and ending points mesh, turning the investigation of causes and consequences an ambiguous issue. Accordingly, communitarian life can be applied and studied as a practical resource, as an economical condition, as a culture, as an ideology, as an expression of social life, as a context of reciprocity, as a network of psychological contracts, as a set of small groups and as a milieu of affection. Each of these features is like a side of the polyhedron. As the polyhedron does not exist when one takes only a single or few of its sides, community ceases its existence if some of its several features are isolated from the whole. That is the reason why communities are a continuous process of rebuilding the being-together and require methodologies capable of grasping the whole. Psychological contracts, identity and leadership are other concepts which share that sort of challenge with the concept of community.

Considering that theoretical background, it is not difficult to imagine a new track of issues and problems posed to communities by the changes fostered in society over the past four decades by the compression of time and space, as the main consequence of the spread of new tele-information technologies. These changes, today known as globalization, have created hurdles to the achievement and development of communitarian life, as anyone can observe in the difficulties met by communities such as the family to build itself as a community within the globalized context. These hurdles affect the background of communitarian life as shown in the next section.

Hurdles globalization poses to communitarian life.

One of the most evident of these hurdles is the subjection of routine, social and affective lives to the determinisms of technology. Technological procedures have become a mediator in the self-other relationship. Information can flow between people without physical contact, be it through the eyes or the ears. Since communities rely on symbolic interaction, the limitation of those resources of communication affects the way a group is managed and mastered by its members, as that has been evidenced in today's team work.

Another hurdle is the culture of individualism and urgency which is creating the a-temporal person. This person, as Nicole Aubert (2003) has beautifully analyzed, spreads fast. That person is fueled by a wide bombardment of information, made possible by the electronic

ubiquity produced mainly by the mobile phone. The a-temporal person behaves through “impulsive zappings” with a view to “spots”, “fasts” and “clips”, thus producing a new pattern of relationship with the other and the environment. Within these new conditions it is easy for people to escape from the local context of their existence. A fundamental condition of communitarian life is swept away thus changing the way the individual is “I” and “we” at the same time.

A third hurdle stemming from globalization is the fragmentation of life. The dealing with life, isolating its parts as fragments is an increasing trend in the production of manufactured goods and services. Events and actions can be and have been detached from their contexts and organized separately. For instance, today the production of car and aircraft parts as well as banking activities are manufactured in hundreds of distinct places miles away from each other and put together by anonymous workers or by machines. Much more radical than in Taylor’s times, today people don’t know who may be involved in the production of the things and services they need nor can they see the several steps of the process through which they were made. To a certain extent, individuals are detached from the activities which are essential elements of the construction of reciprocity – another fundamental condition of communitarian life.

Yet another hurdle is the economic instability, which within the globalized context sets people miles away from the means required to balance their social and affective life. For the past two decades, several countries have undergone crises originating in events carried out in other countries. Democracy, sovereignty and economic balance are not issues limited to the boundaries of a particular nation, but chiefly within a context in which the prevailing commercial pattern is fierce competition. Within this context, it is hard to fuel communitarian life, for communities rely on stability and the variables directly related to the control of the latter in the hands of unknown individuals, most of the times constituting an elite group out of the reach of the community members.

As mere ordinary and daily evidences of life in the globalized era, these hurdles reveal some challenges communities face to maintain their existence and development, within a grammar which challenges the possibility of production of some of their fundamental elements such as mutuality, justice and social economic stability. Within the globalized context, that grammar has turned into a culture which is broadly named as the economy of quality (*the prevailing economic model since the 1980s*). The economy of quality has been the ambition of most nations and enterprises (Malvezzi, 2010b). It became a general criterion for the assessment

of all sorts of outcomes, as a kind of dictatorship the world has hardly seen before. It is beyond any criticism since the things that have been done under its syntax are apparently moral and justified by the introduction of new technologies that amplify the control people have over the environment. On that rationality, most people today comply with the priority given to the system of production over the individual under the shelter of the quest for high quality standards for everything. The impacts of teleworking on families and small communities are undeniable evidence of the above referred to subjection. The economy of quality has tremendous potentialities as an applicable syntax to communitarian life but within the realms of both, an individualistic culture and the legitimacy of fierce and wild competition. It can hardly give any kind of support to communitarian life although it has been legitimized as the path for the development of society.

In very simple terms, from the late seventies, the economy of quality has been fueled by a rationality which explores the potentials of objects, situations and events with a view to optimize both the resources and the results. That exploration within a fragmented context subjects the process of production to the mastery of the moral of results. According to that moral, any action which improves the results deserves approval, may get priority and therefore should be implemented. That rationality came to fit to the commercial competition and as such, evolved to require the highest performance standards and optimized results from both individuals and institutions. In it the individual is taken as a resource detached from the communitarian life to which he/she belongs. Kallinikos (2003) conceived the worker into that grammar as the modular man (*the Lego man*) since the individual is seen and appraised under the capacity of his/her parts to add value to the results. What matters is the part of the person that contributes visibly to the optimization of the results. The individual is paid, his/her skills rated and his/her results considered in relation to his/her results; not in relation to his/her person. The grammar produced by the economy of quality has fostered the culture of individualism, fragmentation and urgency which, allied to the easy access to technologies and other resources, has empowered individuals, enabling them to compete with institutions, such as their own families and communities. Such a power is easily turned into several sorts of weapon.

The society organized on those contingencies has been turned into a realm of paradoxes some of which can give a good sample to explain them all. Never have workers been so required for the production of quality and never have they been so vulnerable. Society stretches biological

aging at the same time that it anticipates economic aging. Individuals are required to have a defined identity at the same time that they are asked to adapt and change who they are according to the requirements of the optimization of economical outcomes. These and other paradoxes reveal the fragmentation of the way society is organized just as people became familiarized with them. Paradoxes hardly upset most people. In that society, consistency has become a short term feature, a condition which may fuel pragmatism and individualism as the prevailing elements of the XXI century cultural pattern. Within that context the whole may be a mere sum of the parts and not a virtual and collective subject as it happens with communities. A very important feature of this contrast between communitarian life and globalization is in another paradox present in the relationship between self-managed teams and the creation of the nomad worker.

The economy of quality has never stopped the quest for the exploration of the emerging potentialities present in the new technologies and the richness of teams. In the beginning of the new millennium, the outcome of that endeavor was clear: The replacement of the management of production through big organizational structures by the management of production through a network of projects. This new model of production of services and goods fostered the development of a new sort of production structure which has been named as the network of self-managed teams. In the present historical moment, this structure characterizes the highest managerial technology of production.

Today, most enterprises are constituted by and accomplish their mission through teamwork. The last figures disclose that about 80% of activities in enterprises are performed by interdependent teams and that most of the biggest enterprises are structured into self-managed teams. The figures also reveal that over the last two decades enterprises have switched the management of teams, from giving and accomplishing orders, to the foment of “shared occasioning”. Virtually, everybody working in an enterprise performs through and belongs to one or more teams (*the most important required skill*). The increase of team work expresses slow but steady decentralization through self-managed teams. Enterprises are evolving towards the building of interdependent autonomy through networks of project management. That kind of decentralization requires cooperation as the collective pattern of performance. Cooperation is sap of communitarian life. Self-managed teams work dependent on interaction and communication as their central managerial instrument because production relies on the integration of information. Teams foster and carry out all sorts of information, scenarios and criteria confrontations

(*discussions*), negotiations, legitimacy and creation. Members of self-managed teams are not confined to the role of mere executing hands but are fundamental creators of targets, producers of designs and executors of actions. Individuals discuss, decide and perform. Today, the more knowledge intensive is an enterprise, a department, or a project, the more it relies on decisions produced by shared knowledge created collectively through intense interaction and communication between its members. Teams behave a socio-cognitive-operative-integrated-systems of cooperation, i.e., the very set of conditions of a communitarian life. Working teams (*as required by present day enterprises*) are constituted by interdependent individuals performing tasks by complementing each other in the shared and synergistic endeavor to achieve the outcome.

Their effectiveness is the outcome of the sense of unity, the certainty and the reliance that all members are committed to the same targets (*group process*). Teams integrate the diversity present in individual knowledge by creating common shared knowledge which is a fundamental support for the collective action required by the present day patterns of time and quality. The competence of those teams stems from the synergy of the individual's cognitions and actions (*a contingency hardly achieved by other means than leadership and cooperation*). As socio cognitive-operative-integrated-systems, working teams are constituted as a synergic plural performance through the management of the group interdependence (*the adaptation to the other*) and complementarity (*the recognition of the task performed by the other as a necessity*). Those events reveal that also enterprises are applying in a peculiar way the model developed by communitarian experience although they do not foster the development of the individual as subject (*an essential feature of the communitarian model*). The enterprise succeeds in building teams like communities although is limited in the construction of teams and individuals as subjects. Differentiated from communities, enterprises hardly know how to apply leadership out of the authoritarian control such that happens in communitarian life.

The power of leadership action is in the innovation (*production of diversity*) posed in the group process by challenging the cognitions of the group. As such a power, leadership innovates the prevailing rationality of the group by posing new designs and meanings for effective action. Accordingly, leadership has a direct impact in three fundamental processes of the group synergy (Chia, 1998). *The first* is the process of sensemaking which is the way the group differentiates and integrates the echo systems of meanings and values. Teams are a meshwork of meanings and

values that ground the understanding of actions; leaders' actions have direct impact in the dynamics of the meanings. *The second* process is the networking which is the process of redesign of the complex structure of intertwined roles. Teams are essentially a cobweb of social interaction organized by expectations of performance in relation to individuals who occupy a specific position in the group. Leaders' actions promote legitimized changes in the cobweb. *The third* process is the enactment which is the means of fostering and molding collective performance. Teams are a network of activities functionally integrated which as a whole produce the evidences that give empirical support for the validation of meanings, values and roles. Leaders' actions also are a source of legitimized changes in that network. Accordingly, the economy of quality is recreating the way of being-together applying the best instrument found in the communitarian model as far as these psychological processes are concerned in its external features. In fact, that new way is externally similar to a community but indeed most of self-managed teams are false communities because they do not care about the condition of subject and the pattern of reciprocity that true communities require.

That false community is a condition of easy understanding. Self-managed teams are correlated with the quality of those enterprises. Following the continuous innovation and dynamic changes, performance relies less on tasks' characteristics than on subjective features such as the sharing of information, mutual trust and team synergic cohesion. The communitarian model is a strong instrument for the creation of socio-cognitive-cooperative-integrated systems as required by the accomplishment of the network of projects. In doing so the enterprise manages the mastery of the development of virtual and individual subjects (*today restricted to the professional in charge of the strategic issues*). One may call that hybrid model as a form of co-construction which is a collective action grounded in "networked conglomerates" wherein individuals and groups share resources for compatible targets which are not necessarily shared nor function as a team, but actually the targets are fragmented. Within co-construction conglomerates the prevailing syntax turns to be the one of effectiveness (*the moral of results*) together with the syntax of fear (*the moral of escape*) while communities work over the syntax of hope (*the moral of ideals and solidarity*).

A particular outcome of the development of the economy of quality, that here is taken as the second feature of the economy of quality, is the transformation of workers into nomads. Today, workers are nomads not because they move like Bedouins and Guaranís used to do, but

because the workplace undergoes continuous changes and so imposes on them the endless need of adaption to the context dynamics which Margaret Archer (2000) has named as emerging properties. Since the individual is an outcome of the self-other relationship, those frequent changes in others as well as in the context make him/her change accordingly to adapt to the new contingencies – today mainly expressed through information. Globalized working life is constituted by frequent changes in the demands of new skills, the setting of distinct references and need of new identities (Malvezzi, 2010a). As any nomad, the worker is a vulnerable person since he/she faces an everlasting instability and for that he/she depends on his/her daily results. Within the communitarian life the individual may not be as vulnerable since he/she is not only an “I” but is also a “we”.

As happens with all nomads, the worker balance is continuously threatened. He/she requires continuous revalidation. These two conditions make him/her instable and vulnerable. He/she is challenged by an existential impermanence, having to administer his/her life through a troubled relationship with the environment. His/her life becomes a new paradox – the management of one’s own autonomy within a context which requires compliance with the prevailing culture and the demands of production.

Today, to face the paradox, workers have to struggle to keep themselves updated. This updating is, generally speaking grounded in several actions such as the construction of a personal plan of professional development, the engagement in social and professional networks and the mastery of the adaptation of his/her own professional identity. Putting these actions into the jargon of present day culture, individuals are required to adapt, to develop, to have a wide range of alternative ways to follow, to be fast, productive, effective, resistant, competitive, successful, autonomous and committed. These features constitute the identity which is applied to all workers. If one fails in a single of these features, the risk of marginalization is always at one’s door. The quest for updating such an identity sets the globalized worker on the same track as other sorts of nomad life, which in its turn requires the being-together – collective competencies. The economic production has already solved that equation by creating the self-managed teams, as explained earlier in this chapter. The social and individual lives have not yet produced a solution for the quality of life in the globalized society.

Conclusion

In the globalization era, the building of communitarian life has proved to be a fundamental resource for the exploration of the emancipatory potentiality of subjectivity as a basic condition of the economy of quality of life. Without emancipation quality of life can scarcely be considered. Looking at self-managed teams, it is not difficult to find in them the main pillars (*synergy, creativity, collective competencies and commitment*) required by the achievement of quality in economic production. All these features have been ever present in communitarian life. May be the construction of communitarian life in the globalized society is not a matter of technologies or models, but of commitment to change society towards a sustainable human life by looking for the quality found in community.

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Countercurrent Subject (Human Actor) and Community

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Invited Keynote Address at the III International Congress of Community Psychology

Puebla, Mexico, June 3, 2010

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Abstract

The first part of the conference tries to show how the constitution of qualitatively human social actors and of humanizing communities are processes that implicate each other and that these processes cannot happen in the dominant direction of this *historic figure*. Therefore, the title does not express one of the ways of being a human social actor and of creating a community; it expresses the only one possible. The second part analyzes the way in which the inhabitants of Latin American popular neighborhoods become human social actors. It characterizes their way of being as being-in-between: in-between the rural and the urban, in-between the popular neighborhood and the city and in-between the heterogeneities of the popular neighborhood. The being-in-between those coordinates gives place to various human types, some better at impersonating subjectuality than others. This is born of the obsession we characterize as agonic conatus for a dignified life. In considering conviviality as the mode of relation of the inhabitants of the popular neighborhood, we ask ourselves how to pass from it onto community, given that community is not in the history or pre-history of the popular neighborhood. The community would be a contemporary construction. In clarifying the factors that contribute to the formation of communities, we weigh the religious organizations and study the role of the church base communities (CEB's in Spanish) which are the humus of liberation pastoral work. We give importance to the external factor that catalyzes the process, demonstrating its risks and the need to overcome the illustrated modernity relationship.

Keywords: Being-in-between, obsession, conviviality, CEBs (church based communities)

Sujeto y Comunidad a Contracorriente

Resumen

La primera parte trata de mostrar cómo la constitución de sujetos cualitativamente humanos y de comunidades humanizadores son procesos que se implican y que estos procesos no pueden acontecer en la dirección dominante de esta *figura histórica*. Por tanto, el título no expresa uno de los modos de ser sujeto y de vivir en comunidad, sino el único posible. La segunda parte analiza el modo como se hacen sujetos los habitantes de los barrios de América Latina.

Caracteriza su modo de ser como estar-entre: entre el campo y la ciudad, entre el barrio y la ciudad y entre las heterogeneidades del barrio. El estar entre esas coordenadas da lugar a diversos tipos humanos, unos mejores conductores que otros de la subjetualidad. Ésta nace de la obsesión que caracterizamos como conato agónico por la vida digna. Al considerar a la convivialidad como el modo de relación de los habitantes de barrio, nos preguntamos cómo pasar de ella a la comunidad, ya que ella no está ni en la historia ni en la prehistoria del barrio. La comunidad sería una construcción contemporánea. Al precisar los factores que coadyuvan a que se formen comunidades, valoramos las organizaciones religiosas y estudiamos el papel de las comunidades eclesiales de base (CEBs) que son el humus de la pastoral de la liberación. Damos importancia al factor externo que catalice el proceso, haciendo ver, sin embargo, sus riesgos y la necesidad de superar la relación ilustrada.

Palabras clave: Estar-entre, obsesión, convivialidad, CEBs (Comunidades Eclesiales de Base)

1. Today every human (subject) actor and every community are built countercurrent to the dominant direction.

Human actors (subjects), personalized communities and genuinely democratic and open societies are directly proportional.

We begin by manifesting our conviction in that human beings always have the possibility of constituting themselves as qualitatively human actors and living in personalized communities. The conditionings of the actors or the environment, or, moreover the combination of both, can enhance or hinder this constituting process; in the negative case it can even hinder it greatly, but never cancel it. The possibility of becoming a person is always in the hands of the person, accepting the life received from others as a gift and being a gift to others, in an open manner; as well as it is in his or her hands to live in personalizing communities, meaning, in relationships with a name and face, horizontal, mutual and open.

From the start, we are establishing the equivalence between the truly human actor and the person (Ellacuría, 1991: 265-311; Moltmann, 1986; Masiá Clavel, 2004: 77-167; Ladaria, 1995: 79-93; Gevaert, 2003: 43-62, 139-141; Díaz, 2002; Forte, 2000: 89-105; Comblin, 1985: 59-75; Masiá Clavel, 2005)¹ and we characterize the community as one of the fields that people create and in which people develop as such. The other field is society. Both fields from the point of view of the persons' constitution are equally relevant and directly proportional, given that people are such due to the relationships (Levinas, 1993:23; de la Torre, 2005: 263-306; Masiá Clavel, 2005: 263-306; Alfaro, 1988: 219-238; Trigo, 2008c; Gergen, 1992: 204, 183-219; Zubiri, 2006: 210)² they establish and these relationships are precisely the ones that constitute communities and society, as we have characterized them. Society is not an inevitable decadence of community, that would be understood then as what is really humanizing, nor the necessary and desirable traditional communitarianism, that with its fixism prevented the development of the individual's virtuosities. In society the actors join their assets to form social bodies inhibiting their ownness; whilst in the community they do not inhibit it but rather they enter with their own name and face (Ellacuría, 1991: 189-194, 303-311).

In society it is indispensable that each actor inhibit his ownness because if not a truly ecumenical social body is not formed. For example, if a bureaucrat treats each one as such a specific person and not as a citizen who has the right to that service, he or she would prefer the

people of his or her own environment or those with whom he or she has an affinity or interest and would relegate those with whom he or she has nothing to do with or those that militate on a different side. What personalizes the performance of a bureaucrat is his or her relative unpersonalization to concentrate all his or her energies and interest in seeing to the one that legitimately requests his or her services. What depersonalizes is, on the contrary, not inhibiting particularities that connect him or her directly or inversely with the users, when they all have the same right.

In the community, on the contrary, what is demanded is that each one accept the other, each one with his or her ownness, that recognizes them and that interacts from the somehow transcendental elements that constitute the community. For example, in a family two brothers can dislike each other; but as long as each of them acts from their common origin that binds them, they will truly care for each other, and they will recognize themselves in the most genuine manner and each will seek the other's wellbeing.

So then, when speaking from here on of community, we are always assuming the correlation of society, without which the community actually closes in on itself, it becomes corporative, and in this way it depersonalizes its members. (Barcellona, 1992: 121-126)³.

Individualistic individuals and corporatized communities are at the same time a reaction and product of corporatized and globalized business.

This note is essential in our *historical figure*, in which the threat of depersonalization is so widespread and is occurring so closely that people tend to take refuge in corporatized communities, without realizing that the massive threat comes, mainly, from globalized corporations. Opposing the family or other community, experienced as a corporation, to the global corporatized business means strengthening the existing corporatism that makes it impossible for it to constitute itself as a human actor to which it is folded until it defines itself by its logic.

Thus, communities that are not built up with the constitution of truly free and democratic societies are not personalizing communities. We talk about the constitution because no current society is, and because it is not dependent only on its institutions but on the actions undertaken in

that direction by these human actors. Just as the existence of human actors will depend on the type of repeated actions.

From what has been said it appears that the existence of qualitatively human actors and humanizing communities is seriously threatened by environmental individualism (Goizueta, 2009: 85-100)⁴, which is mainly the product of global corporations, meaning that it is ultimately threatened by the global corporatized companies. But in turn these companies would not have achieved so much power if there had been a critical mass of qualitatively human actors and humanizing communities.

Incompatibility between global corporations and human actors, personalized communities and democratic and free societies.

A direct struggle is thus posed between these corporatized and globalized companies and the individuals who revolve in their orbit, on the one hand, and qualitative human actors and the communities that are defined by free, mutual, open relationships and the truly democratic and free societies, on the other.

But the struggle takes place with different weapons: corporatized companies are based on seduction and imposition, from the latest technology in the service of money and power. Individual actors and communities and societies, in turn, encourage freedom, a freedom that takes place in symbiotic relationships, both in coming out of themselves and giving themselves out to other people in the communities, as in pooling assets to build ecumenical and dynamic social bodies, that become the field of personalizing communities and qualitatively human actors.

However, the actors, communities and societies that we have characterized spend most of their energies not in overcoming market totalitarianism but in exercising from their own principles and their own logic with such poise that were able to perform, relatively unaffected and independent from the dominant direction of this *historical figure*, yet not outside it, but just acting their civilizational and cultural assets (namely the culture of democracy (Trigo, 2007: 49-63), that of human rights (Barcellona, 1992: 105-109) and life), many of which have no place nor full development in the dominant direction of the totalitarian market (Barcellona, 1992: 127-137)⁵.

So, to them combat is not to destroy the globalized firms but only to de-corporatize them, returning them, from the culture of democracy and from politics, to the fluidity of history that they are determined to remove to function in their present, designed and controlled by them and projected indefinitely (de Sebastián, 1999; Barcellona, 1992: 132)⁶.

Today there is only the possibility of countercurrent individuals actors and communities.

If individualism and corporatism are the two axes around which the dominant direction of this historical figure is structured, it is clear that both human actors and communities can only come to constitute a countercurrent (Touraine, 2006: 297-301; 2009: 143-207). Thus the title that has been proposed to me, as an actor and community in countercurrent, does not express, in my opinion, one of the classes of potential actors, that of those who go countercurrent to the dominant direction of this *historical figure*, but the only possible condition in this situation, of all qualitatively human actors and all non-corporatized community (Morin, 2010)⁷.

Indeed, the fact that human beings understand themselves as beings aspiring to be born of themselves, that are unaware of constituent bonds (and therefore communities) and simply establish relationships for pleasure or convenience is the condition of possibility for corporations to prevail without counterweight turning them into addicts of merchandise through advertising and subjecting them to the wage relation, reduced to a private contract. The introduction of individualism entails that the only organizations that understand themselves of themselves, in themselves and for themselves, are the globalized corporate enterprises (Bauman, 2005; 2010). This is so because of the abstract legal universalism in which politics lie, that in reality are a product of it, is the way to protect, making them invisible, the existing power relations in which the globalized corporations prevail, that are ultimately controlling policy. (Barcellona, 2005; 2010).

These companies could not reign without counterweight, if they were facing not isolated individuals but actors freely released that are able to resist temptations and pressures, who are capable of an authentic experience of reality, who are strongly oriented to life, to live, let live, to live together and give life; that recognize others, especially absolute others that are the poor and cultures considered as inferior by their own, because they are so free that they sacrifice themselves for what goes beyond their interests. With such actors companies cannot scientifically

plan what they sell because they are not influenced by advertising campaigns but they consume only what they need and what empowers them humanely, without any compulsion to consume more than that. These individuals live in a culture of democracy and are therefore able to fight steadily not for a spectacular policy but one that is genuinely deliberative and democratic, which limits corporations, preventing the market from unfolding with a totalitarian logic (Barcellona, 1992: 26-28)⁸.

In fact individualistic individuals and corporatized companies are the two poles of the same horizon because those who do not want to be seen as mere members of sets, corporatized sets, exacerbate their individuality, without realizing that when they believe that they live from themselves, they are choosing from the menu offered by corporations.

In turn, the perception of the frightening banality that induces this scheme governed by the totalitarianism of the market leads to a growing number of people who enroll in fundamentalist organizations that include some kind of communalism, or meaning of corporate community, in which relationships follow pre-established guidelines made by the leadership in a non-deliberative manner. The reason is that the threat of human wreckage is so direct that many think that the deliberate use of personal freedom is a luxury we have no right to have. When the enemy does not act with any regard, one cannot be in a plan of maximums. It seems more expedient to enroll in an organization with clear approaches, not governed by the guidelines of the market, and to follow their own guidelines.

Overcoming this scheme, that equally ignores the qualitatively human actor and the humanizing community, must include a genuinely democratic type of politics that is not restricted, as proposed by current liberalism, to safeguard individuals but that includes some form of sharing of the partner's assets. However, that type of politics will never come to pass if there is no real critical mass of human actors involved in non-fundamentalist communities and in free associations that promote life and the recognition of others, especially of those who are different and above all the poor, and that are able to make sacrifices for that which transcends their individual interests.

It is therefore an illusion to think that you can be an authentic human actor and live in personalizing communities within the established order. The installation in the society of risk or the state of welfare requires in the best of cases, the acceptance of a degree of insensitivity for others so frightening, especially those who cannot become established or that are outside, which

is the negation of qualitative humanity, that includes positive effective recognition of others and sacrifice for what is beyond their individual and corporate interests. That is in the best case, because the common thing is that, whether one tells oneself or not, one actually participates in oppression and exclusion, both at work and in political options.

We believe that the attempt to preserve oneself in existence, that Spinoza theorized as the first and only principle of positive virtuality (Spinoza, 1980: 91), expresses the principle that drives the lives of those who benefit from the dominant direction of this totalitarian global market (Levinas, 1993: 10; Horkheimer and Adorno, 1994: 82)⁹. He expresses the radical individualism that many fail to recognize in themselves, but from where they in fact operate. Staying in existence above all involves the struggle of all against all for the better position and which allows for the less scrupled to prevail. This priority, which necessarily becomes adversarial, prevents the formation of qualitatively human actors.

Being a qualitatively human actor in many environments becomes a venture so countercurrent that is ultimately heroic.

It is not ideal that human actors and humanizing communities have to build themselves on a countercurrent. It rather expresses an anomaly: the failure of the dominant direction of this historical figure. The current direction is so inhuman that for it to prevail it is not enough to keep up the continuous exercise of compulsion and fear and, of course, seduction. A constant mass idealization is essential so that its true degree of distortion is not perceived, the abysmal degree to which the established order oppresses reality, the frightening degree of dehumanization in which there are those who, seduced and / or fearful, fold into it and, above all, their abettors.

So we have to fight relentlessly so that within this historical figure another direction prevails in which its civilizational and cultural assets are expressed and developed and, for that matter, it becomes a good conduit of human actors and personalized communities and even promotes them. We believe that there are minorities working from alternative logics so that they don't only resist but seek to overcome the existing order. The alternative is easy to see, not only in their way of living and thinking but in that they volunteer to do it not for sheer moral reasons, but for the joy of giving and sharing in life.

However, we want to note, that while it is true that it is undesirable for individual actors and communities to have to build themselves on a countercurrent, we must also recognize that

those who manage to build themselves under such adverse circumstances do it with an excellence that they would not have achieved otherwise.

2. Actors human (subjects) and communities in the popular neighborhoods of latin america

This horizon that we have briefly outlined provides a framework for the understanding of a sustained experience over more than three decades, especially in popular neighborhoods of Latin American cities and groups in solidarity with them, from my membership with the historical trend known as Liberation Theology (Trigo, 2004)¹⁰ and from the platform of a research and social action center that we Jesuits run in Venezuela called Gumilla Center (Gumilla, 2004: 163-171)¹¹.

What I have found is that, unlike the attempt to remain in existence, which Spinoza theorized and that according to Horkheimer and Adorno constitutes the *ethos* and the *pathos* of the West, the attempt which is the source of the suburban culture is the dying attempt for a dignified life, whose core expressions are home (home and family) and the infrastructure of the popular neighborhood, their habitat interactions and that result in conviviality and the assumption or, indeed, the creation of a character as a way of becoming a person (Trigo b, 2008). Then we will develop this proposal.

Popular neighborhood culture and subculture of poverty.

First we must distinguish between the culture of the popular neighborhood and the subculture of poverty. The latter is in fact not a culture as it requires not only the constitutional reference to the others but also to itself and neither is it guided by the transcendent claim of becoming qualitatively human. In this situation all sense of process has been lost and one only lives to satisfy the most basic needs and drives. By analogy it can be called culture because this way of life, or more properly stated, of survival generates automation, we can even say that some habits on one hand, achieve a certain stability, in other words the fact of survival, but that on the other hand, make it extremely difficult to induce a proactive change.

The breakdown of families and habitats and more generally of conviviality that characterizes the atmosphere of the popular neighborhood, because of the violence spread by the lack of productive work and expectations, lead to an internal breakdown in which the individual abandons himself, no longer relates to himself and therefore loses ties with others. This phenomenon is increased by the abandonment of the State and city, a growing neglect in many Latin American cities.

The subculture of poverty is the cancer of the culture of popular neighborhoods and unfortunately for quite many citizens of the capital it is what characterizes neighborhoods.

Being-between as the characterization of a popular neighborhood resident. Types that result.

More generally many still believe that in the popular neighborhoods there is no culture because its inhabitants ceased to be farmers and have not fully embraced the city. Because of this condition of uncertainty which they attribute to the residents of popular neighborhoods, many people considered them dangerous because they are unstable.

I would like to stress that, indeed, the inhabitants of popular neighborhoods aren't characterized by their rooting, such as the Indians or peasant farmers or urban dwellers of traditional families, but a vital position that we characterize as being-between.

The popular neighborhood resident is between rural and urban, because when he moves he isn't thinking of the neighborhood but of the city. This situation gives rise to three human types: the stranger, if he emigrated because there were no means of making a living, but still valued his way of life. The outcast, if he emigrated to the city because the peasant way of life became narrow and humiliating for him and yet he did not become assimilated into the city to which he aspired. His desire is to be in the city and he demonstrated with his attitude that he is in the neighborhood because he has no means of leaving, yet he does not live it but rather suffers it.

Additionally the location between the farmland and the city cannot be marked by one of the two extremes, but by the creation of an actor between them, such as the popular neighborhood is a place between the two. This is, by excellence, the creator of the culture of the popular neighborhood and while he establishes himself he creates it.

So, the culture of the popular neighborhood is obviously a contemporary culture, as is Western globalized culture, on the other end of the spectrum of Latin American culture, and as the indigenous, Afro-Latin, traditional urban or rural cultures are not, those who think that culture is something settled throughout many generations that is received and assimilated. This perception of culture explains that those in the traditional culture cannot understand that the popular neighborhood-dwellers, who are new people, may have their own culture.

The popular neighborhood resident is also between the neighborhood and the city, as he is settled in the popular neighborhood and works in the city. Every morning he commutes to the city and returns at dusk. This situation gives rise to two types of humans. The intermediary, when his loyalty is with the city organization that he represents in the neighborhood and the mediator, when he belongs to both sides and mediates between them and above all in himself.

The intermediary has an extensive presence in the popular neighborhood, an ambivalent, if not negative position. The city, on the one hand, does not know the culture of the popular neighborhood, but on the other, does not want the neighborhood to be constituted from itself but rather pretends to control it. This attitude is shared by charity institutions that typify the popular neighborhood merely by the shortcomings that they attempt to remedy, to promote organizations that attempt to become the paradigm to which those in the neighborhood have to come to, or political organizations, which come to the popular neighborhood promising realizations in exchange for votes, and from there to the State that gives, in exchange for loyalty, that which they are required to give the citizens in any case being that they are subject to their rights. This is why all these organizations operate with internal, as well as with external agents, with intermediaries from neighborhoods: people shaped by the logic of these institutions that therefore despise their neighbors and place their identity into learning the institutional proposals that they represent. These are asymmetric relations, both theirs in regard to the institutions, which are of subordinate participation, and in regard to the popular neighborhood, which are aimed at obtaining favors in return for status or other benefits.

The characteristic of the mediator is the symmetric mediation for loyalty, both to the neighborhood as well as to the city. His relations with the city are not subordinate but symmetrical: he is a self-aware citizen, dignified and productive and therefore the city is happy with his performance and his person, he, as one of them, may also appear before them as one from the popular neighborhood and defend the neighborhood against the city giving them a

genuine understanding of the neighborhood. But in the popular neighborhood he does not act as a representative of the city but as a popular neighbor aware of the dignity of the neighborhood, who struggles to make it worthy all the way from the condition of actors of the neighborhood to the respectful and qualified concourse of the city. Nor does he shun his rural roots and the countryside, as one of them, he defends the popular neighborhood and has a genuine vision of the city and in turn the popular neighborhood and city present the reality of the country with its abandonment by the State and its potentialities. From my point of view the status of mediator is the highest possibility of human fulfillment (Trigo, 2001: 85-128)¹².

There is a third manifestation of being-between that characterizes people of the popular neighborhoods: to be between the heterogeneities of the neighborhood. First it should be noted that the city somehow homogenizes its inhabitants, with the result that cultural diversity is expressed primarily in private life or corporate partnerships. Everyone in the popular neighborhood tends to manifest himself as he is, even if it represents drawbacks. First of all because the popular neighborhood is not a refined mold that decants whoever enters it. That is a traditional and living city, for example, in Venezuela, Maracaibo. By contrast, the neighborhood is a contemporary creation to which everyone contributes from what he is and has. Moreover, in the popular neighborhood there is barely any place for privacy in the sense of the city, because for starters the virtual absence of public spaces and the proximity and small size of family spaces leaves almost no room for privacy. In addition, the typical neighborhood environment is conviviality. Thus, in the neighborhood, heterogeneities are easily apparent. It is normal for them to give rise to misunderstandings, friction and animosity, but that, as coexistence is a matter of life or death, there is awareness that we must try to overcome the negative and relate positively.

This all of a sudden complicates life, which is already too complex, as we said, for the residents of popular neighborhoods. If everyone is looking for his life from his origin and expectations, this task becomes more difficult when perceiving in the daily friction very different ways of dealing with reality. Even though the inextricable diversity also sharpens the drive to each find his own identity and consistency. There are some who accept this diversity as an asset and take it into account in their relationships. But for most part, at best, this is a point of arrival. Many, waving to everyone and expressing benevolence, starting with their relatives or acquaintances, their countrymen or co-workers or those for whom they have political, religious or sports affinities. Also, obviously, they seek to relate positively to their immediate neighbors.

This variable also results in different types of individuals, from the bully, the one that maintains a low profile, seeking not to bother nor be bothered, to the one that manages to treat everyone well, although without delving into the relation or the one that regularly fosters neighborly relations opening up to diversity, enriched by it and enriching others with their contribution.

The agonistic attempt for a dignified life, source of popular neighborhood culture.

However, all these types, with their different self-awareness, are faced both with the fact that there is no place for them in the city and a State that increasingly abandons them to their fate, and therefore having to face the challenge that they will not live, if their life is not born from within themselves. And these people, so distinct from one another, accept this challenge, a daunting challenge that wears them out and that is about to make them insane, but that also constructs them as intense and dense human actors, because they are always under tension, but ordinarily are able to live naturally, and because their lifestyle requires them to be versatile. Indeed, they have to make their homes, set up the neighborhood's infrastructure, find a job in the city and have the ability to move in it, to establish popular neighborhood relationships, acquire a trade, build a family. And they must do everything at once, because without all these elements human life is not possible and they aspire to a truly human life. Therefore the efforts of the people in the popular neighborhoods are actually alternative. They have to learn everything and do everything.

And everything takes place within a countercurrent. The State does not even provide security, much less adequate infrastructure, quality education or social security. They really have no rights. That is, neither the State nor the city recognizes them. Therefore their effort for life is agonistic: a commitment to live when there are no conditions in which to live, especially when death lurks. The inhabitants of the city, especially the middle and rich class can take life for granted and the pursuit to qualify it. The goal of neighborhood resident is living, because life cannot be taken for granted. Violence, malnutrition, diseases of the poor, lack of stable work and the neglect and contempt felt, threaten life. And the popular neighborhood residents strive to live tenaciously, as if it were an obsession.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* it is stated that "they learned that dominant obsessions prevail against death" (García Márquez, 1968: 346). This quote is the key to the book and in the novel it is referred to as the obsession of love. In the novel the carriers of the constructive obsession that makes life possible are women, who are not carried away by illusions and settle in daily life. Also in the neighborhood love as the source of life, not the love of the *telenovela* and the bolero but the love lived every day without almost naming it or only being named when it symbolizes this everyday waste of life or when it helps to live in a very tight trance, it is what explains this obsession from which flows the culture that constitutes them into human and humanizing areas. And it is also true that women in the neighborhood are the more qualified and consistent carriers of the constructive engagement from which their culture flows.

When, overcoming the customary neglect of the State and the lack of productive work, as well as the constant tension to manage to live where there are no conditions for it, the person that reaches this constructive engagement becomes an extremely qualitative human actor.

It is obvious that not all popular neighborhood residents achieve these levels of humanity. To live upstream, as we have characterized, wears terribly, requires a constant tension that not everyone can afford. And not a few turn primal until they become beast-like, returned to their drives; others become threatened wild beasts that spread terror in the popular neighborhood; others who are convinced of the futility of the effort, remain at a critical minimum. Others, specially male, handicapped by reliance on the figure of the mother who keeps them from becoming actors and because of a macho subculture that imposes on them teenage parameters, leaving everything to start over, each time with an increasing human precariousness. Others mimic as citizens and subordinate themselves to any organization in the city, trying unsuccessfully to climb or at least believe that they are someone. But others, in the midst of their weaknesses and disadvantages, that make them think again and again that they are overstretched and cannot cope any more, they manage, however, to edify themselves as eminent human actors in the endless process of raising their home and family and of building the neighborhood.

These are, above all, those who we said created a place and an identity between town and country, mediators between the popular neighborhood and the city (and also the country) and those who came to accept as their own asset the heterogeneities of the neighborhood, interacting constructively with them.

The characteristic of the popular neighborhood is the conviviality, not the communities.

Faced with the idea that more than a few city people tend to have neighborhoods and areas of dense communality, we have to say that in popular neighborhoods there are hardly any remains of traditional communality and therefore its communities have to be of contemporary creation, including the family.

Moreover, most of its inhabitants never lived as in a community. We could say that the ancient inhabitants of the highlands, from Mexico and Guatemala to Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, and perhaps some provinces of northwestern Argentina, such as areas of high cultures in Indo America, that in the colony, reduced to villages, continued to live as indigenous communities, although subject to the "encomenderos" (land trustees), and the mestizo people that originated from them, still preserve community structures, although they were not recognized by the liberal governments of the nineteenth century. However, many of their members, perhaps the most capable, as was the case in the European Lower Middle Ages, leaving their communities and moving to the cities, and to the popular neighborhoods, because they felt that the narrowness of these ancient structures, more conducive to preserving than to engaging in dynamic processes, drowned their personal development.

The rest of Latin America did not resist the cultural clash with the Europeans and, despite the protection of the missions, that at least prevented their destruction and made possible some cultural mixing and technological transmission, as Spanish villages settled in its territory and they were left in their peripheries, becoming their proletariat until they disappeared as communities.

In the prehistory of the neighborhood people, at least since the nineteenth century and in many cases before, there is the hacienda (a large estate), where camaraderie reigned, but where community was absent and emphasized the individuality of some laborers from the mass of men that felt they were the landowner's men. Those with most developed individuality, that did not resist the subordination and abuse, would go to tame virgin soil and settle on their own. To mention the prototype case, much of Colombia has been settled that way and therefore the bitterness of the peasants whom the guerrillas and paramilitaries in particular have driven from their land, so dearly their own, without the State coming out in their defense.

As we have seen, in the case of origin of plateaus as elsewhere, to the neighborhood come individuals to find not only livelihoods but to become themselves. In no way are they the outcasts who think only of survival. In them there is a clear establishment purpose.

While it is to be acknowledged that in the neighborhoods of Andean origin there is a certain propensity to build communities under a new egalitarian basis. Perhaps we can say the same of the cities of the highlands of Mexico and Guatemala. But generally speaking, the characteristic of the popular neighborhood is the conviviality and not the community: peers are willing to help each other and live together.

Conviviality and communality.

What distinguishes this way of living, of the community? It differs in that conviviality, even though the interface is continuous and deep, is between individuals who remain as such and do not constitute a we, which is what characterizes the community. The form of relation of conviviality is adjustment: "I want to relate to you and you to me. While we do well, we continue the relationship, but if it does not suit any of us anymore, we part. "

That is why so many do not marry. To marry means to constitute a we .While that way of being is not conceived (the us that constitutes the couple and then the family), it makes no sense to take that step, because those who adjust always have to be validating this relationship; while when getting married, they no longer feel that freely contracted obligation .That is why men say that if they marry, the woman gets spoiled. I think they are right and should not marry until they change their horizon.

The absence of traditional communality is another indication that the culture of the neighborhood is a contemporary culture.

Now, that convivial individuality is also not the modern individualism that upset the organic medieval society, nor that which prevails today in Latin American cities. Conviviality expresses, obviously, desire, liking and decision to live in an open way. Living as a way of living and finding fulfillment. But additionally insisting that those who cohabit are people with a highly developed sense of their own individuality.

The step from conviviality to the community requires an external component.

Is it easy to move from conviviality to community? Is it ever achieved in a meaningful way in our neighborhoods? First we must establish that to form communities means to exceed the scheme of conviviality. The impetus for a dignified life, that upstream effort which we have characterized as obsession, provides energy and willingness to do so and being-between is a source of possibilities. But in any case to move from the initial state it is necessary that the neighborhood inhabitants have been able to perceive the community's proposal or that they may have known the experiences of specific communities. It is customary to combine the actions of these people informed and taught, with the presence in the neighborhood of people from the city to make the proposal and catalyze the process. In both ways we have established the need, usually, of an external element, either the proposal or the reference communities, or people outside the neighborhood who come to it.

For example, a neighborhood resident who maintains symmetric relations with the city has been able to perceive the nuclear family model in colleagues he esteems or people he admires and respects, and has been able to conclude that he too could eventually form such a family in the neighborhood. Sometimes a proposal comes, for example, from a Christian family movement, through counseling priest or any of the participants. Thus emerging in neighborhoods real family communities that for their symmetrical nature, egalitarian and reduced surpass, both the traditional patriarchal family, which still occurs in some people from traditional villages, for example, in Venezuela, from the Andes and is characterized by its asymmetrical nature, by the division of roles (the mother in the house and the father at work and on the street) and by its stability, as the matricentric (Moreno, 2007), the predominant one, in which relationships are of mother and child, non-authoritarian relationships that allow a great flow, but in essence dependency relations that greatly hinder the stable formation of the couple.

We have given this example because out of experience we are convinced that the family community is the mother of all communities. Therefore, those living in nuclear egalitarian and participatory families are communitarizing agents in the neighborhood, but that only happens, if the family is not for them, as for more than a few in the city, a compensatory community for the dehumanization that induces surrender without reservations to the logic of the totalitarian market and therefore closed, corporatized.

The problem of external agents.

Regarding the action of external agents, there are currently two problems. The first is that more than a few of them promote corporatized and even fundamentalist communities. Most political associations are corporate because they seek, not to promote that society is oriented in a certain direction and in that sense support certain public policies, but to obtain benefits, privatizing policy management. So they function as true cliques that manage power illegitimately. On their part, many Christian communities, especially free churches, but also some Catholic movements, are decidedly fundamentalist. However, much of their fundamentalism is not compensatory but alternative and for this reason they achieve some important advances, both in overcoming serious disorders as well as in adopting constructive and integrating habits. But, with these initial gains stabilized, the narrowness of the fundamentalist approach brings as a result that the process stalls or becomes depersonalizing.

The second problem with external agents is that most of them act in the neighborhood from an illustrated scheme. This is the horizon of the agents of modernization of both the first and the second Illustration. In neighborhoods promotion proposals abound and left advocacy groups move, and both believe that those in the neighborhood are disadvantaged or oppressed. In both cases they recognize that they are not to blame for their condition, but still are merely recipients of their action, because they lack the civilizational and cultural assets typical of a contemporary human being. They are not human actors and to become one they must accept the paradigm that is proposed to them. Therefore they have to stop being themselves: to become alienated.

Naturally, these agents do not believe that those promoted or sensitized are alienated; on the contrary they believe them to be the mirror in which all residents should look at themselves. But that is so because the illustrated believe, even though sometimes they might not be aware of it, that humans as such are only they who have come to a systematic use of critical, analytical and practical reasoning. It is obvious that whatever results of that action will be groups of the institutionalized sponsoring or of the promoting or consciousness-raising agents, but never communities. Because personalizing communities are composed of genuine human actors, not of imposed actors.

Difficulty of overcoming the illustrated modernity scheme.

It is very difficult to overcome the illustrated modernity scheme (Trigo, 2008: 104-213) because it is so connatural with the agent, that it is maintained even if is contrary to his ideology. For example, in the seventies and eighties the left mythicized the people, proclaiming that it was never wrong and that "the people united will never be defeated. "However, those who enthusiastically proclaimed it, in practice tutored the people. The same happened to the pastoral agents of the Catholic Church, even in the first period, with quite a few that included themselves within the Theology of Liberation, when they said, for example, that they were in the discipleship of the people. (Dussel, 1973: 116-122, 168-172) Indeed, it was easier to change contents than mindsets, and harder still, of sensitivity patterns.

Only those who managed to engage in truly reciprocal and horizontal relations with the villagers and were able to see and get their input, managed to overcome the ideological captivity of liberal or socialist modernity and engage in intercultural relations, to ensure that the neighborhood residents were true cultural and social actors. This happened sometimes in the daily side by side activity through an almost imperceptible sequence of discoveries of the consistency of popular people who appeared as real authors of their lives; but it happened, above all, when helped effectively in times of crisis, because they received their contributions at a personal level, they who had come to give and generously deliver themselves. These people certainly managed to cooperate effectively to establish communities because they also wanted and needed them and thus participated in them not just as promoters and managers but rather as another member, even though being of diverse culture and therefore with specific contributions.

Thus, the external agent may not help constitute personalized communities when the membership to the community is as vital and relevant to them as to the members of the neighborhood or, better, even more. To put it in a personal example: My belonging to community-bases is not relevant to my ministry, that is to my professional work but to my spirituality, that is to my constitution as a human being from the paradigm of Jesus of Nazareth. I would not know how to be Christian otherwise.

Therefore, as the external element considers himself an agent, which is the way of being characteristic of modernity, he cannot help communities to emerge. He must overcome the paradigm and relate as a concrete human being and therefore through mutual and horizontal relations, to make it possible.

In general we can say that in neighborhoods where for a long time organizations and groups have acted in a truly participatory way, either by organizing an intercultural dialogue, or entering the house of the people, that is, their culture, ultimately the emergence of a social fabric enucleated about those who we said that provided for a place, both as a human habitat as a way of being human between the field in the city, around those we characterized as mediators and those who we said moved in an open way between the complexities of the neighborhood is normal. These people embody the neighborhood's "we" and around them move many others who make up this group which is usually referred to generically as the community of that area.

The ignored fact of the predominance of religious communities.

I would like to note a fact that conflicts with the general state of opinion. For example, today in Venezuela in research on popular participation the fact that participation in religious communities and associations, in this case Christian, almost equal to other ways of participation stands out ¹³. Yet the same respondents believe that what sets the tone in the country is political participation. And it is obviously so. More than that, I would stress that much, among the most dynamic and constructive, community councils and other organizations that are in the process being conducted by the present government, are of Christian origin and more specifically in the orbit of the Theology of Liberation. Those are who live the most genuine process, that is, more proactive and less reliant on the guidelines of state and on the leader's speech.

I think the media that shapes public opinion and academia are reluctant to take on this phenomenon. But the surprising thing is that neither catholic organization involved in these phenomena of participation are aware of this, although we cannot say the same of the Free Christian Churches, whose intellectuals, by their nature corporatized themselves are likely to display statistics. Thus, contrary to popular belief, most neighborhood communities are religious and not a few groups and organizations that are truly democratic and open are animated by them.

Church based communities.

In this environment, the Christian Based Communities (Trigo, 2008a: 139-229), the core generator of praxis that is at the core of Liberation Theology, which are neither fundamentalist

nor proselytizing and do not interfere with the neighborhood associations but instead foster and encourage them, but not as communities but by the action of its members, constitute themselves in the ferment of this neighborhood culture, to counter the so-called culture of poverty, which is the cancer of suburban culture, and to promote that in conviviality the community fabric is incubated. In this process I have rediscovered the importance of cultivating the communality of the family.

However, also of the Ecclesial Based Communities it can be said that not a few have been set, especially in the early days, as cells of the left: a committee of theologians or pastoral work groups, the equivalent of the Central Party Committee, drew up the guidelines and materials, and consultants and delegates took them "down to the base." In this case, as in the others we were reviewing, members advanced in many aspects and promoted effective action, but they were not truly communities because their members were not the source of what they had in mind but were rather acting a script written by others, even though they were the elite of the organization and therefore insiders in the movement.

One element on which I think there is no clarity and that is crucial for the establishment and stable and dynamic maintenance of communities is the number of its members. I think that if they are not expressions of traditional communality but contemporary creations, it cannot be under forty or fifty and the top would be around a hundred and fifty. If the number turns between ten and twenty, which is what we usually have in mind, you usually will not be a base but it likely depends on a coordinator. To stably and creatively fulfill all its functions there have to be many members because, if the whole load is carried by two or three, the community becomes one-dimensional and routinized and results unstable.

We have already insisted that neighborhood residents have to do everything themselves and all at once. Assistance to the community is another burden, but is assumed freely and gladly. So if there are not many and the loads are not distributed, the community ends up not being liberating but a weight that is carried because it seems to make sense and one has committed. It should also be taken into account that a true community is not a party with its internal discipline, but a very heterogeneous group with a varying degree of involvement of its members. If it is a true community, it cannot force accession or require commitments. Everyone does it from himself as of his convictions and possibilities. As the "we" it is born freely of themselves and becomes denser with the exercise, one must be very careful to give it time and not to induce it.

But even people who identify with the community's "we", have many other commitments, primarily family and work, and as the community cannot be totalitarian, respects them, knowing that they are not excuses and everyone does what they can and as they can.

Personalized communities are not countercurrent to the popular neighborhood, although they transcend it by qualifying and safeguarding it.

In what ways are popular neighborhood communities countercurrents? Let us consider the question as from the neighborhood itself and from the dominant direction of the city.

Regarding the neighborhood they are not countercurrent to the culture of the neighborhood but rather outstanding expressions of it, but transcending it, and thus effectively helping it to give out and safeguarding it from its harmful germs.

We already said that the community is not an ingredient of that culture, hence, the need for external intervention to emerge. Although we insist that this intervention, even well-intentioned, often prevents these communities to properly being base communities; and if they are, or are not communities but groups of the agent or cells of an organization, or are not personalized but corporatized or fundamentalist communities. So, it is not easily for personalized communities to arise.

Sometimes, we say, the problem is merely of conception: it is thought of as small groups that are only capable of sustaining a traditional communality and not be expressions of this era.

A typical example of traditional communality is that of the groups of the Legion of Mary when the ordinary meetings are not attended by a priest. If the priest attends it might also be that he is part of that culture and therefore may not be an obstacle or he might be clerical, as is usual, and then he keeps the group from being a community and transforms it into a church group. If they do everything themselves, their limit is that they rigidly follow a manual, but the advantage is that they dominate this code and can act with competence and above all plan actions from their knowledge of the neighborhood and run them in a personalized way. These people do not make the neighborhood advance, but they help to maintain its human qualities as they undertake it and carry out through relationships impregnated with respect and affection and are able to effectively help their neighbors.

Personalized communities as a contemporary fact (the most prominent example is the Church Based Communities) are distinguished from the healthy traditional ones in that they take into account daily life, but not least in its historical character. It is posed then that living in community does not abstract the situation, but takes it into account explicitly, analyzing it and taking action on it. For example, they take into account gang violence and ritualized teen violence, the state services and how they affect the popular neighborhood, the relationship with municipality and the initiatives there are for it, just as the country's situation with the opportunities and drawbacks.

The most characteristic trait is not the meetings for formal analysis but that these are taken into account and come to light to treat specific situations and when treating them specifically. Thus, what they have in hand, for example in the case under consideration of the Church Based Communities, is that what God asks or the following of Jesus, does not belong to a specific segment of reality, in the example considered, the religious realm, but it is realized in the framework of all reality and is based on a way of being human with the two harmonics of deep trust and deep solidarity. So when in community with God, for example by reading the Gospels, they process all life.

In doing so, these people learn to look deep into problems, become aware of their responsibility and ability, they gain self-mastery. Each person responds to what God asks, an inside knowledge of the other is acquired and a sacred commitment that is the source of fraternity is fostered. These people become sisters of their popular neighbors. People know that they can count on them and that they can expect to receive some assistance. Therefore when there are initiatives and there are people in the community there tends to be trust in that there will be consistency and transparent work. As a result of all that the community is people with respect for their neighbors.

From what we have said it is easy to see how the lives of communities promotes and qualifies conviviality.

It also safeguards it. The culture of the popular neighborhood, due to its condition of agony, is very unstable: it is constantly remaking itself because it struggles for life, so disproportionate to its possibilities and in such unfavorable conditions, it steadily erodes it.

The culture of the popular neighborhood lies in the constant actions in pursuit of a dignified life. It depends at all times on a critical mass to appear of such actions, so that the constructive part of that culture overcomes its anomic trends. That is why it helps greatly that there are personalized communities that are a constant source of such actions, stable platforms of a shared dignified life. Being a whole and a stable platform, the community can dialogue with troublemaking elements. It can dialogue because it does not exclude them, because it does not render them impossible, because it treats them with respect. That is why they, to preserve their esteem, which they need to maintain despite all the awareness of their dignity, are able to change behaviors or at least limit themselves giving up some space and time to their neighbors.

Personalized communities are indeed running countercurrent to the dominant direction of this *historical figure*. They are a part of the overcoming alternative. Above all, they contain its civilizational and cultural assets.

Let's start with the civilizational ones, which may seem a paradoxical statement. Do the neighborhood people, have the civilizational assets of this *historical figure*? Young people from the neighborhood have them in a modest amount that is to say to the extent to which city professionals have them. We tend to forget that suburban culture is a contemporary culture. That is why it has an inclination towards them and their sense more than the traditional people of the city. Besides, they actually do have some of these assets, for example, computers and all types of phones and they make them perform much more than most. If pathology is a symptom of psychology, that in the popular neighborhood someone may be murdered to grab a last generation cell phone and this expresses the deep appreciation that there is for them, the same applies to the theft of computers in schools.

Regarding cultural property and the agonistic attempt for a dignified life that characterizes suburban culture, it is active in the face of everything the tenacious, methodical and constructive effort which is boasted of by western culture. More than to it, this effort applies to life, first and foremost so that there is, because, as we insist, there are no conditions for it, it cannot be taken for granted, as happens in the city. But also to their human qualities, which include not only dignity but also the symbolic capacity, the joy for life that becomes evident in the conviviality and the party.

Notes

1. For a notion of person who retains the essence of self of modernity and who also incorporates the structural respectability and thus the relationships, see Ellacuría, *Filosofía de la realidad histórica*. Trotta, Madrid 1991: 265-311. Moltmann, *El hombre*, Sígueme, Salamanca 1986; Masiá, *Fragilidad en esperanza*. DDB, Bilbao 2004: 77-167. Ladaria, *Antropología teológica*. EVD, Estella, 1996: 79-93; Gevaert, *El problema del hombre*. Sígueme, Salamanca 2003: 43-62, 139-141. Díaz, *¿Qué es el personalismo comunitario?* Fundación Emmanuel Mounier, Madrid 2002. Forte, *La eternidad en el tiempo*. Sígueme, Salamanca 2000: 89-105. Comblin, *Antropología cristiana*. Paulinas, Madrid 1985: 59-75. Masiá (Ed.), *Ser humano, persona y dignidad*. DDB, Bilbao 2005.

2. "That which is human is only offered to a relationship which is not a power" (Levinas, *Entre nosotros*. Pre-Textos, Valencia 1993: 23); Torre, *Significancia intercultural e interreligiosa del concepto relacional de persona*. En Masiá (Ed.) 2005: 263-306; Alfaro, *De la cuestión del hombre a la cuestión de Dios*. Sígueme, Salamanca 1988: 219-238; Trigo, *Relaciones de fe*. ITER Humanitas 12 (2008). In a sense different from ours, because for him what has been operated is the shift of the romantic and modern individual to the postmodern relationship, says Gergen, also something that we hold, "it can be said that relations precede the self and are fundamental" (*El yo saturado*. Paidós, Barcelona 1992: 204). From our perspective inclusive and not adversarial, because for us personalizing relationships are only those that are established from the genuineness, its findings are very encouraging (1992: 183-219). For Zubiri relations are not the basics: "Just because reality is respectively open, just for that might there be a connection" *Respectividad de lo real*. En *Escritos Menores*. Alianza, Madrid 2006: 210)

3. This distinction between the community with preset structures in which participants are not subjects but merely deliberative community members and as a community of free subjects based on mutual recognition, be it family, a neighborhood community or any organized group and the emphasis, therefore on the fact that it is not nostalgia but a communalist leap forward as developed by barcellona in postmodernity and community. Trotta, Madrid 1992: 121...

4. Goizueta writes about US liberal individualism in en *Caminemos con Jesús*. Convivium Press, Miami 2009: 85-100.
5. The need to overcome the market environment and imagine other manners of attending to the needs and desires from the concrete individuals and the cooperation ties of cooperation that are freely entered into , an effort made possible by the enormous development of the productive forces that can lead to other manners of reaching the social product purchase and sale. As underlined by Barcellona, 1992: 127-137
6. de Sebastián, *El rey desnudo/Cuatro verdades sobre el mercado*. Trotta, Madrid 1999. For Barcellona democracy is the “antidote against the emergence of technological de-politization that seems to dominate the current phase in the systemic order and is the only obstacle to the economic theology of success and unlimited growth” 1992: 132.
7. Morin insists on the point although he also emphasizes the cultural and civilizational that make it possible and even foster this possibility in a truly countercurrent manner. *¿Hacia el abismo?* Paidós, Barcelona 2010.
8. Barcellona speaks of “systemic monism”, 1992: 26-28.
9. This is the way it was expressed by Levinas in *Entre nosotros* (Pre-Textos, Valencia 1993: 10 and it is what is sustained by Horkheimer and Adorno in *La dialéctica de la Ilustración*. Trotta, Madrid 1994: 82.
10. My last publication on the Theology of Liberation is titled: *¿Ha muerto la Teología de la Liberación?* Mensajero, Bilbao 2004.
11. See for example, *Horizonte del Centro Gumilla*. SIC 664 (may 2004:163-171) and the web page at: www.gumilla.org.ve
12. For me, Jesus of Nazareth, paradigm, prototype and archetype is the classical mediator. See Trigo, *Jesús, paradigma absoluto de humanidad*. In *Jesucristo, prototipo de humanidad en América Latina*. Obra Nacional de la Buena Prensa, México 2001: 85-128
13. The type of group they claim to belong to or to have belonged to is in the first place to religious groups (37%) and in second place to sports groups (17%), with values below 10% actually belonging to co-operatives (5,6%), to community councils (5,4%), Parents associations and representatives (6,7%), neighborhood associations (8%) and political parties (5,9%) (*La Participación Social en Venezuela. Una aproximación cuantitativa*. Caracas, April 2009. Universidad Católica Andrés Bello. Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales).

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LOCAL EDITORS PROFILES

Eduardo Almeida Acosta obtained in 1976 a Ph. D. in Social Psychology and Personality at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. He is a researcher on Community Psychology at the Health Sciences Department of Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla. He is a member of *Proyecto de Animación y Desarrollo, A. C.* a NGO in San Miguel Tzinacapan, Cuetzalan, Puebla. In 1989 he founded at the Northern Mountains of Puebla the *Comisión Takachiualis* of Human Rights. He has been professor of Community Psychology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, at the Autonomous University of Puebla and at Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla. He received in 2005 the National Research Award on Psychology and also in 2005 the Humanitarian International Award granted by the American Psychological Association. He was the organizer of the Third International Conference on Community Psychology in June 2010.

Guillermo Hinojosa Rivero obtained a BS in Psychology at Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. His master's degree is in Education from the University of Washington (Oregon). He has published 5 books in collaboration with other colleagues. He also has produced more than 20 articles on educational topics and on Psychology applied to special education matters. From 1984 to 1990 he was a member of the National System of Researchers (SNI). At Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla he teaches courses on Statistics and Methodology. He was Director of Research and Graduate Studies. From 2005 to 2009 he was the Director of the Department of Human Development Sciences. He is presently professor at the Continuing Education Office. He is in charge of the university program for Elder People and of the Community Leaders Training Program. He has developed courses on computer assistance for rehabilitation of children with learning problems. He also designed electronic equipment for persons with brain palsy for using the computer even with limited and uncontrolled movements.

Oscar Soto Badillo was first trained as a medical doctor. He obtained a Master's degree on Rural Development at Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco (Mexico), and he is a doctoral candidate on "City, Territory and Patrimony" at Universidad de Valladolid in Spain. From 1982 to 1996 he was a collaborator working with indigenous communities and Guatemalan refugees in the South East of Mexico. He has worked also with displaced people by the internal armed conflict in Northern Guatemala. Between 1992 and 1995 he coordinated the refugees return to

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INTERNATIONAL EDITORS PROFILES

Adrian Fisher is an Associate Professor in the School of Psychology at Victoria University (Australia). His main teaching is in the graduate programs in Community Psychology and in supervising student research. His major research focus is in the psychological sense of community, how it can be used as an including or excluding factor, and concerns about its research methodology. Adrian was born in Perth, Western Australia and after a variety of work and travel adventures studied Psychology at the Western Australian Institute of Technology (now Curtin University). It was there that he was introduced to Community Psychology. From Curtin, he moved to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, eventually completing his Master's and Ph.D. degrees. In 1989 he moved to Melbourne to establish a CP program. This is the foundation of the program that operates successfully at Victoria University.

Vincent T. Francisco received his M. A. at the University of Kansas in Human Development, and his Ph.D. at the University of Kansas in Child and Developmental Psychology. He is Associate Professor with the Department of Public Health Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Dr. Francisco is primarily interested in research in community development, especially for the enhancement of community integration and support, and work toward empowerment of marginalized groups. He has considerable experience in the research and evaluation of community-based intervention programs focusing on adolescent development, reduction of risk for HIV/AIDS, teen substance abuse, assaultive violence, teen parenthood, and chronic/cardiovascular diseases. He also has considerable experience in provision of technical support for the development of coalitions. In his current position, Dr. Francisco works with members of ethnic minority communities and the general population to prevent a variety of problems in living. Dr. Francisco has experience in applied (participatory) community research, and in providing technical assistance and support for universal and targeted initiatives with communities including native Hawaiian and Asian American communities, Native American reservations such as with the Jicarilla Apache Tribe, African American communities such as Mid-South Chicago (Bronzeville), as well as immigrant communities in the Northeastern and Midwestern United States. Dr. Francisco has worked with foundations, Federal and State governmental agencies, and local community groups to affect health problems and economic disparities in the general population through the development of community prevention

initiatives. These initiatives include such diverse areas as primary prevention for juvenile justice, youth and community development, and support for Healthy Cities initiatives.

Guillermo Hinojosa Rivero obtained a BS in Psychology at Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. His master's degree is in Education from the University of Washington (Oregon). He has published 5 books in collaboration with other colleagues. He also has produced more than 20 articles on educational topics and on Psychology applied to special education matters. From 1984 to 1990 he was a member of the National System of Researchers (SNI). At Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla he teaches courses on Statistics and Methodology. He was Director of Research and Graduate Studies. From 2005 to 2009 he was the Director of the Department of Human Development Sciences. He is presently professor at the Continuing Education Office. He is in charge of the university program for Elder People and of the Community Leaders Training Program. He has developed courses on computer assistance for rehabilitation of children with learning problems. He also designed electronic equipment for persons with brain palsy for using the computer even with limited and uncontrolled movements.

Carolyn Kagan is Professor of Community Social Psychology and a registered Counselling Psychologist and qualified social worker. She is Director of the Research Institute for Health and Social Change at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, where the first action learning UK Masters programme in Community Psychology is based. She works on critical action research projects in community settings (participatively where possible), both in the UK and overseas. Her work is in pursuit of greater social justice with those marginalised by the social system, including people living in poverty and disabled people. Her work is value based, drawing on feminist and radical academic critiques and integrating ideas from environmental science, sociology, anthropology and critical systems thinking as well as from psychology. She has worked with disabled people for over 30 years. She has developed innovative community based projects which have pre-figured future practice and her work has contributed to UK and international service and policy development. Most recently she has been involved in work on forced labour (modern slavery) with a view to gaining information that might influence international social policy and lead to more humane lives for migrant workers and expose the detrimental impact of globalisation in the face of neoliberal economic policies. She has supervised 24 doctoral students

working within these areas of interest. She has published widely in community psychology and disability, is a member of several academic journal editorial boards and was a founding editor of the International Journal *Community, Work and Family* which she co-edited for 12 years. Her most recent work, written with colleagues at Manchester Metropolitan University is *Critical Community Psychology*.

Francine Lavoie, Ph.D. is professor in community psychology at Université Laval, Québec, Canada. She received the first Ph. D. granted by the Université du Québec. She is the pioneer of Community Psychology at Québec. She joined the faculty of the Ecole de Psychologie in 1979. In 1992-1994 she received the prestigious grant of excellence of the Québec Council for Social Research (CQRS). Since 1996 she is a fellow of the American Psychological Association and of section 27, the Society for Community Research and Action. Over the years, she has received grants on marital violence, dating violence, and mutual aid groups. She has developed and evaluated two prevention programs on dating violence (ViRAj and PASSAJ) for high schools students and has conducted the first research on dating violence in Québec. She also documented sexual and physical violence in the Inuit population of Nunavik. Her more recent work is on sexualized social activities and sexting in adolescence which could represent new settings for sexual coercion.

José Ornelas is professor at Instituto Superior de Psicologia Aplicada in Lisbon, since 1987. He has been Director of college level studies on Community Development and Mental Health since 1998. Since 2004 he is Director of the Master and Ph. D. Programs in Community Psychology. He received a Ph. D. in Psychology at Boston University in 1984. A part of his doctoral program was carried out at McGill University, in Montreal, Canada. In 1999 he obtained another Ph. D. at the University of Porto, in Portugal. From 1984 to 1987 he was a professor at Universidade dos Açores. In 1987 he founded AEIPS - The Psychosocial Studies and Integration Association, with a Program for community integration of persons with mental disorders. In 1998 he also founded Sociedade Portuguesa de Psicologia Comunitaria. He was the first President of the European Community Psychology Association between 2005 and 2007. He belongs to SCRA, the Society for Community Research and Action, the 27th division of the American Psychological Association. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Primary Prevention, of the

Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, and of *Análise Psicológica*. In 2006 he created the National Portuguese Commission for the Restructuring of Mental Health Services. In June 2008 he was the organizer of the 2nd. International Conference of Community Psychology in Lisbon.

Euclides Sánchez has developed a remarkable trajectory as social psychologist for more than thirty years. He is an expert on research and solutions of diverse social problems using qualitative and action research methodologies. His areas of interest are public policies, environmental and social problems solutions, community agents training, community organization, research on social problems, projects design and evaluation. He has been professor at several Venezuelan Universities and visiting professor at academic institutions in Mexico, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Chile, France and Spain. He received his B. A. in Psychology at Universidad Central de Venezuela, his Masters degree in Psychology at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, and his Ph. D. in Psychology at Universidad Central de Venezuela. In 2003 he received the Psychology Interamerican Award, and in 2007 the Environmental Psychology Interamerican Award.

María Eugenia Sánchez y Díaz de Rivera is professor-researcher at Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla. She obtained the Doctorate in Sociology at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. He was Visiting Professor at Cornell University. She is a member of the National System of Researchers, Level II. In 1973 she initiated a process of social transformation in an indigenous community in the Northern Mountains of the State of Puebla, where she lived and worked for 15 years. She organized the Alain Touraine Chair at Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla in 2003. She has published several books and written articles in national and international journals. Among her publications are: “Interioridad y crisis del future humano” [Interiority and human future crisis], “Conocimiento y acción en Tzinacapan” [Knowledge and action at Tzinacapan] in Spanish and in French (2004, 2007), “ Las Universidades de América Latina en la construcción de una globalización alternativa” [Latin American Universities in building an alternative globalization], “La veredas de la incertidumbre. Relaciones iterculturales y supervivencia digna” (2005) [The Paths of Uncertainty. Intercultural relations and dignified

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Alipio Sánchez Vidal received a Master of Arts in Psychology from the University of Minnesota and a Ph. D. at Universidad de Barcelona. He teaches there Community Psychology and Ethics. He is the author of some 50 publications, three books on Community Psychology, one on Social Intervention Ethics, one on Applied Social Psychology. He is the co-author of four other books. He is a member of the European Association of Community Psychology. His areas of interest are community intervention, the sense of community, social ethics and modern technology. In 2007 he published the book “Manual de Psicología Comunitaria. Un enfoque integrado“. He has delivered more than 75 courses at Spanish, European and South American Universities, professional associations, community organizations and government. He coordinated the Master on Community Psychology at Universidad de Barcelona. He organized the IV European Congress of Community Psychology. He is the organizer of the IV International Congress of Community Psychology that will take place in Barcelona in June 2012.

Irma Serrano-García is presently Professor at the Psychology Department and principal researcher at the “Centro Universitario de Servicios y Estudios Psicológicos” at Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras. She was the editor of the Interamerican Journal of Psychology. She received a post-doctoral degree on Public Policies at Harvard University. Her Ph. D. in Social Community Psychology was obtained at the University of Michigan. She has made more than 50 publications, including five books. She is a member of the American Psychological Association, the Interamerican Society of Psychology and the Psychological Association of Puerto Rico. Her areas of interest include social change and power relations, community development, participatory research, gender studies and HIV-AIDS prevention- She is a consultant of community based organizations and of governmental agencies.

Tom Wolff, Ph.D. is a community psychologist committed to issues of social justice and to building healthy communities through collaborative solutions. A nationally recognized consultant on coalition building and community development, he has a lifetime of experience training and consulting with individuals, organizations, and communities across North America. His most recent book is *The Power of Collaborative Solutions* published in 2010 by Jossey Bass/John Wiley. His writings on coalition building include *From the Ground Up: A Workbook on Coalition Building and Community Development* (with Gillian Kaye, 1996) and *The Spirit of the Coalition* (with William Berkowitz, 2000). He has been a partner in the development of the Community Tool Box (ctb.ku.edu), a website with 7000 pages of practical resources on community health and development. Between 1985 and 2002, Tom founded and directed Community Partners, a technical assistance and training program affiliated with the University of Massachusetts Medical School. It provided guidance and support in coalition building and community development. Tom is a fellow of the American Psychological Association, which granted him its 1985 National Career Award for Distinguished Contributions to Practice in Community Psychology and its 1993 Henry V. McNeil Award for Innovation in Community Mental Health. In 2000, he received the “For the People Against the Tide Award from Health Care for All”, for his “outstanding efforts to energize and educate local communities”.

AUTHORS PROFILES

Maritza Montero Rivas received a B. A. in Psychology at Universidad Central de Venezuela (1967). Her M. A. in Psychology is from Universidad Simón Bolívar (1979). She obtained her Doctorate in Sociology at the Université de Paris, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (1982). She is presently Professor Emeritus at Universidad Central de Venezuela. She was co-founder of the Master and Ph. D. programs at Universidad Central de Venezuela. She has been visiting professor at Oxford University, London University and Université de Paris VIII. She has been invited to give lectures at 14 Venezuelan universities and at university and research centers in Germany, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, USA, Ecuador, Scotland, Spain, France, Wales, England, Mexico, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay. She has tutored 52 theses at B. A., M. A., and Ph. D. levels. She actively participates in 7 psychological international associations. She has been a member of numerous editorial committees in several countries of the world. She has received diverse national and international awards: Augusto de Venanzi (Venezuela, 1993); Interamerican of Psychology (Puerto Rico, 1995); National of Social Sciences (Venezuela, 2000); Peruvian Forum of Social Psychology Award (Peru, 2003); Honorary Professor of San Marcos University (Peru, 2003); PPI-4 maximum level for a researcher at the Venezuelan Sciences Ministry (2005). She has published numerous articles in national and international journals. She is the author, co-author and coordinator of 24 books. Some of her recent books are “Psychology of Liberation. Theory and Applications” (2009) co-edited with C. C. Sonn, and “Participación y Transformación: Historias de la Psicología Comunitaria en América Latina” (2011) co-edited with I. Serrano-García. Her main research areas are: Epistemology of Social Psychology, Community and Political Social Psychology and Discourse Analysis.

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Esther Wiesenfeld received a Bachelor of Arts at York University (Toronto, Canada, 1973) and a B. A. in Psychology at Universidad Central de Venezuela (1982). Her M. A. in Social Psychology (1985) and her Ph. D. in Psychology are also from Universidad Central de Venezuela. She has carried out important posts at that university: Coordinator of the M. A. in Social Psychology (1990-2002); Head of the Applied Research Department at the Institute of Psychology (1997-2002); Representative of the Psychology Area at the Graduate Studies Commission (2001-2005). She has published 5 books, and authored more than 100 articles in national and international books and journals. She has participated in scientific meetings and congresses in France, USA and Argentina. She has been invited as lecturer at various universities: Toulouse, France; Belgrano and Rosario in Argentina; Sao Paulo and Brasilia in Brazil; Santo Tomás in Chile; San Carlos in Guatemala; Río Piedras and Ponce in Puerto Rico; San Sebastián and Autónoma de Barcelona, in Spain; ITESO, UNAM, CREFAL, UASLP and Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla, in Mexico. She is an active participant in psychological and environmental associations. She has been a member of diverse editorial committees in England, Spain, Brazil and Venezuela. She has received several awards: PPI-4 from the Venezuelan Ministry of Sciences; three National Awards on research on Housing (1993, 1997, 1997); National Award of Social Sciences (Venezuela, 1998); Interamerican Award on Environmental Psychology (2007). Her main research areas are: Community, Environmental and Social Psychology; Housing; Public Policies; Sustainability. She is an expert on Research methodologies. She speaks English, Hebrew and Polish.

Wolfgang Stark received his degrees from the University of Würzburg (Diploma in psychology) and Technical University of Berlin (doctorate). He has worked as a scientist at the Max Planck

Institute for Psychiatry and at the University of Munich, as a grantee at various universities in the US, and as a senior scientist at Munich's Self Help Resource Center, before he accepted the professorship on Organizational and Community Psychology at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany. Wolfgang Stark is founder and director of the Organizational Development Laboratory (www.orglab.org) based at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany. He is specializing in community building and empowerment processes in organizations and society, and in organizational/societal learning and organizational culture by linking different disciplines and topics. His research focusses upon empowerment processes and quality management, corporate citizenship/corporate social responsibility, value-based management and organizational culture in profit- and non-profit-organizations. He is a founding member and was president of the European Community Psychology Association. He serves as a regular visiting professor at the "Instituto Superior Psicologia Aplicada" (www.ispa.pt) in Lisboa (Portugal) and on the Board of the Institute's International Master Program in Community Psychology. In the years of 2001-2004 Wolfgang Stark served as the dean of the Department for Educational Sciences of the University of Duisburg-Essen. He currently is Head of the University's Center for Social Responsibility and Service Learning (www.uni-aktiv.org). His work received various awards – among others a "Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter-Campus Community Partnership Award 2007" and "Selected Landmark in the Land of Ideas 2008".

Judith Sixsmith is professor of Adult Social Care at Manchester Metropolitan University (UK) and Professor of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver (Canada). She has been researcher at King's College, London and at the Institute of Human Ageing, University of Liverpool. She has been very active as an international scholar and researcher. One project she has recently conducted is on ageing involving the UK, Sweden, Germany, Latvia and Hungary. Other international activities have been carried out in Belgium and Pakistan. Within the UK she has often taken a lead role in evaluating research projects, developing national strategy and being part of ethics committees. Judith Sixsmith received her B.Sc. in 1979 from Keele University, her M.Sc. in Environmental Psychology in 1984, and her Ph.D. in Psychology in 1992 from the University of Surrey. She has received several national and international awards. Seven Doctorates have been completed under her supervision, and four Masters. She has an extensive

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Jim Orford received (with honors) a B.A. on Natural Sciences at Trinity Hall, Cambridge in 1964; a Diploma on Clinical Psychology (1965) and a Ph.D. in Psychology at The London Institute of Psychiatry. He has been lecturer at the London Institute of Psychiatry and at the University of Exeter. Since 1993, he has been Professor of Clinical and Community Psychology at the University of Birmingham. He is Emeritus Professor of Clinical and Community Psychology, and Head of the Alcohol, Drugs, Gambling and Addiction Research Group, at the University of Birmingham, UK. Alongside his main career interest in addictions, he has helped to pioneer community psychology in the UK and in Europe generally. He was coordinator of the European Network of Community Psychology when it transitioned to the European Community Psychology Association (ECPA). His main written works include *Excessive Appetites: A Psychological View of Addictions* (2nd ed. 2001) and two community psychology texts: *Community Psychology: Theory and Practice* (1992) and *Community Psychology: Challenges, Controversies and Emerging Consensus* (2008). His main interests currently are: The effects of government-industry consensus over the liberalization of gambling; and reconceptualizing addiction, families and communities in terms of power. He is the author of 4 books and of numerous refereed journal articles. He has collaborated with “Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría Ramón de la Fuente” in Mexico City.

Guillermina Natera Rey received a B. A. in Psychology at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Her M. A. in Social Psychology was at Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City. She obtained a Master in Sciences focused on Education at DIE-CINVESTAV a research institution linked to the Instituto Politécnico Nacional. She studied Couples Psychotherapy at the Instituto Mexicano de Terapia de Pareja, A. C. She is working towards a Ph. D. in Anthropology at Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia (ENAH). She is a member Level II of the National System of Researchers (SNI). Presently she is the Director of Epidemiological and Psychosocial Research at the Instituto Nacional de Psiquiatría Ramón de la Fuente (INPRF). She is researcher in Medical Sciences “F” in the Coordination of Health Institutes. She is Professor and Tutor at Master and Doctoral Programs in the Faculties of Medicine and Psychology at

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Tim Aubry received a B. A. in Psychology (with honors) at St. Francis Xavier University (1978); an M. A. in Psychology (1981) and a Ph.D. in Psychology at the University of Manitoba (1992). He has been Professor of Psychology at the University of Ottawa since 1992. He was visiting Professor at Université Lumière Lyon 2 in 1999. He was named Professor of the Year at the University of Ottawa in 2004. He is the Senior Editor of the Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health. He has edited one book, seven chapters in books, and 39 papers in refereed journals. He is a Full Professor in the School of Psychology at the University of Ottawa. An established researcher in the fields of community mental health and homelessness, he co-founded at University of Ottawa in 2000 the Centre for Research on Community and Educational Services (CRCES). CRCES is a multidisciplinary research unit intended to conduct applied community-based research that contributes to effective health and social programs and policies for marginalized populations. Dr. Aubry has consulted and collaborated closely on research projects with community organizations and government at all levels contributing to the development of effective social programs and policies. Dr. Aubry is a member of REACH3, a pan-Canadian network of researchers from five Canadian cities, conducting research on housing, homelessness, and health. He is also a member of the National Research Team and the Co-Lead of the Moncton site in the Mental Health and Homelessness Demonstration Project of the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Dr. Aubry teaches graduate courses at the University of Ottawa in community psychology and program evaluation.

David Fryer is currently Professor of Community Critical Psychology at Charles Sturt University, Honorary Senior Research Fellow in Psychology at Stirling University, Scotland. He was President of the European Community Psychology Association and Professor Extraordinarius of the University of South Africa. In 2009 David was Visiting Professor at the

University of Puerto Rico. David is a former Editor of the Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology and the author of many scholarly and research publications on community critical psychology. His current research interests are: unemployment, violence and praxis.

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