



The Community Psychologist

A PUBLICATION OF THE SOCIETY FOR COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND ACTION
Division 27 of the American Psychological Association

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From the Editor

Written by Dominique Thomas, Morehouse College



Hello everyone! We are excited to bring you the Fall 2024 issue of The Community Psychologist!

The Fall 2024 issue features articles on both new and ongoing work within the field of community psychology. This issue also has some additional updates within the SCRA organization as well.

Book Review Submissions

TCP is soliciting submissions for book reviews! If anyone is interested in having their book being reviewed and wants a review published, please send an email to TCP@scra27.org. If you have a potential reviewer in mind, please send their name and contact information along with the book to be reviewed. Please include the title Book Review Submission in the subject line of the email.

Editors' Note

Opinions expressed in The Community Psychologist are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect official position taken by SCRA or the Editor of The Community Psychologist.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

Dominique
TCP Editor

International Committee

*Edited by Tiffeny R. Jimenez, National
Louis University, USA,
tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu*

*Sam Keast, Victoria University, Australia,
samuel.keast@vu.edu.au*

*Mazna Patka, Zayed University, UAE,
mazna.patka@zu.ac.ae*

APA Ceasefire Statement on Palestine Passed! Along with Global Education Dialogues, ICP Reflections, Regional Coordinator Updates & the Radical Ecology Rojava Revolution

*Written by Tiffeny R. Jimenez, National
Louis University, USA,
tiffeny.jimenez@nl.edu*

*Sam Keast, Victoria University, Australia,
samuel.keast@vu.edu.au*

*Mazna Patka, Zayed University, UAE,
mazna.patka@zu.ac.ae*

In this issue of the International Committee (IC) column, we have various updates and opportunities and we conclude with an effort to reach out to the international SCRA community as we aim to reinvigorate the IC. This update is followed by: 1) updates on the APA Statement on Palestine, 2) the IC-Education Vision, Proposed Budget & Plans for the IC 2024, 3) reflections on the International Congress of Psychology 2024 in Prague, Czech Republic, 4) updates from the Regional Coordinator of Australia/New Zealand/South Pacific, and 5) Radical Ecology and the Rojava Revolution discussion group information and links. We also send a special thank you, danke, grazie, to our additional authors Uwe Fischer and Caterina

Arcidiacono for their written reflections in this column.

Update - APA Ceasefire Statement on Palestine – PASSED!

We begin the column with an update from Sarah Buckingham of the APA Council of Representatives stating that the APA finally passed a statement calling for an **immediate, comprehensive, and permanent ceasefire in Gaza**. Next steps involve working to ensure the APA makes a formal announcement of this statement so that further action can be advocated for, such as the prevention of weapons being sent to Israel. This is an email sent to the International Committee Listserv, August 9, 2024:

Earlier this week, the APA Council of Representatives, the legislative body of the APA finally passed a statement calling for an immediate, comprehensive, and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. Dr. Sherry Wang (Div. 45) and I (as Div. 27's Rep to Council) have worked with colleagues across the APA (including SCRA member Brad Olson as Peace Psychology's Rep to Council) for many, many months to finally get a statement out. SCRA's EC co-signed the statement. When APA finally puts this statement out (I will share it as soon as it is public), you may believe that the statement does not go far enough. I agree. It never names genocide. It does not describe the full context of ongoing oppression in Gaza, across Palestine. But we worked tirelessly to craft a statement that a diverse legislative body could and would stand behind so that the APA finally would name tremendous harm suffering and call for an end to bloodshed. It passed at a ratio of 2:1, with most opposed stating that they believe that APA should not enter into this space or believe a call for ceasefire is antisemitic. Now the world's largest psychological association of over 150,000 members is speaking out and officially calling for a ceasefire.

I deeply appreciate your advocacy. Happy to answer any questions and hear your thoughts.

Sara Buckingham

SCRA's Rep to APA Council

Dear fellow psychologists,
As psychology scholars and professionals, we stand at the forefront of the field that seeks the welfare of individuals and communities to improve the human conditions and promote human rights. The APA holds that belief as a founding concept, not only resonating in its vision and mission but is reflected in its adoption of international policies and UN Human Rights resolutions. We hold the APA accountable to these golden standards, to be a voice for truth, and to take action in reducing the mental suffering that will propagate for generations to come.

We are a group of psychologists united by social justice and human rights principles and adhere to the same vision APA aspires to. As Psychologists affiliated to the field and integral members of the APA community, we find ourselves morally obligated to address the dire situation in Gaza and demand APA to take action. **We demand that APA issues a statement calling for Immediate and Permanent ceasefire in Gaza, Palestine.** We extend [this statement](#) to our fellow colleagues in the APA council, divisions and its members, harnessing our unified voice to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, Palestine. Together, we can play a pivotal role in fostering a just and enduring peace for all.

In July 2024, the International Court of Justice accused Israel of **unlawful occupation** and **apartheid** that is happening to the Palestinian people.

Let us stop the present moment from being a repeated lesson of history.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Martin Luther King

IC-Education Vision, Proposed Budget & Plans for the IC 2024

After the SCRA Biennial 2023, we (Tiffeny, Sam, and Mazna; along with other IC members) published the IC's Vision (posted again here as a reminder):

SCRA International Committee Vision - Given the expansive presence and history of community psychology (CP) globally, SCRA needs to widen its lens from a self-focus to one that includes a more

diverse range of knowledges and knowers from around the globe. We need to build on the strengths of the international collective and foster greater inclusion of theories, histories, and practice from a wider range of countries. We need to advocate for improved educational practices that embrace epistemic justice and inclusion and assist training the next generation of scholars to understand the plurality of CP around the world. We need to cultivate more humility and accountability that in turn questions and unsettles the dominance of US-centric forms of knowledge and practice so that CP can recognize historical harms and avoid enacting future ones. Today's problems are too big for one country (with limited history, theories, and practices) to solve. We must, as an organization, and as individuals think more globally.

Over the course of the year, we have met to explore how we would like to realize the IC's vision and what it means to be a committee within SCRA. We initially learned about SCRA's process for requesting a budget and we discussed (along with IC members) ways in which we would utilize funding. We initially organized three meetings for members of IC that cut across multiple time zones in an effort to include our global community. We did not have any attendees for our daytime meetings for those in Europe, Asia, and Africa. However, we did have attendance of members for the meeting scheduled during daytime in the USA. During this meeting, we learned that members are interested in building and maintaining connections with community psychologists around the world, learning about community psychology research and practice outside of the US, and creating research relationships across locations.

Since we were not able to connect with IC members outside of the US, we connected with Moshood Olanrewaju in his capacity as Regional Network Coordinator, to understand the scope and boundaries of his work and areas of collaboration or shared interest between network coordination and the IC. We learned through Moshood that while his work focused on connecting community psychologists in different parts of the world with

SCRA in the US, no database of members by country or general information about their work existed. We used this as an opportunity to combine our efforts by seeking SCRA funding to develop a live interactive map that all SCRA members could contribute to as a way to identify their geographical location(s) and work. The mapping project could then be used for varied purposes across SCRA, while also supporting the IC in its education initiative. Below is the list of main budget activities proposed and a table outlining the budget details we planned to request:

Main Budget Activities:

Bridging Relationships: CREATE/CULTIVATE ONLINE SPEAKER/DIALOGUE SPACES

- Transdisciplinary Speaker costs
- Student-led Regional Dialogue costs
- Translation partner services

BUDGET DETAILS:

Goals/Purpose	Activity	Rationale	Outputs	Cost (USD)
Build an interest in transnational problem-solving based on transdisciplinary collaborations	Transdisciplinary Speakers – early in year of 2024	Hearing from speakers from outside the field will give a fresh perspective on addressing root causes to common social problems	1-3 non Psychology speakers provide global perspectives to consider in addressing shared problems. Zoom video recordings to share on websites.	\$400 honorariums = \$1,200 total
Use of online platforms to build relationships across regions	Student-led Cross-Regional Dialogues – throughout the year on topics related to international or global education	Students bring fresh perspectives to learning about local/regional problems	\$100 honorariums for facilitating/presenting Zoom video recordings to share on websites	5 sessions at \$200 each = \$1,000 total
Bridge communications across contexts for different languages and accessibility purposes	Translation Services	Coordinating various regions to communicate requires language support	7-8 sessions also recorded session w/translations and transcriptions = \$2,500.00 TCP – making publications	\$4,500.00

Mini-Grants: CREATE LARGER GLOBAL HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE BASE FOR ALL

- Create a map educating about genealogical histories of landmasses
 - 2 students hourly pay 5-10-hours/week for a timeframe
 - Students connect with regions and develop global network list
- Regional network building – Collaborative student led initiatives – grants?

Publication/Learning Resource Space:

OVERALL LEARNINGS FOR CP COMMUNITY

- Shared TCP Column COE/IC on Global Education
- Special issue/book on professionalism by region
- Possible pages on Global Journal of CP Praxis

The distinction between the Regional Network Coordinator role and the IC/COE initiative, is that this is an initiative specifically regarding CP Education and Learning more about how this overlaps with World-knowledge systems and Global Education Systems. Education about the ways in which the hegemonic nature of the global knowledge systems overlays with the structure of this professional organization and how it functions as a professional organization, as well as through its curriculum/pedagogy, conceptions of science, and disrespect for the local knowledges of peoples all around the world. We have enough technology now to know how disconnected our educational practices are from the realities of the world and that there is an overabundance of evidence to suggest we can do better. As the strategic planning groups and consultants begin rethinking structures of the organization, or redistributing resources, this is the time to learn all we can about the way the world works, and instead consider re-creating connections based on a re-imagining of our field. Through the remaining months of 2024, we plan to use the \$2,000 to host a few dialogue sessions and create space that allow us to be in dialogues that reveal the absences, ignorances, omissions, violences, and maybe also the other sorts of possibilities when we consider what's possible from a re-imagining of what has been previously termed something like a "Global-Community Psychology" (Marsella, 1998).

"Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better in the sphere of our being as humans, and the catastrophe toward which we are headed... will be unavoidable."

--Vaclav Havel, former president of the Czech Republic (Quoted in Lasley, 1994, p. 3)

Reflections on the 33rd International Congress of Psychology 2024

Written by Tiffeny R. Jiménez, National Louis University



The 33rd International Congress of Psychology (ICP 2024: <https://icp2024.com/>) took place in Prague, of the Czech Republic from July 21-26th, 2024. The title of the congress was "**Psychology for Future: Together in Hope**". I found it all quite overwhelming with so many sessions happening simultaneously over 6 days, but it was all technologically organized with the Whova app and multiple on-site computer screens. I was surprised (and yet also not so surprised) that none of the sessions I attended required language translation or accommodations, indicating most if not all people spoke English, and were fully able-bodied. The dominance of the English language was one of the first markers for me of the evidence of the epistemic overreach of *Global Education Systems* in this international professional setting. Interestingly, despite the size of this event, and with so many choices of sessions to attend, we community psychologists tended to find each other throughout the week. We celebrated one another's work, and used WhatsApp for other ways of connecting for late night dinner, drinks, and a live jazz show by the *Milan Angelo Trio* (https://youtu.be/jc_IT0P6Rrs?si=K61FQ-80AQ3v6oM4). The most amazing thing, for me, about the congress was being in Prague, learning the history of the Czech people, and much of the region through *The Communism Museum*.

Both Wolfgang Stark (Germany) and I co-presented on two sessions at ICP. Wolfgang led the first session titled “Transformative Community Stories: The Role of Collective Story-Telling in Community Building”, which described the New Bank for Community Ideas and Solutions (site: <https://www.ecpa-online.com/new-bank/>). This is a site that collects, documents, analyzes, and shares transformative community stories as informal cultural heritage as a treasure of civil society. Wolfgang connected storytelling to the ways of nature through telling us how bees tell stories in how they dance out directions to each other. He also emphasized the importance of learning to listen deeply from within, from an open heart - empathic listening. We had a handful of attendees



from Portugal, Spain, and other places unknown, asking for examples of how stories enable transformation, including fictional stories. The conversation touched on how valuable storytelling can be for supporting natural ways of cultivating non-expert, non-hierarchical interpersonal relationships.

We were unable to attend this whole session but it was remarkable to Wolfgang and I that there was a major keynote session on democracy. They asked the participants: “What social-psychological factors can help explain the increasing tendency to turn away from democracy as a political system and toward autocracy?” Some of the responses included things like climate change and fear of the future, which may influence people to be more guarded, controlling, and potentially hoarding resources. They also talked a bit about why democratic societies become increasingly divided or experience political polarization across the world,

and their analysis examined economic anxieties, institutional imbalances, class divides, and battles for the truth. Interestingly, they concluded that nations with a fair outlook and high trust in institutions including China, Singapore, and India are less polarized. Six countries were identified as extremely polarized, which included Colombia, U.S., South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and Argentina (Edelman, 2023):

<https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2023-03/2023%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Global%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>). When you go to the Edelman website, you will see they conclude that mistrust breeds polarization, which leads to the points made by Caterina in her keynote mentioned next.

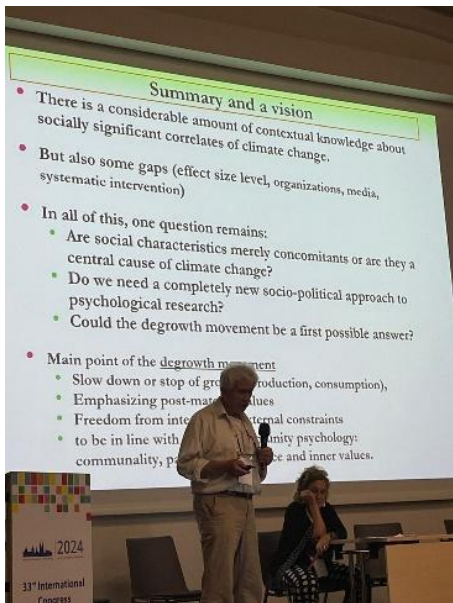
Caterina Arcidiacono (Italy), a member of the EFPA board, presented an important keynote topic titled "Community tackling trust, hope, and social changes", where she talked about the lack of social trust being related to the absence of social bonds and to the crisis of a lack of community participation. She talked about social trust being the core issue of every experience of social change. Community trust can be considered as the positive expectations of community members toward the current and future opportunities they perceive in their local community, either physically and virtually. The concept of “community trust” was analyzed theoretically, drawing attention to its role in community building and its implicit ties with individual and social hope. She argued that trust and hope are two constructs that need to be better defined in their connection and theoretical frames that shape the potential social action of psychology in all social domains in the present and in the future.

Alternative to problems of trust and polarization is the study of “peace systems”, and a number of us attended a session on this, which is the study of clusters of neighboring societies that do not make war with each other (and possibly not at all). The operational factor is that they must have operated as a “peace system” for at least 100 years. The session we attended under the heading Political Psychology, titled “What does it Take to Live in

Peace? Lessons learned from the study of sustainably peaceful societies” focused on 15 ethnographic and historical/political examples of peace systems as contrasted with a comparison sample of 30 other societies and their neighbors. They used various existing/archival data points to study the systems, and one example is the comparison of peaceful society lexicon wordles with conflictual society lexicons, where they observed more language referring to the state within the conflictual societies (state, minister, bank, court), and more language referring to local daily life within the peaceful societies (play, think, look, home). One interesting lesson learned across some of their data was that language used in news reporting in high-peace societies is broader, more elaborate, creative, and expansive...whereas language employed in low-peace places is more limited, formal, shorter, and focused on governing and the state. For more information, here is a related recommended text that speaks to some examples: <https://www.abebooks.com/9780195181784/Human-Potential-Peace-Anthropological-Challenge-0195181786/plp>

I attended a symposium organized by Caterina Arcidiacono (Italy) titled “Visions, Methods and Psychologists’ Competencies in a Community Psychology Approach”, which included 5 sub-sessions from the EFPA Community Psychology WG and Wolfgang Stark as the discussant.

Presenters spoke about varied versions of community psychology approaches across Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Germany. Isabel of Spain spoke about improving the quality of lives via social services, benefits



programs, and legislation. Maria of Portugal talked of science as a movement and reported out on the results of a long-standing intervention to improve professional implementation of community mental health principles. Barbara of Italy spoke about multi-level assessments of university well-being at the University of Naples, and how future assessments will include focusing more on tacit/intuitive knowledge.

I personally resonated most with the presentation by Bernd Röhrle who spoke about “Social and Climate Change: Knowledge Transfer and Strategies from a Community Psychology Perspective”. Röhrle concluded with an emphasis on aligning socio-politically with the de-growth movement to align with climate change. His rationale explicitly articulated the important role of critical psychology in clarifying the contextual knowledge that mainstream psychology does not sufficiently take into account. He identified how critical psychology is consistent with community psychology, in that it is concerned with the “overlapping dimensions of social context, including the role of interpersonal and group dynamics, social rules, norms and networks, social representations, discourses, and ideologies, the activities, policies and practices of government, large corporations and other institutions, as well as the alliances between them” (Adams, 2021, pp.14). We chatted after this session about how his conclusions of de-growth aligns with the session I was planning to present on the next day regarding late-stage capitalism.

On the last day, I led our next session, with Wolfgang as our discussant, titled “Critical Global Education for Community Psychology: Subverting the Geopolitics of Knowledge Systems”, which described the historical context out of which the Critical Global Education Collective developed (<https://criticalgloaleducation.wordpress.com/>), how we engaged in this learning community over time, and the learnings that contributed to our current projects. However the emphasis of the session was on unpacking the geopolitics of our global education system, how it overlays with late-stage global capitalism/neoliberalism, and is evidenced by increasing numbers of people being

dispossessed from their homelands (i.e., migration, asylum seeking). We had a handful of participants from the Czech Republic, Germany, South Africa, the U.K., and Italy, where some joined because they wanted to know what they should be teaching in their part of the world. We talked about migration, and asylum seeking being of the most important social issues of this moment, and debated about whether subverting the knowledge systems was the best strategy or not. One participant mentioned we may not have seen a session of this topic at this congress before, given its potentially controversial nature. An undergraduate psychology student stated how inspired they felt to do something, and wondered what they could do from their own position there in the Czech Republic. Since this session, several conversations make it clear that awareness of this information about Global Education Systems has the potential to shift approaches to education locally around the world.

Overall, I learned so much about the work and lives of our European community psychology colleagues. I also traveled to Vienna, Austria, and Berlin, Germany, where I continued to learn the history of the origins of our civilizations, and the various configurations of social orders and conflicts that has led to so much we experience today (e.g., the Berlin wall, WWI, WWII, the Cold War, imperialism...). I spent about as much time in art galleries and creative exhibits as well. A couple other colleagues also agreed to write their reflections from the ICP, so you will also find some personal notes and reflections here from Uwe Fischer (Germany) and Caterina Arcidiacono (Italy) below.

On a final note, I leave you with this image. The image here is a piece of the Berlin Wall in East-Side-Park, Berlin, Germany, depicting various kinds of walls we build all over the world to separate us from one another, seemingly for purposes of safety, rather than considering safety from the perspective of what we need to consider doing to support common needs for the common good.



ICP 2024 - Some personal notes and reflections

Written by Uwe C. Fischer (Bamberg, Germany)

What comes to my mind regarding the ICP 2024 in Prague titled “Psychology for the Future: Together in Hope” as a community psychologist? I’m beginning from the end. (Uwe is all the way to the left in this image)



One of the last workshops I attended was “Critical Global Education for Community Psychology: Subverting the Geopolitics of Knowledge Systems” by Tiffeny Jiménez and Wolfgang Stark. With critical questions about the educational system dominated by the established Western culture of knowledge, we were exchanging ideas about what we could do to overcome this situation. For me, the discussion gave me the initiation to reflect on the knowledge, which I absorbed directly from the ICP conference more

sensitively. Was there a pluralistic cultural variation of psychological knowledge? In the mass of thousands of topics and symposia, I have selected and picked up some presentations, that raise my attention, but it seems to remain a minority so far. For example, the concept of 'Ubuntu' is a collection of values and practices from Africa on how to be an authentic human being. Besides some variations of different ethnic groups, they all point to the principle that an authentic individual human being is part of a larger and more significant relational, communal, societal, environmental, and spiritual world¹. Mercy Mulaudzi used it for her research about "the role of Ubuntu as a community intervention strategy in addressing mental health challenges." Another interesting concept comes from Asia with 'Ibasha'. The abridged translation would be "a place where you can feel like yourself", but it implicates much more of a psychological sense of an authentic socially and environmentally rootedness. There are important relations with mental health and it has culturally embedded implications for the practice. Lihui Yang presented the general applicability of 'Ibasha' with a survey of Japanese and Chinese adolescents.

Regarding the need for pluralism and decolonization of knowledge, we should consider much more how mental health and psychological concepts from other cultures are meaningful and could be helpful scientifically for psychological interventions within the cultural community. And cannot the Western culture benefit from concepts and knowledge of other cultures (without the danger of exploitation)? Don't we need an adapted 'Ubuntu' in our society, as individual-centred neoliberalism produces more conflicts than solutions in the global cross-linked world? The educational academic system should be aware of its responsibility to teach and appreciate the cultural diversity of psychological concepts.

One symposium gave examples of informal educational approaches to transfer local community knowledge to others at the ICP (e.g. "Transformative Community Stories: The Role of Collective Story-telling in community building"). Remo Job's presentation in another symposium focused on the future of psychology education in

general with "Bringing society into psychology curricula and bringing psychology into societal challenges" also pointed out the need for societal adaptation of psychology knowledge transfer.

The presence of community psychology in general and their connected topics at the ICP was meaningful from my perspective. The European Federation of Psychology Associations (EFPA), supported several symposia and discussions about the role of psychology in general and community psychology in the transformation process of society. The climate crisis calls for psychology to include the context and community, while focusing only on individual behavior change is not sufficient (i.e. "Psychology of climate change – between science and politics"; "The climate crises: increasingly an important field of action for European Psychology"; "Social and climate change: knowledge transfer and strategies from a community psychology perspective").

Nevertheless, Caterina Arcidiacono held an invited speech about "community trust tackling hope and social changes" and introduced a whole symposium about community psychology ("Visions methods and psychologists competencies in a community psychology approach").

In sum, it was a positive experience in Prague, especially to meet and talk to open-minded colleagues from the European and International community psychology. I'm thinking about a seminar focusing on culturally diverse psychological concepts.

Reflections on the ICP 2024

Written by Caterina Arcidiacono, Naples, Italy

The ICP 2024 was a rich experience of relationships, exchanges, and sharing between the different networks of scholars and professionals active across continents. Over 3700 abstracts were accepted, and over 3000 participants from no less than 50 countries, many of which came from China, and Asia, more broadly. Regardless of the size, the event was quite definitely a success and exquisitely organized. Overall, it seemed the congress was a

sign of Psychology's desire to interact globally with opportunities for some of the largest international organizations to interact synergistically. Representatives from the APA (American Psychological Association), the EFPA (European Federation of Psychologists Associations), and the IAAP (International Association of Applied Psychology) participated.

Climate change, peace, justice, exclusion, artificial intelligence, and well-being for all were at the congress. Challenges from which psychology does not shy away and for which it proposes research, visions and methods of intervention. The themes of peace, democracy and hope took center stage. These were sessions collecting a large number of participants and very intensive debate. On the topic of hope, Andreas Krafft's keynote presented the results of the hope barometer, highlighting the need for psychology to face the future in relation to social, collective and non-individual perspectives. Community psychology was also discussed through the work of Wolfgang Stark and the presentation by Tiffeny Jiménez (US-Mexico borderlands).

The symposium I promoted called "Visions, Methods and Psychologists' Competencies in a Community Psychology Approach" included many: Isabel Herrera (Spain), convener of the standing committee on community psychology of the EFPA, with Barbara Agueli of Immacolata Di Napoli (Italy), Maria Joao Vargaz-Moniz (Portugal), Fortuna Procentese, president of the Italian Society of Community Psychology (SIPCO), Bernd Röhrle and Wolfgang Stark (Germany). The symposium aimed to highlight how Community Psychology competencies are promoting social awareness, giving voice to community needs and facing social challenges, and promoting social inclusion aimed at pursuing fairness and wellness in a critical participatory approach. Attendees with a community psychology approach in attendance included: Uwe Fischer (Germany), Donata Francescato (IT), Paola Magnago, Minou Mebane (IT), Tiffeny Jiménez (US-Mexico borderlands) and

many others.



Today's challenge lies in improving quality of life and building social happiness in a global universe where fairness, conviviality and individual rights are facing new challenges: technology, war, inequalities, etc. Human developmental models, nutritional policies, migration, living environmental development are then of interest for individual well-being. Justice and equality ought to become the common goal of social inclusive policies as well as value-related dimensions of professional settings and psychological interventions in a new globalized world. Psychologists are experts of the relation between individuals and contexts while working as catalysts of social change. In this light the community psychology approach thinks about the future of individual and human contexts as well as how to act as experts on the interaction between individuals and contexts. The challenge is to seek for new objectives, instruments, and shared practices for psychologists and people who act on the edge between individuals and social organizations.

It should be noted that the next International Congress of Applied Psychology (IAAP) conference will be in Florence (July 2026: <https://www.icap2026.org/>). The call for papers will open in January 2025. Please note this is an Italian summit, which could be an opportunity for a strong presence of community psychology. In addition, always on the international scene in July 2025 is the European Federation of Psychology Association (EFPA) European congress will take place in Cyprus. Registration and the first call for abstracts just opened on July 1, 2024. Here is the link for the event <https://ecp2025.eu/welcome-from-ecp-2025-chair/> The EFPA assembly during the

congress will be an opportunity to introduce community psychology as a basic field into the graduate curricula in psychology provided by EUROPSY. This is at least the goal of the EFPA working group on community psychology. A challenge to be pursued and supported.

Regional Updates

Edited by Moshood Olanrewaju, National Louis University

Updates on Australia/New Zealand/South Pacific

Written by Katie Thomas

Regional Coordinator: Dr. Katie Thomas:
mothercarematters@gmail.com

Symposium Event:

This year we have an exciting Symposium event being hosted in beautiful Christchurch, New Zealand. If you wish to attend a multi-cultural event addressing multi-national issues, please consider attending. Registrations are welcome via the New Zealand Psychology portal.

The theme is "Connect": Connect us with what you are doing in your community; connect with colleagues; connect with a confluence of ideas about community psychology.

All costs are in New Zealand dollars. There is a reciprocal arrangement with The Australian Psychological Society for trans-national recognition of membership. Symposium presentations have inclusive multi-cultural styles: Rapid communication poster sessions, Pecha Kucha 20 slides at 20 seconds per slide and Creative Presentations: drama, dance, spoken word poetry, songs and other forms of creative presenting alongside regular sessions.

The Academic Co-Conveners are Heather Hammerton and Hayley Lord. For more information please email: icompachair@gmail.com

Initiatives:

SCRA ANZP has resolved to try to increase the profile of those with community expertise by two strategies. The first is to profile the expertise of

members across Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific and the second is to attempt to actively foster as many synergistic and collaborative partnerships as possible by increasing networking across the region.

In line with this decision, Australian Psychological Society, iCommNZ and SCRA members are seeking ways to increase the cooperative partnerships among community practitioners in the region and invite all interested readers to have their name and profile added to a listing of those whose primary expertise and interest is in community building. Interested practitioners, academics and students who would like to make links with others throughout the New Zealand, South Pacific and Australian region are invited to send their name and details of interest, along with any ideas they have for increasing collaborative capacity throughout the region, to the Regional Coordinator. Members are asked to give their permission in their message so that their email and other contact details can then be circulated to other collaborative community practitioners as part of the listing. Current project collaboration possibilities along with invitations for future collaborative research will also be welcomed.

Radical Ecology and the Rojava Revolution ***Monday August 26: The Future is Degrowth***

[Join us Monday, August 26th \(7:30pm EST\)](#) for the second session of our new study group series on ***Radical Ecology and the Rojava Revolution***. This month, we will be joined by writer and radical ecologist Aaron Vansintjan to discuss the topic of ***Degrowth***, an emerging body of ideas arguing that the path to a truly ecological and democratic economy requires us to move beyond the concept of economic growth altogether as a measure of progress.

Along with co-host Sheelan Qader, Aaron will help facilitate an open conversation about the core ideas of Degrowth, their relationship to the social-ecological principles adopted by the Rojava Revolution, and their relevance to contemporary struggles for environmental and social justice.

In preparation for the session, we will be reading two excerpts from the book ***The Future is Degrowth***, of which Aaron is co-author. The book

is [available from Verso Books](#), or can be read via the [PDF linked here](#). The two selections are the Introduction, and Chapter 6.

[RSVP here to join the discussion.](#)

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Prevention & Promotion Interest Group

Edited by Rafael Mederos, PhD, National Louis University Rmederos@my.nl.edu

Prevention & Promotion Interest Group

Prevention & Promotion IG Co-Chairs: [Toshi Sasao](#), [Susana Helm](#), [Rafael Mederos](#), [Aomi Kuwayama](#), and [Shizuka Yanagii](#).

Column Editor: Rafael Mederos, PhD, National Louis University Rmederos@my.nl.edu

The Prevention & Promotion IG column of *The Community Psychologist* highlights P&P resources as well as the P&P work of community psychologists and allied professionals. Please [email Rafael](#) if you would like to submit a brief report or if you have resources we may list.

With our new set of co-chairs reinvigorating the P&P Interest Group, we began monthly starting in June 2024. Given our locales spanning half the globe from Japan to the eastern US, we have done our best to ensure that the co-chairs' time zones allow for each of us to participate, and hope that

you will too. Refer to SCRA Interest Group page for zoom link and date/times for your area of the world: <https://scra27.org/what-we-do/interest-groups/>. Our first order of business will be to update the P&P Interest Group vision/mission and goals, with an eye to planning submissions and supporting folks for the next SCRA Biennial in June 2025.

REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY

The column will continue to feature a "Report from the Community." This quarter, the report comes from Medina Habili, Applied Psychology Research Center Capabilities & Inclusion (APPsyCI); University Institute (ISPA); University of Padua (UNIPD), Department of Developmental and Social Psychology (DPSS). Medina highlights her experience during the ninth International Conference in Community Psychology in Naples. The conference focused on community regeneration and the importance of environments and social bonds that can strengthen communities. She shares a dialogue with the Argentine-born philosopher and psychoanalyst Miguel Benasayag. His presentation of the Complexity of the Present World invites us to see how modernity and post-modernity are not leading us to a better place but contributing to an individualistic approach to life. Benasayag's belief in "exploring new ways of thinking and acting, not self-centered, but aware of the multiplicity that binds them to themselves, to others and the environment." (Benasaya, Schmidt, 2004) is very similar to the Community Facilitator, Sam Kaner. In 1996, he used the participatory approach model to demonstrate the importance of full participation and shared responsibility to promote collaboration and strengthen communities. I invite you to read Medina's article below. As a reminder, this year's International Conference will be held in Montevideo, Uruguay from September 10th through the 13th at the University of the Republic in Montevideo.

Abstract

A year ago, during the 9th International Conference of Community Psychology, we had the honour of spending time in dialogue with the philosopher and psychoanalyst Miguel Benasayag, reflecting on the transformative changes that have

defined our era and the challenges to face due to the historical emergency that shape our daily lives. While the promise of a brighter future has not been fulfilled, the future is often perceived as a looming threat, compelling us to equip ourselves for survival. Benasayag reminds us that to truly live, rather than merely survive, we must cultivate a way of existence that is in harmony with the greater whole of which the human species is a part, rather than attempting to dominate it.

Introduzione

In occasione della Nona edizione della Conferenza Internazionale di Psicologia di Comunità, ospitata a Napoli a Settembre 2022, abbiamo avuto l'onore di fare una conversazione con Miguel Benasayag, filosofo e psicoanalista di origine argentina, che ha militato nell'esercito rivoluzionario e sperimentato la prigionia e la tortura, riuscendo poi a scappare in Francia, dove ha collaborato con il movimento dell'antipsichiatria e della psicoanalisi esistenzialista. Attraverso una sensibile lettura dei profondi e rapidi cambiamenti che hanno modificato materialmente il Pianeta Terra, principalmente ad opera dell'uomo, Benasayag propone un viaggio per interpretare l'emergenza storica che caratterizza la vita odierna, delineando gli assi su cui si fonda la profonda crisi che attraversa la nostra epoca (Benasayag, 2016; Benasayag, Schmit, 2004). Ho portato alla vostra attenzione alcuni dei temi che mi hanno toccato nel profondo leggendo le sue opere ed ascoltando le conversazioni sulle stesse. Vi lascio trasportare da Miguel Benasayag alla scoperta di alcune prospettive per interpretare tali problemi e trasformarli in opportunità per cambiare direzione e riscoprire nuovi modi di vivere in armonia con la molteplicità che caratterizza l'esperienza di vita sul pianeta Terra.

La crisi del mondo presente

La profonda crisi che stiamo sperimentando ha iniziato a delinearsi con la fine della modernità, quando la credenza fondante della nostra società è venuta meno: la promessa di un futuro migliore e di un sapere totale cade e si trasforma nel suo opposto; il futuro diventa una minaccia, una crisi quotidiana per cui è necessario armarsi (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004).

Contemporaneamente al progresso delle scienze, si inizia a vedere come le innovazioni non sempre siano sinonimo di sviluppo verso la creazione di condizioni di vita migliori. Nonostante vi siano maggiori conoscenze, queste sono comunque incapaci di eliminare la sofferenza umana, portando spesso ad alimentare proprio il pessimismo e la tristezza (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004). La sofferenza sperimentata durante la post-modernità viene considerata patologica, sintomo di un mondo che ci vuole performanti, funzionanti e svuotati di ogni interiorità; quest'ultima, vista come ostacolo a funzionamento della macchina economica (Benasayag, Del Rey, 2016).

La delega delle funzioni umane all'artefatto tecnologico

La modernità ha costruito la figura dell'individuo, separato dal resto del mondo e padrone della natura, catturato poi dalla post-modernità come un'insieme di componenti modulari che possono essere trattate separatamente, trasformando la persona in una macchina più o meno funzionante (Benasayag, Del Rey, 2016; Benasayag, 2016; Benasayag, 2019). Se in questo processo emerge la sofferenza, questa viene patologizzata come una incapacità di funzionare e medicalizzata per eliminare il sintomo senza interrogarsi sul significato (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004). Distruggendo la propria interiorità e delegando le proprie funzioni alla macchina, l'individuo diventa un processore di informazioni, da cui non viene modellato (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004; Benasayag, 2019). Questo segna il passaggio dall'individuo della modernità al profilo della post-modernità, per cui viene meno la storia personale che ha contribuito ad aver appreso delle capacità e si passa ad un "uomo senza qualità", che accumula competenze ed elimina la propria soggettività al fine di adattarsi agli esoscheletri disposti dalla macroeconomia (Benasayag, Del Rey, 2016; Benasayag, Schmit, 2004).

La crisi nella crisi

La visione utilitaristica del neoliberismo viene offerta come unica soluzione all'emergenza prodotta dalla crisi, per cui anche i legami diventano dei contratti anziché occasione di incontro (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004). Le nuove

sofferenze hanno spesso alla base un'incapacità di creare connessioni e sentirsi in collegamento con l'altro. In un mondo percepito come pericoloso, anche l'altro si fa specchio della paura di guardare quell'interiorità che viene negata dall'economicismo, vivendo il legame come una minaccia. Utilizzando una metafora, Benasayag paragona la condizione dell'uomo che soffre ad una nave in burrasca, che non ha un porto sicuro in cui rientrare e deve quindi imparare a stabilizzarsi in un mondo in continuo cambiamento (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004). In questo contesto, l'educazione si trasforma in un mandato di sicurezza, per cui i giovani devono studiare per riuscire a garantirsi le competenze necessarie per sopravvivere e uniformarsi alla macchina neoliberista. Il cambiamento culturale fondamentale che ne deriva è l'abbandono di un'educazione fondata sul desiderio, per un'educazione fondata sulla paura e in funzione di una minaccia (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004; Benasayag, 2019). Lungi dall'essere un fantasma, la percezione costante della minaccia esercita una pressione distruttiva nella vita quotidiana, memore della rovina cui si sta andando incontro. Armare i giovani di fronte al mondo che dovranno li aspetta, non li protegge, ma al contrario appoggia lo sviluppo di quello stesso mondo da cui si vuole metterli al riparo (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004).

La crisi come opportunità

Per resistere a questa crisi, è necessario iniziare un percorso alla scoperta di altri modi possibili di essere ed esistere, cogliendo nella complessità del mondo odierno l'invito ad abbandonare l'idea che esista il mito dell'individuo separato dalla natura. L'invito è quello di esplorare nuovi modi di pensare e agire, non autocentrati, ma consapevoli della molteplicità che li lega a sé stessi, agli altri e all'ambiente. L'umanesimo non rappresenta l'unica altra via possibile per essere e sperimentarsi nel mondo; per resistere agli ideali neoliberalisti, occorre interpretare il reale senza farsi sedurre dal canto delle sirene della disperazione, coltivando delle passioni giose e creando legami che si oppongano concretamente all'isolamento verso cui la società tende a segregare le persone in nome degli ideali

individualistici (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004). La nona edizione della Conferenza Mondiale di Psicologia di Comunità ha invitato alla creazione di "Legami e Ponti tra persone e ambienti" come percorso per la rigenerazione delle comunità. Nonostante il fallimento del progetto della modernità e la paralisi di fronte alla perdita dell'onnipotenza, è necessario riconoscere la nuova realtà ontologica (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004): riprendendo la metafora della barca in mezzo al mare durante una burrasca e senza un porto sicuro in cui approdare, tale realtà ontologica assume che la barca in questione sia quella in cui ci troviamo tutti e che, durante la tempesta, nessuno può salvarsi da solo (Benasayag, Schmit, 2004). Resistere dall'interpretare il mondo come un luogo minaccioso in cui bisogna sopravvivere scavalcando il prossimo, significa non sottostare all'utilitarismo e cogliere questa crisi per "sviluppare la profonda e ontologica inutilità della vita, della creazione e dell'amore" (p.64, Benasayag, Schmit, 2004), per tornare a creare dei legami di pensiero e di vita che siano basati su una visione antiutilitaristica propria della natura umana e della vita stessa.

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Per approfondire il tema di delega delle funzioni umane all'artefatto:

TEDx Talks (2014) Come potenziare l'intelligenza numerica: Daniela Lucangeli. TEDxCaFoscariU (*link*: TEDx Talks).

Venezuela: The challenges of Social Justice under authoritarian regimes.

Andrea Bello Lacal^{1}, Carlos Noguera Hernández, Universidad de Nebrija; George Jose Hallak Pita, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid Marian; Taboada Vazquez, Universidad Complutense de Madrid*
** andreacarolinabello@gmail.com*

Morgan & Vera (2006) defined social justice as full and equal participation of all of society's groups, equal distribution of resources, physical and psychological safety, security of all and included the processes and institutional context.

The 2024 Venezuelan presidential elections have unfolded as a poignant chapter in the nation's ongoing struggle for democratic integrity. Despite the National Electoral Council's (CNE) assurances of a transparent process, the elections were marred by allegations of fraud. The CNE employed an electronic voting system with paper backups, allowing for verification and audits. Security measures included biometric authentication and data encryption to prevent external manipulation, ensuring that each voter could only vote once (Chequeado, 2024; Asamblea Nacional de Venezuela, n.d.). Despite the technical assurances, the event was overshadowed by accusations from the opposition and international observers who reported significant irregularities. Allegations against Nicolás Maduro's government include result manipulation and obstruction of independent audits. "The International Federation for Human Rights" (FIDH) and Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos (PROVEA) highlighted discrepancies between official results and opposition-held records

(FIDH, 2024; Euronews, 2024; Chequeado, 2024). The Venezuelan opposition uploaded official electoral documents to an open-access website where over 83,5% of the electoral records indicate that Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia had 7.303.480 votes (67%), proving an irreversible trend and a massive victory. In defiance to the election results, President Maduro orchestrated a power takeover, disregarding the democratic process. This action reflects a significant breach of electoral integrity and undermines the principles of democratic governance. The international community remains vigilant, hoping for a peaceful and democratic resolution to the crisis, as the Venezuelan people continue to demand transparency and justice (FIDH, 2024; PeaceRep, 2024).

The current political crisis is only aggravating Venezuela's long economical and social crisis. According to the Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida (ENCOVI, 2023), the average rate of extreme poverty in Venezuela is 59.1%. It is estimated that a family would need an income of \$222.60 to avoid falling into extreme poverty, however the average monthly income for households in extreme poverty is \$120.70. The government offers a monthly financial help of \$19.6. This means an additional stipend of \$85.37 per household would be required to reach that threshold.

Economic modernization in the broader region is reshaping Latin America, dismantling old centers and constructing new ones. Venezuela has sunk into what experts call a "Malthusian trap," where necessities are no longer available for millions to sustain themselves (Bahar & Dooley, October 2019). The oil economy is no longer the powerhouse it once was. The highest oil production rate was around 3.5 million barrels per day in the late 1990s to early 2000s, the production has been inconsistent (just as oil prices), dropping to 1.17 million barrels per day by late 2018 (OPEC: pp14). This nosedive has devastated public investment in key areas such as health or education. The decrease in quality of life is palpable, it only requires looking around you in any Venezuelan street. The economy has been extremely unstable in the past 2 decades making the human toll

impossible to calculate, forcing families to resort to desperate means out of need.

As a consequence, the crisis in Venezuela has generated one of the most severe humanitarian challenges ever witnessed—by 2023 an estimated 8.2 million refugees will have fled their country (UNHCR, 2023). This exodus, the outcome of a blend of economic demise and political turmoil backed by social upheaval paints an antagonist picture overshadowing even that created in Syria. The repercussions are continent-wide. This mass exodus has been hardest felt by neighboring countries, especially in Colombia. An influx of refugees has put pressure on public services and job markets, with Colombia estimating the impact on government spending at around 0.4 -- 0.5 percent of GDP annually (World Bank, February 2022). However, among these adversities a light of hope is shining. Longer-term estimates for this migration range from an additional 0.7 to 0.9 percentage points of annual growth in Colombia (World Bank, 2022). This opportunity to have positive effects highlights the capacity of Venezuelan migrants who are prepared to give back.

Not only has the situation been critical, it has been a *silent* crisis due to the lack of freedom of speech. In the last 2 decades dozens of news media have disappeared, television broadcasters have been forced to self-censor or disappeared and foreign TV anchors have been forced out of the country. Radio has been the most vulnerable sector. In 2022 alone, the Venezuelan government ordered the closure of at least 95 radio broadcasters (Khan, 2023). Aside from censorship, the regime has used legal action to suppress free speech. Media workers and journalists have faced defamation, slander and terrorism charges. To a dictatorship that has slowly gained total control of national media, certain technological advances and social media companies represent an untamable issue. Currently, Venezuela is ranked among the 35 countries with the least press freedom in the world, according to `Reporters Without Borders`.

Aside from the reasons already mentioned to distrust Maduro's government, one of the most alarming aspects of his regime is the close ties to

“the Cartel of the Suns”. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) investigation has determined that at least from 1999 Nicolás Maduro, Diosdado Cabello, Hugo Carvajal and Clíver Carvajal acted as leaders and managers of the cartel. This cartel has had a devastating impact in Venezuela, the whole American continent and even Europe. The involvement of high-ranking officials, widespread corruption and drug, minerals and gun trafficking has undermined democratic institutions and the rule of law.

Repercussions and Psychosocial Implications

Venezuelans face a challenging reality, the majority of the population is living under extreme poverty and is highly dependent on the regime's financial help and monthly food supplies called, “*Caja CLAP*”. This financial dependence on the government is (1) insufficient to surpass the extreme poverty borderline, (2) limits the people's financial autonomy and (3) adds an extra layer of control over the population. This financial dependence translates to an ideological dependence since people who think differently to the regime's ideals are persecuted, silencing dissent and trapping many in a cycle of poverty and fear, unable to advocate for change without severe repercussions.

Since July 28th the people of Venezuela have been peacefully protesting to defend popular vote. Maduro's regime response has been to violently persecute manifestants. More than 2000 people have been arrested and more than 24 have died in the 9 days that followed elections (Foro Penal, 2024). Many of the citizens are taken to “El Helicoide,” the largest torture center in Venezuela and one of the biggest in Latin America. The persecution has intensified, the regime is now encouraging people to report individuals who participate in the public manifestations through an app called *VenApp*. The app was initially designed to report transport or service failures, augmented with a virtual marketplace; it was repurposed by Nicolás Maduro's government in the lead-up to the presidential elections by adding a report on “*guarimbas fascistas*”, which is how the regime refers to the opposition manifestations. This transformation of a civic tool into an instrument of

political surveillance represents a poignant example of how technology, originally designed to empower citizens and improve their daily lives, can be co-opted to serve authoritarian and oppressive ends.

Venezuelans are also under online surveillance. Maduro's regime is threatening, kidnapping and arresting content creators and social media users who are spreading the news. On August 5th, Maduro's regime expressed that Whatsapp, Instagram and TikTok are a *threat* to Venezuela. Diosdado Cabello, a Venezuelan congressman, said "*We shall return to the Stone Age. We won't use Whatsapp or Tiktok; but here in Venezuela they won't overthrow the government using Tiktok*".

The persecution and oppression have conquered new heights. With the surveillance of online activity and the people's reports in the *Venapp*, Venezuela is probably facing the most similar system to the *Thought Police* described by Orwell in 1984.

Venezuelans don't have freedom to think, they cannot use their mind in "ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression" like described by Martha Nussbaum.

Venezuelans live in fear; fear of threats, abductions, and even the harrowing possibility of murder at the hands of those entrusted with safeguarding their rights and integrity. Within the governance system reigning in Venezuela (and other authoritarian countries) today, social justice is unattainable. It is impossible to individuate or achieve personal development in an environment lacking security. Protection is absent and the last of human freedoms, *the power to choose* has been deprived. This loss of freedom also perpetuates a cycle of oppression and despair that hinders individual progress and dignity.

This article was born from the determination of Venezuelans who emigrated to Spain, compelled to share the truth and break the silence surrounding their homeland's plight. It stands as a testament for those who must remain voiceless, their freedom of expression stifled by oppressive forces.

As long as this regime is in power, social justice will never be attainable in Venezuela. Psychologists and social justice advocates need to stand with the Venezuelan people, stay informed, communicate with their political representatives, donate to

respected charities and echo Venezuelan's chants for freedom.

Fan the flame that freedom ignites. Let it fuel the resilience and strength in the hearts of the oppressed.

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Research Council

2024 Cohort of SCRA Research Scholars

Edited by Fabricio Balcazar, University of Illinois at Chicago

The SCRA Research Council is delighted to announce the outcome of the 2024 cycle of recruitment, review and selection of Research Scholar applicants. The SCRA Research Council was founded in 2017 and decided that a good way to help untenured community psychology faculty in graduate programs where they can mentor upcoming community psychology research contributors. Such scholars may become tenured faculty, contribute to the community research literature and mentor future scholars for decades to come. This effort helps build a base of community psychology knowledge that is bedrock for our field. To date with this cohort about 32 individuals have been appointed as Research Scholars over the last seven cohorts. Of these 27 have contributed to the diversity of SCRA by virtue of their race or ethnicity, sexual orientation and/or nationality. All of those who have sought to be promoted to associate professor with tenure have been successful, with at least two more being considered this year. Many are using cutting edge methods and studying important contemporary issues like understanding systemic racism and the experience of the Black family, building community health coalitions, developing critical community psychology internationally, and promoting disability rights. Several have also taken leadership positions in SCRA. A number have contributed to DEI efforts in their home departments. In short, the SCRA Research Scholar Program has been successful in supporting talented young faculty and helping them be successful in route to promotion to Associate Professor. Scholars value the peer support they have received from cohort members and the mentoring that they have obtained from senior scholars in community psychology. Many thanks to our senior mentors!!

In winter 2024 the SCRA Executive Committee (EC) approved the SCRA Research Scholars Program for 2024, SCRA's seventh cohort of Research Scholars, and committed \$25,000 to support five Scholars. As part of the SCRA's commitment to promoting social justice and uprooting white supremacy, the Executive Committee designated two of these appointments for Black and BIPOC Scholars. For other appointments, racial and ethnic diversity is an important but not an exclusive criterion in the selection process. In addition to financial support for five Scholars, all 2024 Scholars receive mentoring assistance from one or more accomplished senior researchers in community psychology or related field, meet regularly in a peer support group focused on writing and also convene monthly to interact with Fabricio Balcazar who serves as group coordinator and senior community psychologists on professional development topics. The Research Council called for applications in the spring and was happy that a significant number of talented young university researchers applied. After carefully reviewing these SCRA members' applications, the Council selected the following seven very promising assistant professors in community psychology as SCRA Research Scholars:

Dr. Michelle Abraczinskas is an Assistant Professor of Youth Development and Prevention Science in the Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences at the



University of Florida. She completed her pre-doctoral APPIC internship at The Consultation Center at Yale University School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and a PhD in Clinical-Community Psychology from the University of South Carolina in 2018. She completed a two-year National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) T-32 postdoctoral fellowship at the REACH Institute at Arizona State University in 2020. In her program of research, she uses applied developmental and ecological-systems frameworks to engage in community-partnered research to improve health inequities that diverse young people experience.

Dr. Abraczinskas focuses on 1) increasing the engagement of marginalized young people in settings that promote health, 2) using participatory approaches to understand processes necessary to create equitable systems in which young people thrive, and 3) understanding the readiness of systems to uptake and sustain youth participatory action research. Her recent research has involved rural youth and substance use prevention, participatory action research with youth who have experienced parental incarceration, and understanding the conditions under which youth serving systems utilize youth generated research evidence. Dr. Abraczinskas has been involved in SCRA as a member of the Early Career and School & Youth Engagement interest groups. She has participated in the SCRA conference mentoring sessions, both as a participant and a mentor. As a SCRA research scholar, Dr. Abraczinskas has goals to expand her mentoring network, continue training on youth engaged and participatory methods, attend conferences with her research team, and apply for and hopefully obtain a mid-to-large sized grant. Dr. Abraczinskas plans to work on applying for funding to collaboratively design embedded, structural supports for youth who have experienced parental incarceration.

Dr. Joy

Agner is a community psychologist, occupational therapist, Assistant Professor of Occupational Science, and Director of the Health



Equity Action Lab in the Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy at the University of Southern California. Dr. Agner began her work with SCRA as a Student Representative while receiving her PhD in Community and Cultural Psychology from the University of Hawai'i with the guidance of Dr. Barile.

Dr. Agner's research focuses on improving community-based services for people with serious mental illness (PWSMI), which is rooted in her personal experiences as a family member, caregiver, advocate, and healthcare provider. The lack of national attention to developing an effective, empowering community-based mental health system has fueled Dr. Agner's overarching focus on advancing socially oriented, purpose-centered, peer-led mental health recovery models through community-based research. Currently, Dr. Agner is researching socially oriented models of care, such as the Clubhouse model and Trieste model, through multiple lenses. In collaboration with her research team, she is developing a novel socio-spatial engagement measure that maps social interaction and activity engagement in space and time. This work can advance theory on the development of social connections and purposeful engagements in community mental health settings, by defining low or high engagement and social connection spaces, identifying related social design features, and examining proximal behavioral outcomes after co-designed environmental interventions. Her goals as a SCRA Research Scholar are to develop knowledge on designing belonging in mental health settings and to connect

with an immensely talented group of peers and mentors, to offer mutual support, shared accountability, and to be inspired by the depth and variety of community-engaged scholarship in this cohort.

Dr. Janelle Billingsley is

an Assistant Professor in the Community Psychology track of the Human Services Psychology program at the University of Maryland,



Baltimore County. She received her Ph.D. in Community Psychology at the University of Virginia. Dr. Billingsley's research focuses on the study of normative and adaptive processes fostering healthy development among African American adolescents facing contextual adversity. She utilizes qualitative and mixed method approaches to further uncover how African American adolescents may leverage preexisting strengths in their everyday lives, such as supportive intergenerational relationships, in ways that promote their social and emotional well-being. Additionally, Dr. Billingsley's work examines sociocultural influences on African American adolescents' social-emotional development and considers how African American youth understand and respond to their social environments. She aims to develop interventions that build on naturally occurring resources to promote positive developmental outcomes among African American youth.

As a SCRA Research Scholar, Dr. Billingsley will examine how close relationships with caring adults may support African American adolescents as they engage in civic activities such as antiracist activism. She will utilize interview data with African American youth in the Baltimore Metropolitan area of Central Maryland to examine how familial and

non-familial adults strengthen youths' beliefs in their capacity to enact social change. She will also explore how these relationships with adults, help youth strategize and develop skills for effective engagement in civic activities, and support youth as they navigate social-emotional challenges associated with their engagement in social change efforts. Findings from this work will provide insight into processes supporting African American adolescents' civic development. Dr. Billingsley is excited to learn from and work with her mentor and cohort of SCRA Research Scholars!

Dr. Tameka L. Gillum is an Associate Professor of Community Health in the College of Population Health at the University of New Mexico. She earned her



Ph.D. from the Ecological-Community Psychology program at Michigan State University. Dr. Gillum has over 25 years of research experience in exploring and addressing intimate partner violence/dating violence (IPV/DV) within racial/ethnic minority and sexual minority populations. These efforts inform development of culturally specific prevention and intervention efforts, health clinic based IPV interventions and have made clearer the mental health effects of IPV/DV victimization. Among other accomplishments, this work earned her the Outstanding Research Award from the National Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC). Dr. Gillum's most recent research involves investigating IPV in Kenya (East Africa) and gun violence within African American communities.

As an SCRA Research Scholar, Dr. Gillum will work to expand her research agenda by combining her years of expertise in IPV research with

embarking on research to also address the epidemic of gun violence that is plaguing African American communities. Such research efforts could help develop an enhanced and nuanced understanding of the intersection of these two concurrent epidemics of violence that are disproportionately impacting African Americans. They could also inform the development of comprehensive youth-focused prevention efforts to effectively target both forms of violence. This research agenda will be advanced in partnership with a community-based agency with which Dr. Gillum has had a relationship for over 20 years.

Dr. Mayra Guerrero is an Assistant Professor in the Clinical and Community and Applied Developmental Psychology programs at the University



of Illinois Chicago (UIC), where she directs the Health Equity and Access Lab (HEAL). She earned her Ph.D. in Community Psychology from DePaul University and completed postdoctoral training at Michigan State University before becoming a Bridge to Faculty postdoctoral fellow at UIC. Dr. Guerrero holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the City College of New York and is a first-generation Latina raised in the Bronx, New York.

Dr. Guerrero's research aims to promote equitable health outcomes for individuals recovering from substance use disorders and survivors of gender-based violence by examining social, contextual, and systemic factors impacting their wellbeing. Dr. Guerrero evaluates interventions that target social determinants of health, addresses systemic challenges that perpetuate health disparities, and collaborates with communities to advance health equity. As a community-engaged researcher, Dr. Guerrero employs approaches such as Community-Based

Participatory Research (CBPR) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) and utilizes techniques like social network analysis and multilevel modeling. She integrates quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods to identify systemic issues, develop community-generated solutions, and implement sustainable changes.

As a SCRA Research Scholar, Dr. Guerrero will explore the feasibility and utility of a multilevel and mixed-method study examining Recovery Capital (RC) among racial and ethnic minoritized populations with substance use disorders. This project will involve a community advisory board to guide every research stage, leveraging community expertise, enhancing cultural validity, and aiding in the translation of findings. The study aims to provide pilot data to support an R01 application, focusing on recruitment and retention of participants, adherence to study assessments, engagement with the community advisory board, and the utility of the proposed approach. Her long-term goal is to secure an NIH R01 grant to develop, implement, and evaluate a community intervention targeting social determinants of health for racial and ethnic minoritized individuals in recovery. Dr. Guerrero has been an active member of SCRA since 2015. She co-administered the Practice Council Community Mini-Grants from 2017-2019 and served as a Co-Editor of the Practice Council's column in *The Community Psychologist* from 2019-2020.

Dr.

Andrew Nalani

is assistant professor of Human and Organizational Development who studies how cultural/political



ideologies and organizational dynamics shape youth engagement and positive development across both open youth spaces and more structured institutional settings. His interdisciplinary scholarship (drawing on community psychology,

developmental science and organizational studies) aims to enhance organizations' capacity to initiate and sustain young people's active participation in their own growth and wellbeing and make meaningful contribution to their communities. Drawing on his background as a group facilitator for over a decade, in North America and East Africa, his intervention research also examines the link between organizational learning and change strategies to reduce inequality and support healing and thriving for youths and communities farthest from opportunity. His work has appeared in the *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, and *Society*. He is a member and peer coordinator of the 2023-2025 SCRA Research Scholars Cohort and also a member of the current cohort (2024-2026).

During his time as a scholar, Andrew will validate a novel approach to measuring youth-adult partnerships, leveraging secondary data collected from frontline staff in residential youth facilities at the welfare-justice intersection, and from staff in community contexts. Additionally, he will develop a relational recruitment strategy alongside faith communities to study how the ecology of these spaces influences youth civic identity over time. He is interested in how a consequential political ideology, Christian nationalism, manifests in the organizational features of faith-based youth spaces and its downstream effect on youth and young adults' civic identities.

Dr. Nyssa

Snow-Hill, is an Assistant Professor in the Clinical Psychology, Community Track Program at DePaul University and holds a faculty affiliate



position in the Center for Dissemination and Implementation Science at University of Illinois at Chicago. She earned her PhD in Clinical-Community Psychology at the University of South Carolina and completed her clinical internship at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Snow-Hill stayed in Chicago after internship to complete a postdoctoral fellowship in implementation science at the Center for Dissemination and Implementation Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research primarily focuses on using community-based participatory methods to inform the development and implementation of evidence-based interventions for those experiencing homelessness and for other systems-involved youth. She also seeks to better understand and improve attitudes towards those experiencing homelessness.

Over the course of the SCRA Research Scholar program, Dr. Snow-Hill will further an ongoing mixed methods study working to develop an integrated substance use and traumatic stress intervention for youth experiencing homelessness. First, she will complete concurrent analysis of a secondary dataset and in-depth interviews from youth experiencing homelessness and providers working in homeless and housing programs, which will inform the development of a conceptual model guiding intervention development. Second, a literature review of evidence-based practices targeting the mechanisms identified in the conceptual model will be conducted, an intervention will be selected to be adapted, and feedback will be obtained from youth experiencing homelessness and providers. Third, Dr. Snow-Hill will adapt the intervention components and test them to inform final adaptations and implementation strategy. The completion of this 3-aim study will identify four core intervention components for an integrated substance use and traumatic stress intervention for youth experiencing homelessness and will set up a National Institute of Health R-series proposal where the intervention and implementation strategy can be fully developed and pilot-tested.

Dr. Stephanie Torres is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at

Chicago (UIC) and holds an affiliate faculty position in Community and Applied Developmental Psychology (C&ADP) in the Department of Psychology and in the Center for Dissemination and Implementation Science in the Department of



Medicine. She is the proud daughter of a Mexican immigrant family. Her research focuses on utilizing community-based participatory research (CBPR) to develop, disseminate, and implement school- and community-based programs that promote well-being and mental health among immigrant communities. Her work has been funded by the Center for Clinical and Translational Science (NIH UL1TR002003) and the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy at UIC. In partnership with a local community organization, Dr. Torres developed a community health worker-led, 10-session, group intervention called FIESTA (Familias Inmigrantes Empoderándose contra eStrés Tomando Acción), which aims to reduce stress due to structural racism among Latinx immigrant families.

Dr. Torres is a licensed clinical psychologist in the State of Illinois. She is engaged in the Coalition for Immigrant Mental Health (CIMH), a non-profit which brings together multiple stakeholders (mental health practitioners, community organizers, and researchers) to promote awareness and access to mental health services. Dr. Torres is the co-chair of the CIMH Mental Health Practice and Training Committee. Through CIMH, she is a lead trainer for “Reimagining Mental Health Supports for Migrant Arrivals,” a trauma-informed training for frontline staff working with newcomers in shelter settings. As a SCRA scholar, Dr. Torres aims to: 1) increase her knowledge on Youth Participatory Action Research

(YPAR) and mixed-methods; 2) submit an external grant based on her current community-engaged work; and 3) engage in professional development and networking opportunities (e.g., seminars, conferences, writing groups). She is excited to continue to work with her mentor, Dr. Irma Serrano García, and cannot wait to collaborate with her SCRA cohort!

In closing, the Research Council is excited about the past and proposed work of this new cohort of Research Scholars. We look forward to supporting them on their journey toward promotion and tenure in academe and wish them each a great future in community psychology.

Student Issues

Edited by Raquel Rose, New York University & Annalise Tolley, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Welcome to the Fall 2024 Student Issues column exploring the theme: **An open, creative space for conversations and movements within Community Psychology**. Students were invited to submit research briefs, think/opinion pieces, white papers or other works that explore a multitude of perspectives on their hope, predictions, and vision for conversations and movements they hope to see in the field of community psychology. This could be related to practice with communities, empowering students within the community, or any other topic related to the theme.

In addition, **we want to highlight the awardees of the 2024 Student Research Grant Awards**. Students at both the master's and dissertation stages were welcome to apply. Five dissertation awards were provided (Joanna, Chelsea, Magdalena, Kayla, Gordon) and two master's awards (Madeleine, Jamie). Thanks to all the applicants and to our review committee: Raquel Rose, Aaron Baker, Dani Rodriguez Ramirez, Fitsum Areguy, Payton Davenport, Krista Haapanen, and Annalise Tolley.



Joanna Beltrán Girón
The Role of Imagination and Creativity in Movements for Truth and Justice: A Participatory Action Research Project with Salvadoran War Survivors



Magdalena Moskal
Perspectives on College Students of Color Substance Use: A Photovoice Project



Madeleine Lewis
Understanding the Impacts of Transitioning Church Property on Reparative Justice Efforts



Chelsea Birchmier
“Searching For The Nexus” Between Two Movements: Fight For \$15 and Possibilities for Black Worker Struggle in St. Louis, Missouri



Kayla Anderson
Collective Action Around Perceived Environmental and Environmental Health Concerns in Grundy County, Tennessee



Jamie Hardy-Besaw
Impact of CEnR: Immigrant Co-researcher Experiences and Recommendations



Gordon Crean
White Anti-racist Psychosocial Transformation and Accountability: Narratives and Knowledges from White Participants in Abolitionist Movements

Breaking the Shackles Restricting Community Psychology’s Realization of its Full Potential

Written by Siobhonn Job, The George Washington University

When Jim Kelly challenged the field in 1973 and tasked us with defining the *how* of community psychology, we were left with poignant questions to guide the way forward. While luminaries such as Trickett (1996) acknowledge that progress has been made, I still wonder whether Kelly’s questions have been answered meaningfully enough to ignite changemaking needed for the Swampscott vision to come to pass. A look at the gap between where we started and where we thought we could be by now demonstrates that we are not much further along than we were in the 1960’s. So, what happened to the future we were promised so long ago? Hold tight: we start on a dim note, but we get brighter at the end.

Community psychology promised a less individualistic, more context-dependent view of the

human condition. Yet, despite its vibrant beginnings, community psychology is certainly less radical than it set out to be and falls victim to the very issues that paralyzed clinical psychology. For instance, despite its stated focus on issues of “diversity” and how they impact our work, some of community psychology still seems to have a narrow understanding of community— one that others or exoticizes marginalized, non-WEIRD populations. Further, instead of community psychologists leading the charge to promote social inclusivity and wellbeing, we seem to leave it to applied social psychologists, social workers, and public health academics to identify and investigate the structural barriers that prevent changes to more easily-identified microlevel barriers to inclusivity and justice— a peculiar outcome given our stated emphasis on action-oriented science rooted in social ecology and justice (Tebes, 2016).

Community psychologists have made commendable progress with microlevel and mesolevel interventions; however, without creating or capitalizing on macro-level opportunities to demonstrate our expertise in addressing person-in-

context issues, I am tempted to question the longevity of community psychology as a distinct field. As much as I appreciate the idealism of 1960's community psychology, an urgent shift from ideals to action is desperately needed if we are to leap, or even creep, forwards to that original vision of transformation. We commonly say in our field that the best prediction of future behavior is past behavior. Applying this to our field, our future looks grim. I'd expect a new article published in a decade lamenting the painful lack of progress defining our identity, expanding our footprint, and publicizing our efforts. Likely, that author would articulate the very issues already enunciated by Kelly (1979), Trickett (1996), and Tebes (2016), and, based on where we have been and what we have done, I would expect there to be ferocious defense of the ideals meant to guide our work. I would expect for us to lose more of what we do and how we do it as we compete with other fields to engineer solutions to real-world problems.

The rub is that the spirit of competition is antithetical to the values endorsed by community psychology. A real embrace of our values would see us building synergistic partnerships and collaborations (Kloos, 2016). We would find ways to create and share resources with much more equity as we worked towards promoting collective wellbeing. We would harness these connections and resources to assess and address our sticking points and the barriers to the progress we have wanted for over fifty years. In this vision, we prioritize community psychology as cohesive practice and not a disjointed collection of tools.

With this vision, my hope for our field is simple: we get it right this time. We transform our field. We allow our transformations to ripple into other domains of psychology and social science. We continue to elevate the importance of prevention and implementation science and create more balance in our field so we create second-order changes that transform society. In my vision, we never stop pushing the boundaries of our field until we break away from all positivistic, colonial confines to build a truly liberated community psychology that acknowledges its global roots and benefits all of us. I believe the benefits of

community psychological approaches to the science and practice of psychology are abundant, even as they are yet to materialize fully. My hope is that we can keep our hope alive long enough to see those decades-old promises fulfilled. Still, hope is not enough. We are past the point of ideals. We are primed for action.

As we move forward, perhaps we consider enhancing our focus on the structural issues that prevent social justice and liberation of marginalized people. Many in our field have already made and continue to make incredible efforts towards justice and liberation. We can support them by elucidating the community psychology processes and defining better measurement methodologies that tap into the causes and impacts of these sociostructural issues in our communities by going beyond categorical, demographic labeling. We will know we have made progress when it is more common for our reports to detail our participant-collaborators' experiences of marginalization instead of providing descriptive overviews of the marginalized identities they might hold.

We might also consider making a return to our rabble-rousing agitator roots: I do not believe community psychologists were ever meant to accept the norms or practice within the confines of traditional science. We have siloed our liberal selves away from mainstream psychologies, and in doing so, we have done the field a disservice by missing opportunities for collaboration. Sitting at the nexus of individual and societal foci, community psychology has an advantageous perspective that bridges the gap between these approaches. Thus, we must seek to foster greater collaboration that emphasizes mutuality in the cross-disciplinary relationship and allows community psychology to take a more active role in addressing well-documented social issues. Community psychology has a lot to offer, and if we offer it freely and in accordance with our stated values, community psychology can and will (though I admit my crystal ball is a little hazy) realize its full potential and transform the practice of social and psychological sciences to create Swampscott's envisioned future.

For additional conversation, reach out to Siobhonn (sjob@gwu.edu).

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SCRA News

Edited by Dominique Thomas, Morehouse College

Save the Date: 2025 SCRA Biennial

The Official Dates for the 2025 SCRA Biennial Conference at Michigan State University are June 17 - 21, 2025.

Member Mondays

SCRA is excited to use our social media platforms to highlight and celebrate our members on Mondays!

Nominate yourself or another SCRA member!

<https://redcap.link/scramembermondays>



SCRA Membership

If you are not currently a member of the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) and would like to be, please visit <http://scra27.org/> to learn more about the organization. If you would like to become a member, the membership form can be accessed at:

<http://scra27.org/members1/membership/>

If you would like to learn more about community psychology, visit www.communitypsychology.com.

TCP Submission Guidelines

TCP is published four times a year. Articles, columns, features, and announcements should be submitted as Word attachments in an e-mail message to the TCP Editor at TCP@scra27.org
Submission deadlines are:

- **February 15th** – Spring issue
- **May 15th** – Summer issue
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Authors should adhere to the following guidelines when submitting materials:

- Length: **Five pages, double-spaced**
- No cover sheet or title page. Please be sure to put the article title and author names and organizational affiliations at the top of the article.
- **Graphs & Tables:** These should be **converted and saved as pictures** in JPEG files. Please note where they should be placed in the article. Submit the image(s) as a separate file.

Images: Images are highly recommended, but please limit to two images per article. Images should be higher than 300 dpi. If images need to be scanned, please scan them at 300 dpi and save them as JPEGs. Submit the image(s) as a separate file.

- Margins: 1" margins on all four sides
- Text: **Times New Roman, 12-point font** – this includes headings and titles and subheadings.

- Alignment: All text should be aligned to the left (including titles) with a .5" paragraph indentation.
- Punctuation Spacing: Per APA guidelines, make sure that there is only one space after periods, question marks, etc.
- Do NOT include footnotes or endnotes.
- References: **Follow APA guidelines. These should also be justified to the left with a hanging indent of .25".**
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- Please put your email information and an invitation to contact you into the article.

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