From the President

SCRA as Ecological Praxis

Written by Bradley Olson, National Louis University Chicago

The theme of the Biennial this year is Ecological Praxis: System Complexity, Cycles of Action, and Extending the Metaphors with the Natural World.

What does this mean?
Quite a few Biennial submissions received, interpreted, and expanded the “ecological praxis” theme, quite accurately—not that there was a wrong answer—and they did so in intriguing ways. The “Ecological”, in part, recognizes Jim Kelly as a founder of our field and his pioneering, and continued work, on “becoming ecological”. Our attention to “ecology” is now central to SCRA. And yet the ecology metaphor and the ecological realities still possess potential meanings, ecology as, for instance, social systems, multiple-levels, person, and environmental fit. Multiple meanings have instantiated themselves into our community psychology consciousness in complex ways. There is the social ecology in which we work and live. Yet equally meaningful is the connection of ecology to the most meaningful non-human ecosystems around us. The non-human ecology existed before
the human, social ecology, and hopefully they will continue on this earth for a long time.

It therefore makes sense to give due attention to the human-driven climate change, and the scarcity of and threat to resources, and extinction. While attempting to move beyond individuals and exploring our human-social ecology we too often ignore our connection to the larger natural world. We are all part of the same interconnected universe. Urgent realities require urgent human allies. Community members around the world who are less affluent are the ones most threatened by climate-related catastrophes. Our “ecological thinking” must transcend the tracing of ecological constellations of human interactions. We have to realize that animal and plant ecosystems are really more than a metaphor for our work, and there is a need for human unity and for action.

This is where the “praxis” in ecological praxis comes in.

The great complex systems thinking can sometimes get us caught up in intellectualizing and observing structures with curiosity and awe, yet with no clear path to action. And for SCRA, that is research, values, and ACTION. If we do not attend to the action, the movement toward transforming the world, if we are just static, that is problematic. To engage in wise praxis, we need to understand the ecology around us without getting stultified and bogged down. Real action is not a single act. It is not a single point in time or a single event, and that is why praxis presents such a powerful guide. The concept of praxis can help us create better guides toward understanding a more fully temporal process and practice, the forward collective movement that comes through action. Praxis not only occurs in time and stages but is often cyclical and iterative.

Here, I am defining praxis as: an iterative, cyclical set of processes or methodological stages toward social change. The iterative cycle may flow back and forth from community dialogues, to the research literature, showing what has been learned in the past, or what has been effective in other settings. The cycle includes later stages of our current multiple methods of research, our practice and programming, and then back again to our community dialogues. We learn at every stage and consistently refine our pathways.

Our current SCRA strategic plan is unsurprisingly communicated as a multifaceted systems-based (even if a closed systems) model. I am grateful for the many engaged members of SCRA who have helped put it together and to those who continue to help bring it to life. While the SCRA strategic plan accounts for some of the complexity of our reality, like any two-dimensional plan, it cannot explicate everything around us, nor everything that we do. Still, this is not a critique as much as a challenge that we emphasize more movement over time including processes, goals, and outcomes. I believe an accompanying logic model or theory of change could help facilitate such movement.

The illustrative visual of SCRAs strategic plan shown on the next page is right now a powerfully comprehensive framework. Take some time to review this model, represented a building or home. Does it capture your understanding of current and future SCRA priorities? What stands out to you in the model?

Here are some of my immediate reflections. It is a solid, sturdy looking building, in my imagination a house, and a home is a good thing. The brick and mortar structure metaphor for SCRA is a place that can be seen inside is protective, and safe, a place of warmth, a place where one can recover with others. It is a setting, and community psychology is all about the creation of new, autonomous alternative settings, where members can provide each other with mutual support, largely around our professional work, but certainly around friendships and even family-like relationships as well. A sense of community and empowerment often come about in such settings. For some of us, SCRA might even provide a form of therapeutic safety, when our work environments are rough or hostile. The lone community psychologist working out in places where no other community psychologists are around can turn to SCRA and feel a sense of connection.
One limitation I see in the house metaphor is its separation from the natural world, a static structure that does not live and therefore does not grow. If we do look at the nature in the model, we see grass and leaves. The leaves are there to label the different sections. Grass can symbolize beautification of a home and its connection to the earth, so perhaps our values could represent roots (in the natural world), or, given that our values permeate everything we do, vines? Part of me still wishes the whole symbol could be one of life and movement.

I look at the two floors with five concrete strategic priorities—(1) Membership, (2) Educational Programs, (3) Visibility, (4) Operations, and (5) Finance. These two concrete floors feel like a lot a lot of room taken up for such inward focused work. The strategic priorities are important, but sometimes I wonder if our strategic plan focuses a bit too much inwardly. I am not sure it deserves more floors than other areas. What if the outside “community” was seen to represent the majority of our work, to be our base? What if the metaphor of the strategic plan was looked outwardly, to the community and to the natural world? How might that re-framing change the way in which we conduct our work?

Then I get to the “domains of activity”. This is in many ways what I see as one of our strongest set of forces. This, I believe, is where our greatest sense of strengths lies. The domains of activity get closer to the idea of praxis, to what might be better represented as our cyclical but forward movement. Our domains of activity—(1) Research, (2) Education, (3) Practice, and (4) Policy. They reflect action, and our engagement with the world. It is hard not to notice some incongruities between our “domains of activity” and our “councils”. Research, Education, and Practice are all Councils, but Racial and Ethnic Affairs are not included in our domains of activity, and “Policy” is one of our domains of activity but—as I have been reminded—Policy is not a Council. It would certainly be easy to pull Racial Justice up from the values and added as a domain of activity. But should Policy also be a Council? Such alignment between our councils and domains of activity would make sense. For me, what is key
is that these domains of activity reflect on SCRA’s engagement with the outside world.

And then we get to the top of the house. It is in very small print, but it is a very essential and pleasing SCRA mission and vision.

From Ecological Structures to Praxis-Based Action

Let’s focus on the SCRA vision portion on the roof:

*Have a strong, global impact on enhancing well-being and promoting social justice for all people by fostering collaboration where there is division and empowerment where there is oppression.*

The statement is almost perfect here. Although, in my opinion, the pairing of “empowerment” with “where there is oppression” is not quite right. Empowerment is a process that involves the “community members” themselves. Empowerment involves community members, not those doing “oppression”. We need to engage, as well, as Community Psychology, those actors involved in oppression. Rather than “empowerment where there is oppression”, what about “activism” instead? Or even better yet, “empowerment and activism” “where there is oppression”. It is this combination of empowerment and action that changes power structures, whereas empowerment alone puts the onus on the community members in the face of oppression—it falls a bit into the blaming-the-victim, pulling-up-by- bootstraps fallacy. In fact, “activism” incorporates empowerment within it, and solidarity, all in the service of confronting or challenging unjust power and policies.

As community psychologists engaged in activism, we should be working “with” community members, working “for” and, sometimes “behind”. Community members. Often, we actually are the community members. We are always allies and our community psychology brings, as scholar-activists, knowledge capital. We don’t have to fight oppression violently. We can peacefully (but vigorously, forcefully, analytically, and intelligently) play a larger role in resisting oppression. That work, non-violent activism, not just empowerment, falls clearly within the domain of community psychology.

In any ecological praxis survey of the environment, oppression has to be studied, people have to be involved in liberating pedagogy, dialoguing about racism and de-colonization, and pushing for policy change.

There are two broader (not mutually-exclusive) roles SCRA plays when it comes to our function:

1) as a house, a setting of support, perhaps for respite. For many of us, SCRA conferences or events, for instance, are places to refresh, to get new ideas, to feel solidarity. Eventually our empathy for the broader world and social justice re-emerges. Therefore, there is also:

2) that policy, advocacy, and action work that SCRA does as an entity. We are all of course doing individual work outside that SCRA house, but I am talking about the work we do through SCRA, as a collectivity. We engage in that action as SCRA now, and we must continue doing so.

Conclusion

The complexity of ecology can interfere with concentrated action, but we need both ecological thinking and practice, for all the natural world, and the human part as well. How do we learn to better fold our ecological knowledge into praxis-based action? How do we more intentionally share the positive lessons learned and new ideas across the ecology of groups to move toward more collective action? Part of praxis is reflection, gaining input, utilizing existing research and theory, conversing to assess how we are impacting the human and the larger, natural world (animal, plant, and other worlds), and future generations, and putting ideas into practice. Let’s use community psychology’s community-based and trans-species values, against the forces of harm, the by-standing, the excesses of social control, and the structural violence in the world.

Brad Olson
President of SCRA
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Chicago
From the Editors

Written by Susan M. Wolfe, Susan Wolfe and Associates and Dominique Thomas, University of Michigan

In January 2018 The Community Psychology, Liberation Psychology, and Ecopsychology Specialization at Pacifica Graduate Institute was poised to host the Community Research and Action in the West (CRA-W) conference. The theme was Deconstructing Coloniality / Creating Decoloniality in Community Psychology. Unfortunately, the conference was cancelled after unprecedented flooding following wildfires. While we were grateful that the Pacifica Graduate Institute campus was spared, we were saddened by the tragic disaster surrounding the campus and disappointed that this exciting opportunity to delve into decoloniality was lost to us. As a response, we invited the faculty and students who had worked hard to organize this conference to submit a special feature to TCP. In this issue we are eager to present the amazing and thought-provoking set of articles they assembled. We hope TCP readers find them as engaging as we did.

Our column editors and members have all come up with a great set of articles, too. After you read them, here are some ideas to follow up with:

1. Respond to the invitation and get involved with the SCRA Community Psychology Practice Council. Tune in to one of the Conversations that Raise Your Practice Game.
2. Examine your own perceptions of formerly incarcerated individuals after reading the Criminal Justice column.
3. If you are working in rural settings, contact Susana Helm and share your work.

4. Write and contribute a column to the From our Members section. Better yet, if you are faculty working with students on a project or a practitioner working with earlier career folks, collaborate with them to write an article.

5. Share your good news regarding promotions, new jobs, and other milestones reached for our Member Spotlight column.

6. Send an email and congratulate the SCRA Award winners.

We would like to encourage all SCRA members to get more involved. SCRA’s offers many avenues to engage at different levels. You can participate regionally by attending your regional conference, volunteer to be a regional representative, and attend the Biennial in June to learn more ways to engage.

As we finished putting this issue together, we reflected on how much fun it is to serve in the Editor role. Mostly because four times a year we get to read through all the amazing articles that are shared by SCRA members. As Editors, we have to read everything, and this presents an opportunity to read about topics we may not normally select. Each issue opens a new world and reminds us of all the great work being done by SCRA members. It also demonstrates just how much can be done with a degree in community psychology. Next time someone asks you “what do community psychologists do?” just send them a link to TCP.

Susan Wolfe and Dominique Thomas
Your Editors

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Special Feature

Decoloniality and Positionality

Edited by Breana Johnson, Tarell Kyles, and Mari Larangeira, Pacifica Graduate Institute

Colonialism and resistance to it, began in the 15th century with the imposition of European cultures and geopolitical powers upon Indigenous cultures. While simultaneously carving up land and bodies in terms of the material exploitation of non-European entities, colonialism also resulted in a sort of “carving up” of human consciousness and psyche. These fracturing processes, which culminated in European settler-colonies within the non-European world, the near annihilation of indigenous peoples, and the genocide and enslavement of Africana peoples has led to a paradigm shift of a most horrific kind: a global colonial matrix of domination that continues in the ongoing exploitation of the Global South by the Global North.

The colonial matrix of power (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018) can be described as a web; the first element is the linear and dichotomous colonial/modern trajectory that Eurocentric consciousness and the Christian vertical relationship with God cut through the more cyclical cosmologies and ontologies of non-European peoples. This domination or centering of European/Western religious, and later “scientific” paradigms has been called “progress.” With the establishment of the colonies, Europe constructed what DuBois (1903) would later refer to...
as “the problem of the 20th century...the colorline,” adding this vertical axis (the color line) to the horizontal-linear axis of progress (coloniality/modernity). We might say it caused a break in the nature of consciousness and led to the theorization (a decolonial act of resistance) of not only a “double consciousness” for Africana and indigenous peoples, but cracks in our consciousness around issues of gender, age, sex, and the very nature of humanity itself.

Decoloniality, the conceptual analytic upon which this issue focuses, is a triune best understood as decoloniality/coloniality/modernity. It is a collision of narratives of consciousness, psyches, cultures, power, dehumanization, oppression, resistance, re-humanization, and liberation. The narrative continues and takes many forms, as people of all walks of life invigorate the decolonial aspect of the triune with resistances, healings, theorizations, and knowledge from a variety of positionalities. The aim is to delink away from the scarcity and misguided sense of self-preservation, which have characterized the historical thrust of coloniality/modernity.

This Special Feature of TCP presents a curated application of the three premised concepts of decoloniality - 1) coloniality of power, 2) coloniality of knowledge and 3) coloniality of being - as explored by student scholars within the Community, Liberation, Indigenous and Eco-Psychologies (CLIE) program at Pacifica Graduate Institute (PGI). Colonial domination is in the first place, writes Anibal Quijano (2010), “a colonization of the imagination.” Decoloniality deeply acknowledges the “importance of multiple knowledge systems, such as organic, spiritual and land-based systems” (Hall and Tandon, 2017), not only in their value but also in how they have contributed to the epistemology credited as entirely “Western” or “European” (Quijano, 2010). The articles herein provide insight into personal, professional and communal sites of resistance to coloniality via intrapsychic, interpersonal and/or institutional relations. Our engagement in decoloniality studies is tantamount to our desire to use psychology as a tool for creating a sustainable peaceful world, by creating interventions and scholarship that attune to and address the world’s crises.

For this Special Edition, the editors have attempted to listen and lean into the voices coming from the periphery- those not normally privileged in institutions of graduate-level learning. We place value upon our own ways of knowing and use the academic environment at PGI as a space to engage in a praxis of learning and knowledge production that empowers us in the creation of epistemologies that do not require us to sever parts of ourselves. The CLIE program is committed to including scholarship that empowers silenced voices and subjugated populations. The Depth Psychological roots of PGI support us as we engage with the complexities of psyche, even when that engagement results in a critique of the institution and the scholarship it was based upon.

We cannot engage the discourse of decoloniality without engaging ourselves. The editors approached this work from our own positionalities as a man and women from Black/Africana, Latinx, and European backgrounds, a range of spiritual beliefs, religious experience and occupancies of the color, class and sexuality spectrums. The process of curating the following articles was both a scholarly challenge and a subjective exploration into the intricacies of professional and personal identities; and the navigation of positionality in the deconstruction of coloniality in the various spaces, sites and places we encounter. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors, though they do exhibit multiplicity-and even the tensions between them are dynamic. The intersections of race, gender, sexuality, class, and geopolitical locations make this a kaleidoscopic task, highlighting the challenges and victories of navigating the world via a decolonial lens. Hence, our collection is complex, and the voices presented are unique and powerful.
The Decolonial Turn in Black/Africana Psychology

Written by Tarell Kyles and Breana D. Johnson, Pacifica Graduate Institute

The tradition of the Black scholar-activist-researcher is ever more necessary in our contemporary global time-space and is strengthened in its purpose and praxis via the decolonial turn (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). In the broadest sense, African people in the diaspora (Africana people) have taken a decolonial turn for 500 years, shaping the preservation of traditions and cultural practices of resistance and survival. Making what Maldonado-Torres (2013) has coined as the “decolonial turn” highlights the insidious nature of the colonial project and its ability to co-opt ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions that lull us into bystander complicity. These assumptions are at the basis of traditional psychology education and training, rooted in the philosophies of science that have supported colonial agendas. While the critique of traditional psychology as a hegemonic science has gained momentum in the field, applying a decolonial lens offers renewed insight. Scholars continue to explore the “modern individualist ways of being that constitute standards of hegemonic psychological standards” as products of coloniality itself. Acknowledging these ways of being and “modern mentalities” within a neoliberal individualist context or what Henick, Heine & Norenzayan (2010) have coined as WEIRD settings (Western, Educated, Industrial, Rich and Democratic) gives us a refined lens to reflect on the impact coloniality has had on Black/Africana psychology.

The decolonial turn for Black psychologists provokes reconsiderations of the praxis and paradigms at the roots of our work. Though earlier traditions in Black psychology have made major advancements in the field, breaking through important barriers in social science research, the field remains influenced by the colonial geo-politics of academia. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) warns, for the Black/African student embedded in the colonial context, the assumptions of their education will encourage them to “…hate their progenitors as demons…be taught that all the knowledge they possessed before coming to school was nothing but folk knowledges, barbarism and superstitions that must be quickly forgotten” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 11). Black/Africana psychologists risk a perpetuation of coloniality at a psychological unconsciousness level, in favor of its presumed merits and individual material comfort at the cost of collective transformation and healing. We hope to engage decolonial theory more deeply in our scholarship, to understand what it means and avoid “a romanticized vision of Afrocentricity…” that may, “…uphold a politics of identity that is blind to the changing contexts and the ineradicable markings of our colonial past” (Akomolafe, 2019).

Black/Africana Decolonial Depth Psychology

Black/Africana humanist, psychiatrist, philosopher, and revolutionary, Frantz Fanon’s work, represents one of the first western professional decolonial turns in Black/Africana psychology. His work is cited as the beginnings of mainstream, academically published Black decolonial thought, predating the Bandung Conference of 1955. Fanon’s engagement of a non-reductionist psychology by prefacing one’s attitude, reengaged a psychology of subjectivity, as he explored the consciousness of colonized people- perhaps the beginnings of coloniality of being theory. His exploration of power relations, meaning making and collective attitudes in the formation of identity within the modern field of psychiatry was monumental (Maldonado-Torres, 2017). If as Maldonado-Torres (2011, p. 2)
suggests, DuBois announced the decolonial turn in the 20th century, Fanon and many others (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018 p.8), articulated the necessity of moving away from objectification and Eurocentric logics and ways of being in the world. We recognize the triune of modernity-coloniality-decoloniality, formulated within its Latin American geopolitical contexts by Quijano (1991, 1994, 1999), Dussel, Lugones (2010), and many others, whose work was built upon and alongside Black/Africana scholars such as DuBois (1903), Fanon (1951, 1963) and Wynter (2003). We appreciate its analytics and advocate for its redeployment as a solute back into the solvent of Black/Africana Psychology.

Maldonado-Torres' (2017) work focuses on coloniality of being, clarifying how coloniality functions at the ontological level, by rejecting forms of knowledge resulting in epistemicide. He writes:

“Epistemic and ontological colonization did not happen in isolation or were merely contingent results of the search for objectivity through methodic science. More than mere risks, these forms of colonization were preconditions of the rise of modern psychology and the social sciences.” P 433

As students of historically Black institutions, we found the ontologies at the foundations of our training in social science were often antithetical to the scholarship we aim to produce in Black/Africana psychology. Though attending and existing within institutions historically dedicated to education people of color, the demands of the colonial structure required the production of students whom can adhere to and thrive within the colonial matrix - a matrix vastly opposed to Black/Africana philosophies, epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies, and realities. Our patterns of thought were greatly confined and redirected toward the modernist/colonial paradigm, which requires a constant deconstruction at and beyond the doctoral level. This dynamic of double consciousness within professional-academic space-times, where a Black/Africana cultural context is predominant, often contests with the operating colonial matrix of power, knowledge, and being. We suggest, coloniality also functions on unconscious levels by co-opting Black/Africana psychologists via the axiological dimensions of training in the psychological discipline. We observe tendencies toward colonial-modern values of individualism, progression, competition, hierarchy, domination, and economic gain embedded in traditional psychological training. We recognize this is not the intent of Black/Africana scholarship, yet our psychological analyses can struggle to “delink” from colonial values and mindsets (Mignolo, 2009). Building upon the work of clinical/industrial psychologist, Edwin J. Nichols (1974, 1987, 2004), the decolonial turn would be a reengagement of Black/Africana scholarship that intently stands on values of collectivity, creativity, and tradition. Without a critical and intentional analysis as to the ethical assumptions of one’s training, we continue to perpetuate coloniality through our practice and scholarship, despite our dedication to Black liberation.

Transdisciplinary Epistemic Disobedience

To delink requires approaching research, practices, methods, scholarship and education with a depth decolonial attitude. Exploring the axiological dimension of Black/Africana scholarship is one form of what decolonial scholars describe as “epistemic disobedience” (Mignolo, 2009). Epistemic disobedience is a reminder for Black/Africana psychologists to overtly concern themselves with the study of the philosophical implications of epistemologies, ontologies and empirical practices in the process of psychological knowledge production. In many ways, this is how we see our work at the intersections of the five disciplines we traverse in efforts to further the decoloniality project our ancestors have been forging for centuries.

As Black/Africana graduate students engaged in the discipline of psychology, the Community, Liberation, Indigenous and Eco-Psychology specialization in the Depth Psychology program at Pacifica Graduate Institute has provided us with a
transdisciplinary curriculum which overtly explores the decolonial turn, engaging and intersecting five fields of psychology. Depth psychology gives us a Western point of entry to acknowledge the complexity of the soul, while critical perspectives of depth psychology along the decolonial turn invite indigenous psychologies whose conceptions of humanity transcend what is provided by traditional psychoanalytic conceptions of mind, ego, and unconscious. The turn brings us further into the acknowledgment and exploration of an ancient, primordial African Unconscious, traversed by Jung even within his limited European positionality (Bynum, 1998, p. 77-79). Liberation psychology urges a preferential option for solidarity with the resistance of the oppressed and marginalized. Indigenous psychologies reengage historic sustainable experiential knowledge systems and recognize the attempts at subjugation of indigenous knowledge by colonial forces. Coupled with eco-psychologies, the decolonial turn moves away from western mind/body dualism and reconsiders land, ecosystems, animals, and other than human beings in pluriversal, mutually interdependent conversation, toward a cosmic sense of psychological health, well-being, and humanity. Finally, critical community psychology provides the practical tools for collective engagement, navigation of systems and the transformation of the daily realities of the subjugated.

If colonial modernist ways of being are embedded within our consciousness and reinforced by our institutions, a critical analysis of the process, theory and thought we engage in our work, particularly as Black scholar-activist-researchers is key to achieving true liberation of Black/African people. As Mignolo and Walsh (2018, p.2) highlight, “We are where we think”; decolonial studies has brought us into awareness of the threads of coloniality beneath the surface of our professional, student and personal identities, urging us to the edges and depths of the psychological discipline, in the CLIE program. An exploration of the struggles of making the decolonial turn in Black/Africana psychology amidst the hegemonic academic system is necessary for creating safe academic spaces for Black/Africana scholarship to truly thrive. With our transdisciplinary lens, we aim to engage decoloniality in and on multiple realms; Mignolo and Walsh (2018) encourage us to think of decoloniality as “contextual, relational, practice based and lived” - as well as spiritual, emotional and “existentially entangled and interwoven...” (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 19). We hope for Black/Africana psychology to overtly engage topics and explorations of the Black/Africana soul, a reexamination and further theorization of formulations of double/multiple consciousness and research with psychic material, images, and archetypal dimensions of Black/Africana dreams and divinations. These are areas that we feel the hegemonic psychological academic sphere has made “off limits” and superstitious, when in fact, turning our gaze toward the psychological and spiritual change-processes Black/Africana peoples have navigated in the diaspora is liberatory. We believe in a development of decolonial depth psychological perspective which provokes us to re-engage with the Black/African soul toward the realization of our freedom dreams.

References
Indigenous Images on Gentrified Lands: Decolonizing Ecological Praxis through Community Artivism

Written by Brenda X. Perez and C.A.R. Hawkins Lewis, Pacifica Graduate Institute

In psychology, perception is uniquely important because people are both the subjects and objects of inquiry (Kim & Park, 2006). Community psychologists perceive the relationship between individuals and society as an ecological model of nested micro-, meso-, and macro- systems (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Ironically, the ecological model rarely integrates the natural environment in its target-shaped image that centers around the individual (Moskell & Allred, 2013). By contrast, Indigenous communities have entirely different schemas for how people relate with the environment (Fixico, 2003; Gone, 2016), often expressed as cultural images that link people to the Land, evoke vast relationships, and recall ancestral cosmovisions. Confronted with these different visions of community, we ask: can ecological praxes be decolonized or Indigenized?


“Decoloniality,” explained Mignolo and Walsh (2018), “seeks to make visible, open up, and advance radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis, and thought” (p. 17).

One of the primary functions of decoloniality is “border thinking” (Mignolo, 2013). Border thinking, demarcated by the slash symbol, was popularized by Gloria Anzaldúa’s narrative theory “nos/otras” (us/others [we]), which frames “a third point of view… outside binary oppositions… simultaneously insider/outsider” rather than seeing “from any single culture or ideology” (2015, pp. 79, 81). For instance, our co-authorship here (as Brenda/Hawkins) aims to bridge across our individual positionalities i.e., Latina/White, generation X/Y, female/male, hetero/homosexual, 1st/4th generation American, Mesoamerican/European descent. Sandoval and Latorre (2008) also applied Anzaldúa’s theory to explain how artivism—the “organic relationship between art and activism”—grants “access to a myriad of cultures… requiring the ability to negotiate multiple worldviews” or “meshing identities and uses these to create new angles of vision to challenge oppressive modes of thinking” (pp. 82-83).

This article presents participatory artivism research in Highland Park (HLP), the historic Mexican neighborhood of Northeast Los Angeles (L.A.), where registered murals of the original inhabitants are being systematically erased as part of gentrification efforts. Most of the data on gentrification were collected as testimonios: the Latin American tradition of “first-person eyewitness accounts, narrated by those who lack social and political power” (Chase, 2018, p. 555) and remain uncited for their protection. According to Brenda, who was raised in HLP by a single immigrant mother, the neighborhood is a “category-5 gentrification storm” (in Matias, 2018, para. 22): evictions, commercial rent raises, and deportations push families in tears to the curb. The Center for Disease Control (2009) problematizes gentrification “as the transformation of neighborhoods from low to high value,” causing “a housing, economic and health issue that affects a community’s history, culture and reduces social capital” (Definitions section).

However, for prospective homebuyers, this destructive transformation is perceived as progressive amelioration. This difference in perspective is illuminated in the context of settler colonialism, which differs “from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land,” such that “land is what is most valuable, contested, required” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5) and commodified for profit. The L.A. Basin, originally the ancestral lands of the Tongva Tribe, was invaded by the Spanish in the 16th century then became part of the Mexican Republic until the war ended with the U.S. in 1848. Europe’s Doctrine of Discovery, which endures in contemporary law, allowed invaders “legal cover for theft,” displacement, and property privatization (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014, p. 198). To make a place their new home, settler colonists “must destroy and disappear the Indigenous” and “this violence is… reasserted each day of occupation” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, pp. 6, 5). Presently, Trump champions “militarization of the border zone between the [U.S.] and Mexico” such that “the Hispanic is rendered as a cultural terrorist of sorts who menaces the cultural integrity of the nation” (Maldonado-Torres, 2008, p.

Figure 1. Iconic mural by John "Zender" Estrada, 1993
In HLP, gentrification is chiefly advanced by wealthy commercial property owners who serve on their local Business Improvement District (BID) under contract with the City. The North Figueroa Association that controls the BID in HLP conspired with councilmen and Department of Cultural Affairs—whose office claims to preserve city murals—to “clean up” HLP by erasing registered murals. Williams (2008) specified that “art vandalism… assaults the social order by targeting objects that embody shared cultural meaning” (pp. 595-596). Longtime HLP residents were particularly outraged and heartbroken by the whitewashing of Resist Violence with Peace, the iconic mural by John “Zender” Estrada from 1993 depicting a sacred Aztec warrior (see Figure 1). Brenda mobilized a peaceful candlelight vigil for the devastated HLP community, then led a community arts protest against a BID-sponsored retail event on Figueroa Street that excluded the legacy Latino businesses. Brenda later founded Restorative Justice for the Arts (RJFTA) as a grassroots artist platform to protect the many murals that are endangered because their Indigenous images stand in resistance to settler colonial gentrification.

Sacred imagery opens “the possibility of learning or remembering history, ancestry, medicine, language, and other forms of ancient knowledge through visual culture” (Zepeda, 2015, p. 120). Murals make these images literate for everyone, acting as portals or “fissures through which Indigenous life and knowledge have persisted and thrived despite settlement” (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 61). We look to a community’s own “images and physical objects… as socially situated narrative texts” (Chase, 2018, p. 547) that can guide our interactions and interventions. Mary Watkins (2014) explained that wall art, and graffiti specifically “use the surface of the walls themselves to undo the exclusionary logic that created them. The words and images on these walls direct our attention to what such walls would have us not see” (pp. 226-227). In HLP, community murals illustrate the symbols, rituals, heroes, critical histories, futurities, and many “human-animal and human-plant relationships” (Fixico, 2003, p. 76)—the spiritual landscape that commercial terrain would have us not see (as in Figure 2).

Importantly, the oppression of these ceremonial practices are as a root cause of Indigenous mental illness and cannot be cured using the methods from the same cultures behind colonial oppression (Gone, 2016). This insight led us to question the limitations and ethics of employing the ecological model in Indigenous contexts. Ecological perspectives make visible the interdependent relationships between individuals and their environment. It is often assumed that the psychological group and self are universal and translatable concepts (Smith, 2012) instead of determined according to culture and thinking styles. Fixico (2003) explained that, “unlike Navajos who think about all relationships, the linear mind thinks about all of things related to him with himself being at the center” (p. 67). Though the ecological model moves toward relationality, the individual is at its center because Western paradigms see knowledge “as being individual in nature” (Wilson, 2008, p. 38). To unpack these covert paradigmatic assumptions, Hawkins argued that analyzing our own way of seeing community should be as much of a focus of
community psychology as studying communities (Lewis, 2018).

Without this reflexivity, ecological thinking risk homogenizing alternative senses of community to fit a standardized image, not unlike the process of gentrification. Participatory action research is often considered a remedy for the colonial impositions of community researchers. However, truly decolonizing methodologies requires delinking from the manufactured narratives and “epistemic assumptions common to all the areas of knowledge established in the Western world” since colonial times (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 106). After delinking, decoloniality leads “to the reservoir of the ways of life” (Mignolo, 2013, p. 133). This reservoir is more than an ecological metaphor; it is a pluralistic ecology of knowledge (Sonn, 2016) that is culturally multidimensional as well as systemically multilevel. Therefore, in our community psychology research, we inquire into what the typical levels of analysis omit, such as cosmology, seasonality, mythology, interspecies connections, ceremony, and spiritual well-being.

Endnotes

1 We follow the movement of decolonial scholars to capitalize the word “Indigenous” in those cases where the word “Western” would also be capitalized.

2 We use the original “HLP” in resistance to new abbreviation “HP” being used by gentrifying businesses. As Smith (2012) recounted, “renaming the land was probably as powerful ideologically as changing the land... Indigenous cultures became framed within a language and a set of spatialized representations” (pp. 53-54).

3 For a full review of the racism, lack of accountability, and spending liberties of BIDS, such as permission to pay for private security teams to police neighborhoods, see “Business improvement districts as a force for white supremacy in twenty-first century Los Angeles,” available at https://goo.gl/GeFgsu

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**Ayotzinapa: We Will Not Forget**

*Written by Santos Lopez Chavez, Pacifica Graduate Institute*

On September 26, 2014 near Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, Mexico, a group of 43 normal school students were kidnapped, murdered, and then disappeared, by what many believe was an operation of the Mexican federal government and military. Since the event, the Mexican federal government has attempted to silence and cover up what actually happened to those students. Ironically, the students were taken while on an overnight bus trip going to a memorial demonstration in Mexico City, remembering the massacre of hundreds of students that occurred on October 2, 1968 in Tlatelolco Plaza. The student victims of 1968 were advocating for their rights and opposing the newest education reform that president Enrique Peña Nieto had approved. The massacres in 1968 as well in 2014, were intended to silence students speaking against the government and an elite class of Mexican politicians implementing practices that support the coloniality of power and knowledge.

The story of Ayotzinapa is now being publicized by an original documentary film.
produced by Enrique García Meza called “Ayotzinapa El Paso De La Tortuga” that was released on Netflix, on March 14, 2018. The film addresses what happened in the state of Guerrero, Mexico on September 26, 2014, the government attempts at a cover-up, and the massive resistance of the families and communities in Guerrero and the rest of Mexico since the murders. In my perspective, “Ayotzinapa El Paso De La Tortuga” is not only a film that addresses corruption and coloniality, but also shifts paradigms about the ongoing resistance and highlights the trauma and memorial of the families of those students that have not been accounted for. The documentary depicts the wide speculation about the Mexican government’s desire to terrorize students for holding onto their native traditions, voicing their concerns, and fighting for social justice. The students have become perceived as a threat to the PRI political party (Institutional Revolutionary Party) because they have been questioning abuses of power by the politicians; the education afforded the students a more powerful voice than intended. The PRI as a political party has a legacy of oppressing the people of Mexico. The Normalista students are not an exception as they continue to question their elected officials and government. The murders near Ayotzinapa have had the opposite effect to silence: thousands of people, both nationally and internationally have been in the streets demanding accountability and refusing to forget what happened.

The education system in Mexico and many other nations has been colonized by the needs of the market and politicians who have attempted to control the skills and knowledge people learn. In addition, many politicians and government institutions across the world are attempting to privatize the education system and create an education system that benefits corporate profits. Often, students are required to memorize standardized information rather than allowing their creativity to reach full potential. Freire (2000) in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, addresses how the current education system plays a role in teaching individuals to memorize but not to learn concepts; “Banking education treats students as objects of assistance…banking education inhibits creativity and domesticates” (Freire, 2000, p. 83). In other words, colonial education systems are structured to produce individuals who learn how to work mechanically but do not question the nature of the system. Given the resistant values of the normal school, this has not been possible, because the school administration, the other students, and the families of the disappeared have refused to be silent about the disappearances and have demanded an accounting through national and international channels.

Enrique Peña Nieto has constantly attempted to colonize the indigenous people of Mexico, especially the groups of the South closer to the border through the use of legislation. This neglected part of Mexico lacks the resources to make their land more productive. It is believed the Mexican central government has neglected the Southern region because the people have practiced ongoing resistance to the government’s attempts to exploit their culture and natural resources. The people of the South experience extreme financial hardship and the work of the populations has been undervalued. In 2012-2013, Enrique Peña Nieto passed an educational reform bill that would change the public education system of Mexico. The bill standardized education based on the principles of the capital of Mexico, not taking into account certain areas, especially those in the South that have different languages and different levels of education and needs. Many students in rural areas in Mexico do not have adequate access to nutrition and early on in their lives, are needed to help with household duties. The education reform does not take into account the variables that might affect the ability of children to learn the standardized material, nor the learning of practical skills of agriculture as a valid form of knowledge. Many of the Normalista educators did not agree on standardizing the education system and the lack of consideration for the limits and lack of resources in certain poor and indigenous communities. Normalista students as well as established educators have been opposing the education reform that was signed by President...
Enrique Peña Nieto. The education reform gives the department of education the right to grade educators by means of measuring students’ academic performance and firing teachers whose students do not score high on the standardized test. Teachers trained at La Escuela Normal Superior de Mexico (ENSM) protested the education reform. This demonstration highlights coloniality of power and knowledge through the imposition of Eurocentric education practices on indigenous people.

ENSM is a publicly funded education institution for teachers that will teach in rural areas as well in marginalized and Indigenous communities. I was familiar with ENSM, through an associate I met a few years ago, who was studying to become a teacher at the normal school in Jalisco Mexico. She shared how it was a difficult school to get in because it was intended to train the best teachers to teach in public schools. Many of the students that attend the university themselves come from marginalized communities. The victims of the massacre near Ayotzinapa, Guerrero, attended a similar normal school. The students of this institution both study and work the land to help their families survive and remain united with the values, languages, and cultures of their local communities. The elite political class has a negative view of the students’ choice to continue to farm as they are educating themselves to become teachers at rural schools.

Maldonado-Torres (2016) addresses the role of state education systems in colonizing individuals and communities. Maldonado-Torres (2016) states “Universities become centers of command and control, which make them easy to militarize when opposition rises. Many students feel choked and breathless in this context” (Maldonado-Torres, 2016 p.3). In addition, he mentions the struggle to liberate and decolonize the universities is mostly composed of young students. Against the student movements, the government uses censorship, defunding of programs, and rankings by the most conservative faculty. “In the most successful cases, limited measures are implemented, but then contested, sometimes for years, until administrations can successfully undermine them or eliminate them with reference to new financial crises or one-sided reviews and rankings” (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, p.3). The new education reform plans to reset standards for recruiting teachers that are familiar with and committed to a standardized education system.

Since the Ayotzinapa case went public, many international journalists and the United Nations Office on Human rights have investigated. Historically, students in Mexico who opposed the Mexican government, especially the views of PRI and the way they govern, have been silenced. The past incidents of violence have not received media coverage; the most powerful television station in Mexico is affiliated with the elite political class. The politicians and political parties, through violence and massacres, have terrorized students as well as oppressed, marginalized, and Indigenous communities. Along with silencing and forgetting about the past tragic events, the current regime has not allowed the nation to heal. The group of students murdered near Ayotzinapa in 2014, were not only studying to become teachers, they were also becoming advocates of social justice and decoloniality in their communities; they wanted to empower regions that have been marginalized and neglected. Maldonado-Torres (2016) stated that this is a movement of the youth who want to recover what has been taken away from them through colonization and bring back educations where you work in partnership (Maldonado-Torres, 2016 p.3). Through the courageous documentary tracking the commitments of families of the disappeared and the demonstrations of thousands who refuse to forget, the night of September 26-27, 2014 will forever be remembered and will always leave a scar on the presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto.

As a Latino/Hispanic student, I was raised in a marginalized community where we are offered limited opportunities for advanced education due to the increasing cost of education in the United States. I find myself often asking whether I want an education, or do I want to continue to help and support my family? Do we all have equal access to
education, or would legislation, testing, and rising tuition fees be a way to keep certain groups or individuals from pursuing advanced education and break the cycle of poverty? How much of my identity and values do I have to give away to succeed in higher education? We need a free public education system that allows access to all students regardless of family incomes, and respects the values, ways of life, and local knowledge that will liberate us to create communities where we can thrive and feel secure. The struggle for decoloniality of knowledge is happening not only in rural Mexico, but in the United States and in marginalized communities all over the world.

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Breaking through Barriers: A Decolonial Approach

Written by Deborah Najman, Tierra Patterson, and Archana Palaniappan, Pacifica Graduate Institute

As three individuals who identify as women of color, we present lived experiences on encountering microaggressions in spaces we expect to be safe. Mainstream psychology often places the onus of coping from stressors produced by an oppressive system on the individual; this paper posits the necessity of a decolonial approach that redirects the focus from the individual to social transformation. Coloniality is a process and system that minimizes and classifies the colonized as “less than human beings” (Lugones, 2010, p. 745). This dehumanization can be compounded the encompassing of multiple marginalized identities, also known as intersectional identity. Crenshaw (1991) asserts that intersectional identity, such as being both women and people of color, creates a
complex marginalization that shapes lived experience (Crenshaw, 1991, pp. 1241-1242).

Pierce (1970) defined microaggressions as overt or subtle forms of racism experienced in daily life that can stem from subconscious hostility toward racial groups (Hernández & Viladas, 2019, p. 77). Often, when people of color attempt to address microaggressions, they are met with “white fragility”, a product of coloniality. White fragility is the result of an unchallenged white perspectives, that leave a hegemonic society without the social muscle to develop constructive dialogue about racial privilege. When confronted with racial stress, this lack of social muscle results in defensive behaviors, and unconscious attempts to maintain the colonial construct of white privilege (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 54-58).

In this article, we will explore how we recognize racial and gender biases in our daily lives and the struggle to discern how to safely confront these expressions of bias that dehumanize and proclaim power over women of color. Philips, Adams, and Salter (2015) suggest that decolonial responses can help protect people in marginalized communities from persistent violence, while simultaneously bringing awareness to hegemonic groups of their subconscious biases and patterns of perpetrating dominance (p. 376-377). Our stories are about resistance to microaggressions and can be understood as an intrapsychic decolonial response to navigating the violation of our sense of identity and integrity. In our self-examination, we challenge the additional demands imposed on us by the colonial system to prove ourselves worthy in relation to the hegemonic structure. This harm that we regularly face and endure needs to cease and desist.

**Confined by Corporate America**

Being a woman of color has always been a significant part of my identity however, I never felt solely defined by my race until I began working in corporate America. In this setting, I was not defined by my gregarious, bouncy and positive nature. I was only a black woman. My intellect, passion, and belief that I can change the world was translated as aggression, anger, and intimidation. Me, the woman who avoids conflict, was labeled as “threatening” and “unsafe”.

Three weeks after starting my dream job, my supervisor informed me that I was going to be transferred to another team. Unbeknownst to me, she heard there was tension on our team. As the change was communicated and rumors of tension continued to surface, I was approached by the co-leader of a multidisciplinary team, who reported she felt intimidated by my questions during meetings. She did not “feel safe with me” in a room. The crossing of my arms due to the cold temperature in the conference room and the habit of shaking my leg were interpreted as anger by my white supervisor and resulted in disciplinary action.

How do I make myself smaller, as I must be too tall? More presentable, as my hair must be too curly? More passive, as I must be too direct? Less intimidating, as I must be too confident? How do I become less ethnic, less black? With the subsequent barrage of microaggressions, I found myself questioning every interaction and becoming hyper-vigilant about how I was being perceived. As a result of a work environment laden with microaggressions, I found myself experiencing anxiety and a loss of self, while being financially confined to the job. The psychological impact was coupled with physical manifestations, which were all consequences of a racially toxic work environment. The pernicious effects of what I can only label as trauma continues to affect my self-image (Lui et. al., 2019). Confronting my perpetrators was met with fragility, minimization, and double-bind messages. The colonial system that I was working in was unsympathetic to my experiences. Ultimately, I had to quit. Having allies within the toxic environment who were not afraid to name and witness the microaggressions and racial discrimination, were essential to my coping.

**A Liminal Experience: Caught Between Worlds**

I am a Jewish Guatemalan woman. My father is a Jewish refugee who landed in Guatemala City after WWII and my mother was raised in Mexico.
City. We moved to the United States when I was four years old. I am a mestiza, one who lives in the liminal spaces between cultures (Anzaldúa, 2012). For me, living in liminal spaces means I do not fit neatly into any classification. People from diverse cultural backgrounds have tried to claim me as part of their group; aesthetically, I fit into many “boxes”. At times, people have tried to “other” me in order to make sense of what they are seeing when they look at me. Coloniality requires social categorization in order to determine the worthiness of the being in question. During this process of identification, I become subject to great harm.

Many years ago, I was heading to a friend’s wedding in upstate New York. I was offered a ride from the airport by my friend’s uncle who was described as “a little off” but harmless. Being cognizant of the potential for conflict, I spent the first few hours leading the conversation into neutral territory. In the final hour, he began making remarks against Mexican immigrants and Jewish people. I cringed internally. In these situations, I always grapple with the desire to hide safely behind my ambiguous appearance and the need to defend my cultural heritage. He continued his racist monologue while I remained silent, terrified of being “found out” and fearing for my physical safety. We were in a remote area and I had nowhere to physically escape.

It was excruciatingly painful for me to choose silence. I was taught to be proud of my Latin-Jewish heritage. I was trapped in a car with a threatening white man spewing racist venom, only he could not identify me for who I am. I was acutely aware of the many ways in which he could assault me as a female-bodied person if he had found me out. When we finally arrived at the wedding venue, I was resolved to have the final word. I thanked him for the ride, cracked the door open and said: “I just want you to know you spent the last few hours talking to a Guatemalan Jew with a Mexican mother.” I ran out of the car and into the safety of the crowd.

**How to Make an American Alien**

“No, I mean, where are you really, really from?”. This peculiar question is one I’ve heard most often in my life. My first answer, “Right here, born and raised in Ohio,” is never satisfactory. I became accustomed to feeling othered, growing up with my brown skin in a rural, small town, in Ohio. This reliable question, it a damning reminder that no matter how hard I try to belong, I will always be seen as an outsider first.

As an American-born person of color, I am consistently made to feel like an alien in my own home. This homesick alien status even made me “white-wash” myself and anglicize my name for social acceptance, furthering my insecurity and distancing myself from my roots. Regularly receiving this thinly veiled message of “No, you can’t belong” guised in innocent social interaction, is a tax on my sense of self and mental well-being. It contributes to a feeling of diminishment and alienation, a persistent smallness that comes from daily reinforced foreigner status. It is precisely the mundanity of it that has the pernicious effect of constant self-doubt and the internalization of judgement by others. In moments I feel confident and safe, I can call attention to this colonial conditioning. I return the inquiry and ask their lineage in order to witness together the absurdity; how irrelevant our origin of skin color is to this first moment of meeting. It is reassuring when we can laugh and talk about where we call home and why. It is my hope that this not-so-small moment illustrates how a seemingly innocuous question perpetuates perceived differences and illuminates just how we socialize the idea of race and othering every day.

**Final Thoughts**

The personal stories provided show diverse examples of oppressive situations, in which we, as women of color, were unsafe. In resisting the
colonial imposition of white fragility, we had to push through paralyzing fear and alienation forced upon us. What is required is for witnesses and allies to acknowledge when harm occurs and to speak up, in order to raise critical awareness and not normalize oppression (Phillips, et al., 2015). We are using the notion of decoloniality of being as a means of framing resistance to microaggressions. This is a strategy for dismantling western ways of relating to power and being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). Our resistance to coloniality is to “make visible and open up” other perspectives and other ways of being, that need to be accepted and included by hegemonic groups (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p.17). Through our stories, we are reclaiming our power and humanity.

References

Excerpt from a Work-in-Progress “Motherhood is Speculative (Non)Fiction: A Rhizomatic Writing Experiment Examining Motherhood and Matrescence”

Written by Kamee Abrahamian, Pacifica Graduate Institute

I came into existence amidst two layers of denial: as the descendant of Armenian genocide survivors displacement from Lebanon and Syria; and as a first generation Canadian born onto lands painfully colonized through the genocide of indigenous peoples. The writing below is first and foremost personal, drawing from the landscape my intersectional experiences and sensibilities as a queer, diasporic-SWANA mother. I arrive at queerness in the same way as described by queer, feminist scholar of color Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2016), as what “fundamentally transforms our state of being and the possibilities for life” and “does not produce the status quo” (p. 115). It is the lens through which I understand my being in the world, how I build relationships and work in/with communities. And, identifying as queer, feminist, and non-normative has situated me on the fringes of my own cultural community, and on most days, in the world.

As a work-in-progress, this piece will take shape through an iteration of rhizovocality, as put forth by Alecia Youngblood Jackson (2003). She
writes: “These multiple entryways for understanding are acentered, nonhierachical, temporal, productive, and exist in the middle; thus, rhizovocality can be neither fully transcendent nor authentic since it has no original departure or destined arrival” (p. 707). This concept of connected fragmentation and perpetual construction and collapse resonates in my experiences as a mother and therefore throughout this work, not only thematically and structurally, but precisely in how I land on this page/screen. I write in pieces, during Saana’s sporadic nap-times and on the rare occasion that I have childcare. It is near impossible to find a moment or head-space to sit with the entirety of this endeavor, or to trace the epic thread that ties it all together. I am constantly tethered to my child and motherhood, much like the moon in its eternal orbit around earth. This is not a disclaimer, but the paradigmatic reality of my current existence. And, it is important to name that the writing below is an excerpt of a larger work that will be further built upon for my PhD dissertation, which is interested in the ways diasporic peoples enact, resist, and persist through/dominant patriarchal and colonial ideologies of motherhood, and how they transform normalized conceptions of maternal from the axis of their particular positionalities and experiences.

For the purposes of this article, I will write into one of the aspects of how we (those involved in Saana’s caregiving) are enacting gender creative parenting. We do this by intentionally facilitating an environment and relationships that will allow Saana to arrive at their own understanding and expression of gender. It seems radical, outlandish, and to some folks, downright offensive. It is not a new or novel idea. Gender-fluidity has existed (culturally, socially) in various parts of the world. This is not the place to trace its history, though.

It hit me when I was pregnant. People kept asking the gender of my unborn baby. Although I understand the socio-cultural and political roots of this question, it still struck me as peculiar. It assumes that I am a fortune teller. No one asks what my baby’s favorite color might be, or what vocation they will aspire towards. Exactly as in their gender, I simply do not know the answer to those questions. And, I realize that my choice is the result of my particular positionality. The way my worldview and family dynamics are queered is part of how I resist dominant (violent!) patriarchal and colonial ideologies of gender that are pervasive in the western world in which I grew up, as well as within my own cultural community. I am reminded of queer scholar Jane Ward (2013) who refers to José Muñoz’s (2009) focus on “the importance of hope and futurity for queers of color” in Cruising Utopia. Ward creates links between queer parenting and Muñoz’s urging for queers to “embrace projects that plant the seeds for a radically expanded future” (p. 235), as an expression of “desire for a thing, or a way, that is not here but is nonetheless desirable, something worth striving for” (Muñoz, p. 121). For these reasons, it is important to explicitly name that my gender creative parenting is rooted in my own conception of futurity, and my experiences as a queer, diasporic-SWANA mother who was raised as woman.

I do not claim that everyone should do this. It is not an affront to how others choose to parent. There are an infinite number of ways to parent, all rooted in experiences, positionalities, and various cultural/social practices specific to each family. It is a choice I made for myself and my family. It is my way of resisting dominant ideologies of gender rooted in particular hierarchies of power. You don’t have to understand it or embody it, but you can respect it.

A stranger crosses paths with Saana and I. “Oh, so cute!” then turning to me, “is it a boy or a girl?” I reply, “it’s a person!” smiling politely (the gentlest way I can respond, at this point in my life-learning). Response No. 1: “Yes! Thanks for the reminder.” Response No. 2: “Umm,” they are lost for words, nervous, offended. I believe it is okay to feel uncomfortable. I feel uncomfortable every day, for a multitude of reasons. Discomfort can be a great teacher.

A straightforward question such as “is it a boy or a girl” is profoundly loaded. Moments like this have the potential to perpetuate particular
ideologies of gender, how one must instill gender into their children, and how parents are in a particular position to perpetuate the status quo of gender (or not) and the power dynamics involved as such. My response (it's a person) is what I have come to recognize as a micro-resistance, an explicit interruption of dominant conceptions and performance of gender, an acknowledgment and refusal to allow micro-currents of power as it relates to gender determine the docility of my body. In many ways, I have been thinking recently, it is not just a micro resistance either. It is macro in the sense that power as it relates to gender is pervasive and problematic beyond the confines of my family and community. Social transactions between caregivers and others, whether it is other family members, friends, or strangers on the street, are veins through which coded directives are being communicated, it ensures that we as caregivers are going to do our duty in upholding the status quo of gender in how we bring up our children and keep them in check. And, it is also where they can be resisted.

I have stolen a moment, tinkering on the edge of interruption as Saana is nearing the end of their nap-time. I stepped into my maternal being in the early days of pregnancy with similar thinking as feminist scholar Sara Ruddick (2002): “To claim a maternal identity is not to make an empirical generalization but to engage in a political act” (p. 56). My process and transition of becoming a mother marked the convergence of what had long seemed fragmented and incompatible: my queerness and feminism, my diasporic-SWANA lineage. It foregrounded a sense of futurity for me, as descendant, caregiver for descendant, future ancestors - a fractal process reflected into/onto my work as a scholar, artist, and mother.

I believe that the disruption of my monthly bleeding cycle during and after my pregnancy has halted the bodily rhythm that had given me a sense of time, a compass of time. And, because it is a body-sense, a body that is (sort of?) biologically female, not-bleeding has stopped time for me. This absence of rhythm has impacted me in two very significant ways: it has changed my perception of time, and it changed my perception of my gender. Yes, my decision to raise Saana as gender creative ended up changing my own identification of gender. I think of the words of Grace Lee Boggs that I have read in so many places that its origin is lost to me: transform yourself to transform the world. Gender creative, gender non-conforming -- it’s a family affair.

My personal relationship and expression of gender notwithstanding, my intellectual and critical understanding of gender has become even more complex since I became a mother, and since I began to identify as genderqueer/non-binary. The process looked like this, in a nutshell: The endless minutiae of mothering and caregiving is hyper(in)visible. When I talk about the hardships and challenges of motherhood with my mother and grandmother, they remind me that this is the way things go, that “motherhood is sacrifice” and that it is a “thankless job”. I notice that since I had Saana, I feel physically ill when people tell me that I am a “beautiful woman.” So much of my struggle throughout matrescence is connected to how I am (seemingly) a woman-as-mother - the notion that my womanhood has somehow inevitably led me to my motherhood. I am suspicious. And this is how I arrived at not-identifying as a woman. This is when I began liberating myself from binary conceptions of gender and all its trickery.

In Notes Toward a Decolonial Feminist Methodology: Revisiting the Race/Gender Matrix, Xhercis Mendez (2015) writes of gender as historically reconstituted and racialized throughout colonial relations of power. Mendez refers to Maria Lugones’ (2007) colonial/modern gender system, which claims that the colonization of the Americas “introduced many genders and gender itself as a colonial concept and mode of organization of relations of production, property relations, of cosmologies and ways of knowing” (p. 186). Mendez continues, “how we understand ‘gender’ makes a difference not only for how we frame our contemporary relations, but also for what we will consider to be necessary ingredients for re-
imagining our various communities in liberatory ways” (p. 55). This lands like a truckload of gravel in my already-muddled pool of thoughts-- Saana has woken, this is as far as I can go for now.

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Researching While White: Self-Criticality in Decolonial Allyship

Written by Jonathan Rudrow, Pacifica Graduate Institute

To approach a framework of decoloniality within a field founded upon a Eurocentric, patriarchal worldview requires us, as researchers and practitioners, to turn our critical lenses inward; honestly and fearlessly deconstructing our own positionality, identity, and intentions. I will position myself clearly, to begin, as a straight, white male, raised Catholic in the predominantly Christian society here in America. I will employ terms such as “we,” “us,” and “our(s),” which are meant to locate myself and others within the field who hold similarly centralized positions. As we attempt a shift toward decolonial praxes and methodologies—opening space for indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world and allowing ourselves to be led by them rather than merely providing them an insincere, momentary spotlight—we must recognize the self-reflexive work that belongs to us. Part and parcel of determining what work is ours to do is a recognition of what is not. Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) shares the uncertainty harbored by many in indigenous communities surrounding the place of Western academics conducting research focused on their epistemologies or contexts, stating that while there are many researchers who can handle such questions [i.e., critical questions posed by indigenous activists such as “Whose research is it?” and “Who will benefit from it?”] with integrity there are many more who cannot, or who approach these questions with some cynicism, as if they are a test merely of political correctness (p. 10).

The tendency of white researchers to remain at the table of decolonizing efforts in the field, utilizing allyship as a politically-corrective lens, can be detractive to the ambition of decolonization itself. It can both defend the need for white voices to “legitimize” the work and subjects the process to biases implicit in the white, or Western, worldview. Smith (2012) shares that the difficulty inherent in our attempts to decolonize research is that to a large extent, theories about research are underpinned by a cultural system of classification and representation, by views about human nature, human morality and virtue, by conceptions of space and time, by conceptions of gender and race. Ideas about these things help determine what counts as real. Systems of classification and representation enable different traditions or fragments of traditions to be retrieved and reformulated in different contexts as discourses, and then to be played out in systems of power and domination, with real
material consequences for colonized peoples (p. 46).

Therefore, to better understand how we as practitioners and researchers within the field—and more particularly, as white allies striving toward decoloniality—can approach truly transformative outcomes, we must start with a self-critical exploration of our own whiteness, how it is socially constructed and upheld, how we live into it, how it is experienced by people and colleagues of color, and how it instills foundational assumptions in our understanding of, and approach to, the work of decoloniality. To appropriately contextualize this discussion, I will provide some personal accounts of encountering and grappling with my own centrality and how it has led me to turn my attention away from conducting research with indigenous communities and other communities of color. Instead, I will focus on the construct of whiteness.

To begin, I must share that I have a history of volunteering and conducting small-scale research projects within cultural contexts outside my own. Particularly, I have done so with members of the Diné (Navajo) peoples on the Black Mesa reservation land on several occasions, as well as with people who have developmental disabilities living at the Sristi Village in Southeast India. When I began my doctoral studies at Pacifica Graduate Institute, I was ensconced in new-age idealism and savior-complex conceptions of what allyship meant, how it was to be enacted, and what my role was in “helping” communities I deemed in need of my presence and what I saw to be my own “expertise.” My deepening purview of the concepts of colonialism, imperialism, neoliberalism, white privilege and the social construction of race—guided by the mentorship of Pácifica faculty, and their ongoing decolonial work—led me to focus my doctoral work on Critical Whiteness Studies and Critical Race Theory. As my research into these fields has expanded, the inner work necessary to deconstruct and understand my own relationship to whiteness—and other centralized aspects of my positionality—has led me to revisit the fieldwork I’ve conducted in others’ cultural contexts, as well as explore the daily microaggressions I perpetrate.

Reflecting upon how I perform my whiteness brings images not only of the moments I prefer to remember (i.e., instances of clarity, of verbalizing my own and other whites’ failings, and attempts made to correct these), but also examples of these failings—daily reminders of the longitude and depth of the work. It evokes images of fumbling glances shared with people of color I pass on the street; undue considerations of whether I should look away—to evade the impact of my white gaze—or whether I should stare with well-intended ferocity, attempting to communicate “I see you, I recognize your personhood,” as if this were mine to give. This neurotic flailing represents fragments in my daily experience of what Marilyn Frye (1992) labels “whiteliness.” Frye connects performances of masculinity, and its relationship to maleness, with foundational expressions of whiteness, stating:

“The masculinity of an adult male human in any particular culture is also profoundly connected with the local perceptions and conceptions of maleness (as ‘biological’), its causes and its consequences. So it may be with being white, but we need some revision of our vocabulary to say it rightly. We need a term in the realm of race and racism whose grammar is analogous to the term ‘masculinity’… I will introduce ‘whitely’ and ‘whiteliness’ as terms whose grammar is analogous to that of ‘masculine’ and ‘masculinity’” (Frye, 1992).

Frye’s invocation of masculinity, in its most toxic forms, as an entrance into the understanding of whiteness, in its most toxic forms—read, whiteliness—invites us to explore the ways that power differentials are exercised in relational spaces through assertions of one’s maleness or whiteness. Feeling into other occurrences of my own whiteliness, I am brought back to my work with the Diné peoples at Black Mesa, in which I inadvertently asserted my position as a white male academic by presuming my research agenda was in some way “helpful,” despite a lack of participatory organization of the research approach and methodologies. This was a moment of failure,
in which I acted as one of the Western researchers
Smith (2012) warns us of, unable to hold the critical
questions she posits with integrity; subjectivizing
rather than decolonizing.

Reflecting further upon the research I
conducted in India, I imagine walking through the
rural town setting leading to the Sristi Village. I can
recall feeling the gazes of people emerging from
their doorways, or pausing their tasks to observe
me, to watch how I comported myself. I remember
feeling a deep sense of agency, an ability to move
through their place without seeking permission.
Though I had been invited by a citizen of their town,
it was not each of their decisions.

Philosopher George Yancy speaks to this feeling of agency,
describing a young white girl, Carla, who in her
young age was already stretching the limbs of her
whiteness; he states:

“For Carla, this orientation is expansive
and colonial; it gives her a sense of
indefinite spatiality. She is always already
given the ‘right’ and the ‘absolute freedom’
to demarcate her white space and to
ostracize those who don’t ‘naturally’ belong
in it. Indeed, she comes to inhabit the world
spatially in the mode of an ‘ability to do’ or
the ‘capacity to do’” (Yancy, 2012, p. 24).

I recall this sense, as Yancy puts it, of
indefinite spatiality, in these moments. Even then,
without any in-depth, self-reflexive analysis, I could
feel a capacity of mine–truly, a consequence of my
being–in which my presence “Othered” these
persons on their own land, in their own homes.

“It is in these moments that I feel the
most useful to the cause of struggling with
race, in the way Yancy asks of us. He
exposes his deeper reasoning for this call to
struggle, stating that rather than
approaching the problem of race/whiteness
as a lived experience, as a site of shared
vulnerability, as a site of differential cash
value, my fear is that white philosophers will
treat critical discourses around
race/whiteness as sites of intellectual
mastery, as forms of mastery that do not
involve deep personal risk, like being able to
rattle off various philosophical movements
and thinkers (from, say, Jacques Derrida) in
Western philosophy” (Yancy, 2012, p. 27).

I fear becoming that figure, the white
intellectual who wishes to “master” my whiteness
for personal gratification and academic glory, rather
than for true and sustained change to the structures
of power that sustain it. It is imperative that we
struggle in these ways with the centralized aspects
of our positionality as academics; and, as Yancy
reminds us, make concerted efforts toward
personal risk and vulnerability. To do so may
require us to step aside in some cases, to opt out of
the limelight of presumed expertise; and in other
cases, to step into—in the way self-criticality of our
own performances of whiteness or masculinity
require. To approach research in a way that de-
centralizes our own positionality, that advances a
decolonial framework, we must be willing to
become the subjects of our own inquiry; to be
unapologetically vulnerable in the way feminist
philosopher Alison Bailey (2015) suggests, “where
vulnerability is defined not as weakness but as a
condition for potential” (p. 40).

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Accessibility and Decoloniality: Using Students’ Tensions and Struggles in the Community, Liberation, Indigenous and Eco-Psychologies Specialization to Imagine a Decolonial University

Written by Ross Dionne, Mari Larangeira, Stephanie Knox-Steiner, Chenoa Siegenthaler, and Maryam Tahmasebi, Pacifica Graduate Institute

This paper presents a modified Participatory Action Research (PAR) conducted primarily by twelve third-year graduate students in Depth Psychology, Specializing in Community, Liberation, Indigenous and Eco-psychologies (CLIE) at Pacifica Graduate Institute (PGI). The research goals were to understand 1) the experiences of accessibility in the CLIE program for students engaging decolonial pedagogies within the structure of a private graduate institution and 2) to engage in a visioning process of how decolonial praxis could be engaged at PGI policy-making in relation to students.

Decoloniality involves a de-centering critique of the modernist/colonial structures and paradigm and a search for alternatives to it that are grounded in reclaiming our humanity (Maldonado-Torres, 2016) and valuing ways of knowing other than the Western, Euro-centric paradigm (Castro-Gomez, 2013). This project builds upon several years of student-faculty praxis at Pacifica, turning our inquiry on decoloniality towards the institution itself. During the 2015-2016 school year, the Students of Color and Racial Justice Allies (SOC/RJA) groups created a set of goals and analytics for racial justice values in the CLIE classroom (SOC/RJA Groups, 2016). The following year, the groups created recommendations for anti-racist/decolonial curricula (SOC/RJA Groups, 2017). Building upon these initiatives and our ongoing inquiry on decoloniality, in 2018 some students (Group Two in this research) engaged in a participatory action research (PAR) project with Dr. Roderick Watts as part of a Liberation Studies in Action class that focused primarily on program curricula, pedagogy, and classroom experiences. One aspect of this current project led by Group Two was to further that 2018 project by engaging the research at the institutional level. Group One, however, focused on accessibility and tensions experienced by students.

Method

The twelve co-authors of this paper formed two groups of six co-researchers. One group focused on accessibility to higher education and the other group on visions for a liberatory praxis. The two groups conducted focus groups designed to explore the stories, feedback, visions, and recommendations of nine first- and second-year students enrolled in the CLIE program during the 2018-2019 academic year. This project was an “adapted” form of PAR as only the twelve co-researchers from the third-year cohort conceived the following research questions:

1. What has been your experience with accessing higher education at Pacifica in terms of financing your education? (Focus Group One)
2. Do you think it is accessible -- why or why not? (Focus Group One)
What would a university liberated from coloniality look like? (Focus Group Two)

The six co-researchers on each team collectively transcribed, coded, and analyzed the data that was gathered in the focus groups. They then decided on final themes/codes as a group. In an ideal PAR process, all of the participants would have been engaged in the analysis and interpretation of the data. Given that this research project was conducted within time constraints and limitations of a research methodology class, first and second-year students were not engaged at all stages of the research process.

Findings
Findings from the combined analysis of data gathered in the two focus groups suggested the following themes that overlap and interrelate on a number of levels.

Inaccessibility
Pacifica’s overall cost of attendance, for-profit business model, rigid residency policies, and limited support in acquiring funds to alleviate costs render the institution financially inaccessible to many potential students. Students expressed frustration at the lack of assistantships, fellowships, work-study, and compensated training opportunities that are typical of many doctoral programs. Pacifica’s for-profit business model disqualifies students for funding opportunities available to students at public universities. Students expressed respect for the faculty and deep interest in working with them but also disappointment in the relative lack of mentorship and co-writing opportunities.

Psychological Toll
For many students, attending graduate school with insufficient financial support requires them to engage a multitude of strategies that require resilience, agility, and resourcefulness leaving them feeling overextended and internally conflicted. For students who are parents, particularly mothers, institutional policies that prevent children from remaining on campus overnight require them to either leave the child/ren at home, which is especially traumatic and disruptive for breastfeeding babies, toddlers, and children struggling with attachment; or bring them and stay overnight off-campus. The compounded burden of navigating these sorts of decisions takes a toll on students’ overall psychological well-being.

Student Positionality
Students come from various backgrounds. Some felt that their voices are typically silenced in the academy in the U.S. Their socio-economic positions are connected to their experience of inaccessibility. Students who were best positioned to afford PGI expressed that they benefited from available opportunities such as a matching grant. Students who were impacted by colonial structures that have blocked financial mobility for generations were likely to not have access to qualified sponsors for the grant or co-signers for supplemental loans.

Policy
Policy concerns were most observable in contexts around the accreditation requirement of one’s physical presence on campus for courses, policies regarding students’ children on campus, and housing options and their costs during academic sessions.

Positive Visions and Shared Leadership
Although Group Two’s research questions sought to elicit visions of a university liberated from coloniality, much of the discussion centered around challenges that students face, which indicates that until the challenges above are addressed, it is difficult to implement such vision. However, a repeated recommendation from multiple participants focused on shared leadership. Suggestions included increasing student voice through student government and/or associations in order to effect systems and policy change at both the specialization and institutional levels to increase accessibility and transparency around financial, curricular, and class scheduling decisions. Figure 1 depicts the emergent themes that were arranged in a model that represents a vision of a liberatory university.
Conclusion/Recommendations

This research highlights the complexity and tensions involved in implementing a de-coloniality-focused curriculum into a private institution of higher education. The CLIE faculty at Pacifica are well aware of these contradictions and challenges. In a recent article, Watkins, Ciafolo & James (2018) clearly articulated how pursuing de-coloniality in higher education is a paradox requiring humility, solidarity, clarity of intention, and critical dialogue.

Recommendations gleaned from the focus group discussions included increased support around on and off campus work (and/or work-study) possibilities, increased scholarship opportunities, institutional transparency regarding financial decisions, and shared leadership.

In that spirit, we end here with three recommendations: (1) Plan for one program evaluation session per year, during a on-campus session, in which all CLIE students, core faculty, and key administrators participate; (2) Create a CLIE funding position or add responsibilities to current position(s) that functions with student participation and support. (3) Give PGI students a seat at the table in decision and policy-making at the Institute.

Our recommendations are not uncommon as graduate student funding and student councils are fairly commonplace in public institutions. However, programs that focus on decoloniality and decolonization are not common at other institutions. We hope that in sharing our experiences in these conversations, we may contribute towards not only a vision of a decolonial university but of actions to support that vision.

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Getting Ready for the Year Ahead: A Year in Review

Written by Olya Glantsman, DePaul University and Nicole Freund, Wichita State University

One of the aims of the Community Psychology Practice Council (CPPC) is to support community psychology practice in settings outside academic institutions and increase the visibility of this work. In 2018, the CPPC continued to expand the visibility, reach, and impact of community psychology practice through opportunities for connection, support, and professional development across SCRA and other professional organizations and committees. We did that by helping to:

- Continue conversations about defining practice,
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of community work,
- Increase opportunities to be seen as legitimate and acknowledged,
- Increase the visibility of Community Psychology practice, and
- Provide individual and institutional support.

This column will highlight some of the work done in 2018 and the plans forming for the coming year.

Activity: Community Mini-Grants

The CPPC Community Mini-Grants were designed to offer community-based members and programs actively practicing community psychology a small amount of funding to support that work. Practitioners recognize that when working directly with communities, often large sums of money are not required to catalyze meaningful change. In this way, mini-grants could support the important work within communities, provide a mechanism for SCRA members to build local relationships, and strengthen membership by offering SCRA members the benefit of access to these grants. The activity of mini-grant awards supports both membership and visibility (since grantees promote SCRA as a funder and the applicant is required to have an active membership).

Last year, the CPPC continued to provide starter funds for larger community interventions that engaged local community members via the SCRA Community Mini-Grants program. In its 8th year, the Community Mini-Grants program funded a total of 11 impactful, community-based grants. Initiatives included assessing the substance abuse needs of an underserved community, using participatory research for empowerment in a community outside the US, investigating homelessness in college students, and promoting civic responsibility among university students. The diverse communities and needs attended to in these projects speak to broad application of community psychology in practice.

Additionally, students are an important segment that CPPC activities hope to support. Many of the mini-grant applicants this past year, and over the last eight years, have been students seeking to engage in community-based work. Successfully completed grants help to model what community work looks like and build skills that may not be directly taught in either undergraduate or graduate classes.

Activity: Peer Consultation Calls

Monthly Peer Consultation Calls offer CPPC members the opportunity to connect and learn from other practitioners. These calls continued in 2018 and were recently revamped into Conversations.
that Raise Your Practice Game to revitalize the call and attract new participants. Six Peer Consultation Calls occurred prior to the new format and three Conversations occurred in 2018. On average 3-5 participants attended the Peer Consultation Calls and the three Conversations have yielded 10-12 participants, implying the new format is more successful and does a better job of convening and connecting practitioners. This initiative supports most directly the membership strategic priority by increasing member growth and engagement, while providing theoretical and practical support to the members of the group (e.g., increases sense of community, prepares participants for the work in communities, increases their practical knowledge base, increases their marketability, etc.). All practitioners and members who participate in the calls develop professionally either through direct advice on a current project or by building network connections. Practitioners and several academics who teach practitioners have benefitted from the calls as exemplars for what community psychology work looks like outside a university setting.

Activity: Ask an Advisor

The Community Toolbox, a service of the Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas, provides the Ask an Advisor service to answer questions about community work from community workers across the U.S. and the globe. CPPC members continue to serve as volunteer advisors who work a “shift” for the Ask an Advisor service. Ask an Advisor has been supported by CPPC members since its beginning nearly a decade ago and supports visibility by establishing professional presence in a place of direct service to thousands of community workers.

2019 Plans

Changing the format of the “Peer Consultation Calls” to the conversation format is one new way the council is working to address the needs of its members. The calls have been gaining traction and, guided by the interest of the members, successfully continue into 2019. Additional short-term plans include revitalizing the leadership with new elections, and outreach to members to determine the most salient new priorities that should be undertaken in the coming year. This includes revisiting the Community Action Bulletin and the Community Practice Blog and looking for other ways to fulfill the CPPC mission beyond current activities.

Several CPPC-sponsored programs were submitted for the 2019 Biennial, and the Council hopes to continue the “Community Mini-Grants” program should funding become available. The CPPC also plans to explore sustainable ways to brand and promote its activities.

The council welcomes diverse voices and hopes those voices feel included and safe. Much of the work highlighted through CPPC activities seeks to serve traditionally underserved populations, but more could be done to seek diverse leadership and representation within SCRA. For more information or to get involved, contact the CPPC at PracticeCouncil@scra27.org.

Criminal Justice

Edited by Jessica Shaw, Boston College School of Social Work

The Criminal Justice Interest Group Column features the work and ideas of our members. We encourage readers to reach out to the authors if they are interested in learning more or exploring potential opportunities for collaboration. We also invite readers to join one of our upcoming Learning Community Series presentations in which Criminal Justice Interest Group members share their work virtually to foster a learning community. More information, and recording of prior presentations, can be viewed at http://scra27.org/who-we-are/interest-groups/criminal-justice-interest-group/.
One Piece of the Puzzle: Publicly Held Stereotypes about People with a History of Criminal Justice Involvement
Written by Candalyn B. Rade and Amanda Gold, Penn State University Harrisburg

People with a history of involvement in the criminal justice system experience stereotypes and discrimination at both interpersonal and institutional levels. Within the U.S., people express negative attitudes toward adults with a criminal history, often varying based on individual differences in belief systems and prior contact with people who have a criminal history (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010; Rade et al., 2016). Moreover, labeling based on criminal history and subsequent stigmatization can lead to differential treatment of people because of their label (e.g., Murphy et al., 2011). Evidence of inequality and institutional discrimination based on such labels and one’s criminal history has been documented across many vital components of community transition, namely employment, healthcare, and housing (e.g., Frank et al., 2014; Pager, 2003; Wakefield & Eggen, 2010).

This article discusses the preliminary results of ongoing research seeking to bring together theory and methodology from across related disciplines to understand and address the stereotypes experienced by justice-involved groups. Rooted within community psychology values of social justice and equity, we draw from criminal justice research and applied social psychological theory to increase understanding of interpersonal and institutional stigmatization and discrimination, leading to change across these interacting levels. First, we present preliminary results of a pilot study testing the application of Stereotype Content Model to groups with varying criminal histories. Second, we discuss next steps for continued community-partnered research.

Pilot Study
Stereotype Content Model (SCM) from social psychological theory presents a systematic approach for assessing the two central dimensions of stereotypes—warmth and competence (Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002). The warmth dimension is associated with assessment of someone’s intentions, including the degree of trustworthiness, sincerity, and overall good nature. The competence dimension is associated with assessment of someone’s capability to achieve those intentions, including the degree of skill and intelligence. These dimensions predict emotional (pity, admiration, contempt, envy) and behavioral responses (facilitation, harm) toward members of the stereotyped group. Although extensively used to assess various social groups across the world, few studies have successfully implemented a SCM framework to evaluate stereotypes toward people with a history of criminal justice involvement. Prior studies have primarily been limited to investigations of punitiveness (Cite-Lussier, 2016) and wrongly convicted persons (Clown & Leach, 2015; Thompson et al., 2012). Yet, a more informed understanding of stereotypes toward people with a criminal history is a first step to addressing discriminatory behaviors, and the associated reentry barriers.

We conducted exploratory research with a student sample from a northeastern university to test the application of SCM to better understand stereotypes toward people with a history of criminal justice involvement. Respondents were recruited through a course research requirement mechanism and completed all survey items online. After the removal of respondent data for failure to pass attention-check items and extensive missing data, responses from 259 students are included in these analyses. Half of respondents identified as female (n = 135, 52.1%) with an average age of 19.26 years (SD = 1.83, Range = 18-32). Half of respondents identified as White or Caucasian (n = 129, 50.2%). The next most common racial and ethnic identities reported were Asian or Asian American (n = 78, 30.4%), Hispanic or Latinx (n = 19, 7.4%), and Black or African American (n = 18,
Christianity was the most commonly identified religious affiliation (50.0% total; Catholic \( n = 52 \); Protestant \( n = 48 \); Orthodox \( n = 16 \)), followed by no religious affiliation \( (n = 70, 27.1\%) \). Overall, respondents reported moderate political beliefs (44.7%, \( n = 115 \)). By comparison, 28.8% identified as slightly to extremely liberal \( (n = 74) \) and the remaining endorsed varying degrees of conservative political beliefs. Few respondents reported a personal history of arrest \( (n = 5, 1.9\%) \) or conviction \( (n = 6, 2.3\%) \), but none reported being incarcerated since the age of 18.

Consistent with prior research (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002), respondents were asked to rate 35 groups (e.g., ‘people who are in the middle class’, ‘people who are unemployed’, ‘people with a sexual offense history’) using a 5-point scale on their degree of warmth and competence as viewed by society. The competence scale was composed of five items (competent, confident, independence, competitive, intelligent) and the warmth scale contained three items (warm, good-natured, sincere). Competence and warmth mean scores for each group were averaged across respondents. Hierarchical cluster analysis was used to determine the number of clusters based on the agglomeration statistics and dendrogram. A 5-cluster model emerged as the best solution, which was examined through k-means cluster analysis to identify the groups belonging to each cluster.

Results revealed that people with a history of criminal justice involvement are generally rated as low in warmth and low in competence, with the exception of people with a non-violent offense history (see figure 1).

Indeed, the Low Competence-Low Warmth (LC-LW) cluster was comprised exclusively of 10 of the evaluated groups with a criminal history, plus people who abuse substances and alcohol. By comparison, the other non-justice-involved groups fell into higher-rated clusters, consistent with prior research. For example, scientists, business executives, and teachers were all rated as high in competence and moderate-to-high in warmth (HC-MHW cluster). Moreover, the nature of stereotypes varied across subgroups of offense history. People with nonviolent offense histories were consistently rated as higher in warmth and competence compared to other offense history subgroups.

Figure 1. Competence and Warmth Clusters
Concurrent Research and Next Steps

This pilot study examined the application of SCM to understanding public stereotypes toward people with a criminal offense history and the nuanced differences between subgroups. As anticipated, respondents generally reported negative stereotypes (comprised of perceptions of low warmth and low competence) toward those with a criminal history. Findings upheld models presented in other disciplines, such as organizational management and human resources (e.g., Jones Young & Powell, 2010), regarding the possible role of perceived warmth and competence ratings in stereotype formation. Indeed, our pilot study, along with previous theory development work (Rade et al., 2018), provides foundational support for concurrent research. Specifically, focus groups are underway to explore the underlying mechanisms of these interpersonal stereotypes and possible direction for later work intervening to reduce negative stereotypes and increase mindsets regarding growth and successful transitions.

However, publicly-held stereotypes and interpersonal discrimination do not occur in a vacuum, rather they are among many factors contributing to institutional-level problems such as discriminatory hiring policies and access to community resources. Therefore, we must consider the broader contextual, institutional, and systemic factors at play. Especially in our role as community psychologists, we must look beyond the more traditional lens of placing primary responsibility and intervention focus on individuals with a history of justice system involvement, and rather seek to influence critical second-order change. To this end, we are currently conducting a mixed-methods evaluation of prison-to-community transition work by local coalitions state-wide. This ongoing collaboration with local and state government, service providers, and those with lived experiences is providing a stepping point for our group to engage in applied work that is theoretically-informed, community-generated, and systems-minded.

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Immigrant Justice

Edited by Fabricio Balcazar, University of Illinois Chicago and Kevin Ferreira, California State University Sacramento

Working Alongside Refugees in Mental Health (WARM)

Written by Jordan Snyder, Samantha Skirko, Dale Golden, Nyabony Gat, and Sara L. Buckingham, University of Alaska Anchorage and Issa Spatrisano, Catholic Social Services Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services

On a crisp Saturday in January 2019, mental health practitioners and affiliates gathered for the first Working Alongside Refugees in Mental Health (WARM) full-day workshop in Anchorage, Alaska. Representing various mental health professions and levels of training – psychologists, counselors, social workers, and graduate students – all workshop attendees had a unified purpose: To understand more of refugees’ experiences and cultural and contextual considerations when providing mental health care. Jointly developed between Alaska’s refugee resettlement program, Catholic Social Services Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services (RAIS) and a faculty member in the Clinical-Community Psychology PhD Program at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) and her students, the ultimate goal of WARM is to increase the availability of culturally-relevant, linguistically-appropriate, evidence-based mental health treatment for refugee community members in Alaska. And so, the cold morning had an air of excitement surrounding the start of a new network that could meet a significant community need. Below we discuss reflections on WARM, including its rationale, our partnership, the first workshop, preliminary evaluation, and future directions.

Background

We are currently experiencing an international refugee crisis, with the highest levels of displacement on record. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimates that in 2017
there were 25.4 million refugees around the world with only 102,800 (less than 1%) having been resettled (UNHCR, 2018). Refugee status is legally defined under the 1951 Refugee Convention as someone who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or ... is unwilling to return to it.” Historically, RAIS has supported the resettlement of 130 refugees in Alaska annually, primarily to the Anchorage area. Currently, RAIS serves almost 600 refugees and asylees from 33 countries, providing reception and placement, case management, education, employment, and health promotion services.

Refugees are exposed to a host of pre-flight, flight, and resettlement stressors, including war trauma, persecution and discrimination, under-resourced communities, and post-migration living difficulties. These stressors are related to adverse mental health outcomes (Bogic, Njoku, & Priebe, 2015; Steel et al., 2009). Although refugees demonstrate remarkable resilience, as a whole they experience higher rates of posttraumatic stress, major depression, generalized anxiety, panic, and adjustment disorder, and are more likely to experience somatic symptoms of mental distress (Bogic et al., 2015; Steel et al., 2009). Yet, when refugees are resettled to new communities, they face numerous barriers to accessing mental health services including a lack of available and affordable practitioners who can provide culturally-informed, linguistically-appropriate, evidence-based care (Fondacaro & Harder, 2014; Vrana, Campbell, & Clay, 2013). A local needs assessment in Anchorage found that while mental health practitioners expressed interest in working with refugees, they faced many barriers, including a lack of training in working cross-culturally and with interpreters (Robinson, 2015).

**WARM**

Consequently, in 2018, the director of RAIS (Issa Spatrisano) and a faculty member at UAA (Sara Buckingham) began to discuss ways of addressing these barriers to mental health care. Modeled in part after the Intercultural Counseling Connection in Baltimore, Maryland (http://www.interculturalcounseling.org/), we aimed to develop a series of workshops that would provide specialized training in matters relevant to refugee mental health. A team of students, including a doctoral intern (Jordan Snyder), doctoral student (Dale Golden), master’s student (Samantha Skirko), and undergraduate student (Nyabony Gat) joined to support the development and implementation of WARM.

The goal of the initial WARM workshop was to provide practitioners foundational knowledge relevant to mental health services for refugees. In the first part of the workshop, Issa described diverse migration pathways and differentiated refugee resettlement from asylum and immigration, with a particular focus on refugees’ pre-flight, flight, displacement, and resettlement experiences. In the second portion of the workshop, Sara considered the many stressors and strengths associated with refugees’ experiences and how they may lead to, exacerbate, and/or ameliorate common mental health concerns among refugee clients. We described, modeled, and discussed specific strength-based, culturally-responsive, and evidence-based psychotherapy approaches for clients who are refugees. Licensed attendees were eligible to receive seven free Continued Education credits provided by RAIS through a partnership with our state psychological association.

**Preliminary Evaluation**

Of the 29 people who attended the initial training, 14 participated in both a pre- and post-training survey to measure the impact of the training on knowledge, confidence, and intentions to provide mental health services to refugee clients. Data results are limited as only half of the attendees responded to both surveys; however, the data has demonstrated important insight into the
initial impact of our first training. We found that practitioners’ knowledge of matters related to refugee mental health significantly increased and their barriers to working with refugees due to a lack of knowledge significantly decreased after the training. We also found that practitioners’ confidence working with refugees significantly increased after the training. However, while trending in a positive direction, we found that practitioners’ intentions, abilities, and commitment to working with refugees did not significantly change over time. We conclude that our first training provided foundational knowledge in refugee mental health that increased practitioners’ confidence working with refugee clients, but that many practitioners likely need additional training to feel ready to serve refugee clients. We expect that with additional trainings and ongoing consultation, we will likely see practitioners’ intentions, ability, and commitment to work with refugees increase.

The Future of WARM

There is a strong interest among practitioners in Anchorage to provide mental health services to refugees. Through our ongoing partnership, we are working to make our foundational workshop available online so that practitioners outside of Anchorage can access it. With the evaluation data from the first workshop, RAIS has submitted a grant to conduct additional specialized trainings, such as: working with interpreters; conducting evaluations for asylum and citizenship exam waivers; working with children, youth, and families; group treatment; and, vicarious traumatization, resilience, and self-care. With this ongoing partnership, we hope to develop sustainable capacity for working with refugees in mental health in Alaska. Eventually, we would like to develop these workshops into a maintainable community of practice using opportunities including consultation groups to foster continued learning among practitioners.

In the cold of the Alaska winter, WARM is an opportunity to build sustainable mental health capacity for working with refugees. We are excited to continue to work with RAIS and local practitioners to build local capacity so that refugees in Alaska have access to culturally-responsive, linguistically-appropriate, and evidence-based psychotherapy approaches. Fostering and sustaining strong community-based partnerships is critical to building sustainable mental health capacity. WARM may be one method of building capacity that could be replicated in other communities outside of Alaska.

References


Do you know what’s going on in your region? It is always a good time to check out your SCRA region information on the website and contact the regional coordinators to see what is going on (http://www.scra27.org/who-we-are/regional-activities/). Has your region been too quiet these days? Get involved and shake things up! I’m looking at you students! Check out the latest news from the Southeast and Midwest regions of the U.S.

**News from the Midwest Region U.S.**

**MIDWEST REGIONAL COORDINATORS (RCS)**

Amber Kelly, National Louis University; Melissa Ponce Rodas, Andrews University; and Tonya Hall, Chicago State University

On February 6-9, the Executive Committee of the Society for Community Research and Action met for the Annual Midwinter Meeting in Chicago, hosted by National Louis University. On Friday night, Yolanda Suarez Balcazar and Fabricio Balcazar opened their home to over 50 SCRA members for a night of dinner and mingling. Those in attendance included a number of students from National Louis, Roosevelt, DePaul, and UIC. As one of the attendees, Susan Wolfe, TCP co-editor, stated: “This was a wonderful and productive meeting. It was wonderful seeing so many SCRA members and Yolanda and Fabricio are really great hosts.” She is now looking forward to seeing everyone again at the Biennial.

**News from the Southeast Region U.S.**

**SOUTHEAST REGIONAL COORDINATORS (RCS):**

Wing Yi (Winnie) Chan, RAND Corporation and Elan Hope, North Carolina State University

The Southeastern Region would like to welcome Dr. Vanessa Volpe. Dr. Volpe will join the Department of Psychology at NC State University as an Assistant Professor in the Applied Social and Community Psychology program in Fall 2019. Dr. Volpe is an applied developmental health psychologist with a focus on the reduction of racial/ethnic health disparities by employing critical psychological and social justice lenses. Her research aims to explicate the processes by which and the contexts in which individuals resist and protect themselves against forms of marginalization (e.g., racism, sexism, heterosexism), with specific attention to the preservation of health in Black and Latinx communities. Dr. Volpe aims to work collaboratively with community members, employing strengths- and community-based contextual approaches to use research as a springboard for healing programming and policy.
The SCRA Research Council is delighted to announce the outcome of the initial cycle of recruitment, review, and selection of Research Scholar applicants. Initially known as SCRA Research Fellows, the program name was recently changed to SCRA Research Scholars to use a less gendered term. The SCRA Research Council was founded in 2017 and decided a good way to begin supporting community research would be to help untenured community psychology faculty enhance their research programs and become tenured. Such scholars may become tenured faculty, contribute to community research literature, and mentor future scholars for decades to come. In winter 2018 the SCRA Executive Committee (EC) approved the SCRA Research Scholars Program and committed $10,000 to support two Scholars. In addition to financial support for two Scholars, all Scholars receive mentoring assistance from an accomplished senior researcher in community psychology or related field. After final approval by the EC in the summer, in fall the Research Council called for applications and was happy that 13 talented young university researchers on the tenure track applied. After carefully reviewing the large number of talented applicants, the Council members selected the following four very promising assistant professors in community psychology graduate programs or programs including community psychology as SCRA Research Scholars: Elan Hope, North Carolina State University; Nkiru Nnawulezi, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; Ida Salusky, DePaul University; and Victoria Scott, University of North Carolina, Charlotte.

To introduce the readers of The Community Psychologist to this inaugural cohort of Research Scholars, here are a brief biography of each Scholar and a short account of their plans as a Research Scholar:

**Elan Hope**

Elan Hope is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at North Carolina State University and director of the Hope Lab. She is a native of Prince George's County, Maryland and received her Bachelors' degree in Psychology from Smith College and her PhD in Education and Psychology from the University of Michigan. Following graduate school, she completed post-doctoral research (sponsored by the William T. Grant Foundation) in Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago.

In the Hope Lab, Dr. Hope and her team take an assets-based approach to investigate factors that promote well-being for marginalized adolescents and emerging adults who face racism and racial discrimination. In the Hope Lab, research is deeply rooted in the belief that while there are common developmental experiences among racially marginalized youth, individual differences and contextual variation require a deep exploration of diverse pathways to success and well-being. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods Dr. Hope examines well-being as psychological and physical health, academic success, and civic engagement. Her most recent work explores factors that are related to wellbeing, including racial identity, critical consciousness, racial socialization, and community contexts. A self-described womanist, Dr. Hope is committed to wellness and excellence for disenfranchised groups. She believes that, in the words of Marianne Williamson, “We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’ Actually, who are you not to be?”
Research Scholar Plans

Dr. Hope will investigate Black college students’ daily experiences of race-related stress in college, and the utility of anti-racism activism as a coping mechanism to reduce stress and increase academic persistence. Racial inequalities persist in higher education, with implications for economic, physical, and psychological wellbeing. Racial inequality manifests via systems of racial inequality and interpersonal experiences of racial discrimination. In addition to the normative stress of college, Black students face race-related stress. This race-related stress can undermine persistence through and graduation from college. One mechanism that may decrease the negative effects of race-related stress is anti-racism activism.

The goal of this project is to identify ways that anti-racism activism can reduce racial inequalities in higher education. To accomplish this goal, Dr. Hope will conduct a 2-phase mixed methods action research project. In Phase 1, I will conduct a 21-day daily diary study to examine the prevalence and co-occurrence of race-related stress, and anti-racism beliefs and behaviors among Black college students. The first aim of Phase 1 is to determine the impacts of race-related stress on mental health and academic engagement for Black college students. The second aim of Phase 1 is to examine whether anti-racism activism buffers or exacerbates negative effects of race-related stress. In Phase 2, Dr. Hope will facilitate a photovoice project to further elucidate the nature and meaning of the daily experiences of race-related stress and anti-racism activism for Black college students. As consistent with photovoice, she will work with student co-researchers to determine action to reduce race-related stress on their campus.

Dr. Nathan Todd of the University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana, Dr. Pennie Foster-Fishman of Michigan State and Dr. Tami Sullivan of Yale University will serve as mentors or resources for different aspects of this work.

Nkiru Nnawulezi

Nkiru Nnawulezi is an Assistant Professor in Community Psychology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She earned a Ph.D. in Ecological-Community Psychology from Michigan State University and has additional graduate certifications in college teaching, community engagement, and quantitative research methods. Her primary research goal is to improve the social and material conditions for survivors of gender-based violence who occupy multiple marginalized social identities. Using ecological and intersectional theories, she explores survivors’ formal and informal help-seeking behaviors and examines how communities and formal systems respond to survivors’ needs. Dr. Nnawulezi aims to create interventions to improve these within-system responses to survivors as well as develop and test viable alternative community-based responses. To date, she has primarily employed participatory, community-based, qualitative and qualitatively-driven mixed method studies with domestic violence organizations. Thereby, she has sought to create and sustain the individual, interpersonal, and institutional conditions that will increase survivors’ empowerment and well-being. Her research has been funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, State of Michigan, and the Center for Victim Research. She currently serves as a research and evaluation advisor to the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and Ujima: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community.

Research Scholar Plans

During the course of this fellowship and under the mentorship of Dr. Lauren Cattaneo of George Mason University, Dr. Nnawulezi will advance her methodological and data analytic competencies through the implementation of a mixed-method
(QUAL→QUAN), longitudinal, community-based, participatory research study. This study explores how survivors who are homeless or housing-insecure in the District of Columbia are screened for domestic violence when they seek out emergency housing services from the DC Department of Human Services Family Housing Resource Center. Preliminary qualitative data suggest that survivors have varied experiences with being eligible and accessing housing support, yet their long-term housing outcomes remain unclear. Dr. Nnawulezi will collaboratively implement a quantitative, longitudinal study to assess these outcomes. Results will be disseminated to academic outlets such as the American Journal of Community Psychology and will be used as pilot data for future funding opportunities. Study implications will likely be useful to community psychologists who have interests in survivor well-being, homelessness, and systems change. This study was conceptualized by the Domestic Violence Action Research Collective. The aim of this Collective is to generate and implement high-impact, survivor- and community-centered research and evaluation projects that build survivors’ power, increase survivor-responsive care within systems, and enhance individual and community safety. Dr. Nnawulezi is the Collective’s co-founder and current facilitative leader.

Ida Salusky

Dr. Ida Salusky is an Assistant Professor of Clinical-Community Psychology at DePaul University. She received her PhD in Clinical-Community Psychology from University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana and completed her clinical internship at Yale University. Dr. Salusky’s research focuses on issues of social and gender (in)equality in both the U.S. and the Dominican Republic. Currently, she conducts longitudinal research examining educational equity for historically underrepresented populations in U.S. institutions of higher education. She also examines responses to structural violence and state sponsored discrimination of females of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic. Dr. Salusky teaches graduate seminars in community psychology, clinical ethics and qualitative methods. In addition to her teaching and research, she is active in coalition work to develop an integrated network of mental healthcare care for immigrant and refugee populations in the city of Chicago. In her spare time, Dr. Salusky enjoys spending time with her young son, reading and all things outdoors.

Research Scholar Plans

Dr. Salusky’s goals focus on manuscript preparation and professional development necessary for success on the tenure track. Dr. Salusky’s mentor is Dr. Bernadette Sanchez, an authority on mentoring research and Professor of Community Psychology at DePaul University. Dr. Salusky’s research focus for the award period involves developing and publishing manuscripts from two sets of data collected in the Dominican Republic. During the award period, Drs. Sanchez will provide mentorship to Dr. Salusky around cultivating sustainable writing habits to ensure the consistent development of specific, realistic and incremental writing goals. Dr. Sanchez will also provide support in efficiently navigating manuscripts through the peer review pipeline. As a scholar conducting both U.S. and international research, Dr. Sanchez is uniquely positioned to provide Dr. Salusky with guidance around building and maintaining mutually beneficial international research relationships while based in a U.S. university. Finally, Drs. Sanchez and Salusky will work together to enhance Dr. Salusky’s skills around optimally allocating time devoted to teaching and service to best support research and writing within a four-year comprehensive university.
Dr. Victoria Scott is an applied, interdisciplinary social scientist with background and training in community psychology, clinical psychology, and business administration. A faculty member of the Community Psychology Program at UNC Charlotte, she concentrates on improving systems and settings to promote health and equity as key aspects of wellness. Her work extends across three interconnected domains of research pertaining to the *process, people*, and *supports* in systems-level improvement.

Dr. Scott joined SCRA in 2007 and worked closely with SCRA members to advance community psychology. She co-founded the *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice* and co-edited *Community Psychology: Foundations for Practice* (Scott and Wolfe, 2015) to expand the availability of literature for community practitioners. In 2013-2016, she served as Administrative Director of SCRA, leading a 10-month, intensive strategic planning effort. One result of the strategic plan was the development of SCRA’s Research Council. Dr. Scott also served recurrently as a biennial mentor and participated on SCRA committees and councils. Currently, Dr. Scott is co-authoring the 4th edition of *Community Psychology: Linking Individuals and Communities* (Kloos et al., 2012).

Dr. Scott’s contributions to community psychology were recognized with the *SCRA Early Career Award* and the *Don Klein Publication Award to Advance Community Psychology Practice* in 2015. Recently, Dr. Scott and colleagues received the 2017 *American Evaluation Association Outstanding Evaluation Award* for their evaluation of a national community health capacity building initiative. Dr. Scott is an enthused mother of two happy-go-lucky girls.

**Research Scholar Plans**

Dr. Scott will work with a senior community psychology faculty member, Dr. Fabricio Balcazar of the University of Illinois at Chicago, on two objectives. This first is to establish a concrete, specific three-year pre-tenure faculty development plan. This plan will involve goal setting across research, teaching, and service, with an emphasis on research. It will be accompanied by a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis to reflect on personal strengths and weaknesses and identify opportunities and threats/barriers to achieving her professional three-year goals. The second objective is to develop Dr. Scott’s capabilities as a transformative community leader.

Dr. Scott is currently co-leading multiple community health improvement initiatives to improve healthcare access and advance health equity. She is working with the Eugene S. Farley, Jr. Health Policy Center and Colorado State Innovation Model Office staff to implement a statewide assessment of readiness for partnering cross-sectorally to advance and sustain the integration of behavioral health services in Colorado. She is also leading the evaluation and improvement of a community transformation initiative, Building Uplifted Families, to advance health equity and economic mobility in a most distressed Charlotte neighborhood. Recently, Dr. Scott was named the Strategic Lead of Population Health and Community Engagement for the Academy of Population Health Innovation, a university-health department partnership to address the health needs and priorities of Mecklenburg County (N.C.) residents. This new role, along with existing leadership responsibilities, call Dr. Scott to hone her capabilities as a community leader. Her second objective as an SCRA Research Scholar is to work with her senior community psychology faculty mentor to identify and connect with opportunities for leadership development.

Congratulations to these four SCRA Research Scholars! Many thanks to our esteemed senior colleagues who responded so quickly and positively to requests to mentor from applicants and the Research Council! We wish them all well as they
embark on their Research Scholar and mentor experiences.

The Research Council is planning to move up the timing of the call for applications this year to this spring. Please look for that announcement on the SCRA website and listserv.

Also, the Research Council plans to sponsor two programs at the Biennial in Chicago, one on navigating the promotion and tenure process and another on competing for research support. We also are in discussion about holding programs on mentoring. We hope you will consider attending any or all of these that would be of value to you.

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Rural Interests
Edited by Susana Helm, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

The Rural IG column of The Community Psychologist highlights rural resources as well as the work of community psychologist and allied professionals in their rural environments. Please email me if you would like to submit an article or brief report for the Rural column or if you have resources we may list here (Rural.IG@scra27.org).

We invite submissions from current and new Rural IG members, from people who present on rural topics during SCRA biennial and other conferences; and from leading and emergent rural scholars publishing in rural-focused journals (e.g. Rural Sociology, Journal of Rural Studies, Journal of Rural Health, Journal of Rural Mental Health, Rural and Remote Health). Please refer your colleagues and friends in academia and beyond to our interest group and column. We especially appreciate submissions from students, early career scholars, and practitioners.

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Brief Report: Diversifying the Rural Lens – Authors, Geographies, Intersections
Written by Susana Helm, Rural Column Editor, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

The Rural Interest Group column goals for the next two years from 2019 through 2020 are to diversify the rural lens through authorship, geography, and intersectionality. The first goal pertains to authorship. Student, early career scholars, CP allied scholars, and community member authors pose new vantage points on the rural landscape. For example, Gen Z authors are digital nativists and green nativists, both of which arguably are inherent in rural vitality in ways that digital or green non-nativists have yet to conceive. Our most recent rural column exemplifies this (TCP 52-1): a group of students and their professor spearheaded a community garden on their university campus to reduce food insecurity (Giroux, et al., 2019).

Goal 2 pertains to geography. Rural interests are inexorably grounded in geography – both the spaces defined as rural and the spaces that are not (see TCP 52-3 Rural column, forthcoming). As stand-alone entities, rural communities are vulnerable to the tyranny of the majority (Ashwood & McTavish, 2016). Due to low population density and other rural discourses, external majority forces often overwhelm and exploit rural interests. This column seeks to reveal how these forces manifest and are resolved across distinctive communities across the United States and internationally. By expanding the variety of geographies represented in this column, we may begin to see common problems, solutions, opportunities, and means for embracing change or resistance. For example, Guerreirro (TCP 45-3, 2012) portrayed farmers and fishers in Portugal who maintained their rural livelihoods and recovered family stability with assistance from an NGO by using participatory practices, and Cook et al (TCP 49-2, 2016) found that while rural parents in Tennessee and Virginia face some of the known barriers to mental health
care (e.g. stigma, distance), they also identified potential solutions in terms of family-provider collaboration and the importance of child-friendly services.

Goal 3 pertains to intersectionality. Diversifying authorship and geography accordingly will result in a greater array of topics, as suggested above. Moving beyond single dimension topics to rural intersectionalities may subvert essentialist discourses used to disenfranchise rural communities. For example, by exploring the intersection of community-based youth serving organizations with rural economic development, we may identify potential community psychology partners for promoting social, environmental, health, and economic justice. Future Farmers of America and 4-H support economic parity in rural America, where child poverty is higher. In addition to the urban/suburban-rural economic divide, economic inequalities within rural America are widening (https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2016/may/understanding-trends-in-rural-child-poverty-2003-14/). The economic recovery of late has not benefitted low income rural families on par with higher income rural families and non-rural families. To eliminate child poverty, youth serving organizations like 4-H and FFA are particularly critical for low income rural families.

An agriculture-centric program coordinated by cooperative extension across the US, the four Hs refer to head/heart/hands/health. Although 4-H is predominantly rural in focus, suburban and urban youth are served, too: 2.6 million rural youth are “4-H’ers”, and another 1.6 million suburban and 1.8 million urban youth are involved (https://4-h.org/about/what-is-4-h/). Cooperative extension services are linked with land grant universities for the purpose of disseminating agriculture science to strengthen the economic stability among farmers, farm families, and farm communities (https://nifa.usda.gov/extension). Some community psychologists are familiar with 4-H because the positive youth development framework emerged from the assets-orientation of 4-H (Lerner & Tolan, 2016; Lerner et al, 2010; https://4-h.org/).

Future Farmers of America is another ag-centric youth organization with ties to the US Department of Education. FFA defines itself as, “the premier youth organization preparing members for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture” (https://www.ffaf.org/). FFA was recently in the national news, the US House of Representatives passed legislation to preserve its agricultural career and technical education integrity (https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/439/text, https://www.ffa.org/ffa-new-horizons/house-passes-bill-to-modernize-national-ffa-charter/). For future Rural IG columns, we would be very interested in full articles that address the intersection of rural economic development, rural youth leadership, and rural organizational partners.

References
(weblinks retrieved February 2019).
Peer Bridgers: A Distinctive Kind of Peer Provider Connecting Homeless People to Collaborative Housing and Self-Help Support Groups at SHARE!

Written by Elizabeth G. Hartigan, Ruth Hollman, and Jason Robison, SHARE! The Self-Help And Recovery Exchange

The principles and practices of member-run mutual-help groups or self-help support groups have been increasingly adapted into new forms of mental health peer provider roles. An increasing number of US states sponsor peer provider credentialing programs that are reimbursable by Medicaid, and mental health consumers are frequently being employed as peer providers in consumer-run services and in professional, clinical, and rehabilitative services (Myrick & del Vecchio, 201; Salzer 2010).

This article describes the Peer Bridger, a distinctive (or unique) peer support staff role. We describe examples of how Peer Bridgers are used in several sites and emphasize how Peer Bridgers are being distinctively used at SHARE! the Self-Help And Recovery Exchange in Los Angeles, California. Peer Bridgers at SHARE! have been evolving since 2005 and represent a promising practice that, based upon preliminary information, offers the potential for becoming an important evidence-based practice.

A Peer Bridger is someone with lived experience who provides a 'bridge' for a person transitioning between life situations, places, and/or identities. Examples of critical transitions are from homelessness to housing, incarceration to the community, locked mental health facility to the community, and/or unemployment to employment. For the SHARE! Collaborative Housing project, bridging is distinctive in that it also includes offering support in the form of: a) self-help support groups; b) opportunities to learn to live collaboratively with others; and c) participation in the democratic management of the shared housing.

Ideally, Peer Bridgers get to know the person they are bridging before the person transitions to the new setting or situation. By disclosing their similar lived experiences, Peer Bridgers normalize the fears, concerns and feelings that people in the new situation have. Peer Bridgers connect people to self-help support groups, and may themselves attend self-help support groups alongside newcomers, to model effective interactions within groups. While only 70% of SHARE! Collaborative Housing residents actually attend self-help support groups, the impact of those who do is to make the houses more functional, as people bring benefits from the groups to the house, such as learning to listen and problem solve effectively. The Peer Bridger uses recovery planning to empower the person to move forward and function as a supporter and a role model, sharing their experience, tools and skills to make the transition successful.

Peer Bridgers first appeared in the Peer Bridger Project, developed by the New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services in 1994 as part of their mission to help people transition out of psychiatric hospitals into the community in a manner that circumvented the revolving door phenomenon. Until then, 50 percent of people would get readmitted to the hospital within a year. By 2008, the Peer Bridger Project had reduced this to 29 percent (NY Peer Bridger Project, 2012).

Peer Bridgers have been utilized in several mental health programs. The Housing First model, launched at Pathways to Housing New York, found that with the use of Peer Bridgers, 80% of people maintained housing over two-years, compared to 30% for people who received traditional housing services (typically shelters and transitional housing, with access to permanent housing if they complied with program requirements) (Tsemberis et al,
2004). As a progressive program model, the philosophic premises, service structure, and empirical support of Pathways to Housing New York’s Housing First model have led to its increasingly widespread dissemination (Stanhope & Dunn, 2011).

Peer Bridgers are also using Critical Time Intervention (see https://www.criticaltime.org/cti-model/), which helps vulnerable people during times of transition in their lives by strengthening their network of support in the community. In a study of Peer Bridgers supporting people exiting New York psychiatric hospitals with time-limited care coordination, participants increased their use of outpatient services over 12 months and decreased hospital use compared to a control group (Nossell, 2016). Peer Bridgers supported veterans in the MISSION-VET treatment program, serving as role models and a source of encouragement and support (Rodrigues, 2011). Peer Bridgers implementing Critical Time Intervention in Brazil and Chile are currently under study (Stastny, 2012; Baumgartner, 2012). Peer bridging those leaving psychiatric hospitals has been shown to improve symptom severity, functioning and employment (Franx, 2008). A two-year study at nine Canadian hospitals found that the length of hospital stays was reduced due to peer bridging (Forchuk, 2015).

SHARE!’s Model of Peer Bridging

Established in 2005, SHARE! Collaborative Housing uses Peer Bridgers to support more than 600 people a year in its housing program. The purpose of the approach is to maintain a high degree of recovery orientation, where recovery is defined as “a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life and strive to reach their full potential” (SAMHSA, 2012). Participants maintain housing and are supported in pursuing personal growth and change through self-help support groups, and pursuing their personal idea of success, which often includes education and/or employment.

Peer Bridgers at SHARE! are employees who have met the standard requirements for employed peer staff; this consists of being in successful recovery from their relevant issues, and presently attending self-help support group meetings. They receive ongoing training in SHARE!’s approach to Peer Bridging and in the SHARE! Peer Toolkit—the relational dynamics, developed by Executive Director Ruth Hollman - the 2016 recipient of SCRA’s Distinguished Contribution to Community Psychology Practice Award. SHARE!’s Advanced Peer Specialist training, which includes three courses, is funded by the State of California.

SHARE! tracked participants in SHARE! Collaborative Housing with serious mental illness and found that 26% found employment within a year. Participants also showed high rates of pursuing higher education, family reunification and volunteering. 98% maintained their housed status even after they moved out.

One of the difficulties in implementing Peer Bridging is the lack of suitable training. There is a lack of studies comparing peer training of any sort with outcomes in the people served. Many peer certification programs do not teach best practices in peer services, relying on what should work rather than what actually has been shown to work. SHARE! has had difficulties with Peer Bridgers who want to pass into the Case Manager role, as it more familiar and also wields more power. Acknowledging the widespread confusion about best practices in Peer Bridging (Henwood, 2011), SHARE! trains staff and aspiring Peer Bridgers in the most effective traits of Peer Bridgers using the following matrix.
### Critical Ingredient of Peer Bridging

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical Ingredient of Peer Bridging</th>
<th>Examples of High-fidelity Peer Bridging</th>
<th>Examples of Low-fidelity Peer Bridging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrating Support</td>
<td>Integrates the practical parts of the change with their own experience in similar change which includes their feelings, hopes, challenges, etc.</td>
<td>Focuses on problem-solving rather than the person and their feelings, hopes, and fears.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting Differences</td>
<td>Recognizes the individuality of the person they are working with and supports them where they are.</td>
<td>Expects the person they are working with to have the same worldview and/or needs as they do or did.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Role</td>
<td>Sees their primary role as helping the person decide what is important to them and connecting the person to natural supports in the community.</td>
<td>Sees their primary role as solving the person’s problems and connecting them to professional services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship building</td>
<td>Prioritizes the relationship with the person they are working with.</td>
<td>Struggles to build an authentic relationship with the person. Uses professional boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and Dignity</td>
<td>Takes a journey with the person being served to provide them with unconditional love and support. Sees themselves as similar to the person they are serving and looks for strengths and positives.</td>
<td>Sees the person as needing guidance or supervision, rather than as an equal. May use judgmental language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Case study

In September 2016 a 40-something Hispanic woman with a history of domestic violence walked into one of SHARE!’s self-help center and found out about SHARE! Collaborative Housing. She had been living on the streets and occasionally in shelters for three years. A month later she decided to move in to a house in Long Beach, CA. She met with her Peer Bridger the next day and together they filled out the SHARE! Plan for Success. Her 5-year goal was to be “working, have good relationships with family, have GED.” She was referred to and attended Alcoholics Anonymous, Co-Dependence Anonymous and Recovery
International support groups. She was estranged from her two daughters and her siblings. She described herself as “hopeless.” She had no income. She moved in with a Rapid Rehousing Subsidy from the local housing authority. While she was connected to health care, she was not receiving mental health services. Her Peer Bridger connected her to mental health services and benefits, so the next month she began paying her own rent. She had lost her driver’s license for having too many tickets and with the help of her Peer Bridger came up with a plan to get her license back, including going to court, paying some fines and doing community service. She got her license back. She decided that she wanted to be a Drug and Alcohol Counselor, so she and her Peer Bridger researched school options and she went back to school to get her GED and enrolled in a certificate program at the local Community College with financial aid. After three semesters, she decided she did not want to be a Drug and Alcohol Counselor, so she took a job as an Administrative Assistant who also did bookkeeping. Her self-help support groups kept her sober, taught her boundaries and how to have better relationships, so soon she reconnected with her two adult daughters. That in turn led to her reconnecting with her siblings as well. She bought herself a car. Her new boyfriend is loving and not at all abusive. She says, “SHARE! Collaborative Housing was the start of everything I wanted in my life. I am so glad that now I know how to take care of myself.”

The underlying critical ingredients of Peer Bridging, such as respecting differences, relationship-building, respect, and dignity have been documented (Henwood 2011). They are the foundation of SHARE! Collaborative Housing Peer Bridging. In this report, SHARE! has demonstrated its commitment to using evidence-based practices to inform its programs. The fact that Peer Bridgers are not used more widely suggests that providers are not keeping abreast of our evolving understanding of effective peer service provision.

References


Student Issues

Edited by Joy Agner, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

“A Voice for our Neighborhood”: A Community Photovoice Collaboration with Youth

Written by Lindsey Roberts, Bowling Green State University

Researchers have long recognized the importance of environments in shaping youth development. Neighborhoods shape the daily experiences of residents, and in turn, neighborhood environments are shaped by residents. Most often, researchers focus on how economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods expose children to risk factors that, when compared to their peers in more affluent neighborhoods, place them at a higher risk for poor outcomes. Despite the evidence that neighborhoods influence residents of all ages, youth perspectives are often not valued, and youth input is largely excluded from intervention planning and decision-making processes (Frank, 2006; Santo, Ferguson, & Trippel, 2010).

Youth likely have different experiences, needs, and preferences than adults, but even among methodologies that are founded on community inclusion, such as community-based participatory research (CBPR), youth are less likely than adults to be included throughout the research process (Jacquez, Vaughn, & Wagner, 2013). Researchers have identified diverse barriers to including youth, including structural barriers, competing interests of researchers, and the belief that youth are developmentally incapable of making research decisions (Frank, 2006). However, the benefits of including youth as partners in the process are also compelling. For instance, participating in research allows youth to have more of a voice in public affairs, feel more connected to their community, and to develop individual cognitive and social skills (Frank, 2006). The current study used Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1997) to engage adolescent residents of an urban neighborhood in Toledo, Ohio in the research process, and to share their perspectives on their neighborhood’s assets and needs. The overarching goals were to teach youth about the research process and to empower youth to enact change in their community.

Methods

Nine teenagers who were enrolled in the Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) through the YMCA of Greater Toledo participated in the project. Participants were 16 to 20 years old, and all but one participant identified as a racial minority. Four participants were currently in high school, four had graduated high school, and one stopped attending school in the 11th grade. The YOP aims to improve educational attainment, to prepare youth for employment, and to promote civic engagement. To enroll in the YOP, youth must meet income guidelines; therefore, the program comprises low-
income youth. Participants were included in collecting data, analyzing data, and disseminating findings to the larger community and to key stakeholders. Participants attended a total of six sessions (one per week) and a public display of photos held at a local YMCA. SCRA Student Research Award funds were used for professional printing and purchasing supplies. To evaluate the impact of participating in the project, youth participated in individual interviews to assess their views of the program. Interviews covered topics such as perceived individual changes, communal changes, challenges, and suggestions.

Photovoice Outcomes

To analyze the photographic data, both the participants and researcher took part in a participatory visual analysis (Wang & Burris, 1997) during each of the Photovoice sessions. Additionally, content analysis was used to identify patterns and themes across group discussions. Ten total themes were generated from participants’ photos, descriptions, and group discussions. These themes largely reflect three primary aspects of participants’ experiences: adolescence, their environment, and their social roles. Youth described typical developmental processes, including an emerging sense of identity and self-expression, developing goals of autonomy and independence, a desire for positive adult mentors and role mentors, and a drive to create positive change through their lives. Youth also described aspects of their setting, including important places where they may feel an emotional connection, quality of and access to community resources, and safety. Lastly, youth also described the social aspects of their lives, including their relationships with children, their experiences with ageism, racism, and classism, and the different people who comprise their social communities.

Highlights from the photovoice sessions include:

- Nearly all participants emphasized the positive impact that community programs such as the YOP can have. One participant shared a photo of the logo and explained: I like coming here. I’ve only been here a few times, but I’ve been with a lot of people since summer time, and they help me with myself.... [They] opened my mind to a lot of things... I feel good when I’m here.

- Youth described that they encountered structural barriers—such as racism, classism, and ageism—but that these experiences motivated them to create positive societal change. Youth were optimistic that their generation could enact such change. One young woman said, “We can feel sorry, but we don’t have to be that way. We’ve got to make a change.”

- Youth described how parenthood was an important turning point with both challenges and positive aspects, such as the chance to be positive role models for their children.

Program Evaluation

When discussing the project during individual interviews, youth shared how they made time to take photos and attend group discussions, and their
willingness to engage in a new and unfamiliar experience. Youth also noted that they enjoyed sharing their own experiences and listening to their peers, and that as a result they felt more connected. Lastly, participants noted a sense of accomplishment, and increased self-efficacy, and an affinity for photography.

Highlights from individual interviews include:

- Participants felt that they were able to express themselves through photography. One participant stated, “I found my point of view about stuff and how I would express it.”
- Youth enjoyed seeing others’ photos and hearing others’ stories.
- Youth developed a stronger sense of self-efficacy over the course of the project. Discussing the public display, one young woman shared, “It made me proud because I’ve come so far and to have other people see all the work that I do. It just made me happy.”
- Youth used photographs to convey their experiences to peers and adults. See Figures 1 and 2 for sample photos and descriptions that youth chose for the public display.

- Participants reported an increased sense of neighborhood awareness.
- Lastly, youth discussed challenges that they encountered and changes that they would suggest.
- Participants most often mentioned that obtaining consent forms to photograph others was a challenge that limited how they were able to represent their social communities.
- Some participants would have preferred the program run for longer than 6 weeks.

Despite challenges, participants overall felt that the project helped both them and their neighborhood. As one participant summarized, “You’re giving your neighborhood a voice…. I’m 19 years old. Who’s going to listen to me? I’m still just a kid basically, So, things like this, and then having the Blade [newspaper] and everybody there taking pictures and taking statements, it was really nice. It was kind of like just giving ourselves a voice for our neighborhood.”

Acknowledgements

This project was only successful thanks to the contributions of many generous people throughout the process. I am so grateful to the community partners, LaDonna Knabbs and Crystal Harris Darnell, who graciously donated their time, space, and expertise throughout this project. I am also grateful to the participants, all of whom were open, trusting, accommodating, and honest. I am similarly appreciative of my co-chairs, Dr. Carolyn Tompsett and Dr. Catherine Stein, who trusted and supported me in so many ways. Lastly, the support of the SCRA Dissertation Award allowed this project to include more youth, to offer youth compensation (gift cards) for their time and efforts, and to share their stories with their family, neighbors, and communities.

References


Cara Karter (Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago) recently left her position as Research & Evaluation Specialist at After School Matters to become Coordinator of Research Support at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Prior to leaving After School Matters, Cara co-authored with her teen intern a blog post for American Evaluation Association with tips for co-leading evaluations with youth.

Tatiana Bustos (Michigan State University) recently defended her master’s thesis in Fall 2018. The thesis was a secondary, longitudinal analysis of two nationally distributed surveys assessing structural characteristics and state policies for school-based health centers across the U.S. Further, the analysis assessed how these organizational characteristics influenced the number of mental health services reported to be delivered from 2005 to 2014. To better understand her findings, she plans to facilitate a meeting with stakeholders in the School-Community Health Alliance of Michigan.

Jessica Shaw (Boston College) will be joining the faculty of the Community and Prevention Research program at the University of Illinois at Chicago in Fall 2019.

Katricia Stewart (Portland State University) successfully published her thesis research in the Journal of Community Psychology and intends to expand on this research for her dissertation.

Candalyn Rade (Penn State Harrisburg) was awarded the Penn State Harrisburg Research Council Grant in January 2019 for her work titled “Formation of Stereotypes about Formerly Incarcerated Persons: An Integrated Model of Implicit Person Theory and Stereotype Content Model.”

SCRA Member Spotlight

Edited by Dominique Thomas, University of Michigan

The SCRA Member Spotlight is a way for us to engage our members and highlight great works! Each issue will we solicit submissions of accomplishments. We especially would like students, early career scholars, and practitioners to submit their accomplishments and work.

Submissions can include but are not limited to:

- New jobs
- Post-docs
- Promotions
- Thesis/Dissertation Defenses
- Newly published journal articles, books, chapters
- Podcasts, blogs, news items that are by or about you
- Certifications or other credentials
- Retirement
- Grants
- Awards
- Successful/ongoing projects
- New projects of community initiatives

If you are interested in submitting for the next issue, please click this link and fill out the form. We hope to hear from you!
Nurturing the Student Expert in Graduate and Undergraduate Community Psychology Courses
Written by Heather Lewis Quagliana, Lee University

Introduction
As professors, I think we have the tendency to teach students first, and then have them apply course content later. Community psychology courses lend themselves to a practical, creative way of teaching that I have come to call, nurturing the student expert. In this approach, students are emerging experts in the field, offering complementary expertise to me and their classmates. With graduate students, this can be easier to nurture as they are typically engaged in practical work, have some experience from their undergraduate years, and often take more responsibility for their professional development. With that said, I think there are specific ways in which we can engage graduate students more effectively in developing both confidence and expertise.

I also believe that upper-level undergraduate students have more to offer than we often recognize. I always tell my undergraduate students, “I am not interested in who you are becoming or what you plan on doing. I am interested in who you are now and what you are doing now because it’s valuable.” There is such a focus in the collegiate environment on who students are becoming that we lose sight of who they are now. This generation of both graduate and undergraduate students are hungry to resolve issues of social justice, to apply immediately and simultaneously what they are learning in the classroom and let us know their stories that have shaped their paths to caring deeply about communities and context.

High Impact Learning
Research strongly supports the notion of service learning as a high impact-teaching tool with numerous positive impacts in higher education. For example, service-learning increases student ratings of instructor and course quality increases student’s academic performance, and increases self-awareness (Harnish & Bridges, 2012; Tannenbaum & Berrett, 2005). Further, effective service learning in the classroom incorporates the following elements: Direct involvement with people (Levesque-Bristol, et al., 2010), increased understanding of academic content (Tannenbaum & Berrett, 2005), faculty service-learning training (Tannenbaum & Berrett, 2005), emotional empathy (Lundy, 2007), and regular opportunities for reflection (Lundy, 2007; Weigert, 1998; Troppe, 1995; Kendall, 1990). My approach of nurturing the student expert combines a service-learning approach with student led projects and community investment in the professor’s areas of expertise.

I have experimented with utilizing student experts in a variety of scenarios over the past 10 years of teaching Community Psychology and Community Interventions courses. The first scenario is having graduate students choose their own organization and setting to deliver a “consultation” in a particular psychological topic. I have had graduate students choose to engage community interventions on campus, such as dorm talks on self-esteem and campus engagement resources for married students.
At the undergraduate level, I have collaborated with the local Boys and Girls Club to offer annual events during their national week. Undergraduate students are responsible for the themes, event planning, and subcommittee to pull off a special event/programming that meets psychological needs in some way. Both graduate and undergraduate students are trained in how to conduct effective needs assessments, how to apply stages of psychological consultation, and how to evaluate their interventions. The aforementioned “first scenario” approach has worked, but I found myself wanting the students to have more time to develop interventions for their project. When graduate students only have one semester to make contact with an organization, develop an intervention, deliver it, and evaluate it, the projects are rushed and do not produce the depth of expertise I am seeking to nurture in them.

Local and International Application
Over the past several years, I revised my approach. I decided to plug students into my existing community consultation and intervention work. In some cases, I intentionally sought out more projects in my area of expertise to have options for students to choose projects most in line with their interests. Students have been able to choose from the following projects over the past several years: Developing a trauma training curriculum for a Liberian orphanage and caregivers impacted by civil war and Ebola, training teachers and staff at local refugee agencies in trauma-informed approaches to helping children, developing an earthquake relief manual for psychological first aid for children in Manta, Ecuador, designing a research study that examines psychological and emotional needs to accompany clean water filtration system installation outside of Quito, Ecuador, and creating a manual for local ESL teachers that assists in labeling and coping with various types of trauma encountered by ESL students. Students are learning course content while engaging in meaningful projects that are in their developing areas of expertise.

Professor Expertise
As you can infer from the list of my connections and projects, my expertise is in childhood trauma and I have the added benefit of teaching on international campuses to also engage international students. However, each professor has to make this approach work for them utilizing their area(s) of expertise and national and international connections. In this second scenario of plugging both graduate and undergraduate students into my existing projects, students have been able to develop a depth of expertise that has prepared them in ways I honestly could not have imagined. Students not only assist in developing manuals and interventions, but on most the projects, students deliver their projects in person.

Over the past two summers, student teams consisting of both graduate and undergraduate students have gone to both Liberia and Ecuador to deliver their interventions. The opportunities for projects to come full circle have produced student
experts in refugee trauma, sexual abuse, natural disasters, and international consultation. Others have become experts in consulting to local community agencies to offer curriculum development and trainings. Students have been amazed with their own ability to develop expertise and find opportunities to display their applied learning.

As a professor, this approach takes some extra work on my part. I have put in many extra hours training students, developing ongoing relationships and projects within our community and managing quality assurance of the work my students are doing. But I think it is worth it. I think I am a lot like my students, I do not want to just tell them how to develop their expertise, but I want to actively show them what this process looks like. My pedagogy in class involves mentoring, collaboration, processing both content and process of projects, burnout in community work, and class work days where project planning happens with instructor oversight and peer collaboration.

**My Guidelines for Nurturing the Student Expert**

The following suggestions can guide you in your pursuits of nurturing your student experts:

1. Know the service-learning literature (overview given above) and apply best practices in your graduate and undergraduate community psychology classrooms.
2. Take time to enhance professional development. Process the pros and cons of community-based work. Discuss prevention of job burnout when working with high-risk populations.
3. Have high expectations for your students. Expect that they can collaborate effectively with you and each other when an appropriate scaffold is established.
4. Utilize your area(s) of expertise and use it as a model to develop expertise in your students.
5. Model humility to your students in the entire process of community-based work and interventions.

Nurturing and recognizing students’ potentials and expertise helps to reduce power differentials and in fact live out community psychology principles with our students.

**References**


“Green” Behavioral Settings in Community Health: An Ecological Approach for the Community Psychologist

Written by August John Hoffman, Metropolitan State University and Ernesto Vasquez, Concordia University

People tend to like green things. Known as the “Savanna Hypothesis”, organic environments that provide different types of essential resources, such as vegetation, vistas of clean water, and tree canopies (used as protection from ultraviolet rays) are universally preferred by people because of their life-sustaining qualities (Orians, 1980; 1986; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1982). Natural and sustainable environments tend to make us feel better in that they can often reduce the stress that people typically experience in congested and urban environments (Ulrich, Simons, Losito, Miles, & Zelson, 1991). Natural landscapes and green environments have also been instrumental in the development of positive psychologically evolved mechanisms, such as cooperative behaviors, compassion, and social bonding (Home, Hunziker, & Bauer, 2012).

Classic empirical research (Kelly, 1966, 1971; Barker, 1965) has identified the unique relationship between the physical characteristics, interpersonal relationships, and structure of the environment as playing a central role in shaping the behaviors and interactions of individuals within group settings such as neighborhoods and community environments. More recent research has identified numerous interpersonal and psychosocial benefits (i.e., reduced prejudice, negative stereotypes, and intergroup conflict) when community agencies and organizations provide increased opportunities of positive intergroup contact (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013) for community members to work collectively in the distribution of superordinate goals such as healthy foods (Gaertner, Dovidio, Banker, Houlette, Johnson, & McGlynn, 2000).

According to Roger Barker (1965), the unique characteristics of specific types of environments (i.e., “behavior settings”) can enhance how people from diverse backgrounds can communicate (i.e., “scripts”) and interact with each other, improving our ability to understand and relate to one another on multiple ecological levels.

A public park or recreational system, for example, may foster both leisure and healthy physical activities among community residents, whereas a community library may provide opportunities for individuals from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds access to media and literature, providing opportunities for members to read and share intellectual information (i.e., “book clubs”) as a means of enhanced community resilience in disaster recovery (Veil & Bishop, 2014).

![Figure 2 The Inver Hills-Metropolitan State University Community Garden](image-url)
key resources that are central the health and development of the community itself (White, Alcock, Wheeler, & Depledge, 2013). The purpose of this article is to identify how the development of environmentally sustainable community gardens can help provide essential healthy foods to low income and marginalized populations within the community and serve as vital resources to promote psychological wellness and connectedness to community members.

**Sustainable “Green Space” Environments: A Collaborative Approach to Healthier Foods**

More recently, sustainable community (i.e., “green space”) gardens have gained increased attention and popularity in communities in that they provide unique opportunities for individuals to work in an outdoor environment that promotes health, resilience, and empowerment with other community members (Moskell & Allred, 2013). The behavioral settings in community gardens are ideal in promoting individuals from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to not only share horticultural practices to ensure robust yields of healthy foods, but they can also provide numerous psychosocial benefits for members from different cultures to communicate and bond among one another which ultimately increases a stronger sense of community connectedness and identity (Home, Hunziker, & Bauer, 2012). Similarly, communities that provide members with access to specific types environments (i.e., “green space” environments, community gardens and urban forestry stewardship programs) can have a significant and positive impact on both mental and physical health among community members (de Vries, Verheij, Groenewegen, & Spreeuwenberg, 2003; White, Alcock, Wheeler, & Depledge, 2013).

**Community Gardens Providing Food for Underserved Communities**

Unfortunately, the current rate of individuals living within the United States who suffer from both food insecurity and related issues (i.e., homelessness) is increasing at an alarming rate. Food insecurity is currently defined by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture as “a lack of consistent access to enough food to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle” (USDA, 2015). In 2012, for example, more than 8,500 low income families utilized a Minnesota-based food bank, which was an increase of 59% from the 2007 when the economic recession began. Additionally, between 2000 and 2012 visits to food banks increased in Minnesota over 166%, with over 3 million visits to different distribution centers providing food to low income and marginalized community members (Hunger Solutions, 2013). Providing community residents with increased opportunities to participate in natural environment (i.e., green space) activities can help improve overall physical health through reduced obesity and problems that are associated with obesity, such as diabetes (Dept. of Health, 2004) and also significantly reduce stress levels that are commonly associated with urban living (Urich, Simons, Losito, Miles, & Zelson, 1991). Additionally, community gardening programs have recently been identified as a healthy and inclusive process that helps improve individual wellness and resilience (Okvat & Zautra, 2011).

Low-income and other historically marginalized communities can benefit significantly from healthy food access provided through green space initiatives, such as community gardens. Food insecurity for Americans is a prevalent issue; however, food insecurity among low-income and racial minorities in U.S. households have been reported to be above the national average (11.8 %), with rates as high as 30.8 % (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2017). A lack of access to supermarkets among low-income and segregated communities, potentially limiting the availability of healthy food options for consumption (Bower, Roland, Thorpe, Rohdead, & Gaskinac, 2014), further exacerbates the food crisis among these communities. In comparison, high levels of neighborhood poverty have been associated with greater availability of grocery and convenience stores in relation to supermarkets, potentially increasing access to unhealthy food options (Bower
et al., 2014). Additionally, impoverished areas have been reported to have higher availability of fast-food establishments, further contributing to the access of unhealthy foods (James, Arcaya, Parker, Tucker-Seeley, & Subramanian, 2014).

Food insecurity can exacerbate unhealthy dietary patterns which may contribute to chronic illness among affected populations (as cited in Seligman, Laraia, & Kushel, 2010). Accordingly, chronic, diet-related health disparities may manifest within low-income and marginalized communities at disproportionately higher rates given their more prevalent access to unhealthy food options; therefore, access to healthy food options may help alleviate some of the chronic health disparities prevalent among low-income and minority populations. Community gardens are well positioned to provide opportunities for these marginalized communities to gain access to high quality, healthy foods, contributing to potential dietary changes and increased overall health.

Since 2011, students, community members and faculty from Inver Hills Community College and Metropolitan State University have participated in a joint community garden partnership and fruit tree orchard. The garden and orchard were designed with community involvement to help meet the growing needs of providing healthy foods to low income families in the Twin Cities region.

Since 2011 over 10,500 lbs. of fresh vegetables and fruits have been donated to local food banks and distribution centers. The Inver Hills – Metropolitan State University Community Garden also provides community members opportunities to become active participants in growing their own foods and provides participants with tools (shovels, rototillers), irrigation systems, seeds and instruction from Master Gardeners to ensure a successful harvest. Participating in a variety of community development programs such as environmentally sustainable healthy foods programs can help teach community residents basic skills that lead to empowerment, resilience and helps to fulfill our diverse roles and responsibilities as community psychologists.

References
Hunger Solutions, 2013. [link]


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Pathways to Decolonizing the Sex Industries

Written by Christa M. Sacco, Pacifica Graduate Institute

These reflections are based on my unique positionality and experiences as a former sex worker, and the time I have spent researching through embodied shared praxis with different communities of people with experiences in the sex industries in the Los Angeles area. It is not meant to be the final word on the topic of decoloniality but with people in the sex industries but rather the beginning of a different type of conversation around the sex industries, sex work, and human trafficking. It is a hope that the conversation evolves into one that questions and re-works commonly held terms, narratives and beliefs around prostitution, sex work, human trafficking, and marginalized sexual identities.

Researcher Positionality

I identify as a Black woman living in the US, as a person with lived experience in the sex industries, a survivor, a person with lived experience of a mental health challenge, a peer advocate, a writer,
a researcher, a liberation psychologist, and a community practitioner.

**Definition of Terms**

**Sex work.** According to Akers & Evans (2010), “The general definition we use for sex work is the provision of sexual services or performances by one person (prostitute, escort, stripper: Sex Worker) for which a second person (client or observer) provides money or other markers of economic value” (p. 10). Sex workers are diverse people who could act as escorts, call girls, prostitutes, strippers, professional dominatrix and submissive, sex toy salesperson, adult film stars and producers, phone sex operators, webcam models, rentboys, sugarbabies, erotic massage artists, etc. The culture of the streets here in Los Angeles does not commonly use the term sex worker and many ‘workers’ who come from this culture do not identify as sex workers but may feel more comfortable referring to themselves as hoes or not putting a label on it. I did not find the term sex worker until after I was out of the game. So, there is still social distance from the term sex work amongst people who society has labeled sex workers, thinking they are progressive in doing so. Not everyone who performs erotic labor wants to identify as a sex worker and there are many other identities available, but this discourse at least provides one option to broadly organize with others based on their experiences in the sex industries.

**Sex trafficking.** The exploitation of someone by means of force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of a commercial sex act (Trafficking Victims Protection Act, 2000). While this can take many forms, such as forced marriages, illegal commercial front brothels, and violent torture and captivity, in the US popular media, the domestic sex trafficking survivor is pretty much synonymous with pimped street prostitution.

**Epistemologies of the Global South.** Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016) defined epistemologies of the South as ways of knowing that come from the perspectives of people who have “systematically suffered the injustices, dominations and oppressions caused by colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy,” (p. 18). He continued, “a crucial epistemological transformation is required in order to reinvent social emancipation on a global scale” (p. 18). Here de Sousa Santos distinguished that the concept of the Global South and epistemologies of the South extends beyond the geographic location of the south but is rather used as a metaphor to include marginalized, silenced and oppressed groups all over the globe. It is an anti-capitalist, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist South which seeks to rise up against systematic repression.

**Introduction**

I will not sit here and lie to you and say sex work and sex trafficking are two entirely separate phenomena and where there is sex work there is never force fraud and coercion, or conversely that where there is pimped prostitution it is always a grave violation of human rights. These are shades of gray and many people who have been in the industry for a long time have experienced a bit of both. There are terribly dehumanizing and deadly spheres of the sex industries that we currently think of as human sex trafficking that may be better defined as slavery and torture, as human trafficking is hardly severe enough to capture the dynamic that some women are subjected to when surviving capitalism in the Global South, for example. There are also spheres of sex work that are based on consent, mutuality, and pleasure. There are many shades in between. Force, fraud, and coercion can also occur in subtle ways and happen on a continuum between one extreme of consensual sex work chosen and defined by sex workers on their own terms and the other extremes of violence. Sometimes these two extremes of the spectrum can be co-mingled within the same location of work.

One of the challenges we face in going forward with psychologies of decoloniality with people in the sex industries is how do we as an extended community create more equity in terms of sex work options and real protection for sex worker lives to be lived. Another is how do we intervene to stop the violence of human trafficking criminalization and prostitution control policies from directly impacting
the survival of our most vulnerable community members, such as human trafficking and sexual exploitation survivors and Black, Indigenous, trans and migrant people. The final one I will mention here, and possibly most crucial, is how do we build safe enough spaces and strong enough relationships to collaborate across the lines of different social markers that separate us.

**Sex Work as Resistance**

While prostitution is part of a legacy of imperial racist domination, it is also simultaneously a site of resistance in which people can perform narratives and nurture relationships and networks (see Cabezas, 2009) that sharply contradict the socially-induced expectation of sexual and economic subordination. Sex workers are in a key social location to create a contestation to the military-masculine paradigm, to create a new psyche around sexuality and economies of sex and desire, in order to change the role of these structures into one that challenges rather than supports neoliberal drives towards world domination.

For many of the people I am in community with, sex worker identity is more than an economic choice, it is the fight to be exactly who you say you are and not let anyone else define you. It is hard to find people in outside life that can understand your work and calling. Claiming sex worker identity is a way of resisting the label of sexual outlaw or victim. I encountered groups of people that are engaged in this fight for self-determination in different ways with diverse identities and positions. The resistance to the hegemonic influence of anti-prostitution laws grows stronger as people with experience in the sex industries continue to find ways to come together and share space. In their continued existence and continued ways of defying labels through the unique intersection of sex work identities with racial, gender, and sexual orientation identities, in the politics of representation and the continuous negotiation of being and becoming who you say you are, the struggle for sex worker survival is a struggle of resistance to the objectifying gaze of cultural imperialist groups that continue to support the policing, regulation, and abolition of sex work. When faced with the imperfect and damaged opportunities left to them by coloniality, people in the sex industries continue to fight for their right to exist under legal and economic contexts of impending doom.

Speaking up as a sex worker is similar to speaking up as a survivor, it comes from the decision to represent and is part of the struggle for survival, to hear others talking about where you have been and need to speak your truth in response to that. The two narratives being told about people in the sex industries, either the empowerment narrative or the flat one-dimensional victimization narrative are both imposed by and dominated by White women and people who generally have more privilege in the discourse and access to education. The narratives of cisgender White women have been privileged over the voices of the majority of people who actually live or work in the sex industries who are queer people, trans people, people of color, youth, people of the Global South, and migrants and other groups that are variably oppressed by the institution of prostitution and the current manifestation of White heterosexual male dominated systems of sex work.

The construction of sex work as a site of empowerment silences sex work as a site of systems of oppression and simultaneously a site of resistance to those systems that oppress. Painting it with an empowerment lens actually works against sex workers articulating how they are impacted by and resist oppression by the colonial power structure, by implying that empowerment is already available for all within the current contexts of capitalism, racism, gender policing/enforcement, and some of the most violent forms of patriarchy, homophobia, and sexism.

Coming out to the public and speaking about prostitution policies based on our life experiences is a major power move for sex workers and survivors alike to speak to systemic injustices and fight stigmatizing labels. However, it is also a risk that requires the safe enough spaces that make it possible for someone to speak out about their life experiences. But it is not my goal to burden everyone in the sex industries with also having to
come out and speak about their lives in order to fight racialized and gender-motivated systemic violence. Instead of neo-colonial rescue missions and empowerment summits, we need to ground our platforms for advocacy in genuinely supportive relationships with people in the sex industries; not to empower ourselves to rescue, to build a movement or to draw conclusions, but to accompany them as they address in their own ways the systems that have silenced, marginalized, and dehumanized them. We can do this by privileging their own authentic strategies and insights and allowing those to come forward and be deeply heard. By continuing to create collaborative spaces of self-care and healing for the people involved without placing claims on their story, such as survivorship, trauma, resistance, agency, or empowerment.

**Sex Work and Decoloniality**

Today’s prostitution abolition movement not only robs people in the sex industries of their organic ways of expression, forcing them to use the colonizer’s own ways of knowing and expressing to talk about their experiences; but with stricter and stricter laws being passed against sex work or prostitution affiliations, this abolitionism is coming to be recognized as an all-out attack on the very survival of sex workers that nurtures rather than abates contexts of violence. The cultural imperialism in the current discourse about human trafficking victims, or conversely the discourse about self-empowered activist sex workers, robs people in the sex industries of imagination and epistemologies from the south in claiming their identities.

Epistemologies of the south as they apply to sex worker organizing starts with creating space for diverse and marginalized groups of people with experience in the sex industries to be brought to the forefront in imagining the alternatives to our current systems of sex work. Knowledge about the liberation of sex workers must come from the people who are engaged in a fight for their right to exist in their full sexuality and not from the various groups that seek to impose their knowledge on them. We have started in our various organizing processes here in LA to create new ways of knowing about and defining the sex industries that honors this diversity and limits the influence of colonial thinking by encouraging the cross-cultural exchange of ideas and the collective and intersubjective process of knowledge creation about the sex industries. Hopefully, this will grow into a true path for finding together new images and a new imaginary to story our existence that do not depend on racially constructed labels and categories of otherness. There is more rationality in the polyvocal decolonial processes of co-creation of image, art, identity, testimony, embodiment, connection, and vocation.

The liberation of people with experiences in the sex industries implies the freedom of all to choose and create their identities, relations, cultural orientations, and systems of organization, in part through the intersubjective creation of new knowledge that is not attached to the coloniality of power. This creation or expansion of choice lies in a decentralizing of knowledge and power away from the typical centers of cultural production. Indeed, it has become a survival strategy of oppressed peoples to hide one’s true identity and ways of organization. It may be safer for many people with experience in the sex industries to reside in the margins and better for organizers not to impose more order and control from above, to try to pull more people into the center, as is the current way of operating with human trafficking organizations or empowered mainstream sex worker organizations (I won’t name any names); not to rely on those who benefit from the centralized racist power structure to intervene to change it, but to cultivate authentic social power from the margins by accompanying people where they are and mobilizing alternative and informal networks towards those whose choices are most contested and defiled.

Decoloniality is a way of taking back being for people who have been denied their being-ness (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). This can be seen as a redefining being from the positionality of the counter-voice to hegemony, sexism, racism, and...
patriarchy. Decoloniality for the sex industries then might begin with continuing to shift how ‘sex workers’ define themselves, how they perform their identities within the margins of colonial gender expressions and sexuality. Driving a wedge into the world of colonial thinking by continuing to make a home in the in-between places, by carving out spaces between the binarized worlds of those that hold power and their victim-defendants, by continuing to speak as a being with agency who refuses to be placed in a silenced category.

It is not surprising to me that many of the wealthy educated sex workers that I have encountered, who live at the top of the food chain and who benefit from capitalism and White supremacy, are deeply afraid of decolonizing the sex industries. People in general are afraid of conversations about decoloniality because they are afraid that they will make a wrong step and end up the accused, but it doesn’t have to be like that. It is also difficult, even for me, let alone street workers who are still in the game or migrant workers fighting deportation orders, to have the mental space, emotional resources, capacity, etc. to imagine that things could be truly different. Maldonado Torres (2016) reminds us that we cannot win victories for decoloniality solely on the basis of individual objectivity. The work of decolonial scholars points to the need to go to a different level for our solutions. It is the level of the collective, the live-able, the imaginal, the ensouled, the performative, the embodied, the psycho-spiritual, and the supernatural.

No one really has time to become a superhero, but that is what we must do in entering this new age, we must usher in the fifth dimension and become loving superheroes together. Capitalism does not allow time for healing, but rather demands that we keep up with the whims of the market. So, while surviving the genocide of capitalism by finding sources of income, we must also heal from soul crushing trauma and life-threatening mental and emotional pain, with new traumas and triggers compounding in this constant state of war. All of this we must do while resisting coloniality and finding new ways to re-imagine and re-invent ourselves towards decoloniality in an environment that is constantly seeking to obliterate us and the mark we have left on the world by absorbing and marketing our struggles and finding ways to profit from them while simultaneously neglecting and threatening our most basic human needs. So where do we start?

One antidote is the process I have found in the healing circles of Dr. Beth Ribet. She not only identifies as a survivor, she is also a doctor in sociology and a graduate of the UCLA School of Law Critical Race Studies Program. She is also a personal superhero of mine and founder of the organization Repair (Repairforjustice.org). She facilitates our peer support healing circle of trauma survivors and teaches us and her broader community at UCLA about what it takes to heal from complex trauma and survive capitalism/White supremacy at the same time. Her ideas are definitely influential in how I hold the topic of sex work. Furthermore, the healing circle is a technology that makes a real difference in the lives of those involved, that has been for me a true lifeline for mental health and continued survival. It can be replicated with a solid commitment and minimal resources in many communities independently of the medical system. It is trauma-informed, culturally humble, horizontal, inventive, imaginative, discursive, and fluid.

It started out with informal meetings at a café in Koreatown, then it evolved into a monthly meeting at one of the members’ homes for (vegan) chocolate fondu and a sharing circle. Since then, we have expanded into many activities, from smashing and burning things in shared ritual to creating artwork and sharing giggles over extremely low bar new year’s resolutions. But the core of the work from which everything else has unfolded has been creating safe enough spaces for witnessing and deep healing connections to happen and grow, while also being able to identify, discuss, and mitigate the impact of the various systems that contribute to differentially harm us and deny our existence. This brings me to a place of a bit more mental distance from strategically organizing for the cause of sex work decriminalization and writing
letters to the government (and Dr. Ribet does not use the term sex work she finds it offensive), but it creates expansive alternative possibilities of the types of relationships and communities that it is possible to grow when people with experience in the sex industries are able to create shared contexts that move beyond the various colonial labels that currently divide us.

References

SCRA Announcements

2019 SCRA Awards Announced

Distinguished Contributions to Theory and Research in Community Psychology Award:

Dr. Thomasina Borkman

Dr. Thomasina Borkman has made substantial contributions to community psychology theory and research on self-help/mutual aid groups and voluntary community-based organizations. For over four decades, she has conducted innovative survey based, ethnographic, and participatory action research into the processes and understandings of self-help and mutual support groups. Dr. Borkman’s research, leadership, and policy work helped the field of self-help move forward nationally and internationally and has contributed to research and knowledge in the fields of community psychology, sociology, policy studies, and voluntary action. She introduced the important concept of experiential knowledge as an overlooked but critically important form of knowledge possessed by non-academics and non-professionals, which values the lived experiences and knowledge of community members. Through her research and policy work, Dr. Borkman has advocated for using the language, perspectives, and voices of community members within community organizations to more fully understand the roles, processes, and strengths of mutual support groups and other community-based organizations.
Distinguished Contributions to Practice in Community Psychology Award:

Dennis Mohatt

Dennis Mohatt has made substantial contributions to community psychology practice. He has served in numerous community mental health leadership, advocacy, advisory, and activist roles, at the community, state, and federal levels. Mr. Mohatt’s work has had a meaningful impact on a national scope, and these roles have included serving as a member of the National Advisory Committee on Rural Health, Deputy Director for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and, currently, Vice President for Behavioral Health for the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Mental Health Program. His work has addressed rural mental health and facilitating the creation of rural mental health services, advocating for the needs of rural communities, and developing administrative and service strategies in various organizations. Additionally, Mr. Mohatt has contributed to the field through his research and scholarship that on developing collaborative community-based solutions and community-centered preventive strategies to address the needs of many community groups, including veterans, college students, rural youth, and behavioral health care providers. His work in consultation and social policy has made significant meaningful impacts on a broad geographical scope to assist others in developing innovative service models and implement creative workforce development programs. Mr. Mohatt’s work exemplifies the integration of community psychology principles and values into community practice.

Early Career Award:

Dr. Kyrah K. Brown

Dr. Kyrah K. Brown is an assistant professor, Department of Kinesiology (Public Health), College of Nursing and Health Innovation, at the University of Texas at Arlington. Dr. Brown is described by her recommenders as a “born community psychologist” who has been involved with SCRA as an undergraduate, served in an exemplary manner as co-chair of the Community Psychology Practice Council, and whose work has focused on improving the wellbeing of minority youth and families through program development and evaluation. Even at this early career stage, Dr. Brown has shown advanced consultation and program evaluation skills. Her most recent scholarly accomplishment is co-editing New Directions in Evaluation: Evaluating Community Coalitions and Collaborations. Dr. Brown is dedicated to career contributions to community psychology and SCRA.

Best Dissertation in a Topic Relevant to Community Psychology Award:

Dr. Amie Thurber

Dr. Amie Thurber received her degree from Vanderbilt University in 2018; Sarah Safransky served as Chair of her dissertation committee. In her dissertation, “The Neighborhood Story Project: Keeping More Than Our Homes”, Dr. Thurber examined individuals’ sense of place, belonging, and history as consequences of the gentrification of neighborhoods in addition to other, expected material losses, such as affordable housing. She conducted a multi-phase participatory action research intervention to engage residents in
studying and taking leadership positions in their neighborhoods. Her methodologically-appropriate project is effectively grounded in community psychology theories related to place attachments, social ties, and civic action. Dr. Thurber provides a guide for creating learning, caring, and empowering environments, and offers a replicable practice model which can facilitate collective action in neighborhoods becoming gentrified. Dr. Thurber’s dissertation clearly meets the criteria for the Community Psychology Dissertation Award.

Emory L. Cowen Award for the Promotion of Wellness:
Dr. Erin Rose Ellison

Dr. Erin Rose Ellison received her degree from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 2017; Regina Day Langhout served as her chair. In her dissertation, “Collaborative Competence and Relational Praxis Among Community Organizers: The Reproduction of, and Resistance to, Systems of Oppression”, Dr. Ellison examined relational empowerment processes collaborative competence among union organizers using mixed-method, multi-level social network analysis and qualitative analyses. She focused on the functioning of the organizing group in addressing oppression and the building of power via social support and group cohesion to make socially just change. Necessary to this process is that organizing participants must recognize the persistence of racism, classism, and sexism, and that those who reproduce oppression must acknowledge their own oppressive behaviors. Such relational work by individuals and groups can improve resolution of injustices and enable working together in empowering ways. Dr. Ellison’s dissertation clearly meets the criteria for the Emory L. Cowen Dissertation Award.

Ethnic Minority Mentorship Award:
Dr. Ciann Larose Wilson

Dr. Ciann L. Wilson is an assistant professor in the department of psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University. She has supervised numerous graduate students of color and students with intersecting identities. Dr. Wilson is affiliated with and supports the Equity & Access Research Interest Group, which focuses on utilizing community-based research approaches to improve the health, well-being, and social service access of racialized and marginalized communities. In addition to her mentoring, advising, and teaching commitments, she also engages students in opportunities for critical scholarship and community-engaged research centered on elevating the stories and realities of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color and LGBTQ communities. Additionally, Dr. Wilson is a member of the Diversity and Equity Committee, which seeks to bring more ethnic minority faculty members to the Community Psychology program and the University. As a fervent proponent of proportional representation, Dr. Wilson understands the connection between student success and having professors that represent student communities – professors who understand the lived experiences of what it takes for ethnic minority students to attain university degrees. Lastly, Dr. Wilson’s long trajectory of scholarly work centered on health promotion, HIV treatment and prevention, and well-being also demonstrates her commitment to social justice.
Seymour B. Sarason Award for Community Research and Action:

Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky

Dr. Isaac Prilleltensky, through his career, has contributed substantially to the field of community psychology in innovative ways that are consistent with the traditions pioneered by Seymour Sarason. His work has contributed to a vision of community psychology where values are a central framework for action, knowledge is drawn from multiple disciplines, and critical perspectives, power, and privilege considerations are integrated into theory, research, and practice. Dr. Prilleltensky’s leadership and dedication to overcoming injustice and to work for meaningful social change and social action in communities has been inspirational and influential to theorists, researchers, students, practitioners in the field, as well as influencing policy makers, community members, and community leaders. His critiques of the psychology field as a whole, challenges to individually–based notions of wellness, development of a values-based frameworks for the field, and contributions to understandings of oppression, conscientization, empowerment, liberation, social justice, critical psychology, and the need to put theory in action, or praxis, have been major theoretical contributions to psychology. Finally, Dr. Prilleltensky has exemplified the idea of the researcher/activist and has consistently translated theory and research into action through numerous community–based interventions to promote wellness, empowerment, liberation, inclusion, and a sense of belonging in the US and in Canada.

Special Contributions to Public Policy Award:
National Prevention Science Coalition (NPSC)

It is with great pleasure that the Public Policy Awards Committee recommends the National Prevention Science Coalition (NPSC) for the 2019 Special Contributions to Public Policy Award. The NPSC collaborates with diverse organizations, experts, and community stakeholders to support the development of policies that promote prevention to address diverse challenges affecting the healthy development of individuals, families, and communities. Within the last several years, the NPSC has hosted 18 congressional briefings and has published numerous articles, op-ed pieces, and policy statements that have been identified as instrumental in addressing serious community problems, including drug (i.e., opioid) crises, child maltreatment, and human trafficking. The NPSC has made significant accomplishments in addressing transdisciplinary research towards reducing social ills and increasing general public awareness of the importance of community resilience. Through this award, we celebrate the action-oriented, collaborative approach of NPSC as a model for Community Psychologists engaged in public policy.
Special Contributions to Community Psychology Award:

**Dr. Regina Langhout**

Dr. Regina Langhout was given this award for her courageous leadership and exemplary action on behalf of individuals, families, and communities at risk of deportation and family separation, and her actions have had local and national impacts. She took a leadership role in drafting and disseminating a policy brief on this issue which was published on SCRA’s webpages. Dr. Langhout worked with her university to issue a press release locally and nationally. The policy brief was published in the American Journal of Community Psychology via open access. She was interviewed on deportation and forced family separation issues by National Public Radio’s (NPR) affiliate KAZU and state-wide NPR affiliates, and she authored a newspaper Op-Ed (opinion editorial) focusing on how communities could support immigrants lacking authorization. Dr. Langhout and the policy brief committee members also facilitated dissemination to local immigration attorneys, various bar associations, city council members, immigrant rights advocacy groups, researcher and practitioner list serves, social media networks and universities, and the American Psychological Association social media.

SCRA Outstanding Educator Award:

**Dr. James Cook**

Dr. James Cook was selected for the SCRA Outstanding Educator Award. The awards committee was impressed with his long-standing and far-reaching contributions to community psychology and community research and action through education. These included scholarly contributions to understanding building campus community partnerships, teaching a variety of community psychology related courses at the graduate and undergraduate level, and development of the winner of the 2013 SCRA outstanding program award – UNC-Charlotte. Students’ comments on Dr. Cook’s courses reflect powerful experiences that put them on a path of success, collaboration, and working for social change. Particularly noteworthy is the impact he has had on students that have gone on to practice community psychology in a range of settings. Letters of support also spoke to the “learning-while-doing” approach of Dr. Cook, and particularly his long history of facilitating class projects that benefit both students and community partners in meaningful ways. For these reasons and based on criteria for evaluation that reflect the nature and purpose of the accolade, we selected Dr. Cook as the 2019 recipient of the Outstanding Educator Award.
The Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice is this year’s winner of the Don Klein Publication Award to Advance Community Psychology Practice. The Global Journal highlights the work of practitioners and provides a publication outlet for practitioners, encouraging diverse viewpoints, focusing on a lively exchange of information, and creating collaborations. The Global Journal was started in 2010 and has published continuously since that time. Its reach is substantial; it has over 1,000 subscribers and more than 1,500 followers on various social media platforms. Although 52% of subscribers are from North American, other subscribers live and work throughout the world, including Asia Pacific, Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Central/South America. It truly has a global reach and embodies the values of SCRA and community psychology.

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/

TCP Submission Guidelines

Articles, columns, features, Letters to the Editor, and announcements should be submitted as Word attachments in an e-mail message to Susan Wolfe and Dominique Thomas at TCP@scra27.org Authors should adhere to the following guidelines when submitting materials:

- Length: Five pages, double-spaced
- Images: Images are highly recommended, but please limit to two images per article.
- Images should be higher than 300 dpi. Photo image files straight from the camera are acceptable. 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
- Alignment: All text should be aligned to the left (including titles).
- Punctuation Spacing: Per APA guidelines, make sure that there is only one space after periods, question marks, etc.
- Graphs & Tables: These should be in separate Word documents (one for each table/graph if multiple). Convert all text in the graph into the consistent font and font size.
- Footnotes: Footnotes should be placed at the end of the article as regular text (do not use Word footnote function).
- References: Follow APA guidelines. These should also be justified to the left with a hanging indent of .25".
- Headers/Footers: Do not use headers and footers.