

International Community Psychology: Community approaches to contemporary social problems. Volume I. Foreword

Almeida Acosta, Eduardo

2011

<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11777/1651>

<http://repositorio.iberopuebla.mx/licencia.pdf>

International Community

Psychology:

**Community Approaches to Contemporary
Social Problems. Volume I.**

Psicología Comunitaria

Internacional:

**Aproximaciones Comunitarias a los Problemas
Sociales Contemporáneos. Volumen I.**

Editor

F. H. Eduardo Almeida Acosta

Co-Editors

Guillermo Hinojosa Rivero
Oscar Soto Badillo
Gonzalo Inguanzo Arteaga
María Eugenia Sánchez y Díaz de Rivera
Covadonga Cuétara Priede

UNIVERSIDAD IBEROAMERICANA PUEBLA

Puebla, México. 2011

FOREWORD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The aforementioned issues are undoubtedly the main psychosocial concerns of the recent historical decades. This picture give the rationale behind the main theme for the Third

Conference: Community Approaches to Contemporary Social Problems. The focus was on Economic polarization, Interculturality, New Technologies, and Violence. The Conference was designed for contributing to the study of such topics. In this first volume of the Proceedings the reader will find the texts of the 16 invited collaborators. The same topics certainly will be studied in the articles chosen for the second volume.

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

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

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

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

International Conference on Community Psychology was designed to build knowledge on the way diverse community structures and experiences approach and confront the four main concerns of our times.

Four sets of main issues.

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

a) Critical Vision of Community Psychology

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

- In “From Complexity and Social Justice to Consciousness: Ideas that Have Constructed Community Psychology” Maritza Montero attempts to build a theoretical system through the analysis of ideas that have contributed to conform community psychology as a way to study and offer solutions to social problems affecting communities, to achieve a better world. This text of the Inaugural Conference is an invitation to join the author in the unending and neglected effort to give better and richer theoretical foundations to our emergent science.

- María de Fátima Quintal de Freitas develops a model of analysis in “Community Psychology as Political Education and Awareness-raising: Resistances and possibilities in Everyday Life”. The purpose is to offer an approach that makes possible its liberation paradigm. Engaged participation in social transformation and raised awareness sometimes are taken for granted in community programs without taking into account the challenges and dilemmas encountered in the present contexts of globalization and exclusion. How to guarantee a way of social change strengthening the small networks of solidarity? How to involve? How to keep involved?

- “Thinking Critically the Theory and Practice of Community Psychology”, this article by Esther Wiesenfeld presents a demanding agenda for the years ahead. Community Social Psychology in Latin America can be viewed as a psychological discipline with an autonomous development in the region. It includes academic and field programs, multiple areas of application, processes, scopes of action, populations, activities. The discipline has been growing steadily. However, many questions have to be raised, in terms of initial values and expectations, its adaptation to society’s rapid changes, theoretical and methodological usefulness, new dilemmas and challenges, community myths, university training, relevance in the struggle to confront poverty.

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

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

In the Inaugural Address Maritza Montero develops the key idea of Relatedness from which derives the notions of sense of community and of community identity. Fatima Quintal de Freitas contributes to this position when she relates social change with individual involvement by creating small networks of solidarity. Esther Wiesenfeld manifests in her paper her concern about the inadequacy of community psychology as it is understood and

practiced in relation to our societies rapid changes in a *weltanschauung* dominated by individualistic trends. Wolfgang Stark suggests the need of Community Psychology to develop its identity as a linking science by focusing on community as a catalyst of macro and micro social issues.

b) Health as a community challenge

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

- In “Well-Being Services for People with Long Term Neurological Conditions: Co-Researchers Involvement in Research, Service Design and Development” Judith Sixsmith affirms that community health services can enhance the well-being of people rather than simply reveal or address their health and social care needs. This chapter outlines the involvement strategies in services provided for people with Long Term Neurological Conditions refocusing service provider perceptions away from seeing this people as needy, or as problems to be solved and more towards people whose well-being can be improved with the support of professionals. The study includes co-researchers training. It presents reflections on the process of involvement in service design and delivery.

- An enormous challenge for families and communities health and well being come from the millions of people whose lives are adversely affected by alcohol or drug addiction. Having to cope with it can make it a highly stressful experience. In “Re-Empowering Family Members Disempowered by Addictions: Support for Individuals or Collective Action?” Jim Orford presents a program of research that has explored in detail the nature of affected family members experiences and develops a method for helping affected family members in their own right. The research carried out in four countries has suggested the existence of a common core of disempowered experience with some cross-cultural variations. The supporting method emphasizes listening carefully to families’ stories, providing relevant information, discussing coping dilemmas and building social support.

- Guillermina Natera has experienced that it is extremely difficult to modify patterns of consumption of alcohol in indigenous families and communities. However, these families suffer from poverty and from the consequences of the alcohol abuse of a relative, and usually they do not receive assistance. “The Mental Itineraries of the Everyday Lives of Indigenous woman Linked to their Partners Excessive Alcohol Consumption” describes a research project that studied women’s forms of suffering from this problem in a patriarchal world. It is difficult for them to tell others about their partner’s problem. A brief intervention model was adapted to help families. Listening respectfully to the emotional malaise of the women enabled the researchers to discover their mental itineraries and to devise new coping strategies which led to a significant reduction of depressive, health and psychological symptoms.

- Homelessness is a major social public health problem affecting people all over the world. It affects also developed countries. It is defined as a living situation in which individuals and families are lacking permanent housing as a result of poverty and inadequate supports. In “Conducting Research on Homelessness in Canada from a Community Psychology Perspective: Reflections on Lessons Learned” Tim Aubry refers to two projects of research on homelessness within a

community psychology perspective that were conducted in Ottawa: A longitudinal study that followed a group of people who started out homeless for a period of two years; and a project for the development and dissemination of report cards on homelessness. Some lessons learned were the need to expand research and advocacy efforts on homelessness, the need to develop them in collaboration with the community, the need to make a significant investment in dissemination of research findings.

These four presentations offer new insights in dealing with community health problems. One important aim of community health psychology is to look for the well-being of people, beyond their problems. Health hurdles affect not only individuals but also and significantly the lives of the collectives in which they live. Patriarchal obstacles and other cultural limitations can be overcome developing community innovative strategies. Social public health problems are global in nature, research efforts about them must become important objects of public policies.

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

c) Violence, attempts upon community life.

This section includes papers from a Symposium and a Keynote Invited Address intended to catalyze critical Conference debate in relation to violence. The question was how should violence be understood from a Community Psychology standpoint and how can that

understanding be progressively deployed. The next four articles will talk, from the differing standpoints of the authors, about their violence-related work: Socio-structural, political, xenophobic and racial violence.

- In “The War Without Bullets: Socio-structural Violence from a Critical Standpoint” David Fryer, a community psychologist, and Cathy McCormack, a community activist, have worked in mutually supportive and stimulating ways to collaboratively understand and contest socio-structural violence. They focused critically on interconnections between poverty, inequality, unemployment and psycho-social destruction. The community activist characterized these interconnections as manifestations of “War Without Bullets” waged against oppressed people. She has promoted awareness. The community psychologist has tried to develop the notion of a “War Without Bullets” to give it theoretical discursive legitimacy. This chapter presents the discursive frame of reference. Long term collaboration between community activism and community psychology for effective thinking and action are discussed.
- Stella Sacipa Rodríguez is the author of “Building Cultures of Peace in the Community Life in the Face of Intensifying Political Violence in Colombia”. The purpose of the chapter is to think and build peace cultures by referring to the different challenges confronted by a country immersed in political violence, studying them through Community Psychology and Political Psychology. The author studies experiences from three sources: reports from religious organizations, research communications from the Colombian “Social Links and Peace Cultures Research Group”, and reports from researchers working in non-psychological disciplines studying violence problems. The author points out the fascination for violence in Colombia, the repressive actions conducted daily by the government, and the political system, as hurdles to achieve a culture of peace.
- Norman Duncan’s paper “Reaping the Whirlwind: Xenophobic Violence in South Africa” reports that this kind of violence did not disappear once the Apartheid was

over. The country was hit by waves of violent attacks against foreigners, mostly people of color and most of them poor. More than 70 people died and 120,000 were displaced. The intensity of, as well as the apparent motivation for this new violence came as a surprise to most. This chapter examines the causes of this violence. The paper explores potential contributions of community psychology in addressing xenophobic violence.

- Christopher Sonn explores the challenges, tensions and possibilities for pedagogy and community research in contexts where relations are characterized by dynamics of dominance and subjugation in Australia. In “Research and Practice in the Contact Zone: Crafting Resources for Challenging Racialized Exclusion” the author draws on three areas of research and practice where he has been involved in examining responses to intergroup relations with a focus on identity construction. The author has ventured far beyond the borders of Community Psychology to identify ways that maintain racialized oppression. Some conceptual and methodological resources are discussed that have been helpful in making visible symbolic ways that keep intergroup relations characterized by race related privilege and power.

Regarding the many faces of violence manifested in recent decades, the four papers of the third section make it clear that they are usefully envisioned and confronted by focusing them from a community perspective. The “War Without Bullets” i.e. the socio-structural violence endured by the majority of people in the world can be fought according to David Fryer and Cathy McCormack through popular education and academic support at the local community level. The political violence experimented in Colombia since the mid-fifties of the last century, and aggravated recently, has been studied and counteracted by local experiences originated in religious organizations and by interdisciplinary teams. Stella Sacipa reports her work as a community psychologist member of a research team targeting objectives of peace development at the community level. Political violence is structural and rests on individual leaders actions, but a community intervention approach has been shown as an effective strategy. Sometimes xenophobic violence seems to be averted when a whole

country has defeated a generalized discrimination reality such as the Apartheid. However, Norman Duncan's paper reveals that the problem cannot be solved, until the seeds of xenophobia are uprooted culturally at the local communities level. Christopher Sonn's Keynote Address make it explicit that racialized oppression and violence cannot be really confronted and overcome until symbolic collective ways of racialized intergroup relations are made visible.

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

d) Cultures and Communities

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

- Alicia Martínez Tena presents a multidisciplinary approach to understand the social and cultural factors linked to healthy and unhealthy situations and to describe the characteristics of the culture-health model of Primary Health Care developed in Cuba. Regional cultural differences are considered in trying to

visualize the way of life of the patient, his cultural practices and his links with the members of his family and with other social actors of his community. The article “Cultural Factors and Primary Health Care in Cuba. A vision from Community Practice” stresses the need to develop a cultural communication process including the practice of attentive listening, the recognition of particular cultural patterns of behavior, the negotiation of therapeutic recommendations.

- In “Community Psychology and Social Problems in Mexico” Eduardo Almeida affirms that indigenous cultures are the backbone of community life in Mexico. Years and centuries of intents to disappear the Mesoamerican ways of life from the Mexican population have failed. Community Psychology, as an emergent social science in Mexico, cannot be understood without this background. Psychoanalytic, Behavioral, Clinical, Social and Labor Psychology approaches have been implemented to study and intervene with Mexican populations as community experiences. The field in Mexico has been informally evolving through the practices and thinking of Mexican psychologists confronted by pressing social problems.
- The individualist culture that pervades the industrialized countries and that gradually becomes the pattern of life everywhere does not favor communitarian life. Sigmar Malvezzi stresses this point in “The Syntax of Present Day Society and the Building of Community Life”. People are learning to depend on gadgets rather than on other people. That culture gives value and makes people dependent on sensations. Another trait is the cult of the urgency, time and space are shrinking and people depend on the flow of conjunctures. These conditions nourish social sedentarization and individualization. However, communitarian life is the human condition. In it human beings find mutuality, affection and identity. In the war people face with their own conscience the most powerful weapon are reflexivity and affection, resources found in community life, not in gadgets.

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

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

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

The Pre-Conference Workshops

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Homages

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

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

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

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

Final Reflections

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

The realization of the Third International Conference in Puebla was a redoubtable challenge. But it has been a community achievement adventure. We hope that this First Volume of the Proceedings together with the Second, now in preparation in Puerto Rico, could give witness to the progressive advancement of the International Community Psychology as a worldwide service contributing to enhance and dignify the life of every human being.

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

Of everything three things remained:
The certainty that *we were* always starting again.
The certainty that *we had* to go on.
The certainty that *we will* be interrupted
before *we had* finished.

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

October 2011

Eduardo Almeida Acosta

Editor

References

- Montero, M. y Serrano-García, I. (comps.). (2011). Historias de la Psicología Comunitaria en América Latina. Participación y Transformación. Buenos Aires: Paidós. 447 pp.
- Reich, S. M., Riemer, M., Prilleltensky, I., Montero, M. (eds.). (2007). International Community Psychology: History and Theories. New York: Springer. 443 pp.

Vázquez Rivera, C., Pérez Jiménez, D., Figueroa Rodríguez, M., Pacheco Bou, W. y Resto-
Olivo, J. (eds.). (2009). Psicología Comunitaria Internacional: Agendas Compartidas
en la Diversidad. San Juan, Puerto Rico: Programa de Investigación y
Refortalecimiento Comunitario, Instituto FILIUS, Universidad de Puerto Rico. 591 pp.