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COMMENTARY

The global development of community psychology as reflected in the *American Journal of Community Psychology*

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Abstract

This commentary presents a virtual special issue on the global growth of community psychology (CP), particularly, but not exclusively, as reflected in the *American Journal of Community Psychology (AJCP)*. CP exists in at least 50 countries all over the world, in many of those for over 25 years. Yet, aside from several early Israeli articles, *AJCP* rarely published work from or about countries outside the US and Canada until the early 2000s, when the number of international articles began to rise sharply. The focus of CP developed differently in different continents. CP in Australia and New Zealand initially followed North America's emphasis on improving social service systems, but has since focused more on environmental and indigenous cultural and decolonial issues that are as salient in those countries as in North America, but have drawn much more attention. CP came later to most of Asia, where it also tended to follow the North American path, but starting in Japan, India, and Hong Kong and now in China and elsewhere, it is establishing its own way. The other two global hotspots for CP for over 40 years have been Europe and Latin America. The level and focus of CP in Europe varies in each country, with some focused on applied developmental psychology and/or community services and others advancing critical and liberation psychology. CP in Latin America evolved from social psychology, but like CP in Sub-Saharan Africa, is also more explicitly political due to a history of political oppression, social activism, and the limitations of individualistic psychology to focus on social change, overcoming poverty, and interventions by (not just for) community members. Despite those differences, CP literature over the past 23 years suggests an increasingly common interest in social justice, multinational collaborations, and decoloniality. There is still a need for more truly (bidirectional) cross-cultural, comparative work for mutual learning, sharing of ideas, methods, and intervention practices, and for CP to develop in countries and communities throughout the globe where it could have the greatest impact.

KEYWORDS

comparative analysis, epistemic justice, globalization, historical analysis, international community psychology, systematic review

Highlights

- Presents a special issue on global growth of international community psychology (CP) in relation to *American Journal of Community Psychology*.
- CP in Europe focused most on applied development, services, and critical and liberation psychology.

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- CP in Latin America, Africa, Oceania studied social justice, indigenous cultural, & decolonial issues.
- CP came later to Asia, starting in Japan, India, Hong Kong, & Thailand, now in China & Central Asia.
- CP needs more international cross-cultural, comparative work, & sharing of ideas, methods & practices.

INTRODUCTION

We proposed this virtual special issue (VSI) on the global development of community psychology as reflected in the *American Journal of Community Psychology* (*AJCP; Journal*) because, despite the rise in international articles in the *Journal*, we suspect many readers may be unaware of the wide variety of ideas, research, and interventions that have been developed, studied, and implemented throughout the world. We recognize that journals provide a partial and limited knowledge archive. Yet, it is important to the continued growth and vitality of our field that we recognize and understand the full diversity of knowledge that has originated from studying communities and interventions in as many different places, cultures, and systems as possible, especially (though not exclusively) by authors from those other countries.

The VSI was initially proposed by the first author who identified nine international community psychology (CP) articles as possible nominees for the VSI. He then invited five coauthors, each having authored an article cited in the VSI proposal and representing a different continent or region of the world, and all agreed to participate. We added one more coauthor to assist with the Latin America section. To help our team confirm the nominated articles and identify and consider additional articles for this VSI, the first author conducted a thorough search of *AJCP*'s first 50 years for articles both by authors based outside the United States and Canada and by North American authors about theory, research, and/or applications in other countries (we do include some international comparative work including Canada and the US otherwise our exclusion of Canada for purposes of this VSI is based on Canada's relatively strong presence in the *Journal*, the Society for Community Research and Action, and its Biennial Conference since their beginnings.) Our team discussed the VSI through e-mails and a live online discussion and eventually settled on 23 articles for the VSI (21 from *AJCP*, 2 from *Journal of Community Psychology* [*JCP*]), representing different regions and spread over five decades (see Appendix).

The search confirmed our sense that the *Journal* paid only very occasional attention to work outside North America until the early 2000s. Since then, the number of articles in the *Journal* about theory, research, and applications in other countries has risen considerably. This should not be interpreted to mean the field is new to all those other countries, however. CP emerged in different forms in Latin America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Indonesia, and Thailand in the 1970s, and was present in all continents, including Africa, by the 1980s (Reich et al., 2007). We assume, rather, the late arrival of a significant number of international articles appearing in *AJCP* was due mainly to fewer submissions from abroad in the early decades. Reasons for this may have included: (a) English as the only language of publication, which presented a barrier for many authors from non-English-speaking countries; (b) the *Journal* acting primarily as a forum for North American CP research due to its affiliation with the American Psychological Association's Division 27; and (c) possible bias among editors and reviewers favoring certain topics, North American or former British colonial settings and populations, and quantitative methods. Despite that slow start, there were some non-US articles in the early decades of *AJCP*, unevenly distributed geographically and increasing slightly in the 1990s and more markedly since 2000, with greater geospatial diversity (Ozgurer & Perkins, 2021). The purpose of this VSI is to shed light on the international growth and influence of *AJCP* itself by highlighting both some of the older international contributions that current readers may not know and some of the particularly important articles from outside the US in recent decades.

AJCP INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE OVERTIME BY CONTINENT

Africa and the Middle East

Fifty-four countries constitute the African continent. The Middle East consists of 17 countries, depending on whether North African countries are perceived to be part of the Middle East or not. This vast region is geospatially and politically diverse but shares histories of colonization, oppression, and displacement of peoples. In this context, numerous power relationships such as dominant language and academic dialect, research opportunities and funding to sustain transnational networks, and conference attendance in North American or European contexts, influence African contributions to Euro-American knowledge production. Further factors that may influence a lack of African knowledge production in

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AJCP are consistent efforts to build a strong African knowledge economy and infrastructure, including journals, on the African continent. In addition, some community psychologists work in public health, education, and allied fields where they publish in these disciplinary journals, given a shared focus on prevention (Reich et al., 2017).

A number of trends are clear. In the Middle East, Israel was first and one of the only countries represented in United States. CP journals, possibly because many of the early community psychologists, including many at the 1965 Swampscott Conference, were Jewish and may have had contact with Israeli psychologists, and many Israeli psychologists spent time at US universities, some returning to Israel. Shirom et al. (1981) examined Israel's rural *kibbutz* communities and their impact on residents' psychological and physical health. Through the 1990s, no African articles had yet appeared in *AJCP*, but four more Israeli articles were published, including Landau (1990) on social stress and psychopathology in that country, Gidron et al.'s (1991) cross-cultural comparison of self-help group participants and nonparticipants in Israel and the US, Sagy et al. (1996; see articles selected for the VSI, below), and Gilat et al.'s (1998) work on environmental stressors as revealed by hotline calls during war-time in Israel. In 2004, Khoury-Kassabri et al. (2004) examined community, family, and school factors in student victimization in Israel. The latest article from Israel focused on individual and community resilience factors among LGBTQ youth and adults (Shilo et al., 2015). Finally in 2020, authors from the US, Lebanon, and Sierra Leone reviewed the use of community-based participatory research for engaging Syrian refugees in Lebanon in equitable research-community partnerships (Afifi et al., 2020).

Throughout Africa, in spite of the geospatial and political expanse of this region, and the existence of established CP programs, there are few *AJCP* first-authored articles where the authors work at African universities. Most of the articles that do exist, emanate from South Africa. The next trend is more common. From the early 2000s until the present, there are numerous articles that reflect African based transnational work. Two author patterns are evident in these offerings. The first does comparative work between an African country and another one in collaborations between African and non-African authors. The first African article to appear in *AJCP* (Lykes et al., 2003) represents both patterns, discussing human rights and reconciliation in South Africa and Guatemala and the roles of community psychologists in these liberatory processes. Another example is Sigogo et al. (2004; see VSI-selected articles discussed below). The next pattern delineates work on projects by authors that are overwhelmingly based in Europe, USA, and China with the project work located in Africa. During the last two decades these projects have focused almost exclusively on HIV/AIDS and its psychosocial, cultural, and political impacts in sub-Saharan Africa (Cheng & Siankam, 2009; Cornish & Campbell, 2009; Williams, 2014). HIV/AIDS work has also included collaborations between African and international authors (Casale et al., 2015; Motamedi et al., 2021).

These patterns suggest that articles published in the *AJCP* about Africa are commonly produced by authors not living and working on the African content which has implications for knowledge production about African community psychologies in the *AJCP*. This is precisely the issue raised by Seedat and Lazarus (2011; see VSI articles, below). Suffla and Seedat (2015) expand the academic, political, and epistemic project to insert marginalized voices in mainstream academic spaces. They collate African and Arab writing in critical community psychologies from Ghana, South Africa, Egypt, and Palestine. They show how the personal is political and how context, identities, and positionalities frame the ways in which community psychologies are practiced and theorized. Malherbe et al. (2021) engage with an ongoing concern in CP: how the concept of community is understood. In an analysis of newspaper articles, they show how notions of community in South African CP are shaped and maintained by dominant power. The trajectory of African and Middle Eastern work reflects pluralities of community psychologies, with decolonial praxis as a strong contemporary feature of critical community psychologies in Africa and the Middle East.

Asia

Countries in Asia vary greatly in socioeconomic development, political infrastructure, and culture across a vast continent. The first *AJCP* article from Asia was a translation of a 1973 *Japanese Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* article by Sasaki and Jackson (1979; described in the VSI section, below). In 1989, *AJCP* published a collection of six articles generated from field experiences and community programs in Hong Kong (2), mainland China, Thailand, and India (2; see Omprakash [1989] described in VSI section, below). The section editor Murray Levine (1989) stated: "I came away with a distinct impression that our colleagues in Asia had much to offer us in describing their experiences in adapting community concepts in their own work, and in some of the innovations in practice they described" (p. 67). Just three Asian articles appeared in *AJCP* in the 1990s: two from Hong Kong and one comparing US and mainland Chinese samples. In addition to continuing efforts to study unique features of group and community in cultural and country contexts, there was growing interest in mental health and the role of stressors and protective buffers embedded in the larger societal environment (Cheng, 1997).

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Similar to most non-Western societies, CP did not grow in Asia's native cultures; the concept, its worldview, knowledge, and professional practice skills were, by and large, imported through modernization in the early days and globalization in recent decades. Due to different pace of socioeconomic growth, history of colonization, as well as academic and professional exchanges with the west, CP in certain societies, for instance Japan, developed much faster than others. We observe a growing visibility of research conducted in Asia published in *AJCP* in the 21st century. Experiences in countries including India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan were first presented to the larger English academic and professional audience. With the growing variety of topics, we note that research attention increasingly fell on community mechanisms and seeking community-based solutions to social issues. For instance, Schensul et al. (2009) explored community ways in India to engage residents and organizations for HIV prevention and intervention; Xu et al. (2010) work is part of this VSI (see below); and Brodsky et al. (2011) studied the individual and collective resilience process among community members, who shared organizational ties and the goal of empowering women in Afghanistan and Pakistan advocating for human rights.

In the last decade, the country list covered by *AJCP* continues to grow, for example South Korea and Azerbaijan. What has been significant during this time frame is the publication of a number of studies that are contributing to the global discourse of human rights, diversity, equity, power, and decolonization. LGBTQ populations who are less likely to be accepted in certain cultures, religions, and countries in Asia were studied (i.e., Chong, et al., 2015; Yip & Chan, 2021), reflecting the advancement made in such societies and growing research inclusiveness. During this time frame, India-based works (e.g., Dutta et al., 2022; Menon & Allen, 2021) particularly distinguished themselves by critically reflecting on the community fabrics shaped by colonization, and accumulating the community experiences of counterstorytelling and counternarrative as forms of epistemic justice to resist and decolonize conventional knowledge. These works demonstrate that CP research in Asian societies are not only descriptive and interpretive but also deconstructive and reconstructive, seeking to develop indigenized knowledge and practice skills.

There is a growing recognition of the importance of CP in Asia in addressing social issues and promoting social justice (including Chan et al., 2017 in the VSI—see below); community experiences and community-based practice in this region have also generated meaningful implications to American researchers and practitioners in various fields. However, community psychologists there face some key challenges: (1) addressing the diverse cultural and social contexts of the region: cultures and countries are not equally included in academic publications, and comparative research that would raise intercultural implications is rare; (2) addressing issues related to poverty, development, inequality, and socio-economic and political oppressions: few studies connect individual and community well-being to macro level factors and power dynamics; and (3) defining CP as a practice-oriented profession: there is a lack of adequate research attention on practice and community interventions, thus challenging the prevailing practice models in traditional psychology and models in the US or Western societies.

Europe

CP emerged as a discipline in Europe in the 1970s, although its early manifestation as a set of principles and values guiding research and practice can be traced back to the 1930s (Fryer, 2008). CP grew more in countries when and where progressive governments supported innovative policies. The earliest contributions appearing in *AJCP* were mostly focused on proximal contexts and interpersonal relationships, such as the influence of social integration, social support, and neighboring on individual well-being. In a cross-sectional study conducted in Germany Veiel et al. (1988) underlined the need to create supportive social relationships as part of therapeutic and preventive interventions for suicide attempters and psychiatric patients. In a similar vein, Schwarzer et al. (1994) analyzed the psychological readaptation process occurring after a stressful relocation in the context of the breakdown of the communist system in East Germany, showing the importance of establishing new supportive social relationships. Their research represents the only panel study started early enough to observe the dynamics of the macrosocial transformations in Germany. Another study, published in *AJCP* in the same period, reflected the strong emphasis on conceptualization and measurement of social integration and social support, by developing and validating a measure of neighboring in a time when robust psychometric tools were needed for research and intervention purposes (Skjaeveland et al., 1996). These studies contributed to the methodological and theoretical development of CP by creating or refining existing measures of social support and social integration, underlining the importance of the interaction between social contexts and individual processes in shaping individuals' well-being and adopting a preventive and health promotion approach.

A 2000 special issue on feminist CP marked a shift in European contributions to *AJCP* toward political dimensions of social phenomena, by focusing more and more on inequality, power, and social change. Mulvey et al. (2000) explored dynamics of social power by sharing stories of their community work in Scotland and New Zealand. In a similar vein, during the following years several European authors from different countries (Spain, Ireland, Norway) reflected on oppression and

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power dynamics to uncover processes that facilitate empowerment and liberation. The papers published in *AJCP* highlighted the need to foster understanding of the social world from a "situated perspective," avoiding a privileged position of knowledge (Montenegro, 2002; see VSI section, below), and to adopt models and interventions focused on the macro and structural levels of the ecological system (Moane, 2003). The role of macro-level supranational values in CP research and practice is underlined in a longitudinal analysis (1984−2005) of media language in Norway, showing how the global capitalist market ideology is increasingly influencing public discourse in the nation (Nafstad et al., 2009) and stating the need of explicitly promoting alternative value systems based on equality and solidarity.

In the same period, a social justice and liberation perspective has been applied to research on migration with studies analyzing acculturation processes both from the point of view of host communities and immigrant populations (Domínguez & Maya-Jariego, 2008; García-Ramírez et al., 2009 see VSI section, below), on unemployment, with cross-national (Kieselbach, 2003) and qualitative (Fryer & Fagan, 2003; see VSI section, below) research analyzing the multilevel nature of vulnerability factors contributing to social exclusion.

Although during the first decade of 2000s the focus of European research in *AJCP* was mostly on structural/macro level factors shaping inequality, power dynamics, and social justice, the interest in analyzing more proximal contexts was not abandoned, but integrated with these new perspectives. For instance, an Italian study revealed the role of school-level structural and social (school-level democratic school climate) features in predicting students' sense of community (Vieno et al., 2005), while another study analyzed the role of neighborhood place attachment and social capital in influencing adolescents' sense of safety (Dallago et al., 2009).

During the next decade, European contributions to *AJCP* continued to increase and maintained a focus on the analysis of proximal contexts, mainly schools and neighborhoods. In these studies, the simultaneous role of multiple contexts in predicting individuals' well-being was frequently studied along with individual characteristics while integrating the analysis of both structural and social features (Lenzi et al., 2012, 2013, Vieno et al., 2016). This multilevel approach is reflected in the methodology, with increasing use of multilevel modeling. Moreover, a strong interest in understanding the psychosocial mechanisms explaining the impact of contextual features can be detected, with an increasing number of studies evaluating mediating and moderating processes (Lenzi et al., 2014; see VSI section, below). Scholars in this period also started looking at the role of new technologies, as reflected in an Italian study linking specific uses of social media and adolescents' civic engagement (Lenzi et al., 2015). Similarly to the previous decades and consistently with the CP principles, disadvantaged and marginalized conditions continued to be a priority for research in the field, as indicated by studies on migration and homelessness. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, research on immigrant populations examined issues related to social justice (Paloma et al., 2014), sociopolitical control (Paloma et al., 2018), prejudice (Gattino et al., 2019), and community advocacy (Miranda et al., 2020). An additional study adopting an ethnographic approach explored the detention conditions of illegalized non-citizens in Italy, showing how they can create a stressful environment for both detainees and professionals (Esposito et al., 2019). The double focus on disadvantaged communities and professionals also characterizes research on homelessness published in the same period. Studies conducted in the field showed the effectiveness of a strengths-based, person-centered approach (such as Housing First) for promoting homeless people's recovery (Greenwood et al., 2020) but also service providers' work engagement and well-being (Lenzi et al., 2021). In addition, a study analyzing homeless services in eight European countries highlighted the advantages of using photovoice in cross-national research (Gaboardi et al., 2022).

The evolution of the discipline delineated by European contributions in *AJCP* is similar to what emerges looking at European journals, with a stronger tendency of the latter to study sexual orientation issues (e.g., Coyle & Wilkinson, 2002) and factors promoting well-being in the workplace (e.g., Lewis, 2006). However, the development of CP in Europe has been very diversified and it is not easy to detect a common trend. The increasing interest, overtime, in macro-level and structural correlates of well-being derives from an increase in complex social problems faced by most European countries. Although these problems lend themselves to CP approaches, socioeconomic and cultural challenges of globalization weaken the political support and economic resources needed to implement community intervention programs (Francescato & Zani, 2010).

Latin America (& Caribbean)

As of 2023, Latin America is home to approximately 670 million people across 33 countries and 15 colonized territories primarily located in the Caribbean. The extensive use of Spanish, practice of Christianity, and widespread mestizaje in the context of centuries of European colonization give this region a certain sense homogeneity, but Latin America is in fact vastly diverse in its landscapes, millennia-old cultures, languages, traditions, and histories of oppression and liberation. How CP emerged and how it has been conceptualized, applied, and researched across time in this part of the globe has been thoroughly chronicled in many works in both English and Spanish by Montero, Serrano-García,

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Wiesenfeld, and Sánchez—all prominent pioneers of CP in Latin America.

Social CP is the name given to the field in most countries in Latin America and it highlights the unique blend of social and CP traditions that gave rise to the most applied form of psychology practiced in the region thanks to the social commitment and political activism of its members. The term social-CP was coined by Serrano-García et al. (1987; see VSI section, below). Montero (2002) referred to the same term but as community social psychology.

Until the late 1990s reviews of CP in Latin America were available only in Spanish, with very few exceptions. Montero disseminated the first systematic account of its development in English in a 1996 *AJCP* article (see VSI section, below). She continued updating her work in English and provided further insights in other publications (Montero, 2008; Reich et al., 2007). A multinational team led by Reich et al. (2017) offered a concerted effort that explored "the intellectual connections and important catalysts to the field's development" (p. 21) from a global perspective. The section on Latin America in this piece, written by Portillo, was kindly and thoroughly reviewed by both Montero and Serrano-García to ensure its accuracy.

Just as the Swampscott Conference is cited as the birthplace or the main catalyst of CP in the United States, the seeds of the field in Latin America were planted in a conference as well. During the XVI Interamerican Congress of Psychology celebrated in Lima in 1979, Montero organized a symposium on CP and with her, a small group of psychologists from eight different countries founded the CP Task Force within the Inter-American Psychological Society (ISP). This Task Force eventually became a Standing Committee of ISP which has not only maintained the connections of CP scholars and practitioners in the area, but has published CP books and special issues every two years since 1991.

Some early studies conducted by US and European psychologists in "less developed" countries harmfully applied their own cultural norms, and so were not truly (equally, bidirectionally) cross-cultural (Marsella, 2009). The first article published in the *AJCP* that included participants from a Latin American country was a study conducted by Ross et al. (1983) in which Mexicans living on both sides of the US-Mexico border were compared. It looked at the causes and consequences of fatalism and its mediating effect on the relationship between social class and ethnic identity with psychological distress. The first study published in the *AJCP* by a team of researchers from Latin America, specifically from Puerto Rico, was authored by Bravo et al. (1990). The study examined the psychological aftermath of exposure to a disaster among adults residing on the island. During the 1990s, only four more articles that dealt with a Latin American country/population or that included an author based in Latin America were published: Lykes (1993) was a critique of Wicker and Sommer's (1993) resident research model based on her research experience with people from Guatemala. Serrano-García (1994) presented a model of power relationships in her presidential address to the Society for Community Research and Action. Kroeker (1995) examined different forms of empowerment among farmers in agricultural cooperatives in Nicaragua. Montero (1996) chronicled the parallel development of CP in Latin America and the US (see VSI section, below). Serrano-García and Bond (1994) also coedited a special issue of the *AJCP* on silent and underrepresented groups.

Between 2000 and 2009, the number of articles published in the *AJCP* by Latin American authors or about Latin America grew more than twice compared to the previous decade. Within this period, both Montero and Serrano-García served as guest editors of special issues or sections on different topics. Montero guest-edited a special issue on epistemology in CP in 2002 and a special section on CP and politics in 2009. In 2003, Watts and Serrano-García coedited a special issue on the contributions and applications of liberation psychology, a perspective originally proposed by Ignacio Martín-Baró. This is the only special issue that the *AJCP* has devoted to the ideas of a Latin American psychologist. Although Martín-Baró was assassinated in 1989 by the Salvadoran government, his unfinished work in the areas of political, social, and CP was continued by Montero as well as others, and now his intellectual legacy is championed by community psychologists across the globe.

Two articles guest-edited by Montero in the same decade (and included in the VSI: see below) that provide great insights about the evolution and application of CP in Chile and Uruguay are those of Krause (2002) and Rodríguez-Ferreyra (2009). Together these articles examine the dilemmas created by the institutionalization of interventions and the underlying psychopolitical dimensions and effects that social policies can have on community members and their participation. In both countries, the authors examine the increasingly leading role of the State and the course of actions that CP and its practitioners need to consider to fulfill their expectations of transformative interventions and theoretical and methodological soundness, while delivering much needed resources and services to large segments of the population.

Oceania

CP in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand emerged from the sociopolitical climate of the 1960s and 1970s with clear links to the development of CP in other contexts, in particular the United States (Gridley et al., 2007). While US approaches have informed CP in Australia and New Zealand, community psychologies

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there have been shaped by, and responded to, context, culture, and sociopolitical realities and have had a strong focus on community mental health, immigration, indigenous issues, colonization, and natural resources management (Gridley et al., 2007; Reich et al., 2017). In both countries, a social justice theme has been central to CP, which overtime became stronger through synergies and dialogues across various areas including peace psychology, indigenous studies, and feminism.

The contributions from Australia and New Zealand to the international discourse have steadily increased overtime with a growing number of publications in various CP journals including *JCP*, the *AJCP*, and the *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*. An early contribution in *AJCP* is reflected in Gardner and Veno's (1979) paper on the first CP training program in Australia at Queensland University introduced by two people from the US. This program was in many ways ahead of its time according to Gridley et al., and it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that we saw significant developments in training and education programs in different universities in various States in Australia, the establishment of the board of Community Psychologists, the establishment of a Bulletin (*Network: The Bulletin of the Board of Community Psychologists* which later became the *Australian Community Psychologist*).

There was an increase in articles in *AJCP* in the 2000s from Australia, including Prilleltensky (2001), which articulated a framework for values-based praxis that can move CP toward social action and social justice. Along similar lines, Bishop et al. (2002; see VSI section, below) articulated a new way of knowing and doing CP. These publications in this period also reflect the development and applications of CP in public policy settings. For example, drawing on J. R. Newbrough's third position, a paradigm for the just community that balances equality, liberty, and fraternity, Bishop et al. (2009) offers important insights into how CP concepts and practices can be mobilized in policy settings to promote empowerment and achieve structural change.

There are at least 12 *AJCP* papers from Australia and New Zealand in the period 2011−2022. Most of these papers reflect the changing, but still-predominant, positivist methodologies evident in *AJCP*, which seek to examine the role of contextual factors such as social ties and networks in various social issues. The topics are varied and include a focus on neighborhoods and crime, violence, and delinquency (Wickes et al., 2013), the role of neighborhood context in crime and fear (Pearson et al., 2015), organizational and environmental sustainability in a bicultural high school (Harré et al., 2022), and community resilience to crime (Wickes et al., 2022).

Another strong feature of CP in Australia and New Zealand evident from the papers published in *AJCP* is engagement with Indigenous issues, settler colonialism, and decolonization. An early contribution engages with feminist processes in examining power relations between Maori and Pakeha in New Zealand (Mulvey et al., 2000). Reyes Cruz and Sonn (2011) mobilized critical theories to articulate a decolonizing standpoint for community research and action. A key aspect of this writing involves multiple tasks including critically examining the deeper assumptions and worldviews that inform our conceptions of self, other, and community which are typically based on Western, static, essentialized, and binarized conceptions. Sonn (2016) furthered this agenda and is discussed in the VSI section below. Fox et al. (2019) draw on post-structural approaches to show how they enact critical methodologies in their community-oriented praxis. More recent publications from Australia and New Zealand offer examples of efforts that embrace indigenous ways of knowing and doing (e.g., McNamara & Naepi, 2018; Quayle & Sonn, 2019; see VSI). Balla et al. (2022) document how Aboriginal cultural and knowledge practice can be used in processes of healing, remembering, and empowerment.

There are varied expressions of CP research and practice across Australia and New Zealand. In both countries arguably there is a strong focus on practice, with CP as an area of endorsement with the respective registration authority. While there are not many publications from New Zealand in *AJCP*, it would be safe to say that the legacy of colonialism and oppression, and ongoing forms of structural violence in both Australia and New Zealand continue to differentially shape the lives of Indigenous and nonindigenous peoples. In both countries community-oriented psychologists have responded to the increased calls for just research and action, to engage with the anticolonial and decolonial turn, Indigenous Paradigms such as Kuapapa Maori, along with other critical projects and approaches needed to promote empowerment, community, and liberation (Ciofalo, Dudgeon, et al., 2022). These calls resonate with writing from many countries in the majority world (see Carolissen & Duckett, 2018; Sonn et al., 2022) about the need to elevate and embrace ways of knowing, doing, and being that have been marginalized, excluded, or omitted from CP's canon. Important aspects of these developments include: the need to decenter Western-centric ways of knowing, doing and being, and cocreating settings for intercultural and transcultural dialogue and praxis central to achieving CP's goals of liberation, community, and well-being.

Global/multi-continental contributions

In addition to the many articles above and others about work in one or two countries or even across a continent (e.g., Cheng & Siankam, 2009; Gaboardi et al., 2022; García-Ramírez et al., 2009; Levine, 1989; Suffla & Seedat, 2015), there have also been *AJCP* articles and issues that were global in scope or compared countries across different continents. The first of those was

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Dohrenwend et al. (1987) on life stress and psychopathology followed by Gidron et al. (1991) on self-help groups, both articles comparing the US and Israel. Liang and Bogat (1994) then compared coping and social support in China and the US. In 2000, Mulvey and colleagues examined Feminist CP in New Zealand and Scotland.

In 2008, a special section on "The Other Side of Acculturation: Changes among Host Individuals and Communities in their Adaptation to Immigrant Populations" included an article on responses to international migration to Spain and the United States (Domínguez & Maya-Jariego, 2008). The following year the first issue explicitly devoted to international CP (Perkins, 2009; see VSI section, below) included articles from six countries as well as one on a European network, one on Sub-Saharan Africa, but also one on ramifications of an aging population on countries and communities around the globe (Cheng & Heller, 2009), a study comparing adolescent place attachment, social capital, and perceived safety across 13 mostly European countries, but also including Israel (Dallago et al., 2009), and a comparison of two HIV prevention programs run by sex workers in India and South Africa (Cornish & Campbell, 2009).

In 2011, Reyes Cruz and Sonn wrote about decolonizing, collectively empowering, and liberating conceptions of culture in, or applicable to, CP by drawing on ideas from transdisciplinary critical social science and experiences in Puerto Rico, Spain, immigrant communities in the United States, South Africa, and indigenous and immigrant communities in Australia. Riemer and Reich (2011) edited a special section of *AJCP* on CP and climate change which is by definition "global." It included articles from Australia (Browne & Bishop, 2011), Portugal and the European Union (Castro & Mouro, 2011).

From 2016 to 2020, *AJCP* published globally-focused articles each year. Sonn's (2016) article was selected for the VSI (see below). In an era of globalization, Dutta (2016) proposed prioritizing the local and "decentering" CP. She took a liberatory and feminist perspective on contextualizing the local-global dialectic, particularly from marginalized regions and voices. Hanitio and Perkins (2017) is included in the VSI (see below). Carolissen and Duckett (2018; also in the VSI) edited a special issue on "Teaching toward decoloniality in CP and allied disciplines," including articles from the UK (Bell, 2018), Australia (Castell et al., 2018; Hendrick & Young, 2018), Aotearoa-New Zealand, and Canada (McNamara & Naepi, 2018), and others from Canada and the US. Along with Joseph Gone, Thompson-Guerin and Mohatt (2019) edited a special issue on CP and indigenous peoples which included work from Australia (Quayle & Sonn, 2019), as well as Canadian, American, and Hawaiian Native communities. In 2020, Suarez-Balcazar, Francisco, and Chávez edited a special issue on "Applying Community-Based Participatory Approaches to Addressing Health Disparities and Promoting Health Equity," which highlighted mostly US and Canadian examples, but also included collaborations of authors from the US, Lebanon, and Sierra Leone (Afifi et al., 2020), from India, Australia, and the US (Ozer et al., 2020), from the US and New Zealand (Rodríguez Espinosa et al., 2020), and articles from Spain (Miranda et al., 2020) and the Philippines (Vaughan et al., 2020).

A special issue of *AJCP* on "Fostering and sustaining transnational solidarities for transformative social change" edited by Sonn et al. (2022) provided a huge impetus for multinational collaborative articles by authors from Australia, Chile, Colombia, and the UK (Marinkovic Chavez et al., 2022); Peru, Spain, and US (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2022); Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and the US (Ciofalo, Dudgeon, et al., 2022); US and Indonesia (Fernández et al., 2022); Scotland and Australia (Drake et al., 2022); and Germany, US, Mexico, and Brazil (Hagelskamp et al., 2022) on a new global hub for participatory democracy in "nearly 40 countries." The issue also included papers on work in Colombia (Escobar, 2022), Ireland (Vine & Greenwood, 2022), India (Dutta et al., 2022), Canada, and the US (including one on epistemologies of the Global South: Ciofalo, 2022). The latest multinational *AJCP* article surveyed practitioners trained in the US, Canada, Australia, and the UK (Ma et al. 2023).

AJCP may have been rather late in taking a more global perspective, yet the preceding shows a clearly rising trend in international comparative articles, intervention collaborations, participatory action research comparisons (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2022), and special issues, which is welcome and we hope will continue. But more are needed. Publishing work from around the world and international conferences are important, but the field needs more international collaboration.

ARTICLES SELECTED FOR THE VSI

Although there have been few articles from the *Middle East* in *AJCP*, Israel was among the first and most frequent. To represent those, we selected Sagy et al. (1996) for the VSI as it studied both macro- and micro-level ecological factors in a concept central to CP (sense of community) among two groups: one which has become more important in the field: immigrants; and one that has been more overlooked by CP, but is very important in Israel: military veterans. One interesting comparison was that the size of the community was the strongest (negative) predictor of sense of community among veterans, but mattered not at all to immigrants. In *Africa*, Sigogo et al. (2004) is a transnational collaboration that foregrounds the importance of fluidity and reflexivity, as opposed to rigid self-definition of the

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field, when developing a contextually relevant CP program in a democratic South Africa experiencing major sociocultural, political and disciplinary changes. These 19-year-old reflections remain valuable globally for CP. We also selected Seedat and Lazarus (2011) from *JCP* as an example of an African contribution that eloquently sketches the origins, development, and contemporary manifestations of multiple forms of community psychologies in South Africa in the context of colonization and apartheid. The article reflects the South African gaps, struggles, and contributions to CP. They provide a strong argument for inserting African community psychologies and pluralities of knowledge into global CP. Most importantly, the authors argue for reinserting marginalized knowledge but highlight challenges for the discipline which include defining "community" and addressing the importance of the impacts of growing social and political inequality. Winter et al. (2021), produced the first article in *AJCP* from Kenya, East Africa, thus continuing the trajectory of surfacing marginalized knowledge from underrepresented geopolitical contexts. In this instance it focuses on women's fear of crime, but in a novel and underexplored setting of informal settlements. These four selected articles are disparate in aims, methodology, and scope but reflect the diversity of community psychologies and tensions inherent in foregrounding marginalized knowledges emanating from the African continent.

We chose the first *Asian AJCP* article (Sasaki & Jackson, 1979); it reviews Japanese psychology lab research in the 1960s and '70s concerning group norms and how the Asian cultural norm of collectivism and group dynamics affects individual behaviors and group well-being. This article reflects early efforts in Asia to develop indigenous CP knowledge and theories. Omprakash's article (1989) represents studies in India and other Asian countries that applied Western CP frameworks to local communities and connected CP interventions to the larger social needs in development. In Asia, both indigenous and indigenized knowledge and skills have shaped what CP is today. The article by Xu et al. (2010) examines cognitive sense of community, neighboring behaviors, and their relationships to political participation, as contextualized in the rapid economic–social transitions in China. It captures the mismatches between Western CP concepts and local rural/urban cultures, thus leading to different understanding of the relationship between CP and political behaviors. This study together with other studies from Asia challenge the role that CP frameworks, perspectives, and skills could potentially play to change the power structure in different countries and contexts. Chan et al. (2017) examined the political and social movement in Hong Kong using a widely employed transconceptual model of resilience and empowerment. Results from this study demonstrate the Western CP model can be useful and meaningful; it also indicates, similar to community organizing skills in Western societies, that CP ideas on identity and group process are essential to collective actions.

From *Europe* we chose articles with two common themes: that social/community scientists' expertise must be supplemented by insights from victims of oppressive social conditions and a "value-free" social science is not possible. Montenegro (2002) provides a deep theoretical reflection on the implications of Marxist ideology for community work (rare in community or social psychology) and questions social conditions perceived as "natural" as a basis for consciousness-raising thus opening the possibility of promoting networks of participation including multiple worldviews. Fryer and Fagan (2003) describe a qualitative participatory action research project in an economically depressed British city, in which a critical CP perspective was essential to understand the root causes and mental health consequences of unemployment, and to increase participants' knowledge and awareness of ways to improve their financial situation. García-Ramírez et al. (2009) present the experience of an international collaborative network organized to prevent labor discrimination against immigrants in three European countries. They show how it is possible to enhance the network's collaborative capacity, to disseminate effective interventions between countries, allowing for cultural adaptations, and to evaluate the entire partnership. Lenzi et al. (2014) identify mechanisms underlying the link between democratic school climate in an Italian city and adolescent civic engagement, adding to the international literature on civic education and service learning. They show how less structured activities and collaborative teaching techniques can promote adolescent civic engagement by encouraging civic discussions and perceived fairness, thus highlighting a role schools can play in promoting democratic learning and development in societies.

In *Latin America*, against the backdrop of a crisis in social psychology and the contributions of liberation psychology and critical pedagogy, Serrano-García et al. (1987) present the theoretical model that defined the discipline for the University of Puerto Rico graduate program, which is at present the oldest CP program in Latin America. This model integrated social constructionism, ideology and consciousness, symbolic interactionism, and theories of social change and CP. Montero (1996) compares the different origins of CP in the United States and in Latin America demonstrating that, despite diverse beginnings, they shared similar orientations and principles. She expands on the development of Latin American CP describing its characteristics, theoretical influences, and approaches to interventions. She concludes by describing areas of convergence between both geographical areas that focus on the discipline's commitment to improving the lives and conditions in which people live. Krause (2002) carried out an interesting study in various districts of Santiago, Chile, to ascertain whether community interventions met criteria such as:

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seeking the well-being of the population, targeting the same geographic area, and performing interventions beyond the individual level. It critically analyzes the impact of these interventions once they are fostered by governmental policies. Although their number and stability increased there was also conflict between focusing on assistance and promotion of change. Also emphasizing the incorporation of community interventions via governmental social policies, Rodríguez-Ferreyra (2009) presents various projects to demonstrate the dilemma between "palliative" versus "transformative" efforts of social policies. She emphasizes the importance of participatory and critical evaluation strategies to strengthen the transformative potential of interventions.

Authors in different settler colonies have emphasized the importance of CP's values and principles of social justice, social ecology, and cultural relativity. However, many in settler colonies, such as *Australia and New Zealand*, have also questioned the field's Eurocentric orientation and risks of imposing colonialist agendas. This is reflected in the VSI by Bishop et al. (2002) who highlighted the importance of crafting an approach to community praxis, which they refer to as iterative-generative reflective practice (IGRP), rooted in and shaped by the context, culture, and the history of colonial power and race relations in Australia. There are also relevant links to liberation paradigms and the notion of participant conceptualizer. The IGRP approach was a local expression of community-engaged research developed to address issues in various settings including natural resource management and population decline in rural communities because of drought. Reflecting broader discussions in the discipline, Bishop et al. (2002) argued for deeper engagement with various epistemologies that underpin community research and action and the need to engage with various settings and communities on their own terms, as well as the importance of community participation in change processes. McNamara and Naepi (2018) bring attention to efforts to decolonize CP by showing how they have worked with Indigenous peoples of the Pacific (and Canada). They emphasize centering Indigenous frameworks including relational models of self and a process orientation in collaborating with communities. Importantly, these approaches embrace dialogue and dislodge the monological viewpoint in which marginalized and minoritized communities are made dependent on resource-rich others. They include relational epistemologies and ethics, storytelling, which centers the needs, aspirations, and knowledge of indigenous groups. Quayle and Sonn (2019) similarly suggest that CP can play a role in decolonizing projects of cultural reclamation and healing. They bring a community-informed approach, using creative methods to witness stories of Elders, and critical narrative inquiry into a praxis orientation that responds to communities while also critically reflecting on positionality, assumptions, and processes of community research and action.

Globally-focused articles were the latest to appear in *AJCP*. Perkins' brief introduction to the 2009 *AJCP* special issue on international CP identified exciting work around the world, but also two noticeable gaps or challenges. One was too few (up to that point) cross-cultural, comparative collaborations to enhance mutual learning, share ideas, methods, and intervention practices. The other gap was where in the world CP had not yet developed. *AJCP* has exhibited our field's work on all continents—yet CP still does not even exist in many places where it could have the greatest impact (Lyew et al., 2021). Sonn (2016) places the 1965 Swampscott Conference in international context by pointing to "opportunities to contribute to developing a decolonizing CP through expanding the (sociopolitical) ecology of knowledge" (p. 309), particularly from the global South. Hanitio and Perkins' (2017) mixed methods article quantitatively analyzed societal factors related to the existence and strength of both CP and community development as professional fields in 91 countries, along with brief historical case studies of Chile and Ghana. Carolissen and Duckett's (2018) special issue introduction provides a synthesis of 10 markers central to "Teaching toward decoloniality in CP and allied disciplines" based on their review of the literature, including the 15 articles from that issue. Just some of the 10 are: disrupting privileging of Euro-American/Western epistemologies, reframing pathologized accounts of marginalized peoples, deconstructing colonial discourse, inserting counternarratives, foregrounding indigenous knowledge and the politics of knowledge production in curriculum, inserting author identities and positionalities, activism central to the pedagogical continuum—inside and outside classrooms, pedagogical catalysts for critical reflexivity, and drawing on ecologies of knowledge appropriate to context.

CONCLUSIONS

The preceding summary of international contributions to *AJCP* provides clear evidence that for most of its first 25 or 30 years, the *Journal* was largely silent on CP knowledge beyond the US and Canada. But it also shows the global development of the field in recent decades, as confirmed by the increase, not just in international *AJCP* articles, but also in CP articles in other journals, as well as books, conferences, graduate, and undergraduate courses and programs in at least 50 countries all over the world (Hanitio & Perkins, 2017).

The focus of CP developed differently in different continents, with the US and Canada originally dominated by community mental health concerns and expanding from there. CP in Australia and New Zealand initially followed North America's emphasis on

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improving social service systems (Gardner & Veno, 1979), but has since focused more on indigenous, cultural, and decolonial issues (Quayle & Sonn, 2019) that are as salient in those countries as in Africa (Seedat & Lazarus, 2011) or North America. CP came later to Asia, where it also tended to follow the North American path (Omprakash, 1989), but has since found its own way (Yang et al., 2021).

The other two global hotspots for CP (Ozgurer & Perkins, 2021) for over 40 years have been Europe and Latin America. The level and focus of CP in Europe varies in each country, with some focused on applied developmental psychology and/or community services and others advancing critical and liberation psychology (Fryer & Fagan, 2003; Moane, 2003). In Latin America, CP evolved from social psychology (Serrano-García et al., 1987), but—like CP in Sub-Saharan Africa (Reich et al., 2007; Sigogo et al., 2004)—is also more explicitly political due to the history of political oppression and turmoil in that region. CP in Latin America responded to 1960s social activism and the limitations of individualistic psychology to focus on social change, economic development, and overcoming poverty and interventions by (not just for) community members (Montero, 1996). Despite those regional differences, global CP literature over the past decade or two suggests increasingly common interests in diverse ecological methods, social and epistemic justice, decoloniality, and policy relevance (Bishop et al., 2009; Carolissen & Duckett, 2018; Rodríguez-Ferreyra, 2009; Sonn, 2016). It is essential for all journals to reach and bridge across borders so we can decentralize the field and learn from each other.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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APPENDIX: VIRTUAL SPECIAL ISSUE TITLE AND CONTENTS

List of international articles for the VSI

Africa & Middle East:

Sagy, S., Stern, E., & Krakover, S. (1996). Macro- and microlevel factors related to sense of community: The case of temporary neighborhoods in Israel. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *24*(5), 657–676.

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Sasaki, K. (1979). Present status of research on group norms in Japan. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *7*(2), 147–158.

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Perkins, D.D. (2009). International community psychology: Development and challenges. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 44, 76–79.

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