



Conference Report

7th International Conference on Community Psychology Conferencia Internacional De Psicología Comunitaria, Chile- 2018

Naiema Taliep

South African Medical Research Council- University of South Africa (SAMRC-UNISA) Violence, Injury and Peace Unit; Institute for Social and Health Sciences, University of South Africa

Hazel Swanepoel

Community research team member

Prominent academic scientists, community activist researchers and scholars from across the globe gathered in Santiago Chile for the 7th International Conference on Community Psychology, entitled “The Community on the Move: Building Spaces of Diversity, Coexistence, and Change”.

The focus of the conference, held from October 4 – 7, 2018 at the University of Chile at the Juan Gómez Millas campus spotlighted the work of community-based researchers and other social actors on community participation and mobilisation in the quest for transformation and social justice within multiple diverse and shifting spaces across the globe.

The conference’s keynote address by Brinton Lykes, *Contesting the Global North Priorities: Transforming Psychosocial Well-Being through Critical Community Psychology, Feminist Anti-Racist Participatory Action Research, And Grassroots and Grasstops Activism*, drew attention to the necessity for well-being to be considered within the frame of everyday politics and activism.

A poignant symposium at the conference, which incidentally coincided with the anniversary of Chileans’ rejection of the Pinochet authoritarian military regime, focused on the repercussions of Chile’s history of human rights violations. For conference participants, the graffiti adorned walls on campus, depicting the course of military dictatorship and violent repression was a stark reminder of the past atrocities not to be repeated.

Mario Venegas, who was detained and tortured for three years because of his opposition to Pinochet, gave a compelling account of his experiences of physical and psychological torture and the post-traumatic stress that he still endures today.

His presentation particularly resonated with us South Africans, who lived through the dehumanizing experience of Apartheid and its concomitant torture, murder, and violations of human rights. As South Africans, effects of the Chilean oppression resonate with us in our political, social and economic life.

Another conference highlight for us, was sharing a platform with community members in a roundtable discussion entitled *Community-based Participatory Research as an emancipatory modality: Promoting social transformation, agency and activism*. As community activist researchers, we encourage participation and need to ensure the foregrounding of marginalized voices, when publishing in peer-reviewed academic



journals. The participation of community members in this roundtable reflected the critical insertion and importance of local indigenous knowledges into the conversation. All our voices matter.

To this end, we experienced some of those local indigenous voices with a visit to the Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos with our Mapuche hosts. Here we learned in great depth about the systematic suppression, torture, and human rights persecutions against those who opposed Pinochet (Tikannen, 2019). We were fortunate to have met a human rights lawyer from the Mapuche. In her quest for truth and justice, she painstakingly documents violations and file cases of the Mapuche people.

For academics and community activist researchers in the field of Community Psychology, the conference provided an invaluable interdisciplinary platform to share their knowledge on current advances and trends in theory, practice, innovation, and social change and discuss practical challenges and solutions.

REFERENCES

Tikannen, A. (2019). Augusto Pinochet: President of Chile. Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Augusto-Pinochet>

