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PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

Lessons from psychology in Palestine: More than psychotherapy, we need a truly community psychology

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we provide a historical overview of community psychology in Palestine, drawing lessons for the critical analysis of psychology's development, especially for capitalism periphery, and its possible contributions to Palestinian resistance against genocide. The rise of Palestinian community psychology, linked to liberation and anti-colonial struggle, and its subsequent decline, demonstrate the need to go beyond academia and institutionalisation, overcoming the boundaries of psychology itself. Community psychology, criticism of psychology, and decolonisation are not metaphors or rhetoric. They are praxis. It is important to consider community psychology as a part of another ethical-political project of psychology. In this regard, more than psychotherapy, we need a truly community psychology. Finally, solidarity with Palestine and Palestinians as a political praxis is essential, as is the production of knowledge that engages with Palestinian resistance, especially from the perspective of Palestinians and their voices.

KEYWORDS: community psychology; praxis; critique; decolonisation; Palestine

In this article, we seek to provide a brief historical overview of the development of community psychology in Palestine, in order to critically analyse psychology's development, especially for capitalism periphery, as well as to draw out lessons regarding the possible contributions of psychology to Palestinian resistance against genocide. We are psychologists, professors, and researchers from Brazil, whose particularity as a dependent capitalism country, with colonial genesis and development, brings with it a series of similarities with Palestine. Likewise, we have noted numerous similarities regarding the development of psychology in our country and in Palestine. This allows us to advance with Ignacio Martín-Baró's (2011) observation that

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the *misery* or *slavery* of Latin American psychology, that is, its colonised and dependent character, also occurs in other contexts and countries—not by chance, that are colonised and dependent—denoting the uneven and combined development of capitalism, via imperialism and colonialism, also in and through psychology.

On the other hand, there is no comparison with what the Palestinian people have been going through for seven decades, with the settler colonialism and apartheid of the self-proclaimed State of Israel. In the 21st century, we are experiencing the unfolding and strengthening of a colonialist, racist, and genocidal project. This scenario has intensified in recent times, since October 2023, resulting in even more violence, death, and barbarity. This places us before a reality that is impossible to ignore, even if someone tries to turn the head and eyes away, pretending that it does not exist.

For psychology and the 'psy' field (that also includes psychoanalysis and psychiatry), as human sciences and professions that deal with human beings and their needs, regardless of the object they want to attribute to them (mind, subjectivity, behaviour, mental health, etc.), there is a call not only to pay attention to what is happening in Palestine, but also to take a clear position in solidarity with the Palestinian people. Furthermore, considering the gravity of the genocidal resurgence by the self-proclaimed State of Israel with the endorsement of the world's imperialist powers, it is essential for psychology to ask itself whether there is anything that can be done to support the Palestinian population. In our view, the affirmative answer to this question involves two observations, which, at the same time, serve as constant warnings: (a) that psychology must rethink and self-criticise its historical development, whose hegemony contributed to Israeli colonialism in Palestine and the denial of the Palestinian people; and (b) that there are relevant initiatives and movements in Palestine to build a community-based, decolonised psychology, within the struggles for liberation and self-determination of Palestinian people, which must be studied and understood as recognition and learning from the Palestinian people themselves.

Regarding the first point, we know how difficult it is to talk about psychology in a general way, without having some problems. Point 'b' itself already signals that psychology is not a monolith, that it has its internal contradictions. However, psychology as a discipline of knowledge or a partial science and profession, develops itself within a Eurocentric capitalist paradigm, even as a way of justifying this development, psychologising, and individualising reality. As Bulhan (1985) characterises in dialogue with Frantz Fanon, there is an imperialism *in* and *by* psychology. Also, psychology has been hegemonically Euro-American, Eurocentric and, in this, a *psychology of oppression*.

For example, this is expressed in the context of the Israeli genocidal advance against Palestine. According to Samah Jabr (2024c), a psychiatrist and head of the Mental Health Unit of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the 'one-sided condemnations from leading psychiatric [and psychology] associations reinforce Israeli propaganda and make them accomplices to

oppression and killing of Palestinians' (p. 144, our translation). The author specifically addresses the cases of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) that demonstrate the colonialist and imperialist character of psychology itself and the psychiatry field in general, considering that they are two associations that are central in building directions and policies for the psy field. Thus, we seek to heed Jabr's (2024c) call that 'we must push back against the APA and AACAP and any other professional organisations that contribute to hateful and negative representations of the Palestinian people', being 'accomplices of the oppression and killing of Palestinians' (p. 148, our translation).

Furthermore, we seek to continue the dialogue proposed by *Psychotherapy and Politics International*, which aims to make the genocide of the Palestinian people visible and to call on psy field to take responsibility for this reality (Minikin & Pavón-Cuéllar, 2023). We thus agree with reflections published in the journal that repudiate colonialism, racism, and the Israeli genocide, while seeking to contribute through psychology and psychoanalysis, from their ontological, epistemological, and practical particularities to the resistance of Palestinian people (e.g., Gaba, 2024; Mendelsohn, 2023; Palmieri, 2023; Parker, 2023; Sheehi & Sheehi, 2023).

From this, we carried out a brief historical recovery exercise of Palestine's community psychology construction. We specifically address the community psychology developed within the scope of Birzeit University, based on the praxis of people such as Ibrahim Makkawi and colleagues, as well as other Palestinian authors and activists.

Ibrahim Makkawi (1948–2022) was the most prominent name in the theoretical and practical development of Palestinian community psychology, oriented towards contributing to Palestinian liberation. This development was based on the critique of the colonised and dependent character of psychology in Palestine—in Arab countries. During his career, along with several contributions, Makkawi founded and coordinated a postgraduate programme (Master's) at Birzeit University, contributing to the formation of numerous psychologists from a critical and community perspective. Furthermore, he was an important actor at the international level of community and liberation psychology development, proposing and organising several events and initiatives, working together with groups, researchers, and activists from different parts of the world, and reiterating that his commitment to Palestinian liberation was also internationalist, concerning human emancipation (Atallah & Masud, 2023).

Our goal, much more than trying to teach lessons to a people who are resisting and being the moral compass of our times in terms of struggle, is to learn from them. In this, we seek to share their voice, their knowledge, and their struggles, who have been historically denied, but, despite this, they continue to assert themselves and become humanised through their own praxis, pointing out paths and exits to a sociability whose development is increasingly

barbaric. Thus, in the first instance, we present some of the main aspects of community psychology's development in Palestine. Later, we seek to extract lessons to think about the contributions of psychology, especially in peripheral capitalist countries, as well as in Palestine itself.

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY IN PALESTINE AS A RESPONSE TO COLONIALISM

According to Makkawi (2009, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2017), the roots of community psychology in Palestine lie in the Palestinian people's own self-organisation and struggle for their liberation. More specifically, the author points out the relevance of the movements that culminated in the First Intifada, with numerous grassroots, community, and popular initiatives, from a self-management and self-determination perspective, such as: popular education, community schools, welfare services, daycare centres and childcare institutions, support groups, and conscientisation strategies, among other initiatives, which were developed and gained strength, with community psychology nourishing itself from them, at the same time that it was one of these initiatives (Makkawi, 2009, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2017).

The First Intifada came to an end in 1993, following the Oslo Accords. Mediated by the United States, agreements were signed between the Israeli government and the president of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Yasser Arafat. For Makkawi (2015b), the Oslo Accords represented a turning point in the development of the Palestinian national movement and its popular and community-based self-organisation, with a series of influxes and setbacks in community psychology itself. The same assessment is made by Lena Meari (2018), another key figure in the development of community psychology in Palestine, who states that the post-Oslo era is 'characterized by the transformation of the Palestinian struggle from a revolutionary anti-colonial liberation struggle into a state-building project bound by legal and administrative liberal logic and neoliberal economic and political rationality' (p. 50).

Even with the Second Intifada, which occurred in 2000 due to the non-compliance with the Oslo Accords by the self-proclaimed State of Israel, these Accords had already weakened the Palestinian struggles and means of resistance. As a result, 'the Palestinian community in the West Bank and Gaza was less prepared to sustain the collective struggle' (Makkawi, 2009, p. 80), with the Second Intifada resulting in many Palestinians' deaths, failing to achieve its objective.

Despite this, the brief exercise already demonstrates that the construction of a community psychology in Palestine took place as a response to Israeli colonialism; it was based on the needs of the Palestinian people in their struggles for liberation and self-determination. Add to this the influences of Latin American community psychology, especially the contributions of Martín-Baró and Paulo Freire, the praxis of Frantz Fanon, as well as the anti-colonial

revolutionary movements and experiences in Latin America, Asia, and Africa (Makkawi, 2009, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2017). In short, community psychology in Palestine arises from the historical and concrete ground of the Palestinians—also influenced by Third World struggles—as well as from their own humanisation praxis. According to Makkawi (2009), 'what we need in Palestine within the prolonged struggle for self-determination is a liberation form of community psychology' (p. 77).

Community psychology in Palestine was not, therefore, a mere academic production of research centres or researchers, even though it was also developed by them. It originated from struggles and was developed with these struggles. It was not an epistemological invention, as if class struggle and national liberation struggle were transformed into a mere clash of theories, concepts, or worse, of prefixes. Even though this movement criticised the colonised-dependent epistemological bases of psychology, the critique was, above all, ontological, against the ontological denial of the Palestinian as human. Additionally, it was a critique put into practice. It was (and is) praxis; a liberating praxis, linked to the anti-colonial national liberation movement.

Furthermore, we emphasise that such community psychology was born outside of psychology—just as it has occurred with Latin American community psychology, for example (Makkawi, 2009, 2012, 2015a, 2017). Its social genesis lies in popular, community-based organisations, in anti-colonial struggle, and self-organisation and self-determination initiatives of Palestinian people, especially in the context of the First Intifada. Such struggles and actions end up entering psychology, confronting it and its colonised hegemony. They confronted particularly the way in which colonised psychology was institutionalised in certain sectors and spheres, such as in universities and academia. For example, according to Makkawi (2017), 'Palestinian universities, and in particular Palestinian academic psychology, at that time failed to understand and cultivate grassroots manifestations of community psychology' (p. 484). Psychology in such institutions continued 'to teach mainstream, Western individualistic knowledge, and fail to place the development of higher education within its anti-colonial historical context' (p. 484).

Therefore, it is necessary to criticise the movements of institutionalisation and academicisation of psychology critique and decolonisation. In the case of community psychology, especially in Palestine, this institutionalisation and academicisation has meant the mischaracterisation, distortion, and denial of criticism itself and its radicality. For example, in work carried out with colleagues from several countries on the critique of community psychology, Makkawi pointed out that:

> community psychology has gradually become decreasingly diverse and decreasingly radical the more it has become academically and professionally established and evangelized and it is now endangered as a critical alternative to the disciplinary ideologies, theories, procedures and practices of mainstream psychology. (Coimbra et al., 2012, p. 135)

This institutionalisation in the Palestinian context, especially since the Oslo Accords, has also occurred through the penetration and large-scale action of research funding agencies and institutions in psychology, psychiatry, and mental health, by the imperialist and colonialist powers (Makkawi, 2009, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2017; Meari, 2015). The main manifestations of this process are: (a) Western-funded non-governmental organisations (NGOs), supposedly focused on Palestinians' mental health care, considering them in a passive and depoliticised position as victims of a supposed war; and (b) in the trend of individualising (psychologising and psychiatrising) research on trauma, more specifically, on post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSDs) (Coimbra et al., 2012; Jabr, 2024a, 2024b; Makkawi, 2009, 2015a, 2015b, 2017; Meari, 2015).

In other words, the so-called concern of the West, especially of imperialist and colonialist countries, with the mental health of Palestinians, through NGOs, agencies, and funding institutions, has been a Trojan Horse. Armed with supposed critical, counter-hegemonic guises, they are based on the world's and human beings' conceptions that take the imperialist and colonialist countries themselves as ideal types, with the Palestinians continuing to be denied, as mere objects: on one hand as terrorists and, on the other, as victims. What presents itself as critical, socially committed, even decolonised, has largely been an arm of colonialism, hindering the decolonising, anti-colonial, and community initiatives of the Palestinian people.

Furthermore, as much as many of these initiatives present themselves as innovative, there is nothing new in the content or purpose of this process. It is a colonial movement that uses psychology and the psy field as ideological and practical weapons. Something, for example, already denounced by Fanon (2020) regarding the colonised nature of the psy field, especially psychiatry in Algeria—and Africa in general—during colonisation. Thus, through the psy field, the coloniser continues to assert themself by the denial of the colonised, including through their role as saviour of those who need to be cured. Add to this the scientific condition, the impartiality and objectivity of the psy field. In line with Meari (2015, p. 81):

> Both trauma and human rights discourses presuppose a specific Western-like imagined human who possesses specific psychic sensibilities and characteristics. This construct had been positioned as universal and was transferred to different parts of the world. This specific human construct established the depoliticized victim to be redeemed by specialists.

However, such salvation was (and is), in fact, the perpetuation of colonial violence. In the specific case of mental health, it was (and is) reduced—and distorted—to an individual intrapsychic instance, in a clear liberal bias, of an abstract, generic being that hovers in the air. Consequently, its approach is synonymous with psychotherapy, counselling, medication, and to be carried out or coordinated by NGOs and other foreign entities, through individualistic approaches and from a privatising perspective. There is also a corporatism of medical entities (especially psychiatry) and psychology, as if they were private owners of the mental health of Palestinians. Furthermore, it is foreign institutions or those heavily financed

by foreign entities that privately appropriate Palestinians' mental health. Thus, they weaken or deny other collective and collectivised care initiatives, created by the Palestinians themselves, as well as the very nature of care present in gestures of solidarity, in struggle instruments—and in the struggle as a whole—with countless positive implications for Palestinians' mental health. According to Makkawi (2015b), while the Palestinian

> grassroots organizations were established from the bottom up with a broad base of supporters, typically linked to political parties and inspired by self-sufficiency logic, NGOs are established by a few individuals with links to Western funding organizations and with no popular base… Western-funded NGOs are conceived within the wider strategy of co-option and entrapment of the Arab and Palestinian intelligentsia, seeking to depoliticize, distract, and distance radical and organic intellectuals from involvement with the struggle for justice and self-determination. (p. 420)

Meari (2015, p. 79) calls this process 'The Empires of Trauma and Human Rights', in an obvious allusion to its imperialist and colonialist character. Makkawi (2017) characterises this movement as the re-emergence of neocolonialism. As a result, it contributed to a liberal turn in Palestinian culture, with the weakening of community-based and popular voluntary organisations, rooted in the territory, and that were constitutive of Palestinian liberation struggles. In fact, many political and community leaders ended up becoming managers and administrators of such NGOs, of their financed projects or of other imperialist and colonialist ideological apparatuses.

One of the most obvious examples of this process of distortion is the attempt to weaken *sumud*. Although it is often understood as firmness, resistance—or distorted in liberal psychologising terms as resilience—*sumud* does not have a fixed meaning, a univocal translation in Brazilian Portuguese or English, and it is not possible to synthesise it in a single Western concept without distortion. *Sumud* emerged among Palestinian militants and spread throughout their communities specially in the late 1960s, reaching its peak in the Palestinian offensive and its political effervescence during the First Intifada (1987–1993). Following Makkawi (2015a), and based on community, collective, and solidarity values, and on *sumud* as a philosophy of life, as an identity construction and resistance praxis, in contrast to the objective and subjective Israeli colonisation and fatalisation, this process erupted in the First Intifada. After an uprising in a refugee camp, the movement gained even more momentum, based on the entire popular and community infrastructure developed by the Palestinians themselves as resistance. The Israeli counteroffensive was even more violent and repressive, but it was unable to end the anti-colonial offensive of Palestinian liberation, much due to *sumud*.

For Meari (2014), *sumud* is an anti-colonial way of being, embodying 'a multiplicity of significations and practices' that 'destabilizes the colonial order and its power relations', constituting 'a Palestinian relational political-psycho-affective subjectivity' (p. 549). It represents and expresses Palestinian resistance and struggle, in terms of its philosophy of life,

of a collective identity, of a permanent praxis that even circumvents the linear and anti-dialectical conception of time—past, present, and future.

According to Meari (2015) and Jabr (2024a, 2024b), the liberal tradition in discourses, activism, and initiatives linked to human rights and psychological trauma opposes and clashes with *sumud*, which expresses a philosophy of life, social values, identity, and ethical-political commitment. Not that such a liberal tradition does not contain ethical-political dimensions, but these are antagonistic to those of *sumud*, which synthesises and expresses a set of cultural values linked to the firmness, perseverance, and resistance of Palestinians amid the struggles for national liberation.

In the opposite direction, seeking to suppress *sumud*, the liberal tradition of human rights and mental health—expressed by the psy field—began to hegemonise the ideological constructions and modes of subjectivation after the Oslo Accords, reinforcing the Palestinians as objects: whether through supposedly well-intentioned (salvationist) guises, with them as victims, traumatised individuals, etc.; or through explicitly pejorative characterisations, as violent individuals, terrorists, savages, among others. If *sumud* emerged among Palestinian militants and spread throughout their communities, as a result of their resistance, reaching its peak during the First Intifada, its weakening is a constitutive part of the objective and subjective genocide perpetrated by Israeli colonialism. It is, therefore, an intricate colonial engineering, which seeks to physically and symbolically genocide the Palestinian people, depoliticising and weakening their struggles and resistance, and, therefore, some of their central values such as *sumud*.

Linked to this, the concept of community or community-based is manipulated and distorted 'by many NGOs by merely affixing the word "community" to the title of whatever training project they are conducting' (Makkawi, 2015b, p. 421). This distortion occurs on the ontological, epistemological, and practical levels, with ethical and political implications that weaken truly community-based and grassroots initiatives, built from the bottom up by Palestinians. This is not just a rhetorical movement, but also a material, political, economic, and ideological one. Thus, 'both the work of the NGOs and the PTSD research accumulation are problematic and pose serious challenges to community psychology enactment that is committed to people's liberation and social justice' (Makkawi, 2015b, p. 416).

Therefore, the continuity and strengthening of a truly community-based psychology in the Palestinian context requires criticising and overcoming such initiatives. The actions of Palestinian's (mental) health care cannot be reduced to traditional tools in the psy field, such as psychotherapy, analysis, or medication; to a privatist and individualistic conception.

How can this be done? In our view, the answer lies in the resistance of Palestinian people themselves, and how it has been carried out through collective, community initiatives: in and through struggle; in and through self-organisation and self-determination. In line with Jabr (2024b), 'collective trauma can be alleviated through the promotion of collective efforts such

as recognition, respect for minorities, support for the afflicted, and mass cooperative action' (p. 58, our translation). In other words, it is essential to go beyond psychology or even the clinic.

This means the resumption and strengthening of initiatives that are specific to the Palestinian people, as occurred in the genesis of community psychology. In other words, territorialised, community-based, grassroots, bottom-up initiatives, carried out by the Palestinians themselves and their allies in their liberation project during the anti-colonial struggle—which has not stopped.

Yet according to Makkawi (2017), one of the most unexpected and insurmountable challenges was 'academic dependency on Western knowledge production' (p. 490). However, this dependence was not a merely theoretical or epistemological subordination, although it also occurred through these dimensions. For Makkawi (2017), the root of the dependence of Palestinian psychology was the economic and political dependency itself, characteristic of settler colonisation, with the 'maintenance of economic dependency as a means of ensuring academic dependency among Palestinian intellectuals' (p. 484).

In the meantime, the Master's programme in community psychology itself suffered a decline. According to Makkawi (2017), although this decline was linked to 'epistemological and administrative conflicts with people in power during the developmental phase of the programme' (p. 489), it cannot be dissociated from the 'remarkable success of the programme and its emerging academic identity as decolonising community psychology' (p. 489) and the reaction against it, both within and outside psychology. Broadly speaking, the relevance of community psychology as a critical alternative to colonial psychology was confronted by colonialism, which countered the first with marginalisation and lack of recognition within psychology developed in Palestine. We can conclude from this that any movements of criticism and transformation of psychology, such as the one that occurred from Palestinian community psychology, are not dissociated from the struggles and conflicts outside psychology.

The history of community psychology in Palestine—and of psychology as a whole—is, above all, the history of class struggle—the history of class struggle in psychology and through psychology. More specifically, the history of the uneven and combined development of capitalism, its imperialist, colonialist, and racist character, and its expressions in and through psychology. Thus, if community psychology was born in Palestine as a response to colonialism, its institutionalisation and its consequent decline were counter-responses of colonialism—and imperialism—to its relevance.

SOME LESSONS FROM PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY

In this section, we seek to solidify some of the teachings arising from the historical recovery of community psychology in Palestine. In certain aspects, it is a matter of repeating what has already been made explicit in the recovery exercise itself. Thus, in some cases, even though it has been made explicit, the relevance of the notes makes repetition pertinent. We live in times when the obvious needs not only to be said, but repeated. In other cases, the signs were implicit, also justifying the movement undertaken here.

Some of the inflections of community psychology in Palestine, as pointed out by Makkawi (2017), resulted from its institutionalisation in academia and by NGOs, mainly financed by the West, with colonialist and imperialist intentions. As a result, it ended up going against its socio-historical genesis, within the scope of the struggles, resistance, and Palestinian liberation initiatives. It also went against the examples that founded it, such as: the praxis of Martín-Baró and his liberation psychology in El Salvador within a civil war; Paulo Freire and his popular pedagogy in an abruptly unequal Brazilian reality, with a dictatorial regime; the anti-colonial bound with the fight against apartheid in South Africa (Makkawi, 2009, 2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2017).

It is worth noting that these inflections are not exclusive to Palestinian community psychology, and are also observed in other realities and countries, as Makkawi himself, together with colleagues, denounced (Coimbra et al., 2012). In the Palestinian case, it should be observed, however, that, unlike what occurred in Latin America and South Africa, where community psychology developed and consolidated itself during the 'transformation of their respective anti-colonial national liberation movements, decolonising community psychology in Palestine was born during an era of deep setback and defeat of the national liberation movement' (Makkawi, 2017, p. 491).

This serves as a warning to some psychologies that position themselves as critical, community-based, or even decolonising in the peripheral, dependent, and colonised contexts. It is essential to go beyond institutionalisation, especially academic institutionalisation, as well as to overcome the boundaries of psychology itself. The academic institutionalisation of psychology largely implies its disconnection from struggles and social movements, or a stance that criticism is a university's private property, exclusive to academia, which should be the beacon of struggles and movements, guiding them in a paternalistic perspective.

In turn, this does not mean that academia is irrelevant and unnecessary. However, it is a pertinent warning about the need to criticise and to put pressure on academia and psychology, through internal movements, that is, *from within*, but also and especially *from outside*. The challenge for the critique and decolonisation of psychology (including community psychology) in Palestine and, furthermore, in Brazil, El Salvador, South Africa, and several other peripheral realities of capitalism, is: 'to realise that unless it is dialectically connected

to the national liberation movement, it risks being just another academic cliché during an era of neoliberal economic dependency' (Makkawi, 2017, p. 491).

We hope to have been able to demonstrate by the analysis of Palestinian community psychology by Palestinian community psychologists that, more than psychotherapy, we need a truly community psychology in Palestine—and in other colonised or dependent contexts. As Makkawi (2015b) points out, the '[hegemonic] frameworks for intervention are awkward and mostly apply individualistic approaches to counselling and psychotherapy' (p. 420). No one denies the evident and widespread objective and subjective impacts of colonialism, apartheid, and genocide, including in terms of mental health. However, just as mental health refers to the production of life, of concrete individuals in concrete situations that are forged in relationships with each other, care is also collective, and not something individual–private, much less the private property of a field of know-how, of a specific science or profession (Costa, 2024). With this, we must go beyond psychology itself, overcoming it as a partial and private way of approaching objects and phenoms that are social, collectively produced, not being individual–private, even though expressed in or by the singularities of individuals.

Community-based and self-organisation initiatives can (and should) be understood as care initiatives and should therefore be strengthened. Solidarity must be reinforced as the substance of care processes and initiatives. Even in the clinical setting, whether necessary or possible, we can take conscientisation as its horizon (Makkawi, 2012), reiterating and materialising its educational and pedagogical character, in order to deprivatise care by reaffirming that it occurs fundamentally outside of the walls, of the institutions, of the limits of the psychotherapeutic sessions, and the boundaries of psychology. Care occurs in and by relationships with others, in everyday life, in the strengthening of bonds and less alienating and more humanising dimensions of life. In the case of Palestine, care and mental health strengthening can be part of the struggles—they already are.

We also point out as a lesson from the development of community psychology in Palestine, the need to go beyond the necessary but insufficient epistemological changes, in terms of ideas, concepts, and theories. They are not detached from historical soils, their contradictions, and the need to transform them. There is a risk, in this process, of reinforcing that the decolonisation of psychology is a mere decolonisation of psychological thought—as if that were possible. We cite as an example, the critique by Izzedin Araj (2023):

> We find ourselves today in an era of academic metaphors where many have divorced academic recognition from the recognized reality. Many academics write on decolonizing curriculums, epistemologies, methods, perceptions, and disciplinaries but hardly engage with actual forms of undoing injustice. (para. 8).

Community psychology, the critique of psychology, and its decolonisation are not metaphors; they are not mere rhetorical exercises. They are praxis. Thus, it is important to consider community psychology as a part of another ethical-political project of psychology,

which concerns the necessary changes from its ontological and epistemological foundations, but also rethinking its practice and its ethical-political implications. Broadly speaking, a change in the praxis of psychology, that dialectically results from this new praxis. A new praxis, linked to a new horizon not only of psychology, but of society, as postulated by Martín-Baró (2011) in his ethical-political project of liberation psychology—which implied our liberation from psychology.

Once again, recalling Makkawi (2017) and his teachings—including those derived from the author's own self-critical analysis of the development of academic community psychology in Palestine: 'unless framed within the context of the broader anti-colonial national liberation movement, a decolonised community psychology has minimal chances to survive and thrive' (p. 482).

We also emphasise the importance of listening to what is being silenced: the voice of the Palestinians themselves. They are telling us. They are screaming. In the case of psychology, this implies listening to what has been produced in terms of its critique, of counter-hegemonic constructions, as is the case with Palestinian community psychology. These assertions sound contradictory and comfortable, when the authors of this article are not Palestinian. However, for this very reason, we seek to undertake historical recovery of Palestinian community psychology's development, extracting lessons from it, rather than assuming that we have something to teach them, telling them what they should do. Doing that we would be reproducing a (colonial) stance of treating the Other as a mere object, denying it. We seek to equip ourselves with the voices that speak for themselves, that have cried out, despite all the silencing, seeking to be a space for their vocalisation.

Furthermore, being from a country, Brazil, that was colonised and is dependent on the capitalist dynamics, we know that what happens at Gaza also happens in our country (or will happen, if Israel wins), obviously in conditions and proportions that cannot be compared—even because barbarity is not equated or hierarchised. Concretely, the bullets that kill young Brazilian people (black, poor, and from the *favelas*) are produced by Israel and tested on Palestinians. The genocide against our indigenous peoples that does not retreat—despite all the resistance, struggle, and achievements—has its corollary in the genocide perpetrated by Israel against Palestine. Palestine has been a great laboratory for state terrorism, ethnic cleansing, and the development of productive forces of death and barbarity.

In our view, looking into this process allows us to understanding better the Brazilian—and Latin American—reality, but, at the same time, expanding it, going beyond our particularities. Although one can correctly question that the Arab world is not readable from the ontological logic inherited from the Western world, and vice versa, it's also questionable that the conception of Latin America and other realities that were (and still are) colonised as the *Western world*—even if they dialectically are, not passing unscathed by it. Understanding that within the capitalist social totality framework, there are numerous similarities between the

processes of psychology's development in the capitalism periphery. They express the unequal and combined development of this mode of production itself, and the colonised, underdeveloped (or overexploited) particularities of social formations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (and even some in Europe). More than ever, we need unity among the *wretched of the earth*, even in psychology—and, therefore, against it, to transform and overcome it.

In addition, at no time do we consider ourselves as spokespeople for Palestinian reality and psychology. However, we feel compelled by reality itself and by an ethical-political commitment to its transformation. This concerns the relevance of providing support and solidarity to Palestine and the Palestinians, as well as the importance of producing knowledge that engages with Palestinian resistance—as has been happening in the journal *Psychotherapy and Politics International* itself (e.g., Gaba, 2024; Mendelsohn, 2023; Minikin & Pavón-Cuéllar, 2023; Palmieri, 2023; Parker, 2023; Sheehi & Sheehi, 2023).

As Jabr (2024e) points out, 'international solidarity with the Palestinians helps alleviate the psychological pain and alienation caused by Israel's relentless dehumanisation and the world's demonstrated apathy and denial, as well as the lack of denunciation' (p. 164, our translation). In this, solidarity with Palestine is also 'a mental health imperative' (Jabr, 2024d, p. 151, our translation). However, this solidarity, as a political praxis, can and should go further, meaning movements of boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) within and/or through psychology, reinforcing this important initiative, as well as strengthening other actions of Palestinian psychology—such as networks, associations, etc. However, together with all of that, we need to go beyond psychology.

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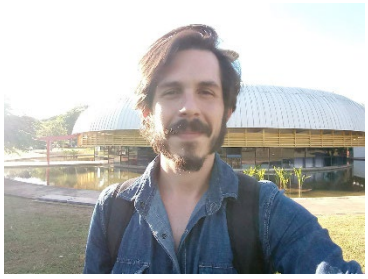
AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



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