

BEYOND THE THEORIES

MÁS ALLÁ DE LAS TEORÍAS

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55611/reps.3401.01>

Mae Lynn Reyes-Rodríguez¹

¹The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, United States of America

The *Puerto Rican Journal of Psychology (reps)* begins 2023 as a quarterly journal. With three publications per year (spring, summer and winter), serves the purpose to provide better opportunity for publications on diverse topics, at the same time, dedicating an issue for a special topic of interest for the editorial board and/or of social relevance. I have titled my editorial note **“Beyond the Theories”** because we find ourselves in a historical moment where theories remain in a vacuum if we fail to address the complex reality that we are experiencing at all levels. We are facing a climate crisis, inflation that aggravates social inequalities, poverty, food insecurity, an environment of intolerance, racism, an increase in femicide, gentrification, displacement, crime, government corruption, among many other social problems that are affecting mental health in our society and without a coherent government plan to tackle them.

Given the challenges that we face, I wonder, what is the role of psychology as discipline that possess the responsibility to promote the well-being of communities. What is the purpose of theories, beyond contributing with a possible explanation of a phenomenon, behavior or emotions? What are we doing as psychologists to tackle the crises we are experiencing as community? These questions challenge us when we come out of our ivory tower and see the reality that is not waiting for a theory to be understood, but rather for actions that improve the quality of life or lessens the suffering of communities. How to find the right balance where we integrate those conceptual theoretical aspects with practice and, how do we visualize the praxis? There is a call for a rethinking of our positioning as psychologists and about the functionality and direction that we want to give to our discipline promoting the mental health well-being. This reflection must take place from the training stage on those people who contribute to it and those who are being trained in order to build a discipline that

responds to the needs that are lived within the historical-cultural context.

The first 2023 issue features nine regular articles that address a variety of topics. Three articles are aimed at addressing issues of the LGBTQ+ community with the purpose of having a better understanding of how discrimination processes are experienced at a social level (Jiménez Del Toro, Cruz Santos & Rosario Rodríguez), personal (Rivas et al.,) or family (Lozano-Verduzco & Padilla Gamez). A community that we have given a voice from the clinical point of view, but that we have failed to provide a social environment of acceptance and justice. On the other hand, Arboleda-Sánchez and collaborators urge us to go beyond the limitations that categories and diagnoses sometimes predispose. The article *“Autism spectrum disorder and mirror neuron system: The role of individual differences”* presents us with the importance of not placing limits on people with autism spectrum disorder and focusing on neural processes that can highlight their areas of strength and integrate them in school and clinical contexts. In this challenge, the discipline has the responsibility of looking for models that contextualize the processes within history and culture and that represent a possibility of social changes. Rodríguez Arocho articulates the contributions of the work carried out by the Puerto Rican Luis C. Moll in educational processes, particularly with the process of funds of knowledge and the integration of historical-cultural aspects and its potential contribution as an instrument of social justice. In the same line of thought, Rolón Martínez and collaborators explored the working conditions for school psychologists. A field in full development in Puerto Rico with the proliferation of graduate programs in school psychology and the increase in the presence of psychologists in different scenarios of the school system. Arzate Morales and collaborators study the social aspect in school by assessing the psychometric properties of a social skills scale in a Mexican university

sample. A recognition that educational processes are not disconnected from social processes, but rather integrated. In another look, the integration of spiritual elements as part of the therapeutic processes was reviewed, particularly for those people who the spiritual practices represent a central axis of their lives (López-Sierra & Pagán-Torres). Finally, the article "*The last straw: Motivations for first-time protesters during the summer of 2019*" from Espada-Brignoni is an example of the possibility of the response for a call for action by the community. However, without a real change, waves of frustrations are like those theories that make sense, but in reality, they are incomplete acts that do not translate into changes that improves the quality of life. I hope that we continue in reflection-change acts because time is pressing and lives are slipping away while suffering worsens.

I would like to thank the authors who have trusted the *Puerto Rican Journal of Psychology* for the publication of their papers, all the reviewers who contributed with the revisions of the papers to guarantee a higher quality, and of course, our editorial team, who without their support it would be impossible to see the final product. I hope we continue moving beyond the theories.

Mae Lynn Reyes-Rodríguez, PhD., FAED
Editor-in-chief
Puerto Rican Journal of Psychology