

Collective Psychology & Social Justice Communities

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Abstract; Psychology has traditionally focused on improving the well-being of individuals, couples, families, and groups, and psychology tends to be widespread in treating values such as social justice as only general goals rather than theoretical concepts that have four identified empirical content. First we discuss how different concepts of social justice fall into three main intellectual traditions in community psychology: (1) the prevention and health promotion tradition, (2) the empowerment tradition, and most recently, (3) the critical tradition. Justice is an absolute requirement in human relations, in the life of society, nation, and state. The great demand for justice that has recently emerged is actually a normative demand. However, the reality is not as expected where many social injustices occur, why can it happen, does justice not exist now? Justice can be seen from various perspectives, from a moral point of view, justice becomes a high value by society. At the operational level, justice is very complex and not easily accepted by the community. "Because communication can be used as a means when there is a social injustice which is a little difficult for the community to do because it prioritizes emotion over logic. What the community should do if it happens is make a report or if they don't want to report because of the long process, the community can communicate with each other without having a conflict that occurs."

Keyword: Community Psychology, Sosial Justice Community

1. Introduction

Community psychology can be defined simply as the applied study of the relationship between social systems and individual well-being in the context of communities. It is a sub-discipline of psychology concerned with understanding people in the context of community, prevention of problems in life, celebration of human diversity, and pursuit of social justice through social action (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2009). Community psychology is the psychology of community psychology because it emphasizes a level of analysis and intervention beyond the individual

individuals and their immediate interpersonal context. It is community psychology because it remains concerned with how people feel, think, experience, and

act as they work together, resist oppression and strive to create a better world (Burton, Boyle, Harris, & Kagan, 2007).

Communication psychology is a series of processes to obtain information related to psychological and environmental factors that can support or inhibit human attitudes. The definition was conveyed by Gita Sekar Prihatin in her book *Empathy and Communication* in 2017. In another sense, because it is derived from two words, 'psychology' which studies the science of the psyche and 'communication' which studies how we interact, the psychology of communication is defined as the process of recognizing the character and attitudes of the communicants or interlocutors by not neglecting the psychological aspects.

It is important to note that community psychology has emerged around the world for different purposes and in unique social, political and cultural situations. A common thread in its emergence is the recognition of injustice and unfairness in social systems and the resulting negative impact on people's well-being (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001).

Social justice is a value and a goal enshrined in the vision of the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA), Division 27 of the American Psychological Association. Social justice also has several main goals, one of which is:

To engage in action, research, and practice committed to promoting the distribution of resources, equal opportunity for all, non-exploitation, prevention of violence, active participation, liberation of oppressed communities, greater inclusion of historically marginalized groups, and greater respect for all cultures. Social justice is a right for every citizen living together in a country. Legal treatment is not differentiated between the upper class and the lower class, all are entitled to a fair and equal law with others. Social justice can also be a major focus in community psychology, one of the reasons is that social justice as a concept is very common.

One reason is that social justice as a concept is so commonly used that its meaning and relationship to others is widely assumed to be self-evident (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002).

2. Discussion

2.1. Community Psychology and Social Justice

Social justice, as a value and purpose, has been integral to the vision of the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA), Division 27 of the American Psychological Association. SCRA will make a strong global impact in improving well-being and promoting social justice for all people by facilitating collaboration in places of division and empowerment in places of oppression. Social justice is also part of one of its main goals: to engage in action, research, and practice committed to promoting equitable distribution of resources, equal opportunity for all, non-exploitation, violence

prevention, active citizenship, liberation of oppressed communities, greater inclusion of historically marginalized groups, and respect for all cultures.

Although concerns for social justice took center stage in the development of community psychology and are currently identified as a guiding principle for the field, terms such as justice, social justice, distributive justice, or procedural justice are not found in the subject indexes of some leading community psychology textbooks in the United States prior to 2002. In the past two decades, there have been increasing calls for the field of community psychology to be concerned with social justice and raising critical consciousness. This has created a growing expectation that community psychologists will be allies to oppressed groups in the struggle for social justice. We will discuss beliefs and assumptions about social justice in community psychology and compare them to traditional clinical psychology. Next, we will discuss research and action approaches used by community psychologists to understand and promote social justice. Finally, we will reflect on the global aspects of social justice within the field and highlight future trends and implications for research and action in community psychology.

2.2. Defining Social Justice in Community Psychology

In community psychology, social justice is often a central focus, but concerns have been raised that the concept of social justice is so often used that its meaning and relationship to practice is considered unclear (Fondacaro & Weinberg, 2002). In the past decade, there have been several attempts to elucidate a greater degree of specificity in describing this concept in order to create a framework for understanding justice in community psychology work.

In this section, we highlight a community psychology view of social justice that

- a. Distinguishes between distributive and procedural justice
- b. Recognizes social justice as a multi-level construct that can be broken down into several subtypes,
- c. Places justice in its proper socio-historical, cultural, and political context.

Distributive and Procedural Justice: What is commonly articulated as social justice has recently been decomposed into two subtypes of justice: distributive and procedural. Although this refinement is relatively new, when discussing social justice, many specifically refer to distributive justice. Distributive justice is "the fair and equal provision of resources, opportunities, obligations, and power within society as a whole" (Prilleltensky, 2001). This definition reminds us that an understanding of social justice must include both rights and obligations. Justice consists of two complementary statements: to each individual, family, organization, community according to need, ability, effort, opportunity, right, and power, and from each individual, family, organization, community according to need, ability, obligation, opportunity, and privilege (Prilleltensky & Nelson 2009; Sandel, 2009).

Procedural justice refers to decision-making processes that are fair, transparent, inclusive, respectful, and participatory. While distributive justice focuses on outcomes, procedural justice focuses on process and the desire for collective decision-making methods to involve fair representation, voice, and power of citizens (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2006; Miller, 1999; Prilleltensky, 2012). This emphasis is on the importance of procedural justice as a mechanism to enhance cooperation and empowerment beyond the traditional focus on resource distribution (Drew, Bishop, & Syme, 2002).

2.3. Social Justice as a Multi-level Construct

The two dimensions of justice, distributive and procedural, have different implications in improving the well-being of individuals, groups and communities. According to Prilleltensky (2012), the tripartite framework is used to explain the contextual nature of social justice as a multi-level construct. Although still in its infancy, this type of analysis illustrates how community psychologists confront issues of justice at different levels of the social environment. As a result, various potential subtypes of justice can be identified ranging from the micro level, i.e. individual relationships, to the meso and macro levels, i.e. groups and societies.

At the micro level, distributive and procedural justice are primarily concerned with justice in the context of individual relationships. For example, distributive justice in interpersonal interactions involves the sharing of goods and responsibilities in a relationship. Likewise, procedural justice in interpersonal relationships concerns non-exploitative relationships, with dignity, respect, and shared decision-making processes (Prilleltensky, 2012). At the meso level, i.e. organizations and institutions, the same principles underlying conceptions of justice apply, but in a broader context. One example of distributive justice at this level is fairness in workplace pay. Procedural justice considerations at this level emphasize the importance of sufficient information and participation in distribution-related decision-making at the organizational and institutional levels. For example, informational justice highlights the importance of transparency in decision-making processes at the institutional level (Prilleltensky, 2012). When certain subtypes of justice are not met, social marginalization and exclusion may occur.

At a broader, macro level of analysis, additional considerations of justice are specific to communities and countries. In line with other levels of analysis, distributive and procedural justice demand that all individuals have equal access to economic resources and services, while also receiving fair treatment from these social systems. This issue is particularly important for social dynamics involving social group affiliations (e.g., race, gender, social class, etc.) and often concerns issues of equality and civil rights. Examples of systems at this level where cultural justice is an important issue include justice systems, public education, social security, and other socio-political structures and services.

At each level of analysis, from personal to communal, a unique type of justice plays an important role. Fundamentally, however, we are talking about the exchange of goods or obligations (distributive justice subtype) or the process by which allocations are made (procedural justice subtype). All types of justice seek to answer the question of what or how (Prilleltensky, 2012).

2.4. Social Justice in Context

While various forms of justice at different levels of the social environment have begun to be more clearly outlined, attempts to apply these concepts are not without challenges. For example, a prominent issue related to distributive justice is how to ascertain what one should receive. Prilleltensky (2012) reminds us that the crux of this debate lies in whether to use merit or need criteria. Using merit criteria implies that people should be rewarded based on effort, talent, and capacity. Needs criteria call for the distribution of resources based on what individuals need to experience a certain level of well-being.

Given the distinctive issues that characterize these two criteria, it is important to note that these perspectives are not entirely irreconcilable. Drew, Bishop, & Syme (2002) suggest that conceptions of justice should also be placed within the socio-historical backdrop of the appropriate political culture. In some contexts, needs should take precedence, while in other contexts merit should be preferred (Corning, 2011). The dynamic relationship between specific time periods, geographical places, and socio-political climates must be taken into account when addressing issues of justice. Consistent with community psychology's attention to the role of context in all aspects of well-being, understandings of social justice must be considered relative to these changing social dimensions. For example, the level of inequality is one issue that is heavily influenced by the contextual influences mentioned above.

Under conditions of relative equality, it would be fair to apply merit criteria and give advantages to those who work harder or have higher capacities. However, under conditions of inequality such as in the United States, it seems fair to favor need over merit (Prilleltensky, 2012). Even in contexts of high inequality, most cultures continue to favor merit over need, thereby maintaining inequity (Barry 2005; Ehrenreich 2009; Fleischacker 2004; Lakoff 2006; Schwalbe 2008; Lareau and Conley 2008).

2.5. Prevention and Social Justice

Community Psychology as a field has affirmed its commitment to social justice research and action. It will be a field of research and action that makes a significant difference to issues of social change by promoting social justice. Community Psychology will explicitly state its commitment to social change that promotes social justice and greater inclusion for historically marginalized groups, and will see that commitment manifest in various aspects of the field's work.

2.5.1. Prevention and Social Justice

Prevention, as opposed to remedial treatment, is one of the fundamental concepts in community psychology. In the article "Toward a Just Society" by George Albee (1986), the population-focused approach in public health that underlies prevention is linked to social justice. Albee presents research on the relationship between social class and mental disorders that was widely reviewed and theorized by Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend (1981) in community psychology. Dohrenwend's review established what is now called the "gradient" between social class and mental disorders; the higher one climbs up the social class ladder, the lower the level of mental disorders. In addition, they presented a social stress model that explained this gradient; as a person moved down the social class ladder, he or she was exposed to more toxic social conditions that led to mental disorders.

There is no threshold at which mental disorders develop; rather, the relationship between class and illness is continuous. Albee then refers to two principles from Rawls' (1971) theory of justice. According to the first principle, everyone should have equal rights to the broadest basic freedoms compatible with similar freedoms for others. According to the second principle, social and economic inequalities should be organized so that they provide the greatest benefit to the least advantaged and are linked to offices and positions open to all, under conditions of fair and equal opportunity. Essentially, the first principle states that rights are universal and should be accessible to all, while the second principle calls for the reduction of inequalities. Albee concludes that the task of community psychology is to explain the relationship between "social pathology and psychopathology" and to change social structures to make them more equitable.

2.5.2. *One Example: Early Childhood Development*

Community psychology has developed prevention approaches that seek to achieve social justice in various contexts, such as racism and heterosexism (Kenny & Hage, 2009). One issue directly related to social justice is early childhood development (ECD) (Social Justice in OECD, 2011; UNICEF, 2012).

- a. First of all, every child has the right to ECD resources, including health, nutrition, child protection, social protection, welfare, and education, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All goals (Britto, Yoshikawa, & Bowler, 2011).
- b. Secondly, the field of ECD uses an ecological perspective, which recognizes that children's well-being depends on the well-being of the family and society as a whole. This is based on principles of social justice in resource allocation and support for strong community structures (Prilleltensky, 2012; Prilleltensky, Laurendeau, Chamberland, & Peirson, 2001).
- c. Third, ECD research shows the existence of social class gradients for various domains of child development, such as health and academic achievement (Keating & Hertzman, 1999; Siddiqui et al., 2012). These gradients are found in

"have" and "have-not" countries around the world (Hertzman et al., 2010; Siddiqui et al., 2012).

Social class gradients vary in steepness or flatness across countries. Countries with flatter gradients, due to lower levels of social class inequality, have better child development outcomes (McCain, Mustard, & Shanker, 2007; Siddiqui et al., 2012). For example, Sweden, which has ECD support policies and wealthy families, has a relatively flat gradient and low rates of child development problems (Hertzman et al., 2010). Similarly, Cuba, although a relatively poor country, also has a flat gradient and surpasses other Latin American countries in terms of children's health and academic achievement, comparable to many European countries and the US, with a strong emphasis on education and universal health care (McCain, Mustard, & McCuaig, 2011; McCain et al., 2007; Hertzman et al., 2010). These findings on social class gradients and child development outcomes support Prilleltensky's (2012) thesis, that equity leads to well-being.

3. Conclusion

Community psychology is the study of the relationship between social systems and individual well-being within communities. It emphasizes a level of analysis and intervention beyond the individual and concerns itself with social justice and human diversity. Communication psychology is the process of recognizing the character and attitudes of communicants by considering psychological aspects. Community psychology emerged around the world due to recognition of injustice and its negative impact on well-being. Social justice is a right for every citizen and can be a major focus in community psychology.

The Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) is committed to promoting social justice, equal opportunity, non-exploitation, and violence prevention. Social justice is a central focus in community psychology, but its meaning and relationship to practice can be unclear. Social justice can be broken down into distributive and procedural justice. Distributive justice is the fair and equal provision of resources, while procedural justice focuses on fair and transparent decision-making processes. Community psychologists confront issues of justice at different levels of the social environment, from individual relationships to communities and countries. Distributive and procedural justice have different implications for individual, group, and community well-being. Ascertaining what one should receive according to merit or need criteria is a prominent issue related to distributive justice. Under conditions of inequality, it seems fair to favor need over merit. Community psychology is committed to social change that promotes social justice and greater inclusion for historically marginalized groups. Prevention, as opposed to remedial treatment, is a fundamental concept in community psychology, linked to social justice through a population-focused approach in public health.

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