CORE COMMUNITARIAN VALUES FOR COMMUNITY PRACTICE: HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, EMPOWERMENT, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

James Anderson, Department of History, University of Edinburgh

Abstract

Values are conceptions of good which enlighten and guide human analysis and action. Discounting noteworthy exceptions, community psychology has neglected making explicit and openly discussing its ethical and value dimensions. My aim in this paper to partially remedy such neglect by posing new sustantive values and approaches suitable for community practice. I suggest first changes in the deontological values to adapt them to the complexity and dynamism of community work. So I put forward shared or collective autonomy, that extends self-direction to the whole community, to substitue for individual disolving autonomy. I also introduce self-care (legitimate self-beneficence) to guarantee psychological and moral integrity of the practitioner as well as long term sustainability of communiy action. I describe, secondly, some core communitarian values. Human development which includes interaction and social bonding besides self-direction. Empowerment, an instrumental value, made of subjective consciousness, communication, and effective social action. Social justice, the main socio-communitarian value, consist of three components: a vital universal minimum, fair distribution of material and psychosocial goods and resources produced by society, and equalitarian personal treatment and relationship.

Keywords : values; community psychology; ethics; shared autonomy; self-care; human development; empowerment; social justice

Introduction

Community psychology (CP) has not valued its evaluative and ethical implications, which only since the 1990s have begun to receive the explicit attention that they deserve due to their importance. Although in 1977 Rappaport pointed out values as one of the three pillars ("values, research and action") that support the field in the subtitle of his book, he has focused his efforts on transformative action and research, relegating a second level is the identification and foundation of values, as well as the construction of a practical ethics differentiated from clinical deontology and academic or congressional rhetoric. But whatever their intrinsic merit, neither the deontological rule nor the great ethical-political discourse are appropriate for community practice, which respectively generates, individual approaches not suitable for the complexity and dynamism of community issues and rhetorical generalities interesting for intellectual debate but of little use as a guide to concrete analysis and practice. It is fair, however, to point out some exceptions to the general neglect of values and ethics in the community and psychosocial field: Bermant, Kelman, & Warwick, 1978; Heller, 1989; Jeger & Slotnick, 1982; Kofkin, 2003; Laue & Cormick, 1978; Montero 2004; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; O'Neill, 1989; Prilleltensky, 1997; 2001; Sánchez, 1999; 2004; 2007; in press; Serrano, 1994; Snow, Grady, & Goyette-Ewing, 2000; Winkler Alvear, Olivares, & Pasmanik, 2012.

I am not denying the ethical vocation inherent to community enterprise in its different versions, but rather the sustained, visible and specific effort to specify and make explicit that vocation through public discussion of the different

evaluative positions and practices that are often taken for granted. 'and agreed. I maintain that the effort dedicated to ethics and values does not stand up to comparison - in qualitative or quantitative terms - with that dedicated in PC to other areas such as the description of programs and experiences or empirical research. Nor does the number of references cited (which could be considerably expanded) refute the thesis: ethical neglect is not a question of quantity but of quality and assessment. That is visible in: 1) the limited value recognized to ethical and evaluative themes in relation to their crucial importance in community practice and theory; 2) the peripheral or adjective quality recognized to those topics, often seen, not as inherently valuable topics, but as mere companions (the 'ethical questions' raised by issue or action X) of other topics - technical, empirical or theoretical - nouns that usually fill magazines, books and presentations.

Causes and effects

The examination of discourse and written literature allows us to identify (Davidson, 1989; Kofkin, 2003; Sánchez, 2004) four different reasons but with convergent effects, to explain evaluative relegation and ethical neglect: excessive activism to the detriment of evaluative foundations (and theorists) of action; the weakness of the scientific and technical base of the field, which increases uncertainty and the difficulty in foreseeing and controlling the effects of the action, which makes it difficult to assume responsibilities; the influence of rationalist positivism that advises dispensing with values in order to build a respectable 'hard' science and a neutral practice; and Manichean 'goodism', since we are moved by the best intentions and we try to do good,

The explicit neglect of values, the insufficiency of the systematic and explicit elaboration of a community ethic and the unjustifiable feeling of moral superiority have had the effect of an extensive practical anemia that the community psychologist has alleviated by making use of the limited existing deontological values or the has 'absorbed' experiencing a sense of failure and stress as undeserved as it is difficult to avoid. The explicit and systematic approach to psychosocial ethics and values appropriate to the aspirations and characteristics of community work is therefore a theoretically relevant and practically urgent task.

As part of that task, I present in this article 'new' values of psychosocial and community practice. The novelty consists of operationally explaining basic socio-community values (such as social justice), redefining deontological values - such as autonomy - traditionally seen as individual attributes, to adapt them to community work and introducing values absent from current proposals, such as self -careful. I base this on Bermant, et al. (1978), the articles by O'Neill (1989), Heller (1989) and others in the American Journal monograph ef Cemmunity Psychelegy, as well as my earlier writings, especially those from 1999; 2007 and in press. Before describing the new approaches and values, I briefly define moral values and their functions in community action.

Moral value systems and community action

Moral values embody conceptions of the humanly good (such as justice, autonomy or truth) in human actions and relationships and in their consequences. I assume that good and evil are not absolute but that - like the values that represent them - they admit gradation so that we can value an action or relationship A - and its consequences - as better or more morally desirable

than an action or relationship B. In practice we can conceive moral values as desirable qualities of people (autonomy, truthfulness) or society and its institutions (social justice, solidarity, reciprocity) whose limited set forms the concrete ideal of person, community or society, the 'profile'. moral' personal that we would want for ourselves (or our children), or social, desirable for the community in which we would want to live.

What function do values have on PC? What is its relationship with the practitioner's performance? Since values are those that outline desirable personal (personal moral values) or social (social moral values) qualities, the practitioner must promote them explicitly, but also implicitly in their attitudes, relationships and professional performance. In this way, their relationship with clients or the community must be truthful, equitable and respectful of others and their social actions must contribute to increasing social justice, solidarity or reciprocity in the community. In short, ethical values illuminate the analyzes and guide the conduct of the community practitioner by identifying the characteristics of the society in which we want to live and the people with whom it is worth living.

The practical management of values in social action demands a totalizing vision in which, far from being something absolute, with an immanent and fixed 'value', values must form systems or constellations of agreed value that people - persons or institutions social - tends to associate and interrelate. On the other hand, since practitioners do not have the time, capacity or precise means to promote all values at the same time and to the same degree, the practical management of values in PC requires ranking them according to their value in a context and situation. subjective and examine the relationships between the

various relevant values according to their content and concrete meaning in the given situation. An initial step in the practical management of values in PC will therefore be

Note that the above practical considerations do not deny the universality of certain agreed-upon values as such (Doyal and Gough, 1994), but rather the practical absolutism of any singular value and its evaluative constancy. It denies, in other words, that a given value always and everywhere has a fixed and invariable moral merit, independent of personal circumstances and social context. Thus, social justice will not have the same importance and mobilizing force for people in a situation of great inequality and deprivation as in a more uniformly rich society with minimal differences. Freedom does not mean the same for a person imprisoned or living in a dictatorship as for another who lives in a society with guaranteed basic freedoms (and vital needs covered).

Deontological values in community psychology

Although deontological values and principles (Beauchamp & Childress, 1999; Franga-Tarragó, 1996) have a clinical basis and are designed to guide professional action with individual clients, they concern basic ethical issues of human action and enjoy a broad consensus. professional. They include three values associated with the central actors of professional action: the client's autonomy, his beneficence and social justice, the value of society. To them we must add truthfulness and trust - supports of the relationship between professional and client - and self-interest - the professional's second value - to have a coherent whole. But in order to be able to fruitfully use these values in PC, it is necessary to modify them by making a more social and appropriate reading of the conditions, aspirations and community way of working.

Thus, in the case of beneficence - of clear meaning with individual clients -, in the presence of various social actors, we must ask what beneficence - or non-maleficence - should take precedence in the event of conflict or unequal distribution of the positive and negative effects of a given option? On the other hand, trust is designed for dyadic relationships between two individuals, but how does its definition and practical cultivation change in the relationship of a practitioner (or a team) with groups and social collectives? What to do when a way of acting Or does interacting strengthen trust with group A but weaken the trust we maintain with B or C? Likewise, truthfulness can have an initial reading as factual truthfulness, simple and acceptable in simple and well-defined situations: telling the truth about data, facts and verifiable behaviors. But how do we define it in complex social relationships and issues that always include a great deal of subjectivity and diversity? In this case, to the objective data and facts we must add the effect of individual subjectivity (meanings, feelings, values) and social interests that allow us to capture the particular vision of each subject (the 'partial truths') and, in turn, the degree of integration or final global coherence of objective and subjective data, holistic veracity. The concept of social justice used in deontology is, in short, too narrow (it means making psychological goods and techniques available to all and not discriminating against clients) and will be expanded in the section on socio-community values. How do we define it in complex social relationships and issues that always include a great deal of subjectivity and diversity? In this case, to the objective data and facts we must add the effect of individual subjectivity (meanings, feelings, values) and social interests that allow us to capture the particular vision of each subject (the 'partial truths') and, in turn, the

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I now focus on the two most important evaluative 'novelties' in this section: the extension of autonomy (generally read as an individual value or attribute) and the vindication of self-care as a form of legitimate self-interest of the practitioner.

Collective or shared autonomy

We can define autonomy as the capacity (sum of freedom and power) of personal self-determination, of creating and carrying out one's own life project. The adoption of this value, generally understood as individual autonomy, to guide community practice generates a double problem: 1) autonomy, elevated to the category of supreme social value - as happens in the modern West - encourages individualism and ethical egoism. and seriously erodes solidarity, it becomes (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton,

1989) a dangerous social solvent; 2) since it is an attribute of individual ownership, it is inadequate for an action focused on the community group. It seems precise therefore,

This new expanded conception of autonomy should - in my opinion - meet two conditions: 1) transcend the goal of liberation from destructive relationships or oppressions (autonomy of), including and underlining the positive goal of developing the potential of people and groups (autonomy for); 2) recognize reciprocity and personal interdependence and be compatible with the exercise of solidarity that allows recreating the community and carrying out shared collective projects. This combination of positive autonomy and solidarity (which we would call shared or collective autonomy) would allow the development of both individuality and personal projects as well as social collaboration in pursuit of shared or negotiated objectives that transcend strictly individual goals.

Even though the proposed collective autonomy is more appropriate for PC and resolves several of the objections made to the individual conception of value, it falls short of being optimal. On the contrary, it raises challenges that can go beyond the social mandate and capabilities of the field (Doyal and Gough, 1994; Sen, 1990) given that it implies the construction of a set of institutions and social systems capable of offering the collective options that allow communities and specific people choose - within certain limits - a meaningful and valuable way of living.

Self-interest and self-care

Modifying Thompson's (1989) proposal, it is also convenient to add the practitioner's self-interest, a value linked to self-care and understood more as an

ethical ground to psychologically support the practitioner or as a modulating (or limiting) principle of others and not as a basic guiding value. The mandate of self-care (and the value of self-interest on which it is based) derive from the extension to the practitioner of the quality of ethical subject - not a mere technical means for the well-being of the client - and from the consequent application of the principle of non-maleficence that ensures the same protection that other subjects of professional or community action enjoy. We are thus reaffirming ethical universality in the professional area.

CUADRO 1.
Autonomía personal y compartida o colectiva

- Promover la capacidad de auto-determinación (tomar decisiones y dirigir la propia vida) de personas y comunidades.
- Tratar a personas y/o comunidades como agentes de sus propias decisiones y acciones y no como objeto de las acciones, intenciones o fines del practicante.
- Respetar la dignidad y capacidad de elegir, decidir y actuar por sí mismo.
- Pactar con el destinatario los fines de la acción y obtener su consentimiento voluntario e informado.
- Informar sobre la acción a realizar, derechos y deberes mutuos y consecuencias previsibles.
- Evitar relaciones y situaciones sociales que creen dependencia, desamparo o impotencia.
- Evitar intervencionismo: no hacer por los demás lo que estos puedan hacer por sí mismos.
- Reconocer y recordar la necesidad de compartir con otros la capacidad de decisión y auto-determinación en asuntos de titularidad colectiva.
- Recordar la necesidad y conveniencia de participar en las decisiones y acciones colectivas que promueven la auto-dirección compartida.
- Facilitar la interacción y vinculación social que permiten definir y perseguir el bien común.

Fuente: elaboración propia

But self-care also fulfills an important practical function: preventing the practitioner from being used by the community beyond what is psychologically healthy (and morally acceptable), which would produce the 'burn out' of the professional and the consequent ineffectiveness and unsustainability of their actions over time. Placing psychological limits on the practitioner's availability is, in short, a relevant ethical and strategic requirement to personally protect the practitioner and to guarantee his professional competence and beneficence in the long run. Self-care would recognize the practitioner (Table 2) certain basic rights such as maintaining their integrity, not being used by the other for their own purposes (beyond what was agreed upon and morally admissible), or the

rights to the precise means to achieve agreed ends and to professional reputation.

CUADRO 2.
Auto-interés legítimo, auto-cuidado

- 'Suelo' ético: marca límites humanos a otros principios; permite al practicante trabajar eficaz y sostenidamente para otros.
- Cuidarse a sí mismo: el practicante es también sujeto, no solo medio técnico para el bien de la comunidad.
- Derecho a mantener la integridad física y psicológica.
- Derecho a no ser utilizado por el otro y a no implicarse afectiva o personalmente en su vida y problemas más allá de lo exigido por la beneficencia general y la buena *praxis*.
- Derecho a los medios (información, motivación y colaboración, medios económicos, etc.) precisos para alcanzar los fines pactados.
- Derecho a mantener la reputación profesional y a condiciones de trabajo dignas.

Fuente: elaboración propia

Socio-community values and principles

As desirable social qualities, socio-community values should be more appropriate to analytically illuminate and practically guide CP. Given that their emergence is recent and they have not been sufficiently explained and discussed, we ignore the degree of professional consensus and social acceptance that different proposals - such as the one outlined here - could enjoy. Let us state -before specifying its content- two additional characteristics of these values. One, since they are social values and principles, they concern the entire society (or community), which is ultimately responsible for their realization; the practitioner is only partially responsible (co-responsible) for promoting them. Two, as in personal values, We can make a distinction - significant but not absolute - between finalist values - which, having an intrinsic moral 'worth', mark the ends of the action - and instrumental values, whose moral merit depends on the extent to which, as means or methods, they promote the finalist values. Thus, participation would be an instrumental value for empowerment which in turn will be instrumental for the purposes of social justice and human development (finalist values).

The proposed socio-community system of values and principles revolves around social justice and solidarity and includes commitment and social responsibility, diversity, human development, empowerment, social participation and organization, and effectiveness. I now describe three novel or relevant values for PC - human development, empowerment and social justice - focusing above all on the last one as the main 'constructed' value of the socio-community system (solidarity being the central 'natural' value).

Personal and collective human development

Human development (Table 3) can be understood individually (development of people) or collectively (development of the community or society). It refers to the harmonious deployment of potential capabilities (personal or community) in dynamic interaction with the material and psychosocial environment under the direction of the subject. It not only implies personal or collective self-direction (autonomy), but also social connection, balance - between different aspects and capabilities - and integration of these aspects in a unitary process governed by the subject. In view of the social and moral havoc caused by excess individual autonomy (and its association with ethical selfishness and economic utility) and its insufficiencies in community action, I am proposing human development as an alternative moral value for both individual and micro-social, community work. Why? Because as a broader and more encompassing value (and concept), it not only presupposes human development, personal or collective self-direction (the acceptable aspect of autonomy), but also personal interaction and social bonding as constructive keys to the development of humanity (individual and collective) and the decision-making and action processes of the subjects that lead to its achievement. These assumptions make the concept of human

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CUADRO 3.
Desarrollo humano

- Promover el despliegue integral y auto-dirigido de las potencialidades y *capacidades personales* en interacción dinámica con un contexto socio-cultural que lo facilite.
- Apoyar la posibilidad de las personas de crear y realizar un proyecto de vida propio.
- Ayudar a crear contextos psicosociales (familias, grupos, etc.) que faciliten el *desarrollo humano* y desanimen relaciones y estructuras innecesariamente represivas o coartadoras.
- Ampliar la gama de opciones socio-económicas y culturales entre las que la gente puede elegir efectiva y responsablemente lo que puede ser o hacer (la vida que quieren llevar).
- *Desarrollo humano* = 'suma' de auto-dirección decisoria o vital, relación interpersonal y cooperación social, igualdad de acceso a, y la distribución de, medios socio-políticos y jurídicos (participación política, seguridad e igualdad jurídica, igualdad de oportunidades sociales…)

Fuente: elaboración propia

Empowerment

Empowerment is the process of acquiring power and its substantive result, the power actually achieved. It is an instrumental value for the purposes of human development (which requires freedom of choice and power of achievement) and social justice that involves equity in the distribution of power and social and psychological resources based on a basic vital minimum. Operationally, empowerment implies (Sánchez, 2013) the subjective awareness of power, communication between people and groups, and the organization and participation of subjects in effective actions to obtain valuable social resources, either through cooperation - which allows sharing power with others-, or through conflict to redistribute power.Table 4).

CUADRO 4.
Empoderamiento

- Adquisición de poder personal participando en acciones colectivas para alcanzar bienes y metas sociales valiosos y legítimos.
- Impulsar el sentimiento *subjetivo* de potencia (sobre todo en grupos marginales), generando expectativas de *empoderamiento*.
- Promover/fortalecer los procesos de *comunicación social* que posibilitan la elaboración de objetivos comunes, la organización social y la participación en acciones colectivas.
- Ayudar a discriminar los contextos sociales que permiten el *empoderamiento cooperativo* de aquéllos en que hay que usar el *conflicto* y la confrontación para redistribuir el poder.
- Asesorar/facilitar la realización de *acciones eficaces* en la consecución de bienes sociales valiosos que permiten la adquisición efectiva de poder y confirman las expectativas iniciales.

Fuente: elaboración propia

Social justice: Distributive justice, vital minimum and relational equity

Being a value of social ownership, the definition and realization of social justice is the responsibility of the entire society; specific social actors and sectors have partial roles (ideally complementary and convergent) in its achievement depending on the contributions (educational, economic, psychological, etc.) of each sector and the contribution that the correct management of these contributions can make to global social justice. As a cardinal value of any society (Rawls, 1971), it has been conceived and operationally defined in various ways. I develop here the three components identified by Bellah et al. (1989) that are relevant to guide community action aimed at promoting that value: a substantive, 'minimum' component; the redistribution of social goods and resources; and the procedural component, Table 5).

CUADRO 5.
Justicia social: Definición y componentes

Definición: Acceso a los bienes materiales y psicosociales precisos para llevar una vida digna y valiosa, obteniendo un trato igualitario (pero que respete la singularidad psicológica y la legítima diferencia socio-cultural) y promoviendo la distribución equitativa de los bienes y recursos sociales valiosos en función de la necesidad humana y la contribución personal y colectiva a la producción de esos bienes y recursos.

Componentes
Justicia sustantiva, mínimo vital que garantiza aa todas las personas:
• las necesidades materiales y biofísicas: alimentación, vivienda, trabajo, salud y educación básicas
• los bienes y aspiraciones psicosocales esenciales: dignidad, seguridad y autoestima, auto-dirección, vinculación interpersonal y pertenencia social
Justicia distributiva distribución equitativa de poder y bienes sociales; igualdad de oportunidades y acceso a los bienes y recursos sociales. Aquí resulta clave el criterio de *equidad* elegido (tipo de igualdad promovida): mínimo universal (justicia sustantiva), necesidad, esfuerzo, mérito, logro, o una combinación de varios criterios.
Justicia procesal, trato humanamente igual para todos (según cualidades bio-psicológicas, socio-culturales y mereci-miento personal de cada quién. Por medio de esta se favorece a los más débiles o necesitados (principio de la diferen-cia; discriminación positiva)

Fuente: elaboración propia

1.Substantive, minimum justice

It is the set of goods necessary to achieve humanity and lead a dignified life; the 'soil' or basis of justice (and humanity) on which broader social justice can be built by adding the equitable distribution of other goods. It defines a human vital minimum that would include the provision of material and socio-economic goods (food, housing, work, basic health and education), but also psychosocial goods such as dignity, personal security, self-esteem, personal autonomy, interpersonal connection, social belonging and participation.

2. Distributive justice, the central core

This is the dominant idea in social justice. The equitable distribution of wealth, power, esteem and other valuable social resources that grants each person or group the same possibilities of obtaining the material and immaterial goods that contribute to their human development. To clarify and apply distributive justice, it is key to specify the meaning and operational criteria of equity in the distribution of social goods and the human equality that we want to achieve: in

what aspect we intend for people or groups to be equal (which will necessarily imply inequality in other qualities or aspects).

The criteria of equity suggested in social action (Doménech, 1989) are: a given amount or a minimum of goods and resources (the vital minimum of the previous point), the need, the effort made or personal merit, the achievements achieved in work and study, or equality of satisfaction and well-being. The choice of each criterion would lead to one type or another of equity (and social justice) and personal equality in some aspects at the cost of inequalities in others. If priority is given, for example, to the criteria of need, those of merit or effort are neglected and the contributions that people make to society are ignored. If, on the contrary, only merit or achievement is considered, rewarding those who contribute the most to the community, the least suitable - and the most vulnerable - will be harmed.

3. Procedural or treatment justice

It involves treating and relating to others fairly and equitably. We encounter the same paradox found in the issue of equity: does this mean treating all people in the same way or, taking into account the value of diversity, treating each person according to their personal qualities and specific socio-cultural circumstances? ? The criterion of treating everyone in the same way in the core human aspects, recognizing those that differentiate us psychologically, socially or economically in order to favor the most needy or helpless (principle of difference) can be useful, although it is probably insufficient.

We can say in summary that a society or community is fair when its members have a minimum of material and psychosocial goods necessary to lead a dignified life, are treated (and relate to each other) equally, respecting their

legitimate socio-cultural differences. and their psychological uniqueness, and the existing social goods and resources are distributed equitably, guaranteeing that, in addition to taking into account the effort and merit in the generation of these valuable goods and resources, everyone has access to them according to the respective need. and aspiration for personal development.

The role of the community practitioner

Since, as I have noted, the promotion of social justice is the responsibility of society as a whole, what role does the community practitioner have? I think it can be specified in the following three tasks:

- Carry out their work in accordance with the substantive and relational principles outlined, guaranteeing relational equity in exchanges with social actors.

- Denounce inequalities by making the community or society aware of the situations and cases of injustice known to them through work and research.

- Ensure that all people and groups have access to the psychosocial goods 'managed' by the community practitioner regardless of the social situation and economic capacity of each person or group. This equality of opportunity or access for all to psychosocial goods rests on a double obligation: that of the profession (to provide services for all those who cannot pay for them in the market) and that of society (to recognize the need for these goods. and services and remunerate their professional achievement).

The above requires raising awareness among professionals and society of the convenience (need?) of public services that provide the psychosocial goods

necessary for the human development of all people, regardless of their bio-psychological qualities and their socio-cultural or social condition. economical.

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