community psychology

IN PURSUIT OF LIBERATION AND WELLBEING

manuel riemer   stephanie m. reich   scotney d. evans   geoffrey nelson   isaac prilleltensky

3rd edition

Community Psychology

IN PURSUIT OF LIBERATION AND WELLBEING

Third edition

Manuel Riemer
Stephanie M. Reich
Scotney D. Evans
Geoffrey Nelson
Isaac Prilleltensky

Brief Contents

Contents

17 November 2021 .
Location: University Library 1 NORTH Course Reserves
Call #: **RA790.55 .R54 2020**

Journal Title: Community psychology

Vol.: No: Mon/Yr: 2020
Pages: chap 16

Article Title: 'How Can Community Psychologists Best Work Towards Gender Equity?

Borrower: RAPID:UW1
NEW: Main Library

Lending String:

HOW CAN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS BEST WORK TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY?

16

Heather Gridley, Colleen Turner, Ronelle Carolissen,
Sherine Van Wyk, and Monica Madyaningrum

Warm-up Questions

Before you begin reading this chapter, we invite you to reflect on the following questions:

1 Think of some ways that gender impacts on your life.

2 What would you be more (or less) able to do if you had been born (or assigned) a different gender?

3 Would this be the case if you had been born somewhere else in the world?

4 What are your culture or society's expectations or gender norms for people who identify as male or female? How rigid or flexible/fluid are these expectations as you experience them?

5 If you awoke one day to discover that gender equality and equity had miraculously been achieved worldwide, how would you notice?

Learning Objectives

In this chapter you will learn about

- The history of gender inequity and inequality in society and within psychology
- Community psychology's (CP) potential contribution to gender equity
- Feminist and more diversity-aware visions of wellness and liberation for people of all gender identities, locally and globally
- How we can participate in realising such visions and values, as community psychologists and in our personal lives

Introduction to Gender Equality

And she is carrying half a truth.
And she is carrying half a lie.
And she is carrying half of tomorrow.
And she is carrying half the sky.

This verse of a poem by Imtiaz Dharker (2015) is a poignant expression of the old saying "women hold up half the sky." More than 40 years since the peak of feminism's "second wave" and 20 years since the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, the basic aim of equality for women is far from being achieved. Today, more girls are being educated, and more women are living longer, are in paid employment, having fewer children, and engaging in politics. But while the lives of women have improved overall, there are many areas where advances have been slow or not achieved at all (United Nations, 2015a). There is still no country in the world where women's income is equal to men's, and women still shoulder most of the household responsibilities, including caring for children (United Nations, 2015a).

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) ushered in eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in a concerted effort to promote human development and address inequality (United Nations, 2015b). The third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3) aimed "to promote gender equality and empower women." Six "Gender Indicators" for tracking progress towards this goal across sectors and nations were developed: education, infrastructure, property rights, employment, political participation, and violence against women. To build on the MDGs and realize those not yet achieved, the UN Member States in 2015 adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be realized by 2030. The SDGs endeavor to address a number of global concerns, such as eradicating all forms of poverty (goal 1); promoting health and wellbeing for all (goal 3); gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (goal 5); and reducing inequality within and among countries (goal 10). Central to all of these is the enactment of power.

In this chapter we examine CP's historical and potential contribution to gender equality and equity. What would a vision of wellbeing and liberation for women around the world be, and how can we know if we are part of the problem or part of the solution, as community psychologists and in our personal lives? If sexism, genderism and all forms of conscious and unconscious gendered entitlement are the problem, are feminisms the solution? Selected examples are used to anchor the chapter. We write from within our own communities in Australia, South Africa, and Indonesia, as feminist community psychologists working for change within and beyond our profession.

Historical Context

Why a Women's Movement?

Throughout history, every society has practiced some form of institutionalized disempowerment and oppression of women. Religious organizations often lead conservative backlashes on reproductive rights, blocking international aid funds for family planning programs, actively promoting homophobic and non-binary gender-devaluing discourses, and retaining narrow definitions of gender roles. The rise of religious extremism, encompassing Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Jewish versions, saw heightened legal and social restrictions on women in 25 countries in the late 1990s/early 2000s (El Sadaawi, 2005). But more recently, sexual abuse scandals have challenged the patriarchal structures that enabled and even sanctioned abuse on a previously unimagined scale. And, in ongoing waves of consciousness-raising and collective action, women have practiced and continuously refined a range of social resistances to counter oppression. Resistance by women to systemic oppression is almost a definition of feminism.

Feminism's "first wave" centered around women's right to vote in Western democracies in the late 19th century and early 20th century. In the post-World War II Western (or Global Northern) world, the timing of so-called second-wave feminism paralleled the emergence of CP in the late 1960s. From the 1970s onwards, feminism drew on a range of perspectives, including liberal feminism (which emphasized equality with men), Marxist feminism (which made links with class and other forms of oppression), radical feminism (which argued that women should distance themselves from male norms), feminist psychology, postmodern feminisms, postcolonial feminisms (which highlighted the long-lasting political, economic, and cultural impacts of colonization on women in the Global South and postcolonial world), and feminisms within a range of cultural and geopolitical contexts (some African American women preferred to describe themselves as "womanist").

In the 21st century, new material feminisms have emerged, incorporating a post-humanist, post-constructionist stance to thinking about diversity and its intersections. These include transfeminism and other more recently emergent models of gender non-conformity that envision more gender and variously other diverse future subcultures and societies. These non-conformity-embracing feminisms, or "diversity feminisms" represent a more recent, post-structural theoretical and social development, shifting further away from polarized traditions of binary, birth-assigned gender based on externally assessed judgements.

Individual and group activism against gender and all stereotyping confines are stressed in this "next wave." More pluralized notions of social gender identity in post-information age society are actively questioned, as is the readiness of people who espouse particular forms of diversity to embrace other diversities and personalized non-conformity. Gender is presented as falling along a continuum of bio-social experiences, rather than placed in a polar-opposed binary based on birth-assigned male or female anatomical gender, and/or on normatively defined social roles. (The Key Terms section at the end of this chapter outlines some of the language required to more meaningfully conduct discourse with professionals and gender non-conforming individuals who are now utilizing these more inclusive, more extensively "unconscious entitlement sensitive" diversity feminisms.)

These various feminisms all work towards the common goal of improving women's lives. Each has its own views on how improvements may be achieved and indeed what constitutes improvement. The vigorous ongoing debates among feminisms can confuse outsiders and frustrate feminist theorists and activists themselves – yet why would it be assumed, or even desirable, that all women, or all feminists, speak with a unified voice? bell hooks (2000b) challenged hegemonic feminism's notion of a shared female experience. She argued that it did not consider differences between women and that, in contrast to middle-class women, working-class women were compelled to work out of necessity. hooks further contended that feminism will not bring about real transformation if men and boys are not included in the feminist struggle: "we have to do so much work to correct the assumption deeply embedded in the cultural psyche that feminism is anti-male. Feminism is anti-sexism" (p. 12). This view suggests that both men and women, and arguably more so, transgender and gender diverse minority groups, suffer oppression if they deviate from prescribed powerful hegemonic patriarchal practices.[1]

---

[1] For a fuller introduction to feminist thought, see Tong (2014), or, for a straightforward girl-friendly version, Kaz Cooke's *Girl Stuff* (2016). Cooke lists the gains made by feminism in the 20th century from a teenager's perspective.

Community Psychology, Gender, and Feminisms

Within psychology, both feminist and community psychologists developed critiques of mainstream psychology, while in the 1970s within the wider community, feminism and CP were originally aligned with human rights movements like the gay liberation, civil rights, anti-apartheid, and peace movements. In Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand in the same decade, Aboriginal and Maori activists (some of whom were also feminists) were making their presence felt. Similarly, in South Africa, gender activists were centrally involved in fighting against Apartheid and exploitation. The battle against exploitation continues today, often involving strong collaborations between women *and* men who identify with feminism.

Feminist psychologists directed their critique towards psychology's "mismeasure of women" (Tavris, 1992) and the individualization and pathologization of women's collective distress (e.g., Caplan, 1995). Women had not participated equally in psychology's establishment as a science, and feminists mistrusted its application to women's lives. As Weisstein (1968/1993) observed back in 1968, "Psychology has nothing to say about what women are really like ... essentially because psychology does not know" (p. 197).

The 1970s feminist slogan "the personal is political" meant psychology was (and still is) fertile ground for action, and that political questions could be seen as psychology's business. But some early attempts to paint women into the psychological picture were themselves criticized for perpetuating victim-blaming (e.g., by suggesting that women's "fear of success" was the real reason for the glass ceiling) or reinforcing gendered stereotypes of masculinity and femininity – and leaving oppressive, inequitable social and organizational structures unchallenged (Mednick, 1989). Examining texts and courses on the psychology of women, Crowley-Long (1998) concluded that "feminist psychology has adopted a much too narrow political focus" (p. 128) in drawing almost exclusively from liberal feminist frameworks and positivist methods, and not enough from radical and socialist alternatives. She argued that a broader frame of reference would be more inclusive of marginalized groups and more sensitive to the socioeconomic forces shaping the lives of women from diverse backgrounds. Her argument resonates even more strongly when considered from a global perspective.

Community psychologists' critique of mainstream psychology emerged in many countries from its parent sub-disciplines of community mental health (clinical psychology) and applied social psychology. In contrast to feminist critiques, their concerns focused less on measurement and therapy, and more on the settings where psychological research and practice took place – they set about broadening their applications (e.g., prevention and macro-level intervention) and taking account of contexts (ecology and community). Thus, they distanced themselves from "the personal" as reflecting psychology's traditional individualistic stance, and mostly took up "public" ahead of "private" causes as their intervention targets.

Anne Mulvey's (1988) landmark article noted that CP and feminism shared similar critiques of victim-blaming ideologies; pushed beyond individual, adjustment-oriented solutions; called for new paradigms beyond the fragmentation and mystification of traditional disciplines; and developed similar change models and strategies. Both focused on social policy, prevention ahead of "cure," advocacy, empowerment, and the de-mystification of experts. Feminist consciousness-raising groups resonated with community psychologists' support for self-help groups and consumer-based movements.

But shared values and goals, and the common experience of "swimming against the tide" of mainstream psychology, did not lead to much integration between the two emergent sub-disciplines.

Even now, references to CP rarely appear in feminist psychology literature, while feminist community psychologists have struggled to have "women's issues" acknowledged within CP agendas.

How Far Have We Come?

Fox and Prilleltensky (1997) brought together a range of critical perspectives from the margins of psychology, enabling the possibility of dialogue between community and feminist psychologies as well as other non-mainstream approaches. The special double issue of the *American Journal of Community Psychology* (Bond, Hill, Mulvey, & Terenzio, 2000) provided a rich menu of feminist research and action. The special issue was organized around seven themes linking CP with feminist theory and research: attention to diversity; contextualized understanding, speaking from the standpoints of oppressed groups; collaboration; multi-level, multi-method approaches; reflexivity; and action orientation. Angelique and Culley's (2003) examination of two key journals led them to be optimistic about CP's increasingly pro-feminist stance. For them, adopting a feminist paradigm means explicitly acknowledging one's worldview – particularly important in a globalized environment. Ayalar-Alcantar, Dello Stritto, and Guzmán (2008) celebrated the trailblazing contributions of 55 women within the Society for Community Research & Action (APA Division 27). More recently, a special issue of the *Journal of Community Psychology* (Angelique & Mulvey, 2012) documented and progressed the co-creation of a feminist CP.

How do the Core Principles of Community Psychology Advance Gender Equity?

What do CP's founding fathers (and mothers) have to say about women's experiences? How far do their principles/approaches take us?

Transforming Systems: Ecology and Complexity In a Globalized World

CP's primary departure point from mainstream psychology was/is its emphasis on the central importance of context to any understanding of human behavior. In practice, this might mean conducting research in naturalistic settings, working with family and community systems as well as individuals, or seeking sociopolitical as well as intrapsychic explanations for presenting problems. Feminist theorists similarly argue for more complex explanations and psychosocial understandings of psychological processes and functioning, as alternatives to reductionist approaches that narrow down and systematically decontextualize the phenomena to be studied.

Ecological models that promote holistic understandings of the interrelatedness of human experiences can be helpful in addressing structural inequalities based on gender. For example, changes occurring in women's lives that are related to their reproductive systems are often represented as purely biomedical problems (e.g., menopause) and psychological theories often add an "emotional disorder" layer (e.g., premenstrual syndrome, "empty nest syndrome"), necessitating therapeutic "treatment." An ecological perspective would take account of society's expectations and valuing of women at different points in their lives. Such a perspective would ensure that the demands of parenting adolescents, caring for ageing parents, renegotiating work roles, having less access to retirement benefits, or finding oneself devalued by the appearance of gray hair, would all be factored into any understanding of women's lives at mid-life – not to mention the freedom and

energy that might be available to post-menopausal women. Ecological understandings thus invite researchers and practitioners to move away from single-factor causal models that promote medicalized solutions or individualized victim-blaming. And the next step is to embrace the complexity and tolerate the uncertainty required for the "dynamic co-creation of identities in multilayered contexts" as Angelique and Mulvey (2012, p. 1) described the "ongoing project" to develop a truly feminist CP. Such a project is particularly challenging in countries like Indonesia or Russia (and in some US states) where fundamentalist groups are increasingly demanding "zero tolerance" of what they describe as "uncertain" categories.

Families are perhaps the most obvious example of an ecological system with particular implications for women vis-à-vis men/partners and children. Patriarchal constructions implicitly or explicitly defined marriage as a hierarchical, male-headed, individualistic institution within which women and children were considered property. As family demographics and understandings of human diversity have shifted gradually, new family forms are demanding more complexity-sensitive research methods and understanding. Some obvious developments include dramatic increases in same-sex parenting and fostering, more transparent and openly polyamorous and multi-partner group-identified families, and parenting in transgender and gender transitioning contexts. Highly vocal social movements have successfully lobbied internationally for legalization changes, enshrining equality for any consenting adults seeking formal recognition of their marriages.

The notion of "family change" refers not only to those families clearly going through change (e.g., in the process of separation, or of gender transition of a child, sibling, or parent), but to all families who, on a daily basis, renegotiate their relationships to one another. Developing ways of respectfully engaging with a changing family ecology is essential for any services provided to parents, children and families. Yet women have historically and biologically been held responsible for children, and this continues to be the case. Where women do have access to income, they often experience the double burden of income-generation and domestic responsibilities. In East Timor, "there is very little progress in getting men to pour their own water, let alone share in domestic work" (International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) 2008, p. 5). In Australia, it has been estimated that fathers spend on average just one minute per weekday alone with their children (Craig, 2008) (see Box 16.1 to consider international care work).

From a feminist perspective, the downside of ecological and systems models *is* that they usually lack any power analysis and can risk promoting homeostatic "status quo" solutions to problems that require fundamental change. Between the rhetoric of terms like "ecology" and "prevention" and the reality that entrenched power is not easily given away, we need to keep asking what safeguards must be in place to ensure that interventions don't work against the groups they were intended to assist. Ecological conceptualizations must factor in social justice and human rights considerations if they are to pave the way for systems-level interventions that lead to social change. Theoretical models must involve naming of power differentials along with recognition of structural inequality as a primary cause of personal distress, whether these differentials and inequities arise from gender, race, class, age, sexuality, and/or other determinants.

Example: Moving Beyond Band-aid Interventions

Instead of merely addressing the symptoms of structurally entrenched inequalities and oppression, the Intervention with Microfinance for Aids and Gender Equity (IMAGE) Study (Kim et al., 2009) in the rural Limpopo province in South Africa is an example of an intervention that addressed an intersection between gender inequality, poverty, and health. Based on the model of the Grameen Bank, this community-based project loaned poor women money (i.e., microfinance) to start small businesses and also provided them with an HIV and gender training program. Compared to the control groups, those women who were in the IMAGE project challenged the acceptability of violence and reported a significant reduction in levels of intimate partner violence; participants also reported higher levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy skills and improved health-seeking behaviors (for a comprehensive discussion of the IMAGE study see Kim et al., 2009; World Health Organization 2015).

Prevention, Promotion, and Social Change

CP students soon become familiar with the "broken bridge" or "clifftop rescue" (see Chapter 6) metaphors of prevention – the notion that it is better to look upstream and repair the bridge or fence than to keep calling in emergency services to rescue those who fall into the water and need to be fished out downstream. But have we actually improved someone's quality of life if all we've done is remove a potential hazard, without questioning why it was allowed to fall into disrepair in the first place? Suicide prevention programs that focus on taking sheets from prisoners' beds or raising the safety rails on a bridge do nothing to address the poverty and desperation behind disproportionate incarceration rates among Indigenous communities or suicide rates among young men in rural communities.

An evidence-based prevention approach to depression in women of all ages would address the oppression and abuse that underpin much of the everyday experiences of women across a range of circumstances. But many approaches that claim to be "preventive" are narrowly focused on medical diagnostic explanations and ameliorative, intra-individual rather than systems-level solutions (McMullen & Stoppard, 2006). Individualized pathologization is all too evident in mental health initiatives that confine prevention to early identification of genetic predispositions to bipolar disorder, for example, or to early detection of symptoms to encourage speedier referral for treatment, often with antidepressant medication only.

Of course ambulances are still needed as well as fences and bridges. Prevention strategies can gain much from the experiences of those who have fallen off the metaphorical cliff. People living

with HIV-AIDS have been heavily involved in designing and delivering prevention strategies, including "safe sex" education campaigns. Our vision of real primary prevention is the community center in the main street far from the river in flood – where women (and men and children) can sing, dance, work, and create. .

Example: Homelessness Is Gendered

The introductory chapter of this book points out that the majority of the world's population is homeless or in insecure accommodation according to many definitions of homelessness. In many countries, formal housing systems fail to serve the bulk of the population, with whole communities living on the streets or in the bush. It is self-evident that homeless people – men, women, children – are without economic independence and/or the ongoing means to obtain adequate shelter.

The experience of homelessness is qualitatively different for men and women, in part because cultural and political assumptions, both explicit and implicit, continue to be promoted about what is "women's work." This work usually includes caring for children, husbands, older people, and extended family, and is often unpaid or poorly remunerated. Women's housing security often depends on the caring work they undertake within the family or their local or cultural community. Homelessness for older, socially female-identified people is thus often brought about by their lower, shared, or non-existent incomes over the life course and their long periods out of the paid workforce while raising children.

Women (including trans-women) are often not identified in homelessness statistics, which in themselves vary in definition, because they are less likely to "sleep rough" and more likely to find shelter in relationships or housing arrangements that expose them to sexual, physical, and/or economic abuse. Sex work is typically seen as "female work," and subject to the same problems characterizing such work: it is unpaid or poorly paid, but with the added problem of being illegal (usually), stigmatized, outside the mainstream economy – and unsafe.

A feminist CP analysis would factor in the prerequisites of economic independence for women when considering how to prevent women's homelessness. Those prerequisites include:

- access to education – still far from a universal right for women
- legislation and policy frameworks supporting paid work for women
- cultural beliefs, norms, and practices that support female-identified households outside of patriarchal structures.

For both cisgender and trans women, preventing homelessness can mean ensuring safety in leaving violent or abusive relationships. Women may find it difficult to leave a family situation when they have no economic supports of their own, and especially when they are responsible for children. It is very difficult to either earn a living or parent effectively without secure accommodation. Women leaving a male or female violent partner (with or without children) may need to escape and hide, and some even find themselves forced to live in their car. In other settings, accommodations "on the streets" are often less secure and safe for women and their children than the violent home they are fleeing.

Most developed countries have a system of child protection where the state has the authority to remove children from parent(s) who are not deemed able to care for them, due to violence or neglect of responsibility. For mothers, this situation may lead to an irresolvable choice between

leaving children with a violent partner/parent or escaping with them to homelessness, which in turn leaves them vulnerable to child protection intervention. Many countries have refuge systems established from the 1970s onwards as safe houses for women fleeing domestic violence. In Australia these shelters are temporary and sometimes inaccessible due to long waiting lists. Others do not allow trans women or children (especially boys) over a certain age (often 12 years). This situation often has dire consequences, particularly for trans women.

A CP approach to preventing homelessness by enabling economic independence for women might be rights-based, ensuring that no group is without universal rights, including adequate housing and consideration of differing emotional recovery and safety support needs. The more difficult challenge is how to operationalize those rights. A cautionary tale from South Africa involves a woman who fought for the right of "access to reasonable housing" under the Constitution (De Vos, 2001). Despite Mrs. Grootboom winning her case, she died homeless in 2008 and her right to reasonable housing was never delivered by the Government (see http://constitutionallyspeaking.co.za/irene-grootboom-died-homeless-forgotten-no-c-class-mercedes-in-sight/).

In Australia and the UK, there has been a strong tradition of public housing for those with less access to economic resources. This tradition has considerably weakened over the last 20 years, and the focus has shifted towards supporting people and case-managing their economic, mental health, or substance abuse issues, sometimes in "safe" accommodation and other times wherever they are living. In contrast, "Housing First" models, where individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance problems receive their own apartments with ongoing "wraparound" services available on site (but not necessarily mandated), have proved successful in a range of contexts (e.g., Nelson, 2010). Marybeth Shinn's meticulous research on homelessness over decades highlights how variables such as economic hardship cause homelessness, and illustrates how CP can contribute to evidence-based policy and solutions (Shinn & McCormack, 2017). She likens homelessness to a game of musical chairs: where then there is not enough to go round it is the poor and socially excluded who are left homeless (Shinn, 2009).

Community psychologists have a role at a number of levels in operationalizing the right to safe and secure accommodation and to the economic independence that supports women's ability to maintain that housing. I [Colleen] am a member of the Board of Management of a community housing organization. In this role, my CP background has been invaluable, especially in advising on how best to advocate for homeless women and children to legislators and policy-makers. For example, until recently, children accompanying their homeless parents (typically mothers) were not counted as homeless. This meant that the "no data no problem" factor made it easier for governments and policy-makers to deny or ignore problems for which there was limited statistical evidence. One of my organization's proudest achievements was being instrumental in having children counted in homelessness statistics, and then successfully attracting funding for a range of programs to support homeless families. But it should be noted that the programs were developed first, and were able to be scaled up when data were available to support the lived experience of many women and children, along with the practice wisdom of experienced housing workers.

Community, Networks, Partnership, Social Capital, and Sense of Community

There is increasing recognition in international development contexts that women's empowerment and education are the keys to real change in disadvantaged communities (United Nations, 2015a; Van der Gaag, 2008). Grass-roots community campaigns have often involved women

fighting for the right to control their fertility, to limit the sale of war toys, or to bear witness to the "disappearance" of their children under repressive regimes.

The downside of community metaphors lies in concerns that a focus on public aspects of community may render women invisible, by prioritizing "public" over "private" concerns. The minimization of "domestic" violence by police and other authorities as less serious than other forms of crime is a prime example. The uncritical acceptance of "community" as an ideal can be problematic when it means the subordination of legitimate concerns to "the greater good." Women who were urged to leave the paid workforce to set up house in the post-World War II period were sacrificed to a narrow vision of community rebuilding. In such cases, a focus on community can have the effect of submerging women's voices beneath the louder notes of (usually male, often patriarchal) community leaders.

The policy and practice question then is: How do community-based organizations and local and national governments work with community members in ways that support the strengths of that community and address individual and collective needs (Turner, 2008). The following example from the Indonesian context highlights some possibilities for women's community participation, even within traditionally assigned gender roles.

Example: Community Networks as Platforms for Advocacy

Indonesia has recently been shifting toward a more democratic political system. Against this background, the concept of community participation is gaining widespread popularity in Indonesian community development practices. Encouraged by such a context, I [Monica] undertook doctoral research that examined the meaning of participation from the vantage point of a local community. Specifically, the study investigated the practice of community participation in a community-based program targeted to tackle discrimination and marginalization experienced by people with disabilities. This program was initiated by a local non-governmental organization (NGO) in a partnership with five villages in Bantul District, Yogyakarta.

Researching this program, I have learned that understanding the broader sociohistorical and political context of a partnership is critical in examining to what extent it has met its promise of promoting equality and access to decision-making. My conversations with villagers suggest that even a well-intended partnership can inadvertently foster existing inequalities between dominant and marginalized groups in a community, such as between "able" and "disabled" bodies, local bureaucrats, and regular villagers, and also between male and female community activists.

In these villages, community health cadres (trained volunteers)[2] are the backbone for community activities included in the program. Although not formally regulated as women-only positions, none of the community health cadres in these villages is male. It is highly likely that gender role stereotypes are behind this situation. In Indonesian culture, the assumption of the nurturing nature of women and the traditional division of labor in families (women as housewives) has conditioned women to take up various voluntary roles in their communities. Such a tendency is not confined to Indonesia, but is almost universally apparent (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Osborne, Baum, & Ziersch, 2009).

---

[2] Cadre is a term that is usually used to call those voluntarily working for community programs initiated by government, both at the local and national level. The word cadre seems to evoke a sense of being observant to authorities who own the programs, rather than the word volunteer. That is why government officials appear to prefer using the word cadre.

Historically, community health cadres were recruited by the government as non-paid fieldwork officers for national health programs. Thus, there is a common image that these cadres are the tool of the government whose main function is to ensure the delivery of government programs, whether or not the programs meet the needs of the targeted community. These cadres are usually depicted as a symbol of women's subordination within the patriarchal system, which positions women as dutiful servants of their community whose work does not need payment (Suryakusuma, 1996). However, my observation suggests that such depiction risks ignoring the women's agency as social actors in their locality. There are instances that indicate how these women tactfully function in their cadre role to promote issues which otherwise would have been overlooked by the decision makers in the community. For instance, one of the cadres is actively reviving what used to be a popular traditional art performance in the community. This activity can bring together youth and elder community members who are usually disengaged from the community life. With work taking up most of people's time, collective rituals and ceremonies that previously were important social gatherings are often missing from communities' routines.

This example indicates that women can have an opportunity to "hijack" the existing social spaces as a platform to advocate issues that matter most for them, and to restore a shared sense of community. It suggests the potential of initiating gradual changes through the existing social platform. Equally important however, are efforts to improve the quality of women's participation by ensuring that they have equal share in decision-making and are not confined in the "nurturing" roles. The next example confirms the importance of being vigilant about the quality of women's participation in their community.

Example: Promoting Environmental Sustainability Through Community Participation

Environmental sustainability is a social issue as much as it is about the physical environment. In the Bantul Region in Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia, where I [Monica] conducted my fieldwork, the social dimension of environmental sustainability is reflected in how people are dealing with the issue of disaster risk reduction (DRR). My field observations suggest that sense of community is central to the success of DRR programs. In addition, the observations indicate that gender significantly influences the way people experience their community.

Following the massive earthquake that hit the region in 2006, DRR has been a prioritized issue in Bantul. Geographically located in one of the world's most seismically active regions, the risks of earthquake and tsunami are ever-present. Therefore, local communities are a regular target for various DRR programs organized by either government or non-government organizations. The ultimate goals of such programs are to develop resilient local communities that can independently identify risks, mobilize local resources to mitigate risks, and promote better adaptation to the environment. Achieving these goals requires an inclusive process that fosters community members' willingness to participate in programs (Korstanje, 2014).

The participative nature of DRR is formally acknowledged in various speeches and discussions related to DRR activities in these villages; however, there were only a few occasions in which related actors (e.g., local community members, government officers, NGO staff) engaged in indepth discussions about the nature of participation. Most of the time, the discussions focused on the technical aspects of DRR such as identifying disaster threats specific to the communities, developing evacuation maps, and establishing a legal body responsible for carrying out each village's DRR plan.

In these forums, usually professional practitioners (i.e., government officers and NGO staff) would present information and knowledge about DRR, with the community members invited as the targeted audience. For the practitioners, knowledge and technical skills related to the concept of DRR were perceived as the starting point. However, for community members, ensuring community involvement was the most crucial component. The practical utility of including different points of view in development initiatives is reflected further in considering that the majority of community activists involved were women.

As the region, in general, shifts toward a more industrialized society, it is becoming more difficult to attract community involvement in volunteer-based collective activities like the DRR programs. In this shifting context, such programs rely on a small number of mainly female volunteers, and the types of activities they engage in can reinforce existing stereotypes and power dynamics. Women would ordinarily have little or even zero involvement in the decision-making process in the programs. However, when it comes to the daily operations, they often carry most of the workload. At a glance, such a situation may create an impression that women have leading roles. But without ongoing critical analysis, this kind of participation may actually reinforce existing gender stereotypes and entrench gender-based inequality.

Power, Empowerment, and Depowerment

According to Burman (1997), traditional psychology's individual focus "has particular difficulty understanding power relations as socially constructed frameworks that may be expressed by individuals, but are created in larger social contexts" (p. 146). The operation of power is central to all feminist analyses. Why do so many men use violence against women? "Because they can," was how one police superintendent replied. Whether measured in terms of information, institutionalized authority, resources, decision-making, coercion, or privilege, power differentials can be seen to constrain or expand the choices available to women and men in a wide range of social contexts – not the pseudo-choice of coffee blends or ringtones, but real choices about how life is to be lived, individually and collectively.

Box 16.1 Women's Work – Whose Labor?

The Western world has become reliant on the skills of elite professional, educated women and expects them to continue in paid work, often for 50 or more hours per week. But neither the original 19th century "8-hour day" nor current campaigns factored in the second (domestic) shift worked by many women, or the "emotional labor" that is primarily women's work (Guy & Newman, 2004).

Poor women have always acted as housemaids, wet-nurses, or nannies to wealthy families. Globalization now means that women from poor countries such as the Philippines, Mexico, or Eastern Europe are forced by economic necessity to leave their own children behind (or sometimes, to prostitute them) to provide cheap immigrant labor, often illegal, in more affluent countries.

Similarly, men in South Asian countries often seek dangerous "slave labor" work in economically booming countries like Saudi Arabia, leaving their wives to carry the domestic load alone.

The exploitation of women in domestic work reproduces and widens the First World (minority) – Third World (majority) divide and makes real and reciprocal alliances between women structurally difficult, both within the "developed" world and between the minority and majority worlds (see Anderson, 2000). Privileged women of conscience, like Naomi Wolf (2001), can see the inequities operating in their daily lives:

> I learned that if I sat in a park with our baby and chatted with an immigrant

nanny who was wiping the drool of a white baby ... within minutes she would show me a photo of her own children far away, whom she might not have seen for years. And her eyes would fill with tears ... These women must often cross oceans and leave their children, big kids and small, with relatives. They often live in rooms at the margins of other people's families ... so that they [the children] can have school uniforms and good food, education and a better chance at life. [p. 219]

Power is not something we have, but something we swim in, a matter of discourse and practice rather than quantity. Feminist understandings of power have shifted from unitary notions of something bad when men have it and good when women have it, towards recognition of its multiple levels of operation. And like racism, its operation in sexist terms has become more subtle – it is rare, at least in Western society, for women to be openly referred to as property, yet the notion is far from dead. A range of gendered power disparities can still increase the risk of cis women, trans women and non-binary identifying individuals experiencing violence within relationships, and diminish their power to escape. Attitudes toward gender varied individuals can be particularly brutal, pathologizing, and often deadly.

The narrowing of gendered power differentials over the past 100 years in societies where women can now vote, be educated, earn an independent income, control their fertility, and participate in sports and other hitherto "unladylike" activities indicates that change, however slow, is possible. Related to the increase in women's education, Gakidou, Cowling, Lozano, and Murray (2010) estimate that 4.2 million child deaths have been prevented in the past 40 years worldwide, and that between 1990 to 2013, maternal mortality has also decreased by 45 percent (United Nations, 2015a). But the experiences of women under successive regimes in places like Afghanistan (and indeed in some US states where hard-won reproductive rights are being wound back) show how fragile such gains can be.

Horacek, 1994, Unrequited Love, Nos 1–100

Empowerment is a founding metaphor within both CP and feminism. But its critics have argued that it has been too easily reduced to simplistic notions of individual power. And conservative governments have co-opted the word "self-empowerment" as a counter to the more radical demands of minority groups for self-determination. We think empowerment is more usefully understood as a process rather than an active verb ("I cannot empower you, but our conversation or active engagement might be experienced as empowering to one or both of us"). Rape will not be eliminated by having all women learn self-defence skills; attention also needs to be directed towards "depowering the powerful," or at least towards creating space for more collaborative, inter-gender power-sharing partnerships.

As Perkins (1991) notes, "power does not have to be repressive – it can actually facilitate better, more satisfying lives for people" (p. 136). As feminist community psychologists from different backgrounds, the challenge for all five authors is to recognize both our relative privilege and relative powerlessness as springboards to action. We are aware of how our respective power and privilege may be useful to the communities we are working with. At other times, our own powerlessness enables us to firmly align ourselves with other women's experiences of oppression.

Diversity, Marginalization, Inclusion, and Intersectionality

Diversity is a complex term that often refers to cultural or ethnic diversity but can and should encompass gender, class, age, religion, languages, abilities, geography, and sexual orientation. It is often viewed in organizations and systems as "that which is different or other," or people and practices that do not conform to the norm. In most Western organizational contexts, like universities, White, male, heterosexual, and Christian values are considered the norm, and all forms of difference are tolerated but seldom affirmed. Affirmation of difference is seldom encouraged because assumptions are made that consensus alone promotes social inclusion in organizations or society. Yet post-constructionist feminist approaches encourage affirmation of difference as productive for organizations and society (Braidotti, 2013).

Diversity-affirming approaches are important as denial of difference with an emphasis on similarity and equality leaves "others," including multiply power-disadvantaged groups (consider Black, transgender, and/or Muslim "others" for example), to assimilate to the values in the organization (or society), resulting in a paradox for marginalized people·in those organizations (Akhtar, 2014). This paradox arises because to participate at all, assimilation into the over-arching organizational culture requires individuals to deny the reality that group differences can be positive and desirable. Instead, marginalized people (if they choose to "assimilate") must accept and perform identities that do not necessarily resonate with their own personal, social, and cultural experiences. They are constantly enmeshed in a double bind that leaves them constructed as a liability and a disadvantage, even though the organization may superficially acknowledge that diversity is desirable.

Linked to the idea of difference is the idea that everybody must be treated "equally." Even though "equal treatment" sounds acceptable and just, it becomes unfair when it assumes that we live in a society without the deep inequalities all humans experience globally. Equity and equitable treatment is more desirable as it considers group needs and merit as opposed to merit only (Prilleltensky, 2012).

The equity/equality cartoon in Chapter 3 (p. 55) indicates that some people and groups need more resources than others so that key CP values of fairness and social justice can prevail in

society. Affirmative action policies that emphasize equity as opposed to equality consider both merit and need by seeking to level playing fields and minimize continued inequalities for disadvantaged people such as women or older employees in job application and selection processes.

Such concerns apply to psychology too. Fine (2012) and many others have argued that dominant voices in mainstream psychology reflect White, male and heterosexual norms:

> We seem to have forgotten to ask critical questions like 'What kinds of evidence are being privileged? What are we not seeing?' in our rush to accept ever-narrowing notions of evidence-based practice in the face of irrefutable indicators of the gendered, raced, classed and sexualized collateral damage of economic and political crisis. (p. 3)

Psychology itself, therefore, needs to diversify the "voice" that authors (and author-izes) its claims to scientific status and pronouncements on the nature of evidence and "truth." While cultural diversity is given lip service, and guidelines warn against "bias" in research and practice, institutionalized practices often work against equal power distribution and opportunities for participation by diverse groups, interests, and individuals – the very communities we claim to serve.

Promoting diversity is no simple matter of token representation or assimilationist melting pots. Dimensions of diversity are commonly experienced as dimensions of inequality and discrimination, often with compounding effects. Crenshaw (1989) used the term **"intersectionality"** to describe the compounding effects of marginalization. She conceptualized identities in a grid-like fashion where multiple identities co-exist and intersect and can never exist in isolation of each other. Intersectionality challenges the notion that multiple aggregations of marginalization or privilege are listed additively. Multiple co-existing identity locations fundamentally shape individual subjectivities of race, class, and gender, even though race remains a marker of diversity. This means all women, for example, do not have the same oppressive experiences and power in patriarchal society, but that some, because of White privilege or middle class privilege, have more power than working class women (and men) of color.

During the 1990s, there was a vigorous debate between dominant forms of feminism and the increasingly visible feminisms of the non-Western world and of Indigenous women and women of color. Critics argued that Western liberal feminism had largely advantaged middle-class White women and had not necessarily had a flow-on effect to other social subgroups of women. Some reasons advanced included the fear that, in sharing newfound power, advantaged women risk losing favor, ground, or personal power. Meara and Day (2000) acknowledged that "in the short term a more inclusive feminism is likely to have more integrity and less power" (p. 260). White privilege has, for example· meant that White women in the US and South Africa benefited most from affirmative action policies. Black men were the second group to benefit from such policies, and Black women derived the least benefit. This pattern of representation and power imbalance has also been observed at times in CP (Ayalar-Alcantar, Dello Stritto, & Guzmán, 2008; Gridley & Breen, 2007; Mulvey, 1988). For example, in the South African context, men and White women typically occupy high status posts in research, teaching, leadership, and publications, and women, often Black, are overrepresented as workers in less socially valued "frontline" community organizations (Carolissen & Swartz, 2009).

Affirming diversity within CP demands a commitment. First, to expand the range of voices represented in its publications, theory-building, and applications from token inclusion to a critical, sustainable mass. Next, beyond the "add voices" strategy, comes the promise and challenge of affirming the complexity of intersectionality – of recognizing that we are all more than the sum of

our demographic dimensions, and that often, these dimensions are in conflict. And are we truly prepared for the field to be transformed by the inclusion *as equal partners* of multiple "others" we had assumed to have fewer resources or had defined by perceived deficits – homeless substance users, young single mothers, non-binary identifying persons, women in veils, refugees, Indigenous elders, clothing outworkers?

CP has taken steps towards affirming global and geographic diversity with international conferences in Puerto Rico (2006), Portugal (2008), Mexico (2010), Spain (2012), Brazil (2014), South Africa (2016), Chilé (2018), and Australia (2020). Participants experience the challenges of multilingual presentations, unfamiliar ways of being, and differing worldviews. Such events serve to de-center our discipline from its heavily North American, Caucasian, middle class assumptive base. But they are necessarily elite events, increasingly difficult to justify environmentally and in terms of their real effects on global and local diversity-based inequalities. Is this the best we can do for equity, social justice, and human rights?

Example: Intersectionality

In the post-1994 democratic South Africa, dominant discourses of national social inclusion suggest that South African children are "born free" and experience few impacts of legislated inequity in apartheid South Africa. However, Carolissen, Van Wyk, and Pick-Cornelius (2012) explored how a group of colored[3] adolescent girls talked about their intersectional experiences of race, gender, and class in their school and community. The girls' experiences represented a counter-narrative to the inclusionary discourse associated with "rainbowism." A focus group interview as well as observations were conducted with 14 girls who participated in a pre-existing life-skills development program at a primary school, in a peri-urban area in Stellenbosch. Their reports of these experiences were often contradictory and involved girls both rejecting and re-inscribing micro-aggressions that impacted negatively on their identities.

Despite having grown up in a democratic South Africa, the young poor girls (aged 13–15) were found to have classed and gendered experiences, which were internalized and expressed as racialized experiences. They associated middle-class lifestyles with "Whiteness." One participant gave examples of upper middle-class colored men (sports stars and politicians) who married White women precisely because they had money and had acculturated themselves to becoming more desirable to White women through financially-acquired, middle-class power. Her responses imply that she and her peers would never be able to consider marrying middle-class colored men, because these men aspired both to Whiteness and to marrying White women. Some participants also said that middle-class colored children in their community thought they were White and better than themselves because they attended schools that were previously White.

In the group, girls were caught in a bind of both idealizing and rejecting Whiteness. They made observations that White people supported their children in further post-school education,

---

[3] We concur with scholars that race is a social construction and that there is no biological evidence for race (Soudien, 2012). The term 'colored' is a remnant of the apartheid system of racial categorization and oppression that ranked people according to their physical features as either White, colored, Indian, or Black. This racial classification entrenched White privilege and Black disadvantage, which denied the majority of South Africans access to resources. Although the democratic government of South Africa has attempted to dismantle the oppression and inequality by using the apartheid categories for redress, the legacy and deep internalization of apartheid race categories continue to shape the lives of all South Africans today (Bundy, 2014).

worked harder, and were wealthier. In contrast, the work ethic of colored people was questioned, with some girls suggesting application of a stereotype that colored people were "lazy" and just "get pregnant at school." This kind of comment reinscribed negative micro-aggressions to colored people like themselves, until another girl in the group rejected this view. She claimed that merit does not exist because inheritance has given White people farms and property and that White people buy drugs in their community. This shocked some girls because they couldn't believe that some White people are drug users.

When girls re-inscribe such micro-aggressions, they unwittingly collude with dominant social discourses and reinforce White supremacy. At the same time, they also display agency in resisting dominant discourses that devalue them. Young girls not only learn how to negotiate the spaces they physically inhabit, they also learn how to negotiate a neo-liberal world where a number of commodities such as branded goods and education have become desirable objects and markers of success associated with Whiteness. Such internalized attitudes are fundamental learning experiences their educators have to engage with when working with girls who experience multiple oppressions. The study's authors suggest that to work in anti-oppressive ways, we should engage learners on issues of power so we may start to build on the beginnings of resistance that are clear in these girls' responses.

Subjectivity and Reflexivity (*Warning – you are about to enter big word territory!*)

Notions of subjectivity and reflexivity are drawn from postmodern, poststructuralist, and social constructionist epistemologies that challenged the heavy reliance of psychology (and most modern sciences) on a positivist paradigm of "value-free," objective, measurement-focused research and a concomitant commitment to "evidence-based" practice. As the name suggests, poststructuralist approaches question the existence of a single human consciousness or reality, and hence emphasize plurality and tolerance of difference. While CP aspires to a more contextualized, ecologically valid and socially useful praxis, its entrenched North American hegemony has largely been impervious to the emergence in Europe and elsewhere of postmodern psychology. In contrast, critical psychology has been influenced by Marxist, feminist, Foucauldian (poststructuralist/postmodern) and psychoanalytic theories.

Critical, community, and feminist psychologies all agree on the need to be context specific in theory, research, and practice. Each seeks to prioritize voices that need to be heard or have been silenced on specific issues, which is where subjectivity comes into play – recognizing that truth claims based on notions of an objective, value-free science are unsustainable. Feminist psychologists were among the first to open up space for multiple subjectivities to be acknowledged within the discipline. Separating the universal "he" into the gendered subject "she or he," they exposed the supposedly impartial, depersonalized observer as just another form of the male gaze.

Poststructuralist approaches have drawbacks of their own, partly because they demand a new jargon that seems very academic, and risks alienating the very women whose perspectives they aim to include, and partly because their strategies of discourse analysis and deconstruction do not necessarily lead to advocacy for non-dominant groups or action for social justice, more equitable societies overall, or wider human rights. But within psychology, poststructuralist approaches can be a breath of fresh air in a discipline long dominated by adherence to a narrow and impoverished version of empirical science. They press us to ask questions like: Whose voices are privileged and whose are muted? Who is constructed as "other" vis-à-vis the subjectivities of "the experts" – authors, researchers, theory builders, and practitioners? And who benefits?

Visions and Values Guiding Feminist Community Work

We noted earlier that all forms of feminisms work towards the common goal of improving women's lives. We wonder what a world without sexism, or "genderism" as it has been redefined, would look, feel, smell like? The Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA – www.rawa.org) has struggled since 1977 for personal and political liberation, providing a striking example of the determination of women in enormously difficult circumstances to fight for their vision of a just society. And in the 21st century Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in 2012 by the Taliban for her activism on girls' rights to education, has become the most recognizable face of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE – www.globalpartnership.org/).

Psychologists, or indeed any outsider working with communities, must recognize that in almost any community they are working with, for, or in, there will be identifiable women and others sharing more mixed gender identities. This seems obvious, but women are often invisible under "bigger issues" of poverty, HIV-AIDS, terrorism, immigration, and now, climate change, or more mainstream issues such as "the economy."

Beyond the acknowledgement that women and plural, mixed gender identities are already everywhere, the range of their voices and intersectional experiences should be sought out, considered and included so organizations themselves can affirm diversity by transforming organizational cultures. There is no one "women's voice" in any debate, but usually a multitude of voices, sometimes in harmony with each other and in dissent with other voices, and at other times in harmony with sections of their communities and not with each other. Not only must the voices of all genders be included, they must be given equality with already more entitled, enshrined male voices. After all, one of the most widely recognized goals of the various waves of women's and other equity movements has been for all humans to be treated equitably, in relation to those who hold societal privilege, especially those who have multiple marginalized identities.

The process of any activity is also historically important in feminist valuing. Consultation or action should, therefore, be planned and undertaken in accordance with clearly stated and transparent values that have been agreed to via ongoing inclusion of relevant voices. Equitable process is often bypassed in an era when the dominant consumer and corporate market-derived rhetoric defines equity as no more than a "level-playing field" on which unregulated competition is free to produce "winners and losers." Relationships built in the course of community action should be positive and sustaining – in both feminist and CP terms, the end never justifies the means.

For practitioners, CP and feminist work needs a balance between "ambulance" work such as counseling, the provision of soup kitchens, or crisis support, with proactive advocacy, structural reform, and/or social action – and scope for ongoing celebration of small and large successes. One activity supports and enables the other, in an action-research loop. Research, advocacy, or social reform without connection to people living with "the problem" risks being all head and no heart, while frontline work that is all heart risks futility and burnout. Some services operationalize this balance so that for each hour of service delivery, workers spend another on prevention or social action. Practice that encompasses "big picture" involvement like "Reclaim the Night" and other activist marches, or advocacy for rape law reform or transgender medical access can re-energize workers seeking channels for accumulating rage – and are likely to be more effective as actions for long-term change. (See Box 16.2 for an example of how CP theory and research connect to gender-based violence.)

Box 16.2 Putting Vision into Action: Stopping Gender-based Violence

Gender-based violence is one area in which American community psychologists like Cris Sullivan, Rebecca Campbell and Nicole Allen have long been active in both research and practice. Allen and Javdani (2017) draw on CP principles in their analysis of violence, emphasizing multiple layers of context. Sullivan and her colleagues have focused on evaluating community interventions for abused women and their children and improving community responses to gender-based violence (e.g., Sullivan, 2011).

Here we bring together the core CP principles examined in this chapter, and consider how they might advance gender equity in the particular case of violence. Gender-based violence is as public as the tools of war and as private as the family home. As such, it remains one of the most pervasive, yet least acknowledged, human rights abuses throughout the world, and the following quotes illustrate its entrenched nature over time and across cultures:

It was impossible to find any historical period in which there were no formulae... specifying the conditions under which a wife was deserving of a good clout. (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, p. 31)

This is my weapon, this is my gun; one is for fighting, the other for fun. (Traditional military drill chant, origin unknown)

If your partner owns a gun, you could be the next target. (www.issafrica.org/about-us/press-releases/if-your-partner-owns-a-gun-you-could-be-the-next-target)

Quotes like these illustrate why a feminist CP approach emphasizes the need for fundamental social change to remove the cultural supports of violence against women and other marginalized people. How does each of our core principles apply to such a challenge?

- *Transforming systems*: Violence against the disempowered, including all socially marginalized women, must be located in its full social and historical context of gender and power. At the relational level, violence must be viewed in terms of its controlling effects rather than stated intentions. However, ecologically derived explanations such as "the cycle of violence" or "it takes two to tango" are challenged by feminists who argue that such models assign women a role in precipitating or maintaining

violent behavior patterns by their intimate partners.

- *Community, networks, and partnership*: Tackling violence is a community responsibility, not a private matter. Approaches that treat violence against women as an individual or a relationship problem lead to practices that are victim-blaming and unsafe. At the relational level, equal partnerships need to replace the still too internationally dominant patriarchal model based on power and control, now well past its use-by date. Community-level partnerships between cis women, cis men and gender non-conforming individuals committed to ending gender-based violence, need to be based on the "depowerment" principle – where the dominant group makes the changes and the less powerful group benefits. This requires firm accountability mechanisms and monitoring by all parties.

- *Prevention*: Raising the status of women is essential. A systems-wide approach addressing the "cultural facilitators" of violence against women is needed to ensure that legal, medical, and social responses serve to expand the options available to women experiencing violence. For example, Ackerson and Subramanian (2008) examined socioeconomic and demographic patterns in intimate partner violence (IPV) in India, and concluded that "challenging cultural norms to promote the status of women and increasing the educational and economic opportunities for all people could decrease the prevalence of IPV" (p. 81).

- *Power*: Questions that need to be asked of any theory of violence include: Does it deal with violence in terms of gender and power issues? Does it couch the problem in gender blind ways, like "the violent couple"? Does it encourage perpetrators to take responsibility for the violence? Does it blame the victim in any way? Does it directly confront the violence as a central issue OR as a side issue to a "larger" problem, a "by-product" of a bad relationship? Does it work to limit perpetrators' power by enforcing legal sanctions? Does it work to expand victims' options in housing, income support, job opportunities, legal redress, parenting support? How does it serve to narrow the gender/power gaps at global, community and interpersonal levels that facilitate violence against women?

- *Diversity/Intersectionality*: Respect for diversity is sometimes misinterpreted as cultural

relativism, justifying a failure to intervene in the affairs of groups defined as "other." But violence is unacceptable in any form, and attention to diversity means working from within the perspectives of minority group women experiencing violence. Thus, Aboriginal women in remote communities may prefer to tackle alcohol profiteers to reduce levels of violence associated with substance abuse; in Aotearoa, parallel development models of service delivery aim to increase within-group accountability while promoting cultural as well as gender safety for Maori women (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2010); many African scholars and activists strongly oppose female genital cutting, yet challenge Western discourses and tactics in campaigns to end the practice (Nnaemeka & Ngozi Ezeilo, 2005).

- *Subjectivity/Reflexivity*: Violence is both a social construct and a (painfully) lived experience – feminist theories define it in terms of the social constructions of masculinity and femininity, the sets of traditions, habits and beliefs which permit some men to assume control over others, and thus, to assume the right to use violence in exercising that control. At the personal level, a person's subjective fear can be the best indicator of the dangerousness of a violent partner, regardless of any informal or professional risk assessment – yet her voice is often ignored, sometimes with fatal consequences.

Chapter Summary

We have not offered in this chapter a definitive conceptualization of a world without patriarchy, sexism, or **misogyny**, or a vision of wellbeing and liberation for under-entitled women and gender-varied individuals throughout the world. We leave that task for you, the readers, in your own contexts – because "feminism is a plant that grows only in its own soil" (Badran, 2002, cited in Van der Gaag, 2008, p. 16). Feminism's historical context reminds us that, in the words of a cigarette commercial, women "have come a long way baby." History also reveals that most changes are incremental and many gains fragile – as feminist community psychologists, we need to be vigilant about co-option by commercial interests (like tobacco companies!), erosion of hard-won rights, and the need to stay honest with ourselves about our relative power and privilege. Participants at a symposium discussing the UN MDG gender indicators wrote this song about empowerment (International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) 2006, p. 3):

> *It's girls in schools*
> *It's labor too*
> *It's being able to plan the kids*
> *And owning all our land*
> *Aspiring to be PM [prime minister]*
> *And having roads and water*
> *So that life in the future will be*
> *Better for our daughters*

Box 16.3 Exercise: From Rhetoric to Reality

Think back to the warm-up exercise at the start of this chapter – what specific aspects of gender equality and/or equity were part of your vision? Was it health, sexuality, work, spirituality, cultural safety, or any other issue impacting on the lives of women? What assumptions do you think you were making about gender identity as your vision took shape?

Deconstruction: Questioning the Text

Find a newspaper, magazine, or online article relating to your chosen issue. Read the text and try to answer the following questions.

1 What is the theme or topic, and how is it formulated (headlines, language, etc.)?

2 Whose voices are represented mostly? Women (or men) in positions of privilege? Are the voices of the people most affected represented in the text? In what ways do different actors and gendered identities enter the discourse (as victims, experts, competent, etc.)?

3 What kinds of discourses surround or are created within a particular text?

4 Are both equity and equality implicit in the text? Is patriarchy supported or subverted?

5 Where does the authority/authorship lie? Who can talk and who is talked about?

6 Who is cast as the expert? How is an expert position created and legitimated? What mechanisms are used to discredit alternative positions?

7 How is gender made relevant to the issues? Are gender relations visible in this text? What forms of masculinity and femininity are being made available here? Are any non-binary identities included or foregrounded?

8 What are the political implications of the text? Is there a transformative message there?

Action: Applying the Framework

In Box 16.2, we applied the principles of a feminist CP framework to the issue of violence against women. Think about the ways you would notice differences in the lives of women (and men and gender non-conforming groups) in your part of the world and elsewhere if your vision were realized, and list how each of those principles might (or might not) assist in working towards making your vision a reality.

Hint: Questions that need to be asked of any intervention include: Who is expected to change? Does it materially improve the lives of women? How many? Which women? How can you tell?

Key Terms

Cisgender: Refers to people whose gender identification and experiences are consistent with their birth-assigned sex. For example, cis female individuals were assigned female at birth and identify as women.

Gender: Refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors attributed by a given culture to a person's assigned sex (often based on stereotypes of masculinity and femininity). Gender is defined along several dimensions, including how individuals are socialized and how they identify themselves. It is a variable set of practices. We all "do" gender within the parameters of our age, culture, social class, sexual orientation, personality, and circumstances. Behavior that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as "gender-normative." A much debated term.

Gender identity: Refers to "each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms" (International Panel of Experts, 2007, p. 6). As the Australian Psychological Society (2016) explains in recommending gender-affirming mental health practices, "[t]he majority of people are assigned as either male or female at birth, and will experience themselves as male or female accordingly. For some people, however, the presumed relationship between assigned sex and gender is incorrect."

Intersex: Refers to a group of people who are born with sexual features of both male and female reproductive organs, chromosomes, and/or genitals. The term refers to sex characteristics, not gender identity or sexual orientation.

Equality: In this chapter we have used equality, particularly between women and men, as the principle of "being of equal value" rather than "being the same as" or "identical." Treating everyone the same is not fair treatment.

Equal rights: Similarly this principle may require different actions or outcomes according to differing – but equally important – needs. For example, women have a right to (and need access to) appropriate medical care at the time they become mothers. Parents (and children)' need, and therefore have equal rights to, a range of supports throughout childhood.

Equity: Ensuring people have what they need to be successful. In relation to gender, it means men and women should be given the same opportunities *despite their differences.*

Feminism(s): Various forms of feminism work towards a common goal of improving women's lives and dismantling patriarchal practices that impact on both men and women, and especially on gender non-conforming individuals and groups.

Intersectionality: Refers here to the complex interconnected inequities experienced by women across diverse cultures, abilities, and backgrounds. For example, an Aboriginal woman may be disadvantaged by being female AND by being Black.

Misogyny: Hatred and/or hostility towards all women.

Power: Central to all feminist analysis – traditionally measured in terms of individual or collective authority, information, resources, decision-making, coercion, and privilege, power is increasingly described in terms of discourse, relationship, and practice rather than quantity. In other words, power cannot be separated from how it is authorized and exercised.

Sex: Assigned at birth within the constraints of available legal categories (male, female, and, in some jurisdictions, intersex) on the basis of biological indicators including external genitalia, sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs, and hormones.

Sexism: Any beliefs, attitudes, practices, and/or institutions in which distinctions between people's intrinsic worth are made on the basis of sex/gender. This discrimination can be systemic as well as individual.

Transgender (in text: trans woman, trans man): Used to refer to persons whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex assigned to them at birth, including but not limited to, transgender, transsexual, and genderqueer identities. Since individuals can express their gender identity in various ways that might differ from their birth-assigned category, these expressions and experiences are generally referred to as transgender spectrum experiences.

Resources

For an overview of global and economic issues affecting women:

http://womensissues.about.com and www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/daw/index.html

The APA Society for the Psychology of Women maintains an active website: www.apadivisions. org/division-35/

An amazing compilation is updated almost daily at the University of Maryland: www.umbc.edu/ wmst/

An Australian site on, by, and for women with disabilities: http://www.wwda.org.au

Following a meeting held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2006, experts from 25 countries with diverse backgrounds and expertise relevant to issues of human rights law unanimously adopted the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: https://yogyakartaprinciples.org/

World Professional Association for Transgender Health: www.wpath.org/

Community psychology: In pursuit of liberation and well-being

by Monica Madyaningrum

17 November 2021

Location: University Library 1 NORTH Course Reserves

Call #: **RA790.55 .R54 2020**

Journal Title: Community psychology

Vol.: No: Mon/Yr: 2020
Pages: chap 16

Article Title: **'How Can Community Psychologists Best Work Towards Gender Equity?**

Borrower: **RAPID:UW1**
NEW: Main Library

Lending String:

IL:-

1st search:
2nd search:
Not on Shelf ☐
Lacking ☐
Not as Cited ☐

HOW CAN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS BEST WORK TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY?

16

Heather Gridley, Colleen Turner, Ronelle Carolissen, Sherine Van Wyk, and Monica Madyaningrum

Warm-up Questions

Before you begin reading this chapter, we invite you to reflect on the following questions:

1 Think of some ways that gender impacts on your life.
2 What would you be more (or less) able to do if you had been born (or assigned) a different gender?
3 Would this be the case if you had been born somewhere else in the world?
4 What are your culture or society's expectations or gender norms for people who identify as male or female? How rigid or flexible/fluid are these expectations as you experience them?
5 If you awoke one day to discover that gender equality and equity had miraculously been achieved worldwide, how would you notice?

Learning Objectives

In this chapter you will learn about

- The history of gender inequity and inequality in society and within psychology
- Community psychology's (CP) potential contribution to gender equity
- Feminist and more diversity-aware visions of wellness and liberation for people of all gender identities, locally and globally
- How we can participate in realising such visions and values, as community psychologists and in our personal lives

Introduction to Gender Equality

And she is carrying half a truth.
And she is carrying half a lie.
And she is carrying half of tomorrow.
And she is carrying half the sky.

This verse of a poem by Imtiaz Dharker (2015) is a poignant expression of the old saying "women hold up half the sky." More than 40 years since the peak of feminism's "second wave" and 20 years since the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, the basic aim of equality for women is far from being achieved. Today, more girls are being educated, and more women are living longer, are in paid employment, having fewer children, and engaging in politics. But while the lives of women have improved overall, there are many areas where advances have been slow or not achieved at all (United Nations, 2015a). There is still no country in the world where women's income is equal to men's, and women still shoulder most of the household responsibilities, including caring for children (United Nations, 2015a).

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) ushered in eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in a concerted effort to promote human development and address inequality (United Nations, 2015b). The third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3) aimed "to promote gender equality and empower women." Six "Gender Indicators" for tracking progress towards this goal across sectors and nations were developed: education, infrastructure, property rights, employment, political participation and violence against women. To build on the MDGs and realize those not yet achieved, the UN Member States in 2015 adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be realized by 2030. The SDGs endeavor to address a number of global concerns, such as eradicating all forms of poverty (goal 1); promoting health and wellbeing for all (goal 3); gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (goal 5); and reducing inequality within and among countries (goal 10). Central to all of these is the enactment of power.

In this chapter we examine CP's historical and potential contribution to gender equality and equity. What would a vision of wellbeing and liberation for women around the world be, and how can we know if we are part of the problem or part of the solution, as community psychologists and in our personal lives? If sexism, genderism and all forms of conscious and unconscious gendered entitlement are the problem, are feminisms the solution? Selected examples are used to anchor the chapter. We write from within our own communities in Australia, South Africa, and Indonesia, as feminist community psychologists working for change within and beyond our profession.

Historical Context

Why a Women's Movement?

Throughout history, every society has practiced some form of institutionalized disempowerment and oppression of women. Religious organizations often lead conservative backlashes on reproductive rights, blocking international aid funds for family planning programs, actively promoting homophobic and non-binary gender-devaluing discourses, and retaining narrow definitions of gender roles. The rise of religious extremism, encompassing Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Jewish versions, saw heightened legal and social restrictions on women in 25 countries in the late 1990s/early 2000s (El Sadaawi, 2005). But more recently, sexual abuse scandals have challenged the patriarchal structures that enabled and even sanctioned abuse on a previously unimagined scale. And, in ongoing waves of consciousness-raising and collective action, women have practiced and continuously refined a range of social resistances to counter oppression. Resistance by women to systemic oppression is almost a definition of feminism.

Feminism's "first wave" centered around women's right to vote in Western democracies in the late 19th century and early 20th century. In the post-World War II Western (or Global Northern) world, the timing of so-called second-wave feminism paralleled the emergence of CP in the late 1960s. From the 1970s onwards, feminism drew on a range of perspectives, including liberal feminism (which emphasized equality with men), Marxist feminism (which made links with class and other forms of oppression), radical feminism (which argued that women should distance themselves from male norms), feminist psychology, postmodern feminisms, postcolonial feminisms (which highlighted the long-lasting political, economic, and cultural impacts of colonization on women in the Global South and postcolonial world), and feminisms within a range of cultural and geopolitical contexts (some African American women preferred to describe themselves as "womanist").

In the 21st century, new material feminisms have emerged, incorporating a post-humanist, post-constructionist stance to thinking about diversity and its intersections. These include trans-feminism and other more recently emergent models of gender non-conformity that envision more gender and variously other diverse future subcultures and societies. These non-conformity-embracing feminisms, or "diversity feminisms" represent a more recent, post-structural theoretical and social development, shifting further away from polarized traditions of binary, birth-assigned gender based on externally assessed judgements.

Individual and group activism against gender and all stereotyping confines are stressed in this "next wave." More pluralized notions of social **gender identity** in post-information age society are actively questioned, as is the readiness of people who espouse particular forms of diversity to embrace other diversities and personalized non-conformity. Gender is presented as falling along a continuum of bio-social experiences, rather than placed in a polar-opposed binary based on birth-assigned male or female anatomical gender, and/or on normatively defined social roles. (The Key Terms section at the end of this chapter outlines some of the language required to more meaningfully conduct discourse with professionals and gender non-conforming individuals who are now utilizing these more inclusive, more extensively "unconscious entitlement sensitive" diversity feminisms.)

These various feminisms all work towards the common goal of improving women's lives. Each has its own views on how improvements may be achieved and indeed what constitutes improvement. The vigorous ongoing debates among feminisms can confuse outsiders and frustrate feminist theorists and activists themselves – yet why would it be assumed, or even desirable, that all women, or all feminists, speak with a unified voice? bell hooks (2000b) challenged hegemonic feminism's notion of a shared female experience. She argued that it did not consider differences between women and that, in contrast to middle-class women, working-class women were compelled to work out of necessity. hooks further contended that feminism will not bring about real transformation if men and boys are not included in the feminist struggle: "we have to do so much work to correct the assumption deeply embedded in the cultural psyche that feminism is anti-male. Feminism is anti-sexism" (p. 12). This view suggests that both men and women, and arguably more so, **transgender** and gender diverse minority groups, suffer oppression if they deviate from prescribed powerful hegemonic patriarchal practices.[1]

---

[1] For a fuller introduction to feminist thought, see Tong (2014), or, for a straightforward girl-friendly version, Kaz Cooke's *Girl Stuff* (2016). Cooke lists the gains made by feminism in the 20th century from a teenager's perspective.

Community Psychology, Gender, and Feminisms

Within psychology, both feminist and community psychologists developed critiques of mainstream psychology, while in the 1970s within the wider community, feminism and CP were originally aligned with human rights movements like the gay liberation, civil rights, anti-apartheid, and peace movements. In Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand in the same decade, Aboriginal and Maori activists (some of whom were also feminists) were making their presence felt. Similarly, in South Africa, gender activists were centrally involved in fighting against Apartheid and exploitation. The battle against exploitation continues today, often involving strong collaborations between women *and* men who identify with feminism.

Feminist psychologists directed their critique towards psychology's "mismeasure of women" (Tavris, 1992) and the individualization and pathologization of women's collective distress (e.g., Caplan, 1995). Women had not participated equally in psychology's establishment as a science, and feminists mistrusted its application to women's lives. As Weisstein (1968/1993) observed back in 1968, "Psychology has nothing to say about what women are really like ... essentially because psychology does not know" (p. 197).

The 1970s feminist slogan "the personal is political" meant psychology was (and still is) fertile ground for action, and that political questions could be seen as psychology's business. But some early attempts to paint women into the psychological picture were themselves criticized for perpetuating victim-blaming (e.g., by suggesting that women's "fear of success" was the real reason for the glass ceiling) or reinforcing gendered stereotypes of masculinity and femininity – and leaving oppressive, inequitable social and organizational structures unchallenged (Mednick, 1989). Examining texts and courses on the psychology of women, Crowley-Long (1998) concluded that "feminist psychology has adopted a much too narrow political focus" (p. 128) in drawing almost exclusively from liberal feminist frameworks and positivist methods, and not enough from radical and socialist alternatives. She argued that a broader frame of reference would be more inclusive of marginalized groups and more sensitive to the socioeconomic forces shaping the lives of women from diverse backgrounds. Her argument resonates even more strongly when considered from a global perspective.

Community psychologists' critique of mainstream psychology emerged in many countries from its parent sub-disciplines of community mental health (clinical psychology) and applied social psychology. In contrast to feminist critiques, their concerns focused less on measurement and therapy, and more on the settings where psychological research and practice took place – they set about broadening their applications (e.g., prevention and macro-level intervention) and taking account of contexts (ecology and community). Thus, they distanced themselves from "the personal" as reflecting psychology's traditional individualistic stance, and mostly took up "public" ahead of "private" causes as their intervention targets.

Anne Mulvey's (1988) landmark article noted that CP and feminism shared similar critiques of victim-blaming ideologies; pushed beyond individual, adjustment-oriented solutions; called for new paradigms beyond the fragmentation and mystification of traditional disciplines; and developed similar change models and strategies. Both focused on social policy, prevention ahead of "cure," advocacy, empowerment, and the de-mystification of experts. Feminist consciousness-raising groups resonated with community psychologists' support for self-help groups and consumer-based movements.

But shared values and goals, and the common experience of "swimming against the tide" of mainstream psychology, did not lead to much integration between the two emergent sub-disciplines.

Even now, references to CP rarely appear in feminist psychology literature, while feminist community psychologists have struggled to have "women's issues" acknowledged within CP agendas.

How Far Have We Come?

Fox and Prilleltensky (1997) brought together a range of critical perspectives from the margins of psychology, enabling the possibility of dialogue between community and feminist psychologies as well as other non-mainstream approaches. The special double issue of the *American Journal of Community Psychology* (Bond, Hill, Mulvey, & Terenzio, 2000) provided a rich menu of feminist research and action. The special issue was organized around seven themes linking CP with feminist theory and research: attention to diversity; contextualized understanding, speaking from the standpoints of oppressed groups; collaboration; multi-level, multi-method approaches; reflexivity; and action orientation. Angelique and Culley's (2003) examination of two key journals led them to be optimistic about CP's increasingly pro-feminist stance. For them, adopting a feminist paradigm means explicitly acknowledging one's worldview – particularly important in a globalized environment. Ayalar-Alcantar, Dello Stritto, and Guzmán (2008) celebrated the trailblazing contributions of 55 women within the Society for Community Research & Action (APA Division 27). More recently, a special issue of the *Journal of Community Psychology* (Angelique & Mulvey, 2012) documented and progressed the co-creation of a feminist CP.

How do the Core Principles of Community Psychology Advance Gender Equity?

What do CP's founding fathers (and mothers) have to say about women's experiences? How far do their principles/approaches take us?

Transforming Systems: Ecology and Complexity In a Globalized World

CP's primary departure point from mainstream psychology was/is its emphasis on the central importance of context to any understanding of human behavior. In practice, this might mean conducting research in naturalistic settings, working with family and community systems as well as individuals, or seeking sociopolitical as well as intrapsychic explanations for presenting problems. Feminist theorists similarly argue for more complex explanations and psychosocial understandings of psychological processes and functioning, as alternatives to reductionist approaches that narrow down and systematically decontextualize the phenomena to be studied.

Ecological models that promote holistic understandings of the interrelatedness of human experiences can be helpful in addressing structural inequalities based on gender. For example, changes occurring in women's lives that are related to their reproductive systems are often represented as purely biomedical problems (e.g., menopause) and psychological theories often add an "emotional disorder" layer (e.g., premenstrual syndrome, "empty nest syndrome"), necessitating therapeutic "treatment." An ecological perspective would take account of society's expectations and valuing of women at different points in their lives. Such a perspective would ensure that the demands of parenting adolescents, caring for ageing parents, renegotiating work roles, having less access to retirement benefits, or finding oneself devalued by the appearance of gray hair, would all be factored into any understanding of women's lives at mid-life – not to mention the freedom and

energy that might be available to post-menopausal women. Ecological understandings thus invite researchers and practitioners to move away from single-factor causal models that promote medicalized solutions or individualized victim-blaming. And the next step is to embrace the complexity and tolerate the uncertainty required for the "dynamic co-creation of identities in multilayered contexts" as Angelique and Mulvey (2012, p. 1) described the "ongoing project" to develop a truly feminist CP. Such a project is particularly challenging in countries like Indonesia or Russia (and in some US states) where fundamentalist groups are increasingly demanding "zero tolerance" of what they describe as "uncertain" categories.

Families are perhaps the most obvious example of an ecological system with particular implications for women vis-à-vis men/partners and children. Patriarchal constructions implicitly or explicitly defined marriage as a hierarchical, male-headed, individualistic institution within which women and children were considered property. As family demographics and understandings of human diversity have shifted gradually, new family forms are demanding more complexity-sensitive research methods and understanding. Some obvious developments include dramatic increases in same-sex parenting and fostering, more transparent and openly polyamorous and multi-partner group-identified families, and parenting in transgender and gender transitioning contexts. Highly vocal social movements have successfully lobbied internationally for legalization changes, enshrining equality for any consenting adults seeking formal recognition of their marriages.

The notion of "family change" refers not only to those families clearly going through change (e.g., in the process of separation, or of gender transition of a child, sibling, or parent), but to all families who, on a daily basis, renegotiate their relationships to one another. Developing ways of respectfully engaging with changing family ecology is essential for any services provided to parents, children and families. Yet women have historically and biologically been held responsible for children, and this continues to be the case. Where women do have access to income, they often experience the double burden of income-generation and domestic responsibilities. In East Timor, "there is very little progress in getting men to pour their own water, let alone share in domestic work" (International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) 2008, p. 5). In Australia, it has been estimated that fathers spend on average just one minute per weekday alone with their children (Craig, 2008) (see Box 16.1 to consider international care work).

From a feminist perspective, the downside of ecological and systems models is that they usually lack any power analysis and can risk promoting homeostatic "status quo" solutions to problems that require fundamental change. Between the rhetoric of terms like "ecology" and "prevention" and the reality that entrenched power is not easily given away, we need to keep asking what safeguards must be in place to ensure that interventions don't work against the groups they were intended to assist. Ecological conceptualizations must factor in social justice and human rights considerations if they are to pave the way for systems-level interventions that lead to social change. Theoretical models must involve naming of power differentials along with recognition of structural inequality as a primary cause of personal distress, whether these differentials and inequities arise from gender, race, class, age, sexuality, and/or other determinants.

Example: Moving Beyond Band-aid Interventions

Instead of merely addressing the symptoms of structurally entrenched inequalities and oppression, the Intervention with Microfinance for Aids and Gender Equity (IMAGE) Study (Kim et al., 2009) in the rural Limpopo province in South Africa is an example of an intervention that addressed an intersection between gender inequality, poverty, and health. Based on the model of the Grameen Bank, this community-based project loaned poor women money (i.e., microfinance) to start small businesses and also provided them with an HIV and gender training program. Compared to the control groups, those women who were in the IMAGE project challenged the acceptability of violence and reported a significant reduction in levels of intimate partner violence; participants also reported higher levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy skills and improved health-seeking behaviors (for a comprehensive discussion of the IMAGE study see Kim et al., 2009; World Health Organization 2015).

Prevention, Promotion, and Social Change

CP students soon become familiar with the "broken bridge" or "clifftop rescue" (see Chapter 6) metaphors of prevention – the notion that it is better to look upstream and repair the bridge or fence than to keep calling in emergency services to rescue those who fall into the water and need to be fished out downstream. But have we actually improved someone's quality of life if all we've done is remove a potential hazard, without questioning why it was allowed to fall into disrepair in the first place? Suicide prevention programs that focus on taking sheets from prisoners' beds or raising the safety rails on a bridge do nothing to address the poverty and desperation behind disproportionate incarceration rates among Indigenous communities or suicide rates among young men in rural communities.

An evidence-based prevention approach to depression in women of all ages would address the oppression and abuse that underpin much of the everyday experiences of women across a range of circumstances. But many approaches that claim to be "preventive" are narrowly focused on medical diagnostic explanations and ameliorative, intra-individual rather than systems-level solutions (McMullen & Stoppard, 2006). Individualized pathologization is all too evident in mental health initiatives that confine prevention to early identification of genetic predispositions to bipolar disorder, for example, or to early detection of symptoms to encourage speedier referral for treatment, often with antidepressant medication only.

Of course ambulances are still needed as well as fences and bridges. Prevention strategies can gain much from the experiences of those who have fallen off the metaphorical cliff. People living

with HIV-AIDS have been heavily involved in designing and delivering prevention strategies, including "safe sex" education campaigns. Our vision of real primary prevention is the community center in the main street far from the river in flood – where women (and men and children) can sing, dance, work, and create. .

Example: Homelessness Is Gendered

The introductory chapter of this book points out that the majority of the world's population is homeless or in insecure accommodation according to many definitions of homelessness. In many countries, formal housing systems fail to serve the bulk of the population, with whole communities living on the streets or in the bush. It is self-evident that homeless people – men, women, children – are without economic independence and/or the ongoing means to obtain adequate shelter.

The experience of homelessness is qualitatively different for men and women, in part because cultural and political assumptions, both explicit and implicit, continue to be promoted about what is "women's work." This work usually includes caring for children, husbands, older people, and extended family, and is often unpaid or poorly remunerated. Women's housing security often depends on the caring work they undertake within the family or their local or cultural community. Homelessness for older, socially female-identified people is thus often brought about by their lower, shared, or non-existent incomes over the life course and their long periods out of the paid workforce while raising children.

Women (including trans-women) are often not identified in homelessness statistics, which in themselves vary in definition, because they are less likely to "sleep rough" and more likely to find shelter in relationships or housing arrangements that expose them to sexual, physical, and/or economic abuse. Sex work is typically seen as "female work," and subject to the same problems characterizing such work: it is unpaid or poorly paid, but with the added problem of being illegal (usually), stigmatized, outside the mainstream economy – and unsafe.

A feminist CP analysis would factor in the prerequisites of economic independence for women when considering how to prevent women's homelessness. Those prerequisites include:

- access to education – still far from a universal right for women
- legislation and policy frameworks supporting paid work for women
- cultural beliefs, norms, and practices that support female-identified households outside of patriarchal structures.

For both **cisgender** and trans women, preventing homelessness can mean ensuring safety in leaving violent or abusive relationships. Women may find it difficult to leave a family situation when they have no economic supports of their own, and especially when they are responsible for children. It is very difficult to either earn a living or parent effectively without secure accommodation. Women leaving a male or female violent partner (with or without children) may need to escape and hide, and some even find themselves forced to live in their car. In other settings, accommodations "on the streets" are often less secure and safe for women and their children than the violent home they are fleeing.

Most developed countries have a system of child protection where the state has the authority to remove children from parent(s) who are not deemed able to care for them, due to violence or neglect of responsibility. For mothers, this situation may lead to an irresolvable choice between

leaving children with a violent partner/parent or escaping with them to homelessness, which in turn leaves them vulnerable to child protection intervention. Many countries have refuge systems established from the 1970s onwards as safe houses for women fleeing domestic violence. In Australia these shelters are temporary and sometimes inaccessible due to long waiting lists. Others do not allow trans women or children (especially boys) over a certain age (often 12 years). This situation often has dire consequences, particularly for trans women.

A CP approach to preventing homelessness by enabling economic independence for women might be rights-based, ensuring that no group is without universal rights, including adequate housing and consideration of differing emotional recovery and safety support needs. The more difficult challenge is how to operationalize those rights. A cautionary tale from South Africa involves a woman who fought for the right of "access to reasonable housing" under the Constitution (De Vos, 2001). Despite Mrs. Grootboom winning her case, she died homeless in 2008 and her right to reasonable housing was never delivered by the Government (see http://constitution-allyspeaking.co.za/irene-grootboom-died-homeless-forgotten-no-c-class-mercedes-in-sight/).

In Australia and the UK, there has been a strong tradition of public housing for those with less access to economic resources. This tradition has considerably weakened over the last 20 years, and the focus has shifted towards supporting people and case-managing their economic, mental health, or substance abuse issues, sometimes in "safe" accommodation and other times wherever they are living. In contrast, "Housing First" models, where individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance problems receive their own apartments with ongoing "wraparound" services available on site (but not necessarily mandated), have proved successful in a range of contexts (e.g., Nelson, 2010). Marybeth Shinn's meticulous research on homelessness over decades highlights how variables such as economic hardship cause homelessness, and illustrates how CP can contribute to evidence-based policy and solutions (Shinn & McCormack, 2017). She likens homelessness to a game of musical chairs: where then there is not enough to go round it is the poor and socially excluded who are left homeless (Shinn, 2009).

Community psychologists have a role at a number of levels in operationalizing the right to safe and secure accommodation and to the economic independence that supports women's ability to maintain that housing. I [Colleen] am a member of the Board of Management of a community housing organization. In this role, my CP background has been invaluable, especially in advising on how best to advocate for homeless women and children to legislators and policy-makers. For example, until recently, children accompanying their homeless parents (typically mothers) were not counted as homeless. This meant that the "no data no problem" factor made it easier for governments and policy-makers to deny or ignore problems for which there was limited statistical evidence. One of my organization's proudest achievements was being instrumental in having children counted in homelessness statistics, and then successfully attracting funding for a range of programs to support homeless families. But it should be noted that the programs were developed first, and were able to be scaled up when data were available to support the lived experience of many women and children, along with the practice wisdom of experienced housing workers.

Community, Networks, Partnership, Social Capital, and Sense of Community

There is increasing recognition in international development contexts that women's empowerment and education are the keys to real change in disadvantaged communities (United Nations, 2015a; Van der Gaag, 2008). Grass-roots community campaigns have often involved women

fighting for the right to control their fertility, to limit the sale of war toys, or to bear witness to the "disappearance" of their children under repressive regimes.

The downside of community metaphors lies in concerns that a focus on public aspects of community may render women invisible, by prioritizing "public" over "private" concerns. The minimization of "domestic" violence by police and other authorities as less serious than other forms of crime is a prime example. The uncritical acceptance of "community" as an ideal can be problematic when it means the subordination of legitimate concerns to "the greater good." Women who were urged to leave the paid workforce to set up house in the post-World War II period were sacrificed to a narrow vision of community rebuilding. In such cases, a focus on community can have the effect of submerging women's voices beneath the louder notes of (usually male, often patriarchal) community leaders.

The policy and practice question then is: How do community-based organizations and local and national governments work with community members in ways that support the strengths of that community and address individual and collective needs (Turner, 2008). The following example from the Indonesian context highlights some possibilities for women's community participation, even within traditionally assigned gender roles.

Example: Community Networks as Platforms for Advocacy

Indonesia has recently been shifting toward a more democratic political system. Against this background, the concept of community participation is gaining widespread popularity in Indonesian community development practices. Encouraged by such a context, I [Monica] undertook doctoral research that examined the meaning of participation from the vantage point of a local community. Specifically, the study investigated the practice of community participation in a community-based program targeted to tackle discrimination and marginalization experienced by people with disabilities. This program was initiated by a local non-governmental organization (NGO) in a partnership with five villages in Bantul District, Yogyakarta.

Researching this program, I have learned that understanding the broader sociohistorical and political context of a partnership is critical in examining to what extent it has met its promise of promoting equality and access to decision-making. My conversations with villagers suggest that even a well-intended partnership can inadvertently foster existing inequalities between dominant and marginalized groups in a community, such as between "able" and "disabled" bodies, local bureaucrats, and regular villagers, and also between male and female community activists.

In these villages, community health cadres (trained volunteers)[2] are the backbone for community activities included in the program. Although not formally regulated as women-only positions, none of the community health cadres in these villages is male. It is highly likely that gender role stereotypes are behind this situation. In Indonesian culture, the assumption of the nurturing nature of women and the traditional division of labor in families (women as housewives) has conditioned women to take up various voluntary roles in their communities. Such a tendency is not confined to Indonesia, but is almost universally apparent (Musick & Wilson, 2008; Osborne, Baum, & Ziersch, 2009).

---

[2] Cadre is a term that is usually used to call those voluntarily working for community programs initiated by government, both at the local and national level. The word cadre seems to evoke a sense of being observant to authorities who own the programs, rather than the word volunteer. That is why government officials appear to prefer using the word cadre.

Historically, community health cadres were recruited by the government as non-paid fieldwork officers for national health programs. Thus, there is a common image that these cadres are the tool of the government whose main function is to ensure the delivery of government programs, whether or not the programs meet the needs of the targeted community. These cadres are usually depicted as a symbol of women's subordination within the patriarchal system, which positions women as dutiful servants of their community whose work does not need payment (Suryakusuma, 1996). However, my observation suggests that such depiction risks ignoring the women's agency as social actors in their locality. There are instances that indicate how these women tactfully function in their cadre role to promote issues which otherwise would have been overlooked by the decision makers in the community. For instance, one of the cadres is actively reviving what used to be a popular traditional art performance in the community. This activity can bring together youth and elder community members who are usually disengaged from the community life. With work taking up most of people's time, collective rituals and ceremonies that previously were important social gatherings are often missing from communities' routines.

This example indicates that women can have an opportunity to "hijack" the existing social spaces as a platform to advocate issues that matter most for them, and to restore a shared sense of community. It suggests the potential of initiating gradual changes through the existing social platform. Equally important however, are efforts to improve the quality of women's participation by ensuring that they have equal share in decision-making and are not confined in the "nurturing" roles. The next example confirms the importance of being vigilant about the quality of women's participation in their community.

Example: Promoting Environmental Sustainability Through Community Participation

Environmental sustainability is a social issue as much as it is about the physical environment. In the Bantul Region in Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia, where I [Monica] conducted my fieldwork, the social dimension of environmental sustainability is reflected in how people are dealing with the issue of disaster risk reduction (DRR). My field observations suggest that sense of community is central to the success of DRR programs. In addition, the observations indicate that gender significantly influences the way people experience their community.

Following the massive earthquake that hit the region in 2006, DRR has been a prioritized issue in Bantul. Geographically located in one of the world's most seismically active regions, the risks of earthquake and tsunami are ever-present. Therefore, local communities are a regular target for various DRR programs organized by either government or non-government organizations. The ultimate goals of such programs are to develop resilient local communities that can independently identify risks, mobilize local resources to mitigate risks, and promote better adaptation to the environment. Achieving these goals requires an inclusive process that fosters community members' willingness to participate in programs (Korstanje, 2014).

The participative nature of DRR is formally acknowledged in various speeches and discussions related to DRR activities in these villages; however, there were only a few occasions in which related actors (e.g., local community members, government officers, NGO staff) engaged in in-depth discussions about the nature of participation. Most of the time, the discussions focused on the technical aspects of DRR such as identifying disaster threats specific to the communities, developing evacuation maps, and establishing a legal body responsible for carrying out each village's DRR plan.

In these forums, usually professional practitioners (i.e., government officers and NGO staff) would present information and knowledge about DRR, with the community members invited as the targeted audience. For the practitioners, knowledge and technical skills related to the concept of DRR were perceived as the starting point. However, for community members, ensuring community involvement was the most crucial component. The practical utility of including different points of view in development initiatives is reflected further in considering that the majority of community activists involved were women.

As the region, in general, shifts toward a more industrialized society, it is becoming more difficult to attract community involvement in volunteer-based collective activities like the DRR programs. In this shifting context, such programs rely on a small number of mainly female volunteers, and the types of activities they engage in can reinforce existing stereotypes and power dynamics. Women would ordinarily have little or even zero involvement in the decision-making process in the programs. However, when it comes to the daily operations, they often carry most of the workload. At a glance, such a situation may create an impression that women have leading roles. But without ongoing critical analysis, this kind of participation may actually reinforce existing gender stereotypes and entrench gender-based inequality.

Power, Empowerment, and Depowerment

According to Burman (1997), traditional psychology's individual focus "has particular difficulty understanding power relations as socially constructed frameworks that may be expressed by individuals, but are created in larger social contexts" (p. 146). The operation of power is central to all feminist analyses. Why do so many men use violence against women? "Because they can," was how one police superintendent replied. Whether measured in terms of information, institutionalized authority, resources, decision-making, coercion, or privilege, power differentials can be seen to constrain or expand the choices available to women and men in a wide range of social contexts – not the pseudo-choice of coffee blends or ringtones, but real choices about how life is to be lived, individually and collectively.

Box 16.1 Women's Work – Whose Labor?

The Western world has become reliant on the skills of elite professional, educated women and expects them to continue in paid work, often for 50 or more hours per week. But neither the original 19th century "8-hour day" nor current campaigns factored in the second (domestic) shift worked by many women, or the "emotional labor" that is primarily women's work (Guy & Newman, 2004).

Poor women have always acted as housemaids, wet-nurses, or nannies to wealthy families. Globalization now means that women from poor countries such as the Philippines, Mexico, or Eastern Europe are forced by economic necessity to leave their own children behind (or sometimes, to prostitute them) to provide cheap immigrant labor, often illegal, in more affluent countries.

Similarly, men in South Asian countries often seek dangerous "slave labor" work in economically booming countries like Saudi Arabia, leaving their wives to carry the domestic load alone.

The exploitation of women in domestic work reproduces and widens the First World (minority) – Third World (majority) divide and makes real and reciprocal alliances between women structurally difficult, both within the "developed" world and between the minority and majority worlds (see Anderson, 2000). Privileged women of conscience, like Naomi Wolf (2001), can see the inequities operating in their daily lives:

> I learned that if I sat in a park with our baby and chatted with an immigrant

nanny who was wiping the drool of a white baby ... within minutes she would show me a photo of her own children far away, whom she might not have seen for years. And her eyes would fill with tears ... These women must often cross oceans and leave their children, big kids and small, with relatives. They often live in rooms at the margins of other people's families ... so that they [the children] can have school uniforms and good food, education and a better chance at life. (p. 219)

Power is not something we have, but something we swim in, a matter of discourse and practice rather than quantity. Feminist understandings of power have shifted from unitary notions of something bad when men have it and good when women have it, towards recognition of its multiple levels of operation. And like racism, its operation in sexist terms has become more subtle – it is rare, at least in Western society, for women to be openly referred to as property, yet the notion is far from dead. A range of gendered power disparities can still increase the risk of cis women, trans women and non-binary identifying individuals experiencing violence within relationships, and diminish their power to escape. Attitudes toward gender varied individuals can be particularly brutal, pathologizing, and often deadly.

The narrowing of gendered power differentials over the past 100 years in societies where women can now vote, be educated, earn an independent income, control their fertility, and participate in sports and other hitherto "unladylike" activities indicates that change, however slow, is possible. Related to the increase in women's education, Gakidou, Cowling, Lozano, and Murray (2010) estimate that 4.2 million child deaths have been prevented in the past 40 years worldwide, and that between 1990 to 2013, maternal mortality has also decreased by 45 percent (United Nations, 2015a). But the experiences of women under successive regimes in places like Afghanistan (and indeed in some US states where hard-won reproductive rights are being wound back) show how fragile such gains can be.

Horacek, 1994, *Unrequited Love*, Nos 1–100

Empowerment is a founding metaphor within both CP and feminism. But its critics have argued that it has been too easily reduced to simplistic notions of individual power. And conservative governments have co-opted the word "self-empowerment" as a counter to the more radical demands of minority groups for self-determination. We think empowerment is more usefully understood as a process rather than an active verb ("I cannot empower you, but our conversation or active engagement might be experienced as empowering to one or both of us"). Rape will not be eliminated by having all women learn self-defence skills; attention also needs to be directed towards "depowering the powerful," or at least towards creating space for more collaborative, inter-gender power-sharing partnerships.

As Perkins (1991) notes, "power does not have to be repressive – it can actually facilitate better, more satisfying lives for people" (p. 136). As feminist community psychologists from different backgrounds, the challenge for all five authors is to recognize both our relative privilege and relative powerlessness as springboards to action. We are aware of how our respective power and privilege may be useful to the communities we are working with. At other times, our own powerlessness enables us to firmly align ourselves with other women's experiences of oppression.

Diversity, Marginalization, Inclusion, and Intersectionality

Diversity is a complex term that often refers to cultural or ethnic diversity but can and should encompass gender, class, age, religion, languages, abilities, geography, and sexual orientation. It is often viewed in organizations and systems as "that which is different or other," or people and practices that do not conform to the norm. In most Western organizational contexts, like universities, White, male, heterosexual, and Christian values are considered the norm, and all forms of difference are tolerated but seldom affirmed. Affirmation of difference is seldom encouraged because assumptions are made that consensus alone promotes social inclusion in organizations or society. Yet post-constructionist feminist approaches encourage affirmation of difference as productive for organizations and society (Braidotti, 2013).

Diversity-affirming approaches are important as denial of difference with an emphasis on similarity and equality leaves "others," including multiply power-disadvantaged groups (consider Black, transgender, and/or Muslim "others" for example), to assimilate to the values in the organization (or society), resulting in a paradox for marginalized people in those organizations (Akhtar, 2014). This paradox arises because to participate at all, assimilation into the over-arching organizational culture requires individuals to deny the reality that group differences can be positive and desirable. Instead, marginalized people (if they choose to "assimilate") must accept and perform identities that do not necessarily resonate with their own personal, social, and cultural experiences. They are constantly enmeshed in a double bind that leaves them constructed as a liability and a disadvantage, even though the organization may superficially acknowledge that diversity is desirable.

Linked to the idea of difference is the idea that everybody must be treated "equally." Even though "equal treatment" sounds acceptable and just, it becomes unfair when it assumes that we live in a society without the deep inequalities all humans experience globally. Equity and equitable treatment is more desirable as it considers group needs and merit as opposed to merit only (Prilleltensky, 2012).

The equity/equality cartoon in Chapter 3 (p. 55) indicates that some people and groups need more resources than others so that key CP values of fairness and social justice can prevail in

society. Affirmative action policies that emphasize equity as opposed to equality consider both merit and need by seeking to level playing fields and minimize continued inequalities for disadvantaged people such as women or older employees in job application and selection processes.

Such concerns apply to psychology too. Fine (2012) and many others have argued that dominant voices in mainstream psychology reflect White, male and heterosexual norms:

> We seem to have forgotten to ask critical questions like 'What kinds of evidence are being privileged? What are we not seeing?' in our rush to accept ever-narrowing notions of evidence-based practice in the face of irrefutable indicators of the gendered, raced, classed and sexualized collateral damage of economic and political crisis. (p. 3)

Psychology itself, therefore, needs to diversify the "voice" that authors (and author-izes) its claims to scientific status and pronouncements on the nature of evidence and "truth." While cultural diversity is given lip service, and guidelines warn against "bias" in research and practice, institutionalized practices often work against equal power distribution and opportunities for participation by diverse groups, interests, and individuals – the very communities we claim to serve.

Promoting diversity is no simple matter of token representation or assimilationist melting pots. Dimensions of diversity are commonly experienced as dimensions of inequality and discrimination, often with compounding effects. Crenshaw (1989) used the term **"intersectionality"** to describe the compounding effects of marginalization. She conceptualized identities in a grid-like fashion where multiple identities co-exist and intersect and can never exist in isolation of each other. Intersectionality challenges the notion that multiple aggregations of marginalization or privilege are listed additively. Multiple co-existing identity locations fundamentally shape individual subjectivities of race, class, and gender, even though race remains a marker of diversity. This means all women, for example, do not have the same oppressive experiences and power in patriarchal society, but that some, because of White privilege or middle class privilege, have more power than working class women (and men) of color.

During the 1990s, there was a vigorous debate between dominant forms of feminism and the increasingly visible feminisms of the non-Western world and of Indigenous women and women of color. Critics argued that Western liberal feminism had largely advantaged middle-class White women and had not necessarily had a flow-on effect to other social subgroups of women. Some reasons advanced included the fear that, in sharing newfound power, advantaged women risk losing favor, ground, or personal power. Meara and Day (2000) acknowledged that "in the short term a more inclusive feminism is likely to have more integrity and less power" (p. 260). White privilege has, for example·meant that White women in the US and South Africa benefited most from affirmative action policies. Black men were the second group to benefit from such policies, and Black women derived the least benefit. This pattern of representation and power imbalance has also been observed at times in CP (Ayalar-Alcantar, Dello Stritto, & Guzmán, 2008; Gridley & Breen, 2007; Mulvey, 1988). For example, in the South African context, men and White women typically occupy high status posts in research, teaching, leadership, and publications, and women, often Black, are overrepresented as workers in less socially valued "frontline" community organizations (Carolissen & Swartz, 2009).

. Affirming diversity within CP demands a commitment. First, to expand the range of voices represented in its publications, theory-building, and applications from token inclusion to a critical, sustainable mass. Next, beyond the "add voices" strategy, comes the promise and challenge of affirming the complexity of intersectionality – of recognizing that we are all more than the sum of

our demographic dimensions, and that often, these dimensions are in conflict. And are we truly prepared for the field to be transformed by the inclusion *as equal partners* of multiple "others" we had assumed to have fewer resources or had defined by perceived deficits – homeless substance users, young single mothers, non-binary identifying persons, women in veils, refugees, Indigenous elders, clothing outworkers?

CP has taken steps towards affirming global and geographic diversity with international conferences in Puerto Rico (2006), Portugal (2008), Mexico (2010), Spain (2012), Brazil (2014), South Africa (2016), Chilé (2018), and Australia (2020). Participants experience the challenges of multilingual presentations, unfamiliar ways of being, and differing worldviews. Such events serve to de-center our discipline from its heavily North American, Caucasian, middle class assumptive base. But they are necessarily elite events, increasingly difficult to justify environmentally and in terms of their real effects on global and local diversity-based inequalities. Is this the best we can do for equity, social justice, and human rights?

Example: Intersectionality

In the post-1994 democratic South Africa, dominant discourses of national social inclusion suggest that South African children are "born free" and experience few impacts of legislated inequity in apartheid South Africa. However, Carolissen, Van Wyk, and Pick-Cornelius (2012) explored how a group of colored[3] adolescent girls talked about their intersectional experiences of race, gender, and class in their school and community. The girls' experiences represented a counternarrative to the inclusionary discourse associated with "rainbowism." A focus group interview as well as observations were conducted with 14 girls who participated in a pre-existing life-skills development program at a primary school, in a peri-urban area in Stellenbosch. Their reports of these experiences were often contradictory and involved girls both rejecting and re-inscribing micro-aggressions that impacted negatively on their identities.

Despite having grown up in a democratic South Africa, the young poor girls (aged 13–15) were found to have classed and gendered experiences, which were internalized and expressed as racialized experiences. They associated middle-class lifestyles with "Whiteness." One participant gave examples of upper middle-class colored men (sports stars and politicians) who married White women precisely because they had money and had acculturated themselves to becoming more desirable to White women through financially-acquired, middle-class power. Her responses imply that she and her peers would never be able to consider marrying middle-class colored men, because these men aspired both to Whiteness and to marrying White women. Some participants also said that middle-class colored children in their community thought they were White and better than themselves because they attended schools that were previously White.

In the group, girls were caught in a bind of both idealizing and rejecting Whiteness. They made observations that White people supported their children in further post-school education,

---

[3] We concur with scholars that race is a social construction and that there is no biological evidence for race (Soudien, 2012). The term 'colored' is a remnant of the apartheid system of racial categorization and oppression that ranked people according to their physical features as either White, colored, Indian, or Black. This racial classification entrenched White privilege and Black disadvantage, which denied the majority of South Africans access to resources. Although the democratic government of South Africa has attempted to dismantle the oppression and inequality by using the apartheid categories for redress, the legacy and deep internalization of apartheid race categories continue to shape the lives of all South Africans today (Bundy, 2014).

worked harder, and were wealthier. In contrast, the work ethic of colored people was questioned, with some girls suggesting application of a stereotype that colored people were "lazy" and just "get pregnant at school." This kind of comment reinscribed negative micro-aggressions to colored people like themselves, until another girl in the group rejected this view. She claimed that merit does not exist because inheritance has given White people farms and property and that White people buy drugs in their community. This shocked some girls because they couldn't believe that some White people are drug users.

When girls re-inscribe such micro-aggressions, they unwittingly collude with dominant social discourses and reinforce White supremacy. At the same time, they also display agency in resisting dominant discourses that devalue them. Young girls not only learn how to negotiate the spaces they physically inhabit, they also learn how to negotiate a neo-liberal world where a number of commodities such as branded goods and education have become desirable objects and markers of success associated with Whiteness. Such internalized attitudes are fundamental learning experiences their educators have to engage with when working with girls who experience multiple oppressions. The study's authors suggest that to work in anti-oppressive ways, we should engage learners on issues of power so we may start to build on the beginnings of resistance that are clear in these girls' responses.

Subjectivity and Reflexivity (Warning – you are about to enter big word territory!)

Notions of subjectivity and reflexivity are drawn from postmodern, poststructuralist, and social constructionist epistemologies that challenged the heavy reliance of psychology (and most modern sciences) on a positivist paradigm of "value-free," objective, measurement-focused research and a concomitant commitment to "evidence-based" practice. As the name suggests, poststructuralist approaches question the existence of a single human consciousness or reality, and hence emphasize plurality and tolerance of difference. While CP aspires to a more contextualized, ecologically valid and socially useful praxis, its entrenched North American hegemony has largely been impervious to the emergence in Europe and elsewhere of postmodern psychology. In contrast, critical psychology has been influenced by Marxist, feminist, Foucauldian (poststructuralist/postmodern) and psychoanalytic theories.

Critical, community, and feminist psychologies all agree on the need to be context specific in theory, research, and practice. Each seeks to prioritize voices that need to be heard or have been silenced on specific issues, which is where subjectivity comes into play – recognizing that truth claims based on notions of an objective, value-free science are unsustainable. Feminist psychologists were among the first to open up space for multiple subjectivities to be acknowledged within the discipline. Separating the universal "he" into the gendered subject "she or he," they exposed the supposedly impartial, depersonalized observer as just another form of the male gaze.

Poststructuralist approaches have drawbacks of their own, partly because they demand a new jargon that seems very academic, and risks alienating the very women whose perspectives they aim to include, and partly because their strategies of discourse analysis and deconstruction do not necessarily lead to advocacy for non-dominant groups or action for social justice, more equitable societies overall, or wider human rights. But within psychology, poststructuralist approaches can be a breath of fresh air in a discipline long dominated by adherence to a narrow and impoverished version of empirical science. They press us to ask questions like: Whose voices are privileged and whose are muted? Who is constructed as "other" vis-à-vis the subjectivities of "the experts" – authors, researchers, theory builders, and practitioners? And who benefits?

Visions and Values Guiding Feminist Community Work

We noted earlier that all forms of feminisms work towards the common goal of improving women's lives. We wonder what a world without sexism, or "genderism" as it has been redefined, would look, feel, smell like? The Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (RAWA – www.rawa.org) has struggled since 1977 for personal and political liberation, providing a striking example of the determination of women in enormously difficult circumstances to fight for their vision of a just society. And in the 21st century Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in 2012 by the Taliban for her activism on girls' rights to education, has become the most recognizable face of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE – www.globalpartnership.org/).

Psychologists, or indeed any outsider working with communities, must recognize that in almost any community they are working with, for, or in, there will be identifiable women and others sharing more mixed gender identities. This seems obvious, but women are often invisible under "bigger issues" of poverty, HIV-AIDS, terrorism, immigration, and now, climate change, or more mainstream issues such as "the economy."

Beyond the acknowledgement that women and plural, mixed gender identities are already everywhere, the range of their voices and intersectional experiences should be sought out, considered and included so organizations themselves can affirm diversity by transforming organizational cultures. There is no one "women's voice" in any debate, but usually a multitude of voices, sometimes in harmony with each other and in dissent with other voices, and at other times in harmony with sections of their communities and not with each other. Not only must the voices of all genders be included, they must be given equality with already more entitled, enshrined male voices. After all, one of the most widely recognized goals of the various waves of women's and other equity movements has been for all humans to be treated equitably, in relation to those who hold societal privilege, especially those who have multiple marginalized identities.

The process of any activity is also historically important in feminist valuing. Consultation or action should, therefore, be planned and undertaken in accordance with clearly stated and transparent values that have been agreed to via ongoing inclusion of relevant voices. Equitable process is often bypassed in an era when the dominant consumer and corporate market-derived rhetoric defines equity as no more than a "level-playing field" on which unregulated competition is free to produce "winners and losers." Relationships built in the course of community action should be positive and sustaining – in both feminist and CP terms, the end never justifies the means.

For practitioners, CP and feminist work needs a balance between "ambulance" work such as counseling, the provision of soup kitchens, or crisis support, with proactive advocacy, structural reform, and/or social action – and scope for ongoing celebration of small and large successes. One activity supports and enables the other, in an action-research loop. Research, advocacy, or social reform without connection to people living with "the problem" risks being all head and no heart, while frontline work that is all heart risks futility and burnout. Some services operationalize this balance so that for each hour of service delivery, workers spend another on prevention or social action. Practice that encompasses "big picture" involvement like "Reclaim the Night" and other activist marches, or advocacy for rape law reform or transgender medical access can re-energize workers seeking channels for accumulating rage – and are likely to be more effective as actions for long-term change. (See Box 16.2 for an example of how CP theory and research connect to gender-based violence.)

Box 16.2 Putting Vision into Action: Stopping Gender-based Violence

Gender-based violence is one area in which American community psychologists like Cris Sullivan, Rebecca Campbell and Nicole Allen have long been active in both research and practice. Allen and Javdani (2017) draw on CP principles in their analysis of violence, emphasizing multiple layers of context. Sullivan and her colleagues have focused on evaluating community interventions for abused women and their children and improving community responses to gender-based violence (e.g., Sullivan, 2011).

Here we bring together the core CP principles examined in this chapter, and consider how they might advance gender equity in the particular case of violence. Gender-based violence is as public as the tools of war and as private as the family home. As such, it remains one of the most pervasive, yet least acknowledged, human rights abuses throughout the world, and the following quotes illustrate its entrenched nature over time and across cultures:

It was impossible to find any historical period in which there were no formulae... specifying the conditions under which a wife was deserving of a good clout. (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, p. 31)

This is my weapon, this is my gun; one is for fighting, the other for fun. (Traditional military drill chant, origin unknown)

If your partner owns a gun, you could be the next target. (www.issafrica.org/about-us/press-releases/if-your-partner-owns-a-gun-you-could-be-the-next-target)

Quotes like these illustrate why a feminist CP approach emphasizes the need for fundamental social change to remove the cultural supports of violence against women and other marginalized people. How does each of our core principles apply to such a challenge?

- *Transforming systems:* Violence against the disempowered, including all socially marginalized women, must be located in its full social and historical context of gender and power. At the relational level, violence must be viewed in terms of its controlling effects rather than stated intentions. However, ecologically derived explanations such as "the cycle of violence" or "it takes two to tango" are challenged by feminists who argue that such models assign women a role in precipitating or maintaining

violent behavior patterns by their intimate partners.

- *Community, networks, and partnership:* Tackling violence is a community responsibility, not a private matter. Approaches that treat violence against women as an individual or a relationship problem lead to practices that are victim-blaming and unsafe. At the relational level, equal partnerships need to replace the still too internationally dominant patriarchal model based on power and control, now well past its use-by date. Community-level partnerships between cis women, cis men and gender nonconforming individuals committed to ending gender-based violence, need to be based on the "depowerment" principle – where the dominant group makes the changes and the less powerful group benefits. This requires firm accountability mechanisms and monitoring by all parties.

- *Prevention:* Raising the status of women is essential. A systems-wide approach addressing the "cultural facilitators" of violence against women is needed to ensure that legal, medical, and social responses serve to expand the options available to women experiencing violence. For example, Ackerson and Subramanian (2008) examined socioeconomic and demographic patterns in intimate partner violence (IPV) in India, and concluded that "challenging cultural norms to promote the status of women and increasing the educational and economic opportunities for all people could decrease the prevalence of IPV" (p. 81).

- *Power:* Questions that need to be asked of any theory of violence include: Does it deal with violence in terms of gender and power issues? Does it couch the problem in gender blind ways, like "the violent couple"? Does it encourage perpetrators to take responsibility for the violence? Does it blame the victim in any way? Does it directly confront the violence as a central issue OR as a side issue to a "larger" problem, a "by-product" of a bad relationship? Does it work to limit perpetrators' power by enforcing legal sanctions? Does it work to expand victims' options in housing, income support, job opportunities, legal redress, parenting support? How does it serve to narrow the gender/power gaps at global, community and interpersonal levels that facilitate violence against women?

- *Diversity/Intersectionality:* Respect for diversity is sometimes misinterpreted as cultural

relativism, justifying a failure to intervene in the affairs of groups defined as "other." But violence is unacceptable in any form, and attention to diversity means working from within the perspectives of minority group women experiencing violence. Thus, Aboriginal women in remote communities may prefer to tackle alcohol profiteers to reduce levels of violence associated with substance abuse; in Aotearoa, parallel development models of service delivery aim to increase within-group accountability while promoting cultural as well as gender safety for Maori women (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2010); many African scholars and activists strongly oppose female genital cutting, yet challenge Western discourses and tactics in campaigns to end the practice (Nnaemeka & Ngozi Ezeilo, 2005).

- *Subjectivity/Reflexivity*: Violence is both a social construct and a (painfully) lived experience – feminist theories define it in terms of the social constructions of masculinity and femininity, the sets of traditions, habits and beliefs which permit some men to assume control over others, and thus, to assume the right to use violence in exercising that control. At the personal level, a person's subjective fear can be the best indicator of the dangerousness of a violent partner, regardless of any informal or professional risk assessment – yet her voice is often ignored, sometimes with fatal consequences.

Chapter Summary

We have not offered in this chapter a definitive conceptualization of a world without patriarchy, sexism, or **misogyny**, or a vision of wellbeing and liberation for under-entitled women and gender-varied individuals throughout the world. We leave that task for you, the readers, in your own contexts – because "feminism is a plant that grows only in its own soil" (Badran, 2002, cited in Van der Gaag, 2008, p. 16). Feminism's historical context reminds us that, in the words of a cigarette commercial, women "have come a long way baby." History also reveals that most changes are incremental and many gains fragile – as feminist community psychologists, we need to be vigilant about co-option by commercial interests (like tobacco companies!), erosion of hard-won rights, and the need to stay honest with ourselves about our relative power and privilege. Participants at a symposium discussing the UN MDG gender indicators wrote this song about empowerment (International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) 2006, p. 3):

> *It's girls in schools*
> *It's labor too*
> *It's being able to plan the kids*
> *And owning all our land*
> *Aspiring to be PM [prime minister]*
> *And having roads and water*
> *So that life in the future will be*
> *Better for our daughters*

Box 16.3 Exercise: From Rhetoric to Reality

Think back to the warm-up exercise at the start of this chapter – what specific aspects of gender equality and/or equity were part of your vision? Was it health, sexuality, work, spirituality, cultural safety, or any other issue impacting on the lives of women? What assumptions do you think you were making about gender identity as your vision took shape?

Deconstruction: Questioning the Text

Find a newspaper, magazine, or online article relating to your chosen issue. Read the text and try to answer the following questions.

1 What is the theme or topic, and how is it formulated (headlines, language, etc.)?

2 Whose voices are represented mostly? Women (or men) in positions of privilege? Are the voices of the people most affected represented in the text? In what ways do different actors and gendered identities enter the discourse (as victims, experts, competent, etc.)?

3 What kinds of discourses surround or are created within a particular text?

4 Are both equity and equality implicit in the text? Is patriarchy supported or subverted?

5 Where does the authority/authorship lie? Who can talk and who is talked about?

6 Who is cast as the expert? How is an expert position created and legitimated? What mechanisms are used to discredit alternative positions?

7 How is gender made relevant to the issues? Are gender relations visible in this text? What forms of masculinity and femininity are being made available here? Are any non-binary identities included or foregrounded?

8 What are the political implications of the text? Is there a transformative message there?

Action: Applying the Framework

In Box 16.2, we applied the principles of a feminist CP framework to the issue of violence against women. Think about the ways you would notice differences in the lives of women (and men and gender non-conforming groups) in your part of the world and elsewhere if your vision were realized, and list how each of those principles might (or might not) assist in working towards making your vision a reality.

Hint: Questions that need to be asked of any intervention include: Who is expected to change? Does it materially improve the lives of women? How many? Which women? How can you tell?

Key Terms

Cisgender: Refers to people whose gender identification and experiences are consistent with their birth-assigned sex. For example, cis female individuals were assigned female at birth and identify as women.

Gender: Refers to the attitudes, feelings, and behaviors attributed by a given culture to a person's assigned sex (often based on stereotypes of masculinity and femininity). Gender is defined along several dimensions, including how individuals are socialized and how they identify themselves. It is a variable set of practices. We all "do" gender within the parameters of our age, culture, social class, sexual orientation, personality, and circumstances. Behavior that is compatible with cultural expectations is referred to as "gender-normative." A much debated term.

Gender identity: Refers to "each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms" (International Panel of Experts, 2007, p. 6). As the Australian Psychological Society (2016) explains in recommending gender-affirming mental health practices, "[t]he majority of people are assigned as either male or female at birth, and will experience themselves as male or female accordingly. For some people, however, the presumed relationship between assigned sex and gender is incorrect."

Intersex: Refers to a group of people who are born with sexual features of both male and female reproductive organs, chromosomes, and/or genitals. The term refers to sex characteristics, not gender identity or sexual orientation.

Equality: In this chapter we have used equality, particularly between women and men, as the principle of "being of equal value" rather than "being the same as" or "identical." Treating everyone the same is not fair treatment.

Equal rights: Similarly this principle may require different actions or outcomes according to differing – but equally important – needs. For example, women have a right to (and need access to) appropriate medical care at the time they become mothers. Parents (and children)· need, and therefore have equal rights to, a range of supports throughout childhood.

Equity: Ensuring people have what they need to be successful. In relation to gender, it means men and women should be given the same opportunities *despite their differences.*

Feminism(s): Various forms of feminism work towards a common goal of improving women's lives and dismantling patriarchal practices that impact on both men and women, and especially on gender non-conforming individuals and groups.

Intersectionality: Refers here to the complex interconnected inequities experienced by women across diverse cultures, abilities, and backgrounds. For example, an Aboriginal woman may be disadvantaged by being female AND by being Black.

Misogyny: Hatred and/or hostility towards all women.

Power: Central to all feminist analysis – traditionally measured in terms of individual or collective authority, information, resources, decision-making, coercion, and privilege, power is increasingly described in terms of discourse, relationship, and practice rather than quantity. In other words, power çannot be separated from how it is authorized and exercised.

Sex: Assigned at birth within the constraints of available legal categories (male, female, and, in some jurisdictions, intersex) on the basis of biological indicators including external genitalia, sex chromosomes, gonads, internal reproductive organs, and hormones.

Sexism: Any beliefs, attitudes, practices, and/or institutions in which distinctions between people's intrinsic worth are made on the basis of sex/gender. This discrimination can be systemic as well as individual.

Transgender (in text: **trans woman, trans man):** Used to refer to persons whose gender identity does not correspond with the sex assigned to them at birth, including but not limited to, transgender, transsexual, and genderqueer identities. Since individuals can express their gender identity in various ways that might differ from their birth-assigned category, these expressions and experiences are generally referred to as transgender spectrum experiences.

Resources

For an overview of global and economic issues affecting women:

http://womensissues.about.com and www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/daw/index.html

The APA Society for the Psychology of Women maintains an active website: www.apadivisions.org/division-35/

An amazing compilation is updated almost daily at the University of Maryland: www.umbc.edu/wmst/

An Australian site on, by, and for women with disabilities: http://www.wwda.org.au

Following a meeting held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia in 2006, experts from 25 countries with diverse backgrounds and expertise relevant to issues of human rights law unanimously adopted the Yogyakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: https://yogyakartaprinciples.org/

World Professional Association for Transgender Health: www.wpath.org/

Community psychology: In pursuit of liberation and well-being

<1 %

11	www.erenet.org Internet Source	<1 %
12	businessfightspoverty.org Internet Source	<1 %
13	groups.psychology.org.au Internet Source	<1 %

| Exclude quotes | On | Exclude matches | Off |
| Exclude bibliography | On | | |