



The Premise of Persistence: Deconstructing Colonial Authority in Community Psychology Curricula and Structures, Towards Liberative Andragogy and Practice

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*For my people blundering and groping and floundering in
the dark of churches and schools and clubs
and societies, associations and councils, and committees and
conventions, distressed and disturbed and deceived and
devoured by money-hungry glory-craving leeches,
preyed on by facile force of state and fad and novelty*

Margaret Walker *For My People*, published as the selection of the year in the Yale University Series of Younger Poets in 1942.

Abstract

In the U.S., Community Psychology (C.P.) arose in the 1960s, attempting to break traditional clinical and research psychology patterns. While CP rejected many Eurocentric and oppressive ideas, remnants remain in every ecological corner of our work: research, professional organization, academic institutions, and community practice. There are also underlying assumptions that White authority, domination, and control systems will persist throughout time. This "premise of persistence" is a damaging and almost universal assumption in the field, particularly for students, and can limit the conceptualization of freedom and autonomy for oppressed populations. The premise of persistence lives inside many of our theories, forcing research and practice to reside within first-order change efforts. This paper takes a historical look at the origins, maintenance, and risks of the premise of persistence. What is proposed is the deconstruction of existing literature, prevalent ideology, and even gatekeeping in community psychology classrooms, which often insists on empowerment as the end goal, without consideration of more radical second-order change.

The Premise

In the U.S., community psychology arose in the 1960s, attempting to break out of traditional colonizing clinical and research psychology patterns. Although community psychology rejected many Eurocentric and oppressive ideas, remnants remain in almost every corner of the field: research, professional organization, academic institutions, and community practice. The impact of the relatively long-standing effects of colonialism is expressed in a variety of nuanced phenomena. One such phenomenon

is the premise of persistence. The premise of persistence is the background assumption that White authority, domination, and control, are the reality and will continue to persist throughout time. It is a damaging and almost universal assumption, acting as a universal truth, which limits conceptualizations of freedom and autonomy for those who have suffered and continue to suffer and stagnate due to White aggression and colonialism. The impact of this underlay is that it in many ways dictates how politics, businesses, music, art, medicine, media, law, and other vital elements of our society are

conceptualized and conducted. If White authority is the perceived reality, then all who perceive it as such must act within that paradigm; if it is concurrently perceived as perpetual, it is then an enduring and almost invisible component of the way that those operating under the premise view the world and their place in it. To imagine a world outside of White authority would seem foolish to those who perceive the premise as a natural rule. Euro-authority is, and will always be; this is the premise that many people of color and White people start from, in almost every consideration, to such an extent that it is practically invisible, background noise, as usual as the subjugation and oppression that it is born of. It is just the way things are, and as they always will be. The premise incapacitates actions against it, deforms all within it, and perverts any outputs from it. It is present within the U.S., quietly reinforcing notions that the colonial status quo is everlasting.

An example of the ways in which the premise incapacitates threats to it can be seen in the institutional response to racial unrest in the summer of 2020, when many institutions instated or expedited efforts aimed at racial inclusion. The goal was that White-lead institutions were to actively and intentionally "include" marginalized groups towards greater levels of institutional equity. In this action the premise is clear; the institution belongs to the "included," and it was to be through their benevolence only that the excluded would be granted access. This action of appeasement was a granting of greater access to the White-dominated world, not the end of it. Institutions often feel as if the greater access is a step too far. Both the institutions and the Black people and people of color within them often, due to the premise, do not even consider the surrender of ill-gained power; it is inconceivable. Remaking unjust power structures is often a notion beyond comprehension at worst and foolish and romantic, at best. To dare to

propose democratic power-sharing, an intentional dismantling of centralized White and White serving systems of authority and control, to rebuild institutions toward decentralized non-hierarchical ecologically informed and collectively owned models, are seldom part of "realistic conversations." The very articulation of such models often evokes rolled eyes, heavy sighs, and claims of pie-in-the-sky and impracticality. Such a reaction is the ever-persistent premise at play, reminding that the status quo is insurmountable and those in power within it are unmovable. Challenges to White-authority appear naive, foolish, and out of touch with "reality," the reality constructed and maintained in part by the premise. The notion that the history of racism, oppression, and White rule will continue into the indefinite future, perhaps forever, lives inside many academic and intellectual spaces, in unique ways, guiding research and practice toward first-order shifts exclusively. This paper aims at a multilayered deconstruction of the premise, with close attention to the history of it, how and why it is maintained, its impact on Black students, and the ways that it exists within the field of community psychology, its academic policies, practices, individual students, professors, research, practice, and ultimately outcomes.

The History of the Premise

To understand the history of the premise, a history of race must first be understood. To do so, race must be separated from Eurocentric manipulations and tainted racial classifications. Müller-Wille (2014) sought to unravel the racial understandings of 18th-century naturalist Carl Linnaeus, credited with the first categorization and conceptualization of race. The Classification of Human Distinctions, put forth by Linnaeus in his work *Systema Naturae* (1735), is commonly understood to have laid the groundwork for modern understandings of race and categorizing humans into

taxonomies. Though Linnaeus is credited with the first categorization, many other populations and people had recorded these distinctions earlier on. By the time that Linnaeus traveled and wrote his classifications, African and other non-European people had traveled the world, in some cases centuries ahead of Linnaeus. They encountered many different physical characteristics (Davis & Sertima, 1978). African people, and those native to what is now known as the Americas, understood and even developed names for such distinctions. Diop (1997) asserted a heavy African, and Asian influence on "ancient" Greek and Roman understandings of racial distinctions. This understanding suggests that African concepts of categorization were possibly the genesis for the categorizations of Linnaeus and likely predated them. The idea that humans failed to notice aesthetic differences in other human groups until Europeans classified them is in itself imperialistically problematic and representative of the pathology surrounding the presumption that White knowledge equates to origin. To then use that assumption, coupled with violence and global aggression, to demand acquiescence to the distortion, is an essential component of the premise of persistence. Race as a system of classification had not been historically harmful prior to Euro-distortion. As stated, many civilizations engaged in classifying plants, wildlife, and peoples. Even *Systema Naturae* was a relatively benign European formal classification. The distorted uses of the classifications later on, set the stage for more modern conceptions of race held by and large today.

Alexander (2010), in her work *The New Jim Crow*, asserted that race is only a few centuries old and is primarily a result of European imperialism, which leans to the interpretation of race as a Euro-constructed hierarchy of superiority. The notion of pseudo superiority enabled colonialism,

European invasion, and conquest is described by Clarke (1970):

From the sixteenth century onward, Europeans ranged the earth, conquering, mainly, defenseless people. They set themselves up as ruling aristocracies. In this world-wide rape of peoples and countries, they destroyed many cultures and civilizations that were old before Europe was born. Their rationales and justifications for these actions were the rankest form of racism ever conceived by the human mind. This tragedy continued during the era of colonization in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and again in the era of neo-mercantilist revival called imperialism that had so many articulate defenders in the nineteenth century.

Clarke further describes the need to robe violent conquest in morality, through notions of superiority, and the role of European Christianity in establishing a colonial hierarchy based on race:

The Christian Church was the handmaiden for the development of racism. While it propagated the theory that all men were created equal in the sight of God, in practice, it found all sorts of arguments to prove that non-European peoples, especially Black men, were inferior and could not be considered as men in the general sense. A search for ways to justify European domination over most of mankind led biologists to the works of Linnaeus and Buffon. Thus, the classification of races began. In deciding the distinctions between higher and lower races, the Europeans, of course, became the hierarch of races.

Structural violence has been so embedded in the Euro-Christian hierarchy of racial groups, that it has become psychologically invisible. Modern racism, through classification and divisions, indeed began the moment some humans saw others as less than human.

The concepts of psychological colonization and racism go hand in hand. It has been through these historical machinations that colonialism was possible. The premise of persistence and colonialism are constructed of the same materials, remaking existential understandings of one's place in the world. When the perception is that White authority is a given, anyone who is not White must arrange a subordinate place for themselves; this is particularly true for Black people who as a result Global anti-Blackness, are often situated furthest from power, as those furthest from European phenotypes. This hierarchy of racial standing exists as a result of and in service to intentional misconceptions of race and the implicit principles ingrained in everyday assumptions as a result of those misconceptions, which place White people and social constructs, along with Euro-features, as the epitome.

Why the Premise is Maintained

It is beneficial at this juncture to address colonization intentionally, as it is inextricably linked to the ways the Euro-authority has been constructed as indefinite. Colonization is tied to people and place and is not an abstraction to be utilized outside of foreign dominion over indigenous people. Conceptualizing colonialism and gaining a sense of the history, causes, and global nature of its dominant narratives, is an integral part of unveiling underlying presumptions of the ongoing authority of colonialism and colonialist. Without colonialism, the premise would not exist, nor would the need for it. Free people occupying and controlling their own lands for their own benefit, without

external exploitation, would have no concept of White authority.

Nevertheless, colonialism exists, in new and present ways, globally aided by the premise that Euro-rule will go on. It is important to note here that even when this rule is seen as unfavorable, it is still often viewed as insurmountable, so it persists. Deconstructing colonialism's impacts and developing decolonizing frameworks can help highlight commonalities among many justice-seeking people living under colonial or neocolonial rule. However, caution must be exercised as unity is forged in shared atrocity and efforts toward freedom from coloniality, because within those bonds is the potential to erase the role of race, and particularly of Blackness. The anti-Blackness and hierarchy of superiorities born of Colonialism and Euro-domination is ingrained in many different people. It compounds the impacts of colonialism for Black people, as other races in many instances find their perceptions of superiority, which is their position above at least Black people in the racial hierarchy, at the expense of rationalizing other races, beneath them. There is an acceptance of White authority and rule, the impact of which is satiated by the comfort of superiority to at least Black people, and possibly others within perceptions of the racial hierarchy. Dismantling colonialism is essential, as is avoiding the many harmful ways that it can be misunderstood and misrepresented to the detriment of those most negatively impacted by it. The reality is that those who seek to dissect their own positions in a racial hierarchy born of the premise will have to face the real losses that come with rejecting the hierarchy head on, which is a loss some consider too great.

On top of colonialism in the United States, the system of chattel slavery required brutal maintenance of White domination as the unchallenged and fundamentally accepted reality. Historically, in the U.S., White

authority has been an essential form of race and class control. Alexander (2010) outlined the concept of the racial bribe. The racial bribe extended special privileges to poor Whites to drive a wedge between them and enslaved Black people. White settlers were allowed greater access to Native American lands. White servants were allowed to police slaves through slave patrols and militias. Barriers were created so that free labor (the labor of free White men) would not compete with slave labor. At this juncture, poor Whites suddenly had a direct personal stake in the existence of a race-based system of slavery, and although the plight of poor White communities had not improved by much, they felt that they were at least better than Black people. White aristocracy needed the capacity to exploit poor White people for both labor and as a tool to maintain enslaved Black people and later “free” Black people in their subjugation position, to bring them to heel. Without the hierarchy of the elite's domination at that time, their power and authority could not have succeeded. Even after slavery ended and overt Jim Crow policy began to subside, the system of Black subjugation and White domination continued. Nelson Peery, a WWII veteran and political scholar, spoke to this continuation as he unraveled the experience of his return home to Chicago's Southside after three years at war. His last book, *Black Radical*, chronicled how he came to understand the larger picture of U.S. power and imperialism, the actual and present goals of elite White men. Perry (2007) wrote that the brutal White economic exploitation of Black people was necessary to keep Whites united, despite class differences, that unity was the foundation of White wealth and the stability of their system.

For every law, code, or unspoken rule aimed at giving White men and women a societal edge, the inverse was true for its impact on Black people, both materially and psychologically. Alexander (2010) also noted that for White people, the idea of supremacy

became a religion over time. There was a deep attachment to the notion that Black people were bestial and that Whites were inherently superior. This religion justified racist economics and politics, which continued and evolved into common and evident conditions across many spaces today.

The current elite have long understood that to protect their class position from poor White people, they needed to deter and or split any natural class alliances which might evolve among the collective multi-racial lower class. The wealthy and land-holding gentry in the United States understood the necessity for pathological perceptions of superiority among poor White people. Freire (1972) described an essential component of this delusional perception of society as the contradiction of the concrete, the existential ritual of recoding reality to maintain comfortable oppression. That Black people were uncivilized, unfit to rule, less than, is at worst an unhealthy projection of internalized guilt for the committing of or complacency in world atrocities. At best, it is a necessary illusion which maintains the notion of White people as members of a master group, offering a moral justification for atrocities and satiation for any latent feelings of guilt or remorse.

The real-world experienced and perceived by White people does not easily occupy the same space as the necessary illusion of superiority and must be maintained through consistent propaganda, policies of preference, religious dogma, music, and other media. The documentary film *Manufacturing Consent* chronicled scholar-activist Noam Chomsky and his lectures and ideas. Chomsky cites Niebuhr (1960), who wrote that:

Rationality belongs to the cool observer—that because of the lack of awareness in the average person, there is a tendency to follow not reason but faith. This naïve faith requires

necessary illusions and emotionally potent oversimplifications provided by a mythmaker, thus keeping the ordinary person on a particular course.

In this case, the ordinary person must keep the naïve faith of the master race, despite perceived contradictions to it. It is emotionally potent in its presentation and offers an oversimplified division of races essential to generating faith in superiority. This faith has driven poor and working class White-Americans toward consistent actions against their own best class interest. Parallel pathological notions of inferiority must be maintained in Black people, who must also be deluded into inaction, keeping faith and acceptance of dominance. The inferiority instilled in Black people in the U.S. is of the utmost importance to maintaining the spoils of colonialism, slavery, and conquest. Freire (1972) wrote that the oppressed can adopt an attitude of 'adhesion' to the oppressor. Under these circumstances, they cannot consider the oppressor sufficiently clearly to see the oppressor as 'outside' themselves. Through manipulation and miseducation, many Black people have been reduced as a population to one which has come to possess internal faith in the religion of White superiority over time. This faith is expressed politically and on deeper levels.

For White power and authority to persist, dominant White elites in the past needed to spread misinformation, oversimplifications, and glaring contradictions to the concrete. Within elite and working-class White communities, varying invisible norms were handed down through generations of maintained authority through what has no doubt come to be perceived as normal behavior, which must be hidden to be maintained. As it is increasingly considered more moral to be anti-racist, those engaged in or benefiting from racist norms, must see those norms as a natural and normal part of reality; in this way, they get to be good while

subjugating or benefiting from the subjugation of others. Invisible norms are how White authority withstands the changing tides and tastes of new generations.

Community Psychology Programs

Understanding how the premise is maintained on a societal level will aid in the specific understanding of how the premise is maintained within the field of community psychology and specifically its academic programs. Often within the field at large and within community psychology programs, invisible norms take shape in the silencing of both dissenting voices and articulations of real opposition to dominant structures in our classrooms. It is found in dissertation committees when students are guided away from liberatory work in favor of more benign and comfortable topics. It is alive in curriculum that is heavy with liberal scholars and work that reaffirms background domination in the most dangerous and subtle ways. Mostly White research material is the norm, and is often touted as liberal, which is often most dangerous. Liberal research and theory embedded in curriculum often inserts the premise of persistence, while articulating a shadowy sanctuary from it, a sanctuary that allows authors and educators to feel and look good while upholding the status quo, which preserves their positions of authority. The premise maintains student perceptions of White authority as a given and a constant. The premise is maintained through institutional norms, and dominant theory because those who maintain it benefit from it, and often, even if unconsciously, do not want to see that benefit end.

How it is Maintained

Modern maintenance of the premise can be found in many small spaces. Language is one such space. Language of all sorts helps uphold the toxic religion of superiority, without overtly asserting it. There is no

overestimating the damage euphemisms have done to ensure the persistence of the premise throughout history.

Terms like *tolerance* and *civility*, for instance, are used to describe ways different people are supposed to share spaces amicably. No one would feel comfortable in a space where they were merely tolerated and not welcomed. That the dominant group will tolerate minority views is applauded as progress when it is, at best, a mediocre and distasteful goal. The call for “civility” (i.e., being nice) is a well-known tool of power structures and within the field of psychology used to dampen the sharing of hard activist truths.

Another such term is equality, which slides the premise of assumed persistent power held by the currently dominant group. Equality is too often used as a quantitative way to suggest the dominant group is the gold standard, anchoring the idea that all groups desire to be equal to the dominant group. Economic reform is vital, but diverse groups have qualitatively diverse values, which the concept of equality erases when it becomes a call for homogeneity, acceptance, assimilation, and acculturation to the dominant ways of being. It is even more diminishing when it assumes that Black people and other marginalized groups seek to be as White people are, when often that is furthest from actual desires. Even a goal of equal opportunity ties and binds Black possibility and potential to the limitations of White people. That the opportunities of Black and other people are bound by what is available to White people, within spaces often of Eurocentric design no less, further entrenches the notion that the only reality is White reality, and that other conceptualizations of being, different political structures, any other social organization, or any assertion for the way that people will interact with each other and the natural world, is a certain impracticality. Equality

equals equal to White people, thus far, and no further.

Whiteness as an ideal end goal is an idea often amplified through attention to gaps; gaps between groups. There is much ado about the space between Black and White children regarding technology, reading, science, and mathematics, the inequity resulting in gaps between Black homeowners and White ones, Black wealth and White wealth. A goal of closing these gaps positions White people as the epitome, the quintessential standard. All other groups are to strive to go as far as White people but not further. Furthermore, even in trying to be as the powerful are, Black people must reach merely for consumption capacity and not actual power. The premise maintains the nuanced perception of place in society as an undercurrent, careful not to disturb adhesion, while creating delusions of equity and inclusion.

Johnson (1972), in a New York Times Article, shared a famous quote from an unapologetic activist and member of the 75th congress, Adam Clayton Powell. When asked about his time in Congress, Powell responded, *“I have done nothing more than any other member and, by the grace of God, I intend to do not one bit less.”* Even a radical Black congressperson, only the second seated in 1945, had to refrain from the public consideration that Black people may hold desires and aspirations, values, capacities, and understandings beyond White people. It was falsely understood, then as it is now, that the standard is European.

Academic Impositions

Non-White people are maintained in a perpetual mode of keeping up with White people, in ways that are often times the antithesis of what society needs. This chasing of irrelevant colonizing goals is just one significant way that the premise is

maintained. If gaps between white people and Black people are to be closed to bring "equality," and if White people and white structures set the standard, the standards will never change. In a passage admired by Martin Luther King, Frantz Fanon argued that Black people around the world needed to stop using European standards as models, and create things anew from their own strengths. This message rings especially true for new community psychologists. Yet, instead of teaching this kind of academic freedom, students often face standardized goals in curricula, Euro-normative expectations, and gatekeeping within educational institutions. Attempts at unraveling Eurocentric approaches to education, by professors who at a minimum seek to offer students opportunities for improvisation based on who their students are, are often thwarted. Professors are forced instead to hold the gate firmly closed to student capacity outside of Euro-norms. Academia often encourages assessment which usually does not seek to understand student critical thought and imaginative approaches to problem-solving or assess the ability to conceive solutions to ecologic and sound problems. Ultimately assessment, in many instances, is reduced to ensuring student willingness to follow the rules, their proclivity for the status quo, demonstration of the capacity to withstand insult and disrespect, and ultimately willingness to embrace the premise entirely. In the worst cases it is when those tests are passed with flying colors that the gate swings open, and the multicultural mis-educated file through, prepared to uphold and perpetuate the premise within a new generation of budding psychologists.

The Premise and the Black Student

The intentionality to define everyone's means and ends to a singular vision tethers Black students and students of color to the White population. For these students, it means they must go where they are told and want what

faculty or the larger field, often in service to the status quo, wants. This leaves a diverse set of students, researchers, practitioners, people, chasing White people across aspirations and positions. Wilson (1998) wrote in detail about how White dominance is maintained and how notions of perpetual domination are arranged in the Black psyche specifically. He writes,

Dominant Whites have used words and symbols to violently and unrelentingly attack oppressed Blacks in a thousand and one nefarious ways, including the projection of dehumanizing stereotypes and caricatures, the falsification of their history and culture, the miseducation of Blacks, and the engaging in chronic derisive media attacks on their morals, behavior, intelligence, ways of life, sexuality, physical features, motives, and values. The final end of the violent White-instigated psychic assault against the collective psyche of Blacks is to induce in them states of false consciousness, self-alienation and self-hatred so as to irreparably impair their capacity to overthrow their White oppressors through the mobilization of their human and material resources false consciousness self-alienation and self-hatred are conjoining states of mind which motivate oppressed Blacks to engage in continuing self-defeating, self-destructive assaults against their own interest, and against themselves unwittingly manipulated into forming alliances with their oppressors and exploiters in disempowering themselves and in empowering those who dominate and exploit them.

This psychological imposition on Black autonomy and self-determination is embedded in many spaces and institutions. It is separate and apart from what other communities of color endure. It is harmful

and psychologically disruptive in ways that unique to Black people exclusively. It is ubiquitous, even if not always visible. The constant separation of Black people from themselves is a hallmark of White control. As a result of being fed long-term distortions, many Black students no longer sufficiently see themselves as vulnerable to the contagions. They may feel dedicated to learning approaches in the field towards justice but end up being open to exploitation and manipulation. These manipulations are formal and persistent in academia. They are a significant source of burnout and non-retention of Black students and other students of color in programs. Community psychology is home to a host of students who possess a desire for justice and have set themselves on a course for community work and action. Community psychology work can feel progressive and ecologic in theory; however, too often the curriculum and culture of programs and classrooms, uphold the premise visibly and invisibly, knowingly and unknowingly. In this way, the premise of persistence slides into the collective consciousness of students and reproduces itself in the next generation in the field.

Community Psychology students of all groups are seated in a space which can reroute non-white power-seeking movement toward more "rational" goals and away from genuine autonomy, freedom, power, and control. Students are told that they need to think practically, i.e., within the premise. It is not uncommon for them to be told, "Don't think your work is going to change the world. Be practical. Go for the lowest hanging grapes." Such assertions are often underscored with text and journal articles highlighting White theory as the epitome. The literature and andragogy, which tends to lead students away from autonomy, usually excludes Black thought and the work of other non-European radical thinkers. These assertions and their backing lead Black and other community psychology students of color to delay, if not to

destroy, the ideal notions of their life practice. When faculty, based on their professional norms and culture, discourage transformative second-order change, the premise is protected and allowed to live on.

Fanon (1988) wrote that silence is urged when considering any expression of the authentic Black self, which is faithful to traditions and linked to African soil's very sap. It is limited, stopped, or broken. He wrote of how Black people have been rendered culturally mute. Fanon stated that colonial rule is a multidimensional exploitation which controlled African people, and that colonialism draws up an entire code and then instills itself so that Blackness's very essence is denied, all for the benefit of White power maintenance and oppression.

In his articulation of the audacity of the French union, and the ways in which it controlled African people, Fanon touched on a phenomena of control for Black students. As Black students begin to study, within the field of psychology, it is often to the complete negation of Black scholars. Even Black issues are presented through White research, separating Black students from the very sap of their own experience, rendering them culturally mute. It is at this juncture that Black students reach for the intellectual tools, and research, which constrained them in the first place. Such tools are the worst possible starting points for working toward real change. Upon this realization rather conscious or unconscious, students may resign themselves to mere completion and, in the attempt to just get the degree. "I just want to get through. I'll just let it happen to me. I just want to get done" mentalities are adopted in order to survive the separation from self. If it is temporary, it is tolerable. In these adaptations – both inside and outside of the university and its programs – Black student resign themselves to constant capitulation. Notions of power and autonomy grow to be seen as sacrilege, an insult to the

institution in which are seated, or even cause for lost social capital through faculty perceptions of that student as radical or unrealistic. So ingrained are these fears of straying outside of the status quo that many Black students don't even say the words "Black people" when referencing their race. They will often refer to "people of color" or "people who look like me" in an attempt to avoid sounding radical. Usually, Black students avoid saying White people altogether, and it is often whispered when discussed among one another. The original and deep passion present at the onset of their programs is often lost. Perceptions of what is possible for their career and capacity are arrested and distorted by the weight of a rigid and unchangeable hierarchy within which they are situated at the bottom. Akbar (1995) wrote that outer influences had essentially controlled black people since being brought to North America. As a community, the outer noises of oppression have drowned out the inner voice. The loss of an inner voice can take away the feeling of responsibility for one's own life. The loss may lead to a reduced capacity to consider a reality outside of that constructed by the oppressor. In a community psychology program, the students' conceptualizations of research and practice then exist only in the confines of the "normal" and the "unchangeable" Euro-normative andragogy and curricula upheld by the university. When a student feels the responsibility for their own life (education) has been lost – that is, when they accept the world in which they are oppressed as unchanging – their ability to use their education toward their own best interest wanes significantly. As a result, their genuine efforts at aiding their communities are often bankrupt from the start, due to models of community psychology research and practice, set in place by their education, which offers only temporary reprieve and symptom-based relief at best, while leaving the power structure, White authority, firmly in place.

The Good and the Less Good

Faculty that care can have no better goal than to accompany Black students and students of color, refuse to be a barrier to their just aspirations, and interrogate the premise within themselves as they nurture the next generation of the field. In doing so, the faculty decide. They decide against upholding the premise, they choose to uphold the student's best interest towards their liberation, even at the ultimate expense of what they may perceive as advantages within the status quo, but there is indeed a choice to make. Many community psychologists, throughout the field, have taken direct stands against false notions of superiority for the just redistribution of resources and a complete re-organization of educational, economic, and political spaces. Community psychology faculty and students can similarly interrogate their programs and course structures. By unapologetically doing so, research and analysis are freed from archaic assumptions, untethered from first-order change, and grows the potential of theory and practice toward knowing not yet imagined.

Many community psychology faculty and programs are due for a reconsideration of curricula and practice. Too often, writings and readings assigned in community psychology syllabi read like a litany of how "bad things are" for Black America. Community psychology came about to fight the focus on deficit and disorder. The lessons seldom include methodologies for ending the suffering or ever daring to address it at the source, inside the pathologies Euro-constructed systems of oppression and those who created them. Instead, new community psychologists are taught to address issues of oppression among the oppressed. When the focus is predominantly on deficit and disorder, particularly in Black communities and communities of color, students of color raise their eyebrows; glances are exchanged. There are questions about the faculty

member's motives and loyalties, the degree to which they will be able to express themselves without retaliation or other consequence.

In the best cases, community psychology strives to be a collectively reflective field and uncover colonizing regularities and patterns in its practices, programs, committees, and classrooms. Through radical and often challenging reflection and striving toward more authentic justice and action, the student and the faculty and institutions become freer? Liberation for faculty members requires overcoming fragilities and standing aside for students rather than fighting students to maintain hierarchies. It requires utilizing participatory methods in the classroom, really listening to and drawing from the experiential wisdom of students' community. Faculty members, along with academic institutions' practices and policies, should step back from top-down driven syllabi, accept new ways of institutional organizing and education models, and embrace spontaneous learning and power shifts and sharing. The personal, cultural, and collective strengths of all students and the communities that they represent, are an invaluable part of a meaningful and sustainable future for everyone. There will be an embrace of diverse sociological imaginations in the best-case scenarios, and through improvisation, a collective drawing out of new possibilities.

Ethnic Pluralism and Allyhood

In his final book before his death, Martin Luther King argued that White allies were essential to the movement. He felt that the civil rights legislation was a long, satisfying battle, which had finally been won. The White supporters, as a populace, felt the work overall had been done, success had been made, and attention could be turned to other interests. Yet King pointed out that the progress made was the easiest part and that White Americans saw the small and simple shift as enough. More specifically, they were

unwilling to make necessary personal or family sacrifices. What posed a barrier to King over 50 years ago poses a barrier to our field's progress and today's academic spaces. Some may argue, why be so critical and dedicated to decolonizing the discipline of community psychology? After all, this relatively small group of scholars and actors are some of the most activist, supportive, allied set of people throughout all of the social sciences? In reality, the progress that has been made was the easiest part, community psychologist can celebrate them for the small and simple shifts that they were, while acknowledging that they are not enough. Without a willingness to make necessary personal sacrifices, as individuals within the field, the field itself will fail to live up to its principles. White community psychologists are well trained through the field's principles to begin acknowledging historical harms and approach monetary, ethical, and professional decisions to restore justice in the field and beyond. A collective interrogation of existing systems and an examination of internal motivations unravels the premise. Facing the ways that positionality in the field have been driven by White advantages, steeped in historically pathological power positions, can be difficult, but is an essential part of rejecting old ways of being towards new, more just alliances. This work may not always feel good, but it is necessary.

Community psychology now includes many new psychologists of color, ready and willing to collaborate towards new approaches. As new equitable systems are created, and old hegemony and structures of oppression collapse. Community psychology and community psychologists are thankfully well-positioned to shift with poise and grace towards a bold stand for justice. True anti-racist work means asking tough questions of oneself and others. It requires risking new adventures. Community psychologists will need to actively challenge old habits to know when to step aside and stand up. Those in

positions of present power could choose to perceive this as a loss, or they could welcome new, more just ways of being, which purge the ugliest elements of our practice.

Where Do New Community Psychologists Go from Here?

New community psychologists can begin to conceive new approaches to research and work, mainly working towards justice. Old norms for research often position pathology exclusively among the disadvantaged while turning a blind eye to the apparent need for study and community practice within advantaged communities. This is the type of norm that needs adjustment. Some young community psychologists share communities with those who conceive and advance oppressive policy and actions, perpetuating inequity through positions of power and authority over the communities in which the new community psychologist themselves may hope to serve. These new community psychology practitioners are often taught to leave those communities, those opportunities to attend to inequity at the source, and to travel into disadvantaged communities, usually of color, to be paid to help them cope with the ignored injustices. In this reach for low hanging fruit, students, often White, will get to be good, a help, an ally, without ever having to face the discomfort of confronting the people responsible, who are often close to them, as a means to end the oppression.

Elite communities often need service and intervention toward their own healing from and understandings of the harm they inflict on external communities. These communities and the people within them are left all but untouched by the benefits of the field. The assumption, the premise from which they are viewed, is that they hold power and likely always will. To risk offense to such a group would be to risk funding from, standing within, and even rejection, leaving these communities and those within them, who

would benefit from our field's approaches, left to continue cycles of repression. These cycles often prove economically beneficial for the field and those who have traditionally researched and practiced in it, but highly harmful to disadvantaged populations in receipt of disproportional "service" as well as the advantaged populations ignored by the field. This research approach has to be reexamined, particularly as increasing community psychologists from communities impacted by oppression enter the field. Service within one's own community should be considered for research and practice, as often, if not more so, than work within external communities, specifically when the external community is a disadvantaged community of color.

Faculty and institutions can begin to more closely reflect and act under new assumptions, those of true equity, within communities in practice, and work with any community. New community psychologists, particularly budding Black community psychologists, some of whom will likely be present in the field 50 years from now, should consider what Dr. John Henrik Clarke called "the unglamorous work of revolution," the intentional and unapologetic work of a bold redesign, without seeking the rewards, acknowledgment, permission, or acceptance of a field, society, or world, in revision.

Rebellion in Real-Time

Baldwin (1971) wrote,

A whole generation is grown up, and it has seen and heard the nature of the lies that White people told Black people for generations, and it understands the reasons for these lies, whether or not they understand really what the situation is and what the future should be is not a question, it doesn't make any difference at the moment, what they are doing is

repudiating the entire theology which has afflicted and destroyed, literally destroyed black people for so long, and what this generation is reacting to what it is saying is that they realize that you, the white people, white Americans, have always attempted to murder them. Not merely by burning them or castrating them or hanging them from trees, but murdering them in the mind, in the heart, by teaching a black child that he is worthless, that he can never contribute, teaching him to hate his mother, father, and brothers, but right now they are refusing this entire frame of reference, and they are saying to the republic this is your bill, this is your bloody bill, written in my blood, and you are going to have to pay it.

Black students, other students of color, and young progressive psychologists are beginning to shake free of the confines of White authority and its conceptualizations. They are beginning to purge, in notable number, European installations of power in their ideologies. They are imagining power for themselves, planning interventions and dissertations, research, and community action, which all have the potential to acquire and maintain justice and true, lasting power. Community psychology is well-positioned to celebrate these strides and to stand proudly at the forefront, yet again, of progress and justice. The Black Lives Matter, or Black Liberation Movement, bubbling in this country today is a continuation of what Baldwin described in 1971. The inability of Black and other students of color, as well as their allies, to sit still for the miseducation, indoctrination, and impositions that have run rampant for so long, is evident. Such unacceptable patterns are truly intolerable for a field of scholar-activists. New approaches and practices for the field are being conceived; it is happening daily. Sarason (1988) asserted that there could be

tension when old norms are confronted with new techniques. This tension is often between those supporting the old model, and those pushing for new approaches. The tension is not a necessity. Community psychology's justice-minded multicultural movement is not new pushing back on old; it does not have to be; it is more a collective walk forward, learning and growing together. That is the proposition.

New Approaches and Understandings

This moment of beautiful and healthy unrest can be used to deconstruct and decolonize, call out and extract, and ensure different forms of knowing and learning take their place. Reform is a debt owed to future generations of community psychologists. Black people, Black students, students of color, and their genuine allies, have already begun the work, standing up, tall, against brutal force, articulating why the injustice of Euro-dominated systems and exclusive ways of knowing can no longer stand. Fearless individuals and global collective actions have ignited an existentially necessary movement. Students have taken risks to their education by refusing bankrupt norms and are replacing them without permission. Faculty, institutions, communities, and organizations have taken similar risks, openly targeting the premise of persistence in order to ensure that the future does not face the same barriers that they have. Baldwin (1971) spoke to the sentiment behind the drive to take such risks, particularly for the Black people.

"I have a two-year-old great nephew. I don't believe that the band of mediocrities which appear to rule this country now, have any right whatsoever to tell him where to sit and where to stand, who he is and what he is going to become, and I won't let them do it, really, it is as simple as that."

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