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Giving Community Psychology Away: A case for open access publishing

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Abstract

Amidst increased pressure for transparency in science, researchers and community members are calling for open access to study stimuli and measures, data, and results. These arguments coincidentally align with calls within community psychology to find innovative ways to support communities and increase the prominence of our field. This paper aims to (1) define the current context for community psychologists in open access publishing, (2) illustrate the alignment between open access publishing and community psychology principles, and (3) demonstrate how to engage in open access publishing using community psychology values. Currently, there are several facilitators (e.g. an increasing number of open access journals, the proliferation of blogs, and social media) and barriers (e.g. Article Processing Charges (APCs), predatory journals) to publishing in open access venues. Openly sharing our research findings aligns with our values of (1) citizen participation, (2) social justice, and (3) collaboration and community strengths. Community psychologists desiring to engage in open access publishing can ask journals to waive APCs, publish pre-prints, use blogs and social media to share results, and push for systemic change in a publishing system that disenfranchises researchers, students, and community members.

"I can imagine nothing we could do that would be more relevant to human welfare [...] than to discover how best to give psychology away." - George A. Miller (1969)

Concerns about research reproducibility in psychology span decades (Vanpaemel, Vermorgen, Deriemaecker, & Storms, 2015; Wicherts, Borsboom, Kats, & Molenaar, 2006). In recent years, however, there has been an increasing push toward open science, in part due to difficulties replicating popular studies (Open Science Collaboration, 2015) and renewed concerns about questionable research practices (Fiedler & Schwarz, 2016; Gelman & Loken, 2014; John, Loewenstein, & Prelec, 2012; Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011). While the "replication crisis" has focused its gaze largely on social psychology, there are reasons to believe these concerns apply to other subfields, for example clinical psychology and clinical neuropsychology (Gelman & Geurts, 2017; Tackett et al., 2017); community psychologists often utilize theories from these and other disciplines in their own work. Additionally, increased concerns about the lack of accessibility of research materials, including stimuli and measures, data, and results, have spurred conversations of what researchers can do to make science a more transparent and democratic process (Fecher & Friesike, 2014; Grant-Kels, 2017). Community psychologists in particular have outlined the importance of sharing one's results with the community with which they are working, especially as this practice relates to building trust with community members, ensuring high quality analyses, and promoting social justice values (Barker & Pistrang, 2005; Christopher, Watts, McCormick, & Young, 2008; Suarez-Balcazar, Harper, & Lewis, 2005). Existing conversations regarding open science are relevant to the practices and values within the field of community psychology, and the current paper seeks to expand community psychology's engagement within this important debate.

The term "open science" encompasses many practices, but we will focus on one practice in

particular: open access publishing, defined as access to research results free of charge and of most copyright and licensing restrictions (Suber, 2010). This paper aims to (1) define the current context for community psychologists in open access publishing, (2) illustrate the alignment between open access publishing and community psychology principles, and (3) demonstrate how to engage in open access publishing using community psychology values.

Current Context for Community Psychologists in Open Access Publishing

Open access publishing has increased substantially since the expansion of the internet in the 1990s (Laasko et al., 2011), wherein over 11,000 open access journals are currently available online (Directory of Open Access Journals, 2018). The degree to which these journals openly publish their contents, however, varies widely. For example, gold open access journals allow the most accessibility in which all articles are open access, whereas other journals may postpone open access by transitioning an article to open access over time (i.e. delayed open access) or by allowing authors to pay a fee to make an article open access (i.e. hybrid open access; Cope & Kalantzis, 2014).

In September 2018, various national research funding organizations, the European Commission, and the European Research Council announced Plan S, which would require all scientific publications resulting from research funded by public grants to be published in open access journals (Science Europe, 2019). Other funding agencies, like the National Institutes of Health (NIH), have also mandated that articles published with federal funds be archived and publicly available (Poltronieri, Bravo, Curti, Ferri, & Mancini, 2016), although in many cases, journal policies go directly against these mandates (Van Noorden, 2017). This initiative has dramatically impacted the biomedical field by contributing to discipline-wide movement toward open access (Poltronieri, Bravo, Curti, Ferri, & Mancini, 2016). The existing landscape of open access publishing provides researchers, including community psychologists, with a promising path toward increasing accessibility of research findings.

Recently, community psychologists have called for our field to evaluate our efforts and create innovative strategies to improve our visibility and relevance (Jimenez, Sánchez, McMahon, & Viola, 2016). Researchers who publish open access are more likely to have their work seen, which in turn increases the chances of someone actually reading and using our findings. For example, in an examination of citations in top ecology journals, Tang, Bever, & Yu (2017) compared the change in citations over time of articles published in open access and non-open access journals. The findings indicated ecology articles with open access status saw an increase in citation of one citation per year (Tang, Bever, & Yu, 2017). In a review, McKiernan and colleagues (2016) show psychology-related open access articles are more than twice as likely to be cited than those not published as open access. Moreover, open access articles are more likely to be shared on social media, viewed and read online, and covered in the news. McKiernan and colleagues (2016) also highlight new funding opportunities for open research and discuss the possibility of improved career outcomes through increased opportunities for finding collaborators. Indeed, the first author has found two large-scale collaborative opportunities through Twitter alone (Lakens et al., 2018; Moshontz et al., 2018). With open access, researchers can more easily find one another and collaborate, increasing the chances of the data we collect being used.

The economic cost associated with access to non-open access journals can create unnecessary burdens to those in academia, akin to scientific gatekeeping. Tenure and promotion are often contingent on scholarship, with researchers relying on their

home institutions' libraries to access journals. Subscriptions to these journals account for a large portion of the libraries' budgets which places institutes with limited library funding at a severe disadvantage especially when the costs of journal access have continued to increase. To save on these costs, some universities have begun to cancel their journal subscriptions. For example, Taiwan Tech recently announced it would no longer subscribe to Elsevier's ScienceDirect due to increasing prices that eventually took up over 20% of the library's budget for electronic journal databases (Huang, 2016). Tactics like these may help to balance budgets, but they can make it more difficult for researchers to access necessary articles. In fact, researchers at underfunded universities may not even be able to access their own articles through their library databases. In some instances, interlibrary loan or paying membership fees to certain societies can defray these costs; if not, researchers must pay access fees themselves which may create barriers for those at underfunded universities. Perhaps not coincidentally, libraries have been involved in creating their own open science initiatives (Heckel, n.d.). Regardless, current publishing practices appear to be unsustainable, and it is up to those wanting to share their research to decide how to proceed.

The requirement to publish for tenure can create a burden on academics who are often inundated with email offers for journals looking to publish their research. These offers may be the result of another potential concern predatory journals (Butler, 2013). The difficulty for these researchers is in differentiating between predatory and non-predatory journals. Predatory journals seek to make as much money off of unsuspecting researchers as quickly as possible. Open access journals may require article publishing charges (APCs), which can make them appear to be money making ventures similar to predatory journals. However, these fees can be found in predatory journals, open access journals (e.g. *PLoS One*) and non-open access journals (e.g. *PNAS*). Additionally, for non-open access journals, publishing charges may be required if authors wish to make their articles open access.

There are some key differences between predatory and open access journals. Open access journals have formal editorial boards whereas predatory journals may indicate they have editorial boards, but those may be in name only. The clearest difference between predatory and non-predatory journals is the use of a peer-review process. Predatory journals fast track articles, provide little to no oversight, and can even allow plagiarism through in their goal of earning money. Non-predatory journals should provide a formal peer review process, though of course, sufficient peer review is not guaranteed. There are, however, ways to identify whether an open access publisher is predatory (Beall, 2015). For example, if a journal offers a fee-based "fast-track" service for getting peer reviewed, or if the journal does not identify a formal editorial board, it is likely a predatory journal. One way to check if a journal is predatory is to do a Google search with the journal name and "scam" afterward, search for lists of predatory journals and publishers (for a historical and sometimes controversial list, see Anonymous, n.d., for an archived version of Beall's list) or to search the Directory of Open Access Journal's "white list" of publishers.

In sum, promising opportunities, as well as legitimate barriers, exist within the current context scholarly publishing. Community psychologists are positioned to navigate this diverse landscape. Namely, the alignment of community psychology values and emphasis for systemic-level change facilitate the field's ability to benefit from this new direction in scholarly publishing.

How Open Science Aligns with Community Psychology Values

As a field, community psychology is primarily concerned with improving the well-being of

individuals, communities, and societies through research and action. To achieve this overall goal, community psychology strives to fulfill core values to direct research and action (Kloos, Hill, Thomas, Wandersman, & Dalton, 2012). Three particular values provide support to open access publishing within the field: (1) citizen participation, (2) social justice, and (3) collaboration and community strengths. Each will be discussed in turn.

Citizen Participation

Community psychologists should consider open access publishing in relation to the values of citizen participation. Specifically, citizen participation is a useful empowerment process in which individuals exert their power to influence decision-making process within their communities (Prilleltensky, 2001; Kloos, Hill, Thomas, Wandersman, & Dalton, 2012). Open access is related to this value because access to information fosters individuals' ability to engage meaningfully in democratic decision-making processes. Moreover, citizen participation facilitates individuals' ability to engage in decision-making across ecological levels, such as local and federal levels of government (Rappaport, 1981).

Cost of access to non-open access sources can hinder not only scholarship and community engagement, but the educational experience of our students, who are and will continue to be members of their own communities. For those of us who are instructors, we should be presenting the latest findings whenever possible, rather than focusing solely on phenomena that have been contradicted by more recent findings. As with scholarship, instructors and students at underfunded universities would bear the heaviest burden of these costs. However, when these findings are in open access sources, such as the Open Science Framework, Github, or institutional repositories, instructors can provide students with the most recent developments. In accordance with APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Major 2.0 (American Psychological Association, 2016), students should develop scientific inquiry and critical thinking skills throughout their undergraduate career, resulting in many students being assigned papers requiring access to published empirical research, particularly in upper level courses. An individual researcher may decide to ultimately pay for access to an article to help their own scholarship, but these expectations are not extended to students. Students are, instead, entirely dependent on university library funding to access non-open access databases and journals. This economic burden could result in scientific gatekeeping that ultimately impedes student learning for those at underfunded institutes.

Regardless if one is an academic, practitioner, or some mix of the two, access to research is an important step in actively engaging citizens, be they citizens of academic spheres or communities more broadly. Engaging in open science practices aligns with many of our values as community psychologists, but we will specifically address how this practice aligns with our values of social justice and collaboration and community strengths.

Social Justice

Community psychology's focus on social justice emphasizes the equitable distribution of resources. Specifically, the field endorses the critical examination of how resources and power (e.g., research knowledge) are allocated across groups in society. The core value of social justice underscore the present discrepancy of access to research journals between individuals who can afford costs of academic articles, whether it be through personal finances or connection to institutional resources, and those without economic access. Emphasis on social justice in the field highlights the alignment between community psychology and open access, wherein community psychology values would support giving psychology away by giving everyone open, free access to the results of

our studies to provide distributive justice of research (Kloos, Hill, Thomas, Wandersman, & Dalton, 2012).

Hiding our science behind paywalls keeps community psychology in the shadows. It disenfranchises anyone without connections to a university with enough money to access the thousands of journals in circulation. Further, not sharing our results openly prevents community members not in contact with us from seeing the data *they contributed to our studies* or what we said about them. It prevents students, professors, and researchers from smaller universities and independent researchers, evaluators, and practitioners from accessing important theoretical and empirical articles, thereby reducing their ability to stay current on the literature. We cannot give psychology away if we lock it up and charge anywhere from $10 to $50 *per article* for access. Yearly subscriptions to journals are even *more* expensive and place financial burdens on both individuals and institutions. One effort to strengthen the alignment between community psychology values and equitable access to knowledge has been the development of an open access community psychology textbook (Jason, Glanstman, O'Brien, & Ramian, 2019). The introductory textbook aims to reduce costs for students and community members who want to learn about community psychology research and practice. In this example, and in research generally, open access alleviates the financial barriers to accessing academic literature.

Collaboration and Community Strengths

Another guiding principle of community psychology involves actively collaborating with researchers, practitioners, and community members (Society for Community Research and Action, n.d.). Community partners desire working with researchers who share their data and results, as well as control over the project (Ferman & Hill, 2004; Minkler, 2004; Rotheram-Borus, Rebchook, Kelly, Adams, & Neumann, 2000). A variety of stakeholders are beginning to require open access to the results of our studies. For those of us funded by government grants like those from the National Science Foundation or National Institutes of Health, one could argue taxpayers have the right to see the results of research they paid for (Suber, 2003). In fact, funders, professional organizations, and journals have begun their own initiatives to support open access practices (Center for Open Science, 2015; National Institutes of Health, n.d.).

Engaging in open science practices may be one way we can improve our own professional standing and grow the field of community psychology. Further, open access publishing may be a mechanism through which community psychologists can employ their values in everyday practice. Given the field's emphasis on empirical grounding, social justice, and collaboration and community strengths, community psychologists may be well suited to implement strategies to engage in open access publishing.

How to Engage in Open Access Publishing Practices

There are several ways to engage in open access publishing practices, each with their own benefits and drawbacks. Researchers can publish their articles as open access in traditional journals or in open access journals, share pre- and post-prints online, put pressure on editorial boards and our institutions to support open access practices and policies, and consider alternative forms of research finding dissemination.

Despite benefits and diverse options for open access publishing, there are barriers to this mode of research dissemination. Many publishers levy an "Article Publishing Charge" (APC) to publish an article as open access. Paying this APC will allow the article to be immediately available--for free--upon publication. As mentioned earlier, Plan S will require all articles to be published in fully

open access journals. According to their 10 Principles (Science Europe, 2019), funders and universities are expected to pay these APCs, which has been controversial. Plan S is pressing for these fees to be standardized and capped, although it is worth noting that it also restricts authors from publishing under hybrid publishing schemes, where journals may have some open access articles (usually paid for through APCs) and closed access articles (where APCs are not applied).

APCs can be quite prohibitive, especially for students, community members, and those without grants. Elsevier (n.d.) currently charges anywhere from $500-$5,000 *per article*; these prices are based upon factors like the journal's impact factor, market conditions, and the journal's other revenue streams. Lest anyone think Elsevier is the only one to charge these amounts, Wiley (n.d.) currently charges $1,000-$5,000 per article, except for one journal, which charges $50 per publishing unit (number of words/500 + number of figures + number of tables; a 7,000-word manuscript with two tables and two figures would cost $900). Similarly, Springer (n.d.) charges $3000 per article and Taylor & Francis (n.d.) appears to charge between $750-$2,950 (note that some cells in the cited spreadsheet refer viewers to the journal's author instructions). These prices are often *before* taxes or VAT. It may also be worth noting that journals that use this model are double dipping: they get to charge authors/institutions to publish open access, but libraries and institutions are not getting discounts on their subscription rates based on how many articles are published open access, and therefore should be "free" (Brown, 2015).

Another consideration for the APCs is the divergent ways in which the funding model influences researchers globally (Sotudeh & Ghasempour, 2018). Namely, APCs can disproproately hinder researchers in developing countries because of APCs are more costly relative to their countries income (Solmon & Bjork, 2005). This problem can result in researchers from lower income countries more often using personal funds to pay for APCs compared to authors in higher income countries (Solomon & Bjork, 2012). If the APC model is maintained, one possible solution is to revise the model to accommodate for differences between countries (e.g., country development, university budget; Sotudeh & Ghasempour, 2018). Future evaluation into the global effects of APCs is needed and community psychologists' emphasis on ecological differences may benefit this exploration.

What is a community psychologist who wants their manuscript to be published as open access to do? If researchers are committed to publishing in a particular journal (perhaps it is the flagship journal of our field, and we need tenure at a university whose administration focuses on impact factors), we can ask the journal to waive the cost, although it is unclear how often this is successful, and there is the potential for this to be an alienating process for researchers from under-resourced institutions, who may be hesitant to ask for waivers more than once and be judged for it. Lawson (2015) provided a review of fee waiver policies and found that 22 of the 32 publishers included in the review had an explicit fee waiver policy. Of those publishers with waiver policies, however, 36% reserved fee waivers for researchers from low- and middle-income countries. Moreover, the review reflects the presence of a waiver policy and not necessarily the actual disbursement of funds. This suggests uncertainty about this route and more research is needed on availability of waivers.

An alternative route to fee waivers is for those with grants can request funders cover the cost, though it is unclear how many funders are supportive of such requests. Institutions with large endowments or financial resources may be willing to shore up the money, although obviously few--if any--institutions can afford for all of their researchers to do this. Some institutions have agreements allowing for free open access

publication, although this often appears to be limited to certain journals (Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, n.d.). If those avenues fail, the cost is often on the researcher.

It is important to note APCs can be charged by both non-open access and open access journals. Typically, non-open access journals may charge APCs so that individual articles can be made available free of charge (presumably to make up for lost revenue for not charging people to read it), but not for publication of the article in and of itself. Researchers can often publish in these journals for free, given they are not asking for open access. Open access journals, which are not often subsidized by a professional organization, may charge APCs for publication of an article. This practice has been criticized, as it has the potential to influence editorial decisions (Brown, 2015). As noted above, it is unclear how many grant- and other research-funding institutions are willing to pay for a journal article to be published in an open access format. There are some journals that do not charge APCs to publish open access, though choosing to only publish in these journals may unreasonably limit where someone can publish in at this moment.

If researchers cannot afford the APC for open access, but still want to publish in a top journal, it is possible to publish in the journal of your choice without open access and archive a free copy elsewhere. Self-archiving is the process of uploading a free copy of some version (usually what you submitted to a journal or the draft before the paper is edited and formatted for final publication). Self-archiving in an archive like PsyArXiv (https://psyarxiv.com/) or one's personal or lab website is beneficial as it allows anyone to access your work, regardless of university affiliation. There is also sometimes confusion among members of the public over whether researchers charge those asking for a copy of the article; self-archiving takes the guesswork out of this process by not creating an environment where someone has to 1) know they can ask authors for a copy of the article and 2) feel comfortable doing so. Many of the above-referenced benefits to open access, including increased visibility, also apply here.

Because self-archiving might go against journal copyright regulations, it is recommended to look up a journal's archiving policy first (SHERPA, n.d.). Some journals allow you to archive a post-print (the final draft before publication) or the publisher's version of the manuscript. Some journals only allow researchers to publish a pre-print (the version of the article before it went to copyeditors). Many journals who allow post-prints do not allow them to be posted before a certain embargo date, usually a year or two after publication. Sometimes, the author cannot archive the publisher's version of the manuscript. It is important to understand journals' policies before engaging in this process. When in doubt, email the editor for guidance.

In the meantime, in alignment with our value of promoting systemic change, community psychologists can implore the editorial boards of journals in our field to allow authors to publish their work as open access without prohibitive fees, and to be more transparent about where APC funds go, as some journals have (The Regents of the University of California, n.d.). Further, community psychologists can refuse to publish in journals that do not adequately support open science. For example, approximately 60 major German research institutions recently refused to publish in response to, as they put it, Elsevier's rejection of "more transparent business models that are based on the publication service and would make publications more easily accessible" (Göttingen State and University Library, n.d.). This is community psychology at work: stakeholders in a community (in this case, academic communities) engage in collective action in an attempt to enact change in a system.

In addition to the guides mentioned above, there are several avenues to get involved in open science practices. For example, there are several active and high-quality groups on social media, including on Facebook (e.g. PsychMAP, n.d.), where researchers share resources and provide support and consultation on open science practices. The Center for Open Science also offers several training services, including workshops and webinars (n.d.). We can start small, integrating open science practices--like open access publishing--in our own labs and inviting other researchers to the table. We can have conversations with the leadership of our professional organizations, like the Society for Community Research and Action, asking them how we can promote open access--and open science more broadly--as an organization.

Regardless of one's path as an academic author, it is important to disseminate research with community partners and the public at large. For some researchers, this may include making videos, engaging on social media, or blogging about their research and the research process (Etz, n.d.; Jason, n.d.; Lakens, n.d.; Steltenpohl, n.d.). Websites run by community psychologists have also been used as an avenue to freely disseminate research findings to large audiences of researchers, practitioners and community members. For example, the Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring (Rhodes, 2018) aims to facilitate conversations among stakeholder groups invested in mentoring practices. The Chronicle achieves increased access to evidence-based mentoring resources by publishing summaries of recent mentoring research and disseminating a monthly digest through their online platform (Rhodes, 2018). Similarly, the Society for Community Research and Action has also created a public-facing website, communitypsychology.com, which allows researchers to share their thoughts on research, practice, and theory, meaning researchers do not have to host and maintain their own website, while still disseminating their research.

As discussed above, engaging community members and "academic Twitter" can increase our reach and engagement. Communicating with the public is an increasingly important responsibility for scientists and utilizing a mixture of social media outreach and open access publishing can meet both our academic needs regarding publication and our commitment to creating a healthy feedback loop with our community partners. It is important to use services that are free and *remain* free, however. For example, academia.edu is a popular "open access" website for archiving one's work and connecting with other researchers; however, in recent years, there has been backlash against the website as it has begun to charge for increased visibility and premium search features like being able to search within the full text of documents (Bond, 2017). One might wonder if work is really open access if you have to pay $99 a year to be able to search its contents or find other people who do similar research.

Conclusion

The present paper defined the current context for community psychologists in open access publishing, illustrated the alignment between open access publishing and community psychology principles, and demonstrated how to engage in open access practices and encourage system-level change. Technological and social advances have made it easier to share our work with others, but some systemic barriers still exist. However, there are ways around these barriers, including publishing only in non-predatory open access journals, disseminating research online, and challenging existing publishing structures.

Open access publishing provides several benefits for community psychologists, including the possibility of increasing our field's reach and influence. It enables us to be

more transparent and collaborate more easily, regardless of where our collaborators are in the world. More importantly, open access publishing aligns with our values of giving community psychology away, promoting equitable distribution of resources, which is a particularly meaningful contribution to progress for students and researchers not flush with institutional resources.

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