Cite as: Di Martino, S., Eiroa-Orosa, F. J., & Arcidiacono, C. (2017). Community Psychology's Contributions on Happiness and Well-being: Including the Role of Context, Social Justice, and Values in Our Understanding of the Good Life. In N. J. L. Brown, T. Lomas, & F. J. Eiroa-Orosa (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of Critical Positive Psychology* (pp. 99–118). London, UK: Routledge.

Chapter 7

Community Psychology's Contributions on Happiness and Well-being: Including the Role of Context, Social Justice, and Values in Our Understanding of the Good Life.

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Introduction

Over the last few decades the scientific literature, institutional, and national policymakers (cf. Lomas, Chapter 22 in this volume), and the general public have demonstrated a growing commitment to the furtherance of the happiness and well-being agenda. However, if we were to look through a critical lens at the extensive body of literature they have produced, we would notice that some relevant issues have been surprisingly left unaddressed. In particular, in this chapter we argue that three elements, namely Context, Social Justice, and Values, have been extensively neglected, and this has significantly impaired the understanding of current scholarship regarding the good life.

For instance, the lack of recognition attributed to Context has led several thinkers to either develop or adopt overly individual-centred models of human flourishing (Diener, 1984; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2002, 2011; see also Table 7.1), which are for the most part blind to social and environmental determinants. On the other hand, economists and sociologists have often produced models and findings in specific policy fields useful to inform lawmakers about the value of national life satisfaction and wellness (Bok, 2010; Mulgan, 2013), and yet too abstract to be still applicable to individual circumstances (Layard, 2005; Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2010; see also Table 7.1).

As we hope to show in the following pages, we believe that both of these approaches are hindered by a common limitation, namely a narrow understanding of the true contextual nature of the good life. Closely related to this, we contend that they also disregard the presence, allocation, and administration of resources and opportunities in the environment. In other words, they lack awareness of how power differential, inequality, and social injustice filter through the social fabric down to the individual existences by affecting personal, interpersonal, and communal wellness (Prilleltensky, 2012).

Lastly, we argue that the neglect of an ethical and value-based perspective—which, as Jeffrey Sachs (2013) has pointed out, "is one of the factors most often overlooked in current discussions of well-being" (p. 81)—stems from an interpretation of science in general and psychology in particular, as value-free disciplines (Cushman, 1990; Proctor, 1991). As a consequence, what the multitude considers the quest for a happy life—which very often conceals a selfish pursuit of personal satisfaction—has been disregarding its possible negative impact on other people and the physical as well as psycho-social environment (Haybron, 2008).

Nevertheless, some reluctant voice might object that Context, Social Justice/Equity, and Values are never entirely omitted from any sound investigation in the nature of the good life (for a review, see Arcidiacono & Di Martino, 2016). We can agree with this line of argument, yet not in toto, and to make our case more explicit, we designed Table 7.1. This tool showcases some of what we regard as the most utilized models and theories of happiness and well-being along with a description of the understanding they hold about Context, Social Justice, and Values.[1]

A quick look at the table would apparently give full credit to the above criticism. After all, every single model we presented seems to tick of all the Context, Social Justice, and Values

[1] N.B. The table has no pretence to be exhaustive and it has been developed mainly to make our case more easily understandable to the readers of this chapter.

boxes. However, we believe that this does not suffice to conclude that the literature holds a clear vision of the issues at stake. Quite, the opposite, we believe that its understanding of the good life in matters of Context, Social Justice, and Values is quite patchy and piecemeal. Indeed, it should not come as a surprise to discover that a preponderance of contributions presented in Table 7.1 have so far been quite reticent to exchange, combine, and synthesise reciprocal practices, findings, and strategies of intervention. Even the rare exceptions we can count have failed to overcome the boundaries of multidisciplinarity (see Sirgy et al., 2006) and venture into the often unexplored territory of Interdisciplinarity and, less still, Transdisciplinarity (Choi & Pak, 2006).

The direct consequence of this is that Context, Justice, and Values have been hitherto addressed as three separate domains, each with distinct relevance to the pursuit of the good life. For instance, some of the theories and models presented above might have a clear vision about issues of Social Justice while lacking knowledge on how these affects society beyond the macro-level (e.g., Stiglitz et al., 2010). Others might be well aware of either individual or social determinants of well-being (e.g., Diener, 2009; Keyes, 1998) while still being little concerned about ethical conflicts related to both the personal and collective pursuit of the good life. As such, many of the forms of scholarship presented in Table 7.1 lack a full understanding of how the three domains are interconnected, or in other words, an awareness of their combined contribution to the promotion of human flourishing.

Table 7.1. Theories and Models of Happiness and Well-being and Their Contribution to Context, Social Justice, and Values

THEORIES AND MODELS	DEFINITIONS	DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS	KEY PRINCIPLES AND AREAS OF INQUIRY	CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS	SOCIAL JUSTICE	VALUES
Subjective Well-being (SWB) (Diener, 2009).	Subjective well-being refers to the global experience of positive reactions to one's life. Life satisfaction pertains to a conscious global judgment of one's life.	• Pleasant Emotions • Unpleasant Emotions • Global Life Judgement • Domain Satisfaction	• Health • Achievement • Social Relationships and Prosocial Behaviours • Wealth • Religion • Personality	SWB primarily resides within the experience of the individual (Diener, 1984). Cultural differences in SWB are also taken into account.	SWB by itself is insufficient for evaluating the success of a society. It also needs to account for human rights and societal equality (Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995).	"Happiness appears to bring out the best in humans, making them more social, more cooperative, and even more ethical." (Kesebir & Diener, 2008, p. 67).
Psychological Well-being (PWB) (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).	Psychological well-being is understood in terms of optimal functioning. Happiness is understood as short-term	• Self-Acceptance • Environmental Mastery • Positive Relations • Purpose in Life	• Leading a Life of Purpose • Quality Connections to Others • Self-esteem	PWB is explicitly concerned with the development and self-realization of the individual (Ryff & Singer, 2008). However, societal level factors are also	Attention to the impact of discrimination, status and social inequality, and belonging to ethnic minorities	Drawing from Aristotle, PWB is rooted in the eudaimonic values, according to which the "good life" is a "virtuous life."

THEORIES AND MODELS	DEFINITIONS	DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS	KEY PRINCIPLES AND AREAS OF INQUIRY	CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS	SOCIAL JUSTICE	VALUES
	affective well-being.	• Personal Growth • Autonomy	• Mastery • Life difficulties	requisite to a full understanding of human well-being (Ryff, Magee, Kling, & Wing, 1999)	on Psychological well-being.	
Well-being theory and PERMA model (Seligman, 2002, 2011).	Happiness includes Positive Emotions, Engagement, and Meaning. Well-being also adds Positive Relationships and Accomplishment to these.	• Positive Emotions • Engagement • Positive Relationships • Meaning • Accomplishment	Strong emphasis on prevention and health promotion. Psychology should promote human flourishing, not just treating mental illness.	• Positive experiences • Enduring psychological traits • Positive relationships • Positive institutions	Well-being promotion should not be the only aims of public policy. Justice, democracy, peace, and tolerance also need to be valued (Seligman, 2011).	The individual pursuit of well-being is to be underpinned by the development of Character Strengths and Virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

THEORIES AND MODELS	DEFINITIONS	DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS	KEY PRINCIPLES AND AREAS OF INQUIRY	CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS	SOCIAL JUSTICE	VALUES
Self Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2002; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2001).	Well-being refers to optimal psychological functioning and experience. It also draws on both hedonism and eudaimonia. Happiness is a form of hedonic well-being that pertains to pleasure and enjoyment of life.	• Competence • Relatedness • Autonomy	SDT's arena is "the investigation of people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation and personality integration, as well as for the conditions that foster those positive processes" (R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68).	Strong focus on the relationship between individual and context. SDT includes "the interaction between an active, integrating human nature and social contexts that either nurture or impede the organism's active nature" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 6).	Emphasis on human autonomy. The positions that fail to recognize the importance of autonomy for well-being may be inadvertently condoning the denial of human freedom to a significant portion of the inhabitants of the globe (R. M. Ryan, & Deci, 2001).	The STD eudaimonic vision of well-being includes: • Pursuing intrinsic goals and values • Behaving in autonomous, volitional, or consensual ways • Being mindful and acting with awareness • Behaving in ways that satisfy competence, relatedness, and autonomy

THEORIES AND MODELS	DEFINITIONS	DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS	KEY PRINCIPLES AND AREAS OF INQUIRY	CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS	SOCIAL JUSTICE	VALUES
Social Well-being (Keyes, 1998).	Happiness is defined in terms of life satisfaction. Social well-being is the appraisal of one's circumstance and functioning in society.	• Social Actualization • Social Acceptance • Social Integration • Social Contribution	Critique of multidimensional models that conceive of the self as primarily private. Emphasis on social nature of well-being.	Social well-being represents primarily a public phenomenon, since adults encounter social tasks in their social structures and communities.	Social structure contributes to either promote or hinder social well-being.	Healthy individuals display "personal obligations that ostensibly contribute to society." (Keyes, 1998, p. 122)
Frey & Stutzer's approach to happiness in economics (Frey & Stutzer, 2002).	Distinction between subjective and objective happiness, cognition and affect, and stocks and flows of psychological resources, with regard to subjective well-being.	• Pleasant Affect • Unpleasant Affect • Life Satisfaction • Labour Market • Consumption • Family and Companionship • Leisure • Health	Psychological Perspective: • Adaptation • Aspiration • Social Comparison • Copying Economic Perspective: • Income • Unemployment	• Personality Socio-demographic factors • Micro and Macro economic factors • Contextual and situational factors • Institutional (or constitutional) conditions	Emphasis on procedural justice as right to participate to political decision-making and actual participation. Focus on the detrimental effect of inequality on happiness and the importance of freedom and democracy.	Economic issues (e.g., runaway inflation) undermine the moral basis of society. Conversely, economics can be manipulated to increase individual happiness, and in turn citizens' involvement in civil life.

THEORIES AND MODELS	DEFINITIONS	DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS	KEY PRINCIPLES AND AREAS OF INQUIRY	CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS	SOCIAL JUSTICE	VALUES
			• Inflation			
The Four Qualities of Life Model and Happy-Life-Years Index (Veenhoven, 2000, 2005).	Happiness or "Appreciation of life" combines "Life results" and "Inner qualities." Well-being combines "Life Chances" and "Inner Qualities."	• Life chances • Life results • Inner qualities • Outer qualities	• Liveability of the environment • Life-ability of the individual • External utility of life • Inner appreciation of life	Analysis of conditions at the macro-level of society, the meso level of organizations and the micro-level of individuals.	Cross-National application of the Happy Life-Years Index shows high correlations with economic affluence, freedom, and justice (Veenhoven, 2005).	The "art-of-living" is seen as the skill of living up to moral principles (Veenhoven, 2003). Three ideologies are explored: • Living up to rules • Living up to an ideal • Living deliberately

THEORIES AND MODELS	DEFINITIONS	DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS	KEY PRINCIPLES AND AREAS OF INQUIRY	CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS	SOCIAL JUSTICE	VALUES
Wellness theory and I COPPE Model of Well-being (Prilleltensky, 2005, 2012; Prilleltensky et al., 2015).	Life satisfaction is an indicator of the personal level of psychological well-being. Well-being is the satisfaction of objective and subjective needs of individuals, relationships, organizations, and communities.	• Overall Well-being • Interpersonal Well-being • Community Well-being • Occupational Well-being • Physical Well-being • Psychological Well-being • Economic Well-being	• Self-determination • Health • Personal growth • Social justice • Support for enabling community structures • Respect for diversity • Collaboration and democratic participation	The promotion of Well-being encompasses four interconnected levels: • Personal • Interpersonal • Organizational • Communal	Persisting, Vulnerable, Suboptimal, and Optimal conditions of Justice/Injustice are linked to Suffering, Confronting, Coping, and Thriving conditions of Well-being, respectively.	The cultural environment primes people's engagement in either positive or negative behaviours. The rearrangement of the environment, can prompt people to engage in prosocial and wellness-oriented behaviours.

THEORIES AND MODELS	DEFINITIONS	DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS	KEY PRINCIPLES AND AREAS OF INQUIRY	CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS	SOCIAL JUSTICE	VALUES
The Big 7 Model (Layard, 2005) and Action for Happiness (http://www.actionforhappiness.org).	Happiness is a long-lasting experience that includes both fluctuating feelings and overall satisfaction with life.	• Family Relationships • Financial Situation • Work • Community and Friends • Health • Personal Freedom • Personal values	Supporter of the "greatest happiness for the greatest number" principle. Happy societies are built on collaboration, trust, altruism, and good social relationships.	Happier societies strive to improve working conditions, family relationships, and local communities. Governmental policies should aim to maximize happiness for the greatest number of citizens.	Fairness is ultimately about how happiness is distributed. Government and citizens alike should focus on the equality with which happiness is distributed in society.	The right action is the one that produces the greatest overall happiness. People's duty is to disseminate as much happiness as they can, and reduce the amount of misery in the world.
Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (Stiglitz et al., 2010).	Well-being has to do with both economic resources and non-economic aspects of peoples' lives. Happiness is understood in terms of both hedonic	• Material living standards • Health • Education • Personal activities including work	• Subjective well-being (cognitive evaluations, positive affect, and negative affect) • Capabilities (functioning and freedom) • Fair allocations	Quality of Life (QoL) takes the individual as the fundamental unit of analysis. This should not imply neglecting community or institutional levels, rather it can be evaluated with regard to what meso-	Strong emphasis on social inequality (both in terms of distribution of economic resources and non-monetary dimensions of quality of life), environmental	Supporter of the Capabilities vision of "responsibility" and role played by ethical principles in the design of the "good" society.

THEORIES AND MODELS	DEFINITIONS	DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS	KEY PRINCIPLES AND AREAS OF INQUIRY	CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS	SOCIAL JUSTICE	VALUES
	experience and life satisfaction.	• Political voice and governance • Social connections and relationships • Environment • Insecurity, of an economic as well as a physical nature		and macro-structures contribute to the QoL of individuals within those levels.	sustainability, as well as the promotion of political voices, legislative guarantees, and the rule of law.	
Amartya Sen's Capabilities Approach (Sen, 1999, 2009) and the Human Development Index (HDI).	Well-being is one of the goals that individuals should have the freedom and agency to pursue. Happiness is one of several aspects of functioning relevant to a person's well-being.	The HDI reflects average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: leading a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and enjoying a decent standard of living.	• Political freedom • Economic facilities • Social opportunities • Transparency guarantees • Protective security	The capabilities approach is a means to assess the development of individuals and Countries around the world.	Justice and Equity are key to the development of freedom and capabilities. "The achievement of social justice depends not only on institutional forms, but also on effective practice"	"Having the freedom and capability to do something does impose on the person the duty to consider whether to do it or not, and this does involve individual responsibility" (Sen, 1999, p. 284).

THEORIES AND MODELS	DEFINITIONS	DIMENSIONS AND INDICATORS	KEY PRINCIPLES AND AREAS OF INQUIRY	CONTEXT OF ANALYSIS	SOCIAL JUSTICE	VALUES
					(Sen, 1999, p. 159).	
Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (Nussbaum, 2006, 2011) and central capabilities.	Happiness is framed in the Aristotelean philosophy, therefore is seen as a state of flourishing given by "an active and virtuous life." Well-being is understood in terms of development of a set of core capabilities.	• Life • Bodily health • Bodily integrity • Senses, imagination, thought • Emotions • Practical reason • Affiliation • Other species • Play • Control over one's environment	The crucial good that societies should be promoting for their people is a set of opportunities, or substantial freedoms. This entails the development of basic, internal, and combined capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011).	The Capabilities Approach has typically been elaborated in the context of international development policy (Nussbaum, 2011). It is, however, also a means to assess the achievement of individual capabilities.	Emphasis on social injustice and inequality, especially capability failures that are the result of discrimination or marginalization. Government should improve the quality of life for all people, as defined by their capabilities.	The capabilities approach not only requires treating every person as an end and not a means; it also demands sympathy, benevolence, and the exercise of care for the other, especially those in need (Nussbaum, 2006).

In contrast with all this, one of the fundamental goals of this chapter is to demonstrate that no investigation into the nature of the good life can shirk an interdisciplinary perspective. In particular, in the following pages we will show how combining the contributions of Community Psychology—together, in some instances, with its critical variant (see Kagan, Burton, Duckett, Lawthom, & Siddiquee, 2011; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010)—with the ethos of Positive Psychology can generate a novel and more comprehensive understanding of human flourishing. We intend to do this in order to inform academics, practitioners, and activists about how a novel contextual, justice-oriented, and value-oriented framework can be embedded into strategies of intervention and promotion of well-being and life satisfaction.

The Limits of Positive Psychology and the Call for Community Psychology

Within the broad literature on the good life, Positive Psychology (PP) stands out as an avant-garde movement that has championed the promotion of human flourishing since its inception (Sheldon, Frederickson, Rathunde, Csikszentmihalyi, & Haidt, 2000). PP, in fact, has been propounding both a salutogenic philosophy and the adoption of scientifically sound practices for the betterment of human existence, which together promise to overcome the pathological hallmark of mainstream psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The prospect of making a meaningful difference to people's lives has already persuaded a multitude of psychologists, social workers, and practitioners to jump on the PP bandwagon. With regard to these issues, both mainstream researchers and new voices within the field of PP have recently started to advance several proposals of positive social change from justice-oriented and contextual perspectives (see Biswas-Diener, 2011; Biswas-Diener, Linley, Govindji, & Woolston, 2011; Marujo & Neto, 2014; Wright & Lopez, 2011) as well as examples of how values inform the theory and practice of the movement (Lopez & Gallagher, 2009).

Although these few raised voices deserve credit, we must acknowledge that PP in general has been highly criticized for placing an unduly responsibility on individuals in determining their life with a narrow sense of socio-contextual determinants, including matters of power, social justice, and equality (Becker & Marecek, 2008). Furthermore, it has been condemned as a new kind of ideology that discriminates alternative voices to its dominant message (B. S. Held, 2004), perpetuates the status quo (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008), and reinstates the current neo-liberal economic and political discourse (McDonald & O'Callaghan, 2008).

We believe that PP and its advocates should be deeply concerned about these issues, since failing to properly address them has hitherto impaired a full comprehension of how the movement can best investigate, pursue, and promote the good life. We argue that what hinders PP most is a subordination to objectivism, whereby overtly declared descriptive (rather than prescriptive) goals and a neutral stance are put forth whenever happiness and well-being are examined (see Seligman, 2002, p. 129).

Taking issue with this vision, we argue the need for the contribution of Community Psychology (CP) to be brought to bear to inform the science and practice of PP, and to get PP scholars and practitioners to step out of their comfort zone by starting to acknowledge the intrinsic relatedness between Context, Social Justice, and Values. This attempt follows on from some recent theoretical endeavours to integrate the two approaches (Kagan, 2015; Neto & Marujo, 2014), based on the recognition that they are both rooted in a tradition of prevention, personal growth, self-determination, and wellness promotion (Cowen & Kilmer, 2002; Schueller, 2009). In the same vein, some of the CP core assumptions identified by Canning (2011), such as adaptation as the means of development and change, wellness as a focus over psychopathology, prevention and promotion as priorities over treatment, and collaborative, empowering helping relationships, share a common ground with the ethos and practice of PP.

However, CP also advocates for social justice, social action, and cultural and human diversity as means to promote better life conditions not only for individuals, but also for groups, organizations, communities, and societies (Canning, 2011; Kloos et al., 2012; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). This last set of assumptions will be our entry point to describe the CP ethos in more detail and, in so doing, lay out a new vision of wellness promotion for PP and the literature on the good life.

The Role of Context

In his 2012 film *To Rome with Love*, Woody Allen portrays the story of a would-be tenor, Giancarlo, who is endowed with an exceptional singing talent that, unluckily, he can only produce when soaping up in the shower. After a disappointing audition, owing to the absence of the only place where he is able to perform well, Giancarlo's impresario arranges for him to perform in an opera from within a shower cubicle on stage. Of course, this bizarre premiere turns out to be an outstanding success, ensuring the singer a promising career. This funny story is an excellent example of how contextual features are able to influence human endeavours by fostering—or, conversely, hindering—personal competences. Under certain circumstances, the only way to enable people to thrive—as in the case of the "tenor in the shower"—is to change their surrounding context, rather than their attitude towards life.

However, even when Context does not play such a decisive role, we think that its importance should never be underestimated. Conversely, we often fail to understand its significance. In fact, as Kloos and colleagues (2012) have pointed out, "like a fish swimming in water, we take the context of our lives for granted" and as a consequence "we tend to minimize contextual factors and overlook ecological levels of analysis" (p. 140).

This tendency is very much evident in the scientific enquiry into the good life as a propensity to downplay contextualism, reducing it to a set of characteristics capable of

influencing the lot of humans. The literature is replete with explanations of how contextual variables and social factors such as marriage, work, health, income, and social relations impact on happiness and well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Helliwell & Putnam, 2004) both at the macro-level of society, the meso level of organizations and the micro-level of individuals (Veenhoven, 2015). However, much less is available in terms of how individual features and coping strategies are "contextually situated" in "historical antecedents, economic constituents, and political consequences" (Cushman, 1990, p. 600).

A fortunate exception is represented by McNulty and Fincham's (2012) critique of Positive Psychology, which show how positive processes such as forgiveness, optimistic expectations, positive thoughts, and kindness—which are normally deemed universally desirable and beneficial strategies to fulfil one's life—can either benefit or harm personal well-being depending on the context in which they operate. In the same vein, Tomasik and Silbereisen (2009) have demonstrated how diverse environments create conditions in which people with very similar characteristics might still produce different outcomes. For instance, demands of social change due to globalization or individualization differ in a systematic way across ecological niches. A study carried by these authors, which compared coping styles and life satisfaction in different parts of Germany (Tomasik, Silbereisen, & Heckhausen, 2010), showed that, against the belief that an active coping style is adaptive in any situation, disengaging from these demands can even be adaptive when one lives in an economically devastated area.

These examples are a good point of departure to introduce CP's contextual vision, since its approach "tries to understand the importance of context for people's lives and work to change the environments to be more supportive" (Kloos et al., 2012, p. 140). This requires CP to assume that people's flourishing is strongly intertwined with the contexts within which they

live and interact (Prilleltensky, 2005, 2012; Schueller, 2009). As Orford (2008) has pointed out:

> At the very heart of the subject is the need to see people—their feelings, thoughts, and actions—within a social context. It exhorts us, when thinking of people's health, happiness and well-being, or when thinking about people's distress and disorder, to "think context." (p. xi)

CP's contextual approach is much evident in its tendency to forgo standardised interventions and one-size-fits-all solutions in favour of more situated answers. In this regard, the success of an intervention is assessed in terms of how much stakeholders are engaged in their own betterment along with their enhanced empowerment to choose among collective and negotiated pathways to wellness (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

In this light, we suggest that PP can benefit from at least three aspects of CP's attention to Context. First, Positive Psychologists can learn that happiness and well-being are to be understood from an "ecological perspective" in that they operate on a multi-systemic continuum. Thus, well-being is a desideratum not only for individuals, but also for organizations, communities, and ultimately society at large (Prilleltensky, 2012; Prilleltensky et al., 2015). In relation to this principle, Prilleltensky has suggested that interventions aimed at promoting better life conditions must draw on Sites, Signs, Sources, Strategies, and Synergies of well-being (for a review see Prilleltensky, 2005) as well as encompass interpersonal, community, occupational, physical, psychological, and economic domains (see I COPPE model in Table 7.1).

Second, PP must be aware that different contexts contribute differently to well-being, in terms of objective/subjective and quality/quantity of resources they supply (Kagan & Kilroy, 2007). In particular, in addition to PP's interest in subjective and cognitive evaluations of life, CP suggests to draw on objective measures including level of education, literacy, life span, and

income (Schueller, 2009). This means that the impact of an intervention is also measured by it capacity to change objective life circumstances, which in turn impinge on psychological determinants.

Third, the adoption of a contextual perspective entails acknowledging the role that socio-cultural traditions and practices as well as global forces play in shaping the individual and collective pursuit of the good life (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008). From the CP perspective this means first and foremost assuming a respectful and non-ethnocentric attitude towards local, indigenous, non-western, and ethnic populations (Kloos et al., 2012). Moreover, it invites to be aware of both opportunities and pitfalls for individuals and collective that lie in a world of fast-spreading globalization, capitalism, and market-driven values (Marsella, 1998; Natale, Di Martino, Arcidiacono, & Procentese, 2016; Sloan, 2010).

The Role of Social Justice

In his seminal volume *Development as Freedom,* Nobel laureate Amartya Sen (1999) made the case that the protective power of democracy to give people the opportunity to develop and express their life might sometimes pass unnoticed unless a particular staggering problem arises. This means that, under certain circumstances, only after things start going downhill, the absence of Social Justice makes people most vulnerable to adversities. In that case, oftentimes victims not only bear the brunt but are also blamed for lacking the skills, will, and courage to emerge from their misery (W. Ryan, 1971).

If we transfer this outlook from political economics to psychology, we might notice that a preoccupation with intra-psychic dynamics and a misplaced emphasis on resilience have led researchers in PP to ignore the significance of Social Justice-related determinants of the good life such as income distribution, access to health and education, and availability of life-fulfilling opportunities (Ehrenreich, 2010; Prilleltensky, 2012). Once again, this vision rests on the

assumption that external conditions are negligible as long as people can rely on their inner strengths. It is quite telling that PP has provided over the years a plenitude of tools, techniques, and practices for nurturing flow, positive emotion, character strengths, and meaning (see Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), whilst largely omitting to promote the fair distribution of objective resources and life opportunities for people to develop their full potential.

In her book *The How of Happiness*, Sonja Lyubomirsky (2008) offered a prime example of PP's disinterest in matters of Social Justice, when she went as far as to say that "only about 10% of the variance in our happiness levels is explained by differences in life circumstances or situations—that is, whether we are rich or poor, healthy or unhealthy, beautiful or plain, married or divorced, etc" (p. 21). However, this invites the question, "What if an individual's unhappiness stems not from any biological or psychological 'fault' but from the wider socioeconomic conditions in which they find themselves living—in an area with extreme deprivation and inequality, say, or a faltering economy?" (Thompson, 2013, p. 428).

In line with Lyubomirsky's argument, Seligman too—when laying out the features of post-traumatic growth—almost makes the case that anybody, once provided with the adequate psychological endorsement, can overcome life challenges and even gain a new purpose in life from negative events (Seligman, 2011). Contrary to this argument, Isaac Prilleltensky (2012) has warned us that, regardless of our capacity of adaptation, only a minority of people are capable of overcoming oppression and injustice.

In contrast with PP's unduly optimistic faith in the power of the individual to recover or even thrive in the face of the most disruptive circumstances, CP has made the promotion of Social Justice and Social Change as well as the fight against disempowerment, marginalization, discrimination, and disenfranchisement the core of its mandate for the promotion of the good life (García-Ramírez, Balcázar, & de Freitas, 2014; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010).

Furthermore, whereas PP is committed to promoting flourishing wherever optimal conditions of Social Justice at the individual level are already guaranteed, CP focuses on all other levels of analysis beyond the individual as well as all those instances where Social Justice is deficient or missing altogether. Indeed, CP works to fulfil multiple aspects of Social Justice (i.e., procedural, distributive, retributive, and cultural) at the personal, interpersonal, organizational, and communal level of analysis (Prilleltensky, 2012).

In that regard, PP can benefit greatly from Prilleltensky's (2012) work, which is dedicated to linking variations in well-being levels to different instances of Social Justice. According to the "Well-being Continuum" model two conditions of Injustice (Persisting Conditions and Vulnerable Conditions of Injustice) and two conditions of Justice (Suboptimal Conditions and Optimal Conditions of Justice) are accountable for variations in well-being. Persisting conditions of Injustice entail "Suffering," which is characterised by the presence of psychosocial responses such as oppression and internalization, helplessness, and upward comparisons. "Vulnerable Conditions of Injustice" represent the next step on the well-being ladder. These are responsible for generating "Confronting," a state of affairs characterized by critical experience, critical consciousness, critical action, and righteous comparison. "Coping" is qualified by "Suboptimal Conditions of Justice" and includes strategies like resilience, adaptation, compensation, and downward comparisons. Of all these states, only "Optimal Conditions of Justice" create the right conditions for people to "Thrive." The strategies involved in this case, indeed, span across the promotion of responsive conditions, prevention, individual pursuit, and avoidance of comparisons.

The Role of Values

As touched upon in the introduction of this chapter, the importance of Values for a well-lived life has been extensively overlooked by the scientific literature on the good life[2] to a greater extent than the two previously discussed topics. As Sachs (2013) reminded us in the *World Happiness Report 2013*:

> We are now returning, step by step, to a broader conception of happiness. Yet . . . the ethicists are still mostly overlooked . . . modern ethicists, who are generally overshadowed in the public discourse, have not yet been successful in placing their subject back on the public agenda. (p. 82)

The absence of a normative value-oriented framework directing people not to pursue self-related enjoyment in life, but to be concerned over the welfare of others, can be partially attributed to the rise of values such as personal satisfaction, competition, and striving for achievement, which are becoming part and parcel of capitalistic and growth-obsessed societies (Bauman, 2008; Lane, 2000; Natale et al., 2016).

In contrast with this narrative, PP professes value-based and moral strategies of wellness promotion as part of its mandate. The seminal *Handbook of Character Strengths and Virtues*—related to the Values in Action (VIA) Institute on Character—is exhibited as the crown jewels of the PP campaign to put values back on the human flourishing agenda (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Likewise, the *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* has given new

[2] Philosophy stands out as an undeniable exception. This discipline, indeed, boasts a long-lasting tradition of reflection on the good life that traces back, at least in the history of Western thought, to ancient Greece (see Annas, 1993).

prominence to values such as compassion, love, empathy, and altruism in promoting human flourishing (see Lopez & Gallagher, 2009).

However, PP's approach is once more undermined by an undue faith in the capacity of individuals to nurture their own ethical nature. And once again, this outlook ignores the fact that environmental circumstances can play a strong role in either promoting or hindering the development of moral instincts. In that regard, Albert Bandura's work (1999) has provided extensive evidence of how social bodies and institutions can prompt people to either engage in, or disengage from, moral conduct.

Therefore, as with Context and Social Justice, we believe that CP has much to contribute towards PP's aim to incorporate Values in its theory and praxis. Indeed, CP has put a premium on ethical and reflective practices (Dalton & Wolfe, 2012). In fact, beyond being faced with specific ethical issues—which stem from the very ecological nature of its approach (Snow, Grady, & Goyette-Ewing, 2000)—CP is committed to disseminating moral values, assumptions, and practices to instil meaning in people's lives and make society a better place (Prilleltensky, 1997).

Elsewhere we proposed to equip CP with the Ethics of Care as a novel reference for the promotion of happiness and well-being (Arcidiacono & Di Martino, 2016). In its latest development, the Ethics of Care, in fact, integrates both an outlook on Social Justice and an attention to care for others, collaboration, trust, respect, and reciprocity (V. Held, 1995), which both fit well with the CP ethos. As much as we believe that a specific kind of ethics is needed[3], we must acknowledge here that CP has so far preferred to adopt "Values," which "reflect both individual and group-level beliefs about what is true and what ought to be; they are belief-

[3] It would go beyond the scopes of this chapter to delve into the advantages for CP of adopting an ethical perspective over and above a value-based approach.

based (like morals) and invoke action and behavior (similar to ethics), but have an aspirational element that is distinctive" (Campbell, 2016, p. 295). Core interdependent values in CP are self-determination, health, personal growth, social justice, support for enabling community structures, respect for diversity, and collaboration and democratic participation (Prilleltensky, 2001, pp. 753–754).

A second ethical consideration from CP calls for a sustainability-oriented approach, to ensure that no one enjoys a well-lived existence at the expense of the environment and future generations (Natale et al., 2016). CP is, in fact, highly committed to upholding norms of environmental sustainability (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Riemer & Reich, 2011). When referring to the environment, we include both the physical characteristics of the world we inhabit and the respect we owe both to animate beings and inanimate objects (Nussbaum, 2011). In that regard, CP informs the practice of PP, in that the promise of "sustainable happiness" does not merely come down to the "subjective experience and construal of the world" (cf. Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2009), but to a state of affairs that acknowledges the intrinsic relatedness of personal human flourishing, other people, the environment, and future generations (Natale et al., 2016; O'Brien, 2008).

These two conditions lay the groundwork for the last one. In fact, pursuing a eudaimonic life while respecting and furthering the interests of others is intrinsically connected to actively participating in civic life. As we have shown in the previous pages, Social Justice is the bedrock for individual and national prosperity. However, we cannot expect Social Justice to be administered only from the top down. CP values both fair governance as an outlet of positive outcomes in society and also grass-roots engagement that promotes the betterment of others and the safeguard of their rights. In other words, CP suggest that Social Justice needs an ethical ground to thrive (Prilleltensky, 1997), and this can be cultivated only in a lively civic environment that upholds the common good at the individual, community, and national level.

Therefore, we argue that the well-being of governments, and, ultimately, of society at large, capitalises on moral-oriented citizens.

As can be seen from other chapters in the present volume (see, for example, Pelletier, Bellamy, O'Connell, Baker, and Rowe's description of citizenship interventions in Chapter 29), applied positive psychologists should think about values not only in terms of what is "desirable" to do, but also as a viable and effective alternative to eliminate symptoms and increase well-being as well as to facilitate the idea that all human beings can be full and equal citizens regardless of their racial, social, gender, or physical or mental health conditions.

Final Remarks

The scientific literature on human flourishing—with Positive Psychology at the forefront—has focused on many important aspects of the good life while overlooking three main key issues, namely that well-being is distributed along different contexts of analysis, conditioned by the presence of equal distribution of resources and opportunities, and driven by a value-based worldview.

By drawing on the contribution of Community Psychology, one of the objectives of this chapter has been to show not only that these three domains are relevant for a better understanding of the good life, but also that their intrinsic connectedness is paramount for planning effective strategies of wellness promotion. We might look at Context, Social Justice, and Values as a three legged stool; we can try to analyse them separately, but ultimately we need to put them together if we do not wish the whole structure to collapse. In other words, if we take into account the role of contextualism in the good life, we must acknowledge that each context—being it individual, communal, or social—provides different resources and opportunities. In follows that Social Justice is needed to ensure that the latter are fairly distributed and accessible to everyone. On the other hand, people cannot expect Social Justice

to be administered only top-down. If anything, a bottom-up approach might be even more fruitful for promoting individual and social wellness. In that sense, as Prilleltensky (1997) has cogently summarised:

> The good life requires that individuals and communities exercise self-determination. But in order for individuals to express their self-determination they need . . . . [a]n appreciation for human diversity . . . caring, compassion, collaboration, and democratic participation [that] ensure that people cooperate in making choices that do not infringe on the right of others to pursue their own self-determination. Distributive justice . . . is [also] crucial. Without sufficient resources, self-determination is meaningless. (p. 521)

Whilst PP can offer CP the large number of empirical instruments it has developed to measure subjective well-being (Schueller, 2009), we have shown in this chapter that CP carries the potential of a whole new outlook that is capable of reorienting the way PP investigates and promotes the good life. In that regard, we aim to make it clear to the reader that we have not meant to suggest that Positive Psychologists have so far only paid lip service to the promotion of human flourishing; neither do we ignore their substantial contribution in opening a new path for scientific inquiry into the good life. However, we cannot ignore the fact that this path has been quite a "sheltered" one. It might have exposed the PP movement to the criticism of a few critics, and to some obstacles to remove along the way of getting recognised as an accomplished scholarly discipline, yet never to the perils of challenging the status quo—that is, questioning social, economic, and political assumptions both within and outside the realm of psychology (Kagan et al., 2011; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010; Prilleltensky, 1994). That is a slippery slope, which PP has hitherto prudently circumvented, whereas CP has been climbing it since its inception.

This contribution thus invites Positive Psychologists to join Community Psychologists on the same journey. In order to do so, it offers three useful points of reference. Context, Social

Justice, and Values can and must be integrated into the PP ethos, and as much as this might be a challenge, we believe that it is a new path worth following for the future of the discipline and its goal to promote better life conditions.

Funding

Francisco José Eiroa-Orosa has received funding from the European Union's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020 (2014–2020) under the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Grant Agreement No 654808.

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