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Human Beings Reasonable and Moral: Lessons from the Civil Disobedience of Rosa Parks to Catholic Counselors and Psychotherapists

LUDZIE JAKO ISTOTY ROZUMNE I MORALNE.
CZEGO KATOLICCY DORADCY I PSYCHOTERAPEUCI MOGĄ NAUCZYĆ SIĘ
Z OBYWATELSKIEGO NIEPOSŁUSZEŃSTWA ROSY PARKS?

Streszczenie

W artykule skoncentrowano się na funkcji sądów moralnych oraz roli rzecznictwa w tworzeniu tożsamości katolickich księży, osób konsekrowanych i świeckich zaangażowanych w doradztwo i terapię. Postać Rosy Parks (1913–2005) jest przedstawiona jako wzór myślenia i działania w zgodzie z ideałem społecznej sprawiedliwości i równości. Autor wychodzi od analizy tego, w jaki sposób akt nieposłuszeństwa wobec prawa segregacji rasowej w komunikacji miejskiej w Montgomery przyczynił się do ukształtowania się tożsamości Rosy Parks jako osoby rozumnej i moralnej. Jego zdaniem katolicki doradcy i psychoterapeuci, idąc śladem Rosy Parks, powinni stać się rozumnymi i moralnymi podmiotami promującymi dobrostan własnych klientów. Deklaracja American Counselling Association (ACA) z 2014 r. uznaje za jedną z podstawowych wartości zawodowych doradców zaangażowanie na rzecz sprawiedliwości, co zdaniem autora powinno przełożyć się na rzecznictwo praw człowieka i godności klientów. W tym celu konieczna jest konfrontacja z niesprawiedliwymi, krzywdzącymi, nieefektywnymi i nieodpowiednimi praktykami i systemami społecznymi, które dehumanizują i uciskają klientów. Rzecznictwo wyraża się we wzmacnianiu podmiotowości i działaniach społecznych. Wzmacnianie podmiotowości oznacza, że doradcy i psychoterapeuci prowadzą klientów zarówno podczas sesji, jak i poza nimi tak, aby oni sami stali się rzecznikami swoich praw. Działania społeczne zaś zmierzają zaś do zmian politycznych i reform systemowych, co osiąga się poprzez udział w różnych aktywnościach, od inicjatyw ustawodawczych zaczynając, a na protestach kończąc. Następnie autor omawia zmiany w edukacji, badaniach i praktyce, które przyczynią się do integracji omawianego tu rzecznictwa w proces terapeutyczny osób wyznających wiarę chrześcijańską.

Słowa kluczowe: tożsamość, osąd moralny, rzecznictwo, katolicyzm

Introduction

A good number of Catholics including priests and religious sisters and brothers engage in a process of therapeutic accompaniment for individuals with Christian faith after having studied counseling or clinical psychology. Many of them aim at not only problem solving and symptom treatment but also the personal growth of Christians in their vocational journey.¹ The term *vocation* implies the calling of God to a human person in order that God and the human being establish a relationship or alliance in love and work together for the justice and peace which characterize the kingdom of God.² Considering their religious ideals, their professional identities such as counselors or psychotherapists may not fully represent who they are. Thus, I pose a question as to what characteristics of human beings reveal their core identity. To respond to this question, I adopt the idea of Oyserman and her colleagues about the formation of identities.³ They suggest that “identities are not the fixed markers people assume them to be but are instead dynamically constructed in the moment.”⁴ This implies that the judgments and choices of individuals formulate and reformulate their identities. Therefore, the judgements of Catholic counselors and psychotherapists both inside and outside of therapy sessions can contribute to the construction of their core identity.

Particularly, moral judgments of individuals can succinctly define who human beings are and who they become. According to the social domain theory of Turiel, moral reasoning takes place through ideas of justice, welfare, equality, and human dignity.⁵ It deals with central values in the sociopolitical dimension of human beings. Because the moral judgments of individuals reveal their personal ideals and values regarding human beings and society, these judgments play a crucial role in the construction of their personal identities. Furthermore, it is possible to discuss how Catholic counselors and psychotherapists construct their identities by analyzing how they make moral judgments. It is because their religious ideals such as justice and peace cannot be separated from their individual and communal judgments on morally relevant issues such as equality and human rights. In this article, thus,

1 See F. Imoda, *Human Development*, Leuven 1998; L.M. Rulla, *Anthropology of the Christian Vocation*, Rome 1986.

2 Ibidem.

3 See D. Oyserman, K. Elmore, G. Smith, *Self, Self-Concept, and Identity*, in: *Handbook of Self and Identity*, eds. M.R. Leary, J.P. Tangney, New York 2012, pp. 69–104.

4 Ibidem, p. 70.

5 See E. Turiel, *The Development of Social Knowledge: Morality and Convention*, Cambridge 1983; Idem, *The Culture of Morality*, Cambridge 2002.

I focus on the functions of moral judgments and commitments based on social ideals in the identity construction of the Catholics in counseling and psychotherapy.

First, I discuss the moral judgment and identity formation of individuals through a reflection on the civil disobedience of Rosa Parks (1913–2005).⁶ Throughout the first half of the 20th century in Alabama, in the USA, segregation laws permitted European Americans to violate the human dignity of African Americans. Rosa Parks, with other African American companions, worked hard to abolish such laws. From a social domain perspective, I review how Rosa Parks made a judgment to disobey segregation laws and discuss how reasonable and moral she was in making this judgment. I then show how she constructed her personal identity through these rational decisions based on social ideals, such as justice and equality.

Secondly, I reflect on the necessity of a commitment to justice in a process of therapeutic accompaniment and discuss the identity construction of Catholic counselors and psychotherapists as rational moral agents. Here, I present a social justice perspective on counseling and the need for advocacy by counselors for their clients. Conventionally, counseling and psychotherapy tend to be considered politically neutral or apolitical. However, therapeutic accompaniment can never take place in a vacuum. Certainly, social, cultural, and political complications in human communities influence the mental health and human development of individuals. I doubt if this simple truth has been assimilated in a healthy manner in accompaniment work. Thus, I argue why commitment to justice is essential in a process of therapeutic accompaniment and how Catholic counselors and psychotherapists can advocate for the human dignity and rights of their clients, both inside and outside individual sessions.

1. Rosa Parks' civil disobedience and identity construction

Rosa Parks was an African American Christian female activist for human rights and equality. She started her life in a country whose laws and conventions segregated African Americans from the rest of American society. One of the most troublesome laws was enforced on the bus which was the main mode of transportation for African Americans in a city like Montgomery. According to this law, the seats of the bus were divided into “white” and “colored” sections. African Americans could not take seats in the white section, even when there were vacant seats there and no seats were available in the colored section. Yet when there was an overflow of European American passengers from the white section, seats in the colored section

⁶ See R. Parks, J. Haskins, *Rosa Parks: My Story*, New York 1999.

had to be relinquished to them, and African Americans had to stand. For years, African Americans in Montgomery complained that bus segregation was unfair and unconstitutional, and they wanted to change it.

One evening in early December 1955, Rosa Parks was sitting in the front row of the colored section of a bus in Montgomery. More European American passengers got on and filled up all the seats in the white section and needed more seats. The African Americans were supposed to yield their seats to the European Americans. But she did not give in:

“I am going to have you arrested,” the driver said.

“You may do that,” I answered.

Two white policemen came. I asked one of them, “why do you all push us around?”

He answered, “I don’t know, but the law is the law and you’re under arrest.”⁷

Due to her act of civil disobedience against the segregation law, Rosa Parks was arrested and eventually found guilty in the local court. When African Americans in Montgomery heard the news of her civil disobedience and arrest, they started a bus boycott. After many days of the boycott and lawsuits, the US Supreme Court declared that the bus segregation law in Montgomery was unconstitutional. Through that long and painful process of fighting for human rights, Rosa Parks become honored as “the mother of the freedom movement.”

1.1. Rosa Parks’ rational moral judgement

Rosa Parks’ disobedience of the segregation law on the bus was a rational moral judgment. In other words, her judgment was neither physically conditioned nor emotionally driven. However, many have depicted her action as having been prompted by her physical tiredness and emotional impulse. For them, her conscious social action and the victory of African Americans against segregation laws became a myth, of sorts.

Kohl analyzed the story of Rosa Parks in books for children and criticized the underlying political intentions for the mystification of her behavior.⁸ One of these books for children depicted Rosa Parks as a poor African American seamstress riding a crowded bus after a hard day of work:

One day on her way home from work Rosa was tired and sat down in the front of the bus. As the bus got crowded, she was asked to give up her seat to a European American

⁷ Ibidem, p. 2.

⁸ H. Kohl, *The Politics of Children’s Literature: The Story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott*, “The Journal of Education” 173 (1991) 1, pp. 35–50.

man, and she refused. The bus driver told her she had to go to the back of the bus, and she still refused to move. It was a hot day, she was tired and angry, and she became very stubborn.⁹

This description of her story emphasizes her tiredness (i.e., a physical condition) and her anger (i.e., an emotional reaction). According to the evaluation of Kohl, the focus on her tiredness and anger on a hot and packed bus does not reveal the truth of her story – an intentional disobedience of a social activist – but rather, renders readers to imagine it as “a spontaneous outburst based upon frustration and anger.”¹⁰

In fact, Rosa Parks herself heard some people say that she did not yield her seat because of her physical tiredness. But she corrected these false assumptions of her disobedience: “I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day [...] no, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”¹¹ In doing so, she clearly disavowed the claim that her civil disobedience took place due to a physical condition. Her solid intention was to disobey the inhumane segregation law.

According to the dictionary of the American Psychological Association (APA), civil disobedience is defined as a “public, nonviolent opposition or protest, usually on the grounds of conscience, to a government or its policies that takes the form of refusing to obey certain laws or to pay taxes.”¹² Rosa Parks firmly believed that the segregation laws regarding mass transportation did not respect the human dignity of African Americans and, thus, disobeyed them based on an autonomous moral judgment. She listened to the voice of conscience, refused to obey the disrespectful demand of the bus driver, and acted reasonably without adopting any violent means. Her judgment and action with her rational capacity are worthy to become an example of civil disobedience.

Historical background for the disobedience of Rosa Parks supports the authenticity of her action for freedom. Since December of 1943, that is, 12 years before her disobedience and arrest, she had worked as the secretary of the Montgomery branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which stood against racial discrimination and unequal education.¹³ Approaching 1955, the Montgomery NAACP – in planning to file a lawsuit against the city of Montgomery over

9 Ibidem, p. 38.

10 H. Kohl, *The Politics of Children's Literature*, in: *Rethinking Our Classrooms*, eds. W. Au, B. Bigelow, S. Karp, Milwaukee 2007, p. 169.

11 R. Parks, J. Haskins, *Rosa Parks...*, p. 116.

12 *APA Dictionary of Psychology*, <https://dictionary.apa.org/civil-disobedience> [accessed: 10.12.2021].

13 R. Parks, J. Haskins, *Rosa Parks...*, p. 81.

bus segregation – had been looking for the right plaintiff, one without moral flaws, to make a powerful legal case, and to mobilize people to end the segregation law.¹⁴ These historical conditions prove that Rosa Parks' civil disobedience was an authentic action on her part, within the larger context of the collective strategies of African Americans in their struggle for equality and freedom from oppression. In sum, her judgment to not give in was not caused by fatigue, but rather guided by reason; her civil disobedience took place not accidentally, but rather intentionally.

In terms of her emotion, Rosa Parks did not show any strong reactions when she was arrested unlike the description of some books about her civil disobedience. She, however, explained how African Americans felt about the segregation, saying, "I don't think any segregation law angered black people in Montgomery more than bus segregation."¹⁵ Thus, anger could have been part of what she felt on the bus when she decided to reject the order of the bus driver and was arrested by the policemen. Nevertheless, this emotional state cannot justify any attempts to describe her action as an angry outburst.

In the field of psychology, most scholars agree that human judgments include both rational and emotional aspects.¹⁶ According to Piaget, thinking and feeling cannot be separated in human mental activities.¹⁷ No emotional reactions can take place without a cognitive activity, whether it is a simple perception or complicated analysis. Following this logic, it could be said that Rosa Parks' rational judgment to disobey the law was accompanied by some emotions including anger. Nevertheless, this analysis does not imply that her civil disobedience happened abruptly due to her anger or to an impulse. Because Rosa Parks' disobedience is comprised of both cognitive and emotional components, the presence of anger cannot invalidate her rational judgment in her action.

Unlike the Piagetian perspective, quite a few psychologists suggest that individuals tend to make moral judgments from their emotions rather than reasoning.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 110.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 108.

¹⁶ See J.Y. Hwang, *How Do Humans Become Moral? Social Domain Approach to Moral Development*, Rome 2021; E. Turiel, *The Development of Morality*, in: *Handbook of Child Psychology: Social, Emotional and Personality Development*, eds. W. Damon, N. Eisenberg, New York 2006, pp. 789–857; J.M. Cowell, J. Decety, *Precursors to Morality in Development as a Complex Interplay between Neural, Socioenvironmental, and Behavioral Facets*, "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences" 112 (2015) 41, pp. 12657–12662.

¹⁷ See J. Piaget, *The Psychology of Intelligence*, New York 1950.

¹⁸ See J.D. Greene et al., *An fMRI Investigation of Emotional Engagement in Moral Judgment*, "Science" 293 (2001) 5537, pp. 2105–2108; J. Haidt, *The Emotional Dog and Its Rational Tail: A Social Intuitionist Approach to Moral Judgment*, "Psychological Review" 108 (2001) 4, pp. 814–834.

This idea of the primacy of emotion in moral judgment contradicts the theory of Piaget because it attempts to divide reason and emotion and argues that reasoning does not matter in many situations since it tends to take place after a decision. If we apply this approach to the case of Rosa Parks, it could be said that she decided not to yield her seat to the European American passenger due to her anger, and subsequently justified her action with some reason, such as the problems of inequality. This perspective, based on the primacy of emotion in judgment, may make a noble human action a compulsive behavior and reduce a complex thinking process to an impulsive reaction. It might serve the need of those who created the Myth of Rosa Parks.¹⁹ They seem to have a political intention to distort the significance of her disobedience by disregarding the rational aspect of her judgment and emphasizing her anger. Thus, the separation between emotion and cognition and the presumed primacy of emotion in moral judgments could misrepresent the genuine nature of human behaviors and, eventually, the authentic identity of human beings reasonable and moral.

1.2. Moral reasoning and conventional thinking

The civil disobedience of Rosa Parks reveals that humans are active rational beings who can make moral judgments by reflecting on social ideals, such as justice and equality. This human capacity for moral reasoning, however, does not imply that individuals are capable of making right judgments at all times under any conditions. All rational human beings can certainly make erroneous judgments. Sometimes strong emotional reactions may be unhelpful for thinking clearly or making good judgments. Nevertheless, human errors in reasoning do not mean that humans do not think. For instance, the police officer who arrested Rosa Park thought about what to do with her. He followed what he thought he should do and, according to his judgment, arrested her. Certainly, his action could be judged negatively. Still, there is no reason to deny the identity of the police officer as a rational human being. He understood the law and his legal duty and followed what he thought he should do. It was a rational decision, regardless of its moral implications. Therefore, instead of asking whether he was reasonable, it would be more important to discuss how his judgment differed from the judgment of Rosa Parks.

With both Rosa Parks and the police officer being considered reasonable, it is worth examining what the difference was between them. When Rosa Parks asked the European American police officer who got on the bus to arrest her, “why do

¹⁹ See H. Kohl, *The Politics of Children's Literature: The Story of Rosa Park...*; Idem, *The Politics of Children's Literature...*, pp. 168–171.

you all push us around?”, he answered, “I don’t know, but the law is the law and you’re under arrest.”²⁰ The officer thought that he should obey the law. Is this type of reasoning equal to the thought of Rosa Parks? Certainly, they made different decisions regarding the observance of the segregation law. The officer followed the indications of the law, whereas she did not. His reasoning was based on the written law, whereas hers was not. It is clear that they did not have the same reason or motive for their judgments, even though both judgments were accompanied by rational thinking processes. Simply put, their decisions differed in the nature of judgment. Both of them reasoned out what they should do, but they did not share the same principles of reasoning for their decisions.

For the analysis of the difference between judgments regarding morality and social norms, social domain theory can be a useful tool. Turiel explained the presence of different domains in social reasoning.²¹ A domain refers to a system of reasoning that consists of unique bases for judgments and possesses distinctive formal features. From childhood, individuals both implicitly and explicitly use distinct domains of reasoning to organize their thoughts and actions and to proceed to their judgments and decisions.²² To analyze the differences in reasoning between Rosa Parks and the police officer, the application of two domains of social reasoning – moral domain and conventional domain – can be helpful.

The moral domain of social reasoning is based on social ideals, such as justice, human rights, and wellbeing.²³ Moral judgments are applicable to all individuals and not dependent on laws or authority.²⁴ Moral reasoning mainly aims at realizing justice (e.g., distributing fairly necessary goods to people), protecting human rights (e.g., acknowledging the basic human rights of individuals regardless of race, age, and gender), and promoting the wellbeing of individuals (e.g., preserving the physical and mental integrity of human beings from violence or other types of harm). Judgments in the moral domain are pertained to all individuals and not dependent on laws or authority. For example, freedom of religion is a social ideal applicable not only to Europeans, but also to refugees in Europe. For another example, currently in

20 R. Parks, J. Haskins, *Rosa Parks...*, p. 2.

21 See E. Turiel, *The Development of Social Knowledge...*; Idem, *The Culture of Morality...*

22 J.G. Smetana, *Social-Cognitive Domain Theory: Consistency and Variations in Children’s Moral and Social Judgements*, in: *Handbook of Moral Development*, eds. M. Killen, J.G. Smetana, Mahwah 2006, pp. 119–153.

23 See J.Y. Hwang, *How Do Humans Become Moral?*, Rome 2021; J.G. Smetana, *Social-Cognitive Domain Theory...*, pp. 119–153; E. Turiel, *The Development of Social Knowledge...*

24 See J.Y. Hwang, *How Do Humans Become Moral?*, Rome 2021.

Myanmar, many government workers do not go to their offices.²⁵ They do not want to work for the military regime. Their decisions do not depend on the current regulation or authority. Their moral judgments are independent from laws and authorities.

The conventional domain of social reasoning consists of the set of common rules and manners that organize and facilitate the ordinary interactions of people and the functions of public and private groups.²⁶ Judgments in this domain depend on the explicit and implicit norms and rules of communities and institutions. Due to the dependency on laws, judgments in this domain tend to vary by societies and cultures. For example, in Korea, people traditionally use a spoon and chopsticks for meals. It is not appropriate there to touch rice with one's hands. However, in some other countries in Asia, people eat rice with their hands. It is a perfectly acceptable behavior in those countries. Like this kind of table manner, dress codes, cultural and religious celebrations, rules for traffic, and so on, are the main contents of the conventional domain. Judgments in this domain tend to depend on the rules, policies, and traditions of communities. In some cases, there are no inherent values in specific choices. For example, you drive on the right-hand side of the road in Italy. In Ireland, people drive on the left-hand side. You cannot say that left-hand driving is more correct or more honorable than right-hand driving. What matters is the consensus of individuals in the community. It would be chaotic if some drive on the left and others drive on the right in the same city. Unlike moral judgments, therefore, the reasoning of individuals regarding conventional matters cannot disregard the written rules and policies of their communities.

Applying social domain theory to the analysis of the decisions made by Rosa Parks and the police officer reveals that both made reasonable yet different judgments. Rosa Parks made a decision to disobey the Montgomery bus segregation laws because those laws did not respect African Americans as they did the European Americans. Under that unequal legal and social context, her judgments to not give in and instead be arrested were based on equality and justice; it was a moral judgment. On the other hand, the judgment of the police officer to arrest Rosa Parks did not seem to have the qualities of moral reasoning because it was neither based on a social ideal (i.e., respect for human dignity) nor was it independent of the legal demands of authority. The officer simply followed the law, without explicitly representing any values or ideals. The judgment of the police officer to arrest her, saying "the law is the law," represented reasoning in the conventional

²⁵ [Anonymous], *The Centrality of the Civil Disobedience Movement in Myanmar's Post-Coup Era*. New Mandala (blog), October 19, 2021, <https://www.newmandala.org/the-centrality-of-the-civil-disobedience-movement-in-myanmars-post-coup-era/> [accessed: 25.10.2021].

²⁶ See J.Y. Hwang, *How Do Humans Become Moral...*

domain based on the explicit regulation of society. On the bus, the moral judgment of Rosa Parks and the conventional judgment of the police officer collided. Both people had reasons to justify their decisions but differed in their qualities: the one was reasonable and moral, whereas the other was reasonable and conventional. With these judgments, Rosa Parks and the police officer constructed their identities. Rosa Parks became a rational moral agent for social change, whereas the policeman was a conventional thinker to maintain the status quo.

1.3. Divergence between Kohlberg and Turiel regarding conventional morality

Psychologists and philosophers who follow the moral development theory of Kohlberg may disagree with my conclusion that the police officer's observance of the law exemplifies conventional reasoning, not moral reasoning. According to the moral development theory, they might analyze the judgment of the officer as conventional morality.²⁷ Like Turiel, Kohlberg strongly believes that judgments based on moral principles (i.e., post-conventional morality) and those based on social norms (i.e., conventional morality) should be differentiated. He argues, however, that these two types of judgments become two different developmental levels of morality, not two domains of reasoning. From Kohlberg's perspective, the disobedience of Rosa Parks represents the highest level of moral development – which tends to appear in post-college years,²⁸ whereas the law enforcement of the police officer belongs to the second highest level – which usually begins to evolve in the reasoning of 10-year-old children.²⁹ From this perspective, Rosa Parks possessed a higher level of moral maturity than did the police officer. Although this evaluation looks appropriate, it is not logically correct because it is not possible to judge a simple observance of laws as moral, without knowing intentions or motives, from the social domain perspective.

Some may suggest that morality consists in obeying the laws of society. However, this legalistic vision of morality differs from the understanding of morality from the social domain perspective. When judgments to follow laws do not include

27 L. Kohlberg, *Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive Development Approach to Socialization*, in: *Handbook of Socialization Theory*, ed. D.A. Goslin, Chicago 1969, pp. 347–480; Idem, *From Is to Ought: How to Commit the Naturalistic Fallacy and Get Away with It in the Study of Moral Development*, in: *Cognitive Development and Epistemology*, ed. T. Mischel, New York–London 1971, pp. 151–232.

28 L. Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages*, San Francisco 1984, p. 5.

29 Ibidem, p. 590.

reasoning based on social justice, human rights, and wellbeing, they could not be part of moral judgments. Furthermore, obedience to the laws of government could be an expression of disrespect for citizens and a defilement of human dignity. In the case of the police officer making an arrest, he stated, “I don’t know, but the law is the law and you’re under arrest.”³⁰ This obedience certainly violated the human rights of Rosa Parks. It was an example of “crimes of obedience”³¹ or “destructive obedience”³² against the promotion of social justice and human dignity. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his letter from the Birmingham jail, “one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.”³³ Although the large part of the law tends to be morally justifiable, the obedience to certain laws can convey immoral implications and hinder human flourishing. Thus, moral reasoning should be independent from the observance of explicit norms. Rational moral individuals should go beyond the conventional reasoning on social issues to act for social justice and human equality.

1.4. Moral judgments and identity formation

Contrary to the expectations of Kohlberg, Turiel and his colleagues found that children can indeed distinguish moral reasoning from conventional reasoning in early ages.³⁴ For instance, Smetana found that most three- or four-year-old children in the United States differentiated moral failures (e.g., hitting another child) from conventional violations (e.g., a failure to place a toy back to a designated place after play) by judging those moral transgressions to deserve greater punishment than conventional ones.³⁵ They knew that physical violence toward another person was wrong due to the pain of the victim (i.e., a consideration for wellbeing), regardless of the law, whereas they understood that conventional transgressions were problematic because of the disobedience of related rules.

The research findings of Turiel and his colleagues correspond well with the experience of Rosa Parks. Even as a child, she was unable to accept the disrespectful behavior of some European American boys. “I never thought this was fair, and

30 R. Parks, J. Haskins, *Rosa Parks...*, p. 2.

31 S. Passini, D. Morselli, *Disobeying an Illegitimate Request in a Democratic or Authoritarian System*, “Political Psychology” 31 (2010) 3, pp. 341–355.

32 S. Wiltermuth, *Synchrony and Destructive Obedience*, “Social Influence” 7 (2012) 2, pp. 78–89.

33 J. Rieder, *Gospel of Freedom: Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Letter from Birmingham Jail and the Struggle that Changed a Nation*, London 2013, p. 213.

34 See E. Turiel, *The Development of Social Knowledge...*

35 J.G. Smetana, *Preschool Children’s Conceptions of Moral and Social Rules*, “Child Development” 52 (1981), pp. 1333–1336.

from the time I was a child, I tried to protest against disrespectful treatment.”³⁶ Her moral conviction about equality, which was formed in her childhood, did not change throughout the rest of her life. “[T]o my mind there was no way you could make segregation decent or nice or acceptable.”³⁷ Equality based on respect for every human being was a principle of moral judgments throughout her journey toward freedom. She constructed her identity as a rational moral human being through her conscious judgments. Like Rosa Parks, human beings are able to construct their identities as human beings reasonable and moral when they comprehend the dehumanizing consequences of the unjust and discriminatory laws and practices of society and make judgments to eliminate them and construct new systems to protect and enhance their human dignity and liberty.³⁸

Despite the early development of rational moral capacities of individuals, many adults do not fully actualize their potentials to become moral agents for social change. A good number of individuals remain conventional thinkers who do not engage in the work of social transformation to promote equality and justice. There are various reasons for this, such as a lack of moral consciousness³⁹ and the risk of persecution. As such, they cannot live up to moral ideals but, instead, stand by a continuation of the status quo. From the social domain perspective, these differences between individuals can be explained by the notion of the coordination of domains. This means that individuals differentiate and integrate various domains of social reasoning to arrive at a final judgment.⁴⁰ In a complex situation, individuals tend to consider various ideas and motives from relevant domains, weigh their values, and prioritize the most important domain or reason over others. For example, many people during the era of segregation in the US believed that discrimination against individuals based on race was wrong. Those who stood up to abolish those laws prioritized moral reasoning (i.e., equality and freedom) over conventional thinking (i.e., obeying the laws), whereas others who obeyed the laws put first conventional thinking or other personal concerns such as security. Due to the divergence in the coordination process of judgment, individuals can arrive at different conclusions. Thus, the quality and results of the coordination determine whether

³⁶ R. Parks, J. Haskins, *Rosa Parks...*, p. 2.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 77.

³⁸ See E. Turiel, *The Culture of Morality*, Cambridge 2002.

³⁹ Moral consciousness refers to a rational operation to find out about the implications of the moral domain in a particular context. See J.Y. Hwang, *How Do Humans Become Moral...*, p. 140.

⁴⁰ J.Y. Hwang, *Judgments on Exclusion of a Biracial Peer in Korea*, “Theology and Philosophy” 23 (2013), pp. 213–254.

individuals will espouse values and ideals geared to personal growth and social changes, and therefore construct their identities as rational moral agents.

2. Counselors' commitment to justice and identity construction

Catholic counselors and psychotherapists should become rational moral persons like Rosa Parks, not rational conventional beings with no commitment to social justice or equality. For the full realization of this noble human identity, a process of therapeutic accompaniment should correspond to individual and collective human endeavors for justice and equality. The fact is that most counselors and psychotherapists, however, work in one-on-one settings. For example, there have been very few academic discussions on the integration of therapeutic accompaniment and a collective commitment to justice among the Catholic priests, religious sisters and brothers, and laity in the field of counseling and psychotherapy, although quite a few of them are personally engaged in social actions for the promotion of justice. By contrast, counseling psychologists in the US have developed a social justice perspective on counseling and a model of accompaniment which includes an advocacy for the oppressed.⁴¹ Reflecting on their studies, I discuss how Catholics in the field of counseling and psychotherapy deal with issues of social justice in their services and construct their identities as human beings reasonable and moral.

2.1. Detachment from social justice issues in therapeutic accompaniment

In the field of counseling and psychotherapy, the remedial model and the intrapsychic model have been prevalent.⁴² They do not usually aim at eliminating unjust or harmful laws and practices which consistently threaten the wellbeing of clients.⁴³ The remedial model of therapeutic accompaniment envisions counselors and psychotherapists working mainly to ameliorate the problems that have already developed in the lives of the clients and regarding their adjustments to their environments as one of the main goals of therapeutic accompaniment.⁴⁴ In a similar vein, counseling and psychotherapy based on the intrapsychic model of human

41 L.A. Goodman et al., *Training Counseling Psychologists as Social Justice Agents: Feminist and Multicultural Principles in Action*, "The Counseling Psychologist" 32 (2004) 6, pp. 793–837; M.S. Kiselica, *When Duty Calls: The Implications of Social Justice Work for Policy, Education, and Practice in the Mental Health Professions*, "The Counseling Psychologist" 32 (2004) 6, pp. 838–854.

42 S.L. Speight, E.M. Vera, *Social Justice and Counseling Psychology: A Challenge to the Profession*, in: *Handbook of Counseling Psychology*, eds. S.D. Brown, R.W. Lent, Hoboken 2008, pp. 54–67.

43 G.W. Albee, *The Boulder Model's Fatal Flaw*, "American Psychologist" 55 (2000) 2, pp. 247–248.

44 E.M. Vera, S.L. Speight, *Multicultural Competence, Social Justice, and Counseling Psychology: Expanding Our Roles*, "The Counseling Psychologist" 31 (2003) 3, pp. 253–272.

behavior primarily seek to analyze and modify the personality structure and thinking patterns of clients. This model tends to focus on the developmental deficits and psychopathological issues of clients, without confronting directly significant obstacles in the conditions of social relationships and activities which can demoralize and dehumanize them. Although it has long been known that justice and equality within a society are closely connected to psychological wellbeing and mental health, many counselors and psychotherapists with the remedial and intrapsychic models have not considered their commitment to social justice as a part of their professional duties.⁴⁵ In short, a detachment from sociopolitical issues has been, unfortunately, a general tendency among counselors and psychotherapists.

What kind of message do counselors and psychotherapists convey if they do not engage in any social actions to eliminate the injustice and discrimination in society which make their clients suffer? Vera and Speight warn that counseling psychologists may be regarded as neither understanding the causes of clients' problems nor providing clients with strategies to resolve the problems, unless they explicitly focus on the issues of oppression and unfairness and work to eliminate them.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Albee maintains that counselors may end up actually perpetuating injustice in society because they try to modify the mindset and behavior of individual clients, not the social environment in which they suffer unfairness and inequality.⁴⁷ No counselors would wish to be silent collaborators of the societal oppressors who exploit their clients. Yet, because of their lack of commitment to social justice, they may unintentionally or unconsciously confirm the unequal and corrupted governing systems of society that undermine and disempower their clients.

In a speech to American psychologists in 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. invited all people to exercise a "creative maladjustment."⁴⁸ When injustice prevails in society, those with moral consciousness should not adapt themselves to that social system. Instead, they should stay maladjusted to the unjust society, creatively object to unfair practices, and vigorously construct a new society with justice and equality. This invitation to creative maladjustment continues to make psychologists reflect on what they are doing in their practices of personal guidance and treatment. If the society is abnormal, normal persons with moral consciousness have no choice but to be maladjusted. Here, some questions arise in the context of therapeutic

45 M. D'Andrea, J. Daniels, *Exploring the Psychology of White Racism through Naturalistic Inquiry*, "Journal of Counseling & Development" 77 (1999) 1, pp. 93–101.

46 E.M. Vera, S.L. Speight, *Multicultural Competence...*, pp. 253–272.

47 G.W. Albee, *The Boulder Model's Fatal Flaw...*, pp. 247–248.

48 M.L. King Jr., *The Role of the Behavioral Scientist in the Civil Rights Movement*, "Journal of Social Issues" 24 (1968) 1, pp. 1–12.

accompaniment. What if those who are maladjusted come for psychological help? Should therapists help clients overcome symptoms and adjust to the abnormal society or should they empower the clients to become agents of social change?

2.2. Calling and challenge for counselors

Since the early '90s in the US, a social justice perspective on counseling has developed as part of multicultural counseling competencies.⁴⁹ Based on the growing attention to social justice, Ratts maintains that social justice in counseling has become the “fifth force” in the field of counseling psychology, following the psychodynamic, behavioral, humanistic, and multicultural approaches.⁵⁰ As researchers in psychology have begun to recognize the close relationship between oppression and mental health issues and the importance of contextual factors in personal growth, concern for and interest in social justice issues have increased in all stages of the counseling process.⁵¹ Along the same lines, the American Counseling Association (ACA, 2014) considers “promoting social justice” as one of its core professional values. Counselors define the promotions of social justice as follows. “The promotion of equity for all people and groups for the purpose of ending oppression and injustice affecting clients, students, counselors, families, communities, schools, workplaces, governments, and other social and institutional systems.”⁵² This value of justice should become a guiding principle for the services and actions of counselors.

Counselors are called to commit themselves to social justice as a principal way of realizing their moral responsibilities. They should confront the unjust, unfair, inefficient, and inadequate practices and systems of varied societal units for the dignity and welfare of their clients.⁵³ Certainly, the ethical commitment of counselors toward social justice must go beyond the context of one-on-one sessions. Thus, the promotion of justice has become a challenge for counseling psychologists with conventional approaches. Brown suggests that most psychologists were

49 D.W. Sue, P. Arredondo, R.J. McDavis, *Multicultural Counseling Competencies and Standards: A Call to the Profession*, “Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development” 20 (1992) 2, pp. 64–88.

50 M.J. Ratts, *Social Justice Counseling: Toward the Development of a Fifth Force among Counseling Paradigms*, “Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development” 48 (2009), pp. 160–172.

51 C. Chang, A. Rabess, *Response to Signature Pedagogies: A Framework for Pedagogical Foundations in Counselor Education: Through a Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies Lens*, “Teaching and Supervision in Counseling” 2 (2020) 2, pp. 20–27.

52 2014 ACA Code of Ethics, American Counseling Association 2014.

53 N.G. Calley, *Promoting a Contextual Perspective in the Application of the ACA Code of Ethics: The Ethics into Action Map*, “Journal of Counseling & Development” 87 (2009) 4, pp. 476–482.

accustomed to avoiding social justice issues and did not dedicate themselves to political advocacy for social changes.⁵⁴ For instance, D'Andrea and Daniels studied how counselors and counseling students reacted to various forms of racism in the US in 1999.⁵⁵ In this study, less than 1% of the European American participants were genuinely committed to eliminating the problem of racism.⁵⁶ Even though many had an awareness of the problem of racism, most did not engage in specific actions for social change, mainly because of a lack of training and support from counseling educators and colleagues. Reflecting on that pattern, the ACA decided that counselors should not only seek to meet the individual needs of clients but also commit themselves to reform social systems that constrain human development and the wellbeing of the oppressed. Thus, counselors are challenged to determine how to balance individual counseling interventions with conscious engagements for the promotion of social justice advocacy on local and/or national levels.⁵⁷

2.3. A new identity of counseling psychologists: Counselor-advocate-scholar model

In 2014, Ratts and Pederson introduced the counselor-advocate-scholar model, which indicates three essential roles that counseling psychologists play in the process of the healing and growth of clients.⁵⁸ Basically, this model tries to incorporate advocacy and scholarship into traditional forms of counseling. Considering the short history of psychology, the role of the scholar was not considered new because the scientist-practitioner model of psychotherapists had been present in the field of clinical psychology since the 1949 Boulder conference.⁵⁹ From then on, psychotherapists have been encouraged to learn how to effectively address the problems of their clients through study and research. However, the role of the advocate in the model of Ratts and Pederson was not explicitly mentioned as a duty of helping professionals until 2013, when the University of Tennessee Counseling Psychology

54 L.S. Brown, *The Private Practice of Subversion: Psychology as Tikkun Olam*, "American Psychologist" 52 (1997) 4, pp. 449–462.

55 M. D'Andrea, J. Daniels, *Exploring the Psychology...*, pp. 93–101.

56 Ibidem, p. 99.

57 K.A. Lee, D.J. Kelley-Petersen, *Service Learning in Human Development: Promoting Social Justice Perspectives in Counseling*, "Professional Counselor" 8 (2018) 2, pp. 146–158.

58 M.J. Ratts, P.B. Pedersen, *Counselor-Advocate-Scholar Model: Merging Multiculturalism and Social Justice*, in: *Counseling for Multiculturalism and Social Justice: Integration, Theory, and Application*, eds. M.J. Ratts, P.B. Pedersen, Alexandria 2014, pp. 51–58.

59 D.B. Baker, L.T. Benjamin Jr., *The Affirmation of the Scientist-Practitioner: A Look Back at Boulder*, "American Psychologist" 55 (2000) 2, pp. 241–247.

program included this role as an essential part of the training for future counselors.⁶⁰ In this role, counselors take actions with sociopolitical intentions to remove the internal/psychological and external/institutional barriers to the wellness of clients.⁶¹ Since then, a good number of counselors have started to acknowledge and accept advocacy as an indispensable aspect of their service and identity.

Above all, the advocacy role in counseling starts with a recognition that injustice and oppression in society are closely connected to the wellbeing of clients. It is important for counseling psychologists to understand the problems and obstacles in the social environment of clients that disrespect and marginalize them. Knowledge of unjust and discriminating systems and policies, as well as their harmful effects on the wellness of clients, becomes a basis for effective and precise interventions. For example, counselors who accompany female victims of domestic violence should never ignore the 2019 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), according to which the number of women killed by their own family members is 137 per day.⁶² Furthermore, based on their identity as scholars, counseling psychologists may also launch research projects to examine the contents and processes of oppression and exploitation by inviting clients from disadvantaged groups as research participants.⁶³ With the knowledge gained from these studies, along with their experience from individual encounters and communal projects, counselors can enter into the social environment of clients, denounce the harmful effects of structural barriers and problematic policies, and work towards changing them.

2.4. Advocacy: Empowerment and social action

Advocacy mainly consists of empowerment and social action. In practice, these might not be considered as two independent types of intervention but as two poles within a continuum.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, it is necessary to denote the unique aspects of each type for creative and diversified advocacies. First, empowerment

60 B. Mallinckrodt, J. Miles, J. Levy, *The Scientist-Practitioner-Advocate Model: Addressing Contemporary Training Needs for Social Justice Advocacy*, "Training and Education in Professional Psychology" 8 (2014), pp. 303–11.

61 R.L. Toporek, W.M. Liu, *Advocacy in Counseling: Addressing Race, Class, and Gender Oppression*, in: *The Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender in Multicultural Counseling*, ed. D.B. Pope-Davis, H.L.K. Coleman, Thousand Oaks 2001, pp. 385–414.

62 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Study on Homicide: Gender-Related Killing of Women and Girls*, Vienna 2019.

63 I. Prilleltensky, *Values, Assumptions, and Practices: Assessing the Moral Implications of Psychological Discourse and Action*, "American Psychologist" 52 (1997) 5, pp. 517–535.

64 R.L.Toporek, W.M. Liu, *Advocacy in Counseling...*, pp. 385–414.

implies that counselors guide their clients – in their sessions and outside of them, if needed – to become advocates for themselves. This begins with counselors helping clients to identify and address the systemic obstacles to the actualization of human dignity and freedom. To achieve the specific goals agreed upon by clients and counselors, the latter can help clients to develop the capabilities of clients to advocate for themselves.⁶⁵ For example, a client suffers maltreatment in his congregation and does not know how to address it with his superior. In this case, the counselor may do assertiveness training with the client. When clients are not stable enough to confront problems or issues on their own, counselors can accompany them to school or the workplace, so that they may advocate for themselves in front of authority figures.⁶⁶ In some cases, empowerment intervention might be sufficient as a work of advocacy.

Social action refers to advocacy for policy changes and system reforms through participation in various activities from legislation to protest. Quite a few unjust practices and unequal treatments from the past and present take place within the legitimate framework of civic regulations, such as the segregation laws in Montgomery in the 50s.⁶⁷ In the system of “legitimate” oppression and discrimination, many clients cannot confront the harsh realities of sociopolitical systems by themselves. Thus, counselors and psychotherapists should cross the office threshold for the wellbeing of clients, in order to play the role of the advocate. For instance, psychotherapists can make an effort to create a bill to guarantee labor rights for people with certain psychological difficulties.⁶⁸ They may try to change dysfunctional social systems, eliminate institutional barriers, and resolve political problems in the social context of clients.⁶⁹

Furthermore, injustice is found, not only in the distribution of resources and benefits, but also in the decision-making process at the government level. Thus, advocacy for social change needs to scrutinize and analyze how public policy perpetuates the unequal redistribution of benefits and what factors in policy-making processes exclude the poor and the marginalized.⁷⁰ Ultimately, social actions in

65 R.L. Toporek, *Strength, Solidarity, Strategy and Sustainability: A Counseling Psychologist's Guide to Social Action*, “The European Journal of Counselling Psychology” 7 (2018), pp. 90–110.

66 See S.L. Speight, E.M. Vera, *Social Justice...*, pp. 54–67.

67 E.M. Vera, S.L. Speight, *Multicultural Competence...*, pp. 253–272.

68 G. Harnois et al., *Mental Health and Work: Impact, Issues and Good Practices*, World Health Organization 2000.

69 R.L. Toporek, W.M. Liu, *Advocacy in Counseling...*, pp. 385–414.

70 I.M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton 1990.

varied forms become one of the core features which define the professional identity of counseling psychologists.

2.5. Self-reflection and self-transformation in advocacy

In reality, many counselors and psychotherapists are not accustomed – individually nor collectively – to deal directly with institutional issues or public policies.⁷¹ They must encourage themselves to try on the role of advocate, even if this lies outside their comfort zone. To that end, self-reflection and self-transformation can be indispensable tools. Particularly, it is necessary that counselors and psychotherapists can reflect on the differences between them and their clients as well as on their motivation for engaging or not engaging in social actions to bring about justice and equality.⁷² Moreover, counselors and psychotherapists could reflect – at an individual or group level – on their own difficulties in dealing with social issues (e.g., deeply rooted personal prejudices and weak moral consciousness) and imagine possible contributions to the promotion of equality and justice.⁷³ In this way, self-reflection could be the basis for their commitment to social justice.

Furthermore, advocacy work can be an experience of self-transformation. It will help counselors and psychotherapists transcend the internal and external barriers which hinder them from social actions and participate in the daily struggles of their clients.⁷⁴ These close contacts would help counselors and psychotherapists develop a new perspective on the psychological problems of their clients and a new sense of their own life and work. Once they commit themselves to the process of social change, counselors and psychotherapists will overcome the limits of conventional practitioners and become rational moral agents for justice and equality, in solidarity with the oppressed and the other citizens upholding moral ideals.

In the work of advocacy, it should not be ignored that the promotion of social justice tends to be a complex and painful process. In the advocacy work of counselors and psychotherapists, thus, solidarity among themselves and with other professionals is crucial to their own empowerment.⁷⁵ They should seek to come together, in a spirit of equality and freedom, both at a micro level (e.g., family, school) and macro level (e.g., city, nation), and work together with scholars in the field of sociology,

71 E.M. Vera, S.L. Speight, *Multicultural Competence...*, pp. 253–272.

72 L.A. Goodman et al., *Training Counseling...*, pp. 793–837.

73 See Ibidem; L.A. Goodman et al., *Poverty and Mental Health Practice: Within and beyond the 50-Minute Hour*, “*Journal of Clinical Psychology*” 69 (2013) 2, pp. 182–190.

74 R.L. Toporek, S.R. Vaughn, *Social Justice in the Training of Professional Psychologists: Moving Forward*, “*Training and Education in Professional Psychology*” 4 (2010) 3, pp. 177–182.

75 C. Chang, A. Rabess, *Response to Signature Pedagogies...*, pp. 20–27.

social welfare, political science, law, etc. to enhance the common good of society. This experience of solidarity helps them reinforce and consolidate their commitment to justice. When they construct their identities as morally awakened social agents through the processes of self-examination and self-transformation, they will be able to help their clients to become free individuals with moral consciousness. Following the examples of their counselors, the clients can then confront sociopolitical issues, bring about social change, and consistently build up their identities as rational moral agents.

Conclusions

Rosa Parks is an exemplary figure who achieved human identity as a rational moral agent. She refused to live according to conventional ways of judging based solely on established regulations and inherited traditions and made a moral judgment based on the ideals of social justice and human rights. Based on this review of Rosa Parks' identity construction, I suggest that Catholic priests, religious sisters and brothers, and laity in the field of counseling and psychotherapy formulate their core identity as human beings reasonable and moral by committing themselves to work for social justice, that is, becoming advocates for the human rights and wellbeing of their clients.

This suggestion is inspired by the 2014 declaration of the American Counseling Association (ACA), wherein American counseling psychologists professed that their practices should include the promotion of social justice. This implies that counselors are called to "advocate at individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to address potential barriers and obstacles that inhibit access and/or the growth and development of clients."⁷⁶ Without confronting the sociopolitical problems that dehumanize and discriminate against clients, the interventions of counselors and psychotherapists in one-on-one contexts could remain merely a transitory remedy for some psychological difficulties of clients. Thus, the empowerment and social action of counselors and psychotherapists for clients become indispensable parts of accompaniment.

Catholic counselors and psychotherapists may contribute to the construction of their core identity as rational moral human beings when they help their clients overcome or eliminate the structural and sociopolitical problems of their small or large societal systems.⁷⁷ For example, some religious persons may not live joyfully in a community whose culture does not prohibit gossiping and slander. This issue can certainly be related to the vice of an individual member. However, there should be an analysis of community life to identify other factors which make gossiping and

⁷⁶ 2014 ACA Code of Ethics..., 5.

⁷⁷ M.J. Ratts, *Social Justice Counseling...*, pp. 160–172.

slander widespread. Through this analysis, they may find that the communication between the superior and the members was not based on trust and the decision-making process of authority has not been transparent. Then, the counselor or psychotherapist may address the issues of community structure and practices inside and outside the sessions of personal accompaniment, while dealing with the psycho-spiritual difficulties and related moral failures of individuals. In short, the accompaniment process becomes complete when treatments for the psychological and spiritual difficulties of individuals are coupled with social actions for the elimination of sociopolitical barriers in their communities.

Integrating an advocacy role into the practice of therapeutic accompaniment requires changes in education, research, and practice. For the training of future Catholic counselors and psychotherapists, educators in the department of psychology at ecclesiastical universities may consider opening new courses about the social justice perspective on counseling and psychotherapy for the oppressed and the discriminated. In terms of research, it is necessary to study how sociopolitical problems (e.g., racism, unemployment, cultural oppression, power imbalance, etc.) influence human wellbeing and mental health, and how the Catholic counselors and psychotherapists integrate psychological analysis with social analysis.

In terms of practice, there are many hurdles to overcome. For instance, many counselors and psychotherapists have not worked with people from oppressed and marginalized groups, because these practices have developed conventionally among middle-class people.⁷⁸ Even though the oppressed and the discriminated need much personal and social assistance they are likely to face many barriers in getting help through therapeutic accompaniment.⁷⁹ For example, many physical workers cannot come to the office of a counselor during working hours on weekdays.⁸⁰ From the part of counselors and psychotherapists, there are also many obstacles to reach the oppressed and offer them personal accompaniment, from limited time to financial difficulty. Likewise, Catholic counselors and psychotherapists may run into many difficulties in their own commitment to justice, and they may not easily find solutions to problems related to the promotion of justice in the process of personal accompaniment. Still, this calling to work with the oppressed is so precious and cannot be ignored. As a response to this calling, Catholic counselors and

⁷⁸ R. Reed, L. Smith, *A Social Justice Perspective on Counseling and Poverty*, in: *Counseling for Multiculturalism...*, pp. 259–273.

⁷⁹ M. Thompson et al., *Clinical Experiences with Clients Who Are Low-Income*, “Qualitative Health Research” 25 (2015), pp. 1–14.

⁸⁰ L. Appio, D. Chambers, S. Mao, *Listening to the Voices of the Poor and Disrupting the Silence about Class Issues in Psychotherapy*, “Journal of Clinical Psychology” 69 (2013), pp. 152–161.

psychotherapists should try to advocate consistently and creatively for the human rights of their clients who suffer from oppression and discrimination.

Undoubtedly, Catholic counselors and psychotherapists still have a long way to go before the construction of their core identity as rational moral agents for social change through the advocacy of the oppressed. In a society where many Christians and non-Christians are in dire need of help, the confinement of the practice of personal accompaniment to offices should not be perpetuated any longer. Thus, it is undeniably important for Catholic priests, religious, and laity in the field of counseling and psychotherapy to respond to the call to advocate for the oppressed. This call includes an invitation to acknowledge that the process of therapeutic accompaniment among Catholics has been dealing with the psychological and spiritual issues of individuals often without confronting the social, cultural, and political hindrances to their wellbeing and flourishing. Upon this acknowledgment, the Catholic counselors and psychotherapists become genuine advocates by transcending the conventional barriers of their practices, advocating for the dignity and rights of the oppressed, and constructing their core identity as human beings reasonable and moral.

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HUMAN BEINGS REASONABLE AND MORAL: LESSONS FROM THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE OF ROSA PARKS TO CATHOLIC COUNSELORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

Summary

The article focuses on the function of moral judgments and the role of advocacy in the identity construction of Catholic priests and laity in the field of counseling and psychotherapy. By presenting Rosa Parks (1913–2005) as an exemplary figure who thinks and acts according

to social ideals, such as justice and equality, the author demonstrates how her judgment to disobey the Montgomery bus segregation laws constructed her identity as a reasonable and moral person. Following the analysis of Rosa Parks's identity formation, the author suggests that Catholic counselors and psychotherapists should become rational moral agents like her to enhance the welfare of their clients. By introducing the 2014 declaration of the American Counseling Association (ACA), which defined a commitment to justice as one of the core professional values of counselors, the author emphasizes that Catholic counselors and psychotherapists are invited to become advocates for the human rights and dignity of their clients; therefore, they must confront the unjust, unfair, inefficient, and inadequate practices and systems of society which dehumanize and oppress their clients. Principally, the roles of advocacy consist of empowerment and social action. The former implies that counselors and psychotherapists guide their clients, both inside and outside of sessions, to become advocates for themselves. The latter refers to advocacy for policy changes and system reforms through participation in various activities from legislation to protest. The author also discusses what changes in education, research, and practice are required to integrate an advocacy role into a process of therapeutic accompaniment for individuals with Christian faith.

Keywords: identity, moral judgment, advocacy, Catholicism

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