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The Role of Prosocial Communities in Youth Development

El Rol de las Comunidades Prosociales en el Desarrollo de la Juventud

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Providing a supportive prosocially oriented socialization for children was emphasized as necessary for their development as responsible citizens oriented to living in and sustaining their communities. A prosocial community was defined as one in which its inhabitants are concerned with the well-being of others in the community and the community as well as with themselves. The failure of current community psychology theory, research, and projects to address the nature of communities and implications of their work for the development of prosocial communities and children was addressed. A comprehensive child-centered approach to prosocial community building which necessarily includes children as participants was outlined. Illustrative youth oriented prosocial community projects, implications of their outcomes, and suggested research directions were cited.

Se enfatiza el proporcionar a los niños una socialización que tenga una orientación prosocial, como un aspecto necesario para su desarrollo como ciudadanos responsables, orientados a vivir en comunidades y apoyar el desarrollo de éstas. Una comunidad prosocial fue definida como aquella en que sus habitantes están preocupados del bienestar de otros miembros de la comunidad, de la comunidad y de ellos mismos. Se aborda el tema del fracaso de las actuales teorías, investigaciones y proyectos en psicología comunitaria en la consideración de la naturaleza de las comunidades y las implicaciones de su trabajo para el desarrollo de comunidades prosociales. Se presenta un enfoque comprensivo, centrado en el niño, para la construcción de comunidades prosociales, el cual necesariamente incluye a los niños como participantes. Se mencionan proyectos comunitarios prosociales ilustrativos orientados a la juventud, implicaciones de sus resultados y líneas de investigación sugeridas.

Introduction

The special role and relevance that communities have on the well-being of children is the focus of this paper. Specifically, prosocial communities are essential to the survival and well-being of individuals and the societies in which they live. Simply creating prosocial communities will not solve all the world's problems nor all the problems of individuals. On the other hand, those problems cannot be solved or even substantially alleviated without prosocial communities that value and support a benign and nurturing quality of life for their members, especially their children. Children are particularly vulnerable to being harmed by destructive societal policies and practices and harmful adult conduct. The quality of their lives is diminished and their socialization leaves them ill-prepared to sustain themselves and contribute to a benign society as adults.

For any society to function effectively, it must include a network of prosocial communities. That network must be strong enough to resist the divisive forces among those communities and its individual members and manage relationships constructively (prosocially) with outsiders. For example, in a summary of the past half-century of research on intercultural relations and on nation building, Segall, Dasen, Berry, and Poortinga (1999) noted that in-groups become ethnocentric. However, overarching identities can be formed and ethnocentrism and interethnic conflict reduced by emphasizing cultural similarities and increasing proximity and opportunities for equal status contact. Further, "when individuals locate themselves in a relatively small collectivity that has meaning as an in-group they can probably also identify comfortably with a larger collectivity that includes the smaller one" (p. 295). This point is particularly apt when considering the well-being of children and their families as well as the children's relationship to their societies.

Defining a Prosocial Community

Understanding the central role of prosocial communities begins with people's common sense

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understandings of themselves, their communities, those around them, and the world in which they live. That general nature of those understandings and their importance is outlined in the following sections.

Common Sense Definitions

The following meanings, taken from the Random House Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1999), are derived from Western cultural concepts. However, to the extent that they describe general patterns of relationships rather than the particular content of those relationships, they have relevance for understanding prosocial communities in all cultures.

A *community* is defined as "a group of people who reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage" (p. 268). This definition focuses on the ties that provide the framework providing community members a way to interact. It does not address whether the community's members share any common concerns for each other.

Social is defined as "pertaining to, devoted to, or characterized by friendly companionship or relations" (p. 1242). The word "social" adds the element of amicable interpersonal relationships among the community's members. It does not specify the nature of the amicable relationships involved.

Although the dictionary provides no specific definition, from my perspective a *prosocial community* includes the consideration that everyone is committed to working together for the well-being of others and the community as well as for themselves. People have a sense of collective responsibility for each other and for the community. This definition does not imply that there are no conflicts within the community. Rather, it implies that no one becomes totally dominant and no one gets ultimately defeated and excluded or destroyed because of conflicts. The dictionary defines *well-being* as "a good or satisfactory condition of existence; a state characterized by health, happiness, and prosperity; welfare" (p. 1480) but is silent about whether well-being is an individual or a psychosocial characteristic. From a prosocial perspective, well-being is based on consideration of others and the community along with the self.

These definitions provide an initial basis from which to explore the nature of prosocial communities. Even so, they leave us with at least two questions about the relationship of individuals to such communities. How and to what extent are individual well-being and the well-being of the community interrelated? How are differences and conflicts between individuals understood and managed in the interests of all concerned? We must answer these questions to determine whether prosocial communities can be developed and sustained in ways that foster their well-being and that of their inhabitants.

Structural Elements of a Prosocial Community

The question of the relationship between the individual, other equally autonomous (free) individuals, partially autonomous (free) individuals such as children, and the community has become a focus of concern in modern society. Everyone's identity is psychosocial. It is formed in a social context, and all people are influenced by their contexts even when they seek autonomy and isolation. For people to survive and thrive it is essential that they build on convergences with others, accept and respect differences, and manage conflicts (Tyler, Brome, & Williams, 1992). The ways that people perform these tasks provide the structural elements to guide how they manage their autonomy and relational needs, the community's well-being (including the socialization of its children), and interactions with the external world in which it is internested.

In an earlier text (Tyler, 2001), I identified the nature of a prosocial community and discussed how existing societal institutions tend to fall short of meeting those standards. For example, communities contain educational, economic, and social organizations to serve specific societal purposes. These organizations provide needed perspectives and skills to members of the community, but also select out those who do not fulfill their requirements or, once admitted, do not meet their performance criteria. This arrangement leaves open the possibility that some individuals may not be acceptable to any of their community's organizations including their families i.e., they may even lose their families. They become marginalized and are discriminated against by the community. Their choices are to remain outsiders, act in non-socially sanctioned ways to change society so they can be included, or act against the community to maintain their lives and identities. In large communities, there are often substantial numbers of individuals who engage in antisocial behavior and even create counter-culture communities (we often call such groups among

children *gangs*). The most comprehensive alternative for avoiding these socially destructive possibilities is to form prosocial communities in which everyone is included as a participant, no one is excluded, and all are involved in addressing needed social changes. This inclusion is essential for children. The community cannot be prosocial for them unless they can participate in defining and protecting their interests and can take on their accompanying responsibilities.

Advocates for disadvantaged and excluded individuals and groups including children often emphasize the importance of addressing their needs, at times in ways that seem adversarial in relation to more advantaged individuals or segments of society. Nelson, Prilleltensky, and MacGillivary's (2001) proposal that community psychologists join with oppressed group members falls short of focusing on the creation of a prosocial community. Prilleltensky (2001), a coauthor of Nelson's, focused on values and cycles of reflection, research, and social action (praxis) as necessary for community psychologists to inform their efforts to reduce suffering and promote wellness. He deplored that relatively little attention has been paid in psychology to values, stressed that most community psychology efforts contribute more to changes in individuals than in their communities, and emphasized the importance of attaining social justice as critical for reducing suffering and promoting wellness. He emphasized the importance of basing community psychology efforts on a social justice value foundation and balancing the three elements of praxis while working to aid the oppressed, but left unclear the nature of a just community and the status of children in such a community. That is, a community that is viewed by its members as treating them fairly.

Prosocial justice. A system of prosocial justice designed to treat everyone fairly must thus include more than attention to disadvantaged community members. It must be fair to everyone and to the community as an ongoing sustaining collective. For example, resolutions of differences are considered to be *just* only when they meet fairness/equatability criteria in regard to the prosocial status of both the community and the individuals involved. The implications of this position for children are particularly salient as they have seldom been able to express and defend their interests. Ennew (2002) highlighted this point at an international conference in Beijing, China, focused on the rights of children to participate in decisions about themselves. She emphasized that children must participate for three reasons, one legal and two practical. In the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Children, the international law states that children not only have rights to care and protection from harm, but also human rights as equal members of the human race. Practical reasons for considering children's rights include that decisions may not have the best outcomes if children are not listened to. Plus, they are uniquely knowledgeable about their own lives. Ennew emphasized that what constitutes appropriate levels of children's participation is related to age and maturity, both of which are social constructs as well as biological facts, and may differ from culture to culture. She summarized by saying, "listening to children does not mean discounting adult knowledge but rather completes information about community life in the same way that women's views complement those of men" (Ennew, 2002, p. 4). Children are not part of the community (society) unless they are included, listened to, and granted appropriate rights to define their reality and participate in society.

Ennew's position complements one on social justice formulated by Tyler, Boeckman, Smith, and Huo (1997). Their conclusion was drawn from their research on how individual decisions have an intricate connection with societal outcomes. They emphasized how people's notions about social justice are derived from personal judgments about whether an involved person's state is fair/unfair and on the social comparisons on which that judgment is based. Four major conceptions about what is involved in arriving at such judgments and determining their legitimacy were identified, specifically: *relative deprivation, distributive justice, procedural justice,* and *retributive justice*. Each of these considerations, its role in shaping our definition of and approach to social justice, and the empirical consequences of our resultant behavior is examined in brief in the following paragraphs.

People make decisions about their sense of *relative deprivation* on the basis of comparisons with real or imagined external criteria. The criteria for making these "objective-subjective" comparisons determine the standards for individual and societal standards of fairness. For example, children whose views are often discounted must be considered if their well-being is to be included in efforts to understand the nature of justice and its relationship to the lives and well-being of people and of their communities. Questions must also be asked about what constitutes community justice, an important

requirement for a prosocial community. Tyler et al. (1997) examined three theories of justice responses and their impact on people's feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. Those theories concern the remaining three concepts that are relevant to prosocial justice: *distributive, procedural*, and *retributive justice*. They provide a useful basis for answering how people and societies decide what is just and what to do to accomplish justice for themselves and their children.

Distributive justice is focused on three approaches to how fairness is determined:

1. Equity: Justice is served when people's merits (work output) and rewards are in balance.
2. Equality: Justice is served when each participant seems to be equally involved in contributing to the relationship overall, although in distinctive ways; or when available rewards are distributed with individuals getting equal amounts without regard to their merits in producing or attaining those rewards.
3. Need: Justice is served when resources are allocated to partners according to their needs.

The research that is available indicates that people a) have strong senses of morality and injustice and b) base their judgments on situational contexts, using equity, equality, and need criteria accordingly. They also respond differently to individual, societal, and intermediate group (e.g., ethnic, gender) issues.

People are also concerned with the steps taken to arrive at justice outcomes, that is, with *procedural justice.* It has the widest multicultural validity, and seems to be the linchpin in establishing the legitimacy of justice procedures. Research findings indicate that people prefer to have a voice in proceedings even when that voice is time consuming, costly, and we know that having our voice will have no effect on the outcome of a dispute. Evidently, fairness in procedures is important to people personally and also for holding communities together. These procedures provide a basic sense of social justice that enables people to identify with their communities and are also particularly important in socializing children to become prosocially oriented.

Finally, understanding whether our approaches to justice contribute to creating a prosocial community requires considering the consequences of violating the standards of justice since the right to fair treatment includes the requirement to respect the rights of others. Tyler et al. (1997) discussed the broader societal reasons for *retributive justice*, for justifying punitiveness as a means of controlling rule breaking behavior. The most important reason proved to be social conditions (e.g., beliefs that families were not adequately socializing children). People's three major concerns were: a) fear of crime, b) need to defend group cohesiveness by punishing deviant rule breakers, and c) concern with linking justice evaluations and behaviors to maintain and strengthen the group's social bonds and contribute to a positive definition of the group. While punitive measures may deter crime, it is not clear that a retributive orientation for responding to violators serves the goals of creating a prosocial society in which people are willing to follow the rules and are concerned about each other's welfare, not just their own. This last consideration is particularly relevant for children who have relatively little power to protect themselves against retribution.

The brief summaries here do not convey the depth and complexity of how justice issues are reflected in our individual and collective behavior and in their impact on our communities. However, they do make clear that the concept of justice is psychosocial. They also highlight that any obligation to children having a role in deciding justice considerations regarding their situation or well-being has been little considered.

Human dignity. The idea that humans have worthiness apart from their value on any specifiable utilitarian criterion is not always included in psychological accounts. The anthropologist Ennew (2002) underscored that "human dignity" is the key concept in human rights. She stressed that it is only through inclusion of children as participants when considering issues bearing on their lives that their dignity can be appropriately considered.

Ennew disagreed with those who use the rationale that children's involvement infringes on the rights of parents and threatens the integrity of the family. She emphasized that children's rights include their responsibilities to honor their limitations and need for socialization and to respect the rights and child-rearing responsibilities of their parents. Consequently, only when children are allowed to participate will everyone involved learn how they can serve as participants in the wider society.

People's participation in issues that affect their lives is a human right. It extends to all members of all groups, and it is possible to create and maintain a sense of justice within a community only when everyone is included. All people, including children, have discretionary capabilities of judgment and

choice, have some level of responsibility for their own conduct and contribution to their communities, and can exercise that right only when allowed to do so.

Giving consideration to these rudimentary components of justice and of human rights is essential to understanding how individuals relate to each other within the context of their communities and societies. However, its focus is primarily on the rights of the individuals in it without explicit concern about how the community itself is sustained. As Shelbourne (2001) has emphasized, no society can sustain itself if it is based solely on rights. No one is born as a self-sufficient autonomous individual and no one can survive as one. Everyone is born in and initially dependent on a social unit, usually a family. To sustain itself that unit forms what Shelbourne calls a *civic society* held together by a shared *civic bond*. Further, all of its members have a primary *duty* to sustain and monitor the prosocial nature of that civic bond and society. Otherwise, they are contributing to the destruction of the sustaining basis of their autonomy, their freedom.

Individual prosocial morality (conscience). Because individuals participate in creating their lives and communities, we need to understand how they form their conceptions of personal and societal responsibilities and entitlements. That is, we need to ask how individuals form a *conscience*, an "inner sense of what is right or wrong in one's conduct or motives, impelling one toward right action" (Random House, 1999, p. 282). We also need to ask what determines whether a person's conscience will include prosocially constructive, individually self-serving, or antisocial destructive criteria. The following studies provide some, albeit incomplete, answers.

Tyler and Blader (2003) studied the relationship in adults between justice, identity, and behavior. They found that procedural justice approaches that treat people with dignity yield a sense of pride and respect. These approaches lead to greater group identity and prosocial behavior. The same patterns would seem to be relevant to children, although no research with children was cited.

Kochanska (2002) reported on the concept of a *mutually responsive orientation* (MRO) between mothers and children as having a positive impact on the development of a prosocial conscience in children (he does not use that term.). He defined MRO as "a positive, close, mutually binding, and cooperative relationship, which encompasses two components, *responsiveness* and *shared positive affect*" (Kochanska, 2002, p. 192). His longitudinal studies on the mother-child relationship from early in life into the school age years found a direct relationship between an MRO and a strong prosocial conscience in the children. Their MRO relationships were thought to influence the development of internal representations for a "working model of a cooperative, reciprocal, mutually accommodating relationship in which partners naturally do things for one another without abrogating their autonomy" (Kochanska, 2002, p. 104).

These findings provide an indication of the kinds of psychosocial dynamics relevant to whether and how people and communities develop prosocial orientations and conduct themselves accordingly. Unfortunately, psychologists and others interested in child development have focused their research primarily on other issues. Much more needs to be known about how to accommodate existing societal approaches to incorporate children's participation into their socialization and the effects of such changes on them and society.

Scope and context. Without justice we don't have a humane society. Without people who have an internalized sense of commitment to prosocial justice (prosocial conscience) guiding their personal behavior we cannot develop and sustain the communities that are basic integrating elements of a humane society. Basing exchanges on self-interest alone may deter antisocial interactions. It does not provide for the development and maintenance of patterns of conduct such as prosocial child development that benefit the community as well as long term individual interests.

As is often noted, with globalization the entire world is a community. All communities must respond to the limits of their resources and scope and to the potentially benign possibilities and threats from surrounding communities. They must address the inescapable tensions that exist between the individual needs and desires of their members and their collective desire for creating and maintaining a just and nourishing community. Resolving these tensions in prosocial ways is essential to creating and maintaining the prosocial nature of any community, large or small.

This individual-group tension within and between communities has primarily been depicted in psychology and related fields as metaphorically like a community with a *commons,* an area (such as a grazing area) held by its members for their common use. Tension arises from the shared knowledge that it is to the short term benefit of each community

member to use the grazing area for as many animals as s/he can. However, if everyone does so the commons will be destroyed and everyone will lose access to that resource. This model assumes that people are motivated by their own self-interest and have the unlimited right to behave accordingly. Their freedom to use the resource is viewed as independent of and in opposition to their commitment to a prosocial society providing justice for all.

People have reasoned that two goals or values cannot be maximized at the same time and concluded that either freedom or justice must be compromised to prevent the destruction of the commons. There are several reasons for challenging this conclusion: (a) All resources are finite, consequently unlimited use will necessarily exhaust them; (b) freedom is not limitless choices, choices are always constrained by a range of factors including resource availability; (c) people's individual and social concerns are not always independent; (d) people are active agents and can free themselves from the limiting effects of their histories and the self-destructive aspects of their natures; (e) reason and desire (facts and values) are not independent, they are contingent on each other, and their interrelationships change with circumstances; and (f) dealing with the commons problem involves continually changing and extending our focus, it does not permit of a one-time solution for eternity. Thus the *commons* problem is not insoluble; it can be approached in ways that are more defensible and that permit it to be addressed. The central argument of this paper is that this problem can be resolved constructively. As Shelbourne (2001) has argued, it is imperative that people have a sense of duty as well as a sense of right. Socializing children accordingly can lead to the formation of prosocial consciences and to a preference for prosocial communities. In such an approach adults and children must be included as participants with duties as well as rights and privileges. For example, parents cannot socialize their own children prosocially unless there is a supportive environment, and they cannot live in a supportive environment unless they contribute to creating and sustaining that environment.

Studying and Intervening in Communities

Studying a community or intervening in it to accomplish a particular objective requires a change agent such as a psychologist to assume a complex role in relation to that community. To function in a prosocial way, the change agent's relationship to the community must be clearly defined. It must address everyone's respective a) interests and b) statuses as at least quasi members of the community. Further, since changing any community also changes at least some aspects of its environs, additional consideration must be given to meeting responsibilities to the surrounding environment and other communities. These concerns lead to questions about how prosocial community considerations relate to other relevant criteria.

A second set of considerations is of a more pragmatic nature. The conditions needed for a community to be sufficiently autonomous to change or be changed and sustain itself at least quasi independently in relationship to external forces must be identified. The essential requirements must also be established that enable communities to influence the larger contexts in which they are nested. In particular, children's interests and children's participation need to be included in responding to all of these considerations. They are any community's most vulnerable and least listened to members.

The Current Situation in Community Psychology

Community psychology and related fields must address the issues raised above before they can contribute to building prosocial communities. The following are a summary of my observations about the relevant status of community psychology with regard to these concerns. It is based on my review of the recent *Handbook of Community Psychology* by Rappaport and Seidman (2000).

A rich and varied set of writing, research, and change projects have been undertaken under the general topic of community, and they have produced desirable outcomes for the individuals and groups involved. However, most community focused writing, research, and projects do not address what is meant by community or what the potential consequences –prosocial or otherwise– of those efforts are for the community beyond the segment they have targeted. These projects are only loosely related to each other, and it is difficult to determine whether they serve the development of prosocial communities. While no study or intervention can touch on everything, they do not have a community focus unless they are explicitly designed, conducted, analyzed, and *interpreted* in reference to a concept

of community. At least some of the undertaking's consequences for participants, change agents involved, the community at large, and outsiders need to be addressed explicitly. One contributor noted briefly that social change is complex, difficult to accomplish, and requires long term efforts. While true, that observation should not excuse ignoring the implications of existing social conditions or of findings from ongoing activities. Rather, it should underscore the vital importance of documenting the need for social changes and undertaking efforts to bring them about and evaluate the consequences of doing so.

For example, those involved in most endeavors directed to studying diversity as a relevant aspect of communities do not define diversity's relationship and relevance to a concept of community. Nor do they indicate what the potential consequences –prosocial or otherwise– of their efforts are for communities. Consequently, their efforts may or may not be directed toward their goal of achieve diversity and its desired effects.

With regard to children, it is not clear that empowering them (or any other relatively powerless group) has a constructive effect on making them or their community more prosocial. It may contribute to more intracommunity strife and/or to the disempowerment of other individuals or groups within the community. There is relatively little attention to the lives of children reported in the *Handbook*. What is there is almost exclusively about developing their competencies as their greatest resource for achieving psychological wellness. That wellness is emphasized primarily as a bulwark for managing stress and as a means of achieving primary prevention of psychological disorder.

In summary, these community efforts are focused largely on creating changes in individuals, albeit at a system or community level. Further, when systems changes are proposed, they tend to be oriented to changing systems so that they at least do not inhibit the development of wellness characteristics in the populations affected. These emphases are laudatory but there seems to have been little attention to considering whether the changes proposed and the wellness characteristics developed are prosocially rather than individual autonomy oriented.

Requirements of a Prosocial Community

Efforts to develop a prosocial community or to relate community psychology's (or any other group's) undertakings to that goal must be evaluated with reference to that overarching conception. For example, the pioneer African American psychologists, Kenneth B. and Mamie Clark "devised and fostered a tenuous balance between adjustment to one's race and amelioration of a racist society" (Lal, 2002, p. 25) in their work in the predominantly African-American Harlem district (ghetto) of New York City. They sought to work with victims to offset the destructive impacts of their society's injustices while also creating a more broadly prosocial society.

K. Clark also sought to address the prosocial responsibilities of society's oppressors and the benefits for them as well as the oppressed of creating a more just society. He subsequently stressed the importance of society acting to prevent the continuing infection of its youth with social group violence and hostility. He pointed out that United States society suppresses empathy and kindness. However, his vision of a solution seems focused primarily, if not exclusively, on creating mature individuals. That is, in *Prejudice and your Child* (1963) Clark stated his belief that significant social changes could be accomplished by informing people of the social science research evidence about the harm from prejudiced and discriminatory child rearing practices and the benefits of changing them.

Targeted Approaches to the Development of Prosocial Communities

My focus on prosocial community oriented approaches to changing societies and individuals includes that those involved acknowledge and address injustices and emphasize the benefits to all from doing so. Construction of a prosocial society is impossible unless all segments of the society are better served and understand that the changes necessarily made are in their interests. However, as was emphasized in the first meeting of the Board of Ethnic and Social Responsibility for Psychology (BSERP), involving the American Psychological Association (APA) in social justice issues and turning its social and ethical questions on itself would create conflict (BSERP, 1973a, p. 4, cited in Pickren & Tomes, 2002). Resolving such conflicts is the central dilemma in the creation of prosocial communities. Those committed to change must consider its implications for them and for those who oppose change and be as willing to change themselves as others.

Probably no more apt examples of conflict

resulting from prosocial changes can be found than the struggles in the United States among psychologists and within psychology over the issue of white racism. The most seminal figure in those struggles is Kenneth B. Clark, the first (and still the only) African-American President of APA. His research and that of his wife on the effect of racism on the psychosocial development of all children was an integral part of the U. S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision to outlaw segregation in public schools. He was instrumental in making changes in the APA as a scholar, a public policy figure, and a participant in the psychological community's efforts to clean up its conduct and organization internally and in relationship to the broader community. Clark was an exemplar in his role as an "involved observer" and "participant-symbol" (Keppel, 2002) in using the colonialist metaphor and defining the context by writing that "the dark ghetto is *institutionalized pathology* [my italics]" (Keppel, 2002, p. 34).

As he illustrated, creating a prosocial community requires a) eliminating conceptions and mechanisms that exclude individuals and groups, b) creating conceptions and mechanisms that include all individuals and groups, and c) involving each of us, professionals included, in imposing on ourselves these same requirements. These three issues, particularly the last, are vital to creating prosocial development possibilities for youth, as is highlighted in the following selected examples.

Eliminating Antisocial Behavior

Olweus (1992) found in his longitudinal study in Norwegian schools that bullying developed and continued among the youth for whom it worked. The bullies did not feel insecure; they had high self-esteem and continued bullying into adulthood unless stopped. A joint effort that involved coordination of home, community, and school programs was required to reduce the bullying. Relevant adults were taught how to create benign and supportive environments by establishing warm, involved, and positively interested relationships with the children and providing firm, consistent, non-hostile, non-physical sanctions against unacceptable behavior. In short, the community members created trustworthy prosocial environments characterized by modeling and teaching prosocial behaviors.

Resource Exchange and Psychosocial Competence

In 1970, I designed and conducted a large high school based collaborative project in the United States to evaluate and improve a suburban county's group counseling program. The program was used to facilitate racial integration among previously segregated students. It was based on the assumption that all of those involved, from students to project supervisor psychologists, brought resources and needs to the project and could gain by exchanging their resources to help each other. The students were African American and Anglo, marginal and exemplary. Results supported that a) the approach effectively created more psychosocially competent and prosocially oriented students, and b) confirmed in a final evaluation that the participants judged each other as behaving in resource collaborative ways in doing so (F. Tyler, Pargament, & Gatz, 1983).

The Olweus and F. Tyler studies focused on only a limited aspect of life in a community. Further, they were initiated by the adults involved rather than in conjunction with the youth. However, they emphasized collaborative participation and required all concerned to apply to themselves the expectations they imposed on others. Further, they examined and sought to change the interrelations between diverse individuals and groups in complex institutions (schools) that are central to socializing children for adult roles in their communities.

Protecting the Rights of Child Laborers

Recent approaches to the situations of working children and to their rights and responsibilities have taken on the additional objective of including the children in defining and implementing approaches to their rights and responsibilities and on broader aspects of societal change. It is instructive to highlight the unique contributions of some of these undertakings.

In a study commissioned by UNICEF, Hart (1977) and his collaborators focused on children's rights and environmentally sustainable development, drawing on examples of children from a variety of cultures who had participated in societal activities. Their research provides useful principles and examples about the process involved in "working with children so that we can engage them in more genuinely participatory ways" (p. *x*). They noted

that while there seems to be greater development of children's community participation in less developed countries, the greatest divide is between adults who do and do not recognize the capacities and desires of children to make a meaningful contribution to their societies.

In South East Asia efforts are underway to institutionalize children's rights to participate in policy formation and the implementation of supportive conditions for their work. The Regional Working Group on Child Labor (RWGCL, 2003) compiled a self-study handbook that managers can use to facilitate children's participation. National child and manager workshops were held in the Philippines, Viet Nam, and Thailand to share insights and experiences and examine the meaning of, opportunities for, challenges to, and protection from abuses of children's participation in labor. The resultant handbook provides perhaps the best and most explicit examples of the inclusion of working children as fully participating members of a prosocial community approach to labor.

Programs focused on child labor contribute to the well-being of the children involved and to the formation of prosocial communities. They do so by incorporating children into the communities as active participants in their societies and as individuals with the rights and responsibilities that adult citizens have. At least indirectly, they also contribute to changing the roles and expectations of the adults, including the community's leaders and the children's caretakers, in a prosocial framework in the area of work.

A Comprehensive Child-Centered Approach to Prosocial Community Building

An example of a multifaceted community and society-based program that incorporates the major characteristics of a prosocial community is provided by Questscope. It is a non-governmental organization chartered in England to assist marginalized children and their families in the Mideast. In 1997 Questscope's director, Dr. Curt Rhodes, decided to use my prosocial community model (Tyler, 1997) as the model for its program with marginalized populations in Jordan as well as for the development and conduct of program activities. At that time my wife (a nurse/ anthropologist) and I began an ongoing collaborative consultation to assist him.

Questscope has implemented its prosocial community orientation by working only with community groups who request its collaborative participation and agree to the shared goal of establishing the group's program as a free standing, prosocial community. It focuses on incorporating all facets of each community in working collaboratively to organize, conduct, and evaluate activities, and to integrate projects into the fabric of the community so that the community will sustain them. Its prosocial organization and functioning are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

The Nature of Questscope

Questscope has a central policy, program, and fiscal organizational structure. Personnel are engaged in a variety of activities from fund raising to social policy development to working collaboratively with community members and the families and children participating in their projects. As with any organization, Questscope's organization and structure are in part a function of its context. Jordan is part of the *Majority World* (Kagitcibasi, 1996) in being outside of the developed world economically, being a predominantly Muslim society, and being a Hashemite kingdom. However, it is progressive and responsive to modernizing influences of Western societies. For example, Questscope's mosque based program for adolescent girls could not have been implemented without clerical consent, but those clerics have not only requested it but provided their women leaders (deaconnesses) with the autonomy needed to address and ameliorate the effects of restrictive controls on young women. Related research and program development activities by Kagitcibasi (1996) in the area of family and human development in Turkey has provided instructive findings about the social context of Majority World societies. They have led her to conclude that the emerging model of emotional interdependence characteristic of those societies produces an autonomous-interrelated self that is potentially more amenable than the Western individual autonomy model as a basis for prosocial individual and family development. Thus, part of the success of Questscope's prosocial community oriented projects may be that societies such as Jordan are particularly receptive and supportive of that model.

Questscope's community project activities range

from one-to-one mentoring of youth, to youth participation in decision making and leadership development, to development of economic projects and national referral linkages. Current programs to facilitate the psychosocial development of youth in Jordan include (a) several with working youth at various sites including one in an industrial city, (b) one with unwanted/abandoned, illegitimate, or orphaned youth living in a government facility with a daytime open door policy, (c) one located in a mosque with adolescent girls from refugee or low income families, and (d) entire refugee camps.

That approach was implemented in the following way: The pro-social approach emphasizes three essential facets of community development: locality development (building consensus on common concerns and providing activities that increase insight and capabilities), collaborative linkages (involving local organisations and professionals in improving the lives of those "at risk"), and civic action (involving civic authorities in implementing responsive "pro-social" policies and practices).

Expansion of Program

Community groups who request Questscope's collaborative participation are expected to agree to the shared goal of establishing their program as a free standing, prosocial community within five years. During the five years, the group's personnel receive intense training in Questscope's methods and in restructuring their program as needed. The group then begins to work autonomously, but continues to participate in a Questscope policy group (prosocial community) to create and maintain other such groups. A core aspect of the group's development is the formation of volunteer-based mentoring programs to work directly with at risk children and families, primarily youth from the ages of 14 to 25. The youth are invited to participate; however, to do so they must commit to acquiring the necessary skills (from learning to read and write to acquiring basic self-respect to learning wood and metal working skills to running a small business) and integrating into the community in a prosocial fashion.

Implications for Prosocial Community Development Concepts and Approaches

The worth of the Questscope approach rests on its impact. Rhodes, Mihyar, Al-Bustami, and Al-Khouli (2004) summarized the value of the mentoring activities in reporting on a prospective study of 164 youth participants who completed pre and post assessments. For example,

> The primary means of collaborating with participants from disadvantaged backgrounds was the establishment of a meaningful personal relationship: often the first non-exploitative association the participant had ever experienced. Participants responded best to those interventions that increased their influence on what happened to them, provided opportunities to take responsibility, and emphasized mutual cooperation.
>
> Even minimal experience with a mentor was remarkably effective... Changes were noted in socially adaptive behavior, cognitive skills for problem solving, development of self-concept/emotional stability, vocational maturity and reduction of substance abuse for all those who shared even brief relationship with a mentor (p. 11).

Rhodes and his colleagues also stressed that "mentoring is an appropriate approach for broad-scale, nationwide programmes that can involve highly motivated volunteers in effective social action in their neighborhoods - making a difference in the lives of others less fortunate and restoring marginalized but talented individuals to effective, productive citizenship" (p. 14). The empirical evidence such as that cited above from Questscope's outcome studies support that conclusion.

It may be that the process of constructing prosocial community programs creates the intrinsic conditions essential to making them effective. In our program evaluation of Questscope (Tyler & Tyler, 2002), we found that one of the things the mentors valued from their participation was that it provided ways for them to contribute to society and to become better parents themselves. This view was shared by administrative and program personnel as well because they are all educated in how to create and contribute in a collaborative approach to their program activities. One of the successes of the industry program has been the changes in the supervisors in the settings where the youth work. They are no longer resistant to allowing the youth to participate in the program during working hours because doing so has led the youth to become better workers. Our numerous visits to homes in refugee camps and to community and project training centers provided valuable comments. Supervisors, parents, and mentors detailed the enormous impact on the

youth, on their respect for and from the youth, and on improved family relationships. The youth described their enhanced self confidence and hopeful perspectives. They also demonstrated their skills, ranging from reading newspapers to building furniture to managing coffee shops and market stalls. They pointed out other youth they had recruited for participation. In short, as people from all aspects of these diverse groups participated in the Questscope activities, they became more prosocially oriented themselves and contributed more to the project's evolution of itself as a prosocial community.

During that same evaluation, we also took part in a Questscope conference of program directors and representatives from a range of government and non-government agencies. Included were representatives form the Ministry of Social Services, Family Protection and Anti-narcotics units of Jordan's Directory of Public Security, Counseling and Community Services programs of the University of Jordan, a women's rights organization, and a prominent social activist Islamic cleric. Their deliberations highlighted their shared growing interest in and adoption of collaborative prosocial community oriented approaches as program policy in their respective agencies and in forming a collaborative group among themselves to better coordinate their programs. Questscope's program efforts have also attracted support and positive evaluations from the European Union, Government of Japan, UNICEF, and the World Bank as well as individual contributors.

These brief paragraphs hardly do justice to the complexity of a prosocial community development program such as that of Questscope. At best, they highlight the integrated and self-reinforcing nature of the spiral pattern of prosocial development that characterizes such prosocial program activities. Because of its nature, its internal and external structure and dynamics, establishing a prosocial community program of any scope generates interactive patterns that further its development. It does so by involving everyone in prosocial activities and becoming more prosocially oriented.

It is easy to cite the direct changes in the youth who participate in mentoring programs as evidence of the validity of Questscope's prosocial community development approach. The less easily documented changes such as those cited in the mentors and employers also support that conclusion. At a more general level, the adoption of this orientation in their own programs by other agency directors in Jordan including the Department of Public Safety and the adoption of a multi agency prosocial community orientation for interacting with each other among these directors add further support. Further, Questscope and its programs are being endorsed by Jordan's Royal Family and religious leaders. These developments taken as a whole constitute substantial empirical support for the value of this approach as not only effective for marginalized children and their families but as a holistic model for community and societal development.

Integration and Summary

Societies need to create prosocial communities to enable them to thrive and, in particular, provide for the well-being of their children. Such communities are characterized by their inhabitants being concerned with the well-being of others in the community and the community as well as themselves. Resolving the tensions and distributing benefits for community members are guided by the way the relationships between their personal well-being and that of their community are defined. Crucial factors include socialization practices that accord everyone a sense of dignity, promote the development of a prosocial conscience in individuals, and rely on social justice procedures that are considered to be fair to the ongoing community as well as the individuals involved. It is of crucial importance that children be accorded full human rights and included as participants in matters concerning their own well-being and that of their communities. They are the most vulnerable members of the community and the least able to protect themselves, yet also the least allowed to participate in their own behalf.

In contrast, at present most community development efforts tend to focus on how to improve an undesirable situation in some marginalized subsection of a community. There seems to be the assumption, at least implicitly, that the quality of life in the rest of the community will be diminished because the other residents will have to give up something to the groups assisted. In most of these endeavors little attention is given to psychosocial community criteria. One result is that neither change agents nor community members know whether their efforts have improved or diminished the community itself or its children who usually are not included in deciding whether interventions serve their needs.

There are legal, humanistic, and practical reasons for according full human dignity status to children as members of the community. In particular, it is only by doing so that they can be socialized so that they internalize prosocial consciences and become disposed to contribute to the development and maintenance of their communities. Unless children are included, their communities will remain incompletely prosocial and continue to foster intergenerational and individual/community conflict.

In addition, investigators and social change agents mut participate in ways that are consistent with the requirements of prosocial communities. They must become part of the community and acknowledge their individual goals and values as well as their goals for the community as they participate in its activities. Only then can they accord community members full dignity and respect for their rights and expect to be accorded the same.

The empirical support cited here for the benefits of adopting a prosocial community oriented approach is tentative and suggestive, but it is robust. These examples provide only an outline of the many ways in which such activities can be organized. There is much more to learn about the underlying socialization processes that lead to the development of such characteristics as a prosocial conscience and a self characterized by autonomous-relatedness and a prosocial orientation. Studies are needed to identify the age levels at which children can assume increasing levels of autonomy and responsibility. Current criteria are largely based on untested historical and cultural foundations. Other important areas of research include studies of the processes and steps involved in getting adults to reconsider their conceptions of adult/child relationships and how to change destructive patterns based on authoritarian and other ideological positions that are inconsistent with existing knowledge.

Finally, each collaborative participatory process must arise out of its own specific context and reflect the nature of that context, the people in it, and their ways of living and interrelating. Collaborative participatory projects cannot be routinized. Their strength is that they evolve in an organic manner and can be created only with everyone's involvement. In particular, the well-being of children (or any marginalized group) cannot be sustained without their participation. In the long run, neither can the well-being of those with advantages. They all, especially the children, depend on the community and all must contribute to maintaining an adequate prosocial structure to sustain it. In turn, the children will soon be the parents and leaders who will nurture or destabilize their families and communities.

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